

“FIFTY YEARS AFTER *CISNEROS V. CCISD*: A HISTORY OF RACISM, SEGREGATION,
AND CONTINUED INEQUALITY FOR MINORITY STUDENTS”

A Thesis

by

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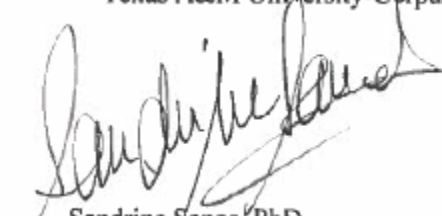
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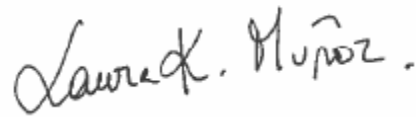
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ABSTRACT

Throughout the history of Corpus Christi, racism has played a central role within many aspects of life including within the role of education. For many decades, students attended particular schools based upon the color of their skin, and were afforded different educational opportunities in direct correlation to their social standing within society. In Corpus Christi, three types of schools, also known as a tripartite system, emerged with one for African American students, another for Mexican American students, and another for Anglo students. This trend was challenged in 1954 with the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared the “separate but equal” clause was no longer constitutional, and ordered schools districts throughout the nation to integrate their schools. Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) began the integration process soon after, but only for African American and Mexican American students, which left Anglo schools completely intact essentially creating a dual school system. However, in 1970, another court case, *Cisneros v. CCISD* ruled that Mexican Americans were a minority, and as a result, CCISD was segregated and needed to form a unitary school system at once that integrated all three races.

This paper presents an educational history of Corpus Christi both prior and after *Cisneros* in 1970, and analyzes the various desegregation methods CCISD employed, including busing and the creation of Special Emphasis Schools. I argue that CCISD is still a segregated school district despite all of the various desegregation compromises and plans adopted over the years due to the district embracing the neighborhood school plan, and several free choice programs offered at different schools that encourage transfers of certain students. This paper seeks to provide an accurate history of CCISD from 1871 to the current day that reveals the reasons why schools are still segregated today.

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I would like to begin by thanking the *Caller-Times*, the local newspaper here in Corpus Christi, that allowed me to have unlimited access to old and new articles. I want to specifically thank Allison Ehrlich, who is the archivist, who not only helped me scan hundreds of newspaper articles, but was always there to answer any pressing questions. Many of those articles are central to this paper, and I would not have been able to provide as many diverse viewpoints without them. I want to also thank the staff at the Benson Latin American Library at the University of Texas at Austin, and specifically Daniel Arbino, for allowing me to research many different collections in a short amount of time that added great material to this paper. This paper would also not have been possible without the collections housed at the Mary and Jeff Library at A&M University Corpus Christi.

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Finally, I want to dedicate this paper to my students, both past and present, who were not only the inspiration for this thesis, but also the reason I decided to write this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

In June of 1990, Nelson Mandela traveled to Madison Park High School in Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, which was his first trip to the United States since being freed from prison in South Africa. In front of a massive crowd composed of teachers, students, and other onlookers, he famously declared, “Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world.”¹ Throughout the history of the United States, the role of education has served three purposes, which firstly, was to develop a citizenry that was educated in order to participate in the democratic process. Secondly, it served as a tool for assimilating immigrants into American society that would teach them the American language and culture. Thirdly, education allowed the United States to develop a workforce that could physically contribute to the United States economically.² However, the role of education within American society has often undergirded exclusionary, racist principles and ideologies that has ultimately prevented certain racial groups from attaining full citizenship and equality.

The history of racism and inequality within education is long and complex, and has happened throughout the nation in order to continually subjugate people due to their perceived inferiority within society. This thesis centers on the history of racism and segregation in the Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD), beginning in 1871 and continuing to the

¹ Peter Schworm, “Nelson Mandela’s 1990 visit left lasting impression,” *Boston Globe*, December 7, 2013, Accessed April 23, 2017, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/12/07/mandela-visit-boston-high-school-left-lasting-impression/2xZ1QqkVMTbHKXiFEJynTO/story.html>.

²Victoria-María MacDonal, “Demanding Their Rights: The Latino Struggle for Educational Access and Equity,” in *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* (Washington, DC: National Park System Advisory Board, 2013), online through the National Park Service at http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageinitiatives/latino/latinothemestudy/pdfs/Education_final_web.pdf.

current day. One of the reasons I chose to focus my analysis on Corpus Christi was due to the fact the district segregated students based on the color of their skin, having separate schools for African American, Mexican American, and Anglo students. This system of segregation of minority school children would ultimately be overturned by *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District (1970)*—the focal point of this thesis.³ In years after *Cisneros*, the school board decided upon different methods of desegregation in order to achieve a unitary school system. CCISD re-assigned thousands of students to different schools in order to achieve an ethnic balance among the three predominant races—Mexican American, African American and white—in order to not have more than 75% of one ethnic group at one school. CCISD eventually adopted a busing plan that required students of different races to be bused to various schools throughout the city in order to achieve this ethnic balance. The busing of students began in 1975 and continued until 1985, which not only impacted school children greatly, but also the racial make-up of the individual schools. Then in 1997, U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack dismissed the *Cisneros* case determining that this court case ultimately improved education in Corpus Christi.⁴

However, despite decades of forced busing of school children and the various plans CCISD implemented to integrate its schools, I argue that currently CCISD still shows signs of segregation and unequal educational access for students of color. This is particularly demonstrated with the creation of the new high school, Veterans Memorial, which opened in 2015, and the demographics of some schools that are still majority Anglo due to their admittance

³ *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District*, 324 F. Supp. at 613 (S.D. Tex 1970).

⁴ Beatriz Alvarado, “Professor: Years after Cisneros segregation still Exists,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 2, 2016, accessed September 10, 2017.

requirements and geographic zones. In addition, due to this continued segregation, some schools have higher test scores and more awards due to their academic achievements, while others still have high dropout rates and low levels of literacy. Personally, as a teacher within CCISD, I not only see these racial trends, but I also see the negative effects they can have upon students of color within the classroom. This reality has ultimately led me, as a historian, to write this thesis, and hopefully encourage more racially equality within CCISD. Before unpacking this argument further, it is important to put this discussion within the larger framework of racism and various court cases that set the stage for the *Cisneros* ruling in 1970.

Two historians who focus on racism, and its place within society are Ian Haney López, and Mark Weinberg. Ian Haney López argues that the concept of race is a human invention that can not only be framed through the passage of laws, but also developed through social interactions between people and the competition for the most power between the various racial groups.⁵ According to Meyer Weinberg, racism grants the dominant race with more rights and privileges, which shows that racism has a goal and is systematic. Weinberg also points out that racism was not just the result of hatred towards a particular race, but that racism was also influenced by economic power and social standing within society, which promoted exclusion and exploitation by the dominant race. As a result, racism is collective action and can be institutionalized, especially within the school system. In fact, the United States has often promoted and prided itself with concepts of universal values and truths, yet at the same time, prevented millions of American children from attaining these through an education that did not

⁵ Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race*, (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 10.

benefit them as individuals, but instead, continually subjugated them within society.⁶ At the core of Weinberg's argument is the claim that the school system has essentially been the dominant force within America that has not only upheld but also sustained racial and ethnic barriers between the dominant race and the perceived inferior races.⁷

In Texas, Mexican Americans were historically legally classified as white, yet were ruled and suppressed by Jim Crow laws that not only publicly segregated Mexican Americans from Whites, but also required Mexican American children to go to separate schools. One of the first court cases to try to overturn this segregation by establishing a legal classification for Mexican Americans was *Hernandez vs. Texas* (1954), which happened weeks before the landmark court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954).⁸ In *Hernandez*, a Mexican American man was found guilty of murder by an all-white jury, and his lawyers found this unconstitutional due to no Mexican Americans being represented on the jury. The Supreme Court of Texas upheld this ruling based upon the legal standard of Mexican Americans as white known as "white by law."⁹

⁶ In Cliff Stratton's book, *Education for Empire*, he reveals that the access citizenship is offered in different ways within schools depending on the color of one's skin. He wrote, "...the paths to citizenship on offer in American schools were as uneven and contentious in what they bestowed upon those that trod them as the interpreted meanings of citizenship that underscored the political economy and civic discourse." He argued that "...the distension of public schooling for the purpose of crafting degrees of citizenship at home and the proliferation of American economic power through empire-building projects both at home and abroad were more intimately intertwined than in usually recognized." America has a long history of using education as a tool for subjugating "inferior races." Clif Stratton, *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2016), 1-3.

⁷ Meyer Weinberg, *A Chance to Learn: The History of Race and Education in the United States*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 352, 7, 1.

⁸ *Hernandez v Texas*, 347 U.S. 475 (1954); *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁹ Ian Haney López, *White by Law*, xxi.

However, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the decision when Hernandez's lawyers argued the "class apart" standard and the paradox of whiteness apparent in the *Hernandez* case.¹⁰ The U.S. Supreme Court recognized the discrimination against Mexican Americans, but at the same time, failed to establish Mexican Americans as a separate race. Therefore, when whites perceived Mexican Americans as non-white, they were refused their basic rights as citizens, such as having separate schools for their children, yet when they were legally classified as white, white's practices of discrimination could not be challenged or overturned.¹¹

Before the *Hernandez* case, Mexican Americans sued several times to abolish the de facto practices of segregating Mexican American students in separate schools from whites. *Romo v Laird* (1925) was the earliest challenge to the segregation of Mexican American students in Arizona.¹² The de facto segregation of Mexican Americans established this racial group of individuals as outsiders to the community, and was often supported by the white community due to the previous *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) ruling that legalized the separate but equal doctrine.¹³ Unfortunately, *Romo v. Laird* did not abolish segregation, and five years later, in 1930, the Del

¹⁰ Even though case law classified Mexican Americans as citizens who were "white by law," Anglo Texans treated them as a separate class of whites or as "a class apart." V. Carl Allsup wrote, "The Supreme Court accepted the concept of distinction by class, that is, between 'white' and Hispanic, and found that when laws produce unreasonable and different treatment on such a basis, the constitutional guarantee of equal protection is violated." Even though this court case made a monumental step forward in addressing the inequalities Mexican Americans were facing due to the color of their skin, it would not be until *Cisneros v. CCISD* in 1970 that would classify Mexican Americans as a separate race from Anglos. *Handbook of Texas Online*, V. Carl Allsup, "HERNANDEZ V. STATE OF TEXAS," accessed November 25, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrh01>.

¹¹ Linda Martín Alcoff, "Latino/As, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary," *The Journal of Ethics* 7, no. 1 (2003), 11-12.

¹² *Romo v. Laird*, Civil Action no. 21617.

¹³ *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

Rio Independent School District was accused of segregating students in the *Independent School District v. Salvatierra*.¹⁴ The school district claimed that the separation of Mexican American students was due to their suspected English deficiency, which is what the Romo family fought against in Arizona just a few years prior.

In 1946, *Mendez v. Westminster School District* ruled that segregation did not uphold the equal protection clause of the Constitution, and overturned the de facto practice segregating Mexican American students due to their race.¹⁵ Judge McCormick not only argued that ‘separate but equal’ education was not supported by the Constitution, but also identified Mexican Americans as a group that qualified for protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. This California court case would not only lead to statewide desegregation, but also established the federal precedent for the upcoming *Brown* case in 1954.¹⁶ Furthermore, *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* in 1948 upheld what had been found in the *Mendez* case, asserting that segregation was an abuse of the Fourteenth Amendment, and that there couldn’t be separate schools based solely upon the claim of English deficiency.¹⁷ However, schools in Texas never desegregated after this ruling due to gerrymandering and the construction of schools in pre-

¹⁴ Laura K. Muñoz, “*Romo v Laird*: Mexican American Segregation and the Politics of Belonging in Arizona,” *Western Legal History* 26, no. 1 & 2 (2013), 101-103, 133; *Independent School District v Salvatierra*, 33 S.W, 2d at 790 (Tex. Civ. App., San Antonio 1930).

¹⁵ *Mendez v. Westminster*, 64 F Supp. A 548 (S.D. Cal. 1946).

¹⁶ Philippa Strum, *Mendez v. Westminster: School Desegregation and Mexican American Rights* (Lawrence: University press of Kansas, 2010), 13, 63-64, 127.

¹⁷ *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District of Bastrop County et al.*, Civil Action No. 388 (W.D. Tex. June 15 1948); A. Reynaldo Contreras, and Leonard A. Valverde, “The Impact of *Brown* on the Education of Latinos,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 63, no. 3 (1994), 471.

dominantly Mexican American neighborhoods.¹⁸ Another court case that upheld *Mendez* in a federal court was *Gonzales v. Sheely* (1951), which terminated the segregation of Mexican American students in Arizona. Once again, *Gonzales* ruled that school districts could not separate based upon one's lineage, heritage, or suspected language deficiency.¹⁹

In 1954, the landmark court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, reversed the 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which had encouraged and legalized the "separate but equal" doctrine. The *Brown* decision claimed this practice was indeed illegal, and required states to begin desegregating the schools "with all deliberate speed."²⁰ However, Mexican Americans were outside the ruling because of the ambiguity of their ethnoracial identity, so desegregation did not apply to them. Essentially, throughout these various court cases challenging Mexican American school segregation, the plaintiffs argued that Mexican Americans "were 'other white' and no state law existed to sanction their segregation."²¹ Due to the de facto social practices and the lack of de jure state laws addressing Mexican American segregation within the schools specifically, school districts asserted that Mexican Americans had no grounds to claim equal protection under the 14th Amendment. In addition, when most school districts desegregated, they did so by lumping African American and Mexican Americans together in their own schools. This

¹⁸ Richard R. Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts: The Mexican American Legal Struggle for Educational Equality*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 52.

¹⁹ Laura K. Muñoz, "Ralph Estrada and the War against Racial Prejudice in Arizona," in *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation: Biographical Essays*, ed. Anthony Quiroz (Denver: University of Colorado Press, 2015), 277-299.

²⁰ Francisco J. Guajardo, and Miguel A. Guajardo, "The Impact of Brown on the Brown of South Texas: A Micropolitical Perspective on the Education of Mexican Americans in a South Texas Community," *American Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 3 (2004), 502.

²¹ Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts*, 60.

allowed school districts to declare between 1954 and 1970 that they had a unitary school system that was not divided upon race.²²

All of these court cases set the stage for *Cisneros vs. CCISD*, which would have a massive impact upon minority students in Corpus Christi. Jose Cisneros and twenty-five other parents filed suit against CCISD in 1968, and Judge Woodrow Seals ruled that Mexican Americans are indeed an identifiable ethnic minority, and as a result, guaranteed the same protection African Americans received under *Brown*. In addition, Seals supported the notion that CCISD was a dual, not unitary school system, and that the discrimination towards Mexican Americans was both de jure and de facto.²³ In Seal's final opinion, he told the court that it is obvious that Mexican Americans have not only been discriminated against, but also segregated in all three levels of the school system, including the elementary, middle, and high school levels.²⁴ Seals continued by ordering CCISD to re-assign Negro and Mexican American teachers and students to other schools in the district to reach more ethnically balanced schools, but allowed the school board to decide how this integration would be achieved.²⁵

Several historians, including Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., have analyzed the *Cisneros* court case, and the impact educational inequality has had upon students of color. San Miguel wrote his dissertation and later published his first book, *Let All of Them Take Heed*, on the history of

²² Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts*, 60-61.

²³ Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts*, 60-63.

²⁴ Woodrow Seals, "Transcript of Opinion," Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3 Folder 6, 11.

²⁵ Woodrow Seals, "Transcript of Opinion," Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3 Folder 6, 17-18, 22.

Mexican American education in Corpus Christi and south Texas. In his dissertation, which focused on Corpus Christi from 1870 to 1960, he writes that Chicanos historically have not progressed and prospered in Anglo dominated public school systems. Mexican American students often have very high rates of drop outs, and have lower academic achievements when compared to other racial groups, which could be due to low socio-economic levels and perceptions of racial and cultural inferiority.²⁶ He concludes that these Mexican American students in CCISD were often given an inferior status that resulted in their separation from Anglo society.²⁷ He writes, “Stories of Chicanos in the public schools is one of crushed dreams and personal frustrations...”²⁸ Even though this dissertation was published after the *Cisneros* court case, San Miguel’s dissertation did not address the case or its lasting effects on Corpus Christi’s schools.

In *Let All of Them Take Heed*, Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. continues his findings from his dissertation, and analyzes the struggle of Mexican Americans for educational equality within Texas over a fifty-year period. San Miguel looks at how Mexican Americans acted as agents in promoting educational equality, and interprets the goals of several organizations that formed during this period that employed several strategies in order to provide their children with greater access to educational opportunities. In addition, San Miguel focuses on how those strategies were implemented and both the positive and negative impacts of the actions taken by the Mexican American community in Texas. San Miguel argues that the quest for educational

²⁶ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits: A History of Mexican American Education in Corpus Christi, Texas, 1870-1960* (PhD diss, Stanford University, 1978) 2-3.

²⁷ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits*, 224.

²⁸ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits*, 229.

equality had two elements, one targeting the public schools themselves, and the other focusing on the Mexican American community. Essentially, Mexican American activists desired to eradicate discrimination within the public schools, and hopefully, in turn, to affect positively the Mexican American community. In 1987, when San Miguel completed this book and less than a decade after prescribed remedies were implemented, he anticipated as did the court that school performances of Mexican American children would drastically change due to greater opportunities, and this would positively benefit their community.²⁹

In San Miguel second book, *Brown, Not White*, he looks at the relationship between the struggle of educational equality for Mexican American students, and the growing Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Here, he focuses on the Texas town of Houston, and argues that the protests regarding educational inequality in the 1970s marked a vivid shift in identity from that of the Mexican American Generation to that of the Chicano Generation.³⁰ The new Chicano Generation did not embrace the desire to be classified as white, but rather as a race that embraced their heritage and culture. The Chicano Generation still desired equality, but not by embracing the standards of whiteness. The Chicano Generation used protests to fight discrimination, yet promoted their culture and heritage among their community members. In addition, San Miguel points out that activist efforts in regards to education during the earlier

²⁹ Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Let All of Them Take Heed: Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), x, xi.

³⁰ The Mexican American Generation categorized Mexican Americans that lived in United States from 1930-1960, who began embracing American standards, and demanded American citizenship. The Chicano Generation was active from 1960-1980, and demanded complete equality while embracing their Mexican heritage. Instead of integration like the Mexican American Generation had proposed, the Chicano Generation wanted to control their own schools and colleges with their own resources in order to self-empower their students and community; Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 7-8.

Mexican American Generation were intended to improve the overall quality of education, while during the Chicano Generation the intent was to desegregate the schools. The *Cisneros* court case occurred during the Chicano Generation, which reveals why the plaintiffs demanded recognition as a separate ethnic group and equality within the school system.³¹

Another scholar who has tackled the *Cisneros* case and the history of the Corpus Christi school district is John Albert Treviño, who wrote a dissertation in 2010 dealing with this subject matter. Treviño outlined how the district operated before the court case, what the court case established, and the effects of busing. He determined that busing was indeed unsuccessful, but that the creation of Special Emphasis schools was successful in completing the desegregation movement in the city. The court accepted the creation and funding of these schools, which were established in poorer neighborhoods in order to offer the students better opportunities for academic success.³² As a result, he argues that these Special Emphasis schools continue to not only serve minority populations, but also ones that are economically disadvantaged, and because of this, CCISD is no longer segregated.³³

Treviño's conclusions, however, raise many questions about how scholars might assess the significance of desegregation and educational equality. Did the busing program ever truly achieve desegregation in CCISD? Are the schools today truly unsegregated? What has happened in CCISD since this court ruling? Very few historians and scholars have attempted to address

³¹ Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., *Brown, Not White: School Integration and the Chicano Movement in Houston, 1st Ed.* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), xii-xiii, 210.

³² John Albert Trevino, *Cisneros v. CCISD: The Desegregation of the Corpus Christi Independent School District*, (PhD diss, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, 2010) 96-97.

³³ John Albert Trevino, *Cisneros v. CCISD*, 100.

these questions, or to write a history of CCISD since this court case. In this thesis, I cover the same timeline as Trevino and revisit some of the same subject matter, but I disagree with his findings and conclude the complete opposite. I argue that both the busing program and the creation of Special Emphasis Schools were short term solutions that left the larger issue of educational equality unresolved. In reality, the schools within CCISD are still largely segregated due to the neighborhood school concept, residential patterns, and decisions made by the district in regards to new schools and school zones. To effectively argue these points, I have sectioned this paper into three chapters and a conclusion.

For the purpose of this thesis, chapter 1 will focus on CCISD from 1871 through *Brown* to right before the *Cisneros* case in 1968. This chapter will not only expose the factors that led the twenty-five plaintiffs to file the court case in 1968, but also expose how the school district established separate schools for Anglos, African Americans, and Mexican Americans in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, this chapter documents how the district reacted to the integration order passed from the *Brown* case. Essentially, CCISD desegregated the school system by forcing Mexican Americans and African Americans to go to the same school while keeping the other schools white only. This led the plaintiffs to file suit due to the unequal resources found at each school, and due to the fact that the schools were still highly segregated in the years following 1954. In addition, during this time, teacher appointments to specific school faculties were based upon the color of their skin too, allowing for the patterns of not only segregated schools but also segregated workforces to continue in the city even after *Brown*.

The second chapter deals solely with *Cisneros* and the impact this case had upon the Corpus Christi school system. I will present the arguments that both the defendants and plaintiffs argued during the court case, highlighting the various individuals called to the stand and their

respective views in regards to segregation in CCISD. I will also reference the evidence the witnesses, defendants, and prosecutors presented throughout the case, which showed the segregation of students and teachers in the elementary, middle, and high schools, and the unequal levels of education and resources the minority students received. I will present the ruling made by Judge Woodrow Seals, and his opinions in regards to the various points presented by both the defendants and plaintiffs. In addition, I will discuss the significance this court case had upon CCISD.

The third chapter explores with the lasting effects of the court case upon CCISD and the city residents, including the resulting mandates to bus thousands of students and the pairing of schools. This affected all students at every level, and not only cost the students time (long commutes back and forth across the city), but also the district money and resources. In addition, several groups protested the *Cisneros* order and some white flight into private schools and nearby school districts occurred in order to prevent busing and integration with other minority students. This chapter will discuss the various steps that were taken in an attempt to achieve an equal balance of racial composition within the various schools. Eventually, CCISD will form Special Emphasis schools that some argue ended racial segregation in the city schools. These Special Emphasis schools were designed to provide funding to underfunded schools, and to allow more educational opportunities to students who might not receive them in another school setting.

This thesis will conclude with the decisions the district made after the conclusion of mandatory busing, and will provide an analysis of the schools in Corpus Christi today, to see if there has truly been an effectual change since the *Cisneros* ruling in 1970. I will show through data from the Texas Education Agency that, unfortunately, the schools within CCISD are still

very segregated on both a racial and economic basis. Despite decades of forced busing of school children and despite the creation of multiple Special Emphasis Schools, CCISD still shows signs of segregation and unequal educational access for some students.

CHAPTER I

A History of Racism and Neglect within CCISD: 1871-1968

The history of racism and neglect towards both African American and Mexican American children in Corpus Christi is an incredibly complex story that began with the establishment of the first schools. This chapter is centered on revealing the intricate process CCISD employed over several decades in the early twentieth century to maintain separate schools for African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglos. The district attempted to disguise their true reasoning for the attendance zones, curriculums taught, transfer policies, and the location of new schools in order to prevent the community from recognizing their true intentions, which was to preserve a system of subjugation and inequality through the field of education. This chapter is going to begin with the history of education in Texas and then Corpus Christi, and reveals how the city first began their segregated school system prior to the *Brown* case. After *Brown*, this chapter will document how the district avoided the integration of schools in Corpus Christi, and the educational curriculums employed to ensure African American and Mexican American students received an inferior education. Furthermore, this chapter will also document the denial both the Superintendent and the school Board had in response to segregation claims from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the American G.I. Forum (AGIF), Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and others. This ignorance and racism ultimately led to a group of parents filing a segregation suit against the district, which is where this chapter concludes.

The history of Texas public education began with the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836 when the rebellious colonists argued that the Mexican government failed the educational

needs of the children living in the territory.³⁴ After the Texas Independence movement, several years passed before the colonists in Texas organized a state-wide school system.³⁵ In 1854, the first free public school system formed due to the Texas Common School Law, which required the state legislature to dedicate no less than one-tenth of the annual revenue from taxes to the newly formed school system.³⁶ In 1858, New Braunfels was the first town in Texas to pass a tax designated for building and establishing schools.³⁷ In 1871, Governor Edmund J. Davis signed a bill launching the public school system throughout the state of Texas.³⁸ The first public school in

³⁴ Previously, the Mexican government established a municipal system of education, and in 1834, records revealed that there were schools located in San Antonio, Nacogdoches, San Augustine, Brazoria, and Johnsburg. However, the Texas Declaration of Independence stated that the Mexican government, “had failed to establish any public system of education, although possessed of almost boundless resources, (the public domain), and although it is an axiom in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self-government.” Frederick Eby, “The First Century of Public Education in Texas,” in Texas Educational Agency Educational Handbook, “Texas Public Schools, 1854-2004,” pg. 36.

³⁵ Horace Mann is considered the “Father of American Education,” due to his belief that every state in the union has a duty to provide an education to every child, and was a big factor to establishing the common school movement that began in the 1830s that encouraged the formation of public schools throughout the nation. In 1838, Mirabeau B. Lamar, one of the administrators of Texas after Independence, tried to establish an educational system, but failed due to lack of resources. However, Lamar is considered the “Father of Education in Texas.” *Handbook of Texas Online*, Max Berger and Lee Wilborn, "Education," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khe01>; Arlene Metha and L. Dean Webb, *Foundations of American Education*, Eight Edition, (Boston: Pearson, 2017), 132-135.

³⁶ Cliff Russell, “Texas Public Schools Mark 100th Anniversary,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 31, 1954.

³⁷ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Max Berger and Lee Wilborn, "Education," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khe01>.

³⁸ This bill also formed the state board of education, designated roles for the superintendent of public education, the attorney general, and the governor. *Handbook of Texas Online*, Max Berger and Lee Wilborn, "Education," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khe01>.

Corpus Christi opened that same year on October 1, 1871 with only 146 students that attended classes in the upstairs of the First Methodist Episcopal Church thanks to Judge Stanley Welch who established the school.³⁹ A year later, Mr. and Mrs. Richard King donated land on North Carancahua where two schools were built, one for whites and the other for African Americans. This would lay the foundation for the segregation of students based on the color of their skin in schools throughout Corpus Christi that would not be successfully challenged until almost a hundred years later in 1968.⁴⁰

Even though the Texas Declaration of Independence highlighted the importance of education for the future Texans, not every individual was given equal opportunity to education due to their racial composition.⁴¹ Almost immediately schools were established separately for

³⁹ Cliff Russell, "Texas Public Schools Mark 100th Anniversary," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 31, 1954; Margaret Ramage, "Little Known About Education Pioneer," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 5, 1971.

⁴⁰ "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library.

⁴¹ Other schools throughout Texas were established around this same time, including Houston's first secondary school in 1877, Austin's public school system initiated in 1881, and Dallas following shortly after in 1884 with their school system. Due to the history of the mission at the Alamo in San Antonio, the city had schools established as early as 1812, and by 1887, 3,594 students were enrolled at ten different schools with a total of sixty-five teachers. Brownsville started their public school system with 8 students in 1855 as well. After the Civil War, the Freedman's Bureau started schools throughout the South in order to educate the recently emancipated African American population, and by 1870, there were eighty-eight schools composed of 4,478 students throughout Texas. For Mexican Americans, students went to school, but were segregated from Anglo students and were sometimes not offered an education past elementary school. *Handbook of Texas Online*, David G. McComb, "Houston, Tx," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdh03>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Laurie E. Jasinski, "San Antonio, Tx," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hds02>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, David C. Humphrey, "Austin, Tx (Travis County)," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda03>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Jackie McElhaney and Michael V. Hazel, "Dallas, Tx," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdd01>; *Handbook of Texas Online*,

African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglos in Corpus Christi. The first high school in the city was built in 1892 right next to the two primary schools, and Moses Menger was the principal who would serve the school for the next 24 years. That same year, the school serving African American children led by a man named Solomon Coles moved to a four room building that previously was a broom factory.⁴² By 1900, a board of trustees organized in order to provide more services to the students.⁴³ Soon after the formation of the board, a school was constructed in 1902 solely for Mexican American students that would remain unnamed for almost a decade. On March 15, 1909, the Corpus Christi Independent School District was officially created by a special act of the state legislature. In 1911, the first high school under the newly created district was formed that would be known as the Corpus Christi High School that would be composed of Anglo students. In 1919, the school servicing Mexican Americans was officially named the

Anna Victoria Wilson, "Education For African Americans," accessed October 22, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kde02>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Alicia A. Garza and Christopher Long, "Brownsville, Tx," accessed October 22, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdb04>; *Handbook of Texas Online*, Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., "Mexican Americans And Education," accessed October 22, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/khmmx>.

⁴² Solomon Coles was a congregational preacher who had previously served as a principal for African American students. Before coming to Corpus Christi, he had been born a slave, and after the Civil War, received a college education and began his career as a minister. When he arrived to Corpus, he decided to leave ministry, and began teaching African American students. The school was named to honor his legacy as one of the first African American teachers in Corpus Christi. Joann Zuniga, "For man once a slave, Coles left his mark on city," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 23, 1983

⁴³ By 1900, there were 526 Independent school districts in Texas. Texas Educational Agency Educational Handbook, "Texas Public Schools, 1854-2004."

Cheston L. Heath School.⁴⁴ Similarly, the school designated for African Americans would remain unnamed until 1924, when the school would be named Solomon Coles High School.⁴⁵

In Guadalupe San Miguel's dissertation that is centered on Corpus Christi's public education system, he explained that CCISD had a defined segregation policy in place for African American students. However, he noted that a specific policy was not in place for Mexican American students.⁴⁶ In a pamphlet written by CCISD, the district claimed that before the establishment of Cheston Heath School, Mexican American students attended school with Anglo children.⁴⁷ In 1876, the state constitution explicitly approved the segregation of African American students, which would ultimately be overturned by *Brown vs. Board* in 1954, but "there was no legal or legislative stipulation for the educational segregation of Mexican American students."⁴⁸ San Miguel reported that in the School Board Minutes for CCISD in 1911, the members agreed to the practice of separating Mexican American students from those of

⁴⁴ Before being named "Cheston L. Heath School," this school was known as the Fourth Ward School. Cheston L. Heath School was named after a hardware merchant that was known for buying books and giving them to children. He also served on the school board, and eventually was a school board president from 1913-1917. The school was named in his honor. However, Heath is one of the individuals on the school board that pressed for the segregation of Mexican American students. "Old Cheston Heath School Holds Memories for Many," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 16, 1968. Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits: A History of Mexican American Education in Corpus Christi, Texas, 1870-1960* (PhD diss, Stanford University, 1978) 61-62.

