An Investigation Of The Haitian-American Community In New Jersey And Its Understanding Of School Choice

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AN INVESTIGATION OF
THE HAITIAN–AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NEW JERSEY
AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOOL CHOICE

BY

HILDEGARDE VERNET

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF
THE HAITIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NEW JERSEY
AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOOL CHOICE

One hundred forty members of the Haitian-American community in six New Jersey counties were surveyed and 20 of the 140 were interviewed to determine (1) the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice, (2) the capability of the Haitian-American community in New Jersey to make the most adequate choice of schools for its children, and (3) whether understanding of school choice affects the type of schooling chosen by Haitian and Haitian-American parents in New Jersey. Participants included both adults and high-school aged youth.

On the basis of survey results and the interviews, several conclusions were drawn, including the following: (1) members of the Haitian-American community are not fully aware of the issues surrounding school choice, with parents' choices generally extending only to placing their children in the public school of their town or in a private school if they can afford it; (2) the Haitian-American community seems to be limited in its ability to make the most adequate choice of schools for its children,
with language being a main limitation; (3) school choice would probably benefit The Haitian-American community, especially the parents who can neither afford to pay for private education nor move to an area where the school district has a good reputation; and (4) some aspects of the adjustment of Haitian-American community members to the American education system are positively correlated with aspects of members' understanding of school choice.

On the basis of the findings, several recommendations were made, including the following: (1) New Jersey school districts attended by Haitian and Haitian-American students should make an effort to provide pertinent information to the community by way of Haitian newspapers and Haitian radio and television programs; (2) such schools should create programs to involve the Haitian-American community; (3) more Haitian-background teachers and school staff members should be hired in the six districts investigated in this study to facilitate communications between school and home; and (4) the New Jersey Department of Education should conduct studies to determine which communities would benefit from school choice.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction to the Study

In the United States, parents are limited to three basic options when deciding how they want their children to be educated at the primary and secondary grade levels (Scott, 1986). These options include home schooling, paying tuition to send their children to private schools, or sending their children to the public school closest to their homes (Scott). Educators have made several proposals to give parents a greater say in how and where their children will be educated. Nowadays, school choice seems to be the solution to all educational problems. This statement, write Mulholland and Amsler (1992), assumes that competition will force public schools to do better given the prospect of losing students. Consequently, public schools have attempted to be new or different. Yet, for many it is not clear how choice should be structured or how to assure that those students with the fewest resources will not be shut out of the best schools (Archbald, 1996).
This study will examine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. It will also investigate the extent to which this community is capable of making the most adequate choice for its children.

**Background Information**

**The story of the Haitian people.**

Haiti and the Dominican Republic make up the second largest island in the Caribbean, write Sunshine and Menkart (1993) (Figures 1 and 2). Before the arrival of the Europeans, the island was inhabited by the Taino Arawaks, who originated in South America. They called it "Ayiti" or "mountainous land," continue the authors. Prior to the Spanish conquest, Sunshine and Menkart point out, Haiti was a lush and fertile land.

On December 5, 1492, Columbus landed in Haiti and renamed the island "La Isla Espanola," or "Hispaniola." The Spanish settlers forced the Tainos to labor in unproductive gold mines and massacred them when they tried to resist. In order to replace the Tainos' labor, the settlers brought in Africans to work as slaves. The Spanish neglect of Hispaniola opened the way for French and British pirates. In 1697, the authors remarked, Spain ceded the western
third of Hispaniola to France. The French renamed the island "Saint Domingue."
Figure 1. Map of the Caribbean region.
Figure 2. Political map of Haiti.
After nearly a century of slavery, in 1791, the slaves of Saint Domingue began a revolution that ended in their independence in 1804, making Haiti the first Black republic. The independent Haiti was viewed as a dangerous example of slave revolt. Haiti was isolated, report Sunshine and Menkart (1993), with trade cut off and diplomatic recognition refused. France recognized Haiti in 1838 in exchange for a large payment, which placed Haiti heavily in debt. The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1862, after the slave-holding states seceded from the Union. Sunshine and Menkart emphasize that during this period, Haitian Creole emerged as a language in its own right. Haitian Creole drew elements from French, Spanish, English and from African languages (Civan, 1994).

Many of the Haitian presidents who followed its independence were generals of the slave army who were dictators and often corrupt, according to Sunshine and Menkart (1993). Few whites were left in the country after the revolution, but rivalry continued between black Haitians and those of mixed race, called “mullattos,” who remained a privileged class. As days went by, Haiti divided into two worlds: the towns and the countryside. The elite group lived in the towns, especially Port-au-Prince. The elite controlled the government, the military,
and commerce. They used the French language for the affairs of government and commerce and tried to imitate a European lifestyle, while most of the rural population spoke Haitian Creole with a lifestyle resembling that of Africans.

In the late 1800s, U.S. trade with Haiti was growing, and U.S. officials and business leaders wanted to stave off European competition (Sunshine and Menkart, 1993). Using Haitian political instability as a justification, U.S. Marines invaded Haiti in 1915 and stayed for 19 years. In 1934, when the United States finally pulled out of Haiti, it left a U.S.-trained military force which became involved in politics and held virtual veto power over election results.

In 1957, Francois Duvalier, a doctor, was elected president. "Papa Doc" Duvalier built a family dictatorship, created an armed militia loyal to himself, the Tonton Macoutes, and declared himself President-for-Life in 1964. Francois Duvalier died in 1971 after handing the presidency to his 19-year-old son, Jean-Claude, sometimes called "Baby Doc."

The unequal distribution of wealth in Haiti contributed to environmental destruction. Poverty, according to Sunshine and Menkart (1993), forced hundreds of thousands of rural Haitians to migrate to Port-au-Prince
in search of work. Others were recruited to cut sugar cane in the Dominican Republic under conditions resembling slavery. Thousands more fled to foreign countries—the United States, Canada, and France, among others. The Haitian government's corruption prompted some donors to reduce their aid, but the United States continued its support. U.S. officials knew that Duvalier was brutal, but his anti-communism made him appear a useful ally.

Sunshine and Menkart (1993) explain that the opposition movement that finally overthrew Duvalier came from young Haitians students, young adults angered by the suffering. They were encouraged by new forces within the Catholic Church. Church workers who spoke out against the government were jailed and even tortured. In 1985, encouraged by the Church, tens of thousands of people marched in procession, singing "We would rather die standing up than live on our knees!" Faced with widespread revolt, U.S. officials decided that Duvalier had to go. On February 7, 1986, a U.S. Air Force jet flew Duvalier and his family to exile in France.

The expectations were soon disappointed (Sunshine and Menkart, 1993). After Duvalier left, U.S. officials helped organized a hasty transfer of power to a governing council composed of men who had been closely associated with
Duvalier. The council did not enact any economic or land reforms benefiting the poor. The new leaders represented the same group that had held power all along: wealthy civilians, high ranking military men, Tonton Macoutes. Haitians began speaking of the new government as Duvalierism without Duvalier. Haitians' anger at the United States grew. Officials of the U.S. argued that the governing council would hold elections soon. As the election date neared, it became clear that powerful groups in Haiti did not want voting to take place. Death squads roamed the capital, dumping bodies in the streets. Arsonists torched the headquarters of the Electoral Commission, the company that printed the ballots, and the homes and offices of presidential candidates (Sunshine and Menkart, 1993).

On November 29, 1987—Election Day—truckloads of soldiers and Tonton Macoutes raced from one polling station to the next, strafing lines of voters with machine gun fire. By 9 a.m., dozens of people lay dead. The election was cancelled. The next two years saw a succession of leaders installed by army-controlled elections and coups.

One of the few who dared to speak out publicly against the regime was Father Jean Bertrand Aristide, parish priest of a small church in one of the capital's most desperate
slums. He founded an orphanage where homeless boys could study, play, and work in a community. Father Aristide talked about the army's brutality, and about how the rich in Haiti took advantage of the poor. He spoke about how foreign interests had controlled Haiti through much of its history. Aristide's message also alienated the top levels of the Catholic hierarchy. A month after his church was burned down, the Vatican ordered Aristide to leave Haiti. In response, Haitians took to the streets in a huge demonstration of support for Aristide, and Aristide remained in Haiti. When the military rulers announced that elections would be held in 1990, Aristide announced his candidacy, calling the campaign Operation Lavalas. He promised a government based on participation, honesty, and justice. On December 16, 1991, Haitians turned out by the thousands to vote for Lavalas. Aristide won with 67% of the votes. Haiti now had a democratically elected president for the first time in its history.

Expectations were high, according to Sunshine and Menkart (1993). Haitians hoped the new government would quickly dismantle the Duvalierist system, stimulate economic development, and provide everyone in Haiti with a decent quality of life. In Aristide's seven months in office, the flow of "boat people" leaving Haiti slowed down
as Haitians began to see a future in their own country. On September 29, 1991, the army staged a bloody coup d'état and Aristide was forced into exile. In 1992, Marc Bazin, the U.S. favorite, was installed as Prime Minister, but the armed forces remained in control. An estimated 3,000 people were killed in the 12 months after the coup. Within a month of the coup, refugees began pouring out of Haiti.

The Bush administration wanted the flow of refugees to stop, but they were unwilling to address the cause of the problem, Sunshine and Menkart (1993) state. The United States joined Latin American countries in imposing a trade embargo on Haiti, but the embargo was weakly enforced, and it failed to persuade the military to give up power. The Clinton administration promised to change the Bush policy in regard to refugees and took strong measures to enable Aristide to return to Haiti. On July 31, 1994, the United Nations Security Council authorized the use of force by the U.S. to remove the military government. Threats to carry out this invasion yielded no response (Sunshine and Menkart). Most Haitians, meanwhile, are struggling just to survive in a country where this requires tremendous courage and ingenuity. Haiti will not know peace until the patterns of the past are broken and this vision becomes a reality.
Family life.

In rural areas in Haiti, Civan (1994) reports, the extended family has traditionally been the social unit. It is not unusual for children, parents, and grandparents to share the same house or to live close to one another. However, the nuclear family has replaced the extended family in certain urban areas due to the fact that deteriorating economic conditions brought many peasants to the cities in search of work, causing a shift in society. Despite the migration, family ties remain close, and family members tend to be supportive of one another. Intergenerational conflicts are rare, Civan points out, but increasing due to urbanization. Men and women play complementary roles, sharing household and financial responsibilities. Women assist in farm work, especially during harvest time. At home, women are generally responsible for childcare and the daily household tasks, while men do heavy chores, such as gathering firewood.

The most common form of marriage, practiced by 85% of the population, is known as "placage," a kind of common law marriage. Although the upper class may say they disapprove of the practice, Civan (1994) reports that many men of the elite have children by mistresses and provide financial
support for their second family. Haitians value both their family and their children.

Hallman, Etienne and Fradd (1982) point out that old people are highly respected and venerated in the Haitian society. They function as counselors and advisors. They are feared because it is believed that they have the power to impose malediction on others. Children are considered a gift from God and are treated accordingly. Children also provide security in old age, Civan (1994) concludes.

Religion.

Catholicism is the predominant religion in Haiti; however, the majority of the population also practices voodoo. The Haitian population is 80% Roman Catholic. Protestants of various denominations account for the other 20%, Civan (1994) reports. Yet voodoo may be considered the national religion of Haiti since most Haitians practice at least some aspects of voodoo or are affected by the religion in some way.

Voodoo is a blend of Western and African religious beliefs, in which God plays a central role. It is basically organized as the Catholic religion, with the saints being called "loas." Voodoo is in fact a religion based on family spirits who generally help and protect.
The Haitian education system.

The first schools in Haiti were established in 1805, and primary education was free and compulsory (Civan, 1994). According to Civan, despite The Education Act of 1848, a comprehensible and accessible school system never developed. The signing of the Concordat with the Vatican in 1860 brought in French religious orders that were assigned the responsibility of establishing and maintaining Catholic schools, which became nonsecular public schools. Few priests went to the rural areas to educate the peasants, says Civan. Modeled on the French system, the Haitian education system followed a classical curriculum, emphasizing literature.

As in France, the school cycle consisted of 14 years of education, 7 at the elementary level and 7 at the secondary level. Elementary or primary education, Civan (1994) reports, began with kindergarten and continued through preparatory, elementary, and intermediate cycles, each of which lasted 2 years. Upon completion of the 6 years and passing the exam for admission to secondary school, students received a Primary Education Certificate (CEP). Students could enter either a "lycee," which was a public school; or a "college," which was a private school.
Secondary education consisted of a 3-year lower cycle and a 4-year upper cycle.

Education at the secondary level was rigorous and usually of high quality, explains Civan (1994). During the first few years of their schooling, students averaged 20-24 hours per week of instruction; this increased to a total of 30-35 hours in the last two years. Completion of the secondary school led to the "baccalaureat," instituted in 1907 by a Haitian poet Leon Laleau (Garrott, 1993). However, only successful completion of the "classe de philosophie," the second part of the baccalaureat, qualified the student for admission to university.

Higher education in Haiti, Garrott (1993) explains, is regulated by the Universite d'Etat d'Haiti (UEH), an organization made up of students, professors, and researchers whose values, beliefs, and expectations attempt to temper Haitian society. There is a tendency, according to Garrott, to work under the norms of national politics.

The 1987 Haiti Sector Assessment report revealed that 9 to 10 percent of public school teachers leave the field each year to secure higher paying positions in other areas, (Rorro, 1992). Their salaries of about 100 dollars per month in the public sector are significantly below those earned by taxi drivers or secretaries in the nation's
capital. During the 1982-1983 school year, Rorro (1992) reports, there were some 5,367 "chaires" or assignments in Haiti (a "chaire" corresponds to approximately 8 hours of teaching per week); this number was expected to rise by 1,519 by 1988-1989 as a result of increasing student enrollments. By Haitian standards, Rorro (1992) points out, a qualified teacher is one who has completed a course of study at the Ecole Normale Superieure. Only 12% of all school personnel in the country graduated from that institution.

There are different types of elementary schools in Haiti reports Rorro (1992). They are the following.

1. Ecoles maternelles (kindergarten)- A 1-year program attended by the sons and daughters of middle and upper class Haitians.

2. Ecoles elementaires privees et publiques (private and public elementary schools)- Two kinds of private schools exist in Haiti: those with and those without a religious affiliation. The former are open to both male and female pupils, but the latter are not.

3. Ecoles conreganistes (Catholic schools)- Public elementary schools administered by the Catholic Church and subsidized by the state.
4. Fermes ecoles (Farm schools)- They are few in number and offer either grades 1-4 or 1-6. They serve children in rural areas.

5. Ecoles presbyteriennes (Presbyterian schools)- Most of them are attached to a Catholic Church and tend to serve country areas.

6. Bay lesson (Home tutorial schools)- Schools of this type are widespread in Haiti. They basically offer, during the summer, tutoring at all levels.

7. Ecoles de mission (Mission schools)- These schools are administered by a mission within the Protestant Baptist, Adventist, or Pentecostal religions and are always known by the mission name.

There are three types of secondary schools in Haiti, Rorro (1992) observes. They are the following.

1. The "Colleges" or private secondary schools are most often staffed by lay people who may or may not be graduates of professional institutions. There is a general shortage of laboratory facilities for subjects such as chemistry and physics in the majority of the schools.

2. The "Ecoles Congreganistes" segregate male and female students. They are most often operated and staffed by Catholic religious orders. They are well known for their
superior facilities, their qualified teaching staffs, and their excellent record of fostering student success at passing the state-administered examinations.

3. The "lycees" or public secondary schools are staffed with qualified teachers, most of whom hold a degree from the "Ecole Normale Superieure" (Teachers' College).

In recent years, Civan (1994) emphasizes, there have been efforts to reform Haiti's educational system to make education more accessible to the poor and more relevant to their needs. Efforts to change the system began in the late 1970s. In 1978, primary schools, both urban and rural, were merged under the auspices of the National Department of Education. The education system was then restructured to include 10 years of basic education, consisting of three cycles (4-3-3 years), and 3 years of secondary education. One major change was the use of Haitian Creole as the language of instruction in the first four grades. Other instructional innovations were grouping students by ability and an emphasis on discovery learning rather than on memorization. By 1981, continues the author, primary school enrollment in urban areas had more than doubled from 1970 figures. School nutrition programs and support from private development agencies contributed to the increased enrollment, but rural enrollments continued to be low.
Moreover, dropout rates remained high, 50% in urban areas and as high as 80% in rural areas. Even though education is technically free in Haiti, it remains beyond the means of most Haitians, who cannot afford the supplemental fees, school supplies, and uniforms required.

**Haitians in the United States.**

Stepick (1982) reports that rather than being unemployed, Haitians are usually under-employed. Many of them have several part-time jobs in small-scale enterprises with no benefits and no union. They would prefer permanent jobs, but jobs are hard to find, especially for unskilled workers. They tend to work in ethnically mixed environments (New York State Education Department, 1985).

The first factor influencing Haitians' adjustment to life in the United States relates to the uncertainty regarding their legal status (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1982). They will hesitate to establish Roots and will be less motivated to learn English. The second factor influencing adjustment is their devotion to the family members left behind. They will not attend school if it disrupts their work schedule. Unscrupulous employers very often victimize them. The third factor is their acceptance by the American society. They can be viewed as taking jobs away from poor Americans. Some Americans are
intimidated by Haitians' practice of voodoo. The class
differences that existed in Haiti still exist among Haitian
immigrants and like all immigrants, Haitians are likely to
experience depression, culture shock, "survivor's guilt,"
and other emotional problems during their first several
months or years in the United States.

Haitians tend to be shy and withdrawn, sometimes
conveying a false impression of apathy or lack of
understanding. According to a study conducted in 1982 in
Miami, Florida, over 50% of the subjects had virtually no
contact with Americans. Eighty-four and one-half percent
want to maintain their Haitian heritage (Stepick, 1982).
Support in times of need is provided by extended family,
friends, and people from their hometowns. When only one
person has a job, the proceeds are shared among many.

Very few married couples live together. It is common
for one spouse to migrate first and not send for the other
until a firm base is established. Moreover, many have left
their children in Haiti. Stepick (1982) found that the most
common organization to which Haitians belong in the United
States is the church.

A study was conducted in Florida by Schilit and
Nimnicht (1990) to gather more information about aliens who
were newly legalized under the Immigration Reform and
Control Act of 1986. The study revealed that Haitian women interviewed had, on average, completed only 3.5 years of schooling, while Haitian men interviewed had completed an average of 5.2 years. The study also showed that the majority of Haitians speak their native language at home, but use more English outside the home than do Hispanics. The study demonstrated as well that the individuals with the highest level of education were also those with a higher ability to use English.

**The Haitian student vs. the American student.**

Civan (1994) reports that students who have participated in the Haitian educational system will exhibit different behaviors and have expectations different from Haitian students in the American educational system. The Haitian curriculum requires learning many subjects in detail. Rote learning and memorization are the norm. Haitian students must be overtly taught that thinking for oneself is highly valued in American schools.

According to Rorro (1992), many of the textbooks used in Haitian schools come from France or Canada and are written in French. And, since only five percent of the youngsters speak French at home, most of them face the additional obstacle of having to study subject matter through a foreign language. Nor do they have, continue the
author, the luxury of being able to call for assistance from their parents, who often have received limited education and are unable to serve as primary tutors for them. The high cost of books precludes many students from ever owning one. To cope with this situation, Rorro continues, students are expected to share a text with their peers and to hand-copy passages from the shared text.

Grading and testing are very important in Haiti; therefore, Haitian students may tend to attach great importance to grades, tests, and even quizzes. The notion that what one learns is more important than the grade one earns is very confusing to a Haitian student, Civan (1994) explains.

Haitian students may also be disturbed by the informal teacher-student relationship in the United States and may perceive this informality as a lack of respect. In Haiti, Civan (1994) states, the teacher addresses all students by their last names and has complete authority over the class. A student speaks only when asked a question. As a sign of respect, Haitian students do not look their teachers in the eye, but keep their heads down in deference.

Students are encouraged to acquire "study mates" in Haiti, Hallman et al. (1982) report. These study partners are usually chosen from the same classroom and are not
necessarily of the same ability level. Haitian students, Hallman et al. continue, even those studying at the university level, find that interacting with a study mate is very helpful in mastering new material and reviewing previously learned concepts.

Hallman et al. (1982) observe that unlike American parents, Haitian parents do not equate education with schooling. Haitian culture makes a difference between instruction, which is the concern of schools, and education per se, which is acquired in the home and is the concern of parents, families, and kin groups. Since in Haiti there are no PTAs, and parents are not routinely asked or encouraged to participate in school matters and decisions, Haitian parents are also often confused by the amount of parental involvement that is expected by the schools in the United States. Civon (1994) mentions that as a result, Haitian parents may react negatively or fearfully to a request for a routine parent-teacher conference.

Furthermore, Hallman et al. (1982) argue, the linguistic and cultural gap which grows between the parent and child is a source of frustration. Children rapidly adopt North American behavior and acquire English skills. These differences undermine the parents' authority and diminish their influence with school achievement and
homework. Haitian parents, like their offspring, need to be educated about what is expected of them.

**Significance of the Study**

The literature discussed previously showed that the majority of the Haitian-American population in the United States tends to be concentrated in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. Several programs have been developed in those states to help their immigrant populations. Despite these programs, Haitian students seem to face several problems.

Bien-Aime (1995) observed the lack of self-esteem exhibited by Haitian students who misbehaved in the classroom and did not progress academically. The author dealt with 100 9th and 10th grade Haitian ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students. After several interviews, Bien-Aime (1995) observed that these students expressed feelings of profound discouragement toward learning in the classroom, and as a consequence, will drop out of school. The causes, the author reports, are several. First is the degrading way American television shows the Haitian refugees fleeing their country in little sailboats. Second is Haitian students' lack of acceptance on the part of some of their American peers who constantly tease them by using the word Haitian as a curse to diminish them. Third is the Haitian students' lack of acceptance by some
English-speaking Haitian peers. Fourth is some teachers' lack of sensitivity to the ESOL students' cultural backgrounds.

**Importance of the Study**

A determination of the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice becomes necessary given the fact that many Haitian parents wish to exercise their right to choose the most adequate school for their children. It also becomes necessary to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community is capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children. The availability of information for Haitian parents can be investigated. The medium chosen to disseminate the information to the Haitian parents should be appropriate in order to assure that these parents not only understand the implications of school choice but that they are willing to become active members in their child's or children's education.

Research in this area may be particularly beneficial to the leaders in the Haitian-American community, who will be able to gain a better understanding of the experience lived by Haitian and Haitian-American parents and students whether they have been in the United States for years or
have just immigrated. Also, this research may benefit school administrators and guidance counselors in their decision making about programs designed to help improve the performance of Haitian-American students.

Likewise, this research will benefit teachers of Haitian-American students who sometimes feel powerless in helping these students reach their full potential. Furthermore, private school administrators and guidance counselors who are faced with a lack of resources such as ESL or bilingual instructors who are fluent in Haitian Creole and/or French will also benefit from this research by gaining additional insights concerning the learning styles or patterns of Haitian-American students.

Finally, this research may provide the New Jersey Department of Education information on the actual success of the many programs that are available to the Haitian-American community. It may also suggest changes that might maximize the success of Haitian-American students in New Jersey school districts.

**Purposes of the Study**

One purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. Another purpose was to determine the capability of the Haitian-
American community in New Jersey to make the most adequate choice of schools for its children.

During this writer's intense investigation over a 24-month period, no evidence was discovered that any author had addressed these issues. No model exists to explicitly identify the medium chosen to disseminate information to Haitian and Haitian-American parents to assure they understand the implications of school choice and are capable of actively participating in their children's education in New Jersey school districts.

In addition to the above two purposes, there was a third purpose of this study. This purpose was to determine whether understanding of school choice affects the type of schooling chosen by Haitian and Haitian-American parents in New Jersey.

Research Questions

In order to address the issues of concern to this study, the following questions were developed:

1. How much choice has the Haitian-American community exhibited so far in the education of its children in New Jersey school districts?

2. How much information was acquired before making a choice? And what influenced that choice?
3. How well has the Haitian-American community adjusted to the American education system in terms of the community members' level of education, the community's attitude toward education, and the community's influence on the education of its children?

4. To what extent does the Haitian background influence the choice made by Haitian-American parents in New Jersey school districts?

5. Is adjustment to the American education system related to understanding of school choice among individuals in the New Jersey Haitian-American community?

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to high school students, college students, and teachers of Haitian descent, and to the parents of students of Haitian descent.

2. This study was limited to Haitian and Haitian-American students, teachers, and parents living in New Jersey.

3. This study was limited to areas inhabited by a large population of Haitians and Haitian-Americans.

4. The interviewer only requested interviews from individuals of Haitian background.

5. Some interviews were recorded in Haitian Creole then were translated into English since some of the respondents did not speak English fluently. Others
simply felt more comfortable answering in their native language.

6. The selected subjects lived in one of the following six counties in New Jersey: Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson, and Middlesex.

7. The researcher used the interview guide approach as described by Patton (1990). The six measurement questions described by Patton (1990) were also used. They are the experience/behavior questions, the opinion/values questions, the feeling questions, the knowledge questions, the sensory questions, and the background/demographic questions.

8. This study combined a qualitative research design with a quantitative component. It attempted to present an in-depth and detailed analysis, as well as to describe the level at which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. It also attempted to demonstrate the extent to which the Haitian-American community is capable of making the most adequate choice for its children.

9. The interviews focused on four sets of questions referred to earlier. Appropriate probes and follow-up questions were initiated by the researcher during the interview process.
Definitions of Terms

School choice - School choice, as referred to in the literature of American education, relates to public schools versus other alternatives such as charter schools and vouchers. Vouchers present the parents with the option to use public funds to enroll a child in either public or private schools. Charter schools are public schools administered by citizens authorized by the state or other agency to provide schooling for segments of the youth of a community. There are approximately 1,200 charter schools presently operating in the United States.

Haitian-American - For the purpose of this study, this term refers to anyone born in the United States whose parents were born in Haiti. It also refers to anyone born in Haiti who became a United States citizen.

Haitian Creole - For the purpose of this study, this term refers to the native language spoken by people of Haitian decent.

Haitian education system - For the purpose of this study, this term refers to the Haitian education system, modeled on the French system that follows a classical curriculum, emphasizing literature. It is a system in which rote learning and memorization are the norm, Civon (1994).
American education system- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to the notion that what one learns is more important than the grade one earns. Thinking for oneself is highly valued in American schools (Civan, 1994).

Haitian student- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a student who exhibits the characteristics typical of that of students in Haiti, such as speaking only when asked a question or as a sign of respect, not looking the teacher in the eye but keeping his or her head down in deference, and having a specific learning style (Civan, 1994).

American student- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a student who exhibits specific characteristics similar to those of students in The United States, such as being comfortable with informal teacher-student relationships and free expression of opinion and ideas (Civan, 1994).

Qualitative research methods - Action research- For the purpose of this study, as stated by Patton (1990), the term “action research” refers to research that aims at solving problems within a program, organization, or community. The research methods tend to be less systematic, more informal, and quite specific to the problem, people, and organization for which the research is undertaken.
Interview guide approach- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to an interview instrumentation which provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. The interview guide keeps the interactions focused but allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge (Patton, 1990).

Cross-sectional survey- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a type of survey in which, Babbie (1973) explains, information is collected at one point in time from a sample selected to describe some larger population at that time. This allows for the determination of relationships between variables at the time of the study.

Maximum variation sampling- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a strategy for purposeful sampling that aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation (Patton, 1990).

Criterion sampling- For the purpose of this study, this term refers to a method that reviews and studies cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 1990).
Triangulation—For the purpose of this study, this term refers to the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs. Some studies may rely only on interviews or observations (Patton, 1990).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents an introduction to the study, including background information about Haiti, its history, the family life of Haitians, the Haitian education system, religion, Haitians in the United States, and the Haitian student versus the American student. Chapter I also includes the significance of the study, the research questions, the limitations of the study, the definition of key terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature and contains an introduction followed by the following sections: Americans' attitudes toward education and school reform, differences in school choice plans, and a summary. Chapter III describes the research methodology, subjects interviewed, the instrument, and the procedures of the study. Chapter IV presents the findings, including transcription of the interviews, data from the surveys, and analysis of survey results. Chapter V consists of the
summary, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

School choice policies raise a number of equity issues, states Archbald (1996). Two models based on different assumptions about equity arise from centralized to decentralized student assignments. Archbald explains that centralized student assignment systems assign students to schools based on school attendance area zones; whereas in decentralized student assignment, the child goes to the school of his or her choice. The author further explains that in the centralized model, the idea is that all schools are the same; therefore, there is no need for parent choice. In the decentralized model, choice is viewed as necessary because students' needs and interests, as well as the goals parents have for their children, are viewed as more diverse. Schools can be designed, for example, to accommodate parent work schedules, day care needs, or other types of needs, adds Archbald.
Swanson (1991) sees school choice as critical to improving schools and says it will be promoted as part of AMERICA 2000. If families have choices in selecting schools for their children, continues Swanson, some schools will improve to stay in the business of educating children.

Recent debates on school choice are concerned less with whether there should be more choice in education than with how much choice should be offered to whom (Wells, 1990). The school choice movement, according to Wells, has widespread, diversified political appeal. It can, given the right circumstances, enable low-income and minority families to avoid poorly run and overcrowded urban schools. It infuses free market, competitive principles into sluggish public education systems. It allows families to have more control over which schools their children attend and what services are provided there. Wells also says that it may increase parent involvement in education. Among the choices offered throughout the United States are controlled choice or open enrollment, work-based attendance, magnet schools, charter schools, tax credits, scholarships, instruction provided by private institutions or companies, and vouchers.

The purpose of this chapter is first to report on Americans' attitudes toward education and school reform and
then to explain the differences among school choices and discuss the variety of school choice plans available throughout the nation. The final section will present a summary of the topics discussed.

**Americans' Attitudes Toward Education and School Reform**

In August 1996, the Center for Education Reform (CER), in cooperation with International Communication Research (ICR), developed a poll to gauge Americans' attitudes toward education and education reform issues. In 1997, the same 10 questions were again asked by the Center for Education Reform (CER) and the International Communication Research (ICR). They were about school choice, the quality of education, teacher accountability, the roles of the federal government and the teacher's unions, and charter schools.

As Table 1 shows, in 1997, 54% of the population strongly supported school choice and only 6% were strongly against it. Sixty-seven percent of the people surveyed in 1997, compared to 72% in 1996, agreed that state legislators should adopt a policy to assist children in failing schools to opt out of that school and attend an alternative school (see Table 2).
Table 1

Americans' Attitudes Toward School Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support net</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly support</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat support</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against net</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly against</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat against</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Refused</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The survey question was the following: How much do you support providing parents with the option of sending their children to the school of their choice—either public, private or parochial—rather than only to the school to which they are assigned? Center for Education Reform (1997)

Table 2

Americans' Attitudes Toward School-Choice Legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Refused</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The survey question was the following: Should your state legislators adopt a policy to assist children in failing schools to opt out of that school and attend an alternative school, either public, private or parochial, of the parents' choosing? Center for Education Reform (1997)
Concerning funding, only 32% of those surveyed were strongly in favor of allowing poor parents to be given the tax dollars allotted for their child's education and permitting them to use those dollars in the form of scholarships to attend another school of their choice (see Table 3). Fifty percent of those surveyed, however, felt that the quality of their public school could be improved (see Table 4), and 78% did not think that all children, particularly those in America's inner cities, were receiving the education they need (see Table 5).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support net</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly support</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat support</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against net</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly against</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat against</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Refused</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The survey question was the following: How much in favor are you of allowing poor parents to be given the tax dollars allotted for their child's education and permitting them to use those dollars in the form of a scholarship to attend a private, public, or parochial school of their choosing? Center for Education Reform (1997)
Table 4

**Americans' Attitudes Toward Quality of Education in Local Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** The survey question was the following: Do you feel the quality of your public school could be improved . . . ? Center for Education Reform (1997)

Table 5

**Americans' Attitudes Toward Quality of Education Nationwide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** The survey question was the following: Do you think all children, particularly those in America’s inner cities, are receiving the education they need? Center for Education Reform (1997)

The public wanted greater accountability on the part of schools and teachers, and 56% showed support for compensation based on student performance, assuming strong academic standards were in place (see Table 6). Forty-six percent of the respondents said that their local teachers
were not compensated based on performance, while 46% did not know what criteria were used to assess teacher performance (see Table 7).

Table 6

Americans’ Attitudes Toward Teacher Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The survey question was the following: Assume children had to meet strong academic standards. Do you believe that teachers should be judged and compensated based on their performance against how well students perform? Center for Education Reform (1997)*

Table 7

Americans’ Knowledge of Criteria Used to Assess Local Teachers’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On performance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On some other criteria</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The survey question was the following: Do you know if your local teachers are paid on their performance or on some other criteria? Center for Education Reform (1997)*
On the other hand, 51% of those polled perceived the teacher unions to be supportive of restoring local control and educational excellence (see Table 8), whereas only 26% believe that the federal government should play a major role in making policy decisions for schools (see Table 9). More than half, 55%, of the respondents favored creating charter schools (see Table 10), which may indicate a strong public desire for continued or expanded local control of education.

Table 8

Americans’ Attitudes Toward Teachers’ Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacle</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The survey question was the following: Do you perceive the teacher unions to be supportive of restoring local control and educational excellence, or are they an obstacle to reform? Center for Education Reform (1997)

Table 9

Americans’ Attitudes Toward the Role of the Federal Government in Making Policy Decisions for Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Major role 26 26
Minor role 45 48
No role at all 25 23

Note. The survey question was the following: Do you believe the federal government should play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in making policy decisions for schools? Center for Education Reform (1997)

Table 10

Americans’ Attitudes Toward Charter Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1997 (%)</th>
<th>1996 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The survey question was the following: Charter schools are public schools which are started by either teachers, parents and/or community groups. They are freed from regulations except health and safety and discrimination, and are open to parents by choice. Do you favor creating charter schools? Center for Education Reform (1997)

Allen (1997) reports the results of a survey conducted by the Association of American Educators, a nonunion alternative for teachers, of 3,272 of its members:

1. 82% thought block grants to the states a good idea;
2. 51% liked school-to-work programs, with Germany as an example;
3. 46% did not feel national standards and measurements were needed;
4. 71% liked uniforms;
5. 47% thought the "army of volunteers" to help develop reading skills is a good idea;

6. 62% said "Yes" to vouchers;

7. 50% liked charter schools (33% were unfamiliar with the concept);

8. 45% were in favor of alternative certification for teachers of alternative programs; and

9. 43% thought competency testing for teachers would be effective.

These results, Allen says, definitely show that there is room for more than one organization to represent teachers, and that there is more diversity of thought among teachers than one would think.

For those who still see no problem in public education, Allen (1997) also reports science achievement scores published by the National Assessment of Educational Progress: 33% of 4th graders, 39% of 8th graders, and 43% of 12th graders lack basic science skills. Proficiency, defined as having competence in challenging subject matter, was obtained by only 26% of 4th graders, 26% of 8th graders, and 18% of 12th graders (see Table 11). Students in the District of Columbia scored the worst, with 81% of 8th graders scoring below basic. Table 12 shows selected 8th grade scores.
Table 11

National Science Achievement Scores for 4th, 8th, and 12th Graders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Below Basic</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Allen (1997)

Table 12

Eighth Grade National Science Achievement Scores for Selected States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Below Basic</th>
<th>At or Above Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Allen (1997)
Differences in School Choice Plans

Wells (1990) reports that several states have adopted statewide open enrollment choice plans that permit students to transfer from one school district to another, taking state funds with them. Others, continues the author, have instituted some degree of school choice through magnet school programs and voluntary desegregation plans.