⁴⁵ "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library; Joann Zuniga, "For man once a slave, Coles left his mark on city," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 23, 1983; Margaret Ramage, "Old Cheston Heath School Holds Memories for Many," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 16, 1968.

⁴⁶ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits*, 59.

⁴⁷ "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library.

⁴⁸ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits*, 63.

Anglos descent despite the fact there was no law in place sanctioning this practice.⁴⁹

Furthermore, in 1914, Cheston Heath, a school board member, demanded that “the schools be instructed to have all Mexican children go to the Mexican schools.”⁵⁰ Interestingly, according to San Miguel’s research, CCISD unsuccessfully attempted to remove this racist documentation in the school board minutes. Sadly, the Mexican American school would be named for the man responsible for their segregation and unequal education.⁵¹

By the end of the 1920s, the newly formed district was dealing with problems of overcrowding in all of the schools. In 1909 there were 1,600 students, but by 1929 there were around 4,300 students attending school on a regular basis.⁵² This led to the construction of a newer high school on Fisher Street to alleviate overcrowding, but this would have little effect in the long run on limiting the overcrowding of students.⁵³ The old Corpus Christi High School was renamed as Northside Junior High School, and became the first and only junior high school until 1934 when Wynn Seale was built.⁵⁴ In 1934, the first class of African Americans graduated from Solomon Coles High School, which was significant because before this, students had to go to

⁴⁹ Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Endless Pursuits*, 61.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² “Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights.” La Retama Public Library.

⁵³ This school would later be named Roy Miller High School in 1950. Margaret Ramage, “Sale of city school property marks end of educational era,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 14, 1973; C.W. Carpenter, “Local School Long Affect by Rapid Growth Problems,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, April 27, 1952.

⁵⁴ Margaret Ramage, “Northside School: A Glorious Age Passes,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 15, 1961.

Prairie View high school or A&M (east of Houston) for a high school diploma.⁵⁵ In addition, there were more Mexican Americans attending Cheston Heath, which only had 16 rooms for 782 students.⁵⁶ By 1939, there were 12, 637 students in the growing city, which was expanding due to an oil boom, the opening of the new port, and new business coming to Corpus Christi.⁵⁷

In the 1940s, the city and its schools faced massive growth and infrastructure changes as a result of outside forces from the state and nation. One major transition the schools were facing was the state initiating a 12-year grade system instead of the 11-year system previously used in most districts.⁵⁸ As a result, many schools adopted half day schedules to try and accommodate the ever increasing amount of students in the coastal bend area. This decade also saw the end of the Depression and World War II, and through the Federal Works Agency and the Works Progress Administration, several schools were built, including Travis, Oak Park, Lamar, Austin Elementary schools and a gym at Coles. After the war, some of the barracks were converted into classrooms that would be used while more permanent structures were built for the schools. Corpus Christi High School was no longer going to be the only high school in town, because in

⁵⁵ Joyce Saenz, "The class of '38," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 30, 1978.

⁵⁶ "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library; Margaret Ramage, "Old Cheston Heath School Holds Memories for Many," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 16, 1968.

⁵⁷ C.W. Carpenter, "Local School Long Affect by Rapid Growth Problems," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, April 27, 1952; "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library.

⁵⁸According to Kathryn Watlington's research, Port Arthur is the first school district to implement the twelve-year school system in Texas in 1926, and by the 1937-1938 school year thirteen other school districts documented their transition from a 11 year to 12-year school system. Soon after this, Corpus would implement this new structure for their schools as well. Kathryn Phend Watlington, "Changing the School Year: The Texas Experience in Moving to a Twelve-Grade Academic Program," (PhD. Diss, Texas A&M University, 2014), 26-28.

1950, W.B. Ray High School opened their doors. In 1940 there were 174 classrooms, and by 1950 there were 469 with 120 being constructed at the new high school. Even though the city seemed to be expanding and more students were going to school, there were clear signs that quality education was not equally attainable for every student.⁵⁹

By the middle of the 20th century, it was becoming increasingly evident that educational inequality in CCISD was due to the color of one's skin. One of the first individuals to inaccurately report this trend was Virginia Lee Hufstedler, who argued that this educational inequality was due to students' location within the district rather than the district purposely creating schools for a certain racial group. Hufstedler conveyed that according to the 1946 census, there were 19,835 children living in the Corpus Christi school district with 2,567 not enrolled in school.⁶⁰ Based upon this information, 80% of the children were enrolled within public schools, 7% were enrolled within private schools, and 13% were not in school.⁶¹ In regards to the racial composition of the 2,567 students not enrolled, 26% were Anglo-American, 69% were Latin American, and 5% were Negro.⁶² According to Hufstedler, there was "no

⁵⁹ "Corpus Christi Independent School District 1909-1994: Historical Highlights." La Retama Public Library; Joyce Saenz, "The Class of '48 was between two eras," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 1978.

⁶⁰ Virginia Lee Hufstedler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, (PhD diss, University of Texas at Austin, 1950), La Retama Public Library, 37.

⁶¹ Virginia Lee Hufstedler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, 39

⁶² Herschel T. Manuel defined Latin American, Mexican, Mexican-American, Spanish, Spanish-Surname, Spanish-American, as a very diverse group of people that trace their heritages to various locations, yet they all have a common language that has been the basis for their subjugation within American society. Manuel notes that, "Wide differences exist within the group, and none of these names is entirely satisfactory, but Spanish is the home language of most (but not all) of the group..." Patrick Carroll continued this conversation within his work, *The*

attempt in Corpus Christi to separate Latin American and Anglo-American children in school. Separate schools were provided for Negro children.”⁶³ However, she does recognize that the schools were predominately composed of a single race, but that was due to “population clusters” based upon culture and socio-economic status.⁶⁴ Ironically, Hufstedler then followed this statement with the transfer policy within CCISD, and noted that most requests were ones where Latin Americans asked for transfers to avoid going to a school predominately composed of Anglo students.⁶⁵

In regards to drop-out percentages in 1946, Hufstedler accounted that two out of three children not in school were of Latin American descent, one out of four were Anglo, and one out of twenty were African American. According to Hufstedler’s findings, the main reason for the dropouts were due to economic concerns, particularly the family’s necessity for that child to contribute economically in order to survive. Hufstedler revealed that over 50% of these students who dropped out did due to socio-economic status, and that 62% were going to work after dropping out. A majority of children dropped out even before reaching middle school with a 49%

Felix Longoria Wake, by documenting Latin American racial experiences within the United States. He stated, “Yankees seemed to view them (Latin Americans) as ‘inferior’ racial beings...and that Anglos...had a moral obligation to control their southern neighbors in order to uplift these ‘backward peoples’ and to ensure their progressive development.” Herschel T. Manuel, *Spanish-Speaking Children of the Southwest: Their Education and the Public Welfare*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 6-7; Patrick J. Carroll, *Felix Longoria’s Wake: Bereavement, Racism, and the Rise of Mexican American Activism*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 73; Virginia Lee Hufstedler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, 154.

⁶³ Virginia Lee Hufstedler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, 41.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

rate, with high school only having a 17% drop out rate.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, this trend would not change over the next few decades, and would be a challenge local Mexican American and African American leaders would continually fight against through protesting, and by filing multiple court cases throughout the state of Texas, and even in Corpus Christi.⁶⁷

During the World War II mobilization, there was massive economic expansion, and as a result, the American government encouraged migration of Mexicans in order to expand business and increase production. Mexican Americans became wage laborers, and were soon viewed by Anglos as easily replaceable and disposable. A new generation of Mexican American leaders emerged that began advocating for equality of the Mexican American race, and would soon be known as the Mexican American Generation.⁶⁸ Perhaps the biggest impact upon the Mexican American generation was the outbreak of World War II in 1941, which allowed Mexican

⁶⁶ Virginia Lee Hufstедler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, 81, 131, 157.

⁶⁷ One of the first historians to look at the history of Mexican American education was Thomas P. Carter, who wrote *Mexican Americans in Schools*, and the question he wanted an explanation for was Mexican Americans' low achievements within the school system. Carter, along with other historians realized that even after major desegregation cases, Mexican Americans tended to still have the highest dropout rates, speak Spanish with little knowledge of English, have low performance rates within schools, and usually were extremely poor. Carter revealed that children who tended to be successful in school had the traits and goals that were similar to what the school demanded from its students. In addition, one of the reasons Mexican Americans still had low socio-economic standings in American society was not only due to limited options within the job market, but also because the school did not emphasize academic achievement for its Mexican American population. According to Carter, the low success rates of Mexican American students were due to the schools not equipping them with the knowledge of skill sets needed in order to raise their socio-economic status higher. Thomas P. Carter, *Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect*, (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970), 1, 3, 208, 210, 221.

⁶⁸ The Mexican American generation categorized Mexicans that lived in America from 1930-1960, who began embracing American standards, and demanded American citizenship. Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 7-8.

Americans to participate in the national agenda of making the world safe for democracy. By fighting in World War II and putting their lives on the line, Mexican Americans believed that they would gain acceptance from white Anglos and access to more employment opportunities, better education, and non-segregated public places. Unfortunately, when these individuals returned home from the war, they realized absolutely nothing had changed in regards to their position within society, and wasn't going to unless they did something about it.⁶⁹ As a result, these middle class Mexican Americans would form several organizations in order to challenge these racist ideals within the United States.⁷⁰ Two organizations that emerged during the

⁶⁹ In "Mobilizing for National Inclusion," authors Lisa A. Flores and Mary Ann Villarreal reveal that "Whiteness" has many definitions and roles within society, including its ability to adapt and modify the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups of people. Whiteness cements its definition and perception through distinguishing itself from other undesirable traits and characteristics, and enables a group of individuals to remain in power over other subordinate races thought as inferior. However, throughout history, certain racial groups have had the opportunities to be included in the privileged white racial group in order to receive economic, political, and social benefits that come with being white in American society. Patrick Carroll, a historian, cited the reason for discrimination against Mexican Americans was due to Anglos racists views towards Mexican Americans. He stated, "Generally, Anglos...came to see Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals as one and the same: 'Mexicans,' brown, alien, and economically, socially, and politically retrogressive, to be segregated from 'Americans,' because they were 'Un-American' and 'unfit' to become American. This made them unqualified, incapable, and unworthy, in most South Texas Anglos' eyes, to exercise the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship." Patrick J. Carroll, *Felix Longoria's Wake*, 9; Lisa A. Flores and Mary Ann Villarreal, "Mobilizing for National Inclusion: The Discursivity of Whiteness among Texas Mexicans' Arguments for Desegregation", in D. Robert DeChaine, ed., *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 87-95.

⁷⁰Furthermore, according to Carroll, these Mexican American leaders "became preoccupied with their racial identity. They came to see themselves and other Mexican Americans as progressive 'whites' of dual ethnic heritage, as Mexican and as American... They were far more concerned with fending off Anglo discrimination than defining their distinctiveness from Anglos." This would encourage these Mexican American leaders to create several organizations in order to prove their equality within society. Patrick J. Carroll, *Felix Longoria's Wake*, 9; Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 2, 165, 41, 166, 3.

Mexican American Generation were the League of United Latin American Citizens and the American G.I. Forum. These two organizations filed lawsuits against school segregation, ended discrimination within the jury selection process, and overall encouraged education attainment in order to achieve full equality within American society.⁷¹

The first organization that formed to attack racism against Mexican Americans was the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) that originated in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1929, and is the oldest Hispanic organization in the United States.⁷² Three separate organizations, The Order of the Sons of America, the Knights of America, and the League of Latin American Citizens of the Rio Grande, decided to combine efforts in acquiring political, economic, education, and social opportunities.⁷³ The major themes of LULAC were loyalty to the United States as citizens, speaking English in order to attain equality, using nonviolent methods in order to reveal the inequalities between the two racial groups, and to uphold the values of American citizenship. Furthermore, in the Constitution for LULAC, it states: “We shall oppose any tendency to separate our children in the schools of this country.”⁷⁴ As a result,

⁷¹ Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 4, 96-97, 86, 192-193, 196, 4.

⁷² The purpose of LULAC was to “develop within the members of our race the best, purest, and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States and to eradicate from our body politic all intents and tendencies to establish discrimination among our fellow-citizens on account of race, religion or social position as being contrary to the true spirit of Democracy, our Constitution, and Laws.” Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 2.

⁷³ Ruben Bonilla, “Support These Vital Projects as an active Member of LULAC,” Julian Samora Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.

⁷⁴ In the Order of the Sons of America Declaration of Principles of 1922, they also stated their objection to educational segregation that was later adopted by the LULAC council. The

LULAC would be one of the main organizations to fight against educational inequality not only in Corpus Christi, but throughout the entire state of Texas. The goal of LULAC was to provide Mexican Americans with tools that would encourage them to be the best American citizens, and one way this goal would be achieved would be through guaranteeing an equal education for all Mexican American children.⁷⁵

Another organization the Mexican American Generation formed was the American GI Forum that was established by Dr. Héctor P. García in 1948 also in Corpus Christi, Texas. Dr. García was a medical doctor that served in World War II, and upon his return, he studied the inhumane living conditions of Mexican Americans throughout Texas. He commented, “I have never seen such general disregard for the welfare and health of any people anywhere in Europe or Africa, even in wartime.”⁷⁶ In addition to conducting this study, Dr. García treated World War II vets, who would come to him complaining of their mistreatment at the local VA hospital, and asserted that they were not receiving any benefits from the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act (also

Declaration stated, “We firmly pronounce ourselves in favor of bringing about a better feeling, relationship and understanding wherever necessary, between our beloved children of school age and the children of all other extractions in in all the States where we may have occasion to establish branches of our Order, to the end that passion, racial prejudice or discrimination may not bar our children from the privilege of co-mingling in the school room with all other classes of American children, inasmuch as Almighty God has given us our Country, our Civilization, and the American Constitution for our common heritage.” Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed*, 232, 239.

⁷⁵ Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 4, 96-97, 86, 192-193; Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed*, 30-34.

⁷⁶ In 1948, Garcia set out to study the living and educational opportunities of Mexican Americans living in and around Corpus Christi, Texas, documenting that Mexican American families were living in shacks with dirt floors and no indoor plumbing, and were segregated educationally from Anglo students. Garcia commented that the educational facilities, “retarded the academic growth of Hispanic students.” Garcia even commented that chickens lived in much better conditions than some of these Mexican American families. Patrick J. Carroll, *Felix Longoria’s Wake*, 35-53.

known as the G.I. Bill of Rights). These veterans decided to form the American G.I. Forum, and elected Dr. García as their president.⁷⁷ García believed that Mexican Americans were equal to Anglos, and through legal and nonviolent methods, he encouraged the Mexican American Generation to confront the inequality in American society.⁷⁸ One of his goals through this organization was to work with local, state and even national governments to demolish discriminatory practices towards Hispanics, including in the field of education.⁷⁹ He believed that “The state has abused and exploited Mexican-Americans for more than 100 years... You people (Anglos) are the foreigners. This is our state, but you are welcome.”⁸⁰ Together, LULAC and the American G.I. Forum would be two of the major forces demanding educational reform in Corpus Christi.

⁷⁷ “Some have called him the Mexican American Martin Luther King.” Spencer Pearson, “Hector Garcia has spoken for Latins for 20 years,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 13, 1968, Julian Samora Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 17 Folder 8; Carl Allsup, *The American G. I. Forum: Origins and Evolution*, (Austin: The Center for Mexican American Studies of the University of Texas at Austin, 1982), 33-36.

⁷⁸ Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 4, 196.

⁷⁹ García Honorable Solomon P. Ortiz, “Honoring Dr. Hector P. Garcia, Recipient of Presidential Medal of Freedom,” *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 98th Congress, Second Session* 130, no. 35 (March 26, 1984), found in Clotilde P. Garía Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 1, Folder 5; Even in 1948, when the Draft Board accused Latin Americans of being illiterate, García responded by saying, “It’s true we’re illiterate... thanks to the Texas school system which has segregated us like... animals for the past 112 years,” “Draft Board Criticism Draws Fire,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, November 8, 1948 found in George I. Sánchez Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 4, Folder 9.

⁸⁰ García would help bring national attention to the injustices Hispanics received within education until his death in 1996. Spencer Pearson, “Hector Garcia has spoken for Latins for 20 years,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 13, 1968, Julian Samora Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 17 Folder 8.

A few years prior to the establishment of the American G. I. Forum, an educator named E. E. Mireles began a bi-lingual Spanish program in September of 1940 in order to teach students the Spanish language and culture due to the lack of Spanish classes in CCISD.⁸¹ In a 1952 report, Mireles chronicled that Spanish could be requested in the schools from 3rd to 8th grade, but after that it would become optional for the student. Furthermore, in addition to Spanish classes, there was a Pan American Club established in several schools where students could learn more about the Spanish culture, history, and heritage.⁸² In Mireles's philosophy, he upheld that "the Corpus Christi Spanish program is based on the premise we shall never know a people until we understand their language."⁸³ E.E. Mireles affirmed that this program was not only for the purposes of teaching Spanish, but also one of tolerance and understanding in order to encourage positive relations with Latin America. By 1950, ten years after its origination, the Spanish program had 10, 353 students enrolled in 298 Spanish classes with 180 teachers, and 26 Pan American Clubs throughout the district. This would be a constant struggle Mexican American leaders had with the schools in Corpus Christi, due to a large amount of students having a

⁸¹ Edmundo Eduardo Mireles was the leader behind the Corpus Christi Spanish Program that focused on the Spanish language and culture. This program was implemented in 39 school districts throughout Texas, and would encourage schools to adopt a foreign language program. In 1941, the Texas legislature passed a bill that allowed teachers to teach Spanish in their classrooms, which overturned the English-only policy from 1917. *Handbook of Texas Online*, Cynthia E. Orozco, "Mireles, Edmundo Eduardo," accessed October 14, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmi90>.

⁸² Letter to Dr. Maurice R. Ahrens, Curriculum Director, from E.E. Mireles, March 3, 1952, Edmundo E. Mireles Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 1 Folder 1.

⁸³ "Philosophy," Edmundo E. Mireles Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 1 Folder 1.

language barrier and a lack of knowledge of their history and culture.⁸⁴ Unbeknown to E.E. Mireles, four years later in 1954, a Supreme Court case would begin to change the discussion around educational equality, and would have a massive impact upon the Mexican American and African American community in Corpus Christi.

In 1954, a Supreme Court case would impact the future of education not only for the African American community, but also for Mexican American community in demanding educational equality. On May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that “separate but equal” no longer was constitutional in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, and ordered that the schools be integrated at “all deliberate speed.” By June of 1954, the Corpus Christi National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) told CCISD that they needed to desegregate the schools before the start of the next school year. Two representatives told the school board that, “If you do not desegregate the schools, we’ll endure it as we have for 300 years.”⁸⁵ The State Board of Education adopted the policy that racial discrimination in education was unconstitutional on July 4, 1955, and determined that segregation of Anglo and African American students was unconstitutional. This policy continued by announcing that all children deserved and equal opportunity to education in Texas, and that “the separation of children of

⁸⁴ Corpus Christi was the first city to have a city wide program of Spanish teaching. “Spanish Program of Corpus Christi Schools: E.E. Mireles Coordinator of Spanish, Edmundo E. Mireles Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 1 Folder 1.

⁸⁵ This quote also revealed that Hufstedler’s argument was indeed incorrect, and that there was racism within CCISD schools. “School Board Asked to End Segregation,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 15, 1954.

Latin American descent in the public schools is contrary to law.”⁸⁶ In addition, this document declared that the local board of trustees had a legal responsibility to find out if Latin American children were being separated due to their national origin. However, many school districts, including Corpus Christi, would overlook this by claiming that Mexican Americans were white, and would desegregate their schools by creating schools of just African American and Mexican American students.⁸⁷

Even though *Brown* was the first step to ordering the desegregation of schools throughout the nation, Corpus Christi would ineffectively integrate the schools, and rather, solidified the racist school system even more. A year later in 1955, the Corpus Christi School Board adopted several principles on how they would achieve desegregation within the schools. First, African American students could still go to the three predominately African American schools if they chose to, which included Washington and Carver elementary schools or Coles Junior and Senior High.⁸⁸ Secondly, African American students could transfer to a different school, but it had to be within their attendance zone.⁸⁹ The students would have to fill out a transfer application in order to attend that school as well. The Board did make the provision that if a school was deemed at

⁸⁶ “State Board of Education Policy on Racial Discrimination in Public Education,” Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 16 Folder 8.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Coles Junior and Senior High was comprised of grades 6-12, and Washington and Carver Elementary schools were comprised of grades 1-6. “Corpus Christi Public Schools Policy on Desegregation 1955-1956,” Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 12 Folder 7.

⁸⁹ This clause prevented African American students from attending all Anglo schools due to the fact African Americans were residentially segregated from Anglos due to the “population clusters” mentioned by Hufstedler. Virginia Lee Hufstedler, *A Study of Psychological Aspects of Public Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment in Corpus Christi, Texas*, 41.

capacity, a transfer request may be denied. Furthermore, Anglo students now had the opportunity to attend the previously determined African American schools if they lived within the attendance zone. However, this statement included no reference to the thousands of Mexican American students who were also experiencing discrimination and segregation.⁹⁰

By September 1955 a total of 101 African American students had been granted transfers throughout CCISD's elementary, middle, and high schools. This article does note that a majority of high school transfers were to Miller High School, which at the time was considered the Latin American school. Even the transfers of African American students to various elementary and middle schools were to schools predominately comprised of Latin American students and not Anglos.⁹¹ Ray High School, the predominately Anglo high school at this time, claimed overcapacity of students, and would deny several transfers of African Americans based upon this claim.⁹² The local newspaper reported that a total of 75 applications for transfer out of the two other formerly African American schools were filed, and that neither African American school had received transfer requests from Anglo students.⁹³ What is revealed through this data is that integration was not truly occurring within CCISD, but rather a move to segregate African and Latin students from the Anglo students.

⁹⁰ "Corpus Christi Public Schools Policy on Desegregation 1955-1956," Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 12 Folder 7.

⁹¹ "Integration Applications Dwindling: 101 Negroes Okayed for White Schools; Miller Gets 17," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 14, 1955.

⁹² "School Integration Machinery is Set," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 28, 1955.

⁹³ Ed Watkins, "14 Anglos Request Transfer to Carver." *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 8, 1955.

Not only was it evident in CCISD that integration was not being achieved among African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Anglos, educationally Mexican American students were not improving.⁹⁴ As a result, in 1956, Corpus Christi launched a program for six year olds who were unable to speak English in order to get them ready for first grade. This program was developed due to the fact Mexican American students were being held back because of inefficient English language skills.⁹⁵ For the first program, 152 children were enrolled and by the end of the first year only three did not advance to the next grade. In 1957 there were 476 children enrolled and by 1959 it had increased to 680 children. This eventually led to Bill 51 that gave money to finance these programs throughout Texas.⁹⁶ However, what is interesting is that some

⁹⁴ In *Subtractive Schooling* written by Angela Valenzuela, she researched the academic achievements of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans in a high school located in Houston, Texas over a period of three years. Valenzuela exposed that instead of this high school providing a means for their minority students to achieve their dreams and goals, this high school rather continually subjugated its minority students and prevented them from attaining the American dream. This high school, which is underfunded and overcrowded, enabled Mexican Americans to graduate as monolingual that were not physically or mentally ready to participate in American society. In addition, these youths only spoke English, and did not identify with Mexico or its cultural heritage that has greatly impacted their personal history. As a result, Valenzuela argued that for this particular group of Mexican immigrants and Mexican American youth, school was a subtractive process that deprived these students of cultural, social, political, and economic resources that oftentimes result in their academic failure. Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 3.

⁹⁵ This program was similar to a program LULAC initiated called the Little School of the 400. The Little School of the 400 was created by Felix Tijerina, and this school's goal was to teach Mexican American students at least 400 English words in order to not only become more fluent, but to also prevent the students from being held back and potentially from dropping out of school. *Handbook of Texas Online*, Thomas H. Kreneck, "Little School Of The 400," accessed October 14, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kdl02>.

⁹⁶ E.E. Mireles, "Corpus Christi Public Schools Summer English Program for Pre-School Non-English Speaking Children," 1962, Edmundo E. Mireles Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, Box 1 Folder 3.

schools within CCISD still encouraged their students to not speak Spanish despite the Texas law of 1941 allowing teachers to teach Spanish classes.⁹⁷ For example, at Ella Barnes Junior High, the school newspaper published an article encouraging the students to only speak English while at school. The article reports, “But since we live here in the United States, we need to speak English well in order to be good citizens.”⁹⁸ In a referral for using Spanish in the classroom, it states “Spanish is a beautiful language and we have no objection to its use at the proper time...However, according to law and school regulation the official language of public schools is English...and all recitations...are to be conducted in the English language.”⁹⁹ Even though the

⁹⁷ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Cynthia E. Orozco, "Mireles, Edmundo Eduardo," accessed October 14, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmi90>.

⁹⁸ At the Texas Conference on Education of the Mexican-American, Dr. Severo Gomez spoke about the education of Mexican American children in Texas, and the changes that needed to be made in order to improve Mexican American education levels. Gomez commented that one of the many problems Mexican American students faced was one of “conflict of cultures,” which is the fact that schools neglected these students’ heritage and culture. Schools would often order students to not speak Spanish and this would sometimes lead to failure within the classroom. “Editorial: Watch your Language,” *Treasure Chest*, Ella Barnes Junior High School, February 20, 1957, Gonzalo Garza Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 2 Folder 12; Manuel Ruiz Ibanez, “Educators Eye Latin Heritage,” *San Antonio News*, July 14, 1967, Cristóbal Aldrete Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 6 Folder 19.

⁹⁹ In a symposium abstract by Herschel T. Manuel, he wrote, “The school must compensate as far as possible for the disadvantaged home, and must both conserve the native language and develop a proficiency in English which will enable the child to become a full member of the community.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, the students “Should find his identify as a participating member of the whole community, the state, and the nation,” and he would be unable to do that if he was unable to embrace his Spanish heritage and history. In a book Manuel later published, he argued that Spanish-speaking children faced several challenges within the American school district. The first challenge was that the English and Spanish speaking communities are divided due to a lack of understanding and respect for each other leading to conflict. Secondly, the dissimilarity between the two cultures fosters isolation rather than union. Thirdly, Manuel noted language is a massive challenge for Spanish speaking children within education, and immediately identifies these students as separate. Lastly, Manuel argued that if these challenges weren’t enough for Spanish-speaking children, many come from very low

district claimed it was encouraging the usage of English, it was attempting to alienating the language these children knew, and their culture as well.¹⁰⁰

In addition to integrating the schools, local African American leaders demanded the desegregation amongst teachers as well in CCISD. In 1963, there were 1,572 teachers with 40 of them being from African American descent, and two African American principals in the district. These teachers and principals taught at African American schools, including Carver and Washington Elementary schools and Coles Junior and Senior High. Dr. Dana Williams, CCISD's superintendent commented, "The district has operated under an unwritten policy of hiring Negro teachers only for Negro schools," but made no comment on wanting to change that racist trend.¹⁰¹ In addition, Williams made the statement that half of the African American student population still attended a segregated school due to their parents choosing to send them there, which he felt was not the school board's responsibility. However, several organizations, including the NAACP and the United Citizens Civic League (UCCL) argued that the segregation gap would close faster if African American teachers and principals were given equal

income households with many living in poverty. Herschel T. Manuel, "The Spanish Speaking Child in the Schools of the Southwest: The Recruitment and Training of Teachers," October 22, 1966, Joe J. Bernal Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 31 Folder 16; Herschel T. Manuel, *Spanish-Speaking Children of the Southwest*, 6-8.

¹⁰⁰ "Referral for using Spanish at School," Gonzalo Garza Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 2 Folder 12.

¹⁰¹ David Lopez, "Integration of Teachers Is Sought: Hiring of Negroes for White Schools to be Asked Here," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 13, 1963.

consideration as whites when being hired in CCISD. Unfortunately, this would not be challenged again until the *Cisneros* case brought renewed attention to the segregation of teachers in 1970.¹⁰²

In 1964, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act required schools to change their status quo operations to correct segregation practices and to eliminate discrimination. The Civil Rights Act determined that “schools and the school system are responsible for assuring that the services, facilities, activities and programs which they conduct or sponsor...are free from discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. The responsibility precludes a system from segregating students or from denying equal educational opportunities to students on the ground of race, color, or national origin. Each school system has the affirmative duty under law to take prompt and effective action to eliminate such segregation or other discrimination, and to correct the effects of past discrimination.”¹⁰³ This required districts to establish attendance zones and transportation patterns in a way that was non-discriminatory, and prohibited the district from granting or denying certain transfers between schools in order to achieve a school mostly comprised of one race. Furthermore, schools were forbidden from assigning students to certain classes based on their race, and the curriculum and activities must be equally accessible to students from various schools.¹⁰⁴ Districts were also not allowed to discriminate in regards to

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Letter from Lloyd R. Henderson, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to Superintendent of Corpus Christi Independent School District, Dana Williams, October 21, 1968, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 13, Folder 6.

¹⁰⁴ Essentially, “school systems are responsible for assuring that students of a particular race...are not denied the opportunity to obtain the education generally obtained by other students in the system. “Policies in Elementary and Secondary School Compliances with Title VI of Civil Rights Act 1964,” Volume 2, pg. 382-386, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

recruiting and hiring teachers for the particular schools, and there could not be differences in school buildings or materials provided to the schools.¹⁰⁵ However, it was very clear that CCISD's policies in 1964 were unlawful according to this act, and CCISD needed to re-organize their schools and teaching staff in order to operate under acceptable standards set by this legislation.

If a district previously operated under a system of segregation, there were four methods a district could employ in order to fully desegregate their schools into a unitary system.¹⁰⁶ First, a school district could embrace the free choice option, which allowed the students and parents to choose what school their child would attend. However, this document does note that if a district chose this method, there are usually more steps required for the district to take in order to achieve full desegregation. Secondly, the district could operate under geographic attendance zones, but the school must ensure that the boundaries established do not continue segregation. Thirdly, the district could reorganize the school structure, which entailed changing the grades taught at various schools, or even consolidating two schools into one if necessary. Lastly, the district could close schools in order to encourage integration of others. The school districts could

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Scott Williams defines "unitary" to transform a discriminatory governing process into a non-discriminatory one." In this case, the term unitary references a school that is integrated among its staff, teachers, and students. However, Williams argues that the definition of unitary is actually more complex than a simple definition, and rather, establishing a unitary school has two parts to it. First, the school district must eliminate any surface vestiges that are apparent in determining if a school is segregated. Secondly, the school district must also destroy any underlying vestiges of segregation, which are often hidden, in order to achieve a unitary school. Williams defines "vestiges" as effects of intentional discrimination, which if left un-remedied, perpetuate the hallmarks of the regime of school segregation. As a result, according to Williams, schools are truly "unitary" once they have eliminated all of these vestiges, including apparent and non-apparent. G. Scott Williams, "Unitary School Systems and Underlying Vestiges of State-Imposed Segregation," *Columbia Law Review* 87, no. 4 (1987): 799-804.

also use other methods if deemed necessary, or could use a combination of the previous mentioned options. In regards to CCISD, they will use a combination of all four methods, however, will be unsuccessful in forming a unitary school system in Corpus Christi.¹⁰⁷

In a report conducted by Dr. García for the 1965-1966 school year, he revealed that the median years of school completed by 25 year olds in 1950 was 11.8 for Anglos, and 3.2 for Mexican Americans with a difference of 8.6 years in education between the two racial groups. In 1960, it was 12.2 for Anglos, and 4.5 years for Mexican Americans, with a 7.7-year difference in education achieved between these two groups. García revealed that over a ten-year period, Mexican Americans raised their schooling by only 1.3 years, and García highlighted the fact that Mexican American students were not academically progressing in CCISD. Furthermore, he documented that out of 442 teachers in CCISD, there were only 24 teachers of Mexican descent (6%), and most of these teachers taught at Miller High School, the predominate Latin school with high enrollment of Mexican American students. Dr. García also noted that there were no Mexican Americans in top positions in the district, and there were no Mexican American administration officers in any of the high schools, including Miller High School. This data revealed that the district was doing little in regards to eradicating segregation and inequality among Mexican American students, teachers, and administrators.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸In a statewide survey of the Texas Poll, every four out of ten adults supported schools that separated Latin American students from Anglos. This mentality along with the free choice option adopted by various districts throughout Texas not only made it a challenge to fight against segregation, but also revealed the racist undertones of these board decisions. "Statistics in the Corpus Christi public schools, compiled by Dr. Hector P. Garcia," 1965-1966, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 12 Folder 8; Joe Bolden, "4 of 10 Favor Discrimination," *The Texas Poll*, Cristóbal Aldrete Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 7 Folder 10.

In April of 1965 CCISD reported its successful compliance with Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 indicating that they had been integrating the schools since 1955 with few incidents. The district adopted the free choice plan in regards to desegregation, and in the first year only a few African American students had made the decision to transfer to a different school.¹⁰⁹ According to the district's report, 56% of African Americans attended integrated schools by 1965, and that the district had not rejected any applications for transfer. In the 1964-1965 school year, CCISD had 2, 048 African American students with 901 attending all-black schools, and 1,147 attending integrated schools, which was based on the student's choice and not the district's decision. Under the "Future Plans" section of the report, CCISD promised to continue hiring teachers from multiple racial groups, and revealed that the district planned on closing Carver Elementary school, an African American school. As a result, students living in that attendance zone, would attend the integrated school in their geographic region, and teachers would be assigned to teach in other schools that weren't composed of only African Americans.

¹⁰⁹ In the *Daily Texan* Cristóbal P. Aldrete discussed the "free choice" program some schools were adopting, and how this was not only supposed to end segregation within schools but also comply with the *Delgado* court case. In *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District*, the judge ruled that it was unconstitutional to separate Mexican American students from other Anglos. Aldrete continued by asserting that the school boards were in fact doing nothing to change segregation by using the "free choice" program, and wrote, "Does the admission of a mere handful of 'Mexican' children in the 'Anglo' schools...eradicate the prevailing custom...of segregation? Of course not." Aldrete believed that there would be no more segregation when students were going to schools without relation to their race. Aldrete concluded that the free choice program was "segregation by any other name smells the same." Cristóbal P. Aldrete was an active member and leader in the American GI Forum (AGIF). He served as State Chairman and acted as a National Legal Advisor for the organization. In his capacity as a legal advisor for the AGIF, Aldrete was one of the five attorneys representing Pete Hernandez in the landmark case of *Hernandez v. State of Texas*. Cristóbal P. Aldrete, "The Firing Line: It Still Smells," *The Daily Texan*, March 1, 1949, Cristóbal Aldrete Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 2 Folder 19; *Handbook of Texas Online*, V. Carl Allsup, "Delgado v. Bastrop Isd," accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrd01>.

Furthermore, the district reported that they planned on closing Coles Junior and Senior High School by the 1966-1967 school year. Those students would then attend the integrated school in their attendance zone. In regards to community attitude, the report asserted that “community leaders, including Negro leaders, have approved the methods used by the school system in meeting this problem.”¹¹⁰

However, a few months later in June 1965, the federal government vetoed CCISD’s freedom of choice policy regarding the ability of African Americans to either go to Coles or other High schools.¹¹¹ The federal government vetoed this section because it was considered discriminatory towards Anglo students due to the fact that they could not freely decide as African Americans where to go to school. As a result, in order to comply with Title VI, Miller and Coles High Schools would be required to share the same geographic boundaries allowing Anglos and African Americans to attend either school, and that all students within the district could attend any school within their assigned geographic zone. However, under the new plan, African American students were not able to go to Ray, King, or Carroll due to their attendance zones, which were considered the Anglo schools.¹¹² If a school were to become overcrowded, proximity would be given preference without any racial considerations.¹¹³ Williams believed that

¹¹⁰ “General Information to Support Compliance with Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act 1964,” Volume 2, pg. 350-354, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

¹¹¹ In 2018, CCISD still uses the language of “choice” in describing its curricular offerings for gifted-and-talented children, and for its lottery programs, which were originally designed as desegregation programs. CCISD, “Programs of Choice,” <https://www.ccisd.us/STUDENTS-PARENTS/Programs-of-Choice>.

¹¹² “School Free Choice Plan is vetoed,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 12, 1965.

¹¹³ “Pubic Notices: To the Citizens and Patrons of the Corpus Christi Independent School District,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 3, 1965.

the federal government previously rejected the free choice plan because it prevented Anglo students from choosing any schools outside their neighborhood zones.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Carver Elementary School closed with Coles projected to close by 1967, and that more plans were developing in order to integrate the teaching staff among the schools.¹¹⁵

Not only was the district attempting to receive acceptable ratings from the federal government, Dana Williams tried to receive support from the parents as well. Through this communication with parents, it is obvious that Williams attempted to promote the image that the district was doing everything in their power to eliminate inequality, which was false. Williams wrote a letter to CCISD parents in May of 1966 to inform them that the Board of Education eliminated the free choice plan that had been in operation since 1955, and the impact it would have upon their children. Specifically, Washington and Crossley Elementary schools were to now operate under a zoning plan that gave each school a certain attendance zone. Under these new regulations, parents now had to choose the school where their child would attend regardless of it previously being an African American or Anglo school. The letter warned the parents that no person could persuade them from choosing one school over the other, and that once the decision had been made it was permanent. Williams ended the letter with promising the parents that CCISD would do everything in its power to not only desegregate the district completely, but to also protect the rights of all children regardless of their race.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ "School Free Choice Plan is Vetoed," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 12, 1965.

¹¹⁵ "U.S. Okays Integration Plans Here," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 8, 1965.

¹¹⁶ Letter from Superintendent of Corpus Christi Independent School District, Dana Williams, to Parents, May 25, 1966, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 13 Folder 4.

Throughout this entire process, CCISD claimed it was doing everything in their power to integrate schools and provide an equal education for all children. By 1967, several decisions made by CCISD revealed that this was actually very far from the truth, and various leaders of the African American and Mexican American communities raised their voices in protest. One decision in particular made by CCISD in regards to a school boundary set a group of parents over the edge, and would ultimately inspire them to file a court case against the district. On January 16, 1967, the Corpus Christi School Board approved the proposed boundaries for the new Moody High School, but not without protest from the NAACP and their president, Irvin Brown. Brown claimed that the district was not upholding the 1964 Civil Rights Act because they would not permit minority students the ability to transfer to other schools unless under some type of hardship. Furthermore, Brown asserted that the boundary of Moody supported a dual system, and that 99% of the students attending the new high school would be African American or Mexican American. Dana Williams refuted this claim by assuring that there are multiple minority groups in various attendance zones, and that if they are in violation in regards to Moody, then they would be in violation throughout the district.¹¹⁷

In addition to proposing a new high school boundary that would not only promote further segregation for Mexican American and African American students, CCISD decided to finalize the closing of Coles High School so that those African American students could “integrate” Moody High School. On March 5, 1967 the *Caller Times* reported that CCISD announced the closing of Coles High School, which according to the Board would achieve complete integration

¹¹⁷ The term dual school system is defined at a school district containing two types of schools, one for minority students, and the other for Anglo students. Ben Goodwin, “Board Okays Moody Zoning,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 17, 1967. *Handbook of Texas Online*, V. Carl Allsup, "Cisneros v. Corpus Christi ISD," accessed October 24, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrc02>.

in Corpus Christi. The students previously attending Coles High School would then go to Miller High School, and along with Carroll and Moody high schools, these three schools would have the highest majority of African American students. This article reported that King and Ray would only have a few African American students, and Williams attributed this fact to the neighborhood school concept. Goodwin writes, “The closing of Coles will bring 100 per cent integration within the system, but the majority of Negroes still will be attending schools in the ‘Westside.’” The article claimed that the only way to change that outcome would be due to a shift in population in where they lived throughout Corpus Christi.¹¹⁸

Due to so many complaints from parents, Mexican American and African American leaders, and students regarding the District’s decision to open Moody, a committee was appointed to research the accusations that the district was indeed encouraging de facto segregation in several schools that had high compositions of minority students. A subcommittee completed a report analyzing three schools in CCISD, including Prescott Elementary School, Cunningham Middle School, and Moody High School in August of 1967. The committee determined that the problems facing Prescott and Cunningham were matters of miscommunication between the community and school officials, and that there were no relations to racial discrimination in these two cases. However, the committee did make note of a double standard applied to certain schools, which was that discrimination was based on economics and not race. This report did point out that the proposed boundary of Moody would result in an 86%

¹¹⁸ In a different article, *Caller Times* asserted that all sports were integrated, and has gone without any major roadblocks. However, in regards to social interactions among students, schools were still very much segregated. Goodwin writes, “Officials have found that students of all races tend to segregate themselves,” and that several fights had broken out between various ethnic groups at the schools. Ben Goodwin, “Coles Closing Last Step in School Integration,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 5, 1967; Ben Goodwin, “Officials Call Integration Equitable,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 18, 1967.

Mexican American, 5-10% Anglo, and the rest African American ethnic composition, and 10 Mexican American teachers, 53 Anglo teachers, and 3 African American teachers. In addition, when asked about changing the boundaries of Moody to create a more diversified student body, the board reported that they didn't see any benefit to that action. Furthermore, the board claimed that the cause for the racial composition for this new high school was due to the ethnic composition of the neighborhood.¹¹⁹

The overall response from these answers from the sub-committee in regards to the findings at these schools was first to have the various schools send representatives to go to the Human Relations meetings so that they could have input and make suggestions. Secondly, to create a committee that would analyze the various school boundaries to ensure the lines weren't being drawn in a manner that encouraged the segregation of students based on the color of their skin. Lastly, to address the Moody dilemma by trying to redraw that boundaries in order to eliminate the de facto segregation present in their proposed boundaries for the new high school. In a letter from the Chairman of the Human Relations Committee, W.H. Colson, to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, William E. Morris, Colson pointed out that they have previously suggested twice before that Dr. Williams create a committee to encourage better communication between the schools and HEW. Regarding the second recommendation, the Human Relations Committee supported the concept of creating a group to examine the boundaries of schools due to "race frustration and ethnic problems which simply will not go away because we ignore

¹¹⁹ Report to the Special Sub-Committee of the Human Relations Committee Investigating Charges of De Facto Segregation at Moody High School and a Myriad of Complaints in Reference to Cunningham and Prescott Schools, August 16, 1967, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 2.

them.”¹²⁰ In regards to Moody’s boundaries, the Human Relations Committee told the school board to adjust the boundaries to achieve a racially balanced composition of the school.¹²¹

One of the ways CCISD maintained a segregated school system was that they never accurately reported how many Mexican American students were enrolled within CCISD. This changed when CCISD received a letter from the Texas Education Agency in October 1967 telling the district to report under the “other” column racial statistics for Mexican American students attending CCISD schools.¹²² In a different letter, HEW explained the purpose of the “other” column was to provide statistics of ethnic groups present within our district that might usually be classified as “white” in order to ensure the districts were not violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Previously, the district had never made a distinction for students of Latin descent, just ones for Anglos and African Americans.¹²³ According to the Texas Education Agency, “Spanish surnamed Americans are persons considered in school or community to be of Mexican, Central American, Cuban, or Puerto Rican descent.”¹²⁴ Previously, Washington had

¹²⁰ Letter from W.H. Colson to Dr. William E. Morris, August 18, 1967, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² “Letter to the Superintendent Addressed from the Texas Education Agency,” October 2, 1967, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 7.

¹²³ “Letter to Dana Williams from Herbert C. Kane, Regional Director,” May 23, 1967, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 7.

¹²⁴ “Letter to the Superintendent Addressed from the Texas Education Agency,” October 25, 1967, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 7.

asked CCISD how many Latin American students they had within the district, but were unable to provide those numbers due to the fact they did not keep records on Latin American students.¹²⁵

By 1967, Dana Williams believed that the District was effectively tackling the segregation question, and efficiently destroying any racial inequality within CCISD schools. Williams became very overconfident in this belief, and as a result, made several decisions that would not be supported nor welcomed by several organizations centered on desegregating Corpus Christi. In a letter to Mr. Don Vernon and the Office of Equal Educational Opportunities on October 17, 1967, Dana Williams explained that CCISD was approved to function under a geographic zoning system instead of a partial free-choice plan with the start of the 1967-1968 school year. Williams had visited Mr. Vernon in September when Vernon made the comment that CCISD did not receive permission from the U.S. Office of Education to embrace a geographic plan in regards to where students would attend school. Williams asserted that in 1965, he received a letter from Dr. Francis Keppler, U.S. Commissioner of Education, accepting CCISD's plan to end segregation within Corpus Christi by closing several African American schools and by using the geographic zoning system. Williams argued that CCISD was not managing a dual system of segregation, and that CCISD has continually worked towards ending segregation completely within the school district.¹²⁶

Mr. Vernon responded to this letter by telling Williams that he must be under the wrong impression if he believes CCISD can begin employing the geographic zoning system. The

¹²⁵ Ben Goodwin, "Local Schools Are Told to List Latins 'Other,'" *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 7, 1967.

¹²⁶ "Letter to Don Vernon from Superintendent Dana Williams," October 17, 1967, Volume 2, pg. 333-334, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

evidence Williams cited in his letter as the basis for CCISD's permission to use the geographic zoning system was accepted for the school year of 1965-1966, but could also be reviewed and altered at any time in order to ensure desegregation was truly occurring in the city. Furthermore, Vernon asserted that CCISD did not follow the correct steps when the district decided to switch from a partial free-choice plan to a geographic zone plan.¹²⁷ Williams immediately responded to Vernon's letter by declaring that he was only following directions from the Commissioner of Education, and that Williams did not appreciate Vernon's attitude towards CCISD's desegregation plan. Williams wrote, "Our ultimate goal has been the complete desegregation of our schools. This we have accomplished."¹²⁸ Williams continued by expressing his pride in CCISD for being one of the leading examples for desegregation and that CCISD was "far beyond what most of the nation's schools have done for the boys and girls in their communities." Williams concluded the letter by telling Vernon that he was looking forward to his visit so he could display an "innovative and progressive" district.

Despite Williams's confidence, over the next few months, it became very obvious through correspondence with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), that Williams indeed was not doing an effective job decreasing the amount of educational segregation in Corpus Christi. In February of 1968, Dana Williams received a letter from Lloyd R. Henderson, reminding him that HEW told him last spring that CCISD needed to make more drastic decisions in regards to desegregating the schools and in abolishing the dual school

¹²⁷ "Letter to Dana Williams from Don Vernon," October 26, 1967, Volume 2, pg. 328-329, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

¹²⁸ "Letter to Don Vernon from Superintendent Dana Williams," October 31, 1967, Volume 2, pg. 326-327, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

structure that was still present in 1968 or they would review the schools. The letter continued informing Williams that after HEW analyzed the Fall 1967 report of the student and staff assignments, CCISD had not made any advancements in attempting to demolish the dual system since the spring report for the 1967-1968 school year. Moreover, when HEW first received CCISD's desegregation plan, the district was running a school system that had one for students, which included Anglo and Mexican students, and one for African American Students exposing the district as a dual system. In addition, these Anglo schools were characterized by attendance zones that made the schools either predominately Anglo or Mexican, but not integrated between the two races. HEW continued their letter by claiming that CCISD's attendance zones not only catered to forming white only schools, but also used the zones to only integrate African Americans in Mexican American schools. As a result, an "extensive separation of minority group students continues in your school system, and raises a serious question of its compliance with Title IV."¹²⁹ This letter concluded with telling CCISD that a compliance review of the schools would be scheduled and that Henderson desired for CCISD to make the steps necessary to employ such a plan to remove any discrimination.¹³⁰

Williams and the School Board not only received criticism from HEW, but also local African American leaders who were tired of William's antics in delaying the desegregation process. In a letter to Dr. Morris, who was President of the School Board, in March 1968, Irvin Brown, the President of the NAACP, listed out several complaints about CCISD's desegregation attempts. First, he pointed out that there had been no attempts at desegregating Washington

¹²⁹ "Letter to Superintendent Dana Williams from Lloyd Henderson," February 28, 1968, Volume 2, pg. 379-380, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

Elementary School, which had 460 students with ten of those being Mexican American and the rest African American. In addition, this school had the only African American principal, and a majority of African American teachers. As a result, he accused CCISD of continuing a segregated African American school, and for not attempting to change this fact even though they were required by law to do so. Brown continued by asserting that CCISD practiced discrimination zoning of the schools based on race, which attributed to the concentration of one race in a majority of the city schools. Brown recognized that these practices of discrimination would remain unchanged unless there were some massive accommodations and displacements. He wrote, “But these costs must be weighed against the cost of continuing disrespect for law, against the damage already sustained in the loss forever to a generation of Negro children of their right to a desegregated education and the prospect that the same loss may now be inflicted upon many thousands of children of a new generation.”¹³¹

June Shagaloff, who was the national NAACP education director, visited Corpus Christi right before Brown sent the letter. She met with Dana Williams in regards to Washington School and discussed the segregation still present within CCISD. She believed that CCISD was “unresponsive,” and that the school officials “are inviting community racial conflict if they

¹³¹ W.H. Colson, the Chairman of the Human Relations Committee also received a copy of Irvin Brown’s letter, and quickly responded to Brown’s accusations by writing to Dana Williams. He ordered Williams to immediately to invite representatives from the NAACP, and to make a genuine attempt to solve the problems mentioned in the letter before HEW did an investigation on CCISD. Colson writes, “We just cannot sweep these matters under the table... I regret very much that an attempt has not been made to solve the situation.” He continued by stating that the situation at Washington school was “inexcusable,” and that it was impertinent that these problems within Corpus schools be solved as soon as possible. Letter from Irvin Brown to Dr. William E. Morris, March 27, 1968, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 3; Letter from W.H. Colson to Dana Williams, May 14, 1968, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 4.

maintain their do-nothing attitude.”¹³² Furthermore, she was certain that the segregation at Washington School did not necessarily have anything to do with zoning but rather continued the practice of segregation from the past. She commented, “Apparently the school system has a commitment to maintain three status groups,” in the segregation of black, Latin, and Anglo students. Shagaloff credited the segregation patterns in Corpus Christi to housing, but also due to the fact that there had been “deliberate gerrymandering” of zones in order to keep the racial categories separate. She called this a “pattern of extensive ethnic separation,” and that William’s excuse of the neighborhood school policy was not a just reason for the racial compositions of the schools in Corpus Christi.¹³³

Furthermore, CCISD was not only physically segregating students based on their racial composition, but the district was also academically classifying and categorizing the students according to their perceived intelligence, which was directly related to the color of their skin.¹³⁴

¹³² Mary Alice Evans, “NAACP to Protest About School Here,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 2, 1968.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ In 1956, eight Mexican American elementary students and their families sued the Driscoll Consolidated Independent School District due to the discriminatory educational practices the schools were enforcing. This district was purposely selecting Spanish surnamed students, and forced them to undergo three years of first grade. The district claimed they did this in order to teach students proper English skills despite the fact the school never academically tested these students to gauge their English fluency. As a result, some Mexican American students were not graduating until they were in their twenties, and some would even drop out of school. In *Hernandez vs. Driscoll Consolidated School District*, Judge James Allred ruled the district treated “students of Mexican extraction in an arbitrary, unreasonable and unlawful manner.” He ordered the district to eliminate this process of placing Mexican American students in three years of first grade immediately. This court case was the center of a recent documentary, “*Stolen Education*,” produced by Enrique Alemán, and in the documentary, he interviewed some of the students who testified in 1956. Through these interviews, they revealed the horrific impact this discrimination not only had upon them, but also their families as well. Many confirmed they were punished for speaking Spanish at school, and some never even spoke of their experiences to their families. This documentary is significant in not only exposing racism in Driscoll, Texas, but

In regards to curriculum, CCISD developed a Sequence program beginning with the 1964 school year by grouping students based on their academic levels in order to meet the individual needs of all students.¹³⁵ By 1968, several reports regarding the sequence program were being done to measure the success of the program, and there were several sources that began noting the discriminatory nature of this curriculum towards students of color.¹³⁶ According to CCISD, the sequence program was developed due to the fact that previously there had been no program in place to group students based on their academic qualities. The district decided to implement this program to not only meet more students' academic needs and challenge them through their curriculum, but to try and reduce the dropout rates and failures in some of the classes. An individual student was placed in a certain sequence due to their proficiency in a certain subject based upon test scores, grades, and their abilities observed by their teachers. The sequence the

in revealing the correlation of discriminatory practices of cities with high compositions of Mexican Americans, including Corpus Christi, Texas. Corpus Christi ISD did not have three years of first grade for Mexican Americans, but they did discourage the use of Spanish, and they would place these students in lower level classes. Enrique Alemán, *Stolen Education*, directed by Rudy Luna (2013), DVD.

¹³⁵ "The Sequence Program: A Report on its Theoretical and Operational Dimensions," June 1968, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 11 Folder 1.

¹³⁶ Marcos Pizarro argued that the unequal treatment of Mexican American students within schools was due to identity formation and perceived roles and an inferior place within society that caused this cycle that was crippling the Mexican American community. Pizarro wrote in regards to Mexican American identities that are degrading and negative, "The weight of the social forces behind these popular understandings is often so great that Mexican Americans themselves not only believe them, but also shape their lives around these low expectations." According to Pizarro, these inferior roles of Mexican Americans promoted by American society is so detrimental to the Mexican American community that its members are brainwashed to believe this is all society and school can offer them. This viewpoint would not improve once Mexican American students understood they were selected for the lower level classes due to their race and perceived inferiority within society. Marcos Pizarro, *Chicanas and Chicanos in School: Racial Profiling, Identity Battles, and Empowerment*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 1, 2.

student was assigned correlated with the academic level and material the student was provided with and how fast the teacher covered material. The high sequences (1&2) were more advanced, while the lower ones (3 &4) spend more time developing academic skills.¹³⁷

However, in an article by *Caller Times*, Ben Goodwin revealed some of the weaknesses of the Sequence program, including that Sequence 4, which was the lowest level, usually had a lack of materials and that the teachers' attitudes were negative towards the students with some not even wanting to teach those students. In regards to Sequence 4, the article reported that in order to fix this problem, "communication between the teacher and pupil and an understanding of the culture and background of the student will be needed."¹³⁸ Furthermore, both overcrowdedness and absenteeism was a common trend among students in Sequence 4, with the article commenting, "Many Sequence 4 students have a tendency to quit school."¹³⁹ The article ended claiming that the curriculum of Sequence 4 was watered down in order to enable more students to pass and not fail.¹⁴⁰ According to the district, a student could move sequences at any time, and could even be in different sequences depending on the subject matter. Dana Williams

¹³⁷ "The Sequence Program," Volume 1, pg. 68-71, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 5.

¹³⁸ Ben Goodwin, "Sequence Plan Made First Year: 4-Level Classes Survive, Scarred but Still Healthy," *Corpus Christ Caller Times*, in Volume 1 pg. 211, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 5.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

even commented that the Sequence System was “pure,” despite the fact that this couldn’t have been farther from the truth.¹⁴¹

Dana Williams and the Board were about to have very few counter-arguments to accusations that CCISD had not demolished the dual school system. In a letter from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to Dana Williams in October of 1968, HEW pointed out ten discriminatory practices CCISD implementing in their schools over the past few years. HEW began the letter by reporting data by an investigative team that looked at actions and facts surrounding the school system. HEW suggested the district redraw boundary lines for a schools that had a composition of 83% Mexican American and African American students, which qualified as a minority school. The first problem HEW pointed out were the discriminatory practices in the assignment and hiring of faculty members. The sequence system the district implemented made it very difficult for minority students to take higher level high

¹⁴¹ Vance Littleton, the Assistant Superintendent for instruction said, “The Sequence 4 approach is based on practical applications to theoretical problems...it is an approach to provide a simple approach to instruction.” Littleton asserted that this program was far from being discriminatory towards a student based on their race. In a different article written by Goodwin over the Sequence System, he revealed that a federal judge ended the Sequence System in Washington D.C. due to the school district employing this program to discriminate against African American students. On April 26, 1968, the Public Education Committee did a study in regards to student success in Texas schools. In analyzing the data, the committee discovered that the two main variables that affected student success was the educational levels of their family members, and the level of income the family unit received. This study also analyzed dropout rates and stated that the higher the percentages of African American and Mexican American population in a community, the greater the dropout rate. The study centered on the 1960 census, and revealed that 38% of Mexican Americans over the age of 14 were illiterate, and 20% of the non-white population was illiterate. In addition, the Mexican American student ranked below the state and national standards in every academic area, and Mexican Americans tended to drop out at earlier ages than the other ethnic groups. Ben Goodwin, “City Schools to Continue Academic Grouping System: Discrimination Ruling won’t Change the Local Plan,” *Corpus Christi Caller Time* in Volume 1 pg. 212, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 5; “Public Education Committee,” released April 26, 1968, in Volume 1 pg. 245-249, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 10 Folder 5.

school classes, which prevented them from attending college. Even though parents had a role in determining the sequences for their children, HEW brought to light that this information had not been relayed to the parents of Mexican American students.¹⁴²

Furthermore, sites for new schools had been selected in ways that encouraged the formation of a school based on one race, and that the boundaries discouraged the mixing of Anglo, Mexican American, and African American students. The buildings housing Mexican American students were much older with little maintenance done to them compared to the updated buildings for Anglo students. In addition, there was overcrowding in schools that had a majority of minority students requiring portables versus schools with a majority of Anglo students were not as overcrowded. The Booker T. Washington School was not only principally an African American school with the only African American principal in the entire district, but the school had little to no upkeep. Despite these conditions and overcrowding, there were no plans in place to remodel the aging buildings or to change the boundary lines. Lastly, the letter ended accusing CCISD of being more attentive to the wishes of the Anglo community than those of the Mexican American and African American. Amidst the continued wrangling among HEW, the district, and the NAACP, the *Cisneros* case had been filed against the district.¹⁴³

A few months before the HEW report was published, on July 22, 1968, a group of Mexican and African American parents filed a lawsuit accusing CCISD of practicing de facto school segregation. It was filed under one of the parent's names, Jose Cisneros, and all of the

¹⁴² Letter from Lloyd R. Henderson, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to Superintendent of Corpus Christi Independent School District, Dana Williams, October 21, 1968, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 13, Folder 6.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

individuals were members of the United Steelworkers Union with children attending various schools in CCISD.¹⁴⁴ Some of the charges included were that students were assigned to schools based on their race due to how boundary lines were drawn and where new schools were constructed. In addition, faculty and staff were also segregated with the teacher pupil ratio being higher in Mexican and African American schools.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the parents claimed that the sequence system prevented children of color from having equal educational opportunities, and that the Anglo schools often had more revenue to make improvements and provide more educational resources than the schools with children of color. The defendants named were CCISD, the Board of Trustees, and Superintendent Dana Williams. The suit asserted that “the defendant will continue to operate the schools as to discriminate... solely because of their national origin, race and-or color, all in violation of law and the Constitution of the United States.”¹⁴⁶ Essentially, African and Mexican American children were being forced to go to schools that did not have many Anglo students, and were being prevented from transferring to schools that did have Anglo students.

The frustrations that these parents encountered can best be summarized by Dr. George I Sánchez, who wrote an article discussing the inequalities Mexican Americans faced in schools throughout the Southwest. He wrote, “Do I sound bitter? Well I am bitter. We Americans of

¹⁴⁴ The suit was filed by 32 families with a total of 96 children in CCISD, and the parents filed this case because, “we felt that our children were being discriminated against and this discrimination was hurting their change to get the same kind of education as other children.” “What All Parents Should Know About the Corpus Christi School Board Case,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 8, 1970.

¹⁴⁵ “School Board has 20 Days to Answer Federal Charge,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 23, 1968.

¹⁴⁶ Tom Lovell, “Group Seeks Injunction Against School Board: Suit Alleges Violations of Integration Practices,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 23, 1968.

Mexican descent belong here...the Southwest is our country... Let us not talk about the education of the Spanish-speaking people. Rather, let us talk about the education of the ‘Anglo’ dominant group...we did not ask the United States to come to the Southwest! We did not ask to be made second class citizens (nay third class) in our own homeland. Why were we not educated? Why are we not now?”¹⁴⁷ This is one of the many reasons the 25 parents were led to file the court case that would change the future of not only CCISD, but other school districts throughout the country as well.

Furthermore, a new generation of Mexican Americans emerged called the Chicano Generation that would address racial inequality in a much different manner than the previous Mexican American Generation.¹⁴⁸ Even though the Mexican American Generation made some important civil rights reforms that helped reduce discrimination, this generation was unable to completely eradicate the racial class system that continually prevented Mexican Americans being equal to Anglos economically, politically, and socially. Consequently, the new Chicano Generation would make it their goal and mission to fight against the discrimination present

¹⁴⁷ Dr. George I Sánchez, “Do I Sound Bitter? I am Bitter,” Julian Samora Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 42 Folder 6; Sánchez also commented that, “The Mexicano has been considered a step-child in the land of his heritage...and is the sad plight of a patient whose illness is diagnosed by doctors with whom he cannot communicate because they talk insight into his malady, but who nevertheless prescribe efficient sounding remedies from the clinical sterility of theoretical eminence and an abyss of practical ignorance,” From George I Sánchez to The Participants who “walked out” of the Equal Opportunity Commission Conference at Albuquerque on March 28, 1966, Julian Samora Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, Box 42 Folder 6.