Moreover, Greenberg (1992) points out that there is a need for enhanced articulation between levels of institutions by administrators and parents. There is also the need to enhance contemporary secondary education, particularly for at-risk students, women, and minorities. This increased need requires a community effort in which colleges have been asked to play a much larger role than previously reserved to them. These different types of choices are examined below.

Controlled choice or open enrollment.

In the case of controlled choice or open enrollment, parents must choose a school for their children because there are no assigned or zoned schools. Schools are given the freedom to develop special educational programs to attract students. This model is applied in Montclair, New Jersey, and in Cambridge and 17 other districts in Massachusetts (Wells, 1990).
Controlled choice attempts to provide choice while maintaining ethnic and racial integration (Weaver, 1992). There are several elements involved in controlled choice, including the replication of successful programs, the provision of information to parents through information centers, and the assistance of low-performing and unpopular schools (Weaver, 1992). The obvious benefits of an open enrollment policy, Scott (1986) states, is that properly administered, the policy appears to accomplish what parents and educators want, which is a wide range of programs to choose from. Further, this is done without raising the constitutional issues of church-state separation that arise when the government subsidizes religious schools.

Work-based attendance.

Work-based attendance is a plan by which parents can elect to send their child to a school near either parent's workplace instead of a school close to their home (Scott, 1986). This can be seen as especially advantageous if a school is located very near one of the parents' workplaces.

Magnet schools.

Many approaches have been used to solve the problem of school choice and high school dropouts. Magnet schools, Klauke (1988) writes, constitute one method applied by several urban schools across the country to decrease
absenteeism, dropout rates, and academic failure. Magnet schools accomplish this in three ways, states Inger (1991): by having a unified curriculum based on a special theme or method of instruction; by opening enrollment to students beyond the geographic attendance zone; and by allowing students and parents to choose the school.

A fourth essential ingredient, which is added by Dentler (1991), is that magnet schools have a unique district role and purpose for voluntary desegregation. Two out of every three of the magnet schools and programs have student enrollments that were racially and ethnically representative of the white, black, and other minority enrollments in their districts, continues the author. In a survey of 15 school districts conducted in 1983, the author reports, seven out the 15 districts placed a high reliance on their magnets to desegregate their systems overall. The quality of education (QED) and the quality of integration (QI) at the school level were significantly interrelated (r = .62) and QED was most often a function of three organizational factors. These factors were definiteness, which was a measure of the program's cohesiveness, coherence, and internal consistency; special treatment, which was an indicator of the program support and attention
a magnet receives from its district administration; and the quality of principalship.

Magnet schools were developed in large universities in the 1970s, reports Inger (1991), primarily as an aid in desegregating schools. In addition, some school systems, not under a legal obligation to desegregate, elected to establish magnet schools to counteract student racial isolation resulting from segregated housing patterns or other demographic factors (U. S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 1989). The magnet school movement gained more interest in 1976, continues Hunter (1994), when Congress passed an amendment to the Emergency School Aid Act which specifically allocated money to be utilized by districts for magnet programs as part of the desegregation process. It was difficult during the first decade of magnet school development, continues Dentler (1991), to distinguish between magnet, specialty, and alternative schools. Originally, states Hunter (1994), the selected magnet school themes were science, mathematics, and performing arts; later, some districts generated and developed themes relative to the interests and needs of students, parents, and communities.

Nowadays, magnet schools offer a variety of programs at different levels. The U. S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights (1989) reports a broad list of programs that have been or are now operating in many school districts. Magnets at the elementary school level offer programs in the following:

1. basic science and technology, in which basic skills are emphasized while students are exposed to scientific themes in all their academic and enrichment areas;

2. classical/traditional academy, which stresses disciplined behavior, dress codes, and punctuality while concentrating on excellence in reading and writing, with special emphasis on mathematics and science;

3. communication art, which uses high-technology equipment as a vehicle for improving reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills;

4. environmental center, in which ecology is taught as part of the science including health, safety, and social studies classes in coordination with art, reading, and language arts;

5. extended day programs, which offer an assortment of early morning and after school enrichment activities to children of working parents as an alternative to noneducational child care;

6. French foreign language immersion, in which students start in kindergarten and by third grade can acquire a
fluency in French comparable to native speaking children of the same age;

7. high technology, in which the computer is an integral of the entire instructional program;

8. international studies, which increases students' awareness of other parts of the world while concurrently developing their basic reading, writing, and math skills;

9. research and study skill centers, which involve the students in research projects in the humanities, arts, and sciences in a program that emphasizes self-motivation and study discipline; and

10. science magnets, which have a "hands-on" approach to learning science and emphasizes reasoning, investigation, and the scientific method.

At the intermediate level other programs are proposed, such as the following:

1. future technology programs based on the assumption that computers, robots, laser beams, and satellite dishes will be in the homes and the work place when students become adults;

2. medical programs offered to students who are considering medicine and related sciences; and
3. telecommunications and computer technology programs
   which make use of satellite transmissions along with an
   extended computer capability.

   In the high schools, the following programs are presented:

1. aerodynamics academy, which concentrates on aviation;

2. foreign language academy, which offers foreign languages
   beyond the traditional choices;

3. health care, which emphasizes broad-based preparation
   for future health-related careers;

4. petrochemical careers institute, in which the students
   work with petrochemical engineers and refinery
   technicians;

5. school of communications, which offers hands-on
   experience in television, radio, and the print media;

6. university high school, which is a four-year program
   that provides intense, comprehensive preparation for
   college; and

7. visual and performing arts, which is designed for the
   artistically talented.

   Virtually all magnets now have waiting lists, despite
the fact that in many of them, students have to travel long
distances to school, the class day is longer, and the work
is harder than in nonmagnets (Inger, 1991). Moreover, Inger
says that some magnet schools are in rundown neighborhoods; some have large pupil/teacher ratios; and some are in decaying buildings.

The appeal of magnet schools comes first from the fact that they have a specialized core curriculum or specialized pedagogy, continues the author, as well as the fact that there is a coherent whole formed by the consistency of the theme or method of teaching, and the identification of the staff with its theme, curriculum, methods, goals, and activities.

Second, they have a safer, more orderly climate, an environment conducive to learning, and an image of excellence. Magnets have a strong commitment to parent involvement, states Inger, and they try to mold student attitudes and values. As a result, magnets attract better-motivated students, which reinforces the favorable school atmosphere.

Third, they have a sense of shared enterprise and a committed, enthusiastic faculty and student body. Students who are admitted, and teachers who teach in magnets feel special about themselves and their school.

Fourth, the school's focus on an occupation or a field of study gives students a sense of direction and lets them justify to themselves, their parents, and their peers the
effort they put into schoolwork. Fifth, a committed, charismatic principal gives the staff the freedom to solve their own problems in their own way, without needing approval from the school district.

Finally, magnets are frequently associated with reform measures. These include such measures as an absence of tracking, contextual teaching, cooperative learning, and teacher collegiality.

Magnet schools also assign multiracial seating and encourage small group discussion, according to Klauke (1988). They provide, says the author, extracurricular activities and special projects. These programs encourage the sharing of diverse skills; and multicultural lessons are introduced regularly into the curriculum.

Moreover, they provide courses of study that barely existed locally before the magnet's establishment, says Dentler (1991). They draw together for improved multi-ethnic learning some of the most able teachers in a district and some of the best-motivated students, the author continues. They also offer districts local demonstrations of quality that may be replicated by regular schools. Above all, they contribute substantially to a district's attainment of full racial/ethnic equity (Dentler).
There is also an emphasis on mutual respect and appreciation and a general atmosphere of trust and goodwill among all members of the school community (Klauke, 1988). Student evaluations are based on progress and effort as well as achievement. Students are judged by their capacity to better their last performance and fulfill their own pre-established goals (Klauke).

Magnet schools have received substantial support from the federal government through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), states Steel and Levine (1994). Between 1985 and 1991, over 739 million dollars were provided to school districts to support the development and implementation of new magnet programs and the expansion of existing programs, continue the authors. In addition to federal funds, state and local governments, private individuals, and organizations have provided further support for magnets.

Charter schools.

The concept of charter schools, state Mulholland and Amsler (1992), can be traced to a model described by Ray Budde in 1988. Not only did the authors spell out the steps in creating a charter school; they also indicated the changes charters might cause in the structures of school districts.
Charter schools differ from regular public schools in a number of ways. They are designed to result in improved student learning outcomes; and they use alternative forms of measuring those outcomes. A group usually presents its plan for a school to a designated governing body for approval. The governing body could be the state department of education, a local school board, or a special board organized to oversee the charter schools. Since the purpose of a charter school is to be an alternative to regular schools, the proposal must contain details about the methods of instruction to be used, the forms of assessment, and how the school will comply with stated requirements.

Legislation usually declares that charter schools are free from all normal district and state regulations. However, as a public school, a charter school is accountable to its sponsor. The elected school board of a charter school is composed of staff, teachers, parents, and possibly community members. Funding comes directly from the state, and as in regular school districts, charters cannot choose their students for specific qualities, nor can they discriminate in other ways.

Charter schools offer the possibility of having independent public schools, states Randall (1992). The
purpose of charter schools, the author indicates, is to do the following:

1. improve individual learning;
2. increase learning opportunities;
3. use different and innovative teaching methods;
4. measure learning outcomes using different and innovative forms of management;
5. establish new forms of accountability for schools; and
6. create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for a learning program at the school site.

Since charter schools are organized and operated as cooperatives or nonprofit organizations, required funds of operation come directly from the state. Mulholland and Bierlein (1993) examine the spread of the charter school idea across the country. Minnesota initiated outcome-based schools in 1991. Nowadays, the program offerings in Minnesota schools are diverse, including a school for deaf students, a vocational/technical school, and a pre-k through grade 12 school emphasizing the needs of at-risk students. The other schools also utilize various innovative practices such as multi-age classrooms, thematic learning, extensive parent involvement, year-round education, extended school day, and multicultural curricula.
In 1992, California allowed the creation of up to 100 charter schools. Like Minnesota, the California charter schools describe a wide variety of innovative strategies to be employed. However, unlike Minnesota, California has approved two charter schools using a home schooling approach in which the school operates as a resource center. In addition, one school will operate an ESL curriculum; another school will utilize Edward Deming's theory of Total Quality Management.

In 1993, Colorado permitted no more than 50 charter schools to be created until July 1997; at this time, the ceiling is removed. Also in 1993, Georgia allowed an unlimited number of public schools to be converted to charter schools. Massachusetts did not implement any charter school law until September 1995.

Missouri's "New Schools Pilot" is a more formative version of the charter school concept. It is designed to test a revised management system within three existing school sites that volunteer to participate for a five-year period beginning July 1995. In 1993, New Mexico granted charter status to five existing public schools. In that same year Wisconsin joined the other states in the pursuit of a better way to educate students.
Morra (1995) reports that all charter schools must be approved by some public institution, but some state laws limit the type of institution that may approve the schools. Some states require school districts to approve all charter schools, while others permit several types of institutions to approve them, including the state board of education, state universities, and community colleges.

Morra (1995) questions the effectiveness and accountability of charter schools. Because charter schools vary in how they state student performance objectives and assessment methods and because no state laws require them to report data by race, gender, or socioeconomic status and most states leave the nature of reporting to local discretion, it is difficult to hold charter schools accountable.

In its last update of September 30, 1997, the state department of education and charter schools resource centers published a list showing that there are 30 charter school laws in the United States and that charter schools are up and running in 23 states and the District of Columbia, serving over 150,000 students (see Table 13).

Dale (1997) explains why charter schools work. According to the author, charter schools are approved and evaluated on results rather than process. Their success is
judged on how well students achieve rather than on compliance with administrative policies and mandated budget allocations. Their focus is on the education of children, rather than the preservation of the education system.

Table 13

Charter Schools Operating or Approved, September 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Opened</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rhode Island  1  1
South Carolina  1  2
Texas  19  1
Wisconsin  17
Total  780  69


Private scholarship programs.

Barrett (1995) reports that J. Patrick Rooney, Chairman of the Golden Rule Insurance Company of Indianapolis, was the first to popularize the idea of privately funded educational choice in the summer of 1991 with the formation of the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust. The CHOICE Charitable Trust was founded to provide low-income children with the same educational opportunities that Indianapolis' wealthier families already enjoyed. CHOICE pays one-half tuition, up to $800, to any elementary school child who wants to attend a private school. The program is open to Indianapolis Public School District families who qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program. Today CHOICE provides over 1,100 low-income children with scholarships, which they eagerly use to attend over 65 different schools (Barrett, 1995).

Shortly after the CHOICE Charitable Trust was established, Texas businessman James R. Leininger launched
a similar educational choice program in San Antonio. That program now provides over 1,000 scholarships to children attending 80 different schools. The Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) Foundation of San Antonio offers families half-tuition scholarships, funds which parents may also use to cover transfer costs to send their children to a public school outside their district. CEO Foundation programs have since expanded to four other cities in Texas and now provide scholarships to more than 1,200 students throughout the state (Barrett, 1995).

In June 1992, Milwaukee, Wisconsin became the third city to join the private scholarship movement when the Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) scholarship program was unveiled. Within a week of announcing the scholarship program, 7,500 applicants had been picked up by interested families. Backed by the city's most prominent businesses and foundations, PAVE currently awards over 2,600 scholarships, making it the largest such program to date. Not surprisingly, over 2,000 children remain on their waiting list. Like the other programs, PAVE scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis to low-income families in search of opportunity. PAVE students attend more than 100 different private elementary and secondary schools in the Milwaukee area (Barrett, 1995).
In Atlanta, the Children's Education Foundation (CEF) received 500 applications in its first week. The CEF currently grants over 160 scholarships and has a waiting list of twice that number. New York City actually pioneered the private scholarship movement, with its Student/Sponsor Partnership first establishing itself in 1987. As the largest program in the state, it serves 950 students and is unique among choice scholarship programs because it provides both financial and personal support. The Student/Sponsor Partnership teams a student with a sponsor who agrees to pay the student's tuition for his or her four years at a non-public high school. As they monitor progress together, the sponsor and student develop a personal relationship, and often the result is a bond that lasts far beyond high school graduation day. The 90% graduation rate of S/SP students far outpaces the New York City and national averages, while a number of these children continue on to prestigious universities. Other programs in New York include Operation Exodus in Washington Heights, Hope Through Education in Albany, and the newly created BISON Fund of Buffalo (Barrett, 1995).

In Albany, New York, one of the newest private scholarship programs is bailing out children of the low-performing Giffen Elementary school with $1 million in
scholarship money. More than 100 of the 458 children at the Giffen school (just over 20% of the student body) have accepted A Better choice (ABC) scholarships to attend a private or parochial school. This includes the child of Giffen's PTA president. The exodus of students incited major changes at the public school, including the replacement of the principal and two assistant principals as well as the turnover of more than 12 teachers (DeSchryver, 1997).

Other big-city programs include the District of Columbia's Washington Scholarship Fund; the Children's Educational Opportunity (CEO) of Southern California, which grants over 775 scholarships to elementary school children in both Los Angeles and Orange counties; and the CEO Oakland, which offers scholarships to another 150 plus students. In every case, waiting lists are overflowing as parents search for more opportunities (Barrett, 1995).

In 1994, CEO AMERICA was created and assisted new and existing programs with dollar-for-dollar challenges and with technical assistance for funding, set-up, and administration. CEO AMERICA aims to promote private scholarship programs on a nationwide level. In addition to those already mentioned, private scholarship programs now exist in Arizona, New Jersey, Colorado, Arkansas, Michigan,
and Tennessee. Groups in Washington, Illinois, California, and Connecticut are raising funds to start programs in their states. For years, the Archdioceses of Los Angeles and Boston have run substantial programs to assist parents seeking a Catholic education for their children. In Los Angeles, the Education Foundation supported 4,200 students in 1995 with scholarships ranging from $800 to $1,000. In Boston, the Inner-City Scholarship fund helped over 3,000 children with $500 scholarships they were able to use at 50 different schools.

Furthermore, the schools in these programs, serving primarily disadvantaged children of Hispanic and African-American descent, have demonstrated remarkable achievement in comparison to their public school counterparts—quite an accomplishment while being constricted by significantly smaller budgets. The per pupil cost for public schools in Texas, for example, is over $4,000; by contrast, the average tuition for schools attended by CEO children in San Antonio is about $1,100. Similarly, in the Indianapolis school district, the average per pupil expenditure in the public schools is $4,165, whereas the average private school spends approximately $1,200 to $1,600 per student. With the help of private scholarship programs, children are getting a choice education at less than half the cost of
their local public school. And this is the rule, not the exception in school districts across the country (Barrett, 1995) (see Table 14).
Table 14

Variations in Charter School, Voucher, Scholarship, and Tax Credit Programs Available Throughout the United States as of September 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Charter schools</th>
<th>Vouchers/Scholarships</th>
<th>Tax credits</th>
<th>No. of scholarships awarded by CEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>$726.54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78 (DBOC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200 National Scholarship Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225 (CEO), 2000 Edison Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$3000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$7000/student $300,000 to CHS in area $125,000 emergency scholarships</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>100 (Daniel Murphy Fund) 230 Link Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$4 of tuition cost</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,014 (Ed CHOICE Charitable Trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Voucher payment for transportation</td>
<td>$1000/child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>KY</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Charity for Choice (private voucher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>$5000 (public schools only) Transportation for poor students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$3000 from Catholic Schools Fund and the Inner-City Scholarship Fund for low-income students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Full scholarships from CEO and the Educational Choice Project; partial scholarships from Partner Program</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>330 (CEO), 178 private scholarships 500 in Cornerstone schools (Partner Program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$1625/child k-6 $2500 7-12 $2000 max for family income $33,500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Full scholarships</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150 (CEO Metro Jackson) to low-income students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MO</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$2500/family</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>NH</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Table 14

Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Charter schools</th>
<th>Vouchers/Scholarships</th>
<th>Tax credits</th>
<th>No. of scholarships awarded by CEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$500,000 from the Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td></td>
<td>School Choice Scholarship Foundation</td>
<td>100 Operation Exodus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Sponsor Partnership</td>
<td>323 BISON Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Exodus</td>
<td>40 Hope through Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BISON Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Albany-based Hope Through Education program ($1500)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glider’s Program “A Better Choice” awards $2000/yr to Students of Giffen Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Max. of $2250</td>
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<td>1855</td>
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<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>117 (Oklahoma Scholarship Fund)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>100 (Partnership for Ed Choice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$1500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1800 vouchers</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22 (CEO)</td>
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<td>TX</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<td>1701</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USAA Federal Savings Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>San Antonio Express News</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ECT Foundation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valero Energy Corporation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>David Robinson Foundation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zachry Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Don King Productions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>UT</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$1000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4153 (PAVE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WY</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruction provided by private institutions or companies.

Elert (1997) reports that Christopher Whittle, the founder of Channel One—whose Edison Project aims to break the mold with the creation of 200 profit-making schools by 1996—gained attention for his early attempts at bringing compulsory commercial television viewing to the public schools under the umbrella of high-level and interesting news and current events education. Schools agreeing to show 12-minute news programs get an impressive array of television monitors and a satellite dish installed and maintained by Whittle. Schools may use this in-school network all day for educational broadcasting and local television segments. In return, Whittle's (2 of the 12 minutes) commercials are required viewing. Under the contract that school districts sign, 90% of the children in a school must watch the program 90% of the time. Also, each of the programs must be watched in its entirety, a show cannot be interrupted, and the teacher does not have the right to turn it off. The results have been an educational wash for the students, but an economic windfall for Channel One's founder.

Elert (1997) also reports on other educational alternatives such as the large-scale privatization
experiment currently underway in Baltimore, where the Minnesota-based Education Alternatives Inc. (EAI)—in alliance with Johnson Controls and KPMG Peat Marwick—received a five-year, $135 million contract to run eight elementary schools and one middle school. No sooner had the doors opened on the newly privatized schools than the Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, stepped in to present company officials with a "break-the-mold" award. He has yet to return to the school that is well into its second year of operation.

Educational achievement at EAI-run schools declined dramatically at a time when overall district scores were improving. In EAI schools, average reading achievement dropped from the 31st to the 27th percentile and mathematics achievement from the 36th to the 28th percentile. In the same period, overall student achievements rose moderately in each category—reading from the 31st to the 32nd percentile and mathematics from the 36th to the 37th percentile. This reported decrease in achievement at the EAI-run schools is due in no small part to their employment policies, Elert (1997) states. Student-teacher ratios rose from approximately 1:19 to 1:25 as 27% of the regular teaching, 50% of the special education, and 63% of the paraprofessional positions were eliminated. Non-
certified, college intern, replacement workers were hired to cover for the lost paraprofessionals at wages of seven dollars per hour and with none of the normal benefits. Turnover among interns has been so great that some classes have had as many as four interns in a single year. Additional cuts were made in the areas of librarians, art, music, reading, and resource teachers. These figures have been explained by EAI executives, who suggest that other factors played major roles.

**Education tax credits.**

In Arizona, DeSchryver (1997) reports, school choice will be further extended to parents in 1998 through school tax credits for both private scholarship programs and public school donations. The 1997 tax credit law, continues the author, grants taxpayers up to $500 in income-tax credits for donations to nonprofit groups providing scholarships for students to attend private schools, including religious ones. The law also offers taxpayers a credit of up to $200 for money given to public schools to support extracurricular activities.

Also this year, DeSchryver (1997) continues, Minnesota's governor won an expansion of the state's tax credit program, income tax deductions, and an elimination of the charter school cap. Under "Students First," the
state's current income tax deduction has been increased from $1,000 per child to $1,625 per student in grades K-6 and $2,500 for students in grades 7-12, and the Working Family Credit has been increased by 25%.

**Voucher systems.**

A voucher system awards students the equivalent of their tax dollars to be applied toward tuition at a public or private school of their choice (Klauke, 1989). However, Elert (1997) does not believe that the voucher system will really accomplish the miracles that it claims it will perform. As the author said, Republican conservatives in the suburbs are generally happy with their schools and would not dream of spoiling them with reduced expenditures. The unusually low levels of funding found in most programs, continues the author, are designed to prevent the masses from choosing the schools of the affluent. If voucher supporters really advocated free school choice in a serious way, Elert continues, every student enrolled in a state would receive at least $10,000. The author also reports that the students enrolled in the Milwaukee Parent Choice Program, 100% low income and 96% African-American or Latino, represent an opportunity for supporters to demonstrate the efficacy of vouchers for at-risk populations. Unfortunately, reports the author, studies
show little improvement in the academic performance of the voucher students when compared to the performance of low-income students still in the regular system.

Levin and Driver (1994) estimate the cost of an educational voucher system. To the regular cost of instruction, the authors add the cost of information dissemination, transportation, and centralization of records. The authors begin by assuming that the voucher amount would be equal to the average per-pupil expenditure in the U.S. public schools in 1990-1991 or $5,871, for a total cost of $228.9 billion in average daily attendance. Based on data obtained from the U.S. Department of education in 1993, Levin and Driver observe that slightly more than 10% of all students, 4.7 million of the 46 million students, attended private school that year. If all of the schools attended by the students had been eligible for vouchers, additional public cost for education would have been about $27.4 billion higher for school year 1990-1991. If only 75% of these students attended schools participating in a voucher plan, additional costs would have been about $20.6 billion. If the amount of the student's vouchers had been only 80% of the average per-pupil cost in the public sector in school year 1990-1991, the cost would have been about $22 billion for all
students, or about $16.5 billion at an eligible rate of 75%.

Voucher plans, according to Levin and Driver (1994), would require an elaborate system of record keeping by the state to assure that all children who are required to attend school are enrolled, to determine the appropriate voucher amount for each child based on educational need (such as grade level, disability, socioeconomic status, and language), and to assess the eligibility of schools to redeem vouchers. Schools would then have to be evaluated, certified, and monitored for eligibility. Levin and Driver estimated that record keeping could vary between $43 and $78 per student. The authors estimated the average cost of transportation under the voucher system based on a transportation system that primarily uses vans and is currently serving the San Francisco Bay area’s three airport facilities. Their estimation varies from $1,260 for 10 miles to $2,160 for 40 miles per student per year. The validity of this range, argue the authors, is supported not only by the St. Louis busing data, but also by the $2,000 per student report for the Milwaukee voucher experiment. Levin and Driver estimate that the government might bear a large share of information costs since equal access is an important consideration. Also, the authors point out,
Parent Information Centers like the ones in Massachusetts funded with state desegregation funds might be needed in a voucher plan.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to review related research and literature pertaining to the question of school choice. Based on the fact that a large percentage of the population wants the freedom to choose the right school for their children, and the fact that most public schools can no longer justify their low productivity, the future of the American school system as it exists is very uncertain. This is especially true given that some states that have allowed some choice are noticing a major difference in the performance of the students who are not attending public schools. Although research has shown that establishing a voucher system would be costly at both the state level and the federal level, it would only seem logical that unless it is tried without major constraints, a voucher system for schools in the United States cannot be dismissed.
CHAPTER III

Methodology, Subjects, Instruments, and Procedures

Introduction

The literature reviewed showed that the majority of the Haitian-American population in the United States tends to concentrate in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. Several programs have been developed in those states to help their immigrant populations. Despite these programs, students of Haitian descent seem to face several problems, such as the one mentioned by Bien-Aime (1995), who reports the lack of self-esteem exhibited by students of Haitian descent who misbehave in the classroom and do not progress academically.

Another problem is mentioned by Rorro (1992), who observes that Haitian and Haitian-American students must be overtly taught that thinking for oneself is highly valued in American schools. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural gap that grows between the Haitian or Haitian-American
parent and his child (Hallman et al., 1982) is another source of frustration.

Furthermore, in the United States, parents are limited to three basic options when deciding how they want their children to be educated at the primary and secondary grade levels: home schooling, paying tuition to send their children to private or parochial schools, or sending their children to the public school closest to their home (Scott, 1986). Based on the fact that a large percentage of the population wants the freedom to choose the right school for its children, and the fact that many public schools can no longer justify their low productivity, the future of the American school system as it exists is uncertain. This is particularly true when some states that have allowed choice are noticing a major difference in the performance of the students who are not attending public schools, a difference that favors "choice" schools.

A determination of the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice becomes necessary given the fact that many Haitian parents have the opportunity to exercise their right to choose the most appropriate schools for their children. It also becomes necessary to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New
Jersey is capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children.

This chapter discusses the methodology, the subjects, the instruments, and the procedures used to conduct the research and analyze the findings. These topics are covered in the following four sections.

The Methodology

The methodology conducted to complete this study is known as qualitative research design, specifically, action research. As stated by Patton (1990), the term "action research" refers to research that aims at solving problems within a program, organization, or community. The research methods tend to be less systematic, more informal, and quite specific to the problem, people, and organization for which the research is undertaken. Patton maintains that qualitative research allows the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail.

In this particular study, the researcher used the triangulation method, which consists of a combination of methodologies, to strengthen the results of the study. In order to achieve the goals set by the researcher, the maximum variation sampling method was selected because it aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of
participant or program variation (Patton, 1990). By using this method, the researcher was attempting to identify information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation. The subjects selected lived in six different New Jersey counties and attended or had children attending different New Jersey public and private schools and colleges. The researcher also used criterion sampling. In this particular study, the main criterion was that all the subjects or respondents were of Haitian descent.

The Subjects

The subjects for this study were the survey participants and the 20 individuals who were selected from the survey participants to be interviewed. The first section below will discuss the survey participants, while the next two sections will focus on the interviewees.

Survey participants.

Within the six-county area of Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson, and Middlesex counties in New Jersey, participants with a Haitian background were sought to complete a cross-sectional survey form concerning their adjustment to the American educational system and their familiarity with school choice. Both adult and youth participants were sought, with adult participants being
individuals who were out of high school and financially independent and youth participants being individuals who were in high school or college and were financially dependent on an adult.

Participation in the survey was primarily sought through Haitian churches and community centers within the six-county area. As described in Chapter IV, the final number of survey participants totaled 140, with 107 of those being adults and 33 being youths.

Of the 140 survey participants, 20 agreed to be interviewed for this study. This group of individuals included high school students, college students, teachers, and parents. All were either Haitian, meaning that they were born in Haiti; or Haitian-American, meaning that they were born in the United States from Haitian parents. The subjects were also chosen based on location because the researcher concentrated on six counties in New Jersey: Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson, and Middlesex. These counties were selected as a result of a review of the literature and also as a result of the information provided by some of the interviewees. Several school districts within these counties were discussed.

To protect the anonymity of the participants, the researcher identified them as "respondents," and they are
referred to as such in chapter IV. The subjects were of both sexes, depending on which parent or which child was available and willing to do the interview. Some high school students and some college students interviewed were familiar with both the Haitian and the American educational system; some were familiar with only one system. The parents were familiar with both systems.

Profiles of the respondents.

Respondent #1 was a high school student born in Haiti of Haitian parents. The family then moved to the Ivory Coast, where the student attended a Seventh Day Adventist private school until the 7th grade. In 1994, the family moved to New Jersey, where the student attended a Seventh Day Adventist school in the 8th grade and transferred to a public school in Essex County in the 9th grade. He was placed in an ESL class, but was tested out the same year. At the time of the interview, respondent #1 was in the 11th grade and was no longer taking ESL classes.

Respondent #2 was a high school student born in Haiti of Haitian parents. She attended a Catholic school in Haiti up to the 8th grade. The family moved to New Jersey in 1996, where the student attended a public school in Essex County in the 9th grade. At the time of the interview,
respondent #2 was in the 11th grade and was still taking ESL classes.

Respondent #3 was a high school student born in Haiti of Haitian parents. He attended a private school in Haiti up to the 6th grade. The family moved to New Jersey in 1996, where he attended a public school in Essex County in the 7th grade. At the time of the interview, respondent #3 was in the 9th grade and was no longer taking ESL classes.

Respondent #4 was a high school student born in New Jersey from Haitian parents. She attended a private school up to the 8th grade and transferred to a private high school in the 9th grade. During that same year, she transferred to a public high school in Passaic County as a result of the parents moving to a town in that county. At the time of the interview, respondent #4 was in the 10th grade.

Respondent #5 was a Haitian-American college student born in Brooklyn, New York. She attended a private Seventh Day Adventist bilingual school in Brooklyn up to the 6th grade. The family moved to New Jersey, where she attended a public junior high school in Essex County and transferred in the 9th grade to a public high school also in Essex County. At the time of the interview, respondent #5 was a senior in college, majoring in French.
Respondent #6 was a Haitian parent whose four children attended a public school in Essex County. Respondent #6 was born in Haiti and went to school in Haiti, where she attended a public primary school and a private secondary school. She obtained her GED in the United States. At the time of the interview, she was working as a clerk and had been living in New Jersey for 4 years.

Respondent #7 was a Haitian parent whose two children attended a public school in Monmouth County. She went to school in Haiti, where she attended a private school. She did not complete high school. She had been living in New Jersey for 13 years.

Respondent #8 was a Haitian parent and teacher. His children attended a public school in Essex County. Respondent #8 went to school and to college in Haiti. He obtained a master’s degree in teaching from Brooklyn College. He was currently a bilingual teacher in Brooklyn, New York. He had moved to New Jersey about 5 years previously.

Respondent #9 was a Haitian parent who had a one-year-old child. He attended school in Haiti and obtained some professional training in the United States. He had been living in Essex County for about 10 years and was a truck driver.
Respondent #10 was a Haitian-American who was born in Brooklyn, New York. He went to school in Brooklyn and in Miami, Florida. He graduated from a Seventh-day Adventist college, worked in New Jersey as a computer technician, and lived in Essex County.

Respondent #11 was a Haitian parent whose two children are not attending school yet. He obtained his high school diploma in Haiti and also attended college there. He had been in the United States for about 10 years. In the United States, he attended a public university and obtained a degree in teaching. He completed his student teaching experience at a public school in Essex County. At the time of the interview, he worked as a computer technician after having attended a technical college.

Respondent #12 was a Haitian student born in Haiti, who came to the United States when she was 3 years old. She attended a religious school from kindergarten to 6th grade. After 6th grade, she transferred to a public middle school first, then to the public high school in the same town in Essex County. At the time of the interview she was in the 10th grade at the same public school.

Respondent #13 was a radio commentator who was born in Haiti and who came to the United States after graduating from high school. He obtained a diploma in computer repair
and in electro-mechanical engineering and is still pursuing his studies in computer repair. He was also a radio commentator and communicates often with Haitian community members. He had been in the United States for about 10 years and lived in Essex County.

Respondent #14 grew up in Haiti and went to school in Haiti up to the 5th grade. He came to the United States at the age of 12 and lived in Essex County at the time of the interview. After high school, he attended Cook College and is currently employed by the town of Irvington and intended to obtain a master’s degree in theology in the near future. He had been living in the United States for about 20 years. He had two girls who currently went to a day-care center.

Respondent #15 grew up in Haiti. She was the director of a community center in Union County. She completed high school in Haiti. When she came to the United States, she majored in nursing in college but did not complete the program. She then took some computer classes and secretarial courses. She planned to go back to college for a degree in early childhood education. She had been in the United States for 16 years. She had also implemented an after-school program for disadvantaged children. She had a child who attended a private school.
Respondent #16 was a math teacher in a public school in Passaic County. He had a bachelor’s degree in pure mathematics and a master’s degree in math education. He was also an adjunct professor at the New Jersey City University. In Haiti, he attended a public school up to the 10th grade. He had been living in New Jersey for about 10 years. He had just gotten married.

Respondent #17 was a Haitian businessman who came to the United States in 1977. He went to school in Haiti. He also attended college in Haiti where he studied psychology and economics. He had been in banking for about 10 years. He had a 14-year-old child who went to school in Middlesex County.

Respondent #18 was a math teacher in Passaic County. He had been in the United States for 10 years and was currently pursuing a master’s degree in math education. He was a math and physics teacher in Haiti for 10 years. His two children were attending public school in Essex County.

Respondent #19 was an 18-year-old Haitian student who had been in the United States for about a week. Before her arrival, she attended a private high school in Haiti. She planned to attend a community college and then transfer to a 4-year college. She wanted to be a physician.
Respondent #20 was a Haitian male who had been living in New Jersey for about 14 years. He went to school in Haiti, but completed his last 2 years of high school in Brooklyn, New York. He was a warehouse manager and had a child who was attending private school.

The Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the interview guide approach and the cross-sectional survey. These are discussed in the two sections below.

The interview guide approach.

According to Patton (1990), the interview guide approach is an interview instrumentation which provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. The interview guide keeps the interactions focused but allows individual perspectives and experiences to emerge.

The six kinds of measurement questions described by Patton (1990) were used in the interviews conducted in the present study. They are experience/behavior questions, opinion/values questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions. These questions were compiled into four sets of
questions designed to carry out the purposes of this study.
These purposes were the following.

1. To determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice.

2. To determine the capability of the Haitian-American community in New Jersey to make the most adequate choice of schools for its children.

3. To determine whether understanding of school choice has an effect on the type of schooling chosen by Haitian and Haitian-American parents in New Jersey.

In order to address these issues, the following research questions were developed:

1. How much choice has the Haitian-American community exhibited so far in the education of its children in New Jersey school districts?

2. How much information was acquired before making a choice? And what influenced that choice?

3. How well has the Haitian-American community adjusted to the American education system in terms of the community members’ level of education, the community’s attitude toward education, and the community’s influence on the education of its children?
4. To what extent does the Haitian background influence the choice made by Haitian-American parents in New Jersey school districts?