¹⁴⁸ This new movement was initiated in 1965 when a Californian grape strike led by César Chavez and Dolores Huerta began to redefine Mexican protest. The Chicano Generation was active from 1960-1980, and demanded complete equality while embracing their Mexican heritage. Mario T. García, ed., *The Chicano Movement: Perspectives from the Twenty-First Century*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1, 5, 3, 5, 6; Anthony Quiroz, ed., *Leaders of the Mexican American Generation*, 7-8.

within American society. The Chicano Generation perceived the Mexican American Generation's goals as accommodationist, and was instead anti-assimilation, integration, and Americanization. The Chicano Generation believed that by teaching Mexican Americans about their ancestral homeland and the history of their culture and people, it would allow this generation to create a new cultural nationalism that would challenge the political, social, and economic inequality Chicanos were experiencing in America. This new emerging Chicano movement would greatly shape race politics within Corpus Christi, and would encourage local leaders to be more adamant in achieving a desegregated school system that embraced Mexican culture and heritage.¹⁴⁹

This chapter revealed the racist principles CCISD employed to not only separate African American children from Anglos, but Mexican American students as well by documenting the racist practices CCISD employed towards minority students. This chapter also revealed the complex history in regards to how Corpus Christi's schools first formed based upon race, and the empty excuses the district made in regards to why they believed they did not employ a school district divided by race. This newly emerged Chicano Generation will chart a new path for Mexican Americans in Corpus Christi, and would demand complete equality while exposing the racist attitudes that ran deep through the city. The next chapter will extensively discuss and unpack the court case, and the decision that was made that changed the schools in Corpus Christi forever.

¹⁴⁹ Cultural nationalism used the common cultural heritage of Mexican Americans to encourage unity and connectivity within their communities in order to form a coherent group that could challenge racism within America. Mario T. García, ed., *The Chicano Movement*, 3, 9, 10.

CHAPTER II

The *Cisneros* Court Case: 1970

The sole purpose of this next chapter is to present the *Cisneros* case in its entirety. Despite the excuses CCISD made before *Cisneros* in regards to maintaining segregated schools, this case revealed that the school board acted in an unconstitutional manner towards both African American and Mexican American students. This chapter examines the various arguments presented by the plaintiffs and defendants to the Judge, and the evidence they used to support their arguments. This includes statistics, witness testimonies, expert opinions, and data. Ultimately, Judge Woodrow Seals ruled in the favor of the plaintiffs, declaring that Mexican American students are indeed a minority, and are protected under the same provisions as *Brown*. Furthermore, CCISD must present a plan of integration immediately, and can no longer “integrate” by forcing Mexican Americans and African Americans into the same schools while sheltering Anglo students from minority contact. This chapter reveals the true racist nature of not only the school board and the Superintendent, but also the individuals who were involved in curriculum decisions, transfer requests, attendance zones, and finances. Unfortunately, despite Judge Woodrow Seal’s final ruling, these same individuals would continue making decisions for the district post *Cisneros*, which as a result, sustained the practice of segregating students based upon the color of their skin which can still be seen today in Corpus Christi schools.

A few months before the start of the *Cisneros* court case, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) published a study over integration records in 1968.¹⁵⁰ The

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare Office of Education, “A Report of the Development of the Organization, Policies, and Compliance Procedures of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” 1970.

purpose of this study was to analyze how isolated each minority was within a school district, and to create a scale to determine the different levels of integration. If minority students attended schools composed of 50% or less Anglo students, then it was considered a non-minority or integrated school.¹⁵¹ On the opposing side of the scale, if minorities attended schools that had very few or no Anglo students, it was considered to be a segregated or minority school. This report inspected one hundred large school districts, and Washington D.C. was considered the least integrated in regards to their African American population with a total of 0.9% African American students attending integrated schools. However, Corpus Christi was the second worst integrated school district with a 1.7% integration rate for African American students. The report revealed that, “Corpus Christi had more than three-fourths of its Negro students attending segregated schools.”¹⁵² In regards to Mexican American students, the study disclosed that the city tied with El Paso with 17.2% Mexican American students attending integrated schools. The racial composition of faculty and staff of CCISD was also inspected with 78% of teachers being Anglo, 18% Mexican American, and 3% African American. Furthermore, the report showed that a majority of the minority teachers taught with minority students.¹⁵³ Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Leon E. Panetta said, “Whether a child is isolated with his own or other minorities, he is still likely to suffer educationally as a result of this segregation.”

¹⁵¹ This study identified minorities as Negro, American Indian, Spanish surname, and Oriental; Anne Dodson, “School Integration at Slow Pace Here,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, February 3, 1970.

¹⁵² The study also revealed that other school districts with high numbers of African American students often had more integrated schools than Corpus Christi; *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ In 1969, the high schools with the highest composition of Mexican American and African American students were Miller, Moody, and Ray. Carroll and King had the highest composition of Anglo students. *Ibid.*

On May 14, 1970 the *Cisneros* case began hearings, and the plaintiffs started by presenting various facts to the presiding judge, Woodrow Seals from Houston, Texas.¹⁵⁴ The plaintiffs contended that *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, applied to Mexican Americans and African American students, and that Mexican American and African American students are segregated in CCISD resulting in a dual system that is de jure and de facto. The plaintiffs asked the court to command the district to create a unitary system immediately.¹⁵⁵ James P. Wolf, an attorney for the plaintiffs, began by reporting that Moody High School had an ethnic population over 90% and Miller High School following close behind with a 75-90% ethnic composition. King High School had less than 10% Mexican American students, and Ray followed with a 20-25% ethnic composition.¹⁵⁶ Wolf documented that there were a total of 3, 079 Anglos going to schools where 10% or less were minority students, and on the other hand, 10,178 Mexican and African American students attended the 90% non-Anglo schools.¹⁵⁷ Mr. Dixie, another attorney

¹⁵⁴ Representing the plaintiffs were James P. Wolf, Chris Dixie, James DeAnda. Representing the Defendants were J.W. Gary and Richard A. Hall. James P. Wolf and Dixie were both lawyers from Houston, and James DeAnda served as co-council who previously served as an attorney for *Hernandez*. J.W. Gary and Hall were both local lawyers for the District; “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1; Richard Valencia, *Chicano Students and the Courts*, 60.

¹⁵⁵ “Background of this Litigation”, Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

¹⁵⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 13, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁵⁷ Wolf stated that “a great mass of Mexican and Negro children in this district attend schools that are composed of student populations of 90% or more Mexican or Negro children.” “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 22-23 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

for the plaintiffs, declared that the “purpose of this lawsuit is to invoke the constitutional right of the plaintiffs and duty of the court to break up this concentration of one ethnic group and produce a genuine unitary system.”¹⁵⁸ Even a few days before the start of this case, Seals asserted that “We are going to have a unitary system here...between Anglos and Mexican Americans as well as blacks and whites, unless I am shown a compelling reason to change my mind.”¹⁵⁹ Over the next several months, both sides would call various witnesses from different backgrounds that would indicate the necessity for a unitary system, and would unleash a new era of civil rights in Corpus Christi.

The first witness called by the plaintiffs was Thomas P. Carter, a historian, who was immediately asked if he considered Mexican Americans to be an identifiable ethnic group due to Mexican Americans historically being considered legally white.¹⁶⁰ This was one method school

¹⁵⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 25 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁵⁹ Georgia Nelson, “Segregation Suit Ready in Local School Issue,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 9, 1970.

¹⁶⁰ Since Carter published his book, *Mexican Americans in School*, his theoretical framework has been termed as “deficit thinking.” Richard Valencia, another historian, wrote a book, *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking*, which continues the argument originally presented by Carter, and argues that a student’s failure in school was the result of the student’s individual effort rather than the institution or the political climate that often determined what type of education a student of color received based upon their perceived inferiority. Both Carter and Valencia challenge this previous viewpoint that Mexican Americans were the reason for their own educational failures, and that their culture does not encourage academic excellence throughout both of their books. Instead, Carter argues that the reason for high rates of Mexican American failure within schools was due to the schools themselves and not the culture of Mexican Americans. This concept was revolutionary at the time this book was published, and has truly transformed the historiography of Mexican American history within education. At the time of this case, Thomas P. Carter was employed at the University of Texas El Paso, and wrote, “Mexican-Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect.”; Richard Valencia, “A Tribute to Thomas P. Carter (1927-2001): Activist Scholar and Pioneer in Mexican American Education,” *Journal of Latinos and Education* 5, no. 4 (2009): 241-245; Richard Valencia, ed.,

districts used in asserting that they had desegregated by integrating African American students with Mexican American students due to their legal whiteness. Carter responded to this question by defining a minority as “a group of people who may be a physical majority, but a minority is a group of people who are not full participants in the dominant society.”¹⁶¹ Carter professed that Mexican Americans were indeed a minority from a racial, legal, cultural, and social-science point of view. Wolf asked him about residential segregation and its correlation to school segregation, and Carter responded that both are the same and have the same effect upon the Mexican American student. Carter informed the judge that 73.3% of Anglo, 72% of Mexican American, and 91.3% African American residents in Corpus Christi would have to move in order to residentially desegregate the city.¹⁶²

Carter’s testimony continued with him debunking the argument that schools should be based on the students’ neighborhoods, which is what Dana Williams and the CCISD school board had encouraged since *Brown*. Carter viewed a school created from the neighborhood concept, “Represents the concentration that the schooling supports a stereotyping and cast-like division that exists within the community.”¹⁶³ This not only hindered a student’s education but

The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice, (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 1997), xi-xv; Georgia Nelson, “2 Schools Contrasted in Suit on Segregation,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 16, 1970.

¹⁶¹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 52, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁶² “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 60-61, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁶³ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 73, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

also created stereotypes that upheld racism and established social interactions between various racial groups.¹⁶⁴ Carter defined a segregated school as “one in which the ratio of ethnic groups among the pupils is out of balance with the ratio of the community.”¹⁶⁵ In addition, these stereotypes affected the views teachers have of their students, including the perception that Mexican American students cannot learn.¹⁶⁶ Carter attested that in order to achieve pure unity and equality, society was going to have to do more than just integrate the schools, but also have affirmative action treating all students equally socially, academically, culturally, and economically.¹⁶⁷ In regards to Spanish within schools, Carter supported learning the dominant language, which is English, accurately in order to have opportunities for jobs and better grades.

¹⁶⁴ Arnoldo de León argues that Anglos viewed Mexican Americans in a very racist manner that gave them very few positive attributes or characteristics. As a result, Anglos living in Texas during the 19th century were determined to display their racial superiority by ensuring that Mexican Americans were never given the opportunity to rise in society. Anglos not only portrayed Mexican Americans as biologically inferior, but also that they were culturally subordinate causing them to be morally defective. These viewpoints led many Anglos to perceive Mexican Americans as non-human justifying their segregation within American society. Arnoldo de León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), ix-xii.

¹⁶⁵ Georgia Nelson, “Segregation Suit: Plaintiffs present more witnesses,” *Corpus Christi Caller times*, May 10, 1970.

¹⁶⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 75, 86, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁷ Carter stated that, “You cannot just expect people who have never lived together...never interacted together, to come together and overnight become the beautiful society you want this society to be. It takes affirmative action on the part of the school.” “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 90, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

Yet, Carter argued that equally beneficial to that of learning English is also retaining Spanish in order to hold onto their customs and heritage that define them as a person.¹⁶⁸

Carter confirmed his assessment of CCISD segregation by conducting field reports of two of its high schools, including King, a predominately white school, and Moody, a predominately minority school. Carter revealed that these schools were indeed segregated, and that the higher the concentration of minorities at a school, the more dictatorial the school climate became. On one hand, at a predominately Anglo school there is more diversity within teaching styles, more experimentation within the classroom, and the students have more control over their particular studies. Carter reported, “Moody is a Mexican American high school. It is a minority high school. In every classroom, only one was there any kind of discussion going on, and that classroom was out of control... the other classes were either taking tests...or silently studying, sitting at their desks.”¹⁶⁹ Later in the court proceedings, Seals asked Carter his opinion in regards to paying for transportation in order to desegregate the schools even though school districts generally have limited funds, and Carter overwhelming responded that he would rather the school district pay for transportation than other trivial things, such as sports. Carter exclaimed, “One thing, the most important thing we can do with it is get kids mixed up, get them so they can

¹⁶⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 107-108, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

¹⁶⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 111-114, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1; In an article from *Caller Times*, Georgia Nelson reported that Carter said, “Whether you approve of the informality or not, the Mexican American student is being deprived of the opportunity to interact in a middle class environment.” Furthermore, Carter upheld that student achievement tends to go higher in a more racially diverse school, and that is why it is pivotal to have a unitary system within Corpus Christi. Georgia Nelson, “2 Schools Contrasted in Suit on Segregation,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 16, 1970.

know each other, get them to recognize they are all human, get them to recognize they all have problems, in the hopes the next generation of kids will do a better job in the country than my generation has.”¹⁷⁰ Carter’s testimony was not only powerful, but also would greatly influence Judge Woodrow Seals’ final opinion and decision in regards to the segregated situation present within Corpus Christi.

The next two witnesses were Mr. Robert D. Campbell and Apoloneo Montemayor, and they continued this discussion Carter began in regards to segregation and the treatment of Mexican Americans as a separate race from those of Anglos. Robert D. Campbell was the principal of Washington Elementary School, one of the three predominately African American Schools in Corpus Christi, and Apoloneo Montemayor was employed by the United Steelworkers of America, the union that filed the *Cisneros* court case in July of 1968. In Campbell’s testimony, he revealed that African American students were often bused to the three African American schools, which included Washington, Carver, and Coles, which were named for national and local African American leaders. Furthermore, these students were often bused past other schools with high enrollment of Anglos in order for them to go to non-integrated schools, and this had been occurring in CCISD since the *Brown* verdict¹⁷¹ Montemayor discussed

¹⁷⁰ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 2, pg. 285-286, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁷¹ Campbell also revealed that some African American students were event bused from the Naval Station in Flour Bluff. “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 183-189, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1; Later in the court case, another witness, Cordelia Sampson, who is African American and the principal of Coles High School, also revealed that some African American students were bused over 35 miles to Coles. “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 2, pg. 317, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

going to Cheston Heath School, the school for Mexican American students, even though it was outside of his attendance zone. He asserted that he would have never been admitted to the elementary school in his attendance zone, George Evans, because it was considered an Anglo school. In regards to Mexican Americans being treated as a separate race from those of Anglos, he testified, “There is no question we have been treated as Mexicanos, but sometimes the school district says... ‘You are the white race. We are treating you as a white person and we are integrating. The blacks are integrated with you because you are a white race...’ When it is convenient for them, they say we are the white race. When we want to go ahead and find a job, we are Mexican.”¹⁷² Montemayor’s testimony would begin the process of revealing to the court that indeed Mexican Americans are treated as a separate race from those of Anglos, and that they deserve to be treated equally to that of Anglos within the schools.

The next witness for the plaintiffs was Anne Hughes Bright, who was a housewife and had several children that went to Baker Middle School and other Anglo schools within CCISD. In her testimony, she informed the court that her children live within the Wynne Seal attendance zone, yet her children go to Baker Middle School, which was a school with a high enrollment of Anglos. She claimed that her kid’s elementary principal sent home papers one day for Baker Middle School and not Wynne Seal, and she didn’t think twice about sending her kids to Baker instead of Wynne Seal, which was a predominantly Mexican American school. Judge Seals asked Bright if there was any noticeable difference between Baker and Wynne Seal, and Bright not only acknowledged that there was a difference, but asserted Baker was a much better school

¹⁷²Montemayor stated to Seals that “When a brown skinned person wants to go ahead somebody always reminds him that he is a Mexican...”; “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 1, pg. 206-207, 220, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 1.

and that is where she would send her children. This testimony revealed that children were being sent to particular schools based on their race, and not their assigned attendance zones within CCISD.¹⁷³

The plaintiffs continued to build their case by calling to the stand next, Dr. Héctor P. García to the stand next, who was a local physician and a civil rights leader for Mexican Americans in Corpus Christi. García wanted to demonstrate that Mexican Americans were an identifiable group based on how they are treated and acknowledged within the community.¹⁷⁴ The court inspected a study García had conducted between 1950-1960 in regards to the educational levels of Mexican Americans, and the amount of Mexican American teachers. His study displayed that there were a total of 442 high school teachers, and only 24 of them were Mexican Americans. Moreover, in 1950 the educational level of Mexican Americans over 25 years was 3.2 grades of school, and by 1960 that number had only increased to 4.5 years of schooling.¹⁷⁵ Essentially, over a ten year period, Mexican Americans improved their education by about 1.3 years, and García testified that he knew of several Mexican American teachers that were either transferred or not allowed to teach at schools with high Anglo enrollment. This would strengthen the plaintiff's argument that Mexican Americans were indeed a minority that was educationally discriminated against within CCISD.

¹⁷³ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 301-308, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁷⁴ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 337, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁷⁵ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 341-343, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

Not only did García's present facts about the low educational levels of Mexican American students, but he also discussed residential segregation in Corpus Christi. James DeAnda, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs, presented the court with several deeds that had prevented Mexican Americans from buying houses in some neighborhoods that were predominantly composed of Anglo families. DeAnda asked García if this was a common practice, and García responded that "the restrictions, they were there, because where the word 'Caucasian' was spelled out in writing, it did not include us."¹⁷⁶ These questions DeAnda was posing to García were meant to show that the neighborhood school concept the district embraced not only created Anglo and minority schools, but also were upheld through racism and discrimination within the real estate market towards Mexican Americans in order to prevent Mexican American students from attending Anglo schools.¹⁷⁷ DeAnda also asked García if the only reason Mexican Americans were appointed to various boards, including school and government, had been solely due to protest and activism from the Mexican American community. García answered that activism had been the only way to achieve these milestones,

¹⁷⁶ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 361-362, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁷⁷ Corpus Christi's residential and school segregation mirrors other cities, including Nashville, Tennessee. Ansley Erickson, another historian, documents the residential segregation in Nashville that not only led to segregation within schools, but allowed the city to maintain these segregated schools despite various integration practices, such as busing in the 1970s. Corpus Christi will follow a similar path, and will allow CCISD to maintain segregated schools after the ruling in *Cisneros*. Erickson writes, "Both urban renewal and suburban expansion in Nashville provided venues for planners, developers, and educators to articulate how they understood the relationship between schools, neighborhoods, and segregation...demonstrated clearly how interactions between schools and markets in land and housing made segregation and educational inequality. This argument is going to be supported by García's testimony. Ansley Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 25.

“because as far as permission and appealing to reason and logic, compassion, and understanding it has been a great failure.”¹⁷⁸ Judge Seals personally questioned García asking if he thought Mexican Americans had made progress within the community over the past few decades, and García acknowledged that some progress had been made, but that was due to going to court and verbally fighting against this discrimination and inequality. Yet, García asserted that the Mexican American community still had not been fairly represented in anything, and that “progress has been forced by tremendous feeling of frustration and helplessness and lack of love and understanding rather than coming from the heart.”¹⁷⁹ García’s testimony would greatly help the Judge realize that Mexican Americans were not only a minority, but had continually been discriminated against and prevented from achieving full equality within society.

Another group that revealed CCISD’s discriminatory practices and the impact segregated schools had upon their children were the parents of minority children, who were also the major force behind filing this case in the first place. The next witness the plaintiffs call to the stand was Jose Cisneros, who was one of the parents that filed this case against CCISD in 1968. In his testimony, Cisneros discussed how his daughter, Christine, would have attended Carroll High School, but then Moody was constructed in 1967 requiring his daughter to go there instead. The formation of Moody High School prevented hundreds of Mexican Americans from going to Carroll High School, allowing Carroll to retain its Anglo majority, and Moody its minority

¹⁷⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 2, pg. 365-366, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁷⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 2, pg. 377-380, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

majority.¹⁸⁰ The lawyers asked Cisneros if the schools had been located in other geographic areas instead of highly segregated neighborhoods, would the schools be more integrated? Cisneros overwhelmingly agreed, explaining that the schools would be more integrated if they had been placed in geographic areas that encompassed multiple neighborhoods with various ethnic compositions.¹⁸¹ Judge Seals asked Cisneros if moving his family to the Southside would allow him to fix this problem and permit his daughter to attend Carroll? Cisneros said yes it would help him and his family, but it still wouldn't help the Mexican American population that was still being funneled into segregated schools.¹⁸² Cisneros would be called back to the stand later in the court case by the defendants.

The plaintiffs predicted the Court would ask for ideas on how to desegregate CCISD if the court ruled Corpus Christi was indeed segregated, so they made sure to design a preliminary desegregation plan that could potentially be implemented by the city. This plan was designed by the next witness, Dr. Gordon Foster, who was an expert witness in regards to desegregation and was involved with the Southeastern Desegregation Assistance Center. Foster proposed two objectives for this integration plan, with the first being to create a unitary school system by appointing staff and students to different schools throughout the district. Secondly, he planned to design a desegregation plan to ensure that CCISD would continue to sustain a unitary system that

¹⁸⁰ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 401-402, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁸¹ Jose Cisneros will be called back up to the stand later in the court proceedings, "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 407, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

¹⁸² "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," Volume 2, pg. 407, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 3.

would not retreat back to a segregated school system.¹⁸³ The court asked Dr. Foster by looking at the data if he noticed any schools that were built and placed in certain neighborhoods solely on racial terms, and he responded with a resounding yes. According to Foster, he believed that any school with a minority or Anglo composition over 85% would be considered a racially identifiable school.¹⁸⁴ Foster recommended that faculty and staff within schools need to be from every racial group, that the school should implement trainings on how to embrace a unitary system, and to teach students from multiple racial backgrounds.¹⁸⁵

Foster proposed that there are two ways CCISD could desegregate the schools and create a unitary system of schools. First, CCISD could totally reshape and redefine the attendance zones, or secondly, establish transportation islands, which would include transporting students from various parts of town into other areas in order to racially balance the schools. Foster also mentioned pairing schools, where two schools would share students depending on their grade to achieve a more ethnically balanced population, but Foster was not the biggest fan of this method.¹⁸⁶ Foster told the Court that to have any type of integration or unitary system the school

¹⁸³ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 3, pg. 434, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁸⁴ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 3, pg. 438, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁸⁵ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 3, pg. 442-443, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁸⁶ For example, under Foster’s proposed plan, Moody would go from 85.8% Mexican, 10.6% African American, and 3.6% Anglo to 70% Mexican American, 1.4% African American, and 28.6% Anglo. “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 3, pg. 451-453, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 4; “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 3, pg. 466-467,

district would have to transport students.¹⁸⁷ The court asked Foster if the neighborhood school concept makes it more difficult for the district to desegregate, and he acknowledged that indeed it would be incredibly difficult to desegregate if the neighborhood school system was in place.¹⁸⁸ Seals asked Foster in regards to desegregating schools, how important was site selection to encourage desegregation? Foster replied that it was incredibly important, and that this also would determine if desegregation was maintained or not. Foster recognized that it would be very tricky to determine how to desegregate Corpus Christi due to its demographics.¹⁸⁹ Foster concluded the list of plaintiff witnesses, but the witnesses called by the defendants would also reveal the inequality and racism within CCISD throughout their testimonies.

The first witness called by the defendants was Dr. Dana Williams, who was the current Superintendent of CCISD. Dana Williams defined the neighborhood school concept as “building schools and arranging attendance zones so that young people may attend the school in the nearest proximity to where they live.”¹⁹⁰ Mr. Gary, one of the attorneys for the defendants, asked

Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 1, Folder 4.

¹⁸⁷ According to Foster, he estimated that around 8,400 students would have to be bussed under this new plan in order to achieve a unitary system, “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 515, 519, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁸⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 538-339, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁸⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 628, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁹⁰ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 647, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

Williams how attendance zones were drawn, and Williams responded that they study attendance records and try to locate schools where high numbers of children live in order to preserve the neighborhood school system. Mr. Gary followed this by asking Williams if he was aware of any school boundaries that were drawn in order to prevent a child from attending a certain school based on their race, and Williams asserted that he was not knowledgeable of any instance where this had occurred in CCISD. In regards to transfers within the district, Williams presented two reasons why students sometimes attend a school not in their assigned attendance zone. First if there is some kind of hardship, or secondly, if there are certain classes offered at one campus and not the other a student may be granted a transfer. In order to have a transfer accepted, the two principals must review the request, and Y.M. Pearce had to approve the transfer.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, Gary asked Williams if they ever made any notice of race when opening new schools in Corpus Christi, and Williams responded with a “no.” To him, there were no differences between Anglos and Mexican Americans.¹⁹²

To try and cover decisions made by the district in order to continue segregation practices, Williams tried to present evidence that showed progress, but in reality, this data was shrouded with racism. Williams presented to Judge Seals that over a 15-year span from 1955 to 1970, the number of Anglo teachers increased by 146% and Mexican American teachers rose 589%. However, the data showed that the district had 1,037 Anglo teachers working in CCISD from

¹⁹¹ Williams believed that attendance zones began to be used in 1938 in Corpus Christi, Texas, “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 650-654, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁹² “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 665, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

1955-1956, and by 1970 there were 1,519 Anglo teachers. In regards to Mexican American teachers, in 1955 the district employed 56 teachers and by 1970 that number was 330 Mexican American teachers. As a result, the data at first looked promising and positive showing an increase of 589% for Mexican American teachers, but in reality, they were far behind in numbers compared to Anglo teachers. In 1970, Mexican American teachers comprised 0.05% of the total faculty in 1955 and only 17.85% in 1970.¹⁹³ Mr. Gary raised the argument that many Mexican Americans have complained that Mexican American staff and educators have been mostly assigned to the schools with the highest population of Mexican American students, and he asked Williams why that had been the case in CCISD. Williams answered that phenomenon had occurred for two reasons, first, that the Mexican American population had requested that the leadership of Mexican American students also be of the same race themselves. Secondly, that a majority of these Mexican American educators specifically requested to teach in these particular areas with high concentrations of Mexican American students.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, Williams wholeheartedly believed that Mexican Americans were integrated within CCISD.¹⁹⁵

The plaintiffs questioned the hiring ratios of teachers between 1955 and 1970 that Williams presented to Seals due to the fact the analysis for African American teachers had been left out. In regards to African American teachers, there were 52 teachers in 1955 and by 1970

¹⁹³ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 685-687, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁹⁴ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 4, pg. 698-699, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 2.

¹⁹⁵ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 726, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

there were only 60 African American teachers. According to James Wolf, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs, 63% of teachers hired in that 15-year period were Anglo, 35% were Mexican American, and only 1% were African American. Williams defended this point by saying, “There has been a great search for qualified persons from the Negro race... we find it most difficult to obtain applicants of qualified persons.”¹⁹⁶ In these particular documents, there was no mention of teacher pay, but historically minority teachers were often paid less than their Anglo counterparts.

One of the methods proposed to integrate schools was the use of buses, but Williams attempted to argue that there was no way the district could support this mode of integration. Seals asked Williams his views on bussing and having to pay for the transportation of students in order to achieve a more ethnic balance if the court deemed it necessary, and whether the integration of the three racial groups had been a part of William’s five-year goal plan. Williams told Seals by the time he had begun to address his goals for the next five years, this case had already been filed and in his goals he gave no priority to intermixing the races. Williams claimed there were several reasons for this, including not having enough money to undertake what Foster and others had previously proposed in regards to busing. Williams said, “There are administrative factors, there are many problems in trying to manage and move people across a busy city, and there are threats and desires of the parents themselves.”¹⁹⁷ Williams stated in regards to integration, “There is great turmoil...and unhappiness on the part of the people. No

¹⁹⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 899-906, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 6.

¹⁹⁷ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 772-773, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

one has asked for it...except the people filing the lawsuit.”¹⁹⁸ To Williams, integration would be more of a hassle that wouldn’t benefit anyone than a necessary measure that needed to be taken in order to promote educational equality.

Later in his testimony, Williams blamed the residential patterns of Corpus Christi as the sole reason for not allowing more integration within the schools. Ironically, Williams also believed that the district had accomplished reasonable integration by mixing black and Mexican American students after the *Brown* ruling.¹⁹⁹ When the plaintiffs began to question Williams, the first question they asked was if he felt satisfied integrating CCISD by just merging Mexican American students with African American students. Williams responded that the school district had, “sincerely met the qualifications and requirements of the courts when they had done this.” Because Williams perceived Mexican Americans as white, he believed CCISD had been effectively desegregated and integrated by combining Mexican American students with African American students within the same schools.²⁰⁰ Williams argued, “Our Mexican American population is white. It is considered white under the laws of our state and we have no obligation

¹⁹⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 774, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

¹⁹⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 776, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

²⁰⁰ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 782, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

to work toward a racial balance of Mexican Americans or so-called Anglos.”²⁰¹ As a result, the district was able to maintain schools that were mainly composed of Anglo students.

In order to get a better understanding of William’s viewpoints towards minority students, the plaintiffs ask a series of questions to prove CCISD was indeed segregated. Mr. Wolf asked Mr. Williams that since Mexican American children were integrated within CCISD, what were the schools called if they had a 95% to 100% Mexican American makeup? Williams responded that he considered it a school that was providing an education to children in that particular geographic area where the school is located. Williams maintained that the schools in no way were designed or built for the sole reason of separating children based on their ethnicity, and that every student regardless of their race was treated equally in every school within CCISD.²⁰² However, it was clear by the evidence presented and the questions asked by the lawyers, that Williams had allowed the district to maintain highly segregated schools and had favored hiring Anglo teachers instead of minority educators.

Due to the controversial nature of busing students to a school not in their geographic attendance zone, the defendants wanted to establish the rules regarding the payment for the buses. Leon R. Graham presented the various rules regarding the busing of children and established who would be eligible for busing and who would pay for it. Essentially, if a student lived within two miles of the school they were not eligible for busing, and he also told the court that Title I funds could not be applied to busing students. Title I is a program where money is

²⁰¹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” Volume 5, pg. 846, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 3.

²⁰² “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 938, 973-974, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 2, Folder 6.

given to certain schools that have a high percentage number of economically and educationally disadvantaged students in order to educationally benefit them by providing more resources. The lawyers asked Graham if a student is bused passed his neighborhood school to another school on the other side of town in order to achieve integration and more racially balanced schools would the state pay for such an expense? Graham responded that the state would not pay for this, but that it would be the responsibility of the district to acquire the buses and pay for the busing of students.²⁰³ Several times throughout Graham's testimony, the lawyers asked if this money could be used to bus students, and if a student was previously at a Title I school if they would still receive the same resources if they were forcefully bused to a school without Title I funds. For both questions, the answer was no, money couldn't be used to bus the students, and because Title I funds are determined by percentages of low income students at particular schools, the money wouldn't follow individual children from school to school.²⁰⁴

After Leon Graham's testimony, Dana Williams returned to the stand to present a history of the racial compositions of the high schools within CCISD. In 1949-1950 there were two high schools, Coles, which had 130 African American students, and Miller High School with a composition of 22.23% Mexican American and 77.77% Anglo. In the 1950-1951 school year, Ray High School opened with a 12.47% Mexican American and 87.53% Anglo student population. That same year Miller had 44.63% Mexican American and 55.37% Anglo student

²⁰³ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 988-996, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²⁰⁴ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1016-1018, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

population, and Coles remained the sole African American high school with 135 students.²⁰⁵ Then in 1957, Carroll opened with 18.37% Mexican American, 78.48% Anglo, and 3.15% African American student population. Miller had 51.28% Mexican American, 46.04% Anglo, and 2.68% African American student population. Ray had 14.33% Mexican American, 85.58% Anglo, and 0.09% African American student population.²⁰⁶ Then in 1965 King opened with 4.99% Mexican American, 96.83% Anglo, and three African American students (0.18%). Carroll had 30.41% Mexican American, 67.62% Anglo, and 1.97% African American student population. Miller had 71.38% Mexican American, 20.55% Anglo, and 8.07% African American. Ray had 31.37% Mexican American, 68.39% Anglo, and 0.24% African American student population. Coles still had 139 African Americans despite this being over ten years after the *Brown* case.²⁰⁷

Coles was closed at the end of the 1966 school year, and Moody opened the following year in 1967. Moody had 87.23% Mexican American, 4.39% Anglo, and 8.38% African American student population. Carroll had 22.65% Mexican American, 77.35% Anglo, and no African American students. King had 8.18% Mexican American, 91.49% Anglo, and 0.33% African American student population. Miller had 66.35% Mexican American, 23.07% Anglo,

²⁰⁵ Within a year, Miller's Anglo population decreased by 22.4% and their Mexican American population increased by 22.4%.