5. Within the Haitian-American community in New Jersey, is adjustment to the American education system related to the understanding of issues that surround school choice?

The cross-sectional survey.

As Orr (1995) explains, a survey is a collection of data gained from a large number of respondents through the use of questionnaires, interviews, or some combination of the two. Surveys, the author continues, are descriptive and intend to reveal the way things are rather than to test a preconceived notion. Moreover, Leary (1991) emphasizes that using a questionnaire can assure subjects that their responses will be anonymous. Thus, subjects may be more honest on questionnaires than in interviews.

For the purpose of this study, the cross-sectional survey was used because, as Babbie (1973) explains, in a cross-sectional survey, information is collected at one point in time from a sample selected to describe some larger population at that time. This allows for the determination of relationships between variables at the time of the study.
The procedures

The procedures used in this study consisted of the selection of survey participants and interviewees, the design and selection of the instruments, the interviews, and the surveys. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

Sample selection.

For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to identify a representative sampling of Haitian and Haitian-American high school students, college students, teachers, and parents to be surveyed, with some of those also being interviewed. To obtain this sample, a total of 600 surveys were distributed to potential respondents within the six-county area in early 1999. The survey was distributed in three ways. First, the researcher asked acquaintances in her neighborhood to refer her to individuals of Haitian background involved in New Jersey school districts. Second, the researcher visited Haitian churches in the six counties, since Stepick (1982) found that the organization to which Haitians most commonly belong in the United States is the church. Third, the researcher contacted Haitian community centers in some of the counties. To increase the response rate, the researcher requested the help of Haitian
pastors to encourage church members to participate in the study and also attended several Haitian radio shows as a guest in order to encourage the Haitian-American community to participate.

Attached to the survey form was a letter that explained the nature of the study and asked participants if they would also be willing to be interviewed. Out of the 140 survey participants, 20 individuals agreed to be interviewed and these constituted the sample for the interview portion of the study. Parents of young students were contacted prior to the interview of their child.

**Design and selection of the instruments.**

The instruments, which consisted of the cross-sectional survey and the interview guide approach, were designed to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. The instruments were also designed to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community is capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children. Based upon this writer's intense investigation over a 24-month period, no evidence was discovered that any author had addressed these problems.
The last set of questions in the interview was designed to determine whether the Haitian background would have an effect on the type of schooling chosen by Haitian parents in New Jersey. The interview questions and the questionnaires were developed from information provided by the review of the literature. Four sets of open-ended questions with amplifying sub-questions were presented to each interviewee. Appropriate probes were used by the researcher. Also, appropriate follow-up questions to get more in-depth answers were initiated by the researcher.

The surveys.

The survey consisted of an informed consent form, a demographic data sheet, and a 22-item questionnaire using a Likert-type scale to determine participants' attitudes and adjustment to the American educational system and their familiarity with issues surrounding school choice. The surveys were written in both English and in French.

Summary statistics were determined for both the demographic section of the survey and 22-item questionnaire. Also, Pearson's correlation test was used to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships (at the .01 and .05 levels) between responses to items reflecting adjustment of the participants to the American educational system and those reflecting
participants' understanding of issues surrounding school choice.

The interviews.

The researcher identified those survey participants who seemed willing to be interviewed and explained to them the nature and purpose of the study and the interview. Twenty of those individuals agreed to be interviewed.

The interviews were conducted in either Haitian Creole or English, based on the respondent's request. Since the researcher was fluent in both languages, either could be used. All interviews were recorded on audio tape and then transcribed by a professional transcriber. As reported by Patton (1990), the use of a tape recorder permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee. Interviews in Haitian Creole were first translated into English by a translator and then transcribed. After transcription, the researcher checked for accuracy by simultaneously listening to the tape and reading the text. Inductive analysis methods were used to analyze the data from the interviews.

Summary

This study followed the pattern of a qualitative research design, specifically an action research design with a quantitative component. The researcher also used the
triangulation method or a combination of methodologies. The subjects were either Haitian or Haitian-American from Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson, and Middlesex counties. This chapter also presented a profile of the different interviewees. The interview guide approach and the cross-sectional survey were used by the researcher in order to obtain a maximum amount of information.

As Patton (1990) points out, the purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. Inductive analysis methods were used to analyze the data from the interviews. For the completed surveys, summary statistics were calculated and Pearson's correlation test was used to determine if there was a significant relation (at the .01 and .05 levels) between responses relating to adjustment to the American educational system and responses relating to the understanding of issues surrounding school choice.
CHAPTER IV

Findings, Qualitative Data, and Quantitative Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from surveys completed by 140 members of the Haitian-American community in six New Jersey counties—Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson, and Middlesex—and from interviews conducted with 20 of those individuals. The findings are presented in two sections: the section on qualitative data presents a transcription of the interviews, and the section on quantitative data presents summary statistics and correlational analysis of survey data.

As indicated in Chapter I, one purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. Another purpose was to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children. It was important to make these determinations because no model exists to explicitly identify the medium chosen to disseminate information to parents in the Haitian-American community in order to assure that they understand the implications of school choice and that they
are capable of becoming active members in their child’s or children’s education in any New Jersey school district. A third purpose of the study was to determine whether or not understanding of school choice has an effect on the type of schooling chosen by parents in the Haitian-American community in New Jersey.

In order to address these issues, the following research questions were developed:

1. How much choice has the Haitian-American community exhibited so far in the education of its children in New Jersey school districts?

2. How much information was acquired before making a choice? And what influenced that choice?

3. How well has the Haitian-American community adjusted to the American education system in terms of the community members’ level of education, the community’s attitude toward education, and the community’s influence on the education of its children?

4. To what extent does their Haitian background influence the choices made by Haitian-American parents in New Jersey school districts?

5. Within the Haitian-American community in New Jersey, is adjustment to the American education system related to the understanding of issues that surround school choice?
The interviews were conducted to help answer the first four questions. The correlational analysis of the survey results addressed the fifth research question.

Qualitative Data - The Interviews

This section presents the transcription of the interviewees' responses to each of the questions. These questions were compiled into four sets of questions designed to carry out the first four research questions of the study.

It should be noted that names of school districts mentioned in the interviews were deleted from the transcription. Also, to protect the anonymity of the participants, they were identified as "respondents" and are referred to as such in the transcription. The subjects were of both sexes, depending on which parent or which child was available and willing to do the interview. Some high school students and some college students interviewed were familiar with both the Haitian and the American educational system, while some were familiar with only one system. The parents were familiar with both systems.

As indicated in Chapter III, all interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcriber, with interviews in Haitian Creole first translated into English by a translator and then
transcribed. The researcher checked the transcripts for accuracy by simultaneously listening to the tape and reading the text. The 20 interviews are presented under separate subheadings.

Interview 1.

INTERVIEWER: This is the interview of Respondent #1. Respondent #1 is a high school student in School #1 in Essex County, and what year are you in?

RESPONDENT #1: Third year.

INTERVIEWER: So you are a junior.

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: In high school. Okay. Tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere.

RESPONDENT #1: First, I went to school in Africa from -- let's say about the equivalent of kindergarten to seventh or eighth grade, and then I came here. And I continued from eighth grade up to the eleventh grade.

INTERVIEWER: So from kindergarten to seventh grade, you were in Africa.

RESPONDENT #1: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What region in Africa?

RESPONDENT #1: West.

INTERVIEWER: West Africa?

RESPONDENT #1: Ivory Coast.
INTERVIEWER: In Ivory Coast, okay. What school did you go to? A private school there or a public school?

RESPONDENT #1: I went to a private school. A Seventh Day Adventist private school.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, a Seventh Day Adventist private school. Okay. So you never went to any public school in Ivory Coast?

RESPONDENT #1: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. How was the education there?

RESPONDENT #1: The education was pretty -- I don't know exactly how to say this but it seemed a little bit harder than here.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

RESPONDENT #1: Because it seems like the teachers put more heart into the job, and the students had to be able -- like put really a big effort into doing the work correctly. And right here -- once you come here, it's more like a play... serious...

INTERVIEWER: Why do you say it's not serious?

RESPONDENT #1: Because to me -- I don't know but since I came here, the environment was different. I kind of -- it kind of made me kind of lazy. I don't know. But because in Africa -- okay, the grading system was over 20 points. Twenty was supposed to be excellent. Perfect. But if you
had a -- from a 13 -- it was consider to be already excellent. If you had a 15, you were considered to be almost a genius.

INTERVIEWER: Really.

RESPONDENT #1: So that means here when I get a hundred, a hundred, a whole bunch of hundreds, it's boring.

INTERVIEWER: [CHUCKLES] Are you saying that it's not challenging enough for you?

RESPONDENT #1: For me it's not. It's mostly this district I'm in, it's not very challenging.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. When you came here, you came in the United States in seventh grade, right or the eighth grade?

RESPONDENT #1: Eighth grade.

INTERVIEWER: In eighth grade. Did you go directly to a public school or to a private school?

RESPONDENT #1: I went to a private school first.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Which one?

RESPONDENT #1: That was Trinity Temple, Seventh Day Adventist.

INTERVIEWER: How many years did you spend there?

RESPONDENT #1: One. Only one. I graduated from there from eighth grade. And then I came to School #1.

INTERVIEWER: How did Trinity Temple compare to your schools in Africa?
RESPONDENT #1: They used two different systems. In Africa, this is what the teachers do. They come in class, they give you the lesson. They write almost the whole lesson on the board. You copied for over three or four pages in your notebook. You go home. You study those four pages by heart. You get a test. You don't have any multiple choices. You have to get it from your head. But when I came here, it was mostly homework. You had a lot of homework to do. So I kind of like had to save myself. I hated homework. But there, I had homework but not as many as you get here. There you mostly study. When I came here, there was like a lot of homework. They were talking about more practice makes greater. Whenever I had lessons in class, I always remembered what the teacher was talking about because I had a good memory. I had like a little bit of problem with the homework because I hate homework.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So all right, so even Trinity Temple, you're telling me it doesn't compare to what it was in Ivory Coast.

RESPONDENT #1: To me, Ivory Coast was a lot more challenging.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And it's because of memorization.

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah. And the competition just to get -- see, even if you did your best, you would have like a
maximum of 15 over 20. So you know you still have 5 points to cover, so you always have to try harder and harder. As soon as I got; I was like maybe about two classes ahead in the math level. So when I came here, even though I did not understand the language, math is a more like international structure. I would have 100, 100, 100, 100, a bunch of hundreds, so yes, I'm bored. It's only for the English part, I had to like work on it.

INTERVIEWER: To learn English?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and how about School #1? How -- what do you think about that?

RESPONDENT #1: School #1. At first, I came -- School #1 in my ninth year was my second year in the United States, so they put me into -- so they put me into a ESL II class thinking that since this is my second year in the United States, I should be in ESL II. But in ESL II, I was -- it seemed like a joke to me because in eighth grade, I was in a private school. So there was like more attention made to me than in School #1 because the teacher focused with me in reading. So I picked up the language pretty fast, although I still had a big accent. So when I got to ESL II, it was like a big joke. I mean teachers saw that I was not on level. So there was this test that we could take to get out
of ESL. I really should have -- like there are four years of ESL language before you get to regular English. And to get out of ESL you would more likely go through the four years than take the test. But I was at ESL II, I took the test and she came and told me that I had a score of -- that showed I was not even supposed to be in any kind of ESL class. So they changed me -- they transferred me to like a reading development. That's like more like a regular class. And even still in that class, I was one of the top students. And then the following year, I entered honors classes.

INTERVIEWER: So right now, what kind of classes are you taking? All your classes are honors or are they -- either your regular classes that you're taking?

RESPONDENT #1: All my classes are honors except for electives.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you know about school choice?

RESPONDENT #1: School choice?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT #1: Hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever hear anybody talk about school choice?

RESPONDENT #1: No.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you -- what would you do if you had a choice? Where would you choose to go to school?

RESPONDENT #1: If I were to choose to go to school, I would choose -- the best choice of it would be to go back to Africa but I can't. So in here, I would say maybe a public school but in a more -- a better area.

INTERVIEWER: In a better area.

RESPONDENT #1: In a better area.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. But you would still choose a public school?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

RESPONDENT #1: Because public school tends to have like more -- a lot more professional teachers, teachers with higher degrees and a lot more equipment than with private schools.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now tell me do you think that the school that you're attending now -- School #1 -- do you think School #1 is preparing you for your future?

RESPONDENT #1: Hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know what you want to do for the future?

RESPONDENT #1: I know what I want to do.

INTERVIEWER: What would you like to do?
RESPONDENT #1: I wanted to become a neurosurgeon.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT #1: But I don't think School #1 has sort of prepared me for that.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

RESPONDENT #1: The level of education is very low. The other day in the newspaper, there was a study of the schools in New Jersey, and School #1 was on the bottom of the -- of the rank. And I feel that Columbia, which is next to us is way up there. It's almost like School #1 is _______ to list. And not only that, but the classes -- the classes could be a lot better if the environment -- like the students wanted to be better. But I don't know, they think high school is a place to have fun and to enjoy yourself.

INTERVIEWER: Oh that's what you think that high school is a place to have fun and enjoy yourself?

RESPONDENT #1: No that's -- the environment.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, the environment. Okay.

RESPONDENT #1: Some teachers are trying to make the best of things, but since there are a lot of students who are in the same classes, we just messing with those -- with the others.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. Even in your honors classes, you have trouble concentrating? How do your honor classes compare to the other classes?

RESPONDENT #1: To the regular classes?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RESPONDENT #1: The honor classes are way better, way better.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

RESPONDENT #1: The teachers -- like the competition is higher. You feel at least that you're doing something, and the teachers tend more to focus on a college preparation than regular classes. And now a lot of honor teachers are trying to like -- whichever student is trying to mess up the class, they are trying to kick the student out of the classes in order to make it better for other ones. There are only 30, and I think it's much better.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Since you said that you don't think that you don't think that the high school you are attending is preparing you for what you want to do in the future, are you still going to continue to go for it or what do you plan to do?

RESPONDENT #1: What I was planning to do. Going to School #1 next year will be my last year. So I say I could handle it for one more year. I could stay there for one more year.
But what I was planning on to do is that, this summer I was not going to have a summer job. I use the library like a second house so I could -- so I go there and read a whole bunch books and pretty much study for like my SATs so I could have a really good score, take college placement tests and be able to get to a better place for more competition in college.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now tell me about your parents.

RESPONDENT #1: My parents -- they care about my education a hundred percent, and that's unlike many parents in my district. My parents are after my education. Every time I have -- if a paper comes home from school, they would like, "Respondent #1, did you read the paper? Did you read this? Did you read that? What did you have on your report card? Why did your grade go down? Why did they go up? Whenever I have a progress report, they always support me. They... Plus they're with me all time unlike a lot of parents in my district, who don't focus really on the kids' education.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think they focus on?

RESPONDENT #1: Getting money for the kids to -- I don't know -- getting money. Getting all the jobs and, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your parents play a role in your education or in your performance?
RESPONDENT #1: Yeah, they do. If I had no parents right now -- as soon as I came I go I don't know -- it seems like the environment got me lazy. So if my parents were not there, maybe I was going to be a lot, a lot lazier. So I think they did a lot of things in education.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Tell me about their education. Do you know anything about what education they got?

RESPONDENT #1: My parents did not get really far. My mother just had her GED and, yeah, that's pretty much it. And she followed[?] I think a computer course over a few months. And my father had -- he went to college. Yes, he did. And he had -- I don't know how you say that but he has something for French teacher[?].

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that if they were not educated, that they would have the same influence on you?

RESPONDENT #1: I would think so. Because I'm sure that since we are in a Christian family, I know that. God -- who always going to take care for his children, so he would find a way to talk to my parents in order to help me and have a good education.

INTERVIEWER: Are you telling me that religion played a role also in your education?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What role?
RESPONDENT #1: Like okay. You know you have to sweat in order to have something. Like you have to work in order to earn something. So my parents they are always after me saying, "You have to do this to earn it." The Bible even gives an example. You have to -- to -- I don't know how to say it in English. I know it in French. [SPEAKING FRENCH] And so the thing is the model to tell me to work through school so I could become somebody in life.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you say you don't know anything about school choice.

RESPONDENT #1: School choice?

INTERVIEWER: Well, let me tell you that pretty soon they will come up with a program where parents can choose whatever school they want to send their kids to. And there are other ways -- other types of school choice programs also that they are -- that are offered. And there are different types of school choice programs that are also offered to students that will be offered starting September '98. Now if you were offered -- I have to say again -- within the United States, if you were offered a choice between -- these different choices, there is something called a voucher where the state would give you some money and you can take it and go wherever you want to go with it, or you can get scholarships or they can give your parents
tax credits. Okay. Things like that. So if you had the choice -- let's say if it was up to you -- within the United States, where would you choose to go to school? Or if you had a chance to do it again, where would you do it again?

RESPONDENT #1: If I had a chance. I would choose I think -- I don't know exactly -- maybe New York. New York has some pretty good schools there.

INTERVIEWER: Private or public?

RESPONDENT #1: It depends because my mother was talking to this lady. She was talking about her sons live in New Jersey but goes to New York. There is this public school in New York and you have to take a placement test before you get there. So many students take that placement test. It's like a high level high school.

INTERVIEWER: Did the person explain to you what type of school that was?

RESPONDENT #1: Not exactly. She talked with my mother. My mother just gave me a brief summary.

INTERVIEWER: So it's just the school where the kids have to have quality? They have to be of high performance? A level of high performance to be admitted there, and it's a public school you're saying?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.
INTERVIEWER: In what area in New York?

RESPONDENT #1: I don't know that.

INTERVIEWER: So you think that would be one of your choices or would it be the only choice?

RESPONDENT #1: I don't know exactly but if I look for other schools maybe I would find other choices.

INTERVIEWER: What qualities would you look for in a school if you were to look for a school?

RESPONDENT #1: I would look for a school that would -- that had a lot of interest in their students, and where you have a good environment, affordable, where I'm close to home.

INTERVIEWER: What do you call a good environment?

RESPONDENT #1: The teachers and the students influence... environment mostly because the students' attitudes influence your way of working. Because if you live in a pretty bad environment, you have a tendency to look like the others and focus on other things than education. And these teachers, if the teachers really care about the student, they would like make programs and other to have the students progress.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of programs?

RESPONDENT #1: Like -- a lot of like maybe after school program, extracurricular activities and --

INTERVIEWER: Can you give me some examples?
RESPONDENT #1: ...competitions. Like -- me? I don't know, but since I was sent to kindergarten, I was gifted in math. I don't know but that's a gift from God. So I was thinking like you could have competition in math, a college level student -- making college students come to high school and having competitions, and they develop your talents.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So these are the things you think that they should do to improve?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I love it. Any other things you think that your district could do to improve their environment or is there anything that this -- you think the district could do to improve the quality? Communication.

RESPONDENT #1: Maybe you apply certain rules.

INTERVIEWER: It should what?

RESPONDENT #1: Apply certain rules. My district -- when you go to school mostly during the summer time, it doesn't seem like a school. It seems like a big fashion place. Like if they do fine fashion. It's okay for somebody to dress nice and neat, but sometimes some people go to extreme conditions. Some people just think about money. They have an after school job. They don't do their homework. You know, I mean, you see it there. They don't care about school really. They care about the way they look compared
to others. So I think like maybe a uniform will be good, some kind of...

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that going to school in a different district, like you said, will -- will that make a difference? What do you think another district could offer you?

RESPONDENT #1: A more challenging competition, and some other districts have better names. They know that if you graduate from that district, you are more likely able to do better work. Like, for example, if I say Columbia. If somebody knows that you graduate from Columbia, they know that Columbia is a college prep high school. But if you say that you graduated from School #1, which is not a really big high school, you have more chances to go -- going for the better colleges if you come from Columbia.

INTERVIEWER: But what do you think makes -- besides the name, what do you think makes Columbia, since you were talking about it -- what do you think makes it a better school besides the name?

RESPONDENT #1: I have many friends that go there. They seem like the teachers are a lot more serious about the education of the students. They have better equipment. And in the newspapers, they were showing the thing about statistics. They were showing -- they were showing that
student attendance, the average attendance -- School #1 had a total of about 86% per day, and I think Columbia had 94%. And for the staff, we had an attendance I think of 89 to between 89 and 91. The other school had an attendance of about 98% of the staff, and they were also showing SAT scores. Like our scores were low at 800. It was 800 -- around 800. And some other schools had scores of around 1200, so all that matters to me.

INTERVIEWER: Now, you're going to take the SAT, right?

RESPONDENT #1: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Are you preparing for that?

RESPONDENT #1: Yeah, I'm preparing for that.

INTERVIEWER: Does the school offer you a program in SAT prep course?

RESPONDENT #1: [hesitates to answer]

INTERVIEWER: Is there such a thing as an SAT prep school course in your district?

RESPONDENT #1: I heard of an SAT prep course, but I haven't heard much of it since the... of the HSPT... because a lot of our students don't pass the HSPT (?)... So more people are concerned about the HSPT than the SAT.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else that you'd like to add in terms of school choice, in terms of your education and your future?
RESPONDENT #1: For myself, I'm trying to find myself a decent schedule. I just joined the tennis team in order to... but you see, if I join the tennis team, I'm going to have to go practice with them every day. And that makes -- that kind of like throw off my schedule. So I have to learn how to organize myself a lot better, in order to do my work. Because I have to like -- more like prepare for college, because when I'm in college, my schedule is going to be... learning how to organize myself.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. All right. Thank you.

RESPONDENT #1: You're welcome.

Interview 2.

INTERVIEWER: Interview of respondent #2.

RESPONDENT #2: ...

INTERVIEWER: The first question I'm going to ask you is for you to tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere. What I mean is, can you compare or how do you find the education that you had in Haiti compared to what you're getting here in the United States.

RESPONDENT #2: I'd say the education in Haiti was easier than here. But it's... I mean, the education here is easier than the one in Haiti. But... it's good. And I understand and...
INTERVIEWER: Why do you think this is easier here than in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #2: Because in Haiti you had to do much work. You had to study a lot. And you still have to study a lot here, but -- and I think... [French] lecon... pourquoi... nous... recité...

INTERVIEWER: So you're telling me that in Haiti there was more memorization and you had to do an oral recitation to the teacher, okay. What about here, what do you do here?

RESPONDENT #2: Here... we have a lot of quizzes and tests. And I have homework every day.

INTERVIEWER: The -- if you tell me what about -- how do you compare -- how are you doing in school? Are you doing well compared to -- how are you doing in school compared to how you were doing in school in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #2: ...doing better here... In Haiti... in a Catholic school...

INTERVIEWER: So you have to have an average of 63?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: ...that compared to a 50 here. So you had to have an average of 63 in Haiti --

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: -- in order to pass a class. And here -- what about here?
RESPONDENT #2: Here, you have to have 65 to pass...

INTERVIEWER: But is it the 60 -- is it easier to get the 65 here than it was to get the 63 in Haiti? Or which one -- how is it -- which one is harder, which one is easier?

RESPONDENT #2: I think in Haiti it was harder.

INTERVIEWER: It was harder.

RESPONDENT #2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that when you came here -- when you came here, did you get -- how did you find out about the school that you went to? I know that your father was looking for a school for you guys before you came here. Do you know why he picked this specific town that you live in? Did he choose that town that you live in and the school that you're going to?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes, he did. He used to live in East Orange and he... high school, so that's why he chose...

INTERVIEWER: So you guys go to School #2 in Essex County. Now how was it in School #2 when you got there, did you -- who oriented you, did you get -- what classes did they put you in -- did you have any special program to learn the language. First of all, did you speak English well when you came?

RESPONDENT #2: No, I did not speak English well. They put me in ESL and I... of these... she helped me in English and
that's why, when I first came, I could not understand anything because...

INTERVIEWER: What grade were you put in when you first came in?

RESPONDENT #2: They put me in the 11th grade and then they figured I couldn't do it, so they put me back in ninth grade.

INTERVIEWER: The ninth grade?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So why did they put you into 11th grade when you came here?

RESPONDENT #2: Because they knew that I was in Catholic school in Haiti, so they thought... They thought if they put me in 11th grade, it's going to be easy for me.

INTERVIEWER: Was it based on age?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so you were put in an ESL class when you started. Are you still in that ESL class?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes, I'm in ESL 3.

INTERVIEWER: ESL 3. Now you're in your third year of high school?

RESPONDENT #2: No, the -- yeah, this is my third year.

INTERVIEWER: You're a junior?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.
INTERVIEWER: Okay, and you're still in ESL?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that the ESL -- how do you -- what do you think about that ESL class, is it helping you or --

RESPONDENT #2: Yeah, I think it's... They give you a test every spring and if you pass that test, they're going to put you out of ESL. They're going to put you in the regular English classes. But if you don't pass it, you're going to still stay in that ESL class.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did anybody when you came here, explain -- -- when you just started -- the educational system in the United States to you?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: How about in your school, did anybody explain anything to you?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: What about your guidance counselor?

RESPONDENT #2: Oh, yeah. He told me that if you study... you just have to study and he told me that... about the education of... have to study and you don't have to...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did he know anything about the education that you had in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #2: No.
INTERVIEWER: So he couldn't -- he didn't make any comparison or anything?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: So all right now are you telling me you're doing better in school now or than you did when you just came?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Now did you -- do you think that the way you're doing in school now and you did in school in Haiti, do you think that your parents have anything to do with that?

RESPONDENT #2: No...

INTERVIEWER: Do your parents have a role to play -- did they play a role in getting you where you are now, or how involved are your parents in your education?

RESPONDENT #2: ...

INTERVIEWER: Est-ce que... participé... education?

RESPONDENT #2: ...

INTERVIEWER: ...yeah, what do they do?

RESPONDENT #2: ...[French]...

INTERVIEWER: So do they ask you about how your day was?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: If you have homework, if you have any tests, and things like that?
RESPONDENT #2: Uh hum.

INTERVIEWER: How concerned do they seem to be? Est-ce que...

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hum...

INTERVIEWER: So they're very responsible.

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hum.

INTERVIEWER: Now if let's say that they were needed at school, they have to talk to them, they call them in, do they go to the school?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: When they call them in?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hum.

INTERVIEWER: Every time?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hum, every time.

INTERVIEWER: So they go to the school. Let me ask you how is their -- what is their -- do you -- what is their level of education, your parents?

RESPONDENT #2: They did not finish -- my mother... in high school when she was in Haiti and my father... he was... here...

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that their education makes them the way they are, or do you think if they had less education, they wouldn't be the way they are about your education?
RESPONDENT #2: Yeah... education... they would be...

INTERVIEWER: And what are you plans for the future?

RESPONDENT #2: I don't know, but I want to be a pediatrician because I like to work with kids... that's what I'm going to study.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Are you satisfied with the education that you're getting in School #2?

RESPONDENT #2: ...yes...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the education that you're getting in School #2 is going to prepare you for what you want to do?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes, because I take -- they give me... that can help me.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of subjects?

RESPONDENT #2: Like... biology and...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you think that that will definitely prepare you for your -- for what you want to be?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you apply -- are you considering any particular college?

RESPONDENT #2: No, not yet.

INTERVIEWER: Not yet. But you do plan on going or you don't intend to go?

RESPONDENT #2: Oh, yeah, I want to go... college.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the way you were brought up and... your education, meaning that the way your parents raised you, do you think that influenced the way you are in school, the way you learn?

RESPONDENT #2: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How?

RESPONDENT #2: Because they teach me certain things and they show how to do certain things.

INTERVIEWER: Like what?

RESPONDENT #2: ...and they told me that when...

INTERVIEWER: How do you compare your parents or the education that you had to the education that you see other kids have?

RESPONDENT #2: Like for example, most of friends...

INTERVIEWER: What?

RESPONDENT #2: Smoke.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT #2: And I don't, so they...

INTERVIEWER: So -- ou pensez que l'éducation... ou pensez que...

RESPONDENT #2: ...

INTERVIEWER: ...influence...

RESPONDENT #2: ...pense que ca...
INTERVIEWER: Est-ce que pensez que la religion... Does religion matter?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: No? Even if you weren't a religious person, you would still be the same way?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

RESPONDENT #2: Parce que...

INTERVIEWER: So you see that other kids... not going to be an advantage. They behave well.

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: What kids are we talking about? Are we talking about other Haitian kids or other American kids?

RESPONDENT #2: No, it doesn't matter.

INTERVIEWER: It doesn't matter? So the kids you're telling me about, are they kids that go to your school? So most of the kids in your school behave well?

RESPONDENT #2: Not most of them, but some of them.

INTERVIEWER: Behave well?

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: And so did you ever visit any other high school in the United States besides School #2?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: You never went to any other high school?
RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you consider yourself an American student or a Haitian student?

RESPONDENT #2: Oh, a Haitian student.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

RESPONDENT #2: Because... everybody in the school knows me... students... they know that I don’t speak English well so that's why...

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so you consider yourself a Haitian student because of that... All right. Thank you.

Interview 3.

INTERVIEWER: We're talking to RESPONDENT #3 who is also a high school student at School #2. What year are you in?

RESPONDENT #3: ...ninth grade.

INTERVIEWER: You're in ninth grade. How many years have you been in the United States?

RESPONDENT #3: Three years and a month.

INTERVIEWER: Three years and a month. So you started here in what grade?

RESPONDENT #3: Seventh.

INTERVIEWER: Seventh.

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: ...of seventh grade. So tell me about your educational experience between the United States and the...
You studied in Haiti also. So how -- tell me, what do -- how did these two educational experiences compare?

RESPONDENT #3: ...some classes in Haiti are harder, and somewhat easier here, somewhat... And in Haiti... like me sometimes... like research paper, like report... And here they give you a report card... and sometimes... vocabulary. In Haiti, study... almost the same thing, you -- instead of saying it, you just write it. And here you have more...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT #3: And Haiti -- in Haiti, the... more or less -- a little bit more stricter...

INTERVIEWER: What do you call strict?

RESPONDENT #3: Like sometimes they tell you that if you don't know your lessons that they give you, that they spank you...

INTERVIEWER: ...whipping.

RESPONDENT #3: Yeah, and here, like they give you a zero... that if you... you got a spanking...

INTERVIEWER: So this is different?

RESPONDENT #3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What type of school did you attend in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #3: Private school.

INTERVIEWER: So and here you are in a public school? Okay. One thing I didn't ask... but I'll go back to it, well,
I'll ask you and then... can also answer. Do you -- if you had a choice, here in the United States, if you had a choice, first of all, where would you chose to go to school?

RESPONDENT #3: In the United States...

INTERVIEWER: Well, anywhere. What would you do, if you had a choice, if somebody were to tell you that you could choose to go to school anywhere in the United States you want to go to school, where would you choose to go?

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: You don't know. ...?

RESPONDENT #3: ...I would... school... and... whatever a good school... just... but it's just that it's...

INTERVIEWER: Would you choose a public school, a private school, what would you choose?

RESPONDENT #3: I probably would choose a private school.

INTERVIEWER: You probably would choose a private school? Why?

RESPONDENT #3: Probably... education.

INTERVIEWER: You think that in a private school here in the United States you would get a better education?:

RESPONDENT #3: ...because I had the experience... private school, but in Haiti... schools are...
INTERVIEWER: But how about here in the United States, what would you choose?

RESPONDENT #3: ...a private school...

INTERVIEWER: So you think that it's probably the same thing as in Haiti, that the private school would give you a better education than a public school? Okay. What about you... [THIS QUESTION WAS ADDRESSED TO RESPONDENT #2, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT.]

RESPONDENT #2: What was the question?

INTERVIEWER: If you had a choice, where would you go -- if you had a choice to pick any school you want to go to in the United States, where would you choose to go?

RESPONDENT #2: ...it would easier for my parents to go to a public school... and I think that would probably easier.

INTERVIEWER: So you think you would choose a public school because your parents wouldn't have to pay for the public school.

RESPONDENT #2: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: But in New Jersey, where would you choose to go to school, if you had a choice to choose a school anywhere to go to school in New Jersey? Would you know how to choose a school?

RESPONDENT #2: No.

INTERVIEWER: You wouldn't know how to choose a school?
RESPONDENT #2: I wouldn't know.

INTERVIEWER: Would have to ask. Who would you ask... if you had to choose a school in New Jersey, who would you ask?

RESPONDENT #2: I would ask... school.

INTERVIEWER: Well, what school? If you don't know, how would you choose a school? How would you go about asking? Who would you ask?

RESPONDENT #2: I would like go... school... ask the students or... and...

INTERVIEWER: Uh hmm.

RESPONDENT #2: And then how the... and I would ask if the students... was...

INTERVIEWER: That's how you would choose. So can I say that you are satisfied with the way things are or -- there are things that you would like to do that you don't have. How do you feel about School #2?

RESPONDENT #3: I think it's...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that you're getting all that you wanted to have? You get all the things that you wanted to learn, you're learning them?

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: ...what are the things that you think you'd like to learn...
RESPONDENT #3: They have this like art class. I like art...
We do things but like teacher doesn't really appreciate
what I do.

INTERVIEWER: The teacher doesn't appreciate what you do?
RESPONDENT #3: No.

INTERVIEWER: What happened?
RESPONDENT #3: ...appreciate what I do. Other people -- if
I draw something, and I... all the people... I didn't do it
like better than... not as... that's all.

INTERVIEWER: So explain this to me. You think that the
teachers are not appreciating what you're doing.
RESPONDENT #3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so what does the teacher do? He didn't
grade you well?
RESPONDENT #3: He grades... like it's just... just keep
giving me a...

INTERVIEWER: It's like just a simple grade, nothing
major... you were telling me that yeah, your art teacher is
not really appreciating your work?
RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so how many -- how often do you get
assignments from that teacher?
RESPONDENT #3: ...every... like one day... and like... tell us like to draw something, to draw something like the... it's like it's a project, it's like...

INTERVIEWER: So you don't get any art show or any display of your work? You don't put the work up and so people can go and look... show, exposé...

RESPONDENT #3: ...[French]...

INTERVIEWER: Now, what are your plans for the future?
RESPONDENT #3: I would like to create cartoons...

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and do you think that you are being prepared for that at School #2?
RESPONDENT #3: Yeah, kind of.

INTERVIEWER: Kind of. What do you mean, "kind of"?
RESPONDENT #3: Like... helps me...

INTERVIEWER: Right.
RESPONDENT #3: And sometimes you can... pastels...

INTERVIEWER: You do pastel painting?
RESPONDENT #3: Yes...

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything that you'd like to have that you're not getting --
RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: ...to prepare you for what you want to do?
RESPONDENT #3: ...didn't have...
INTERVIEWER: So do you know where you plan to go to college?

RESPONDENT #3: Not yet.

INTERVIEWER: Not yet. But is there a plan of going to college...

RESPONDENT #3: yes...

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that -- how do you see yourself, how are you working here? Are you performing better here than in Haiti or vice versa or the opposite or were you doing better in Haiti in school than here?

RESPONDENT #3: ...[FRENCH]...a lycee...

INTERVIEWER: So for some certain subjects you do better here than you do in Haiti, so others you do better in Haiti than here. So you're interested in art. How was your art in Haiti? Was there any program?

RESPONDENT #3: I didn't have any art there.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: You didn't have any art.

RESPONDENT #3: But sometimes I used to draw.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you consider yourself an American student or a Haitian student?

RESPONDENT #3: Haitian (?)

INTERVIEWER: Why?
RESPONDENT #3: ...I'm still Haitian and... Haitian accent and I just feel like...

INTERVIEWER: Are you still taking ESL classes?