²⁰⁶ Seven years later, Miller's Anglo population decreased by 9.33% and their Mexican American population increased by 6.65%. Ray's Anglo population decreased by 1.95% and Mexican American population increased by 1.86%.

²⁰⁷ Within eight years, Miller's Anglo population decreased by 25.49%, and their Mexican American population increased by 20.1%. Ray's Anglo population decreased by 17.19%, their Mexican American population increased by 17.04%, and their African American population increase 0.15%. Carroll's Anglo population decreased by 10.86%, Mexican American population increased by 12.04%, and African American population decreased by 1.18%.

and 10.58% African American student population. Ray had 28.11% Mexican American, 71.79% Anglo, and 0.1% African American student population.²⁰⁸

It is important to notice the transformation of Miller from 1949 to 1967, because their Anglo population decreased 54.7% and their Mexican American population increased by 44.12% due to the shifting of boundaries and the location of new schools. After Williams provided these percentages, Williams promised that no student had ever been rejected or banned from attending the school in their attendance zone due to their race.²⁰⁹ Williams remarked that he “supported integration... I have simply tried to say that when we force the mixing of races and ethnic groups or what-not by taking them out of the neighborhood through busing, it brings unhappiness on the part of the community.”²¹⁰ In regards to achievement levels, Mr. Wolf pointed out to Williams that schools with higher composition of minority students tended to have lower scores than schools that had a high percentage of Anglo students, and Williams responded that, “If they are

²⁰⁸ Within two years, Miller’s Anglo population increased by 2.52%, Mexican American population decreased 5.03%, and African American population increased 2.51. Ray’s Anglo population increased 3.4%, Mexican American population decreased 3.26%, and African American population decreased 0.14%. Carroll’s Anglo population increased 9.72%, Mexican American population decreased 7.76%, and African American population decreased 100%. King’s Anglo population decreased 5.34%, Mexican American population increased 3.19%, and African American population increased 0.15%, “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1029-1037, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1. Overall, the school district has had a 1.87% increase of Mexican American students, a 0.22% decrease of Anglo students, and a 0.22% increase of African American students. Margaret Ramage, “Ethnic Groups Being Diffused Among Schools,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 29, 1970.

²⁰⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1037, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹⁰ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1042, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

economically deprived, this would run normally true.”²¹¹ In these statements, he overlooks one common factor that caused this disparity between schools, which was race.

When it comes to continuing racist practices within a particular district, there are usually multiple people with high level roles that either hide or continue racist practices within the city’s schools. For CCISD, one of those people was J.M. Pearce, who was the director of research and people services for CCISD. Essentially, he was in charge of analyzing data from school censuses, calculating how many students are currently and could potentially be enrolled, establishing attendance zones, and even deciding where new schools should be built due to population records.²¹² Mr. Wolf questioned Pearce on the neighborhood school policy, and if the district truly aligned students to a school closest to them geographically. Pearce responded that this depended on school size, and that in some cases, if a particular school is overcrowded, a student would go to a different school that may be farther due to this phenomenon.²¹³ Pearce acknowledged the fact that certain bus routes had mostly one race due to the schools the students were attending since the route was based off of their neighborhoods.²¹⁴ In regards to transfers within CCISD, Pearce identified two reasons a student was granted a transfer, which was a

²¹¹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1052, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹² “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1059-1060, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹³ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1083-1084, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹⁴ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1093-1094, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

hardship or a condition the district deemed necessary to grant a transfer. However, Wolf exposed a transfer that Pearce approved allowing a student to transfer to Ray instead of attending Miller due to convenience and nothing more. Pearce claimed he did not remember that particular case, and that there could be more to the story than what is on the transfer request.²¹⁵

Next, Pearce briefly summarized the racial percentages for students that dropout from the various high schools in Corpus Christi from 1967-1968. Carroll had 54 students drop out with 40 Anglos and 14 Mexican Americans. For King, 118 students dropped out with 109 Anglos and 9 Mexican Americans. Miller had 220 dropouts with 41 Anglos, 136 Mexican Americans, and 23 African Americans. Moody had 75 dropouts with 7 Anglos, 63 Mexican Americans, and 5 African Americans. Ray had 100 dropouts with 56 Anglos, and 44 Mexican Americans.²¹⁶

Immediately after presenting those statistics, Judge Seals commented, “It seems to me that the dropout rate among the Mexican-Americans is higher in a school that is predominately Mexican American than the dropout rate among Mexican American schools that is predominately Anglo.”²¹⁷ Essentially, the Judge noticed that the mostly Anglo schools tended to have lower amounts of dropouts, and the schools with higher minority numbers had higher numbers of

²¹⁵ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1099-1094, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1108-1111, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹⁷ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1112 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

dropouts. Mr. Gary tried to reassure the Judge that those numbers did not reveal that trend, and that he would need to study the calculations closer before drawing that conclusion.²¹⁸

Wallace Davis, the next witness, was the assistant superintendent in charge of instruction, and he revealed the significance of native language in student performance. His job role included establishing the school curriculum, the materials used within the classroom, the educational specifications for school plans, and the organizational patterns in regards to curriculum within the elementary, junior, and high schools.²¹⁹ Mr. Gary asked Davis if language could be a hardship for a student within a classroom, and Davis agreed that this could be a major factor that determined his success or failure within the classroom. Wallace presented a brief history of the various language programs that were initiated in 1956 by E.E. Mireles, and also discussed the Head Start program, which at one point had over 5,000 students enrolled in order to make them more academically successful by teaching them English. Davis asserted that a district lowered its dropout rate when the student had a more positive outlook on school by “making use of a language they bring than rather putting them into a verbal environment in a language they cannot comprehend.”²²⁰ However, after mentioning this concept, Davis discussed vocational training within CCISD, and how it increased 85% in vocational agriculture since 1949 with 4,000 students participating in various vocational trainings throughout the district. The Court pointed out that minorities were being the main ones to partake in these vocational classes. However, Mr.

²¹⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1114, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²¹⁹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1117, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²²⁰ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1120-1121, 1133, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

Gary assured the Judge that before kids start these programs, they talk with their counselors, and that the district did not systematically select minority students for these classes in order to teach them menial jobs.²²¹

When Mr. Wolf began to cross examine Mr. Davis, he gave a contradictory testimony about his views on desegregation. Wolf asked if Davis was opposed to integration, he responded with an overwhelming “no.” However, when Mr. Wolf questioned how integration would affect the students educationally and emotionally, Davis said, “I would say we have found no studies that indicate that the very fact of mixing representative groups of people makes any long term results. There have been no studies that have indicated that.”²²² Wolf continued this conversation by asking if it was true that the schools with the higher percentages of minorities had lower test scores, and Davis replied that based upon data that was the usually the case, but that it wasn’t determined by race alone, but also socio-economic status. Mr. Wolf did ask Mr. Davis if curriculum would be disrupted if there were to be integration, and Davis responded that some programs would be altered, including which schools received Title I funds, which was granted on a school’s percentage of low socio-economic population.²²³

Following Mr. Davis’s testimony, Dr. Lawrence Haskew, a professor of education and administration at the University of Texas, discussed the importance of maintaining the

²²¹ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1134, 1137, 1141, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²²² “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1157, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

²²³ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1170, 1178-1179, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 1.

neighborhood school plan in CCISD. The first point raised by the defendants were the benefits of the neighborhood plan, and what could potentially be taken away if this plan was altered in order to achieve more racially balanced schools within CCISD. To Haskew, if the neighborhood system of schools were to be eliminated, so would the community involvement due to students being spread over a wide geographic area.²²⁴ As a result, students wouldn't participate as much within the community due to them not having the constant contact with community members as they usually do in a neighborhood school situation. Furthermore, according to Haskew, the school was only one aspect of a child's education. Children tended to receive education in multiple areas, including the physical neighborhood they reside in. The witness told the Judge that in his opinion, the neighborhood school in a long term situation can diminish segregation more than anything else. However, Haskew admitted that there was very little research and evidence regarding the Mexican American experience due to Mexican Americans not being separated from Anglos in regards to desegregation studies.²²⁵

The Judge continued this conversation by asking Haskew how a school could benefit a student if they are only physically around one race all day rather than being within integrated classrooms and schools. Haskew responded that in regards to schools predominately composed of Anglos or African Americans, "that kind of education... is not due to the location of the

²²⁴ Haskew asserted that the neighborhood school concept should have positive result within the neighborhoods, and that "it can serve as a liaison agency between residents and other educational agents..." and that "The neighborhood school, in the long run will accomplish more to remove ethnic segregation than anything else." To him, "education conducted in the ghetto is the best path out of the ghetto," and that bussing ultimately has little affect in altering this trend. Georgia Nelson, "Residents' Motion Denied by Judge," *Caller Times*, June 2, 1970.

²²⁵ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1214-1215, 1218-1223, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

school, but through the people who operate it.”²²⁶ According to the witness, if you were to force a child to go to a school not in their neighborhood, this does little to change the way they view their circumstance because at the end of the day, that child still returns to the same neighborhood. To Haskew, the neighborhood school concept offered the best chance to do two things. First, to truly create a school that gives students full success in education rather than just the same educational opportunities for each student. Secondly, a true difference within students will occur when the barriers preventing certain racial groups from achieving full equality within society were removed. These barriers being torn down were not going to be determined by what school a student attends and whether they are located in particular neighborhoods in Haskew’s opinion.²²⁷

Haskew argued that one of his biggest fears in regards to eliminating the neighborhood school concept was that it could result in white flight. Essentially, Haskew believed that busing, “is going to hurt more than it is going to help the very object we are working for,” due to its expense. The loss of those funds, redirected from educational purposes, encouraged people to move out of their neighborhood depending on where busing is occurring.²²⁸ Furthermore, Haskew argued that socio-economics affected the test scores of Mexican Americans more than

²²⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1222-1223, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

²²⁷ Haskew said, “It is that barrier that is preventing access to work and not the location of the school to me, to which he attends,” “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1226-1227, 1229-1230, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

²²⁸ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1232,1239,1241, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

what school they attended, and that if minority students attended an integrated school, they would still feel isolated and not included in the social aspect of school. Haskew said, "...the school simply does not have the power to, within itself, to cure all of the ills of American society or to lick every problem that can be turned up...if by some magic wand we could pick up all of the people that we want to distribute and distribute them equally among all the schools in a way so that they were not upset about it...and changed nothing else in the American society...would be largely wasted money if your end is to erase these differences."²²⁹ Mr. Wolf began to question Haskew, and asked Haskew if he thought the separate but equal argument was no longer an issue within the schools, and Haskew responded that yes he felt that it was a problem in the past.²³⁰

Charles M. Clark, a CCISD school psychologist, testified for the plaintiffs about the factors that determine the levels of a student's academic achievement. Clark asserted that one of the factors was the student's home environment, and specifically how the parents responded to academics and academic behavior. This could determine whether a student was high or low achieving. Mr. Hall followed this statement with asking Clark what factors affect the various levels of acceptance among students in regards to racially mixing within a school. Clark responded that some factors were the competitive atmosphere within the school, intimacy and duration of contact among students, equality of status, support from authority figures, and the students' individual value systems. In regards to value systems, Clark defined this as commonalities-e.g. do the students have something in common besides their ethnic or racial

²²⁹ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1245-1247, 1251, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

²³⁰ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1255, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

makeup.²³¹ To Clark, the most pragmatic way to increase academic levels within a district is to maintain the neighborhood school policy and focus on improving the students' academic performance before integrating them, so that when they are integrated they are on the same level academically.²³²

In order for the Court to comprehend the negative treatment of Mexican Americans in Corpus Christi, Mr. Cisneros was called back to the stand by the defendants. Mr. Hall began questioning him in regards to his treatment in Corpus Christi as a Mexican American. Mr. Hall asked Cisneros if he had ever been refused service in Corpus Christi, and he said that yes he had been refused service at a restaurant once before. When Mr. Wolf began questioning, he asked Mr. Cisneros if he had preferred if his daughter went to Carroll instead of Moody, which only had 3% Anglos. Cisneros responded that he would have loved if his daughter attended Carroll, because, "It would be nice for all the kids to be able to grow up together and know there is no difference between a person because he is black, brown, or white."²³³ Furthermore, Mr. Wolf asked if Cisneros believed the residential patterns had changed since he was in high school, and

²³¹ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1351-1352, 1365-1366, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

²³² In regards to bussing and integration, Clark said, "I feel that a low socioeconomic child, regardless of race or ethnic groups, who is forced into competition with children who are in top groups and he is forced to do this particularly far from support or home and peer group, that he is going to have a lot of trouble." Furthermore, To Clarke the best ratio of various ethnic groups should be 70/30 because there is a clearly a dominant group, and Clark believed that there is greater struggle for power if this ratio was altered. "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1385-1386, 1403-1404, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

²³³ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1408. 1410, 1414, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 2.

Cisneros asserted that the residential patterns were still mostly the same leading to schools that were continuously segregated.

Before the Judge delivered his final opinion, the lawyers from both sides presented their final arguments. Mr. Dixie began his closing remarks by adamantly supporting the position that Mexican Americans had experienced both de facto and de jure segregation along with African Americans within Corpus Christi schools. Dixie pointed out that in CCISD after the *Brown* case, there was a period of free choice for African American students, but that after being “integrated” with other Mexican American children, this free choice period came to a screeching halt. As a result, in the plaintiff’s opinion, the school board did not fulfill their role and responsibility to end discrimination and segregation. Additionally, CCISD intentionally located schools and altered the boundary lines in a way that increased and heightened segregation in Corpus Christi. The plaintiffs believed that Mexican Americans are an identifiable ethnic minority, specifically a “deprived and disadvantaged minority that enjoys worse suppression than the blacks and it is inconceivable that the court would fail to know that as a matter of judicial notice.”²³⁴ Mr. Dixie concluded his statement by accusing the district of preventing the city from moving forward due to these racist decisions on the part of the school board, and for encouraging the persistent segregation of African American and Mexican American children.²³⁵

²³⁴ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1429-1434, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

²³⁵ From 1960 to 1970, CCISD spent 4 and ½ billion dollars renovating or building junior high schools that were 85% or higher Anglo and only ½ a million on junior high schools that contained less than 85% Anglo. This rate also applied to the elementary schools in CCISD. CCISD also spent \$14 million dollars in a ten year period to expand or construct new segregated schools compared to \$1 million on the schools with low Anglo populations. “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1442-1444, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

Mr. Wolf continued for the plaintiffs by telling the Court that they cannot be afraid of the consequences to integration such as protest, white flight, or anger, and that the Court needed to make a decision that would be beneficial for the youth and future of Corpus Christi. Wolf presented a harrowing fact that 60% of African American children go to only two elementary schools in the city, including Washington and Crossley, which also did not uphold the *Brown* ruling. In addition, 92% of all African American elementary school students attended schools that were wholly African American or heavily composed of minorities. In regards to junior high, 75% or more African Americans attended schools that were mostly minority. Wolf stated, “The only thing that is lacking is a sign outside... ‘For Whites Only’ and the converse on the other side of town.”²³⁶ Wolf exposed that more than 80% of all students at all levels go to schools that are racially identifiable segregated schools. Essentially, Wolf argued, “segregation and isolation and apartness was not merely happenstance...it was not something that was thirty years in gestation and arrived 32 years later as a complete surprise.”²³⁷ Rather, this segregation was systematic and was fulfilled with the drawing of Moody’s boundaries that separated Mexican American students. Wolf targeted the neighborhood school policy, and asserted that it wasn’t a true policy because CCISD allowed transfers multiple times to permit students to go to schools that upheld segregation. Wolf also believed that the children knew what type of school they went

²³⁶ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1446-1450, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

²³⁷ “Report of the Transcript of Proceedings,” pg. 1451-1453 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

to, and that this was negatively affecting minority students hurting their academic records even more.²³⁸

On the other hand, in closing, the defendants asserted that there was no desire nor intent on the part of the school board to separate children based on their race into different schools, and as a result, there was not de jure segregation present within CCISD in 1970. Mr. Hall pointed out that the district did not keep records of Mexican American students until the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare ordered the District to do so in 1967. Hall recognized that the district should not have treated the Anglo and Mexican American as one race, and that in hindsight that was a mistake. As for the construction of Moody in the southeast side of town, the school board thought that would be the best location because of population density. Hall assured the Court that in 1969, CCISD had sixty schools, and that Mexican Americans attended all five high schools, all twelve middle schools, and all forty-three elementary schools. In regards to African American students, there were enrolled in 4 out of 5 of the high schools, eight out of twelve of the junior highs, and twenty-three out of the forty-three elementary schools. Lastly, Hall reminded the Court that according to Haskew, the goal for the district is not educational equality but rather educational success. To the plaintiffs, busing and other means of integration would hamper the district's ability to provide the students with educational success.²³⁹

²³⁸ In regards to faulty, the racial composition of educators did not reflect the various population numbers of the racial groups within the schools. Also, the schools that were predominately minority tended to have minority teachers and staff assigned to that school. "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1458-1464 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

²³⁹ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1466-1490 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

Mr. Gary continued the defendant's argument by defining integration as, "putting together of a dual school system."²⁴⁰ In this definition, there was no mention of racial balance, which is how the plaintiff's defined integration, and Hall asserted that was not the role of the school district. To the defendants, the lawyers believed that in order for the plaintiffs to win the Court case they must prove two different things. First, they must prove that Mexican Americans are an identifiable minority group, and that they have been discriminated against on the part of the school district. Furthermore, Mr. Gary concluded that to the defendants, the plaintiffs neither presented nor found any evidence of discrimination towards Mexican Americans due to the fact they attended every school in Corpus Christi. The defendants believed and upheld that Mexican Americans were white, and that CCISD never required Mexican American students to go to "colored schools." To Gary, the main priority of the district should be how and where to spend money in order to produce students that are truly successful within society.²⁴¹

When Mr. DeAnda concluded the argument for the plaintiffs before the Judge gave his final opinion, DeAnda agreed with the defendants that the goal of the district should be educational success, and that the district should do everything in its power to enable students of all colors to be productive citizens of Corpus Christi. However, DeAnda reminded the Court that Mexican Americans had an average of 3.2 years of schooling in 1950 compared to the Anglos

²⁴⁰ To Gary, when CCISD had a dual system with two types of schools-ones for African Americans and the others went to the Anglo school, meaning everyone who wasn't African American went to the same schools during this time. However, in reality, there was even more division among "white" schools-ones for Mexican Americans and others for Anglos. That is the factor the plaintiffs of *Cisneros* wanted to eliminate. "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1492, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

²⁴¹ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1492-1500, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

with 9.4 years of schooling. DeAnda also called out the irony of Gary's statement. If Mexican Americans were truly considered white, why was there such an appalling difference in educational levels between the two groups? DeAnda said, "the curtain has dropped here and all of a sudden we have lost our ability to tell one from the other, when in truth and in fact, of course, this distinction has existed in this community..."²⁴² Furthermore, DeAnda pointed out that yes Mexican Americans can go wherever they want, eat wherever they want, and so can the African American, yet African Americans are considered minorities while Mexican Americans are not. In this statement, DeAnda tried to prove that Mexican Americans were indeed a minority group, and the Court needed to recognize their status. In regards to the point Hall raised about Mexican Americans being in every school, DeAnda revealed that in some schools there was only one Mexican American or one Anglo, and he claimed these ratios are what the school board has relied on in order to support their racist actions. As for the neighborhood school system, DeAnda pointed out that there was no such system for teachers, yet they were highly segregated within CCISD.²⁴³

This concluded the comments made by all of the lawyers, and next Seals delivered his ruling and opinion based on these facts that were presented over a three-week period. Seals began his opinion by upholding that the *Brown* case was not only limited to protecting African Americans, but Mexican Americans as well. Seals stated, "The Court finds from the evidence that these Mexican American students are an identifiable ethnic-minority class sufficient to bring

²⁴² "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1512-1515, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

²⁴³ "Report of the Transcript of Proceedings," pg. 1515-1520, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 3.

them within the protection of *Brown*.²⁴⁴ Seals believed Mexican Americans qualified as a minority due to their physical characteristics, their culture, Spanish surnames, and their language. Due to this fact, Seals declared that Mexican American students within CCISD have been and are currently segregated in all levels of the school system, which is outlawed by the 14th Amendment.²⁴⁵ In regards to African Americans, the Court determined that they as well have been segregated that not only resulted in CCISD being a dual system, but also broke the law established from *Brown*. Seals mentioned that just like the students, the faculty had been segregated as well. Moreover, Seals asserted “that by placing Negroes and Mexican Americans in the same school does not achieve a unitary system.”²⁴⁶ A unitary system within Corpus Christi can only be accomplished by integrating Anglos with both African Americans and Mexican Americans. Seals proclaimed that the district had practiced both de jure and de facto segregation.

²⁴⁴ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 9, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁴⁵ Seals stated, “It is obvious tot the Court from the evidence that the Mexican Americans have been historically discriminated against as a class in the Southwest and in Texas, and in the Corpus Christi district.” Seals also mentioned how several organizations formed a s a response to this problem, including LULAC, the G.I. Forum, and MAYO. “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 10-12, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁴⁶ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 13, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

Seals remarked, “But this segregated and dual school district has its real roots in the minds of men.”²⁴⁷

Seals accused the school district of upholding segregation through their transfer policies, their practice of building of schools in certain geographic areas, the establishment of attendance zones, the assignment of minority teachers to schools with high percentages of minority students, and their continual financial investment and maintenance of these segregated schools. Seals commented, “The schoolhouse is more segregated than the neighborhoods.”²⁴⁸ Furthermore, Seals exclaimed that he “does not accept the explanations given by the school administration for...maintaining a segregated school system and dual school system.”²⁴⁹ The court commanded the school district to reassign Mexican American and African American teachers to various schools, and also to hire more minority teachers. In regards to busing, Seals reminded the defendants that minorities had been bused in order to maintain this dual system, and these kids have shown no negative effects upon them. To Seals, the physical inconvenience of transportation far outweighed the psychological loss the current students endured in a segregated

²⁴⁷ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 13-14, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁴⁸ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 14-15, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁴⁹ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 17, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

system.²⁵⁰ To conclude, Seals imparted to the Court that “the public school institution...is the one unique institution which has the capacity to unite this nation and to unite this diverse and pluralistic society that we have.”²⁵¹ Seals asked the city of Corpus Christi to create a human relations committee that was composed of people from all professions and racial backgrounds that could help the school board in enacting a unitary system. Lastly, Seals charged the plaintiffs and defendants with creating and submitting an integration plan that would ultimately form a unitary school system.²⁵²

This chapter revealed that CCISD was not immune to racism and inequality, but rather, that these accusations not only characterized the district, but that the district purposely subjugated minority students by providing them with an education that was unequal to those of white students. Despite all the excuses the district responded with to the Court when questioned about these racist practices, the data and evidence proved otherwise. This evidence was not only personal, such as testimonies and personal views, but also numerical, which showed minority

²⁵⁰ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 17-18, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁵¹ “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 19, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁵² After the Court Order was given, Dana Williams called Héctor P. García asking him for help in regards to integrating the schools. Héctor P. García commented to his daughter, Cecilia García Akers that, “...I am going down to help him because he does not know what to do to integrate the schools.” “Transcript of Opinion and Ruling by the Court, Cisneros et al. vs CCISD in the District Court of the U.S. for Southern District of Texas, No. 68-C-95, 6/4/70,” pg. 20-22, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6; Cecilia García Akers, *The Inspiring Life of Texan Héctor P. García*, (Charleston: The History Press, 2016), 76.

students were segregated from other Anglo students in schools, and were taught and reminded constantly that they were an inferior race through the practices embodied by the district. The plaintiffs succeeded in bringing the district to their knees in this court case, but the challenge was only beginning in trying to create a district that was not segregated along racial and economic lines. The next chapter will evaluate all of the various desegregation plans that were implemented over a series of fifteen years, and the overall effect these decisions had upon the students and residents of Corpus Christi.

CHAPTER III:

Desegregation, Busing, and Special Emphasis Schools: 1970-1985

A few weeks after the conclusion of *Cisneros*, Hurricane Celia came crashing down upon Corpus Christi's shores on August 3, 1970 resulting in around 600 million dollars in damage.²⁵³ Despite widespread loss and destruction, the district still needed to adopt a plan to desegregate the city's schools. This chapter focuses on the various integration plans the district implemented, including the pairing of schools, the mandatory busing of thousands of students, and the creation of special emphasis schools over the next fifteen years. This chapter also reveals the arguments posed by several community groups and individuals who were against the mandatory busing and forced integration of schools. Furthermore, this chapter exposes the frustration many residents in Corpus Christi had in regards to all of the different plans adopted, due to the fact data was not producing results that showed the schools as integrated. Similar to Hurricane Celia, which left the city devastated and in ruin, many of these integration plans did the same to the city's schools. Despite clear evidence that schools were not integrated, this chapter will conclude with the termination of court ordered busing allowing for schools to maintain their segregated status.

After Judge Woodrow Seals's ruling in *Cisneros*, CCISD had to form a committee to advise the school board in regards to desegregation, and also design a desegregation plan that would be implemented by fall 1970. Within a few weeks, CCISD created a plan that would be implemented, and included the closing of Beach Elementary School, and changed attendance

²⁵³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Roy Sylvan Dunn, "Hurricanes," accessed November 10, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ybh01>.

zones for several elementary, middle, and high schools.²⁵⁴ The plaintiffs also drafted a plan that established the pairing of several schools and would result in the busing of students throughout the district. For the busing of 9,500 students, the district calculated that it would cost around \$1,689,200. The district vehemently opposed this plan due to the busing aspect, which according to them, would result in longer school days, more transportation costs, and residents moving away if they were required to bus their children.²⁵⁵ However, Seals rejected the plan proposed by the district stating, “The proposed plan submitted by the Corpus Christi Independent School District... is not constitutionally acceptable,” and that the district must submit another plan at once.²⁵⁶

The school board designed a new plan shortly after Seals’s order that shifted middle and high school boundaries affecting around 3,600 students. There were no changes made in the boundaries for elementary schools, and this plan did not require any busing. Seals accepted this plan knowing it was not only temporary, but ordered that in a few days the Court was to meet to produce a new plan for a unitary system.²⁵⁷ In September 1970, a hearing occurred in Victoria, Texas due to destruction Hurricane Celia caused in Corpus Christi. Various individuals testified including a bus company, several school officials, and education experts who offered insight on

²⁵⁴ “Seals rejects schools’ plan for Desegregation: Possibility of Opening Delay raised,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 26, 1970.

²⁵⁵ Mary Lenz, “Busing: Objections are Filed by Board,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 25, 1970.

²⁵⁶ “Seals rejects schools’ plan for Desegregation: Possibility of Opening Delay raised,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 26, 1970.

²⁵⁷ Tom Bond, “School Trustees Map Another Plan: No Busing Required in Shift,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 31, 1970.

how to create a unitary school system in Corpus Christi.²⁵⁸ The testimonies concentrated on the various costs of implementing a unitary school system, especially transportation expenses. The hearing also analyzed three different desegregation plans, including the neighborhood school plan, the Foster plan, and the Scott plan.²⁵⁹

The Foster plan was created by Dr. Gordon Foster, who was a witness in the *Cisneros* case, and this plan altered attendance zones, paired schools, and required transportation of students. Essentially, “the ethnic percentage in each school should fit the percentage of each ethnic group in the total school population of the district.”²⁶⁰ Under this plan, 16, 906 students would be transported, and only applied to 23 out of 43 elementary schools. The neighborhood school plan was actually deemed unconstitutional by Woodrow Seals, which established that students were to attend schools within their attendance zones. This plan required no busing, and only changed attendance zones for 11 schools. Nevertheless, this plan was rejected and not applied for the 1970-1971 school year.²⁶¹ The Scott Plan was formed by Mrs. James C. Scott, a parent in Corpus Christi, who revealed her plan during the hearings in Victoria. This plan only effected elementary schools, and established the pairing of several schools and the busing of

²⁵⁸ “Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case,” Pg. 1-3, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

²⁵⁹ “Jose Cisneros vs Corpus Christi Independent School District: Background of this Litigation,” Pg. 4, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁶⁰ “Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case,” Pg. 10, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

²⁶¹ “Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case,” Pg. 12, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

5,000 students. Basically, each school under this module would have two grades each, and the students would go to their neighborhood school for four years and their paired school for two years.²⁶²

However, on September 15, 1970, the plaintiffs asked for the United States Departments of Justice and of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) for aid and intervention in this desegregation situation.²⁶³ HEW and the Justice Department in turn encouraged the plaintiffs to wait for the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Swann*. When HEW intervened in *Cisneros*, the Court extended the due date for their new desegregation plan until June 1, 1971. One of the main questions at the Victoria hearings was the cost of transportation, and if that money would come from the federal government or not. A few months later in another desegregation case involving African American students in North Carolina, the Supreme Court ruled in regards to busing within school districts and the federal government's role within the desegregation process of schools. On April 20, 1971, the Supreme Court decided *Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, which established that the ethnic ratios of student populations within schools could be analyzed in order to design a solution to desegregate.²⁶⁴ The Court also ruled that it was impossible to require the schools to maintain an ethnic balance in every school within a district,

²⁶² "Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case," Pg. 11, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

²⁶³ "The Court was further influenced by the fact that there appears to be a growing National Policy favoring integration as expressed in Government actions...because any integration order would be helped by the active assistance of the Government." "Jose Cisneros vs Corpus Christi Independent School District: Background of this Litigation," Pg. 4-5, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁶⁴ *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1, 91 S. Ct. 1267, 28 L. Ed. 2d 554, 1971 U.S.

but that district courts could change attendance zones, order busing, pair schools, and even establish noncontiguous zones.²⁶⁵ Chief Justice Burger ruled, "...if a state imposed limitation on a school authority's discretion operates to inhibit or obstruct the operation of a unitary school system or impede the disestablishing of a dual school system, it must fall."²⁶⁶ Burger upheld that busing was a necessary tool to employ by school districts in order to integrate schools.