RESPONDENT #3: ...English.

INTERVIEWER: So -- you don't need ESL anymore or what, you were tested out of ESL?

RESPONDENT #3: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How many years did you spend in ESL?

RESPONDENT #3: I had a year -- I just... few years ago...

INTERVIEWER: You only had one year in ESL? So right now you're in regular English?

RESPONDENT #3: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you have no problem, or you...

RESPONDENT #3: I got Bs in English.

INTERVIEWER: You get Bs in English. Okay, all right. Do you think that your parents play a role in your education...

RESPONDENT #3: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What is their role?

RESPONDENT #3: To help me study... to help me...

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT #3: ...make me study...

INTERVIEWER: And you don't think that religion has anything to do with the way you are, the way you behave, the way you learn?
RESPONDENT #3: I think it does...

INTERVIEWER: So you think without the religion, you wouldn't be the student that you are?

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: Okay...religion.

RESPONDENT #3: ...

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.

Interview 4.

INTERVIEWER: This is the interview of RESPONDENT #4. And RESPONDENT #4 goes to school #3. The first question is to tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere.

RESPONDENT #4: My educational experience in the United States is good so far. In high school is harder. Grammar school was easier because I went to private schools. I've been in private schools for nine years. This is my second year at a public school. So public schools...

INTERVIEWER: Now did you start school here or in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #4: Here.

INTERVIEWER: Here. So you were born here?

RESPONDENT #4: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So what private school did you go to?

RESPONDENT #4: School #4 and School #5 in high school in Passaic County.
INTERVIEWER: So you started high school in a private school? Then you transferred here. So how do you find the education system in New Jersey? You've always been to school in New Jersey?

RESPONDENT #4: Uh hum. The education system is good. It depends on where you're located, where the schools are okay, because the students make the school, the school doesn't make the students. It depends on where you're located. In Paterson, I find that private schools are better... to bring up the child, personally. Public schools are not so good.

INTERVIEWER: So you used to live in Paterson first, and then you moved up... And what about your parents?

RESPONDENT #4: My parents are both Haitians. And my father, he's from... Port-au-Prince. And my mom is from... She's half-Spanish. But... great grandfather was Dominican. My parents came here -- my mother came here first. She was pregnant with me. She had me in 1981 and then a year later my father came. And my mom, she's a nurse at Wayne General. My dad, he's a supervisor of office equipment in Fairfield. INTERVIEWER: They... have a high level of education?

RESPONDENT #4: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they influenced your education?
RESPONDENT #4: They influence me a lot.

INTERVIEWER: How? How?

RESPONDENT #4: My home training, the way they bring you up, first of all. Second of all, the way they teach you responsibility such as school wise, what you have to -- your priorities, what you should take first and afterwards. The way that they work... education. They didn't come here with money. They had to work hard to get an education and to bring their families here, to make money for me, so that influenced me a lot.

INTERVIEWER: How do they see education? What do they think of education?

RESPONDENT #4: They see education as the main thing, the main force. Education is more -- to them, education is more than money, it's more than anything you can have, because knowledge is what they base their whole life upon, for us, as their children.

INTERVIEWER: And what are your plans for the future?

RESPONDENT #4: I want to be a medical technologist. I'd like to go to College #1 or any college in New Jersey. I'd like to have a family and a house.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that School #3 in Passaic County here is preparing you for the future you want to have?
RESPONDENT #4: It's preparing me, but the way I came into this school was not good enough because, as I said before, I came from a private school, and the curriculum of the private school is way different from the curriculum of the public schools. You need a certain amount of credits in public school to graduate, which in private school, you just take classes and you graduate on your time. In public school, it's a whole different story. But the curriculum is very good. They teach you well.

INTERVIEWER: Where, in a private or in the public?

RESPONDENT #4: In the private schools. The public schools, the teachers, they don't mostly have time for you. You have to do your work on your own time. You have to work hard, come after school, things like that. And if your questions are not answered, then you have to move that out yourself.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, now do you see yourself as a Haitian student or as an American student?

RESPONDENT #4: I see myself as Haitian student.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

RESPONDENT #4: Because my family and my language, my culture, my religion, my way of dress, and the way I was brought up, my background. I'm not American. I was born here, but I'm not American, my family has -- I've been living with them for the longest time, the food I eat, the
language I speak at home, I don't speak English, I speak Creole, and sometimes Spanish. I think of myself as a Haitian student.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that your background as a Haitian, your upbringing, do you think that influenced your education?

RESPONDENT #4: It influenced me a lot because of history Haitians, suffering, and their problems, and what they had to go through and even now, it influenced me a lot of my background and my upbringing of my parents.

INTERVIEWER: Now if you had a choice, if you had a choice, that you could choose to go to any school you wanted in New Jersey, where would you choose to go to?

RESPONDENT #4: College #1.

INTERVIEWER: As a university, but how about as a school -- a high school?

RESPONDENT #4: High school? School #5.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

RESPONDENT #4: I've been there before and it's like a home to me. I feel more comfortable there and I'm more comfortable in private school. I've been in private school all my life, to me it's more comfortable.
INTERVIEWER: How do you feel in the public school that makes you feel -- what is it in the public school that makes you feel uncomfortable?

RESPONDENT #4: There are a lot of kids and you have questions and it's like crowded in the class. Your questions are not answered as well as you want them to be. The teachers don't have time for you, they can't make time for you, and you have to make your own time to come after school, do the work. If you don't get it done, that's your loss. In private school, it's a whole different story. They make a way for you to get your assignments done and they seem to care of you more, try to take care of you more than in public schools.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see -- well, there aren't too many Haitians in this high school. How do you see the Haitian population in the schools, I mean, you've been to Catholic school all your life. Were there a lot of Haitians in the Catholic schools?

RESPONDENT #4: In the Catholic schools where I've been to there were about 20 percent in School #4. And in School #5, there were about 15 to 20. And they were just as I am, but some of them were not fully Haitian, either they were half or their mother was Haitian, or their father and then something else. But culture wise, they were just like me,
because it's not easy to recognize a Haitian these days in school. But you can see the like the way they are, the way they present themselves.

INTERVIEWER: So where you used to live, why is it that you moved from Paterson to this area?

RESPONDENT #4: I moved from Paterson because my mom, she wanted to have a restaurant -- a Haitian restaurant in Prospect Park -- and we moved and my father said that the school -- the private school was too expensive. He had to pay taxes here. So he heard that this school was a good school, so he preferred me to go here and my mom could have the restaurant. So then we moved to Prospect Park from Paterson.

INTERVIEWER: So basically you can say that you came to this town because of the school?

RESPONDENT #4: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: All right. So do you know any other Haitians that do that, that move from town to town because of schools?

RESPONDENT #4: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where do they go?

RESPONDENT #4: I have one of my cousins moved from East Orange to go to school in Saddlebrook. I have another one of my cousins who moved from Paterson, from ... High
School, to go to school all the way down in south Jersey --
New Brunswick.

INTERVIEWER: So it's very common among the people, the
Haitians that you know that they move a lot because of the
schools.

RESPONDENT #4: The schools.

INTERVIEWER: Now what about the ones that stay in the
schools that they are in, let's say, in Paterson or East
Orange. How do they feel, do you know?

RESPONDENT #4: I think that they try to make the most of
what they're doing in the school. If they should have a
problem with the school, if it's not them... most Haitian
kids would have a problem because they do -- I'm not
generalizing, but they do take education seriously. They
do. And they try to make it the most priority -- their
first priority in their life to complete an education,
because... have the understanding of where their parents
came from and how hard their parents worked to come here to
provide for them.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that the school system, since
you don't know any other system, what do you think in
general about the education system in New Jersey?

RESPONDENT #4: The education system is good. But like I
said before, it depends where the school is located and
what kind of students are in the school, because like I said before, the students make the school. The school does not make the students. It depends where the school is situated, what kind of students are in it. Do they want to learn or not. Or are they just here because they have to be here.

INTERVIEWER: Now if you were given again, I know, you would go to -- you said you would go -- but are you aware of the fact that soon there's going to be in New Jersey -- I don't know if it's going to be a law or a bill, but something that's going to allow parents to choose whatever school they want to send their kids to. Are you aware of that?

RESPONDENT #4: No, I...

INTERVIEWER: Also, do you know -- I probably will have to interview your parents and ask them -- or some other parent, but how did they -- do your parents find out about School #3?

RESPONDENT #4: They found out from my family -- my aunt -- who had her son here -- who had her son here before and she said that it was a good school because she used to live in Prospect Park. The reason she moved was because of work, her job. She said it was a good school... her son did well here. It was a good environment to learn, so we chose to move here.
INTERVIEWER: Do you know if they went around and -- did they get any other information besides your aunt?

RESPONDENT #4: Yeah, they went to I think -- I went to basically my family members who lived around this area... and that's why...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that there is enough information out there to inform people about schools?

RESPONDENT #4: Not that much.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

RESPONDENT #4: There's not that much information that informs you about schools because not everyone knows about particular schools, if you don't ask... to tell you what's happening and what's going on in schools.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know whether your parents came here in School #3 and asked information about the school before they put you in? Who did they talk to?

RESPONDENT #4: Yeah, my mom. They came and they talked to Dr... and Ms. ...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And that was enough for them to make up their mind and decide to send you here?

RESPONDENT #4: Uh hmm.

INTERVIEWER: Now how about your programs, the programs that you are in the school, how did you choose them?
RESPONDENT #4: I came to the school, like I said before, from a private high school, freshman year. I came to the school sophomore year. They counted all my credits, they told me that I needed some classes in order to be a sophomore. They gave them to me and they gave me some classes in order to have all my credits to be a junior. That way, they come and then all... and they told me how many credits I needed to graduate for the year in order to graduate on time.

INTERVIEWER: What about your courses, your programs, did anybody help you chose them or did you just pick them out of the book, or --

RESPONDENT #4: My guidance counselor helped me choose them and my father.

INTERVIEWER: Did your father have any logic behind the courses that he suggested that you should take?

RESPONDENT #4: He told me not to take any fundamental courses if I wanted to go to high school --

INTERVIEWER: If you wanted to go to high school?

RESPONDENT #4: I mean college. Take courses that would benefit me in the future in order to go to college.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that the level of education of your parents had an influence on your life?
RESPONDENT #4: I think it did in a way. It did in a way, because my parents, in order for them to get where they are, they didn't go to school free. They had to work hard to get where they are and they were very old, so they didn't go to school like just learning things... to try to remember and comprehend what they were just being taught. So --

INTERVIEWER: No, but how does that influence you?

RESPONDENT #4: How did it influence me? It influenced me because I want a good future, just like they had. But I want an even better one. It influenced me because they showed me that through hard work, and what you get out of going to school, it pays off in the end.

INTERVIEWER: Would it have made a difference if they didn't go to school, if your mother wasn't a nurse, if your father didn't go back to school, would it have made a difference in your life?

RESPONDENT #4: No.

INTERVIEWER: Why or why not?

RESPONDENT #4: No, because speaking for myself, my parents are Haitian and just the manner of upbringing that I was brought up in and the home training and everything else that goes with that, the way that they try to teach you that, even as... to have knowledge, enough knowledge or
enough money to get the education that they really wanted, it made me want to get the education that I wanted for myself. And in a way, makes them proud.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that Haitians -- how do you think that Haitians choose the school that they want their kids to attend? How do you think Haitians end up in the schools that they do?

RESPONDENT #4: I don't think all Haitians chose the school that they want to go to, because sometimes the income is not good enough, so they just go to that school, or the area that they're in, they have no choice, but to go to that school.

INTERVIEWER: Why is it do you think that they stay in that particular area or is there a particular area that Haitians usually stay in?

RESPONDENT #4: The particular area that I know of that there are a lot of Haitians, there's... East Orange and Newark. The majority is Haitian community. And I think because it's cheaper, like the housing, there's jobs and that's mostly it.

INTERVIEWER: So it's not really a choice, it's just where they end up and for income purposes, that they're still there. Anything else you want to add in terms of what we've been discussing.
RESPONDENT #4: Uh uh. That's enough, Ms. INTERVIEWER.

Interview 5.

INTERVIEWER: First I'll ask you to tell me about your educational experience here, like what school did you go to?

RESPONDENT #5: Well, I went to a parochial school in Brooklyn, New York; Seventh Day Adventist Bilingual Union School. And I went there as -- in pre-kindergarten, like it was a daycare center and then they expanded to up to kindergarten, then they expanded to... there... sixth grade. And then we moved to New Jersey and I was going to public school. And there was a big difference between the public school and the private, because the private school in Brooklyn, it was founded by the church, the Haitian church. So it was completely different from regular Catholic private schools. So it was a big contrast in personalities, schools, and the whole social interaction, that I had to undergo.

And in New Jersey, I went to junior high... and then when to School #6 in Essex County. And I didn't have as many friends as I had in private school because I didn't like how the kids looked. They were more... they were more unruly... together, they were just crazy. And just the attitude was just completely different... private school.
In private school, it was more of a home like attitude, a home away from home. Everyone knew each other, everyone practically knew each other's families. Most of the students were from the same church, so it was very close knit. So the public school was very different.

INTERVIEWER: And any particular reason why your mom chose that school to start you out in Brooklyn?

RESPONDENT #5: Yes. Well, it was a daycare. It started out as a daycare. My mother... daycare. My sisters, they went to public schools in New York. So the time that I was born, my sister was three years old when I was born, so basically, she was already going elsewhere and the daycare... sent me to, I just stayed there when it developed and it went to a... she just kept me there. It was just like chance I ended up going to a private school. My sisters went to public.

INTERVIEWER: Now it's not -- did your mother choose to come and live in East Orange, New Jersey?

RESPONDENT #5: Yes. It was my uncle -- my uncle lived in East Orange, New Jersey and we were just looking for a better place to live, the conditions and... we just were moving a lot. So we wanted someplace quiet and just stable, so we moved to New Jersey, which...
INTERVIEWER: So that's the only reason you chose to go to school in... well, you came and lived in New Jersey because your uncle was here.

RESPONDENT #5: I probably would have stayed in the private schools up until eighth grade... and then, because I had... public school, anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So how did you find the education in school #6?

RESPONDENT #5: It was a lot easier. It was easier. The work level was lighter, but I was never good in math anyway, so my math was questionable. But I think that a student gets as much education... because if you don't do the assignments, if you don't do the... and if you won't have an interest in it, you won't get much out of it. And I wanted to and I did the study and... so I believe that I got a lot out of my education. And after high school, I didn't see anything after that except college. It was just something that came automatic. I didn't think about working or getting a job... I -- yeah, I saw college as the next step after high school and that's what my sisters also did, so it was just the norm. And also I got more out of college. Basically, education is what you make of it. And if you don't see it as an important part of life, it won't serve any purpose.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that School #6 prepared you for your college experience?

RESPONDENT #5: School #6, like the high school?

INTERVIEWER: The high school.

RESPONDENT #5: Well, I was in a college prep program, but it depends on what college I went to. I chose College #1 because of the reputation that it had. But if I had gone to ... County College, I was more prepared for ... County College because it was like an extension of high school... college. So the workload -- because I had spent a semester at ... County College during my College years to make up some credits real fast. And there have two completely different ways of doing things. And the workloads are completely different. That was like the first semester I had gotten straight A's. I had A's for the three classes I had taken at ... County College, but at College #1, I really had to bust my butt to get an A depending on the class. So I have to prepare myself, basically, from -- it depends on what counselor you have -- counselors went -- advised the students to go to college because of their grades. And some students basically don't plan to go to college. I know just kids on the block, they're planning to either go to technical school or get a job upon high school graduation, and some of them don't graduate because they
get pregnant or something like that. So it -- it really
depends on the... how prepared they are and first time was
also enrolled in the EOF program.
INTERVIEWER: What's that?
RESPONDENT #5: Education Opportunity Funding Program that
allows certain students that the family incomes are not at
a certain level, but they have this... capability or
potential to make it. And it also gives you some financial
funding... semester or the year to get your college
education. So when I went to the summer program, it was a
summer program that kind of brought you into -- kind of
helped to ease you into the college situation. And that's
why it helped...
INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that your parents have any
influence on your education experience?
RESPONDENT #5: A lot. My mother, she was a single parent
and she never finished her high school education because of
the death of one of her parents. So education is very
important to her and she wanted her daughters to have what
she didn't have. So because of that she pushed us to go to
school, even though when she first came to this country,
her English was not even up to par, she made us go to
school. We learned the proper way to speak English, which
also caused a slight problem in high school, because
everyone else -- other Afro-Americans -- thought that we spoke funny because of the way we -- our English. But it was kind of ingrained in us that is we don't get an education, we don't learn the so-called "white man's language" and his way of doing things, that we won't make it. And it's... here. And so my mother had a lot to do with that. And so far she has all college graduate daughters and I'll be the last one.

INTERVIEWER: That's it. And what are your plans for -- I mean, what are you studying right now?

RESPONDENT #5: Right now my major is French and my plans are a good question. I need counseling for a career. I'm not prepared for that. College, though, really prepares you for afterwards. Actually, if anything go... for graduate school, but I don't think I'm going to graduate school... because I have enough years of undergraduate. I've been there too long... so I'm planning to hopefully get a good job that won't end up being a dead end job. I've done a lot of part-time jobs and some... some in office work, but I want something more than that and that's fine. I kept going back to school every time I left, so that I can have a degree to help me.

INTERVIEWER: Will you be working in something that you studied in your field?
RESPONDENT #5: In French? Well, that depends. It depends on what companies I go to. And I'm also going to -- my school has a careers center where they help you. They have job listings there on campus and I can go there, help them -- they help me with my resume and to find a job that would possibly be useful with my...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your background as an Haitian or your upbringing influenced you? Do you think that if you were -- you were born here, correct?

RESPONDENT #5: Uh huh.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if you were something other than someone with a Haitian background, it would have made a difference in your education?

RESPONDENT #5: It depends. It depends on my family, if I had the same type of family, because education is really important in my family on both sides, my father's side and my mother's side, although they were divorced. And it all - - it depends on the individuals in my family, how they work, because I think if we were already here and we weren't Haitian, it would probably be the same thing... I think so. I can't imagine how it would be any different...

INTERVIEWER: Right. Do you consider yourself to be an American student or a Haitian student?
RESPONDENT #5: Oh, gosh, that is so hard. It depends. It depends on the situation I'm in, where I'm around or but usually I just consider myself American. But people like to break down the types and I'm not sure whether I should call myself Afro-American or Haitian or... So sometimes I just don't call myself anything and just consider myself... think about my family background or... according to the U.S. government, I'm American...

INTERVIEWER: Now if you -- if we go back -- if you had a choice, let's say that when you came to New Jersey, if you had a choice to choose to go any school that you wanted to, where would you have chosen to go to school?

RESPONDENT #5: College?

INTERVIEWER: No, a high school.

RESPONDENT #5: High school. Hmm. I wouldn't choose the School #6 because actually I was afraid to go there. I didn't want to go there when I was graduating from junior high, because I've heard a lot of rumors about the school. That it was dangerous, that there were shoot-outs and people were carrying weapons and fights. And people getting hurt all the time. My sister was there a year ahead of me, so I didn't hear any stories like that from her, it was just other students that were going there. And I also -- that was not my choice. But I had no choice. I didn't know
of any other high schools except maybe another... that seemed less... school. So there wasn't much of a choice. There were only two high schools in this area. The other one was further... and it seemed... but after I got to School #4, it didn't seem that bad.

INTERVIEWER: Now, again, if you could have chosen to go anywhere else, if it didn't matter on where you live, where would you have -- would you have picked anything different?

RESPONDENT #5: I have no idea. I wouldn't have chosen probably anything else because I didn't know anything else.

INTERVIEWER: So you basically received no counseling in how to pick a school or where to go to school?

RESPONDENT #5: To pick a high school? No, I never received any counseling. We just sent my records...

INTERVIEWER: ...

RESPONDENT #5: ...I didn't have any say so, actually. I didn't have any say so. It was just automatically...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now have you ever considered any private school at that time?

RESPONDENT #5: No, actually, no... school...

INTERVIEWER: But nobody let's say talked to you or your mom and told her if you chose to live in this particular town, the schools are better. Why don't you live in this particular town where the schools are much --
RESPONDENT #5: Actually, we didn't think of living in any other town except East Orange. Yeah, we didn't think about that because at the time my uncle owned the house that we lived in. So that basically set our place of residence. We didn't know of any other towns in New Jersey, because we just moved to New Jersey. And so we didn't know that other cities in New Jersey had better schools because we never really went there. So our view were pretty narrow...

INTERVIEWER: Okay. But when you started -- when you started the high school, you had a couple of years, or did you ever think about let's say --

RESPONDENT #5: Leaving?

INTERVIEWER: -- mom -- yeah, maybe let's move elsewhere or --

RESPONDENT #5: No, actually, no, because I mind my own business. I went to school, took the assignments, did the work, participated in class when I needed to and I went straight home. So I actually -- I like the teachers and I didn't really care for the students and I didn't really need to interact with them as much. So I didn't have any problems and I actually liked the school, aside from the view that I had of the forms. I had no problems with it... I settled in.
INTERVIEWER: Now, I'm asking this, I'm sure that in the future, you are planning on having kids and a family.
RESPONDENT #5: I don't know about that. I actually am planning not to have any kids and keeping myself childfree. But it would have to be in the far, far future. In a few years out, in five years, I'll asking myself... I don't know where I'd be, but I don't see myself living in East Orange. I hope I'm not living in... in five years.
INTERVIEWER: Wherever you were going to go, what would influence your choice?
RESPONDENT #5: Well, if my job was relocating, I think about that, the time... I don't look forward to -- I'm not thinking about moving to the South or any southern areas because of the -- it's hot all year around and I don't like that type of climate. I would think about the area and how it looks, probably... basically what it looks like. And the type of neighborhoods that it has. And if I was married, how feasible it would be for the both of us to move there and find jobs that were within a close proximity of... living. So I would think about that and how -- if we were planning to have kids, if there were schools nearby and things like that.
INTERVIEWER: Are you aware of the fact that the
Commissioner of Education is giving... choice in New Jersey
in the very near future?
RESPONDENT #5: ...
INTERVIEWER: Are you aware of the issues surrounding school
choice, what it is, what it involves, what it's about?
RESPONDENT #5: I don't know too much, but that I think they
were... [Airplane]... families who had their children... I
don't know... but... yeah, like they were giving like
scholarships, some kind of fund... so that certain poor
families with certain good students can go to private
schools... like that with a better education... But I
really didn't think about it too much, because I'm about to
finish college. So as far as that, I wouldn't be too -- I
don't really think much about it unless I was going into
teaching, as a career, which I'm not, fortunately. A lot of
people ask me if I want to teach because I'm taking French,
but that hasn't entered my mind too long because I know how
the kids are nowadays, and for some reason I have this
phobia of being stuck in one school teaching. And the kind
of job I want, I want... I guess... or to be able to travel
with my career, so teaching is just like... I don't know
much about the school choice except that you can go to a
school that is not in your area or... you're not forced to
stay there, you can go elsewhere if you can. But that's all I know about that.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you. Anything you want to add?

RESPONDENT #5: I don't know. I can't think of anything except that -- actually, my sister she went to school in Haiti, but because she didn't like school, she didn't learn certain things. So when she came here, she didn't do well in English. And that set her back on grade. And because of that, I think that made her a better student, because... she got... because of her English was bad. And that, I guess, pushed her so far that she was a better student than I was, and she eventually graduated cum laude at... University... and so it all depends on how you fail or how you succeed, how good a student you will be...

INTERVIEWER: ...

RESPONDENT #5: ...that was... when I got... A's and B's.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: In continuing the conversation with RESPONDENT #5, she told me that while she was in high school, she never let anybody know that she was Haitian, since she didn't have a heavy accent and nobody could detect her Haitian accent, no one knew that she was Haitian. Therefore, she was not picked on like the other kids who were obviously from a different background.
She also explained that the discipline that she was used to in elementary school helped her continue her high school. Despite the chaos that seemed to be going on in the high school, she was able to continue with her own discipline, because she was so used to discipline. She's been disciplining herself since elementary school, so she was able to continue her high school years without any problem as far as discipline goes, and as far as being lazy.

**Interview 6.**

This in an interview of a Haitian parent of a high school student in the . . . School District.

INTERVIEWER: How does the American school system compared to any other system you are used to?

RESPONDENT #6: Compared to the other place that my child was, the American educational school system seems more focused on developing the understanding of a subject instead of memorizing it. Here in the United States, my child does more research projects than when he was in the Ivory Coast. The American school system seems to put great focus on the idea of thinking and understanding a subject. However, one of my observations is that when my children came to this country, certain projects, certain things, certain subjects that they were doing in the Ivory Coast,
they realized that in this country, in the United States, the children here were a little bit behind what they were doing. As an example, my oldest son, when he was in eighth grade, he realized that the math problems that he was being given, these were things that he had already been doing at a lower grade in the Ivory Coast. Another example is that my son has the capability of doing certain drawings, certain scientific drawing by hand, which amazed the children in the United States. They expected him to use certain equipment, but in the Ivory Coast, he was used to doing all these by hand. My oldest child's companion was surprised about how good, how great the drawing came out, even though he did them by hand. I would say in general that since many of the subjects, many of the things that my child is doing now, he had already been doing them, he feels that he needs more challenges from the work that he has been getting so far.

INTERVIEWER: How long have your children been going to school in the United States?

RESPONDENT #6: My children have been going to school in the United States for the past four years.

INTERVIEWER: After your children left the Ivory Coast, what kind of school did they attend? A private or a public school?
RESPONDENT #6: They attended a private school.

INTERVIEWER: How did you find that private school? How was it? What was the experience at that school?

RESPONDENT #6: I would say that in general the education that they received in the Ivory Coast sort of prepared them to be able to keep up with the students at that private school. They didn't have too much problem understanding the English language.

INTERVIEWER: Are your children still attending the private school?

RESPONDENT #6: My children are now attending a public school.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the education that your children receive at the private school compared to the public school that they are now attending?

RESPONDENT #6: I would find that, in general, at the public school my children are forced to do more research papers compared to the private school which they attended before.

INTERVIEWER: Was there anyone who gave you advice about putting your child at a private school instead of a public one?

RESPONDENT #6: Yes indeed. I came across some people who advised me that it was better to put my children at a private school.
INTERVIEWER: The people who gave you advice, were they common folks or were they professionals, or were they people from certain organizations, educational organizations?

RESPONDENT #6: The people who guided me were friends, people I just asked about their advice. They were not teachers or any other professional type people. I must also say that when my children came to this country, at the private school they put them at a grade corresponding to their age. From what I understand, if I were to take them to a public school when they came to this country, they would have put them one year behind, which would have been a loss of time in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you choose to put your children in the . . . School District.

RESPONDENT #6: I chose to put my children in the . . School District basically because of financial reasons. I could no longer afford to pay a private school for them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think if you lived in a better or more expensive neighborhood, the overall cost of living an education would be higher?

RESPONDENT #6: I definitely think that if I lived in a more expensive neighborhood, therefore my children's education would cost me much more.
INTERVIEWER: What kind of education, what's the level of education do you think your children are receiving from the ... School District?

RESPONDENT #6: I chose the ... School District because I thought it was not the best, since I think I can not afford the best, but not the worst either. I cannot do a proper comparison with the other towns, such as Orange or some other places, maybe Montclair. But I would say that, in general, I had the chance to see the work of some students from the ... Public School and I would say that, in general, I feel that the ... School District is doing a much better job than the ... Therefore I would say that I think that Irvington is not doing such a bad job after all.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your children are getting the best education, the most they can get from the ... School District?

RESPONDENT #6: I feel that the school could do much better, because I really think that my children have the capability and the desire to learn a lot more. In other words, I think that my children would be happy to have some more challenges thrown their way. Sometimes my children even complain that they do not get enough work compared to the amount of work they used to do in the Ivory Coast. I would
say that I noticed that my oldest son, who is currently attending high school, used to struggle much more. to make much more of an effort to learn when he was in the Ivory Coast as compared to here. Now he seems to think that the subjects that he is being given are pretty easy for him to grasp.

INTERVIEWER: If you had the chance to send your high school student to any other school in New Jersey, where would you choose to send him and how would you go about making that decision?

RESPONDENT #6: I would probably try to get a hold of some teachers in order to help me figure out what's the best school to put him in. Since very likely I would not be able to make the trip myself, I would have to rely on the decision, the knowledge, of some experts in the field.

INTERVIEWER: Are you aware that in New Jersey they are putting together a program in which the parents would have the ability to choose where their children go to school?

RESPONDENT #6: No, I was not aware that New Jersey was working on such a program. However, I think that the possibility of a parent choosing a certain school for his or her children is a mixed blessing. I think that a professional, or the school system, would be better equipped at placing the child at a proper school. Because a
parent may decide that his or her children are strong enough, intelligent enough to attend a certain school, while they may not be at the level of that school. I think that children should be placed at certain schools depending on their test scores. If a child has the test score that is high enough, he or she should go to a certain school.

INTERVIEWER: Who do you think should make the decision of placing the child at a certain school?

RESPONDENT #6: I think that it would be the responsibility of the school system to test a child to make sure that he or she is able to attend that type of school. As an example, I understand that in New York there are certain tests that they give to the students and if they do pass these tests, they are placed in an advanced, certain advanced classes. I think definitely that a system in which the students are tested for the levels is best because certain parents may think that by putting their children in an advanced school they would be doing him or her a favor. However, that student, if he or she is not at the level, at the proper level, may end up slowing things down. Thinking that--the parent might think that the teacher is going to fast to encourage the student to excel while the student may not have the ability to perform at a higher or at the required level.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there should be an entrance examination for the students before they are admitted at these schools?

RESPONDENT #6: Yes, I do think that the students should have an entrance examination.

INTERVIEWER: Suppose that the government gave you a voucher that would allow you to place your child at any school that you wanted. Let's say that you didn't want your children to attend the . . . School District, how would you feel about that?

RESPONDENT #6: I think that the voucher system may not be necessarily the solution to all of my problems. If I were to receive a voucher and my child had to go to a school that's far, I think first of all, my first problem would be to come up with a way for him to get to that far away school. I think that if it was done in such a way that, first, I could live in whatever town that I wanted. I think that would make it a little bit easier for me instead of having to ship my--instead of having to send my child to a school that's far and having to make him travel long distance to attend that school. I definitely don't see the voucher system as being a total solution.

INTERVIEWER: And how would you feel about a break in income tax if the government were to give you a break in paying
your taxes that could be applied to your child's education. How do you feel about that?

RESPONDENT #6: I think that a tax break is not also a solution to the problem. Because even by having a reduction in my taxes, the money is not coming into my pocket. Basically it's still going towards my child's education. So I'm still at the same position, same situation in which I started.

INTERVIEWER: What would you consider the ideal educational situation to be for a Haitian child whose parents are trying to get him or her a good education in the United States?

RESPONDENT #6: The way to approach this situation would be first, to involve the child, say it's level, and then second to provide the child, the student, with a good environment, with good tools and equipment so that his or her education can be the best that there is. For example, the school in which my son is attending, I can see some deficiencies. Sometimes when they would give him a report to write and he goes to the library, there is hardly any computer that he could use to do his research. Therefore not having the right equipment, the child is not able to give the best that he can. I think that a whole environment needs to be set up so that the foreign child who comes can
feel comfortable. As a matter of fact, the children or students who come and attend private school—not private, public school, they already are put one year behind. Therefore, not having the proper tools or equipment add up to the frustration that the student must feel. It's again, aspect that may affect the education of the student is the neighborhood in which the student lives. If he or she lives in a very bad neighborhood, there is a great likelihood that this is going to affect the way the child learns, the possibility of going to the libraries, not being afraid that something would happen to him or her.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's enough information out there to help the parents of a Haitian child attending school in the United States?

RESPONDENT #6: Yes. I think there's a lack of information available to the parents of a child attending school in the United States. For many parents who grew up in Haiti, the mere fact that they send their children to school, they believe that should be enough for the child to be educated. Sometimes when you speak to them and says it's not enough to just send the child to school, you must interact with the teachers and so you may get feedback on how the child is doing. And often, unfortunately, the parents are working very hard and they have very little time or interest to go
and deal with the teachers. It must be extremely difficult for the single parents. Can you imagine having two, three, four children and you are a single parent?

INTERVIEWER: Where do you think parents should go to be able to find information helping them deal with the different aspects of the education of their children?

RESPONDENT #6: This question is a little bit hard to answer. Maybe I would say the newspapers. However, thinking about it, the parents who are unable to read would not be able to have access to this information. Maybe using the radio would be a better idea. If it were possible to organize certain leaders in the community who would go over the radios, the radio stations and inform the community about what's happening, maybe that would be a better solution than using the newspapers. Therefore, using the language that the parents can understand, the leaders would be able to motivate and inform the parents.

INTERVIEWER: Often in the schools they have guidance counselors who are able to help the student and disseminate information to the parents. Do you think that this is enough information to help the parents make up their minds and then make a good decision.

RESPONDENT #6: Yes. Having a guidance counselor is a great idea. But then again, we go back to the same problem. Many
parents have a language barrier, and therefore are unable
to explain what's on their mind regarding the education of
their children. And let's face it, sometimes the counselor
might be aware of certain weaknesses of the institution in
which he or she belongs. However, he is not going to share
that information, these little details, with the parents
because, after all, he has to defend his institution or the
organization in which he belongs.

INTERVIEWER: Since you said that many parents do not speak
the English language at a level adequate for them to
communicate with the guidance counselor. And since they do
not have the time or the ability to read newspapers, where
do you think the parents should go to be able to find
information that would help them with the education of
their children?

RESPONDENT #6: I think that radios and TV stations should
play a leading role in informing the community in terms of
the different choices and possibilities that would create a
better environment for the children, helping them achieve
the highest possible potentials. I strongly believe that
the Haitian programs could do a major job in terms of
educating the parents and the community since a great deal
of people in the community do listen to the Haitian
programs. I think that many members of the community do
feel that the fact that they are able to listen to a
program in Creole give it a higher value or credibility
rather than if the news or the information were being told
in a different language than their own.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it would be necessary for the
schools to have a radio program directed especially towards
the parents in the community?

RESPONDENT #6: No. It doesn’t necessarily mean that the
programming should be done under the direction of the
school. However, since many of us live in big cities, it
should be possible for certain leaders to be able to search
and find certain information that they, in turn, could
share with the population. Because if we look carefully,
certain immigrants who came to this country, they are able
to generate a certain class of people, certain group of
people, who are able to provide them with certain necessary
and needed information. As an example, if we take certain
members in the Latino communities, they are able to have
certain people who provide them with so much information
that it is not even necessary to bother learning English.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that maybe an association of
Haitian parents is a necessity?

RESPONDENT #6: Yes, I do think so. However, I am wondering
to what extent we would be able to get a majority of
parents in the community to attend these meetings because, after all, many Haitian parents seem to be more interested in working two jobs than to look after the education of their children.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian background of your children does have a certain affect on their intellectual and social outlook in terms of their education?

RESPONDENT #6: Yes, indeed. I do see a certain difference between my children and those who were born in the United States. My children, indeed, do have certain African tendencies.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the characteristics or tendencies, African tendencies, that you observe in your children?

RESPONDENT #6: For example, when talking to an adult, a child in Africa, a child is not supposed to look directly in the eyes of the adult. It is considered a sign of disrespect if one were to do so. Also, my oldest son who sometimes likes to play with the American girls, he would seize them sometimes when they said that they like him. He would say, well since I grew up in Africa, the way we do it in Africa, I'm supposed to have many wives. So if you
agree, so and so would be wife number one, somebody else
wife number two, so on and so forth.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future in terms of where
you live and how your children are educated? Do you plan to
continue living in Irvington or do you plan to live
someplace else?