Due to the debate regarding the usage of busing, President Richard Nixon used his political power after this order had been implemented in several school districts, including Austin, and told the HEW secretary, Elliot Richardson, "to hold busing 'to the minimum required by law."²⁶⁷ *Life Magazine* credited this order with initiating confusion and problems for districts throughout the United States who had already started to use busing to integrate. Furthermore, the White House warned officials that if they did not follow this order, they themselves would be fired, including Richardson. The *Life* article concluded by critiquing Nixon's point of view: "The President's action seems largely determined by the political gains he hopes to win among conservative southerners."²⁶⁸ Nonetheless, the United States Commission on Civil Rights recognized in a public statement, that there were various ways a school district could go about desegregating, but at the same time, endorsed that transportation or busing was a

²⁶⁵ "Jose Cisneros vs Corpus Christi Independent School District: Background of this Litigation," Pg. 12, Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁶⁶ "Jose Cisneros vs Corpus Christi Independent School District: Background of this Litigation," Pg. 6 Cisneros Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 3, Folder 6.

²⁶⁷ "A Confusing Retreat on Busing," *Time Magazine*, August 27, 1971, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 13.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

vital way that could achieve integration. The Commission also noted that transportation had always been a factor central to American schools, and had never been an issue before, especially when school districts bused students out of their way to “colored schools.” Similarly, *Time Magazine*, in agreement with the Commission, noted that Nixon’s statement would “undermine the desegregation effort...and will almost certainly confuse the American public and erode the position of those school officials who have put themselves on the line to implement the law of the land.”²⁶⁹ Furthermore, *Swann* objected to busing, “Only when the time or distance of travel is so great as to risk either the health of the children or significantly impinge on the educational process.”²⁷⁰

During the *Cisneros* case, a group of parents and several individuals emerged who were against the massive reassignment of students, which they realized could be a possibility as the trial progressed. This group decided to file a motion to intervene in the case, but the motion was denied. As a result, the parents responded by forming, Concerned Neighbors, a new organization whose sole purpose was to maintain the school neighborhood concept and to ensure equal education for all students regardless of race.²⁷¹ This group was vehemently against busing

²⁶⁹ “Statement of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Concerning the Statement of the President on Busing,” Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 13.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ “Concerned Neighbor News: History of Concerned Neighbors Inc.,” *Voice Chronicle*, November 11, 1971, “School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report,” pg. 89, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 174, Folder 8; Letter to Concerned Neighbors: Report on Current Developments Affecting Federal Desegregation Case,” May 18, 1971, “School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report,” pg. 89, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 170, Folder 9.

because they believed that busing had negative results, and credited it with dismantling the education system. Furthermore, this group thought Corpus Christi was unique due to Mexican Americans historically being considered Caucasian, and they thought the Court didn't improve the situation by focusing on ethnicity. By August of 1970, the group claimed 10,000 members, and after Judge Woodrow Seals devised his own desegregation plan that could result in busing, 10,000 more members flocked to Concerned Neighbors.²⁷² If the group truly had 20,000 members involved by 1971, it only comprised 10% of the city's total population, which was 204,595 in 1970.²⁷³

Parents immediately began to respond to the possibility of busing their children by writing letters to various individuals involved with the *Cisneros* case. In a letter written from two parents, Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hoffman, to Judge Woodrow Seals, they warned the Court that they were planning on enrolling their children in a private school or another school district that was more racially balanced. These parents claimed that they were frustrated by the fact that their children may be forced to attend a different school in a distant black or brown neighborhood rather than their neighborhood school. The Hoffman's wrote, "We fail to understand how removing children from a middle class neighborhood school and thrusting them into extreme minority position in a ghetto-type school can have a beneficial effect..."²⁷⁴ The Hoffman's

²⁷² "Concerned Neighbor News: History of Concerned Neighbors Inc.," *Voice Chronicle*, November 11, 1971, "School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report," pg. 89, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 174, Folder 8.

²⁷³ Texas Almanac, "City Population History from 1850-2000, accessed November 8, 2018, <https://texasalmanac.com/sites/default/files/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf>.

²⁷⁴ Letter to Judge Woodrow Seals from Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hoffman, July 17, 1970, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 1.

concluded the letter by warning Seals that if this desegregation proposal were enforced, that the racial percentages would change due to other parents removing their children from CCISD as well.²⁷⁵

Dr. Dana Williams, the school superintendent, also came out against busing, and instead supported compensatory education, which encouraged spending more money on various educational programs and resources for students in lower income areas. To Williams and other district officials, busing was hurtful and detrimental instead of helpful to a child's education. Williams stated, "Clearly a remedy other than that offered by transporting children away from their neighborhood schools must be sought. Such a solution is available through the concentration of funds by thoughtful, redirected compensatory programs."²⁷⁶ He noted that there are benefits that come from integration, but only when a certain percentage of middle class students (60-70%) attend each school. He argued the most effective way to ensure integration was changing housing patterns, which would lead to more integrated neighborhoods as well. In addition to this, society needed to enable and ensure upward social mobility for everyone regardless of race, which to him, was already occurring in the city.²⁷⁷

Judge Woodrow Seals weighed all of these contrasting points of view, and on July 2, 1971, he designed a desegregation plan for CCISD. The school board was told to put the plan into effect for the 1971-1972 school year. This plan changed certain attendance zones for elementary, junior, and high schools, and paired certain elementary schools to form schools that

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ "Williams Speaks Against Busing," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 28, 1972, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162 Folder 25.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

were ethnically unidentifiable. After this ruling, Seals was replaced by Judge Own Cox, who was a Nixon appointee that would embrace more conservative ideals in regards to desegregation and the use of busing within Corpus Christi. Once again, CCISD asked for more time in implementing the desegregation plan, and Judge Own Cox accepted their request giving the District until the 1972-1973 to enforce the desegregation plan. However, on July 19, 1971, Cox asserted that African American children were to be integrated that year, while Anglos and Mexican Americans would be integrated the following year.²⁷⁸

Under this new federal desegregation order, Williams revealed that around 1,000 to 1,200 African American students may be bused for the upcoming school year. African American children in grades 1 through 3 at Washington Elementary would be bused to Fischer Elementary and those at Crossley Elementary would be bused to Calk Elementary.²⁷⁹ The president of the local NAACP chapter, Irvin Brown, stated that “Black children should not bear the burden of ‘pulling the school board out of the fire it has built for itself.’”²⁸⁰ Brown did not believe it was fair that African American students were the only racial group that was ordered to be bused to various schools in order to achieve integration. Brown and the NAACP asked why Anglo students couldn’t be bused to the predominant African schools as well? Furthermore, instead of buying portables to deal with over crowdedness, why not use that money to transport Anglo

²⁷⁸ “Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case,” Pg. 5, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

²⁷⁹ Mary Lenz, “Problems Foreseen in Busing Negroes,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 22, 1971.

²⁸⁰ Mary Lenz, “Black Oppose ‘1-Way Busing,’” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 28, 1971.

students to achieve more equal representation of the races?²⁸¹ Concerned Neighbors responded to this order by declaring that they would support the African American community in fighting against busing. Concerned Neighbors also presented the fact that 1,290 families recently moved from the Westside to the Southside, and to them, if this trend continued over time, integration would be achieved without having to rely on busing to do it.²⁸² This population movement of Westside families to the Southside would allow the schools to seem integrated on paper, but essentially these schools would still be mostly comprised of Anglos due to the slow movement of minority families into this geographic area of town.

By August 3, 1972, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Judge Seals's findings and asserted that there was unconstitutional segregation within CCISD. The district gave the Court a plan that reassigned around 3,665 students (10%) and closed Coles High School, which was considered an African American school. In order to accomplish this, the district would re-adjust five elementary school zones and a majority of the zones for junior high. On May 8, 1973, Judge Cox ruled that this plan was "superficial" and did not achieve full integration.²⁸³ Cox expected a new plan by June 11, 1973 that did not have junior highs more than 75% majority to a 25% minority. On June 11, 1973, the school board presented a plan that made a few boundary alterations for the 1973 school year, but for the 1974-1975 school year, the

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Anne Dodson, "Antibusing Suit is considered," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 23, 1971.

²⁸³ "Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case," Pg. 6, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

district proposed making 9th grade part of high school, designing a new school, closing multiple schools, and making even more boundary changes.²⁸⁴

On August 14, 1972 at the CCISD's Administrative building, a group of Mexican Americans, including Dr. Héctor P. García, decided to have a sit-in after a motion was declined that would have allowed transportation for individuals who requested a transfer to a different school. After the sit-in began "Dirty Dana" (the moniker the protesters gave to the superintendent) told the protesters that they would be arrested if they did not leave by 7pm, and the protestors refused to budge.²⁸⁵ During the sit in, the protestors discussed the unequal education Mexican Americans were receiving in CCISD, and asserted that "The school board of Corpus Christi has been found guilty of giving us bad education. We merely wanted them to start listening to the community and to correct the school board's past mistakes."²⁸⁶ Soon police officers showed up to arrest the 16 protestors, including Dr. García. At first, the protestors were arrested for trespassing in a public building, but eventually all charges were dropped, implying that CCISD had made a mistake in ejecting the protestors. The sit-in revealed that the school board had been unwilling to help the Mexican American students achieve an equal education, despite the *Cisneros* ruling in 1970.

²⁸⁴ "Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case," Pg. 6-7, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

²⁸⁵ "Dr. Hector was inside with us 100%...and we were with him 100%."; "Dirty Dana" is in reference to Dana Williams, CCISD's superintendent. Eduardo Guebara-Adame, "La Historia Del Sit-In," *Barrio* Vol. 1, Issue 10, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162 Folder 22.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

On the day after the sit-in, the U.S. District Court decided that the plan proposed by the school board would be put into action for the 1974-1975 school year. In addition, the Court announced a volunteer transfer program where certain students could be eligible to be transported to schools where there were few minorities. This transportation would be free of cost from those eligible students who lived more than two miles from the school, and the schools receiving these students must make the necessary adjustments. This addition to the desegregation plan seemed to be in response to the arguments Dr. García and other leaders revealed during their sit-in regarding the lack of school transportation for minority children. However, these transfers did not go as well as planned, and not many students applied for transfers. A total of 350 students applied for a transfer, and by January 27, 1974, this number had only increased to 382. Of the 382 students, 122 students applied to return to the same school they already attended. The highest amount of students that applied for a transfer during this time was 1,350, which only constituted 3% of CCISD's total population.²⁸⁷

As a result of such low transfer requests, by June of 1974, the plaintiffs no longer supported this voluntary transfer plan.²⁸⁸ Essentially, this transfer plan was put into place in order to improve the various ethnic balances within the district. The plaintiffs stated, "With regret we tell the Court that the results of the transfer program have failed to produce a unitary school system and we request the Court proceed to consider pairing and clustering of schools...to

²⁸⁷ Dale Hornsby, "Highlights of the Court Case Brought by Jose Cisneros Against the Corpus Christi Independent School District," October 4, 1975, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 3.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

achieve the unitary school system required by the Constitution.”²⁸⁹ The plaintiffs presented the racial compositions of Moody and Miller as evidence. Miller was 79.31% minority in 1969, but by 1974 it had risen to 86.65%. Furthermore, 92% of Anglo students in the city attended three high schools, including: King, Carroll, and Ray, with an Anglo population of 36.8% alone at King. For junior high schools, five had a minority composition of 58.3% or more. Out of forty-two elementary schools, twenty had 75% or more minority compositions with sixteen of them being greater than 90% minority.²⁹⁰ Despite these statistics, however, another plan did not emerge until March 1975, when Judge Cox told CCISD they had until March 31, 1975 to desegregate all schools. At this point, Dr. Héctor P. García demanded that Judge Cox quit this court case due to the fact “Cox seemed unable due to personal or philosophical reasons to carry out the orders of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.”²⁹¹

Judge Cox was not the only person under scrutiny from Mexican American leadership, so was Dana Williams, whose resignation or termination of contract was demanded quite often. Dr. Cornell Barnard, the Vice President of the School Board asserted in front of a group of Mexican Americans at a luncheon, that Dr. Williams was “an executive who knows how to delegate

²⁸⁹ Nick Jimenez, “School plaintiffs sue to force action,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 30, 1974.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ On November 1, 1974, several African American leaders met and asserted that in Corpus there was only 1 way bussing occurring, and that bussing was not equal among the races. “The Corpus Christi School Desegregation Case: An Analysis,” pg. 7-8, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 25.

responsibility.”²⁹² This statement was in response to several groups and individuals demanding the resignation of Williams, including Dr. Clotilde García, who was Dr. Hector García’s sister, and Tony Bonilla, a previous president of LULAC. In addition to the little desegregation achieved in Corpus Christi at this time, achievement scores still showed minorities having lower scores than those of Anglos. For example, the junior high median reading scores for minorities were 14 for minorities, and 48 for Anglos, with 50 being the national average. In response to these scores, Barnard stated that he was not pleased with those results, but reminded the crowd that progress had been made in other areas, and that more needed to change within the home for students to be academically successful. Essentially, Barnard did not credit these results with the school system or the lack of integration, but rather, the lack of support minority children received at home. Barnard offered what scholars now describe as a classic “pathological” or “deficit” response, that the problem lay with black and brown families.²⁹³

²⁹² “School Board member rises to the defense of Superintendent,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 21, 1974, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 23.

²⁹³ Two scholars, Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Rubén Donato, discuss this “deficit” response by arguing that schools neglected Mexican American students due to their culture and subordinate position within society. These historians state, “In many cases, the schools responded not to the genuine needs of this diverse group of children but to those of other stronger political and economic interests who sought to use schools as instruments of cultural conformity and of social and economic subordination.” According to Jason G. Irizarry and Sonia Nieto, “much of the deficit-centered literature suggests that a lack of involvement among families living in poverty...is in part responsible for the educational outcomes of this community.” However, both scholars note that many of the parents of these students were unable to receive an adequate education due to their perceived inferiority. Furthermore, research amongst many scholars suggests that Mexican American communities do highly value education contrary to the “deficit” response. Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. and Rubén Donato, “Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America: A Brief History,” in Enrique G. Murillo, Jr., Sofía A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galván, Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Corinne Martínez, and Margarita Machado-Casas, ed., *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research, and Practice*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 29.; Jason G. Irizarry and Sonia Nieto, “Latino/a Theoretical Contributions to Educational Praxis: Abriendo Cominos, Construyendo Puentes,” in Enrique G.

By January 1975, the whole town was embroiled with all of these various desegregation plans that caused widespread frustration, so the Court decided to once again formulate a new plan. Manuel Narvaez, who was a representative for the Steelworker's Union, which was the group that filed the *Cisneros* case in 1968, stated, "despite six years of litigation, nothing has been accomplished (by the school district) with the exception of the hiring of a few Black and Mexican American teachers."²⁹⁴ That same day, over 500 PTA members met and vowed to protest busing as the method of achieving integration within CCISD.²⁹⁵ On March 31, 1975, the District revealed an integration plan that would bus around 3,000 students in grades 3-6, and paired 17 elementary schools. On April 21, 1975, the plaintiffs announced that they were against this plan because they believed it was not drastic enough in integrating the schools, and by May, the U.S. Department of Justice agreed with the plaintiffs. There had been some discussion of using computers in order to achieve desegregation, and in June of 1975, Cox decided that the computer plan would be used to desegregate CCISD schools.²⁹⁶ The idea behind using computers to desegregate CCISD was that, "The court is convinced machines impartially can solve the

Murillo, Jr., Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galván, Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Corinne Martínez, and Margarita Machado-Casas, ed., *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research, and Practice*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 112.

²⁹⁴ "The Corpus Christi School Desegregation Case: An Analysis," pg.8, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 25.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ Dale Hornsby, "Highlights of the Court Case Brought by Jose Cisneros Against the Corpus Christi Independent School District," October 4, 1975, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 3.

Corpus Christi integration problem in the elementary schools.”²⁹⁷ Furthermore, by using computers, they can randomly select students not based on geographic zones, but rather by satellite zones that represent how far a particular student is from a school in order to create a more equal ethnic balance.²⁹⁸ On June 16, 1975, a computer supervisory committee was created under Dr. Joseph Rupp, and the Court supported the use of this plan for the upcoming school year.²⁹⁹ On August 4, 1975, Cox ordered the computer plan to be enforced, and discarded all of the previous desegregation plans that had been presented to the Court.³⁰⁰

This new computerized desegregation plan ordered by Cox resulted in the relocation of around 18,141 students, or 55% of students in grades 1-6. According to the district, the 1975-1976 school year was going to focus on integrating elementary schools, and then plans for integrating the junior and high schools would follow in the next year or so. As a result of this new order, and the understanding that there would be widespread busing throughout Corpus Christi, many citizens predicted that students would leave CCISD and enroll into private or parochial schools rather than being bused to a different school. One parent stated that this new

²⁹⁷ Mary Alice Davis, “Computers to desegregate schools,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 12, 1975.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ “Legal Chronology of Cisneros Case,” Pg. 8, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 165, Folder 20.

³⁰⁰ Dale Hornsby, “Highlights of the Court Case Brought by Jose Cisneros Against the Corpus Christi Independent School District,” October 4, 1975, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 3.

plan was, “damned ridiculous...This is taking a giant step backwards.”³⁰¹ Another woman stated, “I don’t think its necessary to achieve integration,” and that she was going to send her child to a private school instead.³⁰² Dr. Héctor P. García said, “This plan was a peaceful solution to a delicate problem.”³⁰³

After asking several students that lived in the Southside of town how they felt about the court order, a majority of them were against leaving their school and being bused somewhere else. Howie Singleton, who was 11, said, “You ought to go to your own school. You shouldn’t be forced to go to another school you don’t like. It’ll waste money.” He also told the reporter that he would be going to a private school for the upcoming school year.³⁰⁴ What is interesting is a different reporter went to the Westside of town to ask children their views on busing, and overall they favored the new court order. Mary Lou, a six grader said, “I want to ride on the bus, I don’t want to walk.” These students living on the Westside were going to be bused to the Southside to enroll at Sanders Elementary or Schanen Elementary instead of attending Austin Elementary.³⁰⁵

Enrollment and racial composition of CCISD from 1967 to 1975 displayed a steady increase in the percentage of Mexican American students in the district. The number of Mexican American students rose from 21,176 in 1967 to 23,858 in 1975 with an increase of 10.68%. For

³⁰¹ Cathy Soete, “Flight to parochial schools predicted by some,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 28, 1975.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ Brooks Peterson, “What do the Children Think: Southside Children Express opposition to leaving ‘own’ school,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 30, 1975.

³⁰⁵ Jay Brakefield, “What do the Children Think: Westside: ‘Child in the Street’ views busing favorably,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 30, 1975.

African American students, enrolment grew slightly from 2,308 in 1967 students to 2,403 students in 1975 with an increase of 0.7%. For Anglos, the number of students dropped from 21,891 in 1967 to 15,337 students in 1975 with a decrease of 11.38%.³⁰⁶ By July of 1975, 75 students had enrolled in private schools, 579 students had transferred to parochial schools, and 123 went to other school districts in the surrounding area. Nearly seven hundred (670) students moved away from Corpus Christi, and for 234 students the district did not know what happened to them or where they went. Of the 1,681 students that didn't return to CCISD, 600 were Anglos.³⁰⁷ Enrollment for CCISD also significantly decreased overall from 45,366 students in 1967 and a peak of 46,195 students in 1970 to 41,598 in 1975. These statistics show an overall loss of 4,597 students. In 1975, Mexican Americans comprised 57.35% of the student population, Anglos 36.87%, and African Americans at 5.78%.³⁰⁸

On August 20, 1975, Dana Williams decided to create a committee of fifteen members that represented various organizations in Corpus Christi that would advise him on the integration and desegregation of schools. In a memo he wrote to various individuals, Williams recognized that the respectability of the school district had declined due to all of the various court rulings over the past decade. Through this committee of community leaders, Williams aimed to receive

³⁰⁶ "School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report," pg. 34, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 166, Folder 1.

³⁰⁷ "School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report," pg. 89, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 166, Folder 1.

³⁰⁸ "School Desegregation in the Corpus Christi School District-Staff Report," pg. 34, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 166, Folder 1.

guidance and advice from these individuals over the various responses and steps taken in regards to desegregation. Furthermore, he hoped that the committee would help service the community, and keep them up to date on various desegregation measures happening throughout the district. Some goals included allowing representatives to share their thoughts and opinions, and to ask questions in regards to current desegregation measures. Also, he expected the committee to collaborate on ideas in order to best achieve desegregation and to give the school board an insight and better understanding of the community's goals and desires through these representatives.³⁰⁹ One of the organizations selected to participate in this committee was the American G.I. Forum (AGIF), and Dr. Héctor P. García received one of the letters from Williams before the committee had officially formed. Williams wrote to García, "You may be assured that I am sincere in seeking the assistance of citizens of Corpus Christi and feel that a group of this kind is definitely needed at this time to help me fulfill my leadership role in the community."³¹⁰

García responded to his letter a few weeks later, and told Williams that the AGIF was declining his invitation. García explained that one reason for this decision was the fact that four years had passed since the ruling in *Cisneros*, and he observed very little change and progress in the desegregation process within the schools. García wrote, "we also feel that the board has not made much effort in this direction, but instead you merely reflect the evasiveness of the Board in

³⁰⁹ "Superintendent's Advisory Committee for Integration-Desegregation," Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box. 163 Folder 3.

³¹⁰ "Letter to Héctor P. García from Dr. Dana Williams," April 19, 1974, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 42 Folder 26.

general: that is not representative of the community by its make up or philosophy. They have also failed and naturally we see very little hope in their mending their thinking and ways. We all feel that a committee under your supervision would be without any power or legal standing.”³¹¹ Furthermore, García critiqued Judge Own Cox, charging him with waiting for too long to receive a plan for desegregation. García wrote, “We respectfully request Judge Cox to take charge of the case himself.” García asserted, “This is not a community problem anymore, it is a problem of the courts. The courts must decide why there has been a failure in implementing their findings and decisions.” García concluded the letter by declaring that “The Board and Superintendent and community failed when in spite of objections they permitted this type of segregation and discrimination to get roots and become a cancerous growth.”³¹² To García and the AGIF, the current plan for desegregation was not working nor achieving the goal of educational equality for all children regardless of their race.³¹³

Six months after Judge Cox ordered the Computer Integration Plan, the Concerned Neighbors, a group that was mostly Anglo and against busing, published a statement documenting their argument in regards to the current desegregation process. This group claimed that after school programs had declined in membership, Parent-Teacher Associations were no longer around in certain schools, and some schools were very overcrowded. Furthermore, they reported that children not riding the bus have to walk around 22,000 miles a day cumulatively, and the district bought around 36 more busses in order to implement the Computer Integration

³¹¹ “Letter to Dr. Dana Williams from Héctor P. García,” May 14, 1974, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 163, Folder 2.

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ *Ibid.*

Plan. In addition, they argued that there has been a shift within the real estate market that now makes homes in “integrated” grids less valuable, and that the district has had a drop in enrollment. Anglo enrollment went from 39% to 30%, and the overall enrollment dropped around 8% or 1,500 elementary students. Concerned Neighbors ended their list of complaints with the statement that teachers within CCISD had now lost hope in the public education system with race being the main factor and nothing else. As a result, they demanded that an expert come to the city to truly see if any difference had been made with the Computer Integration Plan.³¹⁴

According to Dale Hornsby, the President of Concerned Neighbors, the changing housing patterns in Corpus Christi would result in integration and not the various busing measures the district was employing throughout the schools.³¹⁵ A committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights came to Corpus Christi to analyze the integration effort and the effects it had upon the city. Opposing Dale Hornsby’s comment, Irvin Brown, one of the main activists for the African American community, said, “It’s a myth that minorities can move anywhere they want to in Corpus Christi... Housing discrimination is as strong as ever.”³¹⁶ Antonio Dominquez, a plaintiff

³¹⁴ “Concerned Neighbors Statement in regards to the Computer Plan,” Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 164, Folder 3. According to Paul Montemayor, one of the leaders in the desegregation case, he did not believe the Computer Plan achieved much integration within CCISD. He stated, “It has contributed only in a very minor way...But the burden has been on children and their families and it has not accomplished the protection of the children’s rights to equal education.” In regards to the school board, he said, “the school board is sitting like an Ox in the middle of the road, stopping progress. It has been the backbone of separation and has created animosity in this community.” Anne Dodson, “Computer Plans effects ‘Very Minor,’ *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 4, 1976.

³¹⁵ Anne Dodson, “Neighbors say Computer Plan a Failure: May hit Political trail with Protest,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 29, 1976.

³¹⁶ Anne Dodson, “Discrimination: It’s real; it’s here,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 7, 1976.

for the *Cisneros* case said, “You say, why don’t we move into your Anglo neighborhoods. But you don’t know that for years and years, we were deprived of advancement and good salaries and this prevented us from saving to buy better homes.”³¹⁷ Reverend Harold Branch said, “We want to end ghettoized living in Corpus Christi, and we are all in ghettos, not just the people in the ‘corridor.’ I don’t care if you have a five figure home behind those walls on the Southside, your living a walled off life too.”³¹⁸ Corpus Christi was well known for redlining and using restrictive covenants in its housing deeds that allowed neighborhood schools to remain mostly Anglo.³¹⁹

The plaintiffs of *Cisneros* embraced the school board’s junior high desegregation plan that would use both lottery and the pairing of schools. They thought this “plan works for integration in an even handed manner.”³²⁰ However, they refused to accept the motion to move ninth grades from Westside middle schools to Ray, Miller, and Moody. The reason for this objection was the fact that a majority of these ninth graders being transferred were minority, and

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ During the *Cisneros* case, the plaintiffs presented one to the court that stated, “No tract, lot or part of lot in said subdivision shall at any time be occupied or used by any person or persons not of the Caucasian race...excluding from occupancy in said addition Mexicans, Latin-Americans, Negroes, and people of the yellow race.” Alan Lessoff reported that Mexican Americans mostly populated the Westside of town, which was a wedge of land that spreads southeast from Interstate 37 to Crosstown Expressway. African Americans lived in an area referred to as “The Cut,” in the Northside of town. “Best Addition Restrictions: The State of Texas County of Nueces: Known All Men by these Presents,” *Cisneros* Collection, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 14 Folder 6; Alan Lessoff, *Where Texas Meets the Sea: Corpus Christi & Its History*, (University of Texas Press: Austin, 2015), 43-47.

³²⁰ Mary Alice Davis, “School Suit Plaintiffs endorse lottery pairing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 12, 1976.

in the case of Miller and Moody High Schools, this would only increase the minority population rather than reduce it. The plaintiffs suggested that students from Westside schools should go to Carroll and King while Southside should go to Miller and Moody. The school board responded by claiming that King and Carroll were too overcrowded, and that this plan would only make it worse.³²¹

In another order filed July 19, 1976, the Court revealed a revised desegregation plan for the 1976-1977 school year. For the elementary schools, CCISD was ordered to continue the student assignment plan, which also included the opening of a gifted-and-talented school for children named Windsor Park. In regards to junior high schools, the Court in this order rejected the grid system claiming it resulted in little integration. Rather, the Court embraced a “student lottery system.” Under this lottery system, fifty percent of the seventh and eighth grade students from designated sending schools would be selected randomly and then sent to a receiving school. The other fifty percent would be sent to the receiving school the following year.³²² Cox decided to not permit the sending of ninth graders to high school, and Ella Barnes Junior High would be closed with those students either going to Driscoll or Martin. The district may also continue hardship transfers as long as the minority ratios of the schools do not shift significantly, and the District may also continue majority-to-minority transfers guaranteeing transportation for those students.³²³

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Order for Integration, July 19, 1976, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 163, Folder 3.

³²³ The majority to minority transfer policy allowed an Anglo student to transfer if their current school was more than 40% Anglo, and African American and Mexican American could also apply for a transfer if their current school was more than 60% minority. Mary Alice Davis,

This plan ordered by Cox actually resulted in less integration measures than what the school board had originally submitted. Six junior high schools were not being altered at all by this order except for transfer requests. Under the school board's plan, they had accepted the notion to expand busing measures throughout Corpus Christi, but Cox's smaller desegregation plan targeted the most segregated areas of Corpus Christi to make sure they became integrated in the next school year. *Caller Times* wrote, "If the board, the administration, and the community bring the same spirit of cooperation... as was evidenced when elementary schools were first desegregated last fall, it should be accomplished smoothly and with a minimum of distraction to education."³²⁴ In a different article written by *Caller Times*, Mary Alice Davis reported that under this new plan, minority students would be bused more than Anglo students to their new junior highs. From a pool of 2,000 Anglo students from Haas, Cullen, and Brown, 505 would be bused to Cunningham or Martin. From a pool from 1,600 to 2,000 minority students from Cunningham or Martin, 860 would be bused to Haas, Browne, or Cullen.³²⁵

"Cox Orders Lottery Pairing: Plan will affect only five City Junior Highs," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 20, 1976.

³²⁴ "Judge's School Plan Acceptable Decision," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 21, 1976. Grady Phelps reported that busing had not negatively affected the real estate market in Corpus Christi. The housing reports showed that there had not been any widespread selling of homes out of the ordinary. Grady Phelps, "Busing not believed affecting sale to homes," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 1 1976.

³²⁵ Mary Alice Davis, "Plan would transport 505 whites, 860 Mexican Americans, blacks," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 21, 1976. Soon after Cox's ruling, Concerned Neighbors announced a boycott of CCISD's schools for two days, September 7th and 8th to protest against the district's busing measures. This group had coordinated a boycott the year before, which resulted in anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 students staying home. Anne Dodson, "Boycott of Schools Planned on September 7-8th," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 10, 1976.

In regards to the creation of a special school for gifted-and-talented students, Dr. H. Gene Bryant, the assistant superintendent for instruction, said the reason the school board wanted a school for gifted students was to academically challenge these students in order for them to achieve excellence. Around 522 students ranging from Grades 1-6 would be selected based on their intellect, leadership qualities, creativeness, and their academic aptitude. The teachers would first nominate a student they thought was qualified, and then the student would undergo a series of tests to gauge their various strengths and weaknesses. This school would have to follow the racial guidelines set by the Court as well.³²⁶ There were several school board members who supported the creation of this new school including Jack McQueen, who reminded the board that students are signaled out all the time, which had never stopped them before. There were also several school board members that were against the idea of a gifted-and-talented school including Glenn Hutson and Franklin Bass, who “voiced strong objections to ‘signal out 522 students as being of superior intelligence and talent and ‘segregating’ them in their own school.”³²⁷ Huston said, “When you take the so-called gifted students and put them in another school, you’ll find they tend to enter into an unrealistic culture that they won’t find in the real world when they go out looking for a job.”³²⁸ Nevertheless, this school would be the first of several schools aimed at selecting gifted students throughout the district.

In 1976, four junior highs were comprised of 20% or more Anglo students, but after the Court order in 1976, all five middle schools selected for pairing met the new integration goal.

³²⁶ Anne Dodson, “Q&A: Interview with Dr. H. Gene Bryant,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 6, 1976.

³²⁷ David Palmer, “Integration Proposal sent to Judge: Board Disagrees on gifted School,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 4, 1976.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

The only two junior highs that did not meet the integration standards were Driscoll and Wynn Seale. Wynn Seale actually lost Anglo students and was 88.8% minority, yet was not included in Cox's desegregation plan. Driscoll, which was also not included in the pairing plan, still had an 81.4% minority enrollment. Southside middle schools, including Browne, Haas, and Cullen, actually reduced their Anglo enrollment significantly under the new court order. Brown started off with a 51% Anglo enrollment and went to 42.2% with a decrease of 8.8%. Haas went from 58% Anglo to 44.4% with a difference of 13.6%. Cullen went from 56% Anglo to 44.8% with a difference of 11.2%. In regards to high schools, 64% African American students attended Moody or Miller, with Moody being 95.6% minority. In Cox's next order, he proposed a plan for the integration of high schools.³²⁹

By February 1977, African American students in CCISD were considered the most segregated group despite six years of integration efforts and various court orders handed down by Seals and Cox. Fifteen schools located on the Westside of Corpus Christi still did not have at least 20% Anglo enrollment despite the fact these schools were paired and had implemented busing. In addition, elementary schools located on the Westside were more segregated despite the fact they were a receiving school for the pairing process. In 1977, of the 106 African American elementary students, 47.8% attended Coles or Crossley. In 1969, a year before the ruling in *Cisneros*, 59% African American Elementary students attended those two schools, showing a difference of 12% over an eight-year period. Coles and Crossley were receiving schools as well, so Southside schools were supposed to send Anglo students to those two schools, yet Coles and Crossley were not sending any students to Southside schools. Over the last two years of busing, these receiving schools had stayed segregated due to Anglos not

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

showing up to these schools. The district argued that they weren't liable for this trend since they took the steps in ordering those students to attend these schools. Strikingly, Windsor Park, the new school for gifted-and-talented students was already 60% Anglo, and only had 14 African American students.³³⁰

In the school board's desegregation plan for high schools submitted to Cox, they proposed to change Carroll's attendance zone in two areas. First, the plan would allow 551 students to attend Moody from Carroll's attendance zone. Due to Carroll having some minority students in their zone, if they happened to be selected to attend Moody, they could apply for a transfer back to Carroll, but Anglo students must attend Moody. Secondly, 167 Carroll High school students would be selected to attend Ray High School, which was to not only continue desegregating the schools, but to also reduce the overcrowding occurring at Carroll. If this plan went into effect, Carroll's Anglo population would be 57%; Ray's, 15%; King's, 76%; Miller's, 13%; and Moody's, 20%. In regards to elementary schools, the proposed plan would only require twelve schools to bus students instead of twenty. For junior high, the same plan implemented the previous year would continue.³³¹

However, a few months later, the Justice Department told Judge Owen D. Cox that he should reject this newest integration plan submitted by the school board. This was shortly after the plaintiffs of the *Cisneros* case voiced their displeasure with this newest plan as well. The reason for this negative reaction was the fact that this new plan would do nothing to alter the racial compositions of King and Miller High Schools. The government was also opposed to

³³⁰ Anne Dodson, "Schools: Blacks still are Isolated," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, February 24, 1977.

³³¹ Ronald Ozio, "High School Integration Plans Ready," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 5, 1977.

using only percentages instead of fixed numbers for junior high students that needed to be reassigned, which would not improve the desegregation effort. Furthermore, this plan left out six junior high schools, which hadn't been altered at all under these court ordered plans. In regards to elementary schools, the government thought the district's suggestions of abandoning the computer plan and reducing the number of paired schools would only result in less integration and more segregation.³³²

A few weeks later, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission's Texas Advisory Committee declared that CCISD was still segregated despite seven years at various attempts to integrate the schools. Chairman Milton I. Tobian declared that, "Superintendent Dana Williams and School Trustees must stop foot-dragging on integration and take 'the initiative in developing additional plans designed to further...desegregation...without waiting for instructions from the Court.' Williams should be fired if he is 'unable or unwilling' to implement such plans."³³³ Furthermore, there was still not enough African American and Mexican American teachers, and that school board members should not only be selected at large but should be represented adequately by the people of Corpus Christi. Dr. Héctor P. García stated in regards to the seven trustees that are Anglo, "they represent 'their own racist views' and do not represent the district's Mexican-American majority."³³⁴ Williams refused to make a comment, but in a letter written to Commission Regional Director, J. Richard Avena, prior to the committee's claims, he wrote, "I find many inaccuracies in (a draft of) the report, conclusions not based on fact, and with almost

³³² Ronald Ozio, "Government Opposes Integration Plans," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 10, 1977.

³³³ Ronald Ozio, "Panel Slams Board, Williams, Cox," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 26, 1977.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

complete bias from start to finish. It is evident that your efforts (are) to embarrass the superintendent...and the board of education.”³³⁵ Williams and the Board of Education weren’t the only ones who received disapproval, but so did Judge Owen D. Cox. Jose Cisneros said that, “it is ‘quite evident’ that Cox hasn’t done enough to promote desegregation in the district.”³³⁶

In an Order by the Fifth Circuit Court filed June 10, 1977, Cox set out the plan for the 1977-1978 school year, and asserted that now a plan for High School must be implemented. This order dismantled the Computer Integration Plan that had been in use for the elementary levels. Now, for elementary schools, a combination of new geographic zones and pairing would be implemented. Students attending Kindergarten through second grade would go to their neighborhood schools. However, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades would be paired and students would go to various schools depending on their grade. For junior high, the same pairing plan that was used in 1976-1977 would be used again and it would require a racial ratio of 80% minority and 20% Anglo. The pairings included a set of three schools, Cunningham, Cullen, and Hass, and another set of Martin and Brown. For high school the Court accepted boundary line changes for several schools, including Moody, Carroll, and Ray. Moody’s boundary would be extended to include students that previously went to Carroll, and Ray’s boundary would also be altered to include students from Carroll. These new boundaries would be applied to sophomores and juniors with seniors allowed to remain at the same school they had attended the past three years.³³⁷

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ Order for Integration, June 10, 1977, Order for Integration, July 19, 1976, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 163, Folder 3.

After Cox's newest integration plan came out, the U.S. Department of Justice thought that it did very little to desegregate schools in Corpus Christi. The Justice Department claimed that this new plan would actually cause schools that had been desegregated to become segregated once again, that it did not uphold the 80-20 ethnic ratio in some schools, resulted in too little integration for Moody High School while leaving King untouched, and did not require younger-age students' integration experience, which would have been valuable for them.³³⁸ In response to the Justice Department's findings, Dana Williams stated, "the government is consistent. They don't like us."³³⁹ Additionally, in this new plan, fifteen elementary schools would not have supported the 80-20% ethnic ratios, and several elementary schools, including Crossley, Lamar, Chula Vista, Allen, Travis, and Prescott would actually become more segregated than the school year before.³⁴⁰ State Representative Hugo Berlanga felt that Cox's new order was a return to the neighborhood school concept, which had been in use by the district prior to busing. Berlanga was not opposed to neighborhood schools, but he stated that they must be equal. However, despite this new trend, Berlanga upheld that single-member districts were the only way Mexican Americans had a viable chance to get elected onto the school board.³⁴¹

The *Caller Times* reported that overall, the opposition to busing had significantly declined over the past few years since the integration plans had been implemented. Concerned

³³⁸ Anne Dodson, "Justice Department hits integration plan," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 27, 1977.

³³⁹ Ronald Ozio, "District Urged to Broaden Pairing Plan," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 28, 1977.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Ronald Ozio, "Berlanga ties school order to special districts," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 14, 1977.

Neighbors had a reduction of membership, and by 1976, this group was no longer holding any rallies. Despite getting several members elected to the school board, including Dale Hornsby and Martha Darlington, Concerned Neighbors now called for their resignations. The previous boycott of the schools in 1976 had failed miserably, and Arturo Vásquez stated that Concerned Neighbors was “a group of sick people and racists.” Another anti-busing organization, National Association for Neighborhood Schools had membership of 15,000 in Texas with most members inactive. Citizens for Responsible Action, yet another anti-busing organization, was a group of people from the Southside of Corpus Christi, but had also received little attention from the public. Parents-In-Touch founded by Barbara King, claimed they had a membership of two hundred people, but no more than twenty people attended monthly meetings. King decided to withhold her daughter from attending Lozano Elementary School after she was ordered to be bused, and was ordered to court on truancy charges. According to Elbert Ocañas, the president of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), “Her tactics have embarrassed the people who ordinarily oppose busing.”³⁴²

When school started in the fall of 1977, a majority of the Anglos re-assigned to Moody High School did not show up for school. According to Moody’s principal, Ed Grant, out of 150 students newly assigned to Moody, 73 had registered. The assistant director of pupil accounting, Tom Cron only asserted that he did not know where these seventy-five students had gone.³⁴³ By September 1977, eighteen schools within CCISD did not have enough Anglos to support the 80-20% ethnic ratio. This included fourteen elementary schools, two junior highs, and two high

³⁴² Ronald Ozio, “Busing Opposition Remains ingrained, but fervor of past years has dimmed,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 12, 1977.

³⁴³ “Carroll Anglos reassigned to Moody aren’t showing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 31, 1977.

schools located on the Westside of town. Even though the new court order moved some of Carroll's students to Moody, there had only been a five percent increase for Anglo students. Moody was now 91% minority and 9% Anglo. Crossley was the least integrated campus in the district with only 1% Anglo enrollment.³⁴⁴ Miller High School, which was left out of the court order actually had a decline in their Anglo population, going from 14% to 12%. According to Cox, there was no high school to pair with Miller, and that Miller's establishment was not intended to create a segregated school.³⁴⁵ King was also left out of the order, because it was close to achieving the 80-20% ethnic ratio with a 76% Anglo enrollment.³⁴⁶

In May 1978 another integration plan was submitted to Cox for the 1978-1979 school year. Jack McQueen, the president of the school board said that the plan was "a little bit of bad and a little bit of good." In this new plan, the district proposed to close Savage Elementary, pair Allen and Travis and bus grades 3-6, renovate Crossley, and rebuild several schools, including Travis, Houston, Allen, and Fannin. The other schools would maintain their desegregation procedures from the 1977-1978 school year. During the 1977-1978 school year 2,400 students were bused and this new plan would add an additional 600 students.³⁴⁷ This plan was later accepted by Cox, and by the start of the school year in 1978, 21 out of the 54 CCISD schools were still not considered integrated. Part of the reason for this, according to some, was that the

³⁴⁴ Ronald Ozio, "18 CCISD schools lack enough Anglos: 80-20 ethnic mix is court standard," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 10, 1977.

³⁴⁵ Miller was originally Corpus Christi High School, Corpus Christi's first high school.

³⁴⁶ Ronald Ozio, "High Schools still 'segregated' too," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 28, 1977.

³⁴⁷ Ronald Ozio, "Integration Compromise Unveiled: Plan Avoids mass reassignment," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 20, 1978.

younger students were not subject to being bused, and some schools still weren't part of the integration plan itself.³⁴⁸ Dr. C. Tom Cron said part of the reason some schools aren't upholding the 80-20 ratio was due to less Anglo students attending CCISD. Originally when busing began, Anglos comprised 39% of the student body, but by 1979 this had dropped to 31%. Out of the 56 CCISD schools, only eight had a majority of Anglos, including King with 67% Anglo attendance. Cron stated, "With the ethnic percentages we have in this district there is a limit to what we can do."³⁴⁹

In a chart showing the racial compositions of students before and after desegregation there are some noticeable alterations within the high schools. For example, King, one of the schools with the highest percentages of Anglos in 1970 at 91% dropped to 87% in 1973, and 76% in 1978.³⁵⁰ King High School's Mexican American population increased from 9% in 1970 to 12% in 1973 to 24% in 1978. Moody High School, which had the lowest Anglo percentages in 1970 with 4% increased to 20% in 1973 and then lowered to 10% in 1978. The Mexican American population at Moody was 86% in 1970, 72% in 1973, and then went back up to 90% in 1978. In 1970, only two high schools-Miller and Moody-had African American students, and in 1973, those two schools still had the highest percentages for African American enrollment. By 1978, every school had African American students, but it is hard to tell how significant their populations were due to the chart combining Mexican American and African American

³⁴⁸ Ronald Ozio, "21 out of 54 schools not integrated three years after Court orders it," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 9, 1978.

³⁴⁹ Dr. Dwayne Bliss also stated, "The problem is we have fewer and fewer Anglo students to distribute." Patsy Lochbaum, "18 city schools skirt guidelines," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 20, 1979.

³⁵⁰ In 1978, the ratios for Mexican Americans and African Americans were combined for all of the high schools.

percentages.³⁵¹ In regards to teachers, in 1970-1971, there were 1,557 Anglo teachers (78.1%), and by 1977-1978 school year there were 1,409 (67.1%) Anglo teachers. In 1970-1971 there were 364 Mexican American teachers (18.2%) and by 1977-1978 there were 581 teachers (27.7%). In 1970-1971 there were 74 African American teachers (3.7%) and by 1977-1978 there were 109 African American teachers (5.2%). Even though the percentages for Anglo teachers decreased over the eight year period, overall they still were the dominant race of teachers within CCISD.³⁵²

By August 1979, CCISD had two programs and three schools that were considered “magnet schools,” or a school that had special curriculum or classes certain students could qualify for. One was a fine arts program at Chula Vista School, and there was the Athena program located at Windsor Park and Baker Middle School for gifted-and-talented students. Neither one of these schools resulted from Cox’s orders, and some studies said that these special schools were “no panacea for segregation.”³⁵³ In regards to the Athena program, minority students had to score 86% on the qualifying tests, and the Anglo students 94%. A study done for the U.S. Office of Education said, “Only a limited amount of desegregation can be attributed to

³⁵¹ “Section II: Proposed American GI Forum of U.S. Learning Enrichment Project to Support CCISD Desegregation Plan,” pg. 8B, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 3.

³⁵² “Section II: Proposed American GI Forum of U.S. Learning Enrichment Project to Support CCISD Desegregation Plan,” pg. 20A, Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 162, Folder 3.

³⁵³ Chris Connell, “More funds for magnet schools seen,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 31, 1979.

magnet schools.”³⁵⁴ Yet, this was only the beginning of the creation of these magnet and special emphasis schools within CCISD.

On August 14, 1974 a suit was filed against Dana Williams by LULAC, AGIF, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), and others who claimed that CCISD was guilty of racial discrimination in regards to how trustees were elected to the school board. The trial for this case occurred four years later from August 21, 1978 and ended September 1, 1978. Before the ruling of this case, the school board was comprised of seven members that had terms of six years. In order to be elected, these individuals would run to represent selected geographic areas of the district regardless if they lived in that area or not.³⁵⁵ Mexican Americans argued that this type of at-large election ultimately hindered minority votes, and made it unlikely that a minority would be elected to the school board. Ruben Bonilla, the LULAC president in 1974, said, “Anglos didn’t vote for Mexican-American candidates, and the Mexican Americans were not maximizing their voting strength, so there was no equal representation on the board.”³⁵⁶ This type of voting for board members was enacted in 1956, but on October 2, 1979, Judge Owen D. Cox ruled that the “at large, by place election scheme of the Corpus Christi Independent School District is unconstitutional.”³⁵⁷ After this case, a mixed

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ “Memorandum and Order: LULAC v. Dana Williams,” October 2, 1979,” Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 170, Folder 2.

³⁵⁶ Jo Ann Zuniga, “Hispanic Coalition seeks new school board tack,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 5, 1981.

³⁵⁷ “Memorandum and Order: LULAC v. Dana Williams,” October 2, 1979,” Dr. Héctor P. García Papers, Mary and Jeff Bell Library Special Collections and Archives, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Box 170, Folder 2.

voting plan was adopted that allowed three members to be elected at large, and four from single member districts. By 1981, the school board had four Anglos, one African American, and two Mexican Americans with one female.³⁵⁸

By May 1980, the school board remained under court order to desegregate and once again decided to shift several school boundaries, which would result in the busing of 600 additional students. Savage Elementary would be officially closed, and a new Southside school would be built in the upcoming months. Additionally, the attendance zones changed for Coles, Oak Park, Crossley, and Gibson.³⁵⁹ A year later, the school board began discussing the shift from busing to using the neighborhood school concept once again. If this were to take effect, Dr. Tom Cron believed that eight Westside schools would once again increase in minority enrollment. In some cases, certain schools would remain below 20% Anglo enrollment with or without busing. Eli Grant, a school board trustee said, "I don't think busing is doing the job the plaintiffs thought would."³⁶⁰ If the school board were to employ the neighborhood school plan once again, only six schools would have an Anglo population greater than 50%. In the 1973-1974 school year, only twenty-seven schools had 50% or less Anglo enrollment, and by 1981 that number had increased to thirty-seven.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Jo Ann Zuniga, "Hispanic Coalition seeks new school board tack," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 5, 1981.

³⁵⁹ Anne Dodson, "600 more students will be bused," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 13, 1980.

³⁶⁰ Bobbi Reiste, "Move is made toward return to neighborhood schools," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, April 28, 1981.

³⁶¹ Joey Lozano, "CCISD mules Court review of busing," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 11, 1981.

In May 1981, Dana Williams decided to announce his retirement after being CCISD's superintendent for nineteen years. In regards to integration, he stated, "it tore us apart. It was a divisive factor in the community."³⁶² In regards to busing, he hoped that the district would solve that in Court in the upcoming months and said, "If I can get us out of busing, I'll get these kids back out of private schools."³⁶³ He believed that the migration of Anglo students from CCISD public schools into private schools was not only a threat to CCISD but to the cornerstone of democracy. A few days after Williams's announcement, the school board decided to submit a new plan to the Court that would end mandatory busing within the city. Arturo Medina, a board member, stated that submitting this proposal "should signal the beginning of the end of busing in Corpus Christi. We have had a good fight, but it is time to shake hands over it. We have learned together and can live together for the betterment of the children."³⁶⁴ A factor for this decision was the fact that the district was becoming more minority based while the Anglo population had continue to decline to 30%.³⁶⁵

By June 1981, Williams's successor, Vance Littleton was announced as the new CCISD superintendent, and he embraced both the community and the court order. Being Anglo in a city with a high Mexican American population, Littleton stated, "I can't change my ethnic background, but I want to be representative of all ethnic groups in our community and our school

³⁶² Gardner Selby, "School Integration 'tore us apart': Dana Williams remembers 19 years in office," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 23, 1981.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Linda Carrico, "Trustees take step to end busing: District lawyers told to prepare papers for court," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 27, 1981.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

system.”³⁶⁶ A month later, Jude D. Owen Cox requested to be removed from the desegregation case, and was replaced by George P. Kazen, who now had the responsibility of deciding on the busing factor.³⁶⁷ By August 1981, the Justice Department rejected the school board’s plan to end busing due to the fact that the “ethnic population has not changed drastically enough to justify ending busing in the district.”³⁶⁸ Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds reported that the Justice Department used two criteria to decide whether a school district was integrated. First, does the district encourage equal education to every student regardless of race? Secondly, has the district attained as much integration as possible without having to use busing? According to Reynolds, one of the reasons the new plan was rejected was due to the second factor.³⁶⁹

By December, Littleton and other school board members decided to go to Washington to unveil a new desegregation measure that would hopefully end court ordered busing in Corpus Christi. According to the district attorneys, “desegregation already has been achieved in the school system,” and Littleton believed that busing was a waste of time and money.³⁷⁰ Furthermore, J.W. Gary, the same lawyer that defended the district in *Cisneros*, commented, “Mandatory busing is not needed because the school district provides equal education

³⁶⁶ Joey Lozano, “Littleton sidesteps busing, bilingual questions,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 5, 1981.

³⁶⁷ “Kazen to handle local suit on school busing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 28, 1981.

³⁶⁸ Bobbi Reiste and JoAnn Zuniga, “Justice Department Objects to school busing review,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 26, 1981.

³⁶⁹ “U.S. Says CCISD integration efforts fell short,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 5, 1981.

³⁷⁰ Leslie Williams, “CCISD officials head for capital with a new idea,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, December 19, 1981.

opportunities to all students.”³⁷¹ This new plan proposed by Littleton would allow students to sign up for special programs at various schools throughout the district. This would hopefully result in students’ voluntary agreement to be bused to these particular schools with special programs. This in turn, would lead to more racial integration in Corpus Christi schools without forcing students to be mandatorily bused throughout the city. In CCISD 2,291 elementary students, and 702 junior high students were currently being mandatorily bused.³⁷²

When Jo Ann Zuniga asked parents from various backgrounds about the possibility of busing ending, some had positive attitudes towards the return to neighborhood schools, and others had a negative outlook towards the changes. One parent, Patricia Rodriguez stated, “I’m in favor of the new plan...it was so inconvenient for me.”³⁷³ On the other hand, Jeanne Gonzalez stated, “We’re an old fashioned Mexican American family. We keep to ourselves. And I believe no matter how educated or well off, Mexican Americans feel inferior to Anglos because we are not exposed to their environment. If parents around my neighborhood could see the difference and the Anglos on the Southside could find out we don’t have just pot-smoking, wild kids, then we could learn so much from each other.”³⁷⁴ Another parent, Martha Peters stated that her daughter “was just one little Anglo among a bunch of Mexican Americans... completely

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Jo Ann Zuniga, “End of the line for busing: Parents exhibit mixed reactions,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 13, 1982.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

surrounded by Mexican Americans,” and concluded that she was happy there was going to be no more busing.³⁷⁵

Even though the district proposed ending busing, the numbers confirmed it still had not accomplished integration. In May 1982, Beth Arburn Davis reported that schools comprised mostly of one race still were present within CCISD. For example, Moody High School, which opened in 1968 with a 96% minority percentage, had only dropped to 94% minority by 1982. Some elementary schools were also comprised mostly of Mexican American students, including Oak Park, Zavala, Shaw, and Allen. Windsor Park, the gifted-and-talented school, had 59% Anglo, 38% Mexican American, and 1% African American. In regards to ethnic ratios of teachers, in 1972, 78% were Anglo, 18% Mexican American, and 3% African American. By the 1981-1982 school year, 61% were Anglo, 33% were Mexican American, and 5% were African American. Even though those percentages showed improvement, there was a decrease of 121 Anglo teachers, an increase of 404 Mexican American teachers, and an increase of 55 African American teachers with Anglos still dominating CCISD’s faculty.³⁷⁶

In August of 1982, a new U.S. District Court Judge, Hayden W. Head Jr., ruled that busing would begin to phase-out in CCISD over a five-year period and would officially end in 1986. Beginning with the start of the 1982 school year, the busing of elementary students would end, and new programs would be implemented in several schools to encourage students to sign up to be bused to those locations, which would continue integration efforts. By the 1983-1984 school year, busing for junior highs would also end. The district would begin implementing

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ Beth Arburn Davis, “One-race schools predominant,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 13, 1982.

“special emphasis” schools “which target schools that have high rates of low achieving students.” A total of six emphasis schools would be created, and the magnet programs at Windsor Park, Baker, and Chula Vista would continue as well. Furthermore, a new board, the Plaintiff Advisory Board was required to meet at least two times a year to go over data to determine if integration was still occurring within CCISD. If this board did not think the school board was doing its due diligence they could report their findings to the Court in order to seek further action.³⁷⁷

One of the conditions of the new plan was to implement extended day programs at several schools located on the Westside of town. However, less than a third of students expected to enroll had signed up by the deadline. Only thirteen Anglo students had signed up for the program, with Travis Elementary receiving no Anglo students. However, 102 students did sign up to be bused to four schools located on the Southside of town under a voluntary program. Under the majority-to-minority transfer program, 1,281 students had also requested to be bused, which showed an increase of 46 students from the year before.³⁷⁸ Superintendent Vance Littleton announced that the advisory committee established under this new order needed to meet and discuss the fact very few Anglo students had signed up for the extended day program. This program was located at eight elementary schools, four with high percentages of Anglos and four with high percentages of minority students. For the elementary school with high Anglo enrollment, 114 minority students had volunteered for the program. However, only 19 Anglo students had volunteered for the same program at the schools with high numbers of minority

³⁷⁷ Nancy Floeck, “Court begins phase-out of busing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 3, 1982.

³⁷⁸ Sue Fahlgren, “Few Elementary Students sign for transfers,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 18, 1982.

students.³⁷⁹ After meeting with the committee, Littleton announced that the deadline for signing up for these extended day programs would be postponed in order to encourage more Anglos to enroll.³⁸⁰

In March 1983, the advisory council approved the plans to end busing for junior high students for the upcoming school year. In addition to continuing the programs implemented at the elementary level, the school board decided to create another special emphasis school at Shaw Elementary School.³⁸¹ In June 1983, the *Caller Times* reported that the test scores were rising within CCISD, which to school board members, meant that this new voluntary desegregation plan without busing was working. However, what is interesting is the schools that showed the biggest improvement were schools that had high Anglo enrollment. For elementary schools, Meadowbrook showed the largest increase from 53% to 70%, and Windsor Park had the highest overall score on the state testing with a 96% pass rate. Both of these schools had high Anglo enrollment, and despite improvement in several schools with high minority enrollment, such as Zavala, those test scores really did not reveal significant change. For high schools, Moody showed the greatest improvement going from 39% Anglo to 42%, but the school with the high test score was King, a predominantly Anglo school, with a 64% pass rate. Despite some increase

³⁷⁹ Leslie Williams, "Officials to discuss extended-day plan," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 26, 1982.

³⁸⁰ Leslie Williams, "CCISD extended-day deadline delayed," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 4, 1982.

³⁸¹ Leslie Williams, "Junior High busing to end here," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 1, 1983.

of scores for several minority schools, they were still significantly behind scores from schools with high enrollments of Anglos.³⁸²

By November 1983, the school board announced that only two schools would have to employ mandatory busing out of the district's sixty schools. These two schools would be Club Estates on the Southside and Travis on the Westside for the 1984-1985 school year.³⁸³ By December 1984, CCISD announced that busing for Travis and Club Estates would end by the conclusion of the 1984-1985 school year. This decision officially ended all mandatory busing present within CCISD a year ahead of the projected schedule. Busing under voluntary measures would continue. In addition to ending mandatory busing, the Committee also expected another measure that would create seven new special emphasis schools in return for allowing the district to end the extended day programs.³⁸⁴ Still, by May of 1984, the *Caller Times* reported that several schools within CCISD were still comprised of a majority of minorities. A third of Mexican American students in elementary attend eight of the district's forty elementary schools. Some Westside schools even have minority percentages ranging from 95% to 99%, while 37% of African American children attend only two elementary schools. When Jose Cisneros was asked about this trend, he stated, "But all that time, what we wanted most was equality of schools that

³⁸² Sue Fahlgren, "Test scores are rising in city schools," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 28, 1983.

³⁸³ Leslie Williams, "Busing is cut from all but two schools," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, November 15, 1983.

³⁸⁴ Leslie Williams, "Forced busing to end here," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, December 11, 1984.

provide the same level of education all across the district. And now, as far as we can tell, this is the case.”³⁸⁵

A year later in May of 1985, Vance Littleton decided to retire, and he left with support and praise from the plaintiffs who had filed *Cisneros* in 1968. Manuel Narvaez, a plaintiff, thanked “Littleton for opening up the Red Sea for our people.”³⁸⁶ In regards to Williams, the Superintendent that preceded Littleton, the plaintiffs agreed that Mexican Americans would have been “doomed” under his leadership. However, under Littleton, they felt that he had “replaced Williams and his philosophy with one that gets the maximum from each child by making them feel they are something special.”³⁸⁷ In regards to busing ending within CCISD, Cisneros said, “We worked together and came out with a solution that everybody liked, we would still be at it if he (Littleton) hadn’t come along. The struggle would be going for a long, long time.”³⁸⁸ Arturo Medina, a board member said, that busing “was an overall symbol of the wound in the community...the development of the special emphasis school was a masterpiece.”³⁸⁹

As historians, it is common to often wonder or question the role an event had on the projection of history, and to consider such as what may have changed if that event hadn’t occurred the way it did. Perhaps if a different decision had been made, or if a war were never declared, or even if a separate outcome occurred, how would history be different? In this

³⁸⁵ Anne Dodson, “Some Local Schools still mostly minority,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 13, 1984.

³⁸⁶ Leslie Williams, “Hispanics Praise Vance Littleton: Retiring Superintendent is thanked for ending busing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 4, 1985.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ “Busing to Travis, Club Estates ends,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 31, 1985.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

particular case, one can't help but wonder what would have happened if busing had not been concluded in Corpus Christi? Or perhaps if a different desegregation plan had been adopted, would that have effectively changed the racial compositions of the schools? Despite evidence showing that schools were still not integrated by 1986, the Court, the district, the superintendent, and the school board decided to end mandatory busing. This decision allowed the district to promise the citizens that other methods would be used in order to encourage integration, but from this point forward, the district would never truly going to adopt a program that fully achieves an ethnic balance in all CCISD schools. The next chapter discusses what the district did once mandatory busing concluded, and reveals these decisions enabled them to require as little integration as possible, resulting in a school district that remains segregated today.

CONCLUSION

The End of *Cisneros* and the Lingering Evidence of Racism and Inequality: 1986-2017

Even though court-ordered busing ended in 1986 for all CCISD schools, *Cisneros* was still more than a decade away from concluding. Due to the fact busing was no longer going to be implemented in order to integrate schools throughout Corpus Christi, the school district needed to design a system that would continue the act of integration and not reverse the court ruling. Unfortunately, the school district's solution to integration in the post-busing era would never truly integrate CCISD schools. As a result, racism is still present within CCISD schools today, and little has been done by the Superintendent and school board to try and fix this trend and integrate the schools. Rather, racism and inequality has solidified even more since the conclusion of *Cisneros*. One factor that has widened the racial gap even more was the opening of a new high school in 2015 that is mostly Anglo due to its location and its gerrymandered school boundaries. These decisions made by the school board have had adverse effects on several of the other schools in the city leading to displacement and widespread frustration throughout the district.