RESPONDENT #6: For the benefits of my other children, I do
plan to move out of Irvington, New Jersey.

INTERVIEWER: In moving out of Irvington, what role would
the education of your children play in making that
transition?

RESPONDENT #6: My mother used to say that she would not
leave any material possessions for her children because
after she died, they would probably fight over material
things. She would rather give them an intellectual
possession which no one could take away from them.
Therefore, she would make sure that they were well-
educated. I believe the same as my mother. I believe that
in moving, first I would pay attention to the possibility
of getting the best education for my children. Therefore,
by having a good education, they have a better chance of
making it in life.
INTERVIEWER: The fact that you left Africa to come to the United States, do you think that it was a plus or a minus, in terms of your children's education?

RESPONDENT #6: I would say that there are pluses and minuses to my children coming to the States. On the positive side, I would say that coming to the States was good because my children have the chance to compare the two cultures, to see different things, and therefore have the ability or the possibility to choose whatever they like best. However, I still think that they would still have gotten a good education had I stayed in Africa.

INTERVIEWER: What factors would you say are involved in making the decision to choose a school for your children?

RESPONDENT #6: I would do my best to find a place where my children could find intellectual and social stimulations. There is a teacher who has been encouraging one of my children by giving her books and providing her with suggestions. And as a result of that, my child is able to read at a level that is superior to her current grade. But I still believe that if my children were at a school at which they were pushing them further, they definitely could accomplish much more. My lack of financial means is what is keeping me from putting my children at a better school. I believe that if I had more money I would have the
possibility of putting my children at a better school. Often my children end up earning the first place in their school projects. But unfortunately, there's not much more that I can do.

Interview 7.

INTERVIEWER: RESPONDENT #7 lives in Monmouth County, in Asbury Park and is the mother of two young boys. What is your opinion of the American school system?

RESPONDENT #7: I like the American school system. However, I do not like the fact that they do not pray with the children. I believe that the fact that they do not pray with the children is one of the reasons why the children bring weapons to school. If prayer was practiced in the school, I believe that the lives of the teachers would not be in danger and the students would not think of hurting each other.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the American school system does a good job of teaching the students?

RESPONDENT #7: I would say yes. Here in Asbury Park the teachers are doing a pretty good job with my two kids. One of my children is in special ed. They took him out of the regular classes and since they put him in the special ed class, he's been improving. As an example, before, he was not able to do additions but since they placed him in the
special ed class, he's been improving and is able to do additions. In special ed they do have more patience with my child who is attending that class. As for my older child, he's doing okay, doing pretty good. He's been doing so well that they gave a little party in his honor and they have given him gifts.

INTERVIEWER: How many years have your children been attending school in the United States?

RESPONDENT #7: My first child was born in the United States of America and went to school at the age of five years old. And today he is 11 years old. So far he has been attending school for six years. My second child went to school at three years old and today he is nine.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of school do your children attend, private or public school?

RESPONDENT #7: My children do attend public school in Asbury Park.

INTERVIEWER: Did your children ever attend private school?

RESPONDENT #7: No, never.

INTERVIEWER: Did somebody help you choose the school that your children are now attending? How did you decide on the current school that they are now attending?

RESPONDENT #7: It was a friend of mine who advised me to put one of my children in a pre-school because the
government would pay, would finance for the education of that child. Since I am a single mother, and my husband died, my friend told me that the government would be willing to help me financially to educate my child. As far as my second child, he was attending ... School and I was the one who made the decision to place him there.

INTERVIEWER: Why are your children attending a school in Asbury Park?

RESPONDENT #7: Since I am living in Asbury Park, I have made the decision for the kids to attend a school close to my house.

INTERVIEWER: The school that your children are attending, is it, in your opinion, doing a good job?

RESPONDENT #7: Yes, indeed, I do feel that the school is doing a decent job with my children. They are given good advice and as a result, they do not get into fights or arguments with other kids. And the teacher is always calling me if the children do misbehave somewhat. And I do make sure that whenever there are parent meetings that I do show up. I do get a good feedback from my children's teachers.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the behavior of your children is a result of your Haitian background, or is it a
result of the education that they get from the school system?

RESPONDENT #7: I do believe that since I am Haitian I do try to raise my children according to my Haitian background and culture. I do not believe in my children dressing up with the kind of pants that dropping on their behind, for example, or putting earrings in their ears. Or putting earrings on their noses. Therefore, I would say my children are educated according to my Haitian background. I am not an American, therefore my children tend to follow the Haitian style. I do not like the way that some of the young American kids are dressing up in a lax manner and I do make sure that my children are dressed very well while going to school. Also since I am a Christian, I do try to raise my children according to Christian principles.

INTERVIEWER: If you had more money or if you had a much better job paying you much more money than now, would you continue to send your children to the school they are presently attending?

RESPONDENT #7: If I were able to get more money, I would definitely choose to put my children at a private school because, if you look at the children who are attending the schools directed by the nuns, they do have a much better sense of discipline than those attending public schools.
INTERVIEWER: What is, in your opinion, the advantage offered by a private school?

RESPONDENT #7: As one example, the students who do attend private school do not fight. As a second example, the nuns would not accept these children to be dressed improperly or to have earrings in their noses or ears, as an example. The advantage of attending a private school or a school directed by some nuns is that the nuns have the capability of not accepting the children. They send the child home if he or she is misbehaving and if the child does something serious, to remove him or her from that school. The schools, the public schools, they do accept every types of children, those who misbehave and those who behave. Contrary to the private schools that basically accept students that tend to behave.

INTERVIEWER: Therefore, would you say that it is the discipline that you like in the private schools?

RESPONDENT #7: Yes, I do like the discipline of the private schools and I do believe that the private schools do a lot of work with their students.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the private schools work, do a much better job of teaching the students than the public schools.
RESPONDENT #7: I believe that the private schools do give much more homework to the students. However, one advantage of the public school is that if the child doesn't understand one subject, the public school tend to give the child somebody to assist him or her in the hope that he or she would understand the work much better. As opposed to a private school which does provide much less personal assistance to the student. In order to get that kind of assistance from a private school, you would have to pay to find somebody to give you that extra help.

INTERVIEWER: If you had more money, you said that you would definitely choose a private school for your children. How would you go about finding that private school since there are many private schools? How would you find the one appropriate for your children?

RESPONDENT #7: I have some of my friends who do have their children attending private school and I would admit that they are much better behaved than the children attending public school. Therefore if I had more money, I would go to my friends and ask them for advice in choosing which school to put my children in. Since I am Catholic, I would put my children at a Catholic school.
INTERVIEWER: Are you aware that the state of New Jersey is trying to set a program in which parents would be able to choose which schools to put their children in?

RESPONDENT #7: No, I am not aware that the state of New Jersey is going to give the parents the ability to place their children in whatever school they may choose close to their house or far away from the house.

INTERVIEWER: Is it your belief that the parents should be able, should be the one able to choose which school their children should attend?

RESPONDENT #7: Yes, indeed, I believe it is the parents decision to decide to choose which school their children would attend.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it is the state or the government who should decide which school your children should attend?

RESPONDENT #7: No, I believe it is the parents' job to decide.

INTERVIEWER: Who decides where your children go to school now? Is it you or the government? Can your children go to a school at a different county, for example?

RESPONDENT #7: It is the government who decides which school my children can go to because right now if I wanted to send my children to a school at a different county, I would be unable to do it.
INTERVIEWER: If the state gave you the choice to put your children at whatever school in whatever county that you chose, where would you place your children?

RESPONDENT #7: If the state or the government would be willing to provide my children with transportation, very likely I would place them at a school in Belmar where they could go to a school directed by nuns. But if the government doesn't supply me with the transportation, I would be forced to have my children going to school nearby, in Asbury Park, where I live presently.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that parents should have the choice of putting their children in whatever school, in whatever locations, that they deem necessary?

RESPONDENT #7: Yes, I do believe that the parents should have the ability of placing their children in whatever school they deem necessary.

INTERVIEWER: Would you be in favor of a program by the government to provide you with some money to put your children to a school that you desire?

RESPONDENT #7: Yes, I would be in favor of a program supplying me with money for the education of my children. That's why, for example, if the government were to provide me with some type of tax credits, I would be in favor of such a program.
INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the school system in the United States with that of Haiti?

RESPONDENT #7: The schools in Haiti are completely different than those in the United States.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the Haitian school system with the American school system?

RESPONDENT #7: I would say that the Haitian school system is heavily dependent upon memorizing the material; whereas the American school system is based on an understanding, and less on memorizing, the material.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that the American system is better than the Haitian school system? Which one, in your opinion, is much better.

RESPONDENT #7: I would say that the Haitian system is pretty good as compared to the American system. I would say that they are both good. I would say that the Haitian system has a tendency of giving too much homework. And there's too much emphasis placed on memorizing.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian parents have sufficient information available to them or are you given any information about how the schools are run, what's their performances, and what kinds of laws and regulations are involved?
RESPONDENT #7: Before the opening of the school I did receive some papers concerning certain regulations that the children had to follow while attending school. As an example, the children were expected not to get into fights, not to disrespect the teachers, not to be absent or late. Otherwise there would be punishment. Also there were regulations about where the cars, who would be picking up the children, where the cars should be parked. If they were to be parked directly in front of the school. They would be ticketed by the traffic agent.

INTERVIEWER: In what language did you receive these informations?

RESPONDENT #7: The informations provided to me were in English. I was attending a conference for the parents and I was fortunate enough to have somebody sitting next to me who translated whatever information were being given in English.

INTERVIEWER: The papers that you received from the school, in what language were they? Were they in French, English or Creole?

RESPONDENT #7: All the papers that I have gotten from the school were in the English language. I certainly wish that the papers could have been translated in French because my English is not perfect. Also I believe that whenever there
are conferences at the school that somebody would be there to translate for the public or at least do the conference in the language--French, for example--that everybody could understand. Since the school has many Haitian children and, as parents, sometimes we have to rely on the children to translate for us. Because the danger of relying upon your child to translate for you is that sometimes they would tell you a lie. I would certainly be glad if they would get somebody to translate whatever they are saying in English at the conference and have somebody translate it into French or Creole.

Also I believe that some kind of system should be established whereby the parents who are not fluent in English could go to a school in Asbury Park whereby they could learn English. There is a high school where they do teach English. However, the system is so lax that sometimes the teachers do not show up. Therefore, it's not well organized. I believe that you may run into certain individuals--as one example, there's a lady who does translation at the office, and certain teachers that when you meet them would take your problems into consideration. But as for the people directing, or the people in charge of the school system, I believe that they couldn't care less about the plight of the Haitian parents.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the parents have enough time to take care of their children, with their homework, and then find the time themselves to go to school and learn English?

RESPONDENT #7: Some parents do have the time to take care of their children and then go to school and improve their education, while others do not have the energy or the capacity to do everything. As for an example, some parents are working two jobs. Therefore, they do not have enough time to take care of the children, as far as homework and other things are concerned. As for myself, when I get home around 3:30, I do take some time to work with my children.

INTERVIEWER: Do the Haitian radio stations or programs provide information to the parents living in the Asbury section?

RESPONDENT #7: There was a Haitian station, Haitian program, that used to provide information to the parents in the Asbury community. And that station was a link to a station in New York. Unfortunately, the program is no longer on the air. It was a pretty good program.

INTERVIEWER: Are there parents associations in the Asbury community?

RESPONDENT #7: I do not know. At my church I know there are Haitian community centers in the community of Asbury Park.
But as far as a parent's association, I am not aware of that.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever received information about parent's association?

RESPONDENT #7: No. I have been invited to parents meeting. However, I haven't heard of any parents, teacher associations.

INTERVIEWER: At the community center, what kind of information do they provide to the parents?

RESPONDENT #7: It is my understanding that at these centers they provide mostly help with legal and illegal immigrants, in terms of filing papers and in terms of finding food to keep themselves healthy and well-fed. Since the meetings at the community center do take place during the day time, early in the morning, and I do have to work at those hours, therefore I have not had the chance to really attend one of their meetings. But I do not believe that they provide information about the school system.

INTERVIEWER: Is that center open in the afternoon? Maybe after work? So that working parents could attend.

RESPONDENT #7: There was one time when the center was open in the afternoon or at night. But unfortunately there wasn't much enthusiasm from the parents, and the center did close. However, during the time when the center was open in
the afternoon, they were providing, the center was providing English classes.

**Interview 8.**

INTERVIEWER: Respondent #8 is a parent. Okay. Mr. --

RESPONDENT #8: Mr. ...

INTERVIEWER: Mr.... Okay. This interview is about a project that I am working on with Seton Hall University. And it's a thesis, and the project is about the community, the Haitian community, that I'm trying to study. I'm trying to study the Haitian community and trying to see how the American education system is really helping or not helping the community, whichever way you feel. So first of all, could you tell me a little bit about you. Let's see, I know that you filled out the form for me, but how, what do you do? What kind of a background do you have?

RESPONDENT #8: Okay. Like I said, my name is ... And the reason that I filled the form is because I relate to the questions, the questionnaire, because I was a teacher in Haiti. And now I am a teacher in the New York City system. I've been teaching in New York for 10 years. I am a tenured teacher in Middle School 220, in Brooklyn. And I teach Social Studies, French and also Haitian Creole. In 1991 I fulfilled a Master's in Bilingual Education, at Benson
College in Manhattan. So anything relative to education issue always attract my attention.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now how does the American school system compare to—you said you'd been teaching in Haiti, you taught in Haiti, so you have experience of both systems which is very good for my research—so how do you think that the American system compares to the education system of Haiti?

RESPONDENT #8: Okay, first of all, there are a lot of differences because of the size of the—-I mean because of the size of both countries, you know. That now where I live in, I mean America is a superpower and they are ahead of everything relative to academics and technology. And the education in America for a Haitian child who might live in America offers a lot of advantages that they wouldn't have in Haiti because there—they have the chance to experiment when they are doing science, they have a chance to do hands on. But home we didn't have, and I'm sure we still don't have that in Haiti. The education in Haiti was and is based too much on rote, rote memory. You know? So there are a lot of advantages like I said, in America. And also the nutrition that they provide to the children. You know, that help them with—

INTERVIEWER: Their lunch?
RESPONDENT #8: --Yeah, their physical needs. This being said, I just would like to point out these remarks. What I don't feel comfortable in America in the educational system is what, first, what you could call professionalism. The teacher end up having a problem with his or her supervisor whenever he or she has to retain or fail two or three children. They don't like that. They are going to assume a lot of reason for, you are to explain what it is on that DGD&R not making their grade. That you are responsible. In Haiti, you don't pass, whatever your age, you are not promoted, you stay in the same class. So this is something that we really can, you know, agree or point we've got against this system. Because in Haiti, you know, whatever your age, you are going to pass or you are going to fail. So these are the remarks about the contrast between the two systems.

INTERVIEWER: Now you have kids, right?

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah, in middle school. My own children?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes.

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You have your own kids. They are going to what grade now?

RESPONDENT #8: Oh one of them is in seventh grade; the other is in second grade. Seven and second grade.
INTERVIEWER: Are they attending a public school? Or?
RESPONDENT #8: Yeah, yeah. Public school in Irvington.
INTERVIEWER: Irvington, okay. Okay, and how do you find that school? The school that your children are attending?
RESPONDENT #8: Okay, first we have to talk about two different schools. The reason I said that because my first daughter, the oldest, is in middle school, and in seventh grade now, and you know the school, were two schools. First she was in my son's school for from K to fifth grade. After fifth grade the district said, deemed that she was, she could be a much better student at another school so they offer to transfer her for her sixth grade to another school in the district. But because Marshall is only, they finish on their sixth grade, after sixth grade now, she's at ... Avenue School. That's her Middle School. And she goes to a Magnet School.
And the other one is following her big sister's steps at .... Avenue school. So what, how could I, if I could--for her first five years, I say from K to five, it was, you know, it was good. She didn't have too many problems adjusting with the school. But because of the difficulties expanding and some of the people from the system, things seem not to be the same that they were a few years back in
terms of social adjustments. But individually, they are doing fine.

INTERVIEWER: They are doing fine.

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so I can say that generally you are pleased with the school system also? With the way they are educating them.

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah. Even we would like to see more, but given the constraint of, you know, the (?) things or, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did anyone advise you as to which school your child should attend? Did anybody suggest that you put your kids in the . . . public school or did you decide?

RESPONDENT #8: Because I live in, I've been living in Irvington, so I didn't have any other choice at that time than to put them at . . . Public School. And for the middle--I mean for the middle school for my first daughter, she has been directed to . . . because this is the only school in Irvington that has the magnet. Yeah. So at that time I was, you know, I was told by the district that my daughter would go at that school. And from that school she has been, I mean it was, like you said, beyond my control.

INTERVIEWER: Now what kind of magnet is that school? What--is there a specialty for that school?
RESPONDENT #8: Okay, from what I know, she has been doing good in her primary school at Madison in terms of academic and also art.

INTERVIEWER: So that's not a special magnet school? Is there a specialty in that school, like are they concentrating on the arts?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, it's an art school?

RESPONDENT #8: No--there is the component in the school.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. That's the only component in that school or are there any other components?

RESPONDENT #8: As far as I know.

INTERVIEWER: As far as you know.

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It's only an art component in that school.

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah, okay.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah. Well when you--since you said it wasn't really a choice since you lived in Irvington, that's why your kids are going to school in Irvington.

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Now would you like to put them elsewhere or is that fine with you, you think they are doing well and you are satisfied?
RESPONDENT #8: Well, like I said, it's any parent choice to put their children in the best schools, for the best education. But given what they call zoning, I find myself having them in ... school. But we have some other plans for them, you know? Because of what's going on now in Irvington as a township going through some financial difficulties. And I'm thinking of moving to, you know, that we can be moving to another city, another township.

INTERVIEWER: So your move will be basically because of the school? Or will it be for other reasons, too?

RESPONDENT #8: Not particularly of the school. As for all us. We are concerned now with middle school. But it might be because of what, because of what is coming after, you know, for the high school. Because there's only one high school, like in some townships, except for Newark, there's only one high school, you know. And from what I've been hearing and from what I've been seeing, so my wife and myself, we might not feel too much comfortable in, you know, in having that them going to that school.

INTERVIEWER: --High school?

RESPONDENT #8: --Yeah, ...high school. So there is a big interrogation.

INTERVIEWER: For this?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: Now if you plan on changing their school, how are you going to choose a school for them? How are you going to choose another town for them?

RESPONDENT #8: Definitely because I am a part of the public school, I'll still keep my foot in the arena in a public school.

INTERVIEWER: In a public school?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any particular reason? Do you think there's a difference between public schools and private schools?

RESPONDENT #8: Okay, from where I have been, I've never experienced a private school, growing up in Haiti. And also like I said, I'm a product of public school. In Haiti, we didn't have too much to envy from our private school colleagues. You know? They might have more lab but we knew what we were doing. So that's why, you know, I still have in mind of giving my children the public school exposure. The setting and all of the curriculum and everything.

INTERVIEWER: What you are?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Now are you aware that parents in New Jersey will have the ability to choose which school their children can attend?
RESPONDENT #8: Yes I have read that a lot, yes. And it's, I mean it's a proposal, yes. I have been reading about that, what they call choice.

INTERVIEWER: Right. School choice. So you heard about that?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes, yes. There is, I have been following that point. And the reason that I would prefer it because there is a provision of securing the, I mean, the community school. I mean they are going to, according to what they said, they are still going to fill the school, even that they might be losing some children. Because I know public school, like I said. So even I would like to pull my children you know, to take advantage of the choice. But I wouldn't like to see a depletion or decline of public schools. Because of that provision of still giving the money to the school. I said it's a good provision and I might be part of it.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. That's good. And so do you, how do you think that kids should be put into the other school? Do you feel that there should be a test given to the students for them to attend a different school? Let's say that the choice was approved. Okay. And you are given the choice of putting your children someplace else, even if it's a public school. Would you, do you think that they should give them
a test to get into another public school or they should just transfer from one public school to another?

RESPONDENT #8: You know, everything in America is about testing, it's about tests. But because they have the--I mean they have to differ from the children. It would penalize the children and the way that they've been working, I don't think that new tests would be necessary. I think that if a parent decides or requests to have his or her child to go to that other school they deemed better, you know, I think that they should. The incoming school should have the authority to, not to apply tests, but to evaluate the child according to his or her records.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, okay. I see. Did you hear of any other proposal about school choice besides the fact that the school is going to still continue to put in the money? Would you go for, would you like a tax break instead?

RESPONDENT #8: Tax break for the parents? This is a big issue. This is a big issue. Because, you know, I agree with the people who said that diverting public dollars to another school is not a good idea. Like I said I would prefer that provision of giving the parent an opportunity to remove two or three children by class according to their ability, their academic, you know, the record of the children. And still to put the money in the school, but not
get it for tax break. Some people really don't need it. Some people do.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that there's enough information available for a Haitian parent when it comes to the education of their children? Do you think that Haitian parents get enough information about what's going on in the school and how they should work with their children and so on and so forth?

RESPONDENT #8: Okay, there is a problem with the Haitian parents and the Haitian community. Because I'm trying to speak from my perspective. Any problem, I don't want to say that they are not interested. They really are, you know? They all want good education for their children. But there is a lack of improvements from these parents. Once they put their children in a particular school, okay, okay, (?) doing their homework at night. And you know, different, that's all. And they don't put enough time sometimes to visit the school, the teacher, they don't participate in PTA. I can tell you that from my perspective. Because whenever the administration give, say memo or a note, whatever, or announcements to give to all classes, the kids usually reply: "Oh, my mommy is not coming, okay? My mommy's not coming" I said, "Ok." Just believe them because don't (?) So it's not that there is not an effort from the
school to open up to the parents. No. It might be either language barrier from different parents or a lack of an involvement from the parents. So there is a level of lethargy in that--

INTERVIEWER: --In that sense.

RESPONDENT #8: But like I said, it's out. The child may come with a memo--

INTERVIEWER: But you think that it's the parents that don't make enough effort to be a part of it?

RESPONDENT #8: It might not be his or her fault but I think they should do more.

INTERVIEWER: They should get more involved?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes. Because once they see you, you come and ask questions so, you know, the school is going to do more for your child.

INTERVIEWER: So if a parent has very little or no knowledge of the English language, and that parent is working more than one job and can't get the proper information, where do you think that a parent could go to get more information? Are there any places in the community? Are there any areas or any persons that a parent could go to? Let's say that I don't speak English, that's why I don't go to the meetings. I don't get involved in the school. But is there a place in
the community that you think might be able to help or is actually helping the parents?

RESPONDENT #8: I'm trying to answer the question generally because I spent all my day in New York City and even my children in New Jersey School and I'm just trying to answer generally. In that sense, I think that the churches or any other kind of agency, Haitian businesses, should be able to fill the void. Like I am speaking now, I really can't say, I really can't locate, you know, which church, which agency should be doing that. But I heard about a--

INTERVIEWER: Caraco?

RESPONDENT #8: Caraco--I heard about it from some of my friends in New Jersey they were talking about it. And I do not think they are, I don't know, they are disseminating that much information to the public. So I think here again it's a weakness. You know, if you want to consider it, it's a weakness for the Haitian diaspora.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian radio or television programs could do, could play a more important role?

RESPONDENT #8: They should. They should. And I don't know to what extent that they are doing that. Because I turned them on sometime, you know. I don't want to criticize but sometimes when I'm watching sometimes they are some
information, but they are more directed to party, jazz and music. You know? Where you know, where there are some kind of party. Maybe some of them are doing that. But still, that should be done in a greater scale.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that maybe the schools? Should the schools maybe send something to those radio or TV stations in order to inform the community? Let's say, instead of sending the papers home, put it on TV or put it on the Haitian radio station? Do you think that might be helpful to the community?

RESPONDENT #8: To the extent that this particular school is aware of--

INTERVIEWER: --Of the existence of the stations?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes. Okay? And here again, I think that this radio, this agency should be a liaison between the parents and--because these people don't know what station or that it exists in the Haitian community.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a Haitian association of parents that you know of?

RESPONDENT #8: Not to my knowledge.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it would be necessary--well I'm saying, there's a PTA in every school.

RESPONDENT #8: Yeah, PTA.
INTERVIEWER: But there's no such thing as an association of Haitian parents? No? Do you think that is something that would be useful maybe?

RESPONDENT #8: Yes, definitely. I don't want to talk for, from what I don't know. It doesn't exist, not to my knowledge. I haven't been aware of it.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that the Haitian background of your children affect their education? Do you think that the fact that you are Haitian, that probably their mother is Haitian, do you think that makes a difference in their life, in their education?

RESPONDENT #8: Definitely. Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: In what sense?

RESPONDENT #8: Because they know that even though they are Haitian American, they are very proud of their Haitian descent. You know? And being Haitian they know who they are, they know that about the culture, the education or the background wouldn't put up with certain kind of behavior. And because of that, because of that knowledge, so they are trying to act right. They know what they can take from the American culture and what they don't have to take.

INTERVIEWER: Now let me ask you this. Like you said before that you are, that you think the schools here in the United States offer a lot more than the ones in Haiti.
RESPONDENT #8: Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: And is there anything else that you'd like to add, in terms of school choice, in terms of the comparison between the American and the Haitian system? Is there anything else you'd like to add?

RESPONDENT #8: We could say that, if you want to talk in terms of higher training now, higher education, because up to now we have been talking about--

INTERVIEWER: --Primary and secondary--

RESPONDENT #8: --Primary and secondary education, we have to give a good applause to higher education in Haiti because we have been through all level of higher education in Haiti and we (?). And I think that you know, it's a great factor that has helped a lot of Haitians. Either in college of medicine, either for nursing, either for teacher college, the Haitian government provide this education, free education. And you know, I was stunned some years ago when I had to go, you know, for my Masters, because in Haiti I had what they call the Bachelor. And then I have to pay. So I think that even things are very scarce in Haiti, that in this area, you know, Haitian education has a, you know, deserve a lot of "bravo" for that.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, a lot of applause for what they're doing. Thank you very much.
RESPONDENT #8: Oh, with pleasure.

Interview 9.

INTERVIEWER: And RESPONDENT #9, please tell me a little bit about yourself. How does the American school system compare to any other school system that you are used to?
RESPONDENT #9: Well I've been out of school for more than 16 years. The American system, school system is different because the number of years you spend in school is different from other countries. But the other thing is I think from other countries, they learn more, they've got more time to learn than in this system. Because the kid spend more time on (?) without books, homework with their book open than other countries. That probably makes other kids from other countries smarter than the ones you got from here.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that the school system here doesn't challenge the mental ability of children?
RESPONDENT #9: Yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER: You think it does?
RESPONDENT #9: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You don't have any kids attending school yet but where would you send--where do you plan on sending your child to school? Will it be a public school, a private school?
RESPONDENT #9: For sure I choose probably public schools.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any reason why you would prefer public schools?

RESPONDENT #9: There is two reasons. The first reason is because I am a Christian, I would like to send my kids to a Christian school. And the other thing is, you've got more preparation for your kids in Christian school than in a public school. Less trouble.

INTERVIEWER: So you think you might want to send your child to a Christian school rather than a public school?

RESPONDENT #9: Christian school, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Now how would you go about choosing a school?

RESPONDENT #9: I might say choosing about school is to see if I got anybody in that school, see the curriculum of the school or what kind of activities the school give to the kids. That would probably influence my idea to send my kids to one of the schools.

INTERVIEWER: Would you seek the help of some organization or is there some other place you could go to get some specific information about a school?

RESPONDENT #9: No I'm sure.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that if you lived in a different area, that you would prefer to send your child to a public school?
RESPONDENT #9: Yes. I do think so.

INTERVIEWER: So you think that it depends on where you live, whether you're going to send your child to a public or private school? Or no matter where you live, you're still going to send your child to a Christian school?

RESPONDENT #9: Depends on the area I live. Some areas are poor on transportation and on education. Mostly you might say all public school is same. But the learning system is different. The teaching system is different.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you live in Maplewood. Do you know much about the Maplewood School System?

RESPONDENT #9: Not much. I know little because I've got my cousin in the schools. Only thing I, I'm not agreeing is like I know in . . . High School, they don't have any relationship with the parents, just the students. And what they expect from the student, parents don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so there's not much contact with the parents.

RESPONDENT #9: No, except when they kick kids out. Even though the kid is sick at school, they contact. But I realize and found out that there's so many kids quit school and the parents doesn't know about it.
INTERVIEWER: Now, do they, you said that your cousins go to that school, . . . High School. Do they send a lot of information to their parents.

RESPONDENT #9: Not exactly. I don't know about it.

INTERVIEWER: You don't know if they do. And you don't know in what language they would communicate to the parents either? If it's simply in English or--?

RESPONDENT #9: They are simply in English.

INTERVIEWER: In English. They don't have anything translated?

RESPONDENT #9: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Are you aware that parents in New Jersey will have the ability to choose which school their children may attend?

RESPONDENT #9: I would like that to happen but the way the system goes, if you, for example, you live in Irvington and you see that in Maplewood or Union or Millburn, there's a better way for your kid to learn more, you're not going to be able to send them there because of taxes for the cities. That's the main problem.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you don't think--what if they were to tell you that you can send your child into any public school you want. They're giving you the choice, how would you feel about that?
RESPONDENT #9: That would be okay, but you will have to know about the school curriculum and the Board of Education to that school to know how to deal with the kids.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents should decide which school their children are attending.

RESPONDENT #9: Yes. I do so.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that, let's say that they allow children to go to another town. Let's say they live in Maplewood, they allow them to go to school anywhere else, and let's say they decide to go to a school, either Irvington or Newark, or someplace else, do you think that the other school district should give them a test in order to accept them?

RESPONDENT #9: I don't think there should be tests because there is, for me it is the same system all over the United States. Why they are doing a test? If they've got enough teachers, like had a same kind of teaching all over.

INTERVIEWER: How about a tax break? What if the state decided to give a parent a tax break on property tax and told them you can take your child, I'll give you a reimbursement, you can put your child in school elsewhere. How would you feel about that?

RESPONDENT #9: That would be okay too. Different part of the district decide how much they're going to (?)
INTERVIEWER: What do you consider an ideal situation for a student who left Haiti and he's now attending school in the United States? Let's say that a student just left Haiti and they come here to go to school in the United States, what would you say to a student that comes from Haiti right now and he's going to school here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #9: Okay I would say to that student be ready to learn that he's going to have a new challenge, mostly in English. I know they might consider that student is a slow learner because he doesn't know much English. But that student might have a knowledge of more than English on other studies. And I hope they would consider that student as a potential learner for the school.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the schools are taking into consideration the fact that a student comes from someplace else? Do you think that the schools help students that are coming from Haiti, let's say.

RESPONDENT #9: It depends on the cities.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. You know of some--

RESPONDENT #9: --Depends on the cities. I know for sure in New York, New York City, New York State, some other places they do have some bi-language classes for the students. I know some schools in Newark and East Orange, probably
Irvington, and I don't know much about it, but I know some schools very good.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's enough information available for a Haitian parent to make the proper decision regarding his child's education?

RESPONDENT #9: No, I don't think so. They're not much involved and there's no way the school district or the proper authority could tell them something about the school.

INTERVIEWER: What would constitute a good source of information for Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #9: Okay, my point of view of this is for there was an association or there was a way they could send them a letter to invite them to come to the school and probably the principal or the board would talk to the parents to tell them what's going on and the things about the school.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any other place that you would know of in the community that is actually informing Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #9: Not much I know. Probably one, two or three.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any community center that you know of that are actually helping Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #9: I know one, that's Caraco. Probably one in downtown Elizabeth. Not much I know.
INTERVIEWER: So there's not enough, you think, for Haitian parents around, to help them out.

RESPONDENT #9: Not much.

INTERVIEWER: What about churches? Do you know of anything they are doing in order to help the Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #9: Not, no.

INTERVIEWER: Alright. If a parent has very little or no knowledge of English and can't get the proper information, where do you think that a parent would go?

RESPONDENT #9: In my knowledge, I would like to say if the parents involved in church organization or any other organizations, they're supposed to have a way to help the parents with their kids. Especially when they don't speak the language and they have a poor education.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian radio and television programs are helping the Haitian community in that sense?

RESPONDENT #9: Sometime yes. But not plenty.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they should have a more important role in the education of the Haitian community.

RESPONDENT #9: Yes, I do think so.

INTERVIEWER: Should the schools have a program that could be broadcasted on those Haitian programs on TV or on radios?
RESPONDENT #9: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that a lot of Haitians would pay any attention to them?

RESPONDENT #9: Yes I do think so because it would do something for them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know of any Haitian parent association?

RESPONDENT #9: No.

INTERVIEWER: Would you think that would be a good idea?

RESPONDENT #9: Yes, that would be a good idea.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that the Haitian background affects the education of Haitian students here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #9: One or two incidents I know that happened in some school, in Essex is when a student came from other countries, especially from Haiti, the way they portray the Haitian community from Haiti to here, put the student in the position that they are lowest position to score in school because they came from a poor country. They don't have any knowledge. But that wasn't true. They had, for some of them, they got more knowledge than kids who graduated from high school to go to college.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. How do you see the future of Haitian-American kids in the American society?
RESPONDENT #9: Okay, for those who came here as little kids, who grew up in school, I know for sure that the Haitian family put their kid at the maximum way to reach their goal. Well some drop out for some other reasons that their country built for them, like drugs, alcohol and other bad friends. But I know much of them grow up to be somebody.

INTERVIEWER: So you think that a Haitian student has the ability to make it in this society.

RESPONDENT #9: Yes, yes I do.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, what do you think will be the influence on that student in order to make it?

RESPONDENT #9: Okay, the influences like back home to be somebody you have to try your best, to study, to do your homework and make the whole effort from yourself to make it. And you don't need parent behind you. Exactly over there, you need parent behind you. Here, you are free. But the whole reason is going to be on you if you don't study, you aren't going to have, you're not going to be the person you want to be.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you wish to say anything more regarding children's education and success in Haitian students?
RESPONDENT #9: Well for the Haitian student what I would like the school system do about it is try to convince parents to send their kid to school. If there is any problem at the school, the school is supposed to get contact with the parents. Don't let the kid stay in the street and treat him as if they don't care about him. But try to reach parents and tell them what kind of problem they have with kids and how they can help to rebuild the confidential thing with the kids.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the parents are involved enough in their kids' life here in the United States? The Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #9: Not exactly, because for example, if you see a family with two or three kids going to school, sometimes they have to wake up early and go to work. You have nobody else. And this kid have to stay in school and walk home and nobody home to guide them. So that's one of the problems they face.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

RESPONDENT #9: You're welcome.

Interview 10.

INTERVIEWER: Respondent #10, you want to tell me a little bit about your experience with the education system? Did
you start going to school in Haiti or here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #10: In the United States. And I went to college for two years, basically.

INTERVIEWER: So all your education was in the United States? All your school education?

RESPONDENT #10: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you have no way of comparing, I guess, with the education system of another country -- with Haiti, let's say.

RESPONDENT #10: No.

INTERVIEWER: No. Do you think that you were challenged enough when you went to school here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #10: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: You think you were challenged enough?

RESPONDENT #10: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: May I ask what town or what city you went to school in?

RESPONDENT #10: I went to school in Brooklyn and Miami and college in Huntsville, Alabama.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you were very satisfied with what you got from these schools?

RESPONDENT #10: Yes, somewhat.
INTERVIEWER: Somewhat. Okay, is there anything more that you would have expected, or that you wanted you didn’t get?

RESPONDENT #10: Well some schools probably didn’t have certain tools, like books. They probably didn’t finish a textbook completely all the way through but basically I think I got a good education.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, did the school that you attended, were they private or public schools?

RESPONDENT #10: Public.

INTERVIEWER: They were all public?

RESPONDENT #10: Except for College, it was a religious school.

INTERVIEWER: It’s a religious school, right. How did it compare with your education in a public school?

RESPONDENT #10: They teach different and they have Christian philosophies they put together with lessons. I prefer them to a public school.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, when your parents put you in school, did they look for any information on the school before they put you in the school, that you know of?

RESPONDENT #10: No, not really. Basically the schools that I went to, like public school, to high school, they were close. So long as they were close to where my house was.
INTERVIEWER: So I guess they didn't get any information on how the school works before they put you in it?

RESPONDENT #10: No, not really.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that, would you have preferred going into a different public or private school?

RESPONDENT #10: Well I'd rather go to an Adventist school but as far as different public school, not really.

INTERVIEWER: Not really, okay. Now are you familiar with the school system in New Jersey?

RESPONDENT #10: Not really.

INTERVIEWER: Not really. Probably the same thing is happening also in New York, where parents will be given the ability to choose what school their kids are going to go to. Let's say that you were given the ability to choose what school you wanted to go to. You said you would still choose a religious?

RESPONDENT #10: Yeah, Adventist.

INTERVIEWER: Adventist school. Okay. Why do you think, do you think that your parents' education influenced your-- your parents, the fact that they are Haitian, do you think that it influenced your education in any way?

RESPONDENT #10: No.

INTERVIEWER: No?

RESPONDENT #10: No.
INTERVIEWER: Whether your parents were Haitian or American, you think that your education would have been the same?
RESPONDENT #10: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's enough information available for Haitians, as far as picking the right school or going to the right school, making the right decisions when it comes to the education of their children?
RESPONDENT #10: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: You think that there's enough information available?
RESPONDENT #10: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How were your guidance counselors in school? Were they helpful?
RESPONDENT #10: They were helpful somewhat, you know. They showed concern in regards to my education in school.

INTERVIEWER: But they didn't influence what you studied or where you went to school?
RESPONDENT #10: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you listen to any Haitian radio station or Haitian programs?
RESPONDENT #10: No.

INTERVIEWER: You never belonged to any association of Haitian students?
RESPONDENT #10: No.
INTERVIEWER: So you would say that you pretty much consider yourself an American student?

RESPONDENT #10: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And do you see any difference or have you noticed any difference when you were going to school between the Haitian students and an American student?

RESPONDENT #10: Not really.

INTERVIEWER: Not really. They all behaved in the same manner?

RESPONDENT #10: Yeah, as far as their culture in reflecting their behavior somewhat. Maybe, language, how they speak and, you know, different ideas they may have. Basically they were the same.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you don't see that Haitian students are being shortchanged in any way in the American school systems?

RESPONDENT #10: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Thank you. Anything that you'd like to add about the American education system?

RESPONDENT #10: Not really. Maybe it could be better if there was more money put in to have different programs. It would be more effective and a better education for students to learn more.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.
RESPONDENT #10: They could probably use more money.

INTERVIEWER: Right, to help--

RESPONDENT #10: --To improve the education in general.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview #11.

INTERVIEWER: And could you please tell us a little about your experience in the United States, about how many years have you been here?

RESPONDENT #11: I've been here about 10 years. I left Haiti in 1988. I left law school and I came to America to continue my education and to better my life for myself and my family. And here I am 10 years after on the verge of the completion of this goal.

INTERVIEWER: How does the American--did you, you didn't go to high school here at all?

RESPONDENT #11: No.

INTERVIEWER: So you only have--

RESPONDENT #11: I went to college here.

INTERVIEWER: You went to college here, so you have the college experience of this system. Okay. So did you go to college also in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #11: Yes, I did.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so then can you compare the two systems?
RESPONDENT #11: Well actually, if you are attempting to compare the American system of education with the Haitian system of education, you would see it's totally different. For most, the American system of education is based on practice. And while, like most third-world countries, the education is based on book knowledge. So at home, we were forced to learn more through books. And here you can just do a test on a book and with a lot of practice, learn basically the same thing. So it's different in many regards. And kids here do not have the obligation that we had back home where we had to not only study, but also memorize, but you have also to demonstrate to your teachers and, you know, for others, that you know what you say that you know. Sort of, reciting it in front of your teacher and here there is no such thing. You just go to class.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the challenges that this system, the American system challenges the mental ability of a student?

RESPONDENT #11: To a certain degree, yes. But I also have to give a lot of credit to the third-world system of education whereas the kids, I mean, well it's done, I would say, force, but when you have to learn, memorize things. And then when you face the practical part of it, you are more aware of it, you know the subject better. And I think
it's, in this regard, I could say that there is a little advantage than--

INTERVIEWER: Than the American system?

RESPONDENT #11: Well any, you could do it both ways, I mean it depends how you view it. But for those of us who have had a chance to study in a third-world country, when we come here, it's just like nothing. So it's no challenge for us really.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly. You don't have any kids in the school system yet?

RESPONDENT #11: Actually I don't, but I have experienced the school system because I taught for like a couple of months--

INTERVIEWER: --Good, okay.

RESPONDENT #11: --In elementary schools, so I know what it looks like.

INTERVIEWER: Were you exposed to both public and private schools?

RESPONDENT #11: Actually, yes. I did one week in ... High School, which was the worst experience. And I also had a chance, when I was doing my internship to be in a classroom in ... Middle School for a couple of weeks.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that these schools, so you never really were exposed to a private school, I guess, here.

RESPONDENT #11: Actually, no.

INTERVIEWER: No. But do you have any knowledge of the difference that could exist between a private or a public school?

RESPONDENT #11: I do have a knowledge because the differences do upon these. The way that our public school is funded here is through property tax. And we know that in the neighborhoods where our properties do not have much values the school systems suffer a lot. So those people can not afford to invest a lot in their schools, in those areas. So those kids, they have a very low, I would say, exposure to high tech teaching as opposed to a neighborhoods where property taxes are high and people are much wealthy.

INTERVIEWER: And they get a lot more chances. If you were to pick a school for your kids, what would you pick?

RESPONDENT #11: Well actually, I am a conservative Christian, so I would surely choose a Christian school. So there's no question about it.
INTERVIEWER: How would you go about choosing even a Christian school, how would you go about choosing the right one?

RESPONDENT #11: Well actually that organization which I am a part of, my church, and we have a lot of schools in district. And I am aware, I am an activist, I participate in campaigns to raise funds for those schools so I know what they are. And also I have worked in helping, you know, kids in the schools so I know which ones and I would be able to make an educated choice myself, since I am an educated person so I would certainly look for the best education for my kids.

INTERVIEWER: Would you pick a Christian school just because it is Christian?

RESPONDENT #11: I would choose it for both reasons. I would choose it first because my kids have a chance to be exposed to an environment where they will be guided, they would be given some Christian guidance. And second of all, I know that those who are responsible for teaching my kids would teach them, I mean, would use a curriculum which would teach them which is in compliance with my understanding of what it's supposed to be.

INTERVIEWER: If you could choose any school in New Jersey to send--well first of all, are you aware that pretty soon
parents will be able to choose the school that they want to
send their kids to in New Jersey

RESPONDENT #11: Oh yes, I've been an activist--I mean, I've
been in the forefront of this proposal. Because when the
Jersey legislative was working toward this, I had fax, I
had calls, Senators, told them that I am for this movement
so I would like parents who have kids in the public school
system to have choice to send their kids where they want.
So they don't have to send them to a school where they
think they are not getting what they should be getting. So
I know that

INTERVIEWER: Right. Which one of the different things are
you favoring? Would you favor a voucher system or a tax
break

RESPONDENT #11: Well, I would say, if I was talking for
myself, I would certainly choose a tax break since I am not
in the bottom of the, I'm not in the lower bracket income.
But I also have to be considerate. I mean those who are not
fortunate enough to do as, maybe not as much money as I'm
making in my work, I think the voucher system will help
them more. So I have to be very considerate in this regard
INTERVIEWER: So you definitely think that it would benefit any Haitian parent to have that kind of a system.

RESPONDENT #11: Oh sure, I do think so. And I also think that they need to be educated into what is available in the area for their kids. Because a lot of people don’t even know those things exist. And I think—

INTERVIEWER: --They need more information?

RESPONDENT #11: They need more information.

INTERVIEWER: Well how do you think they should go about getting that information? Are the schools the ones that should be providing it?

RESPONDENT #11: I think the school have some work to do. I would also encourage them to go to their school, get to know who teach their kids, get to know what the school is about. Talk to the principals, talk to the teachers. And also the Internet is a very high source of information where people can get information, like whatever is happening in your community and New York State at large.

INTERVIEWER: It offers a lot to the Haitian parent.

RESPONDENT #11: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What do you consider an ideal situation for a student that comes from Haiti and goes to school in the
United States. I mean, leaves Haiti in the middle of a school year, let's say, and then comes here and they have to attend school in the United States. What would you say to a student like that?

RESPONDENT #11: First of all, because a lot of students who come from Haiti, they are, they have a background, but because they are not able to express what they know, they are not capable of expressing themselves in English yet, our system of education here think that they are slow. Sometimes they put them in some special education programs which is a disadvantage for them because it slows them down. And I think that they could, while they are learning some English, they could put them in a classroom where they have the same opportunity as all the other kids. So I think if I was doing some counseling work, I would advise the school system or the school board to adopt some sort of programs where those kids can be placed in a regular classroom. At the same time they are getting the help they need to get to their--

INTERVIEWER: --Are you familiar with the bi-lingual program that is being offered?

RESPONDENT #11: Oh yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it is satisfying the needs of the Haitian student?
RESPONDENT #11: To some degree, yes. And also it has some disadvantage. To those that do not want to learn English, it gives them an incentive to just not learn English. So if they would be placed in any classroom where they would be forced to learn some English, where they would have to hear it all the time, you make an effort to speak it. I think it would be a very good thing to do. Yet I know there are some students who do need some help in this regard. It is not always, you can not have it both ways.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that the Haitian media, the radio and television programs, are playing an important role in helping parents as far as education is concerned?

RESPONDENT #11: They could but they're not doing that. It's unfortunate. They are not doing that. Because those that have the luxury of controlling those media, it's unfortunate, they are more inclined to politics than education. And it's sad. And I personally, I don't listen to them, I don't watch them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that, so do you think it's worth it for school to even broadcast things on these stations.

RESPONDENT #11: Oh, yes. Actually I guess it's economy, it's all about money. So if those people who control the media, they're not, they have no interest in broadcasting any type of information that would be educationally
oriented. But if the school system fund certain programs on the radio, absolutely, I believe it would be a good thing. And more people like myself would maybe listen.

INTERVIEWER: Do you, is there a Haitian parent association that you are aware of?

RESPONDENT #11: Actually I do not know of any one.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think something like that would be needed in the community?

RESPONDENT #11: Well it's not only needed, I think it's a necessity for something like that to happen. I've said it before. I mean most Haitian parents are not even aware of how the educational system works. I mean, what are the programs that are available in their community and if there was an organization that could help them, in a sense I think it's more than worthwhile.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of a Haitian growing up in this country?

RESPONDENT #11: It's sad. I see our values going down. Back home we could, anybody could correct a kid when he or she is wrong. But when we're here, the system makes us believe that if we try to correct a kid, of course some of us use sometimes a lot of overreacting. But I think it's a necessity that our kids do have respect and do have someone that they can show respect for. But here, it's not
happening and our kids are just left in the hands of the system and they are losing their identity. And it's sad. I do not see any better future for our kids than I see for all the other kids around. So it's unfortunate but I believe the individual can make a difference. People like myself.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that the church is playing a role in the community?

RESPONDENT #11: Oh yes. The church has played and will continue to play a very important role. Because you can see the difference between those kids who go to church and those who don't. You can see the difference between those who have received at home a Christian education versus those who don't. So I believe the church can and will make a big difference.

INTERVIEWER: Do you wish to add anything else?

RESPONDENT #11: Well I was—I think it was a good interview. And as I said, I don't listen to most Haitian broadcasts, but when I have an opportunity to voice my opinion, if it's going to help somewhere, I'm more than happy. And it was a pleasure talking to you. So I wish you good luck.

Interview 12.
INTERVIEWER: Respondent #12, tell me a little bit about yourself, about your experience in the education of the American school system. First of all, did you start going to school here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes, I did.

INTERVIEWER: So you started from kindergarten all the way up?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What type of school did you attend? A private school, a public school?

RESPONDENT #12: At first it was private school, but then when I got into sixth grade, it was public school.

INTERVIEWER: Now, did you attend a public school in New Jersey or did you go anywhere else?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: New Jersey?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you, so you don't have any experience as far as the Haitian school system?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: So you don't know anything about that? Okay, can you tell me how did the public school compare to the private school you went to?
RESPONDENT #12: It's really different because the private school, one of the major differences was the fact that we wore uniforms. And some of the things are different. The private school I went to is really much smaller than the public school. So it's a lot of students in one class. There's not that much room so some kids aren't paying attention and things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that you are being challenged enough in your school?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes? You don't think they could challenge you more?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: No? You don't want to be challenged any more?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Did anybody help you choose the schools that you attended? Or helped your parents choose the school that you attend, do you know?

RESPONDENT #12: Well yes, because before we weren't living in Maplewood. But my cousin talked my mother into moving here. That's why we came here. And it's the only high school in Maplewood, is . . . , so that's why I go there.

INTERVIEWER: Okay I see. What about the private school that you attended before, did anybody refer--
RESPONDENT #12: --Yeah, another cousin.

INTERVIEWER: --That referred her to that school?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah. Because it was a religious school.

INTERVIEWER: Right. That's why you went there. Now would you rather--are you happy where you are, at the high school that you are? Or would you rather go someplace else?

RESPONDENT #12: I'd rather go someplace else.

INTERVIEWER: A public, a private?

RESPONDENT #12: I just don't like Maplewood because a lot of the people, the comments, they're like, (?), and you know that other stuff.

INTERVIEWER: So it's basically the social aspect of it with the kids?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How are they, how are you viewed as a Haitian student there?

RESPONDENT #12: Not everybody knows I'm Haitian. It's not even the fact that I'm Haitian, it's just the fact that my, like . . . is mostly, like, how do you say that, Caucasians that go there. So you know, like African Americans they, some of them get prejudiced to them.

INTERVIEWER: That's only the students you're talking about, not the teachers as well? Right?

RESPONDENT #12: Probably.
INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you would rather go to another high school, a public high school you're saying? And so, in what area? Somewhere how?

RESPONDENT #12: Not somewhere bad like down in Newark because I don't think I would learn anything over there. But somewhere that I would get a good education.

INTERVIEWER: But do you think that the school you're going to now, do you think that it's really preparing you for the future.

RESPONDENT #12: Some of my classes.

INTERVIEWER: Some of your classes? And the others?

RESPONDENT #12: They don't have anything to do with anything. They do have something to do with something, but some of the things they're teaching you, you're not really going to use later on. It's like you learn it now, you just learn it to be knowing it because the teacher is telling you to learn. You're not really going to end up using it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you, are you aware that parents in New Jersey at some point will be able to choose the school that they want their kids to attend?

RESPONDENT #12: But they do choose the school.

INTERVIEWER: Well they choose it whether they, I mean, if they want to send a child to a public they will send it to a public, or if they want to send it to a private, they
will send it to a private. But let's say that you live in the-- Pretty soon, they're working on a legislation, you know, a law that parents will be able to choose any public school they want to send their kids. So they won't have to send that child to the same town that they live in.

RESPONDENT #12: So they don't have a limit of options.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly. Are you aware that this is going to happen in New Jersey at one point?

RESPONDENT #12: I didn't know that.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't know that. Do you think that your parents are well informed about what is going on in your school?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: How come?

RESPONDENT #12: Because I don't tell them anything that goes on. And those things like that, I just don't talk to them about school.

INTERVIEWER: About school? May I ask why?

RESPONDENT #12: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Does the school, though, communicate with your parents?

RESPONDENT #12: They only do that for the kids that, you know, they know that are not paying attention in classes or doing bad. They don't talk with them.
INTERVIEWER: They never want to talk to them. Did your mother go to the school?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: She never went to the school?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: What about when there's parent conferences, do they ever call her for parents' conferences?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you tell her when there's a parent conference?

RESPONDENT #12: I don't even pay attention to that.

INTERVIEWER: What about your report card?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah, she cares about that.

INTERVIEWER: How do you get your report card, do they mail it to you?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah, sometimes they're mailed or sometimes we get them and we bring them home.

INTERVIEWER: So she basically never goes to any parent-teacher conference. What about the PTA meetings? No? Never? You just don't let her know when it's happening.

RESPONDENT #12: I throw the paper away myself so if they ask me when is it, I don't know. Because the school is, I don't even like being there so I don't pay attention to the things that are going on.
INTERVIEWER: So you don't let her get involved?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that she might want to be involved?

RESPONDENT #12: No. When I was going to my private school they used to go to the PTA meetings and all that other stuff. But since I came here, they don't really know.

INTERVIEWER: There are different choices and all being offered when going back to that school choice thing. There are several choices that are being offered. For example, they are proposing maybe giving a tax break for the parents. Let's say that you want to send your child elsewhere, well they'll give you a tax break if they decide to put you in private school rather than a public school.

It's like they have less taxes to pay or something like that. Or some people are even talking about giving a voucher. Let's say that they'll give them a check for a certain amount of money. And if they don't want to put you in . . . where you're going right now, they could put you into another private school. They'll have a certain amount of money available to do that. But whatever the difference is, they'll have to put it up, but there will be a set amount for that kind of thing. So what, in your opinion, would be a better way to do this? Would it be better to
give the parents a certain amount of money? Or would it
better to give them a tax break? Or nothing, just freedom
of going wherever you want and then the school district
will pay.

RESPONDENT #12: The school district. Well who is the money
going to be coming from?

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's going to be coming from the
taxpayers who pay the district to educate the kids that
live in the district.

RESPONDENT #12: So isn't that going to be hard for them?

INTERVIEWER: For who?

RESPONDENT #12: The taxpayer that the money's coming from
to like, give us vouchers or whatever. I think they should
just give us the tax break.

INTERVIEWER: Just give you a tax break.

RESPONDENT #12: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Rather than the vouchers. What do you consider
an ideal situation. Let's say a student leave Haiti, right,
comes to the United States and decides to attend school in
the United States. What would you tell that student? Have
you known anybody to just come from Haiti, to come here, to
go to school? And then what would you tell a person like
that?

RESPONDENT #12: About school choice?
INTERVIEWER: About the way school, the school system is in the United States and how they should adjust to the system? RESPONDENT #12: I really don't know the difference, like, from Haiti or here so I don't know if it's the same. So I don't know if they would be able to adjust quickly or not. But I wouldn't know what to tell them.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think there is, let's go back to the parents, do you think there is enough information available to your parents? But you said that you just get rid of the information that they send home to your parents?

RESPONDENT #12: Because I have to bring them back to school.

INTERVIEWER: Right. But do you think that the school is making a good enough effort to reach the Haitian parent?

RESPONDENT #12: I don't think they're making a good enough effort to reach anybody's parent. Only the kids that are bad. Because everybody else—even if your kid isn't bad, but if they're doing well, then you should let their parents know also. Like, they don't do that.

INTERVIEWER: They don't do that. So you think that there should be something more that should be done besides just letting the parents of the good kids know what's happening? What else would you like to see the school do more of in
terms of getting the parents involved? Especially Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #12: I think some of the, one of the reasons some Haitian parents aren't involved is because they don't understand English that well. So I don't know what they could do about that.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any communication from your school in another language besides English?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah, sometimes if a student is sick, they'll ask one of the nurses that speak French to write something in French or whatever to give to the parents.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, so there are some nurses that speak French?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah, there are a lot of French teachers in my school.

INTERVIEWER: Are they Haitian?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: They are from France or something?

RESPONDENT #12: No. They just speak French.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, they just speak French.

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. How is the, are your guidance counselors good sources of information for you?
RESPONDENT #12: No. Not my guidance counselor this year. Because she's not helping. They tell you--like you go to her to get a class changed. She, they mess up your schedule, tell you there isn't one available. And then when you ask somebody else, you find out they have that class that you wanted. But they're not really helping you. They tell you one thing when it's not true.

INTERVIEWER: Do you ever listen to any radio station or radio program here?

RESPONDENT #12: Yeah, I listen to the radio all the time.

INTERVIEWER: I mean Haitian programs and Haitian stations?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: Not at all?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: So you wouldn't have any idea of what they're doing, if they are really getting in touch with the community or anything like that?

RESPONDENT #12: Who?

INTERVIEWER: The radio programs.

RESPONDENT #12: Oh, my father listens to that, but I don't listen to that.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that he's getting any information about education at all on these radio stations?

RESPONDENT #12: Not to my knowledge.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the schools should have a program that is broadcasted on the Haitian programs, or specially geared towards Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #12: No, because it's censoring, it's centering us out, because there's a lot of other people here that come here that don't speak English. Like some people of Hispanic origin or whatever. And I just don't think it would work.

INTERVIEWER: You don't think it would work. Why?

RESPONDENT #12: It's like, Haitian parents, well from what I know, Haitian parents are not really involved that much with their children's education as much as we see American parents are. Like if they're in the sport, they'll go watch them play and do all that stuff and show them support. But you don't see that from Haitian parents.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they know that their supposed to do that? Or it's just that it's not important to them. Why do you think that they don't get involved?

RESPONDENT #12: I don't think it's because it's not important to them. I don't know, maybe it's because they just don't have time or it's just because they don't make time.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that having a Haitian parent association would be a good thing? Is it worth it?
RESPONDENT #12: I think that would work. If some parents would really want to help their kids.

INTERVIEWER: And what do you think the purpose of that association should be?

RESPONDENT #12: It should be to inform the parents about things that are going on in the schools and the community and all that other stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian background that you have affected your education?

RESPONDENT #12: No, because I came here when I was really little. But someone that didn't, that comes here at a much older age and they have to take ESL and have all these other classes, I think it affects them because they don't get paid much attention to. Like they put them in the really bad classes and they're not learning much. They're like behind everybody else.

INTERVIEWER: How about the fact that your parents are Haitians? Do you think that made a difference in your learning experience?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: You would have did just as well whether, or the same as you are doing, with other kind of parents or parents of another background?

RESPONDENT #12: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: So how do you see the future of Haitian youth in this country? Education wise? How do you see your future? Do you see yourself as a Haitian student or an American student?

RESPONDENT #12: I see myself as a Haitian student because I'm still Haitian even though I came here when I was little. Because I was born over there. I can't say where I'm going to be in the future.

INTERVIEWER: But do you think that the education you received gives you enough baggage, enough--prepares you well enough for a good future? Solid future?

RESPONDENT #12: Not at this point because I'm only in my second year of high school. I can't go out in the world and try to be successful. I don't even have my high school diploma yet.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you see other Haitian kids adjusting to this system?

RESPONDENT #12: I think some of them are adjusting. But some of them just don't care or don't try, they're not doing very well.

INTERVIEWER: Anything else you'd like to add as far as the education system that you are experiencing?

RESPONDENT #12: No.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.
Interview 13.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me something about your background? Did you attend school in Haiti and did you also attend school in the United States? And what grade level did you achieve in the United States?

RESPONDENT #13: I have attended Essex County Vocational where I studied computer repair. And I have also attended Lincoln Tech where I did study electro mechanical engineering.

INTERVIEWER: How would you explain your experience in the school system of the United States?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say that the educational system does encourage a student who's willing to learn. With the loans being offered, a student whose school has the chance of attaining a school whereby he or she could learn technical skills. However, the other side of the equation is that once you have a loan and if the money does reach a high level, once the student graduates, sometimes it's a bit hard to find a job. And the student might be stuck with a high amount of money that must be repaid.

INTERVIEWER: Did you attend high school in the United States of America?

RESPONDENT #13: I did attend high school in Haiti.
INTERVIEWER: Was it a difficult transition for you to go from the Haitian educational system to the American educational system?

RESPONDENT #13: No, not at all. When I came, after I took a placement test, I did make good grades for it. So the transition wasn't that difficult for me. When I first came from Haiti I was used to studying hard. Therefore, it wasn't that difficult to adapt to the American system. And besides, the subjects in which I was tested were not unfamiliar to me.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know anybody who has a child attending high school or do you yourself have any child or children attending high school?

RESPONDENT #13: Myself personally, I do not have a child attending high school. However, I do have relatives that do have children attending high school in the United States.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the education that you receive in Haiti and that being given in the schools in the United States?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say that when a child goes to school in Haiti, he or she doesn't only receive food for his thought, but he or she also receives a certain moral education which seems to be lacking in the United States school system. I would say that in Haiti the moral
education that a child receives is pretty strong, as opposed in the United States. For example, instead of talking about sexual abstinence, in many cases the child is given a condom and said, "Do as you wish."

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that the school system in the United States is challenging enough as far as you're concerned. In other words, does it make you reach the maximum level that you are able to reach?

RESPONDENT #13: Yes, I would say that the school system in the United States is very challenging. It does force you to do your best. And also one thing that I noticed here is that, the education being given is not based on rote learning as it is done in Haiti. And I would notice the open book exams that some teachers do give here which is a way of encouraging the child to read whatever material is in the book and try to understand it instead of just trying to remember something by rote.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare the private school system and the public school systems in the United States? Is there anybody that you know who has attended both, which would allow you to make a comparison between the two systems?

RESPONDENT #13: From my observations, I would say that the private schools tend to be stricter in terms of the
students' behaviors than in the public schools. As you may notice by watching the news, often there is a lot of violence taking place at the public schools, shooting, knifings and fighting. And compared to the private schools which tend to have lesser incidents of violence. And I would say also that at some of the private schools and mostly the religious schools, the students are taught not only about reading, writing and arithmetic, but also there is a religious formation that they do receive. And it is my understanding that according to the laws being passed now, and being observed, the students in public schools are not even allowed to have prayers in the classrooms.

INTERVIEWER: You said that you are a single individual and that you do not have any children. If you do have, if you had a child or children, which school would you choose to put that child of yours?

RESPONDENT #13: Well as far as having a child now, I would say that it's quite a few years away from having one. So therefore, I do not have to make the choice right now. I do not even have any plans to get married yet so that's quite a few years away. To answer your question directly, I would say that given the choice, I would probably place my child at a private school. However, I would not rule out public school if I do not have the necessary means to pay for a
private school for my child. However, before I do send my child to a public school, I would make sure that I give him the proper instructions, the proper guidance so as not to be influenced by the bad things going on at the public schools.

INTERVIEWER: If you were to put your child in a public school, would you just choose any school at random or would you try to choose a specific school in a specific neighborhood to place your child?

RESPONDENT #13: My philosophy is that I would do my best to save my money so I may live in a decent neighborhood, decent, safe, whereby if I have to put my child at a public school, he would have the advantage of being at a good school in a good neighborhood. Therefore if I were to choose a school, public school, I would try to choose it on three criteria. First, educational, second, moral, and third, in terms of good security for my child.

INTERVIEWER: How would you go about finding information about which school to place your child at?

RESPONDENT #13: First of all, I would be mostly interested in getting a hold of some parents that do have their children attending that school. Because it is the personal experience of other parents that would be my main guideline in choosing a school. Secondly, I would make sure that I
speak to the teachers teaching at that school. And third, probably, I would go through the Internet and try and find some information about that particular school.

INTERVIEWER: Are you aware that pretty soon the state of New Jersey would give the parents the capability, the ability of choosing which school that their children would attend? For example, if your child is currently living in East Orange and you would like that child to attend a public school in Maplewood, that would be possible in the future. Are you therefore aware that the state of New Jersey is working on a law that would give the parent the ability to put, to choose which school that his or her child would attend?

RESPONDENT #13: No, I am not aware of that particular law that is to take place. I do think that it is a good law as long as the parent has the possibility of paying for transportation for the child to attend that school away from the location in which the child is currently living. I do think that it is a good law.

INTERVIEWER: There are many ways in which that law could be implemented. For example, one way to do it would be to give a tax break to the parent. If for example, the parent is living in East Orange and sending his child to a Maplewood school, the government could lower the tax that he or she
is paying on his house, his or her house. The second way that could be done is for the government to give a check to the parent so as to cover a good portion, if not all, of the tuition for the student going to the school away from his or her district. And among these two choices that I have mentioned to you, which one do you think would be more favorable to the Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say, in my opinion, if I were to ask 10 people, they would probably, eight out of 10 would go for the proposal of receiving a check from the government instead of a tax break. I think that the tax break, the way most people would look at it, is something they would not receive until they go and fill their taxes at the end of the year. Whereas receiving a check from the government would probably be something done much quicker.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that many of the schools here in the United States make a diligent effort to have a relationship with the parents of the students?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say that yes, I do think that the schools do make an effort to reach out to the parents; even though, maybe more might, could be done. However, I think the problem is on the side of the Haitian parents. Many of them would prefer to work two or three jobs instead of going to their children's school and speak to the teachers
and see how their children are doing in school. Some parents would rather work hard and buy their children nice clothes and certain toys to play with instead of paying attention to the education of their children.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the community centers or the churches are doing a good enough job to educate the parents concerning the choices available and the different opportunities that they could take advantage of?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say that as far as my church is concerned, because that's the organization I'm most familiar with, that they make a good effort at reaching out to the parents. However, I think that the fault is on the parents' side, who do not make the particular effort to find out how they could improve the lives of their children. Many parents are more concerned about the appearance of their children, as far as having nice clothes, nice shoes and nice things in life. But once a meeting is announced, they do not take the time to go and speak to the teachers who could give them an idea of how their children are doing in school. I do think that many parents have failed at the task of properly raising their children.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian radio programs, the newspapers and whatever other media are doing a good enough job in helping enlighten the parents?

RESPONDENT #13: I can not speak for the television programs, nor can I speak for the newspapers. However, I do know a little bit about the radio stations. I do have a radio program at a station called Radio Tropical. And myself, I do make a particular effort at informing the Haitian population about what's going on in terms of education. I would say that my program does make an effort at educating the Haitian population in terms of the opportunities and the possibilities for the parents. But unfortunately, the great majority of Haitian parents do not support whatever is being done to help them out.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of a young Haitian growing up in American society?

RESPONDENT #13: I would say that the future of a young Haitian growing in that society depends first on the way he or she was raised by the parents. If that child had received a pretty good education, a good guidance, there's a likelihood that he or she would become a decent citizen in the society and would be able to resist the temptations of doing something bad. It is the temptation to go and try to make a lot of money doing something illicit is so great
that very few people are able to resist. However, with the strong educational background, the guidance of good parents and a moral and religious guidance, I think that the young Haitian should be able to become a success.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the fact that you were brought up by Haitian parents and you yourself, being Haitian, has any influence on who you are today?

RESPONDENT #13: I do believe that the fact that I was brought up by Haitian parents has a great influence on the way I behave today, being an adult. I was brought up in an environment where my parents taught me right from wrong and gave me a strict moral education. I think all these factors do play a great role on who I am today. I did spend my primary and secondary years attending school in Haiti. And when I came here I spent a couple of years attending school in the United States. And even though there were many things that were not proper going on around me, however, my background, the way my parents brought me up helped me stay strong in the face of these many temptations.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any final words that you would like to say?

RESPONDENT #13: I appreciate the fact that you took some time to come here and ask me a few questions. And I appreciate your effort in that vein and I would say that if
there is anything that I may do to help you out, feel free to ask. I'm happy to spend my time doing that kind of work instead of maybe watching TV or doing something nonproductive. Thank you very much and I do wish you great success in your project.

Interview 14.

INTERVIEWER: Respondent #14, could you please tell me a little bit about yourself and your educational experience in Haiti first and then in the United States.

RESPONDENT #14: My name is . . . . I grew up in Haiti up to the age 11, going to 12. I was there until fifth grade, then I came to the United States. And I enrolled in sixth grade in East Orange, the summer school program. I graduated from junior high, then I went to high school. Graduated from East Orange High in '85 and I moved onto college. I attended Cook College, which is one of the schools of Rutgers University. And I was there until 1990. Currently I am employed by the Township of Irvington with the intention to obtain my Master's Degree in Theological Studies.

INTERVIEWER: How do you compare the Haitian school system with the American school system?

RESPONDENT #14: I grew up in Haiti for a little time, but in some ways I kind of wish I had finished high school in
Haiti. The reason I say that, I liked the way the school system in Haiti is structured. When someone graduates from high school they pretty much prepare you for life for your higher education. It's the way the system is set. Even though it's an undeveloped country, but those of us who are fortunate to go to school in Haiti are well instructed to attend college wherever they go. I've seen students who graduated from high school who came here. They, the subjects, they usually advance in them. I'm not saying that the school system in the United States doesn't do that. But I experienced some difficulty when I went to college probably because of my lack of preparedness in English from being born in Haiti, coming here. But these are the differences. I kind of wish, like I said, I had completed high school in Haiti but God knows why things worked out the way it did, so who am I to judge them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any kids in the school system here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #14: Currently I have two little boys. They're not really in school. One is in daycare center. My wife and I, we chose the one that he goes to. It's a Christian daycare center. And we're happy with it, with the way it's structured.
RESPONDENT #14: Now when your child grows up and gets ready to go to school, where are you planning on putting him in school?

RESPONDENT #14: My wife and I wish to see our children go to a private school because I feel that, I pray that first God give us the means to be able to do that. There's something about private school, the discipline system, the lack of--student ratio versus teachers, I believe it's lower. And I think that the children who attend private school usually are better instructed. I'm not saying that public schools are not good because I'm a product of public schools, it's a matter of the child's home, how the parents influence about their education. But nonetheless, if my child goes to public school they will do fine because we will supervise their studies.

INTERVIEWER: How would you go about choosing the school that you put your child in?

RESPONDENT #14: I will do a little research by going in, getting information, asking teachers, talking with the teachers as well as parents who currently have their children in the school. That's what I did for my son who is currently at a daycare center. If I may add, I tend to be very involved in my child's education because I think that's one of the, besides the gospel of God, that's the
best thing I can give them. And then they'll be set for life.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that, well you live in a town that you said you could also send your kid to a public school if you couldn't send them to a private school. Now are you aware of a choice program that is available--that will be available within the New Jersey school system or that they've been discussing.

RESPONDENT #14: Yeah, they've been discussing. I know the Jersey City school system had that if I'm not wrong. I'm aware of that and right now where I live, which happens to be the township of Greenfield, I believe that the parents are very involved in the public school system there. And it's very good for children below the age of eight to go through the education program in Greenfield. It is excellent.

INTERVIEWER: What do you know about the choice?

RESPONDENT #14: Basically if I understand it correctly, I believe that parents will have the choice to decide which district the children can go to school to. That's how much I know about it.

INTERVIEWER: Now if you were offered that choice, would you take advantage of it?
RESPONDENT #14: Probably, yes. I don't know since I'm not at that stage yet. I would have to look more into and decide from there.

INTERVIEWER: There are different views and different ideas that are being debated about this. And one of them was that maybe they could either give the parent a certain amount of money and the parent could take that money and go wherever they want, either another public or a private school or wherever they want to go. And that is not necessarily—that is one way. A second thing that they were talking about would be to give the parents a tax break. As you know, just because you decide not to put your kid in that public school, they would give you a tax cut and that amount would be put towards the school you chose, in the town that you're living in. Now if you were offered these choices, what would you do? Would you pick any one? Are you agreeing with any one of these two things?