By January of 1986, Tom Nix, the school board President, pressed the school board and the public to conclude the court-ordered desegregation program. He believed there had been great progress since 1968, and that the district no longer needed to be under the rule and watchful eye of the court. Some school board members agreed with Nix, including Susan Hopkins, who said, "The board is capable of running our own show. The minority members of the board are quite capable and the Anglo members of the board will want to provide good quality education

for all kids in Corpus Christi.”³⁹⁰ However, other board members such as Roland Rodriguez and Elliot Grant, asserted that “while the district has made significant progress in the area of desegregation, it is not ready to have the court order lifted.”³⁹¹ Members of the Plaintiff’s Advisory Committee also agreed with this statement, reminding the school board and public that more was still needed to be accomplished in order to achieve educational equality.³⁹²

The majority-to-minority transfer rule was still being applied in 1987. This allowed students “whose ethnic group is in the majority at their neighborhood school to transfer to a school where they are in the minority.”³⁹³ This rule was part of the desegregation order with the purpose of encouraging students to voluntarily transfer in order to achieve greater integration. However, an article from *Caller Times*, reported that in 1986, 342 students transferred out of Moody High School using this rule in order to attend schools on the Southside of town. Various leaders and principals began to argue that this rule was causing more segregation rather than integration. A total of 155 students transferred from Miller High School as well, and only three students from Southside schools applied to attend Moody and none for Miller. Furthermore, Martin Junior High lost top academic students that were supposed to be part of the special emphasis program, but rather these students transferred to Baker, Hamlin, Haas, or Cullen

³⁹⁰ Beth Arburn Davis, “End of Desegregation plan could bring back busing,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 26, 1986.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ Suzy McAuliff, “Transfer rule gets fire from Westside,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 3, 1987.

middle schools. Tony Bonilla, who was previously the National LULAC President in 1981 and 1982, commented that this policy allowed “one way segregation.”³⁹⁴

By August 1987, Judge Hayden W. Head Jr. decided to hear the district’s proposal to end the desegregation suit after nineteen years. However, many still objected to this case closing due to evident examples of inequality, especially on the Westside of town. By 1987, Ray had a minority enrollment of 66.6%, Carroll 55.59%, King 50.03%, Moody 94.87%, and Miller with 93.6%. One of the problems in regards to these statistics was the assumption that Westside schools, such as Moody and Miller, could not offer the same level of education as the Southside schools, such as King and Carroll. This concept was unfortunately supported with test scores due to Miller and Moody High Schools having the lowest pass rates for the districts’ high schools. The other problem facing the Westside schools was the fact they also couldn’t offer higher level classes due to such low attendance rates.”³⁹⁵ This trend unfortunately would not improve over the next few decades.

By January of 1988, both sides agreed to lower the amount of majority-to-minority transfers within the district, and decided to add a magnet program to Moody in order to not only offer unique courses, but also encourage transfer to the high school.³⁹⁶ Furthermore, the school board supported the conversion of Martin Junior High into a special emphasis school, which

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁵ Reverent Elliott Grant, a member of the school board, said, “I’m not so sure at this time that every school affords an opportunity for the best education and the best facilities. Suzy McAuliffe, “Ghost of Segregation lurks in Westside Schools: Court will determine future of 1968 class action lawsuit,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 2, 1987.

³⁹⁶ Sandra Forero, “Final Changes to transfer plan made,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 8, 1988.

would offer special programs and lower student to teacher ratios.³⁹⁷ A few months later, U.S. District Judge Hayden Head Jr. ordered an extension of CCISD's desegregation plan for three more years. This new order actually continued the majority-to-minority transfers, which had been an aspect of contention, especially among Westside school leaders. Head stated in regards to the desegregation process in Corpus Christi, "What you have achieved is very, very commendable."³⁹⁸ A teacher named Richard Godoy did not agree with Head, and rather argued that "the agreement still makes us a segregated school. It is nothing more than de facto segregation."³⁹⁹ Part of this new order was extending special emphasis schools into more elementary schools with high enrollments of minority children, and to continue these special emphasis schools into middle and high schools as well.⁴⁰⁰

By 1988, 74.8% of students within CCISD were minority, and 25.2% were Anglo.⁴⁰¹ Jill Lawrence, an educational writer, wrote an article published in *Caller Times* revealing that the National School Boards Association believed "schools are in danger of becoming segregated again as a result of rising Hispanic isolation in the West and outmoded integration plans in the South."⁴⁰² A study revealed that "Hispanics have been becoming more steadily isolated in

³⁹⁷ Sandra Forero, "School Officials Back Plan to alter Martin emphasis," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 13, 1988.

³⁹⁸ David Teece, "Judge Oks extension for CCISD: Decision adds three years to desegregation plan," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 28, 1988.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² Jill Lawrence, "Era of new segregation worries officials: School group cites Hispanic isolation," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 24, 1989.

virtually all parts of the country.”⁴⁰³ The report credited these trend to several factors, including higher rates of immigration, lower enrollment of Anglos, and the continued practice of residential segregation.⁴⁰⁴ By September of 1991, Texas announced that minorities were the majority for the first time ever in public schools across the state. In 1990, minorities comprised 50.47% of Texas students, and Anglos 49.53%. For minorities, Mexican Americans had 33.88% enrollment, African Americans 14.41%, Asians 2%, and Native Americans 0.2%.⁴⁰⁵ A study that analyzed the segregation of African Americans and Mexican Americans from 1968 to 1986 believed the way to end the segregation of these two minority groups was to focus on effective research techniques for desegregation and provide help to districts instead of the federal government constantly wavering and assaulting various methods and educational plans, which prevented integration.⁴⁰⁶ Unfortunately, in the CCISD case, few scholars (as noted in the introduction) have studied how desegregation techniques might aid the district. By providing a concise history of how racism shaped schools in Corpus Christi, this thesis offers a remedial foundation for such future scholarship.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ Part of the reason for lower enrollment of Anglo children in Corpus Christi was due to White Flight, when Anglo parents began sending their children to other schools instead of being bussed across town. They enrolled their children in several private schools around the area in order to avoid the bussing order issued by the Court in 1975 for Corpus Christi. Some families moved into certain districts as well to prevent their children from going to a school where the schools may have high minority enrollment. *Ibid*; Chuck Kaufman, “Private Schools Swamped,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, 1975; Cathy Soete, “Flight to parochial schools predicted by some,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 28, 1975.

⁴⁰⁵ Scott Rothschild, “Minorities are Majority in Texas public schools: Hispanic students increase as Anglo percentages drop to 49.53%,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 7, 1991.

⁴⁰⁶ Jill Lawrence, “Era of new segregation worries officials: School group cites Hispanic isolation,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 24, 1989.

By September 1990, the *Cisneros* plaintiffs agreed that the twenty-two year-long case could be settled if the judge and district converted Driscoll Middle School into a special emphasis school.⁴⁰⁷ Soon after, in May 1991, the District decided to file for unitary status with the federal court, which was the beginning move in concluding the desegregation lawsuit that had begun in 1968. In a statement regarding this decision and the court case itself, Cisneros said, “It was definitely a hassle for my family and me. We went through pure hell. But it was definitely worth it.”⁴⁰⁸ Manuel Narvaez, another plaintiff, believed that CCISD had made amazing improvements to the schools, and the implementation of educational programs throughout the district since the filing of the court case. If this status were to be approved, the district would be supervised for three years to make sure the district maintained programs that were put in place to achieve desegregation.⁴⁰⁹

On July 23, 1992, U.S. District Judge Hayden W. Head Jr. settled the *Cisneros* lawsuit, and declared that the Corpus Christi Independent School District was “no longer divided unconstitutionally along racial lines.”⁴¹⁰ The Judge ruled that CCISD would still be supervised for a three year period, and six specific schools would also be overseen due to their high minority populations and generally low test scores.⁴¹¹ Head stated, “I believe that all that can be achieved

⁴⁰⁷ John Mies, “Integration Suit Outcome pending: 2 plaintiffs back idea for retaining special-emphasis programs,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 7, 1990.

⁴⁰⁸ Vivienne Heines, “Vote Signals end to desegregation battle: CCISD approves legal action to end 23-year-old lawsuit,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 14, 1991.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Jeffery Ball, “Judge Releases CCISD federal control: 6 schools may determine suit’s outcome,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, July 24, 1992.

⁴¹¹ Those six schools were Fannin Garcia, Houston, Kostoryz, Lexington, and Prescott. *Ibid.*

by the intervention and remedies of the Court have been achieved, and that the parties have worked together as any community could want.”⁴¹² Charles Benson, who had just resigned as Superintendent a month before this ruling, agreed that some schools had high compositions of minorities, but he declared that trend was due to housing patterns and not district decisions on boundary lines. Ignoring the history of residential segregation that had exacerbated the lawsuit, Benson continued by saying, “I think if certain draconian ways were used, such as busing, you could change that...But I don’t think it would make common sense, and I think it would be very disruptive.”⁴¹³ Despite these facts and concerns, the *Cisneros* case was settled and these racial trends would continue regardless of the various emphasis schools and transfer policies.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ Ansley Erickson, a historian who analyzed the desegregation process Nashville, Tennessee undertook after *Brown*, argued that the school board and leaders never truly desired full integration of the schools, but rather made decisions to guarantee very little racial change within the schools. Even though Erickson predominantly focused on the integration of African American students with Anglo students due to low enrollments of other minorities, the arguments she made can be applied to CCISD as well. Erickson reports that Nashville’s school district was successful in physically integrating the schools between Anglos and African American students, but a different type of racism and segregation took form, such as separating the African American students from the Anglo students into different classes based upon perceived ability, and teachers would use racist stereotypes against African American students as well. Erickson writes, “Even as Nashville’s schools became exceptional for their statistical desegregation, they remained unexceptional in the patterns of unequal educational opportunity they demonstrated.” She argued that Nashville continued a racist educational program despite their successful integration percentages by placing schools in certain geographic locations, how students were placed into classes, and narratives used to justify this inequality between Anglo and African American students. Very similarly in the years after the conclusion of *Cisneros*, CCISD will take very similar actions to maintain minority segregation in Corpus schools. Ansley Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limit*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1-12; *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Another historian, David G. García, wrote *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality*, which focused on the *Soria vs. Oxnard School Board of Trustees* that was decided the same year as *Cisneros*. This lawsuit charged the school board of Oxnard, which is in California, practiced both de jure and de facto segregation, “charging the trustees of knowingly maintaining and purposefully perpetuating segregated schooling.” The

On June 27, 1997, U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack officially dismissed the *Cisneros* court case. Jack believed that education in Corpus Christi had drastically improved since 1968, and thought that the school district should regain control over their schools once again.⁴¹⁵ Jack stated, “There will never be any guarantees that what’s in place will stay in place...the guarantees, I think are that the people of Corpus Christi are not going to let (education) go back to what it was.”⁴¹⁶ This article reported that CCISD in 1997 had a 74% African American and Mexican American composition and 26% Anglo population. Abelardo Saavedra, the Superintendent of CCISD in 1997, noted that since 1968 more African Americans

plaintiffs won the court case, which led to bussing over a ten-year period, hiring more African American and Mexican American teachers, and integrating curriculum taught within the classrooms. However, García argued that the “*Soria* case did not fully uproot patterns of inequality long denied, ignored, and purposely hidden.” Furthermore, he analyzes the four strategies used by the school district to continue subjugating minority students, which include promoting a racial hierarchy, segregation within the schools themselves, destroying a reason for segregation, and by cementing the connection between residential and school segregation. He states, “I argue that residential and school segregation became interconnected ‘not by chance, but by design.’” These arguments are very similar to the ones presented by Erickson and this thesis, due to the fact, the district will use the argument of residential neighborhoods as a means of continuing schools with high compositions of minorities. David G. García, *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality*, (California: University of California Press, 2018), 1-3, 129, 160, 165.

⁴¹⁵ Another historian, Gary Orfield, argues that despite the *Brown* ruling in 1954, school districts have achieved very little integration throughout the nation. He states, “...after *Brown* racial separation both between and within school districts is an ordinary, unnoticed fixture in K-12 education.” Orfield attributes this trend to several factors, including the fact that *Brown* was very unclear in establishing what a desegregated school district should look like. Furthermore, he accounts current day segregation to judges, who have since *Brown*, slowly dismantled the power of the case. Orfield writes, “Judges and others often simply accept school officials’ pledges to create high-quality segregated schools. Consequently, judges make usually irreversible decisions to release school districts from desegregation requirements.” This is essentially what occurs once Jack closed the *Cisneros* case in 1997. Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton and The Harvard Project on School Desegregation, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*, (New York: The New Press, 1996), xiii-xix.

⁴¹⁶ Heather Howard, “Local Suit on Schools Dismissed-Desegregation Battle Changed Education,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 29, 1997.

and Mexican Americans were financially more successful, resulting in the migration of these two groups into the Southside of town. This movement had also affected the racial compositions of various schools located on the Southside of town as well.⁴¹⁷

However, despite the conclusion of the court case, several individuals continued to report about the challenges minorities were facing in Corpus Christi's public schools. One such individual, Jorge Rangel, wrote an article in *Caller Times* proclaiming that "One does not have to look beyond statistics on drop-outs, graduation rates, and enrollment in college and professional schools to conclude that many members of the minority communities that policy-makers targeted for discrimination in the past still lag behind those not burdened by such obstacles."⁴¹⁸ He reprimanded the courts by stating, "Even though the courts have outlawed such pernicious discrimination, society still suffers from the effects of practices that denied generations of innocent students basic constitutional rights and the benefits that flow from a quality education."⁴¹⁹ Rangel concluded by reminding public that "As we strive toward a color blind society, we cannot be blind to history."⁴²⁰

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of *Brown vs. Board*, the *Caller Times* argued that schools located in low-income areas are not only mostly minority, but also tend to have lower test scores trailing behind other schools in the district. Miller and Moody High Schools both scored lower on state tests than the other high schools, King, Carroll, and Ray, who had more

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ Jorge Rangel, "Court can't ignore our racist past," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 17, 2003.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

experienced teachers, and didn't have as many minority and low socio-economic students. The school board was simultaneously seeking to approve a \$230-million-dollar bond that would create another high school, and renovate several schools. Some individuals debated that if the district just redrew boundary lines to encourage more attendance for Moody and Miller, there would be no need for another high school. The President of Corpus Christi's Black Chamber of Commerce, Lamont Taylor, believed the reason the district would not alter any school boundaries was due to "too many precious individuals from Carroll and Ray would have to go to Miller and Moody. That's what needs to be done, but they are not going to do it because they are afraid of what the community would say."⁴²¹

Despite the need for students to transfer to Westside schools, the schools with the highest enrollment were located on the Southside of Corpus Christi. For the 2006-2007 school year, King had the most students with 2, 508 enrolled, followed by Carroll with 2,388, Moody at 1,966, Ray at 1,939, and Miller being the smallest school with 1,183 students. Scott Elliff, the Superintendent for CCISD in 2006 attributed these population numbers to the population shift to the Southside, and the fact that Flour Bluff ISD and a private school, John Paul II High School, were drawing students away from CCISD schools. Moody's student population drastically increased during this time due to a magnet program established for students wanting to pursue a career in the health or science field. Even Ray's student population was decreasing, and the local newspaper reported that the district might bring a special academic program called International Baccalaureate to Ray in order to boost up their population numbers and continue the gifted-and-talented program from Windsor Park and Baker Middle Schools. In 2006, Miller was considered

⁴²¹ Janell Ross and Ofelia Garcia Hunter, "Equal Education is elusive-50 years later Brown vs. Board The South Texas Experience," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 9, 2004.

a Public Education Grant school, which meant around half of the students failed one or more parts of the state test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Prior to 2017-2018, the state required students to pass the TAKS to obtain a high school diploma. As a result, several students transferred out of Miller to the other high schools, with the most going to Moody and Ray. Elliff also attributed to the reduced population numbers at Miller to the fact that residentially the Northside of Corpus Christi was not expanding.⁴²²

The school board decided in 2010 to pass a bond that would create new middle and high schools located on the Southside of town. By 2010, King High School had 2,408 students and Carroll had 2,222 students compared to Miller's 980 students and Moody's 1,828. This new high school was meant to decrease the overcrowding at Carroll and King, and to also follow the growth of the city, which was expanding towards the Southside of town.⁴²³ By 2013, the Board announced that this new school would open for the 2015-2016 school year, and would alter the boundaries for King and Carroll. School Board Vice President, John Marez, supported the notion of adding another high school to CCISD due to his belief that the students "deserve better."⁴²⁴

Sixty years after *Brown*, national studies revealed that a large number of public schools in America were still racially isolated despite all of the desegregation efforts put in place throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Since most of these desegregation methods, including busing, were no longer implemented, a majority of school districts claimed that residential patterns were

⁴²² Adriana Garza, "Testing the boundaries-District's two oldest campuses losing students to Southside boom shifts in CCISD's high school enrollment spur officials to begin brainstorming," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, December 3, 2006.

⁴²³ Elaine Marsilio, "Bond to fund new schools," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, October 31, 2010.

⁴²⁴ Elaine Marsilio, "Corpus Christi ISD trustees approve plan to add sixth high school," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, June 17, 2013.

the continued cause of schools that have high amounts of minority students.⁴²⁵ The *Caller Times*, reported that the census figures over the past twenty years for Corpus Christi revealed that there has been a continual population and economic shift towards the Southside. On the other hand, the Westside of town and other areas that have been central to Corpus Christi's original growth in the early twentieth century have had the opposite occurrence with population numbers declining and reports of lower income levels. In 2015, the city was ranked 103 out of 359 for cities that had overall economic segregation, but Jim Lee, an economist from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, believed that "the city as a whole, in terms of disparity and how divided we are, is still better than other cities."⁴²⁶ City Councilwoman Lucy Rubio, who represents a single-member Westside district, believed that if the town brought more opportunities for businesses and schools to the Westside, the schools would improve as well. Dan Jorgensen, the social sciences chairman at A&M-CC, believed that this would be difficult due to the fact richer neighborhoods pay more in taxes allowing their neighborhoods to receive more city services and priority, while other neighborhoods lose their value and become more

⁴²⁵ Furthermore, for the 2011-2012 school year, 39% of African American, Mexican American, Asian American, and Native Americans attended school that was 90% minority, which showed a marked increase since 1988. Gary Orfield, a professor at the University of California, commented, "Segregation, generally, has increased dramatically." He also argues this point in his book, *Dismantling Desegregation*, and argued that very little has been done since *Brown* to change the racial compositions of schools and to prevent segregation from occurring throughout the United States. Tom Hargrove, "Racial Divides mark schools-Court orders in Brown case fall, report says," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, May 17, 2004; Gary Orfield, Susan E. Eaton and The Harvard Project on School Desegregation, *Dismantling Desegregation*, xv.

⁴²⁶ Kirsten Crow, "Southside Shift," *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, March 8, 2015.

dilapidated over time. This in turn, created various problems for the city in regards to decisions they make with what to do with that money.⁴²⁷

In addition to continued residential segregation, students within Corpus Christi were not performing on the same academic level as others throughout Texas. After the state education scores were released for Texas in 2015, data revealed that students in CCISD had lower scores and performance rates compared to other students throughout the state. Furthermore, this report, the Texas Academic Performance Report, also brought to light that fewer students were sitting for the ACT and SAT tests when compared to data from a few years earlier. This report documented that CCISD has a high composition of students that are economically disadvantaged, and students that are considered at-risk, and conversely, a lower amount of students participating in higher educational programs, such as the gifted-and-talented. Hector Salinas, a Board Trustee commented that “We need to accept the fact that at-risk kids and poverty play a major role with these kids,” and Roland Hernandez, CCISD’s Superintendent admitted, “I don’t like the fact that we’re behind the region and the state.”⁴²⁸ A few months later, on August 17, 2015, CCISD opened the doors of their newest, \$93.2-million-dollar school, Veterans Memorial High School.⁴²⁹ The opening of this new school would only increase racial differences throughout the city even more.

⁴²⁷ Dan Jorgensen also stated that “It becomes very difficult managing those interests...adding that good city planning can help avoid depreciating the value of neighborhoods.” *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Matt Woolbright, “Test scores pose worry,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, January 20, 2015.

⁴²⁹ Allison Ehrlich, “Timeline: Creating Veterans Memorial High School,” *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, August 23, 2015.

In the new millennium, data over the last two decades showed a marked decrease in Anglo students, and a slow increase of Mexican American students within CCISD. For the 2016-2017 school year, CCISD had a total of 38,214 students enrolled with 4% African American students, 79.5% Mexican American students, and 13.6% Anglo students.⁴³⁰ There was a decrease in student numbers when compared to the 2012-2013 school year that accounted for 39, 142 students enrolled with 4.1% African American students, 79.0% Mexican American students, and 14.0% Anglo students.⁴³¹ Even going farther back, CCISD had 39,185 students for the 2003-2004 school year with 5.5% being African American, 72.5% Mexican American, and 20.2% Anglo.⁴³² In addition, CCISD seemed to be losing students over a period of ten years. In regards to racial compositions of teachers in CCISD, for the 2016-2017 school year, 3.6% were African American, 56.8% were Mexican American, and 37.4% were Anglo.⁴³³ For the 2003-2004 school years, 3.0% were African American, 45.5% were Mexican American, and 50.3% were Anglo. While this data showed an increase of minority teachers within CCISD since the *Cisneros* case, the district still hired very few African American teachers.

Even though there was an increased percentage of students passing the state test over time, the scores still showed an inequality between the passing rates of African Americans and

⁴³⁰ Texas Education Agency, “2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD.”

⁴³¹ Texas Education Agency, “2012-2013 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD.”

⁴³² Texas Education Agency, “2003-2004 Academic Excellence Indicator System: Corpus Christi ISD.”

⁴³³ Texas Education Agency, “2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD.”

Mexican Americans when compared to those of Anglos, which revealed that despite all the District's initiatives, very little was accomplished to improve the educational progress of minority students. The dropout rate for grades 9-12 for the 2015-2016 school year for the district was 2.0%, with African Americans comprising 2.5% of the students, Mexican Americans 2.0%, and Anglos 1.9%.⁴³⁴ For the 2011-2012 school year, there was a percentage of 3.1% dropouts, with 3.7% being African American, 3.3% being Mexican American, and 2.2% were Anglo.⁴³⁵ For the 2002-2003 school year CCISD had a 3.6% dropout rate with 3.9% being African American, 4.4% being Mexican American, and 1.7% Anglo.⁴³⁶ Even though the overall dropout rate decreased over time, the data still exposed the fact that minorities were dropping out from school with higher percentages then compared to Anglos. In regards to the state test, for the 2016-2017 school year, 71% of students passed the STAAR exam with 65% being African American, 69% Mexican American, and 81% Anglo.⁴³⁷ For the 2012-2013 school year, 67% passed the newly released STAAR exam with 62% African American, 64% Mexican American, and 82% Anglo students passing.⁴³⁸ For the 2003-2004 school year 62% of students passed the TAKS test with 50% African American, 58% Mexican American, and 78% Anglo students

⁴³⁴ Texas Education Agency, "2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD."

⁴³⁵ Texas Education Agency, "2012-2013 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD."

⁴³⁶ Texas Education Agency, "2003-2004 Academic Excellence Indicator System: Corpus Christi ISD."

⁴³⁷ Texas Education Agency, "2016-2017 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD."

⁴³⁸ Texas Education Agency, "2012-2013 Texas Academic Performance Report: Corpus Christi ISD."

passing.⁴³⁹ Anglos were scoring around 20% higher than those of minority students. This revealed that minority students were still struggling within the classroom, and despite all the district's initiatives for equality among the racial groups, minority students were still falling behind Anglo students.

Not only were minorities scoring lower than Anglo students, many schools in Corpus Christi were still racially segregated revealing that despite *Cisneros* schools still had high compositions of minorities and/ or Anglo students in select schools. For the 2016-2017 school year, the elementary school with the highest composition of Anglo students was Windsor Park Elementary School with a percentage of 35.4%.⁴⁴⁰ Windsor Park is the elementary school that houses the gifted-and-talented program where students have the option to test into the program. The middle school with the highest Anglo composition was Kaffie Middle School with a percentage of 24.5%, with the newly built Southside middle school, Adkins following closely behind with 20.0%.⁴⁴¹ The high school with the highest Anglo composition was the newly opened Southside High School, Veterans Memorial High School with 24.3%, and King High School following with 16%.⁴⁴² The elementary schools with the highest percentage of minority students for the 2016-2017 school year included Los Encinos Special Emphasis School (97%),

⁴³⁹ Texas Education Agency, "2003-2004 Academic Excellence Indicator System: Corpus Christi ISD."

⁴⁴⁰ Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Windsor Park Elementary School."

⁴⁴¹ Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Kaffie Middle School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Adkins Middle School."

⁴⁴² Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Veterans Memorial High School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Richard King High School."

Shaw Special Emphasis School (95%), Allen and Zavala Elementary schools with 94%, and Garcia Elementary school with 93.4%.⁴⁴³ The middle schools with the highest percentage of minority students included Martin Middle School (96.8%), Cunningham Middle School (94.4%), Driscoll Middle School (94.3%), and South Park Middle School (93.5%).⁴⁴⁴ The high schools with the highest minority composition included Moody High School (96.2%), and Miller High School (93.6%).⁴⁴⁵ Out of these 11 schools mentioned that have higher than the 75%-25% ratio of minority-to-Anglo students, nine of them are located on the Westside of Corpus Christi where large numbers of economically disadvantaged and minorities live. On the other hand, out of the five schools mentioned with the highest Anglo percentages none of them are located on the Westside, but rather mostly on the Southside of the city.⁴⁴⁶

In regards to schools' test scores for the 2016-2017 school year, the schools with higher compositions of Anglo students tended to achieve higher pass rates than the schools with higher compositions of minorities. For the elementary schools with high enrollment of minority students, the pass rates for all students and all subjects are as follows: Los Encinos 83%, Shaw

⁴⁴³ Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Los Encinos Special Emphasis School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Shaw Special Emphasis School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Allen Elementary School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Zavala Elementary School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Garcia Elementary School."

⁴⁴⁴ Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Martin Middle School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Cunningham Middle School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Driscoll Middle School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: South Park Middle School."

⁴⁴⁵ Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Moody High School;" Texas Education Agency, "2016-17 School Report Card: Miller High School."

⁴⁴⁶ The percentages calculated did not include students from these racial backgrounds: American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races.

68%, Allen 56%, Zavala 58%, and Garcia 78%.⁴⁴⁷ Contrastingly, Windsor Park, the gifted-and-talented school with the highest Anglo enrollment had 100% pass rate.⁴⁴⁸ Two other elementary schools that followed Windsor Park in their Anglo compositions, Mireles and Kolda, had 91% pass rates for the state exam.⁴⁴⁹ Just within the elementary schools, there is a wide gulf in percentages between the schools with high enrollment of minorities versus those with high enrollments of Anglo students. Los Encinos, a special emphasis school, did have a high pass rate, 83%; however, compared to Mireles and Kolda, still scored lower by 8%, and compared to Windsor Park, 17%. Unfortunately, these trends did not improve for the Middle Schools either.

For the middle schools, there is a very wide gap between the schools with higher amounts of minority students than those that have more Anglo students. For the middle schools with high enrollment of minority students, the pass rates for all students and all subjects are as follows: Martin 58%, Cunningham 61%, Driscoll 54%, and South Park 59%.⁴⁵⁰ Contrastingly, Kaffie and Adkins Middle Schools had a pass rate of 84% and 78% respectively.⁴⁵¹ This data reveals a

⁴⁴⁷ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Los Encinos Special Emphasis School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Shaw Special Emphasis School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Allen Elementary School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Zavala Elementary School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Garcia Elementary School.”

⁴⁴⁸ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Windsor Park Elementary School.”

⁴⁴⁹ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Mireles Elementary School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Kolda Elementary School.”

⁴⁵⁰ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Martin Middle School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Cunningham Middle School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Driscoll Middle School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: South Park Middle School.”

⁴⁵¹ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Kaffie Middle School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Adkins Middle School.”

difference of anywhere from 30% to 20% in scores between the schools with high amounts of minorities compared to others with lower amounts. Interestingly, this wide gap is not evident when looking at data for the high schools. For the high schools with high enrollment of minority students, the pass rates for all students and all subjects are as follows: Moody 71%, and Miller 69%.⁴⁵² King and Veterans on the other hand, had pass rates of 70% and 83% respectively.⁴⁵³ Veterans has the highest pass rate, and King, despite having more Anglo students than Moody and Miller, scored lower than Moody in the state exams. Despite this shift at Moody, by looking at the data comprehensively, it is evident that schools with higher numbers of minority students are generally located on the Southside of town, and are out-performing schools with high percentages of minority students located generally on the Westside of town.

Over the past decade, CCISD has become more diverse within their teaching staff, and in their student racial compositions, but the data reveals that CCISD has not improved or corrected the undereducation that plagues its minority students who in the twenty-first century are still dropping out in higher numbers and scoring lower on state tests when compared to those of Anglo students. Furthermore, minorities and schools comprised of higher percentages of minority students are scoring lower on the state exams than the schools with higher enrollment of Anglos. These were some of the foundational complaints the plaintiffs in the *Cisneros* case brought forward to the court in 1970, and ultimately helped prove that CCISD was indeed a racist district. If that was the case in 1970, what has changed over the past 50 years in CCISD in order to create a district that was not racially segregated? While the district implemented busing

⁴⁵² Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Moody High School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Miller High School.”

⁴⁵³ Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Veterans Memorial High School;” Texas Education Agency, “2016-17 School Report Card: Richard King High School.”

for a few years in the 1980s, but did that truly impact and change the racial compositions of the schools? The district did open several more special emphasis schools since the conclusion of forced busing throughout Corpus Christi, but why aren't these special emphasis schools scoring as high as the schools that are non-emphasis and high Anglo enrollment?

One of CCISD's arguments in the *Cisneros* case to justify segregation and the inequality between schools, was the fact the district supported neighborhood schools, and as a result the schools located in lower-economic areas had higher enrollment of minorities and lower rates of academic excellence. CCISD claimed that these housing trends were not their fault, and did not validate the claim that the district was racially segregating its students. Ironically, if *Cisneros* ruled that this was an unjust explanation, why is this argument still being defended in regards to where schools are built and boundary lines are drawn today? Can CCISD truly say that since its inception in 1871 that it has effectively shifted from a segregated tripartite system to a segregated dual system in 1968 to a unitary integrated system in 2018? The historical record demonstrates that they did not, and as a result, Corpus Christi remains segregated and inequality remains the status quo as evidenced by the underachievement of minority-majority students attending schools located on the Westside of town compared to those students enrolled on the Southside of town.

This inequality and racism needs to end within CCISD. Patrick Carroll, a historian, stated, "Prejudice never quite seems to go away; quite the contrary. At certain times, when it appears to have been laid to rest, it reappears with infuriating and discouraging prominence."⁴⁵⁴ In the same manner, these facts presented in this thesis reveal that racism and prejudice have manifested themselves over many decades within CCISD. This led to the continued creation of

⁴⁵⁴ Patrick Carroll, *Felix Longoria's Wake*, 12-13.

schools based on race, and reveals that the district continues to perceive minorities as inferior within education. If that wasn't the case, the district would have drawn different attendance zones, and focused on truly integrating CCISD schools so that certain schools don't have high minority or Anglo compositions. One of Hector P. García's famous quotes was, "Education is our freedom, and freedom should be everybody's business."⁴⁵⁵ It is time for educational equality to become the central focus of the city once again, and it is the duty of residents in Corpus Christi to demand racial inequality be eliminated within CCISD once and for all. Why? Because our students matter. They deserve better.

⁴⁵⁵ This quote is inscribed on the statue of Hector P. García that is located in the Hector P. García Plaza at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. Cecilia García Akers, *The Inspiring Life of Texan Hector P. García*, 113.

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