RESPONDENT #14: The tax cut is a good one, as well as giving the parents the money to choose either for a public school or a private school. Either one, either of these two options would be acceptable to me. Which one I would choose, again, unfortunately I'm not at the stage of where I could choose.
INTERVIEWER: Are you aware of any, are there any organizations that are giving information to Haitian parents? Are you aware of any?

RESPONDENT #14: I'm not aware of any, no.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents are getting enough information from the school system--Haitian parents are getting enough information from the school districts in any aspect?

RESPONDENT #14: Well it depends on what approach is being used. If they are just sending letters home, many times the parents do not, they are not well versed in the English language so therefore if the child attending school is left to explain it to them, the message will not get through. Unless they approach the Haitian media to make the Haitian parents aware of what's going on or contact the Haitian churches, I don't think the message will get through.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that the media and the churches are doing a good job of informing the Haitian parents as far as education is concerned, or educational options?

RESPONDENT #14: Do I think they are doing a good job? Well if the school system contact the churches directly or the Haitian media, I know the message can get through that way. I can speak for my church, if any information sent to the
church, we would as a member of the committee as well as
being active with the youth, the message would get through.
At least from our church, I can speak for our church.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents should be able to
decide what school they want to send their child to? Or are
you in agreement with that system right now where you have
to turn your child to the public school next to you or
closer to your house?
RESPONDENT #14: Well I think if the government is not
making sure every district is getting equal opportunity,
then the parents should have the choice to send the
children to any school they wish. But if the government
does its part in terms of making sure each district
receives the same opportunity for any other student, then
the parents should send the children in their own district.
But the government has to provide the same opportunities
for every child. The reason I say that, all the children,
wherever they go to school, they are the future leaders of
the country. They need to be well prepared to be able to
lead the country.
INTERVIEWER: What do you consider an ideal situation for a
student who leaves Haiti and comes to the United States
right now like you did? What would you give to a child who
comes right now to attend school in the United States, what advice would you give a student?

RESPONDENT #14: What advice? I believe that when I came to the country in 1979, I'm a product of the bilingual system. I believe the bilingual program worked because I am a product of it and I have other friends who are part of it, graduated from high school and went to college and are successful in the country. I would not permit a Haitian student coming from Haiti stay no more than two years in a bilingual program. I would put them in there for two years, help them learn as much English as possible, then transfer them to regular classes. More than two years, I would not permit it. When a child first comes from Haiti, all they need is the language. Because I believe most Haitian students who come from Haiti are well prepared. They are well versed in the subjects they teach in high school, to tackle anything. The language is always the barrier. And that's why I wish I had finished high school in Haiti. I think I would be better prepared to become anything I wanted.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian, that your Haitian background, made a different in who you are today?
RESPONDENT #14: Definitely. One thing Haitian parents, which I am, are like non Haitian parents, they know that one of the greatest things they can do...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your Haitian background made a difference in who you are today?

RESPONDENT #14: Yes I believe so very strongly. The reason I say that, most Haitian parents I know, they emphasize education in the home. They usually consider education is the way out for having a better life. And I know my parents, when I was young, they encouraged me to take my studies seriously. And I can recall when I was in college, one of the things friends of mine used to say is that they are taking the semester off. I know I could not go home and tell my parents I'm taking the semester off. The questions they would ask me, "what are you going to do? Are you going to work? If you're not going to work, you go to school." So they will emphasize education and my Haitian background truly makes a different.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you see the future of Haitian students in this country? Or students with a Haitian background?

RESPONDENT #14: Well you know, this is a good question. At the same time, I'm saddened by my answer to the question. A couple of years ago I think the Haitian, the young Haitian
generation used to take the education more seriously. Now I don't see the same maturity, I could say, or seriousness among the Haitian students. Some of them have been very influenced by the type of people they hang out with. And I don't know if it's because of lack of role models in the schools. But it really saddens my heart as a young Haitian to see how many Haitian students hanging out in the street after school and then in front of the library instead of going to library, get the work done. And also, pursuing higher education after college. Some of them seem to be satisfied with a high school education. Some of them don't even consider finishing high school. And it's sad in my heart. I hope it doesn't turn out.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it is due to the school that they are attending?

RESPONDENT #14: I believe there are many influences, yes I think that is a factor. But there could be other factors involved. It depends on the child too. The type of parents, how serious the parents take education. I know as a young person, young parent, education will always be very important in my home. If you're a young child, if you're not in school, what are you doing? Committing crimes? Committing violence in the community? I wish more parents could take that more seriously. And unfortunately, a great
deal of young people are having children. And because of lack of matureness I could say, it's affecting the current generation.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything else you wish to say about the subject or the school choice?

RESPONDENT #14: I just pray that things turn out, especially in the Essex Community. I know some of the communities, they have excellent schools. I don't see that, unfortunately, for the school district I graduated from a few years ago, which is . . . And I currently work in the Township of Irvington. I pray things turn around as well. I have all my sisters graduated from the Irvington District. They're all doing fine in college, higher education. I think the school has a part to play, but at the same time, depending on the parents. You know, there's a big role they can play. And wherever you go to school, you can make it. You just have to want it. Hopefully with a little encouragement from the parents, family members, any young child can make it. I thank you for your time and I hope my interview will help you get an A.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for your time.

Interview 15.

INTERVIEWER: Respondent #15, could you please tell me a little bit about your educational experience, meaning where
you started school and where you are as far as education goes?

RESPONDENT #15: Well I went to school in Haiti when I did my Baccalaureate.

INTERVIEWER: Basically finished high school?

RESPONDENT #15: Finished high school and then I came here. When I came here I went to college for English and then I majored in Nursing. I didn’t graduate in Nursing at the last minute only I need one semester to go. I Decided this is not really what I wanted. So I jumped out of nursing and then I went for computers. Computer classes and then also I took a secretarial training. And right now I'm making plan to go back to school for early childhood, you know, maybe having a Master’s Degree in early childhood education.

INTERVIEWER: How long have you been in the United States?

RESPONDENT #15: I've been here for the past 16 years.

INTERVIEWER: How do you, since you never been to high school here, but you have kids, right?

RESPONDENT #14: I do have kids, yeah, and I'm also dealing with kids that go to the public school here so I have an after-school program. So I think I pretty much have an idea of what's going on.

RESPONDENT #15: How do you think that the school system in Haiti compares to the school system in the United States?
RESPONDENT #15: Oh, gee, can they be compared? To an extent, yes. But I think the old fashioned way, how can I say that, the technique that the people use here for kids to learn I would say is maybe better. But when it comes to the discipline, respect, how people, the parents see the teachers, I see there's a big difference. Because growing up back home I went to school in a little village to my elementary school, it was that my mom and dad were everywhere. Every older people that I see in the community were my parents. And that mean from school, back and forth, you got to be straight. And here, do I really like the education I see kids getting here at the high school especially the one in where I am living in Elizabeth? Of course not.

Because I don't like and I despise so much and I am working so hard to keep my kids in a public school, which is really similar to Haiti. Which is similar to Haiti. But there is a big difference. The kids have no respect for the teachers. Not only the kids, but also the parents. And back home, I dare you to talk or look at a teacher. And what I would say, the matter your kids here have more opportunities. Not only read to just put things into their head, but they have this privilege to do hands-on things. They have a lab to work on the day you have biology, you don't only do all the
formula. In Haiti, you do the formula, you do only theory, but no practice. But kids here have more opportunity to test what they learn, you know, and see if it really works. And they say, "Oh and I grew that." You know, technology, computers.

INTERVIEWER: It's much better.

RESPONDENT #15: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they challenge the kids enough in schools here?

RESPONDENT #15: Challenge them enough, yes, but not enough on the way that some teachers here are really limited. There are certain things they can not really do. If they push too much then they become labeled as something, you understand? Where in Haiti, I think the teacher really, like, it is my job that you become somebody. Do you understand? Like they respect you, they'll do this, they'll punish you. But at the end you know it's for, it's toward...

..., their intentions are good. Their intentions are good. But to challenge, it's a yes or no question based on the students. Based on the kids.

INTERVIEWER: Now the school got, your kids are atten--you have one child right?

RESPONDENT #15: I have one, yeah.
INTERVIEWER: Is he or she attending a public school or a private school?

RESPONDENT #15: Private school.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is there, do you see any difference between private schools and public schools here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #15: Oh, yeah, there's a big difference in New Jersey or maybe, I like not to be too general, I would say in Elizabeth. What I've seen over there I don't like it. And I don't see my kids going to ... High School right now, or to any public school for that matter. There are good teachers I guess, some of them, but they don't have the liberty to really be a teacher. They are being limited to what they can do, being manipulated by the system. And the kids are too wild. Like I say, no respect, no control. It's scary.

INTERVIEWER: Did anybody advise you on the school you chose for your child?

RESPONDENT #15: I do research, even for the private school, I do my research. I go around talking to people and parents. So then I find out what. (TELEPHONE INTERRUPTION)

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you said you researched for your child's school.

RESPONDENT #15: Yes.
INTERVIEWER: No organization where you could go to find information about that type of school?

RESPONDENT #15: No, that's really a big one. If you need daycare there's an organization you can go to for that. But school, no, there is none. You are on your own.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if you lived in a different town that you would put your child in a public school?

RESPONDENT #15: Definitely yes. I can mention a few. If I go down to Summit, Chattam, Springfield, Millburn. Millburn, that's a big plus, because I like what they do over there with the kids. And in the state I think there really—not in the state, country—they're doing wonderful. Yes, I would send my kids to a public school.

INTERVIEWER: If you lived in a different town?

RESPONDENT #15: A different, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the school that your child is attending could do a better job than what it's doing now or are you satisfied with the job that they are doing with your child right now.

RESPONDENT #15: I'm very pleased with it. There's always room for, you know, improvement. I wish they'd get more of black history in the school, not only once. My daughter is fighting them on this, she stood up and speak out for that.
But I'm very happy. I'm very pleased with what she's getting over there.

INTERVIEWER: Are you aware that parents in New Jersey will have the ability to choose which school their children may attend? Are you aware that there is such a thing called School Choice?

RESPONDENT #15: I heard about that. That would be nice. Then again, it would not be fair to the good district when you can have all of this people go over there, do you understand? That's a good idea. Will I take advantage of it? No I will not. Because it would be unfair to the people that live in that community.

INTERVIEWER: Even if they were to offer you a tax break, a voucher, meaning like a check, you would not?

RESPONDENT #15: No I would not. It's not fair. Because imagine if that was you in the community and see all those kids. Because sometimes parents don't know what they're dealing with, they might be dealing with two different personalities. The kid that's they see in the house and the kid that's in school are two different things. And they think that it's the other kids that are no good, their kids are okay. And they took the kids out of the school and sent them somewhere else. And it's your kid. You understand? So no I would not do that.
INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents should decide which school their children should attend?

RESPONDENT #15: Locally, in their own district, yes. You should. Your own city, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Would, what do you consider an ideal situation for a student who leaves Haiti, let's say, in these days. Leaves Haiti and is now attending school in the United States. What would you consider an ideal situation for that child or what advice would you offer that child?

RESPONDENT #15: My advice would be not only to that child but to the parents. Before the parents enroll the child in any school, the parents need to get educated themselves about the school system. What to tell the kids, what to expect. Because sometimes we have kids coming from other country, and especially in Haiti, and they come here and no control. The parents can not talk to the kids because they are in that level, you know, there. But there is a lack of information. A lack of that. And that's one of the things that I see in my work, to be a source, you know, of information for all newcomers. So when they come in, they get all the dos and the don'ts. If you want to succeed, if you want to take opportunity of this beautiful land, this is what you are to do. So we are working with New Jersey Community Foundation to that they receive from another
foundation to do this. But a charter school would be a better place for people that come from the island. You understand? It's more stricter, there is more discipline there. And we are thinking about something like that maybe in the long while.

INTERVIEWER: For the city of Elizabeth?

RESPONDENT #15: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And will that be an English speaking school?

RESPONDENT #15: It will be a bilingual school, of course, French and English, where parents can talk to the teacher not being afraid to speak their own language. When the kids know, my mom speak Creole, I can not hide this information from my mom because she's going to call the teacher and find out exactly what's going on. But the kids today, there's a gap so they're taking advantage of it. You know? They're taking advantage. That's why I'm so depressed. Get involved. Get involved, even though you don't speak the language. Find someone that know to go with you at least once a month or once in a quarter. Something. Not at the PTA meeting, because even though there are PTA meetings they do not attend those meetings.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that Haitian parents come to the center? Do you feel that they come here enough, that they really are looking for that information?
RESPONDENT #15: Not really. I wish they would come more for that. They come for other, especially the kids that come here, that finish high school in Haiti. They come here for guidance, what college to go to. Is that beneficial for them to go to ESL classes only or just, you know, apply to the school for full major, things like that, or go to high school based on the kids. But no, we do not have a lot of people coming in inquiring about that really.

INTERVIEWER: So do you consider, is there a good source any other place that Haitian parents could go to besides here if they wanted information that you know of?

RESPONDENT #15: No, I can say that. In Union County there is none. And maybe in the next years to come, CMI can be that source, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the schools are making a big enough effort to inform the parents?

RESPONDENT #15: No, they're not. They're not. They're not doing anything.

INTERVIEWER: So the information is not written in different languages. It doesn't go home. They don't make sure?

RESPONDENT #15: No it's only in Spanish and English. And although they do have one Haitian liaison for the whole 27 schools in the district, come on. You understand? We are all over the place. There are some where you might see more
Haitian there but all over the place, and not all of them really, those people understand the language. No, so they don't really make any effort, no.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian radio and television programs are helping in that?

RESPONDENT #15: For school, no. They talk more about politics, what's going on in Haiti. It's a lot like guiding the people what to do. At school. How to get involved, no. They are more like I say, politics, what's going on in Haiti.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the schools could have programs broadcasted over these TV and radio stations?

RESPONDENT #15: The school yes, but I think all the school have their own, they have a Haitian club at the high school. It would be up to that club to let, to speak out, and that's one of the things I'm going to work with them. Because right now I'm in the process of making some noise—not noise—publicity for education. And I'm going to get, the kids are going to get involved. You know, if you are serving immigrants there should be no discrimination or we're supposed to get that. And they have a club but they're not doing anything. When you hear all the good things the other clubs are doing. So it's like, wow, what happened, what's going on.
INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that a Haitian parents association would be a good idea?

RESPONDENT #15: Haitian parents' association would be a good idea. But before you could get to that name you have to find people that are motivated to put it together. Definitely you need that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your Haitian background affected your education or who you are today?

RESPONDENT #15: Oh, my dear. Growing up I couldn't understand why my parents were the way they were, you understand, and blame the government thing about it. But now seeing what's going on here, seeing the way kids are, I am so thankful of the way, where I came from, a little bit. I would not say 100% because I'm so liberated and the way I think people say that I have an American mind. But the foundation, I'm very pleased with that. And I try to pass that along to my kids, you know.

INTERVIEWER: You have anything else you'd like to say or add as far as the children, the Haitian future--the future of Haitian American kids in the United States?

RESPONDENT #15: In United States, what we need to do as elders, you know, because I'm very involved with kids, I'm an Advocate here in the city. But we need to be more positive role models for them. We need to stand up and tell
them, guys we can do it. And are we going to say that, not by words only, by examples. Do the things that people do not expect us to do. Stand up when people think you are making a fool, but stand up for something that's right. We need to show the kids. This is not our country. But we're here to get an education and also to make something out of life. And I do go to school, public school and talk to the children. Especially third and fourth graders. One of the things I stress is that education, you want to be somebody, stay in school. Stay in school. By the year 2000, high school will not be an option for you anymore. You are going to need degrees. What do you have? Master's or what? Associates or what? You know? We have good kids. But when they come here, we lose them and it's our fault. If we are uneducated about what's going on--you can not say you are in this country and you don't want to get involved. You need to know how those kids think. And TV's no good.

There's a lot of good shows on TV that can also help. And as a parent, if you have kids, how can you tell me you don't want to get involved? And when you try to keep the kids inside the house all the time, you know, "I don't want you to play with this kid, I don't want this, I don't know." And this is when you are having a big problem because the kids can not behave. "I can do anything I want
because my teacher told me I can do this, I don't have to listen to you. I can do this." But sometimes the parents also create that situation. And the kids that are torn between two cultures. They try to be an American to please their friends. And they try to be a Haitian to please their parents. Come on. This is a lot. Somebody need to meet them half way. And that person needs to be the parent. Why am I saying the parents? You are not changing your beliefs, you are not changing the way you believe things are supposed to be. No. You need to be of one mind with the kids. Come to their level, understand what they're going through. This is not the 19th century, this is a new generation with new ideas, technology. They're seeing a lot of things. They're friends are talking about a lot, Internet, things that we didn't know until like a year or two years ago. So you need to get updates. It's really hard. Not everybody can do that. But for the sake of the kids, if you don't do that, you'll lose them. Then you cry.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for your time.

Interview 16.

INTERVIEWER: And Respondent #16 can you tell me about your education or experience in the--well first of all, tell me a little bit about yourself, your education, the level of
education. Then you can tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere?

RESPONDENT #16: To start, my name is ... and I received a BA from Rutgers University in Mathematics and an MA in Math Education at New Jersey City University. And my education experience from Haiti was very good because it helped me improve my education in the USA. In Haiti, I had a very strong education because my parents, they sent me into private school and from that I build up in the USA. Even though I didn't go to a private school in the US because my parents didn't have the money to send me to a private school. I went to a public school but because of the background that I had from my education in Haiti, this helped me when I went to high school and to college. And even from college to go to grad school so that I have the degree that I have today.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your parents influenced your education?

RESPONDENT #16: Absolutely because my parents, in general, father and mother and then my uncle, when I was in Haiti they were after me every single day. Because I was a student they told me that you always have to have something in your hand, having a book in your hand. Even though it's a vacation you always have a book in your hand to read in
order to be what you want to be in life. So my uncles and my parents, like my mother and my father, they always encourage me and they influenced me about my education a lot.

INTERVIEWER: How does the American school system compare to the Haitian school system since you have been in school in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #16: It's a, there's not a big difference because where I live in the USA--and I don't know about like in suburban area because I live in urban area, where the student did not have that much respect for teacher or older people like we used to in Haiti. Because as a student you should have a lot of respect for your classmates, your teacher and everybody. And the thing is, in Haiti you don't have to go to work. So your parents support you. One thing you have to do is go to school and study. But in the USA, when the kids are around 15, 16, they want to go out in the job market and start looking for jobs. So by doing that they don't have enough time to study and do their homework. But that's the difference between the education in Haiti and here.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the educational system here in the United States is challenging the kids enough?
RESPONDENT #16: I think so. In an urban area, it's not that challenging. But in the suburban area, yes. Because the kids, you know, they have all they need. Like if you go to a chemistry class you see those kids they have the labs, everything ready for them. And even in the elementary school, those kids they already have like graphing calculators. They have everything they really need. But in an urban area it's different because the kids can't learn to divide. They have to use calculator. See it's like two parts. The first part is, if you're in a suburban area, yes it's very challenging. But if you're in urban area, I think here it's like 50-50.

INTERVIEWER: If you were to put a child in a school, where would you choose to put your child in a school? Would it be a public school or a private school?

RESPONDENT #16: A public school if I live in a good neighborhood, like if I'm living in an urban area, definitely in a private school. Because in a public school they give those kids everything. And even they have like music, you know, all these things, they're all free. But if you put those kids in a private school, if you live in a suburban area, it's not in your advantage because there's a lot of stuff that you have to, you know, pay for your kids. And if you don't come up with that money they're not going
to benefit. But if I'm living in an urban area, definitely I'll put my kids in a private school because in a private school they have, you know, the courses are more challenging and the behavior of the kids is kind of like different from the public school.

INTERVIEWER: Now in order to find a good school for your kids, how would you go about finding information? Let's say in this area that we live in here in New Jersey, how would someone go about finding information about the school, any school?

RESPONDENT #16: To find information about school, I think first of all you might go to the library and start doing some research about that county where you want to live to see the test score, the HSPT results of the high school kids, the GEPA score of those kids, to see how many of them passed. And if you can do that, so you can choose wherever you want to live where your kids want to go to school. Because the first thing you have to do is a research in the library and compare the test scores of all the districts so you can see which one that you want to send your kids.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that it is easy for, or do you think that enough information is available to a Haitian parent in order to pick the school, to choose a good school?
RESPONDENT #16: I think it's not like they're going to pull this information available for you. You are the one who got to go look for them. Because if you're very interested about your kid's education, you have to go look for those informations. So if you go look for it, I think they might be available. But you're not going to sit and think they are going to bring them to you. You have to go look for it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents should decide what school they want to put their children in? Or do you think—I'm talking about the system that we have here in New Jersey where you go to your neighborhood school, meaning you live in an area and that's where your child has to go to school. Now do you think that, rather than having this, the parents should be allowed to pick any school that they want to put their kids in, any public school?

RESPONDENT #16: If the parents are allowed to do that, there's going to be a problem, because everybody would like to send their kids to the best school. So now what's going to happen to those parents who are living in that area to see, in a classroom, they have like 45 kids in one classroom. So that's what's going to happen, you know, is the government going to build more high schools in that area? So I think what they should do in each area is put
more money and offer more in that area so everybody can stay wherever you live but have the same kind of education. INTERVIEWER: Okay. Do you think that, how do you feel that, if you don't agree for them to go anywhere else, how about—you heard of the charter school program, charter schools, and you heard of the voucher system. The voucher system is a system that will allow parents to basically choose what school they want to put their kids in. There are different possibilities as far as this voucher system could go. They are talking about giving a tax break or, you know, making the kids take a test before they go to a certain school. Since you said you don't think that it's a good enough way, you're saying, right? That it's better to develop the school where the kids are rather than having them go elsewhere. Now as far as a Haitian parent is concerned, what do you think would be best for Haitian kids considering the areas where you find most Haitian kids. Do you feel that Haitian kids are really benefitting from the educational system in the United States?

RESPONDENT #16: In order for those Haitians to get benefits, one thing we must do is having more Haitian teachers in the classroom. Because a lot of them, it's not like they don't know what they're doing. The problem is a language problem. So if they put in more bilingual teachers
in the classroom to help those kids, I think they can make a big difference. And about a charter school or voucher school, I think it's the same thing as a private school. The difference is in private school you don't have to take no test to get into it. But those kids who are having problems, the basic problem is with the language problem, it's still going to be a problem to get into those schools. Because they're still going to have the language problem.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of the Haitian community for kids today? How do you see them benefitting from this system?

RESPONDENT #16: The future, for me, it's not a bright future right now because we don't have that many Haitians on the school board. Because no one asks to say what we have in mind, what we think about our kids, we should have somebody that's going to respond to us. So if we don't have somebody on the Board of Education who can do that for us. And like I say, right now in the neighborhood where I live in Irvington which has over 50% of Haitians and if you look at the Board of Education, you probably see one or two Haitians where we're more than 50% of the town. We should have more Haitians who are fighting for us, for our kids, in the system.
INTERVIEWER: How would you advice a child coming from Haiti today in getting into the school system in the United States? What would you tell that child?

RESPONDENT #16: The first thing I would tell the parents of that child is to see if they can live in a good neighborhood so the kids can go to a better school. Because right now most of those kids that are coming from Haiti, the parents I think they probably don't have enough money to live where they want to live and so those kids come into a, not only a bad neighborhood, but--

INTERVIEWER: --They could do better.

RESPONDENT #16: --They could do better. So the best advice for Haitian kids is try to see if they can fulfill their dream by staying on top of everything like they were in Haiti. So if they do that, I think they can fulfill their dreams.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

RESPONDENT #16: One thing I would like to add about that is, as I already finish, if we can stick together and do some research about the school system where our community lives, we can make a big difference for the one that's coming behind us.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Alright. Thank you very much.
Interview 17.

INTERVIEWER: RESPONDENT #17, could you please tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere?

RESPONDENT #17: Okay, first of all I've been living in United States since 1977. In Haiti, I was in university. I studied psychology. Here I studied economics. And I've been in banking for a long time at Summit Trust, about 10 years. And then that's all about my education.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little bit about your parents, their background, did they influence your education?

RESPONDENT #17: Well in Haiti, I don't think so. The problem is my father is a farmer and my mother was involved in business. But the point is, they want to provide me with a good education. And since I was little, I was really interested in my education.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your background as a Haitian has influenced your education? Would it have made a difference if you weren't Haitian?

RESPONDENT #17: I believe so. The point is, since I was little, my parents wanted me to be a physician, a doctor. And the point is, I don't think that's what I was supposed to be. And because of that I spent two years in Haiti trying to get admitted in medical school. And if I didn't
have that in mind, I could go to law school, I could go to something else which I think will fit my personality more than the medical field.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any child or children in the school system here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #17: Oh yes, my daughter is 14. She is in high school in Edison. That's her first year.

INTERVIEWER: How do you compare your education, and what she's getting here in the United States. First of all, I have to ask you, is she going to a public school or a private school?

RESPONDENT #17: Public school in Edison.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about the education that she's getting?

RESPONDENT #17: I think that it's good, which is completely different from the one I got in Haiti. In Haiti, the education system is more, there is more theory. Sometimes you studied, but you don't understand what you're studying. You have to learn it by heart. But here it is completely different. And my daughter, when she is doing something, she knows what she is doing. She can explain it better. I think that's more practical.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Has she always been in school in the United States?
RESPONDENT #17: Oh, yes. She was born here.

INTERVIEWER: So she doesn't have any experience of any other school system?

RESPONDENT #17: But the point is, she speak my language very well, the Creole.

INTERVIEWER: That's good. How did you go about choosing the school that she went to? Did you choose is or is it because you live in the town and she goes to the school?

RESPONDENT #17: Well first of all I was in North Plainfield and I moved from North Plainfield to Edison because of her. Before making any decision to move to a town, I ask information about the school system and I learned that Edison has a good school system. I think that influenced my decision about the town I live in.

INTERVIEWER: Did you hear about school choice? Do you know anything about school choice? Did you hear that there is talks, there are lots of talks about allowing parents to choose the school that they want to send their kids to? It doesn't have to be the town that they're in, it could be someplace else. Did you hear anything about that?

RESPONDENT #17: I heard about it.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about that?

RESPONDENT #17: Well I think that's good. That give you more freedom. For example, you might not be able to afford
a place in Edison, in Summit, in Millburn, but you still
have the opportunity to send your kids there. I think that
gives you more freedom--

INTERVIEWER: --Of choice--

RESPONDENT #17: --Of choice.

INTERVIEWER: Now do you think that Haitian parents will be
able to make that choice?

RESPONDENT #17: Some of them. But for most of the Haitian
parents, I think they need guidance. They need guidance.
Because one thing you have to do, they are really
interested in their kids education. But not all of them
understand the system here, so it's good to--they need more
education, more guidance about it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the schools are making an
effort in educating them?

RESPONDENT #17: Well one problem with the Haitian people,
sometimes they don't attend the meetings. I think, first of
all, they have to explain to them, show them that it's very
important to attend a meeting, to know about their kids'
performance. And that is the first step you have to do.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that, based on that school choice
again, because there are several opportunities that they
are going to offer. They're talking about offering, whether
they will just give you a check and you will take the money
to another school. Or give you a tax break, meaning on property taxes, or some other form of scholarship. Now do you have any preference, based on these different ones? Which ones do you think would benefit or be able to accommodate Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #17: You're talking about the tax break and--?

INTERVIEWER: Well if they're going to give a choice it would be either give you a check so you can take that money and pay another school district. Or if you live in a town and you don't send your child to school in that town, they're going to give you a break on your taxes in that town.

RESPONDENT #17: Well the point is, part of them are not homeowners. In this case, I think if they can receive a voucher for the kids to attend a good school, I think this would work better. In my opinion, I believe so.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the community is supporting Haitian parents or giving them enough information? Like you said, they needed guidance, do you think that they're receiving any guidance from the community?

RESPONDENT #17: Well I believe that there's a lot to be done in this case. Because the point is the Haitian community, they are good working people. If they do not try to motivate them, it would be very difficult for them to
know about their kids' education. I think we have to make
more effort, to afford them more opportunities so they can,
like, self-motivation for them to know about their kids'
performance and what is good for them.
INTERVIEWER: Let's assume, what if they were to give us the
choice. Do you think that it would be a good idea to give
the students a test before they allow them to go to--to
enter a different town school?
RESPONDENT #17: The point is they have been in the system
already. And it's always good to give them a placement
test, but not a test to get admitted. A placement is always
good because there are, they don't know exactly where to
place them. I think that's good.
INTERVIEWER: What advice would you give a student that
comes from Haiti right now and he's going to enter the
school system in the United States? What would you say to a
student?
RESPONDENT #17: Well, first of all they have to know the
system is completely different. They have to talk to other
students that have been in this system, okay? And they have
to try to accommodate with the system and learn the
language, not be afraid to talk. I think that's the best
way to adapt to the new system. And that's the best advice
I could give them.
INTERVIEWER: What would you think would be a good source of information for that particular child or the parents who have no idea what's going on? Where do you think that parents of that type of child, who just comes from Haiti, where would they get some information? What would be a source of information for them?

RESPONDENT #17: Some schools here, especially in Essex County, I believe there are guidance. Because there are so many Haitians that live in Essex, it's easy to find someone that understand their language. There are more familiar with the system to refer to those people so they know exactly how to behave, what the education is about and what the best way to have a good opportunity to learn. Especially when you go to a school, try to deal with someone who understands your language or someone who is in your advantage to see that you learn very well to have a good adaptation.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that a Haitian parent association would be a good thing? Do you think that it's a need in the community?

RESPONDENT #17: I would say it is a must. Because Haitian enjoy being with Haitians. If there is a Haitian association, you know the best time to catch the parents, how to talk to them, how to convince them. I think it is a
must. That would be a good, good step in the right
direction.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of Haitian students
in the United States?

RESPONDENT #17: I think we have a good, a good future. And
I am really optimistic about it. Because right now...

INTERVIEWER: All right let me read the question to you
again, I said how do you see the future of Haitian students
in the United States?

RESPONDENT #17: Okay, like I said before, I am very
optimistic about Haitian kids, Haitian students because
right now there is a lot of progress because we can find
Haitian in many aspects of the American society. And if the
Haitian student look after them, I believe that we would
have progress. So I am very, very optimistic about their
future.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, would you like to add anything else?

RESPONDENT #17: Well like I said I think there's a good
opportunity to give my views to kids. Because we have a
responsibility to help them, to offer them good guidance
and I will offer some congratulation to you for taking that
step. And I tell you good luck.

Interview 18.
INTERVIEWER: Respondent #18, could you please tell me about your educational experience in United States and in Haiti?
RESPONDENT #18: Okay first let me tell you my name is . . . And I was teaching in Haiti for more than 10 years, for 11 years in Haiti. I was teaching mathematics and physics in Haiti. And in United States, this is my first year teaching, so I can not say exactly. I have not many experiences in the United States, but at least because of my experience in Haiti I can compare the system in both countries, Haiti and United States. So that's for my experience.
INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me how was your experience in Haiti, how was the schooling? How was the teaching? How do you feel about the information or the learning experience in Haiti?
RESPONDENT #18: I can say the system in Haiti is a little bit different from the system in the United States, as you may know. The learning environment is not so great in Haiti what a student may want to learn. Most of them, I can not say all of them, but most of them want to learn. Because their life depends on their education. So my experience in Haiti, I was, I can say I liked it. I like teaching in Haiti because you feel like they are anxious to learn, some of them. They are anxious to learn. So that was great.
Compared to here. So the system is good, not bad. But still they don't show like they want to learn. Most of them, I don't know. For some part, where I am now, some of them they really are not interested in education.

INTERVIEWER: What district are you currently working in?
RESPONDENT #18: Oh this is, I work in . . . in Passaic County.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me, did your parents influence your attitude toward education?
RESPONDENT #18: In some degree, I can say yes. But my parents they are not well-educated. But they used to tell me the only way I can become a man, a good citizen, I have to go to school. So in this I can say they influenced my education. And they encourage me to go to school.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any kids in the American system?
RESPONDENT #18: Oh sure, I have my kids. I have three, the oldest ones go to school. The youngest one is only five so he is not going to school really. So I can say yes, I have kids in school.

INTERVIEWER: May I ask where they are going to school?
RESPONDENT #18: I believe in public school. I send them to public school. I believe in the system.

INTERVIEWER: Are they in Irvington?
RESPONDENT #18: Oh they are in Irvington, yeah. Even though the system, I can say, even though some schools may, I don't think they really want to learn, but I think it's still is good. So I believe in the system in public school. I really do.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that where they are now, the school that they are attending is preparing them for the future?

RESPONDENT #18: Right. My son, my oldest son is in the magnet program. And I can say, compared to some of the students, I can see it's an advanced school. He's in eighth grade now. But I can compare him to any ninth, tenth grade student, in some cases.

INTERVIEWER: What type of magnet does he attend?

RESPONDENT #18: It's music.

INTERVIEWER: Music, okay. It's like where I am. Now do you think that, have you heard about the school choice?

RESPONDENT #18: Yes, I do.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me what you've heard about it, what you know about it?

RESPONDENT #18: Okay. What I heard about school choice, like the parents can have a choice to send their students to either a public school or a Catholic school. But this should be at the expense of the district, as I understand
it. I don't know if it works, but I don't think it's a good thing. I don't think so. I believe it. Because taking taxpayer money to pay for private school and you have public school right there, you really should try to focus on public education and then maybe to try to fix what is going on, what is wrong in public school and spend that money to fix it. There is something wrong.

INTERVIEWER: So you heard about the voucher system, charter schools and things like that?

RESPONDENT #18: I heard it but I don't really read too much about it. I don't really read too much about it but I heard it. Like I know in New York they have some type of school in New York now.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there are major differences between private and public schools in the United States?

RESPONDENT #18: Sure, I think so. My kids don't go to private school but some of my friends, they send their kids to private schools. So I think there is a major difference between those two systems, I can see. I believe in private school, since the parent has to pay, most of them they take care of their kids when they come home. I can say that. You know, because they pay their money and they have them at home, they can even have a teacher, you know, after school program teacher for them. But I think in public school,
some parents, you know, they go to work, they don't care too much about their kids' education, I think. That's one problem in public school. I believe that's one problem. And other parents may think if they send them to private school it will be better. But some teachers in private school have some of the kids now who go to the same program, they say they don't have any problem when they are in private school. But in public school there is some problem.

INTERVIEWER: How many years have your kids been attending . . . School?

RESPONDENT #18: My oldest son attend since '92.

INTERVIEWER: Do they have any plan for the future?

RESPONDENT #18: Oh, sure. My son, I don't know, he say he want to be an astronaut. He plans to be an astronaut, I don't know. And I usually tell him he has to focus on science and math so that's what he's trying to do. And he is good in science.

INTERVIEWER: Did anybody advise you as to which school you should send your children when you came to the United States?

RESPONDENT #18: Oh, no. No.

INTERVIEWER: Nobody told you?

RESPONDENT #18: Nobody told me. Because I have choice. When I first came to the United States, where I lived, they send
their kids to private school. But I had a job at that time so I can't send my kids to private school. So when I get a job I can do that. But I believe, like I said, I believe in public education. So I went to public school in Haiti and I believe most of the time public school does a good job. Maybe parents, they don't, the cooperation between the parents and the teachers is not good. Maybe this is what we need.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Haitian parents are well informed about what's going on in schools?

RESPONDENT #18: I don't believe most of them are well informed. I don't believe that. But I can say some of them are informed. Some of them maybe.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's enough information out there for them?

RESPONDENT #18: I believe that there's information but they may not know how to get that information. Because like I can say, if you call the Board of Education you will get all the information you need. But if you don't know how to get it, so you don't know where to go, I believe they are not informed enough to know exactly where to go to get the information.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the churches, the media are doing a good job informing Haitian parents?
RESPONDENT #18: Oh, I go to church. I am a member of a
close church. I can say no. I can say no. There is no information
around. I don't know if you are a friend of somebody who
can talk to that person, can use information. But I can
say, like in order to educate the members, I can say no,
there is no such program. I don't know in the Haitian
community.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that a Haitian parent
association would be a good thing?

RESPONDENT #18: Oh, sure. It would be perfect.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that a lot of Haitian parents
would want to be members?

RESPONDENT #18: I believe that. I believe they may need
some motivation to be a member, some of them. But I can
say, I would be one of them. I would be a member of this
association. So I know some of them would be there.

INTERVIEWER: What do you consider an ideal situation for a
student who left Haiti and he's now attending school in the
United States? What would you tell a student like that?

RESPONDENT #18: Okay, I know they have some sort of special
program for those students. I think they teach them for one
or two years, depending on how well they do with this
program. So if their parents can help them at home, I
believe they don't have to go to a special program. Because
I know so many Haitian kids, they are very smart. I can say this, they are very smart. The people are very easy, very quick. So I can say to them, focus on their study. And try to pick up the language first. Because if you don't speak the language, you don't understand. But if you try to pick up the language as quickly as possible, you can do well in the system.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of Haitian students in the United States?

RESPONDENT #18: I believe so far Haitian students, I cannot say generally, but I can say most of them are doing well in the system. Most of them are. Some of them, they are doing poorly in the system, but I can say most of them are doing well. So in the future, we will have a great community, I can say. I believe it will be good. But I can say, we Haitian people, we have to focus on the education of these students. Not only on my student or your student, but I can say, if you are going to advise a parent to do something, we have to advise them because sometimes they don't know what to do and they don't know. And if we know, we can tell them. Let's tell them what to do. I believe in the future of the Haitian community.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything else you'd like to add?
RESPONDENT #18: I have something to add, I will congratulate you. I say congratulations to you because as a Haitian, I know your background as a Haitian, so you do a good job to go to school for your education, in a PhD program, that is good. So that will inspire Haitian people, to do good. We try to do the best we can. That is pretty good. So I enjoy that. And like I say, if you can again talk to as many Haitians as you can talk to them, try to get them to focus on their kids' education.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

   Interview 19.

INTERVIEWER: Can you please tell me your experiences with the Haitian educational system?

RESPONDENT #19: I would say that the Haitian educational system is very good, very tough. It requires a lot of effort from the student. However, one weakness is that it relies on rote learning. In terms of teachers, it's like everywhere else. You have good and bad ones. Some of them, they do a pretty good job of educating the students, others they just come just to make some money. I would say that the school that I attended they did a pretty decent job. They not only gave me the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, but they also taught me how to deal with people, how to relate to others.
INTERVIEWER: DO you think that your parents had an influence upon your education?

RESPONDENT #19: Yes, indeed. I would say that my parents did influence me in terms of my education because they showed me which way to go to be successful. Some parents might have chosen to make some money instead of paying for the education of their children. However, I would say that those parents are in the minority because many parents these days seem to have realized that having an education is more important than just having money. With a good education, their children would be able to make money. I would say that from what I have observed, most parents tend to think that having a good education would be a great thing for their children to have. That's why they try very hard to educate them, to encourage them, and tell them to continue with their schooling. I would say that from what I have observed, that having a diploma, having certain intellectual knowledge, is an advantage even though sometimes some students after graduating, they may not be able to find a job in the field in which they have studied. However, I would say that not having an education would be even worse. Some students are tempted by the easy money that can be made by doing illegal things. However, I'd say that the majority of students believe that by pursuing the
road of education, they will be better off in life instead of making quick money and endangering their lives.

INTERVIEWER: The school that you attended in Haiti, was it a private school or a public school?

RESPONDENT #19: The school that I attended was a private school.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the education that you received at that school prepared you for the person that you are now? In other words, prepared you to have a better future.

RESPONDENT #19: I would say that the school that I attended did really prepare me, in terms of reading, writing and math. And also I was prepared in terms of my civic duties as a citizen. And also I was shown how I should relate to my fellow citizens.

INTERVIEWER: Even though you may not have yet, as of yet, first hand experience with the American education system, but from what you have observed, what is your opinion of that system?

RESPONDENT #19: I would say that, in terms of what I have seen so far, the American education system seems to be a little bit better in a certain way than the Haitian system because from what I have seen, it seems that the American system does not depend on rote learning like they do in
Haiti. It's more focused on doing experiments and understanding what is being done instead of just memorizing the lessons.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that now there's a big difference between the private school and the public school in Haiti?

RESPONDENT #19: Yes I would say that there is a big difference between the public school and the private school. According to what some professors have told me, in the old days the public schools, in general, had a pretty good reputation in terms of the education that they gave to their students. But unfortunately, today it seems that the private schools are the ones who are doing a better job.

From what I was told, right now in the public schools there is a lack in moral discipline. As an example, some teachers do not show up. They only come to the classroom when they feel like coming. Therefore the students are being cheated. Also on the part of some of the students in some of these public schools, there is a lack of discipline. Many of them tend to come late to their classes. For example, this past January as a result of the teachers not being paid, a strike took place in the public school and the students of those public schools wanted the students attending private schools to join them. However, the private school students were of the opinion that since they were not informed in
advance, they could not join the strike. Because it was not
their fault that the teachers were not being paid. The
chaos existing in the public school systems may have some
link with the political instability existing in the
country. Many of the students in the public schools are
willing to learn. However, since there's a lack of focus, a
lack of attention being paid to their needs, the students'
needs, I think that all in all, the students attending the
private schools are much better off. Many people are of the
opinion that, in general, the public school may have higher
quality, better quality teachers, as compared to the
private school.

INTERVIEWER: The teachers teaching in the private schools,
are they certified teachers? Because I seem to remember
that a few years ago in the public schools, it was the
certified teachers that were teaching the classes?
RESPONDENT #19: Yes I do agree with your assessment. And
also I would add that in the old days, things seemed to be
a little stricter. But nowadays there is a certain lax in
the way things are done in the country. Many people who are
now teaching are not really certified. As long as they have
finished their secondary schooling, many of them are hired
as teachers. I would say that many of the teachers are not
certified. Even though some of them may not be certified,
but you'll find many who are really qualified. I would say that maybe the public school might have a higher number of certified teachers teaching their courses.

INTERVIEWER: The school that you attended in Haiti, how did you manage to pick that school? What was the process that you followed?

RESPONDENT #19: It was my older brother who helped me make that decision. There is a good school by the name of Petit Seminaire, which means Little Seminary, but unfortunately since it was a boy only school, I was not able to attend that school. Even though it's a good school. However the second choice was to attend a school by the name of Nouveau College Bird, whose literal translation would be New Bird College.

INTERVIEWER: How did your older brother decide that the second school that you attended was a good school? Was it that he knew about the college? Was it somebody told him? How did he figure that out?

RESPONDENT #19: I would say that my brother has many friends. He always talk to people. And he is pretty well aware of what's going on. I would say that probably he made the decision after talking to some of his friends and by maybe looking around and comparing whatever information he could find about the school.
INTERVIEWER: And now that you're living in the United States, what's your opinion concerning the private schools as compared to the public ones?

RESPONDENT #19: Since I'm sort of new in this place, I would say that I could not make an educated, I do not have an educated opinion upon that question since I do not know that much to be able to tell you the difference.

INTERVIEWER: And how are you going to choose which school to go now?

RESPONDENT #19: First, I would try to gather as much information about the school as I can before I do sign to attend.

INTERVIEWER: And where would you go about looking for that kind of information?

RESPONDENT #19: First I would go to the school and try to find some literature from that school. Second, I would speak to some of my friends and other people who might be able to provide me with some information.

INTERVIEWER: As the new arrival in the American society, would you say that the Haitian community has a certain system to accommodate to provide information to people who are new in this area, in this place? I am talking about in general in the Haitian environment that you're in, is there a support system to help out?
RESPONDENT #19: I have been in this place for barely three days, and therefore I'm very new. And I'm not really aware of what's going on in this place. And I would say that as far as the reception, the people that I am living with, they have given me a pretty good reception.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think the future holds for you in the United States? What is your dream? What's your hope?

RESPONDENT #19: My hope in this country is that I can find a good school to attend and be able to reach my goal, which is to be a doctor. Even though many people have told me that it is going to be extremely difficult to reach that goal. However, since I just came from Haiti and I am used to studying hard, to struggle, I expect that here I would do the same, study hard and be able to achieve my goal.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for providing me with that interview. I really appreciate your collaboration.

Interview 20.

INTERVIEWER: Respondent #20, can you tell me about your educational experience in the United States and elsewhere?

RESPONDENT #20: First I would start with my experience in Haiti. I spent most of my time going to school there, primary and a good portion of my secondary years. And I would say that I was pretty satisfied. I would think that I had gotten a good education and when I came here, a lot of
things that I did, I caught on pretty quickly. And I spent about two years in high school in the United States and a few years in college.

INTERVIEWER: How does the American school system compare to the Haitian school system?

RESPONDENT #20: I would say in general the Haitian educational system is based mostly on memorizing the lessons and reciting whatever you learn word for word to the teachers. Here in the United States it seems that not too much emphasis is placed on memorizing. And the tendency is to understand a little bit more what you are learning, instead of just reciting and learning rote, by rote.

INTERVIEWER: What school did you attend in Haiti, what is a private or a public school?

RESPONDENT #20: The schools were, I think, private schools.

INTERVIEWER: When you came to the United States, did you attend a private school or a public school?

RESPONDENT #20: Public school.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a major difference between the private school and the public school besides the educational system? I'm talking in terms of behavior, environment? How was it different? Was it only because it was in the United States rather than in Haiti? Or do you think it made a major difference between the fact that you
were in a private and a public school here in the United States?

RESPONDENT #20: I would say that probably there was a difference in the private schools. The students tended to behave better. And I don't think I attended public school in Haiti but from what I heard from some friends of mine, I think the students in private school tended to have a better behavior. And here in the United States, since I did not attend private school I do not know what it is like, but I would guess that it might be the same experience as in Haiti.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any child in the American system?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes I do.

INTERVIEWER: Is the child attending a private or a public school?

RESPONDENT #20: Private school.

INTERVIEWER: Are you satisfied with what you are seeing with the educational experience that she's having?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I'm satisfied.

INTERVIEWER: How did you go about choosing the school that your child is attending currently?

RESPONDENT #20: My wife did all the work.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any idea how she decided to choose that school over another one?
RESPONDENT #20: No I don't.

INTERVIEWER: You said that your wife chose the school that your child is attending. Now if you had a choice, where would you have put your child?

RESPONDENT #20: If I had a choice, I would have put my child in a private school, assuming I can afford it.

INTERVIEWER: Why a private school rather than a public school?

RESPONDENT #20: Most likely, in general, she would get a better education in the private schools. But I am aware of some public schools, in New York for example, where they do a pretty good job.

INTERVIEWER: Private or public?

RESPONDENT #20: Public.

INTERVIEWER: Public schools in New York?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes. Like Bronx High School of Science and some other schools which are public and have a pretty excellent reputation.

INTERVIEWER: Are you aware of, do you know anything about school choice?

RESPONDENT #20: No, I don't know anything about school choice.

INTERVIEWER: Have you heard that parents in New Jersey will pretty soon probably have the ability to choose which
school their children will attend, whether private or public?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I heard about it, but I do not know too many details. I vaguely know something about it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you know?

RESPONDENT #20: That the, whomever is in charge, is going to try to give the parents the ability to choose which school to place their children in.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that parents should decide which school their children should attend?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I think it's good if a parent can decide which school a child can attend.

INTERVIEWER: There are several choices that will be offered. Well there are several choices that are already offered to parents in certain areas. Let's assume that they wanted to give you a choice between giving you money, a certain amount of money, which they call a voucher, so that you could take that to wherever you want to put your child. Or let's say that they offered you a tax break, what would you prefer?

RESPONDENT #20: I think probably I would go for the voucher.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any particular reason why?
RESPONDENT #20: Because I think with the voucher I don't have to spend any money from my meager resources. That's basically the reason. Because if I were to take some money out of my pocket, it would make my life much more difficult.

INTERVIEWER: What would you, so you would take that money and put your child in a private school? Am I understanding you correctly?

RESPONDENT #20: If given the choice.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's assume that a child comes from Haiti, brand new student, young person, what do you consider an ideal situation for a student who has left Haiti, and he's now attending school in the United States?

RESPONDENT #20: I would say an ideal situation for that child would be to be placed in an environment where he or she's being taught in his mother's tongue. And then after he's able to understand the new language, then they only teach that child in the second language.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that there's enough information available for a Haitian parent to make the proper decision regarding a child's education?

RESPONDENT #20: No I do not think there are enough information out there available.
INTERVIEWER: What would constitute a good source of information for Haitian parents?

RESPONDENT #20: I would say a good source of information would be for the radio programs or TV programs or newspapers to have a ceratin section dedicated to that kind of, to these kinds of ideas.

INTERVIEWER: Would a guidance counselor at a school be a good source of information for a parent?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I think a guidance counselor would be an excellent source of information.

INTERVIEWER: If a parent has very little or no knowledge of the English language, and--let me rephrase that question. Do you think that Haitian parents have good enough knowledge of the English language in order to make certain decisions regarding their children's education.

RESPONDENT #20: I would say it's a mixed bag. Some do and some don't. I don't know which percentage do.

INTERVIEWER: Should the schools have programs that could be broadcasted on those Haitian programs?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I think the schools should have programs that the Haitian stations could pick up and broadcast for all the parents.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe that a Haitian parents association would be a good idea?
RESPONDENT #20: I think it would be an excellent idea, though I don't think too many parents would be interested. But at least whatever number is interested would attend.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your background as a Haitian, do you think that affected your education in some way?

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I do. I think the way I was brought up to study hard and try to be a success has stayed with me.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the Haitian Americans that are born here in the United States, do you think that they are as well-prepared or as well-versed into, or as ready as you were for school?

RESPONDENT #20: I think it depends on the parents and the students. If the parents push the children and the children are willing to learn, they would be well-prepared. Otherwise, it's up to the child. If the child is not willing to learn, whatever effort the parents may do would not be conducive to any success.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of your child?

RESPONDENT #20: I think she has a bright future. And if she is willing to study hard, she will become somebody in the future.

INTERVIEWER: How do you see the future of Haitian Americans in the United States?
RESPONDENT #20: I think it's a mixed bag. It's like everything else. You find good and bad. You find Haitians who are willing to study and be decent citizens and contribute their knowledge to the progress of this place. And you find others who are mostly interested in partying and having a good time and not paying too much attention to their education.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any successful—well what I mean by successful, any working, self-supporting adult Haitian Americans? Do you know—

RESPONDENT #20: Yes, I do know quite a few of them. I have an aunt, I have two aunts, for example, who have a few kids. And they were raised pretty much here since they were little. And they are successes, examples of success stories.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, one thing that I didn't ask you about is to tell me about your parents, how did they influence your education? What is their level of education and their attitude toward education?

RESPONDENT #20: Well even though my mom did not finish her classes, I would say that she got a, maybe a level of education of maybe middle school. But she did try to push me to study and learn as much as I can.
INTERVIEWER: Do you wish to add anything else as far as this interview is concerned in terms of school choice, in terms of Haitian Americans and the education system in the United States?

RESPONDENT #20: Well in terms of school choice, I do not think that giving a voucher, for example, to the parents is going to be the solution to all of the educational problems that exist. I think having, for the parents to have the choice to put their kids to whatever school they choose is good. However, I do not think that the educational system is designed for everybody to be a success because I don't think this society has enough jobs to be able to produce, to make a success out of every student. I think there's a shortage of jobs and I do not think that it is designed for everybody to be a success.

INTERVIEWER: Do you wish to add anything else?

RESPONDENT #20: That's basically it.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much for according me this interview.

RESPONDENT #20: You're welcome. My pleasure.

Quantitative Data Results and Analysis

This section presents the findings from the surveys. The section is divided into three parts. The first section presents a summary of the results from the demographic
section of the survey. The second section presents results from the 22-item questionnaire concerning attitude to the American education system and understanding of school choice issues. The third section presents the correlational analyses of the questionnaire results. These correlational analyses were done to determine whether there were any significant relationships (at the .01 and .05 levels) between participants' adjustment to the American educational system and their familiarity with school choice issues.

Six hundred surveys were distributed to the Haitian-American community, primarily through churches located in six different counties in New Jersey—Essex, Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson and Middlesex—and through Haitian-American community centers in some of the counties. Surveys consisted of an informed consent form, a demographic questionnaire, and a 22-item Likert-type questionnaire focusing on adjustment to the American education system and understanding of issues related to school choice. Some of the surveys were printed in English and some in French. They were distributed among both parents and youth, and participants were asked to answer the questions that best applied to them.
To increase the return rate, the researcher enlisted the assistance of church pastors. She also made several appearances on a Haitian-American radio show to explain to community members the value of completing the survey.

Of the 600 survey forms distributed in early 1999, 72 had been completed and returned by spring of 1999. In order to increase the response rate, the researcher returned to the Haitian-community churches during the summer of 1999 to further enlist the assistance of Haitian-American community members in completing the surveys. An additional 68 surveys were completed and returned to the researcher, for a total of 140 completed surveys. Of these, 107 (76%) were completed by adults (individuals who were out of high school and financially independent) and 33 (24%) were completed by younger participants (individuals who were in high school or college and financially dependent on an adult). Participants came from a total of 20 different school districts in the six-county area.

Demographic results.

For adult participants, the average age was about 40 years, with 34.6% being female and 65.4% male. The highest level of education attained by the adults was reported as follows: elementary education 2.8%, secondary education 29.9%, high school diploma 16.8%, bachelor’s degree 13.1%,
master's degree 7.5%, doctorate 1.9%, and technical degree 22.4%, while 5.6% did not indicate their highest level of education.

The average number of years of school completed in Haiti for the adult participants was 13. A total of 37.4% of the adults had attended only public school, 25.2% had attended only private non-religious schools, and 11.2% had attended only catholic/religious schools. Others had attended more than one kind of school: 5.6% had attended all three types of school, 4.7% had experienced private non-religious schools and public schools, 3.7% had attended catholic/religious schools and public schools, and 1.9% had attended catholic/religious schools and private non-religious schools. About 10% of the adult participants did not indicate the type of school they had attended in Haiti.

The average number of years of school attended in the United States by the adult participants was 5. A total of 34.6% had attended only public schools, 4.7% had attended private non-religious schools, and 1.9% had attended catholic/religious schools. About 59% did not indicate their attendance at any type of school in Haiti.

Twenty different professions were represented among the adults. Fifteen percent worked in the technical field; 9.3% were in the clerical/secretarial field; 8.4% were in
the nursing field; 6.5% worked in a factory; 6.5% were teachers; 4.7% were ministers/pastors; 2.8% were continuing their education; 4.7% worked in the counseling/psychology field; 1.9% were barbers; 1.9% were farmers in Haiti; 1.9% were housekeepers; 1.9% were cab drivers; and 3.6% were tailors, managers, waiters, or other. The family income reported varied from $12,000 to $75,000 per year, with 25% of the adult participants having a family income ranging from $18,000 to $25,000 a year, and with 77.6% of the families being two-parent families.

The average number of years the adult participants had been in the United States was 13. The average number of children reported per family was three, with the average age of the first child being 14.8 years. Of these children, 44.9% were attending a public school and 35.5% of the parents admitted having no other choice. About 38 of the parents lived in Irvington and 78.5% in Essex county. A total of 21.5% had moved from Newark, 16.8% from New York, 11.2% from East Orange, and 11.2% from Haiti. Twenty-five percent of the adult participants reported moving for safety reasons and better schools, and 43% wanted to continue their education. Of the adults surveyed, the best understood language was Creole (43.9%).
Among the youth surveyed, 48% were 16 or 17 years old, with 54.5% being female and 45.5% being male. A total of 72.7% were in high school, while 15.2% had already earned a high school diploma. They had attended school in Haiti an average of 9 years. A total of 30.3% had attended public school there, 18.2% had attended catholic/religious schools, and 12.1% had attended private non-religious schools, while about 39% did not indicate that they had attended school in Haiti. The young people surveyed had been in school in the United States an average of 7 years, with 69.7% of them attending public school, 6.1% attending private school, and 9.1% having experienced both catholic/religious and public schools.

The youth participants reported living in families in which the average yearly income was about $30,000, and 81.8% of these children live in a two-parent household. They had been living in the United States an average of 7 years. About 42% of the youth surveyed lived in Asbury Park, 30.3% in Irvington, 6.1% in East Orange, 6.1% in Maplewood, 6.1% in Newark, 3% in Montclair, and 3% in South Orange. Of these children, 57.6% lived in Essex County and 42.4% in Monmouth County. About 21% had moved from Haiti to their present town, 9.1% from one of the boroughs of New
York City, 6.1% from Newark, 3% from Irvington, and 3% from East Orange.

A total of 84.8% of the surveyed youth planned to pursue higher education. The best understood languages were French and Creole (27.3%).

**Questionnaire results.**

Survey participants completed a questionnaire about their attitudes regarding the American educational system and issues surrounding school choice. A five-point scale was used to measure the range of agreement or disagreement concerning 22 items. The answers to the items were scored as follows: strongly agree = 5; agree = 4; no opinion = 3; disagree = 2; strongly disagree = 1. This section presents the most frequent responses to each item for both adult and youth participants.

Of the adult participants surveyed, 35.5% strongly agreed and 33.6% agreed that they were familiar with school choice. About 44% agreed and 22% strongly agreed that their educational experience in the United States had been very good. In regard to whether they were pleased with their child’s or children’s school, 35.5% agreed and 31.8% strongly agreed. Concerning preference to send their children to another school, 29.9% of the adults surveyed
disagreed, 10.3% strongly disagreed, and 27.1% had no opinion.

About 51% of the adults surveyed strongly agreed and 28% agreed that their parents had a good attitude toward education. About 44% strongly agreed and 23.4% agreed that their parents influenced their education. About 38% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that their Haitian background and upbringing influenced their education. About 26% strongly agreed and 23.4% agreed that they fully understood the American education system.

About 38% of the adults agreed that they received information about how to choose a school, while 22.4% disagreed. About 31.8% strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed that they chose their children’s school. About 38% strongly agreed and 19.6% agreed that they would choose a religious school for their children if they could. About 36% strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed that they preferred to go to school in the United States, whereas only 5.6% strongly agreed and 8.4% agreed that they preferred to go to school in Haiti.

About 36% of the adults surveyed disagreed and 27.1% had no opinion on whether there was enough educational information available for Haitian parents. More than half of the adults (50.5%) had no opinion on whether they belonged to a parent association or organization. About 34%
agreed and 16.8% strongly agreed that they understood and spoke English very well.

Results for all 22 items for the adult participants are shown in Table 15. The top number in each cell indicates the number of participants who chose the corresponding answer, while the lower number represents the frequency of participants who chose that answer.

Of the younger participants surveyed, 54.5% agreed that they were familiar with school choice. The same percentage of the youth surveyed (54.5%) also agreed that their educational experience had been very good. About 46% agreed that they were pleased with their school, while 30.0% had no opinion. About 27% strongly agreed and also
Table 15

Responses of 107 Adults to the Survey Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am familiar with school choice.</td>
<td>38 (35.5)</td>
<td>36 (33.6)</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>6 (5.6)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My educational experience in the U.S. has been very good.</td>
<td>24 (22.4)</td>
<td>47 (43.9)</td>
<td>24 (22.4)</td>
<td>8 (7.5)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am pleased with my school or my children's school.</td>
<td>34 (31.8)</td>
<td>38 (35.5)</td>
<td>25 (23.4)</td>
<td>10 (9.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would prefer to go or my children to go to another school.</td>
<td>20 (18.7)</td>
<td>15 (14.0)</td>
<td>29 (27.1)</td>
<td>32 (29.9)</td>
<td>11 (10.3)</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My parents have a good attitude toward education.</td>
<td>55 (51.4)</td>
<td>30 (28.0)</td>
<td>20 (18.7)</td>
<td>2 (1.9)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My parents influenced my education.</td>
<td>47 (43.9)</td>
<td>25 (23.4)</td>
<td>23 (21.5)</td>
<td>12 (11.2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I know what I want to do in the future.</td>
<td>56 (52.3)</td>
<td>31 (29.0)</td>
<td>16 (15.0)</td>
<td>3 (2.8)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am being prepared in my school for the future.</td>
<td>27 (25.2)</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>32 (29.9)</td>
<td>18 (16.8)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My Haitian background and upbringing influenced my education.</td>
<td>41 (38.3)</td>
<td>31 (29.0)</td>
<td>24 (22.4)</td>
<td>8 (7.5)</td>
<td>3 (2.8)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I consider myself an American student</td>
<td>13 (12.1)</td>
<td>16 (15.0)</td>
<td>40 (37.4)</td>
<td>32 (29.9)</td>
<td>6 (5.6)</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I consider myself a Haitian student.</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>33 (30.8)</td>
<td>35 (32.7)</td>
<td>12 (11.2)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I fully understand the American education system.</td>
<td>28 (26.2)</td>
<td>25 (23.3)</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>19 (17.8)</td>
<td>9 (8.4)</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I received information about how to choose a school.</td>
<td>19 (17.8)</td>
<td>41 (38.3)</td>
<td>19 (17.8)</td>
<td>24 (22.4)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I chose my school or my children's school.</td>
<td>34 (31.8)</td>
<td>35 (32.7)</td>
<td>21 (19.6)</td>
<td>13 (12.1)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If I could choose a school I would choose a public school.</td>
<td>12 (11.2)</td>
<td>19 (17.8)</td>
<td>37 (34.6)</td>
<td>25 (23.4)</td>
<td>14 (13.1)</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. If I could choose a school I would choose a religious school.</td>
<td>41 (38.3)</td>
<td>21 (19.6)</td>
<td>28 (26.2)</td>
<td>14 (13.1)</td>
<td>3 (2.8)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. If I could choose a school I would choose a non-religious private school.</td>
<td>22 (20.6)</td>
<td>14 (13.1)</td>
<td>35 (32.7)</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>10 (9.3)</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I prefer to go to school in United States.</td>
<td>38 (35.5)</td>
<td>35 (32.7)</td>
<td>26 (24.3)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I prefer to go to school in Haiti.</td>
<td>6 (5.6)</td>
<td>9 (8.4)</td>
<td>36 (33.6)</td>
<td>41 (38.3)</td>
<td>15 (14.0)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is enough educational information available to Haitian parents.</td>
<td>12 (11.2)</td>
<td>15 (14.0)</td>
<td>29 (27.1)</td>
<td>39 (36.4)</td>
<td>12 (11.2)</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>9 (8.4)</th>
<th>20 (18.7)</th>
<th>54 (50.5)</th>
<th>20 (18.7)</th>
<th>4 (3.7)</th>
<th>3.09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. I belong to a parent association or organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I understand and speak English very well.</td>
<td>18 (16.8)</td>
<td>36 (33.6)</td>
<td>27 (25.2)</td>
<td>22 (20.6)</td>
<td>4 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

about 27% strongly disagreed that they would prefer to go to another school; 33.3% had no opinion on the question.

Approximately 46% of the youth participants strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed that their parents had a good attitude toward education. Further, 33.3% agreed and 24.2% strongly agreed that their parents influenced their education, while about 27% had no opinion. About 64% agreed that they knew what they wanted to do in the future and 51.5% agreed that they were being prepared for the future. The same percentage of younger participants (27.3%) agreed and disagreed that their Haitian background and upbringing influenced their education. About 40% agreed that they considered themselves American students, whereas 45.5% of them agreed that they considered themselves Haitian students.

About 70% of the youth surveyed agreed that they fully understood the American education system. About 55% agreed that they received information about how to choose
a school, while 36% disagreed. About 52% disagreed that they would choose a public school if they could choose a school to attend, and about 43% agreed that they would choose a religious school. About 30% agreed that they would choose a private/non-religious school to attend if they had a choice. About 64% agreed that they preferred to go to school in the United States, and 46% had no opinion on whether they would prefer to go to school in Haiti. About 61% of the children surveyed disagreed that there is enough information available to Haitian parents. About 79% agreed that they spoke and understood English very well.

Results for the 33 youth participants in the survey are shown in Table 16. As in Table 15, both the number and the frequency of responses for answers to each item.

**Correlations.**

In order to investigate the relation between adjustment to the American education system and understanding of issues surrounding school choice, Pearson’s correlation test was used. Specifically, answers to those questionnaire items that reflected participants’ adjustment to the American education system were compared to answers to questions that reflected participants’ understanding of school choice to determine whether any items in the first set were correlated with any items.
### Table 16

Responses of 33 Youths to the Survey Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am familiar with school choice.</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>18 (54.5)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My educational experience in the U.S. has been very good.</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>18 (54.5)</td>
<td>7 (21.2)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am pleased with my school or my children's school.</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>15 (45.5)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would prefer to go or my children to go to another school.</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My parents have a good attitude toward education.</td>
<td>15 (45.5)</td>
<td>12 (36.4)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My parents influenced my education.</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I know what I want to do in the future.</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>21 (63.6)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am being prepared in my school for the future.</td>
<td>2 (6.1)</td>
<td>17 (51.5)</td>
<td>7 (21.2)</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My Haitian background and upbringing influenced my education.</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I consider myself an American student</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>6 (18.2)</th>
<th>9 (27.3)</th>
<th>10 (30.3)</th>
<th>4 (12.1)</th>
<th>4 (12.1)</th>
<th>3.27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I consider myself a Haitian student.</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I fully understand the American education system.</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>18 (54.5)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I received information about how to choose a school.</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>14 (42.4)</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>7 (21.2)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I chose my school or my children's school.</td>
<td>2 (6.1)</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>9 (24.2)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If I could choose a school I would choose a public school.</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. If I could choose a school I would choose a religious school.</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>9 (27.3)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>4 (12.1)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. If I could choose a school I would choose a non-religious private school.</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>12 (36.4)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I prefer to go to school in United States.</td>
<td>3 (9.1)</td>
<td>18 (54.5)</td>
<td>11 (33.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (3.0)</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I prefer to go to school in Haiti.</td>
<td>2 (6.1)</td>
<td>2 (6.1)</td>
<td>15 (45.5)</td>
<td>6 (18.2)</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is enough educational information available to Haitian parents.</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>8 (24.2)</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16
Continued

| 21. I belong to a parent association or organization. | 1 (3.0) | 0 (0) | 14 (42.4) | 7 (21.2) | 11 (33.3) | 2.18 |
| 22. I understand and speak English very well. | 8 (24.2) | 18 (54.5) | 0 (0) | 7 (21.1) | 0 (0) | 3.82 |

in the second at the .01 or the .05 significance levels.

This procedure was carried out for both the adult and the youth participants. Table 17 shows the two sets of questions that were compared.

For adult participants, several positive correlations at the .01 significance level were found. These were as follows:

1. satisfaction with educational experience in the U.S. (Question 2) and familiarity with school choice (Question 1), with $P = .006$;

2. satisfaction with educational experience in the U.S. (Question 2) and understanding of the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .003$;

3. satisfaction with their children’s school (Question 3) and whether they chose their children’s school (Question 14), with $P = .001$;
Table 17

Two Sets of Survey Questions Compared by Pearson's Correlation Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set 1: Questions about adjustment to the American Educational System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. My educational experience in the U.S. has been very good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am pleased with my school or my children's school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am being prepared in my school for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I consider myself an American student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I prefer to go to school in United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I understand and speak English very well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set 2: Questions about understanding school choice issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am familiar with school choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I fully understand the American education system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I received information about how to choose a school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I chose my school or my children's school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. There is enough educational information available to Haitian parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. satisfaction with their children's school (Question 3) and understanding of the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .001$;

5. satisfaction with their children's school (Question 3) and whether there is enough educational information available to Haitian parents (Question 20), with $P = .001$.

6. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and understanding of the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .000$;

7. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and whether information about school choice was received (Question 13), with $P = .004$;

8. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and whether children's school was chosen (Question 14), with $P = .000$;

9. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and whether enough educational information is available to Haitian parents (Question 20), with $P = .000$;

10. considering self as an American student (Question 10) and understanding of the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .000$;

11. preference to go to school in the U.S. (Question 18) and understanding of the American education system
(Question 12), with $P = .000$;

12. understanding and speaking English very well (Question 22) and understanding the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .000$; and

13. understanding and speaking English very well (Question 22) and whether participant chose children's school (Question 14), with $P = .004$.

Three additional positive correlations were found at the .05 level between answers to the two sets of questions:

1. satisfaction with the U.S. educational experience (Question 2) and whether information about school choice had been received (Question 13), with $P = .039$;

2. considering self as an American student (Question 10) and whether information was received about how to choose a school (Question 13), with $P = .027$; and

3. understanding and speaking English very well (Question 22) and whether enough educational information is available to Haitian parents (Question 20), with $P = .009$.

No negative correlations at either the .01 or .05 significance levels were found between answers to the two sets of questions.

For youth participants, four positive correlations at the .01 significance level were found between answers to
the two sets of questions:

1. satisfaction with the U.S. educational experience (Question 2) and whether current school was chosen (Question 14), with $P = .002$;

2. satisfaction with current school (Question 3) and whether information was received about how to choose a school (Question 13), with $P = .001$;

3. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and understanding of the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .005$; and

4. understanding and speaking English very well (Question 22) and understanding the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .000$.

In addition, two positive correlations were found at the .05 significance level:

1. satisfaction with current school (Question 3) and understanding the American education system (Question 12), with $P = .011$; and

2. preparation in school for the future (Question 8) and whether current school was chosen (Question 14), with $P = .032$.

There were no negative correlations at either the .01 or the .05 significance level.
Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study in regard to the subjects’ responses to the two instruments: the interviews and the surveys. The interview guide approach was used to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American Community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice and are capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children. Twenty individuals were interviewed and the transcripts were included in this chapter.

Findings from 140 completed cross-sectional surveys were also presented. The survey was administered to help determine familiarity with school choice among the Haitian-American community in six New Jersey counties. To determine whether there was a significant relation between the variables of adjustment to the American education system and familiarity with school choice, Pearson’s test was performed to test for correlations between the answers to the two sets of survey questions reflecting these variables. Results of the correlation analyses were presented in this chapter.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This section provides a summary of the findings of the study through Chapter IV. The next section, Discussion, will provide further discussion of the findings for both the interviews and the survey.

The section is divided in three parts: Purpose of the study, Design of the study, and Findings of the study. Each of the sections will highlight the main points of that aspect of the investigation.

Purpose of the study.

One of the purposes of this study was to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is aware of the issues surrounding school choice. Another purpose was to determine the extent to which the Haitian-American community in New Jersey is capable of making the most adequate choice of schools for its children.

Based upon this writer's intense investigation over a 24-month period, no evidence was discovered that any
author had addressed this problem. No model exists to explicitly identify the medium chosen to disseminate information to Haitian parents in order to assure that they understand the implications of school choice and that they are capable of becoming active members in their child's or children's education in New Jersey school districts.

In addition to the two purposes mentioned above, there was a third purpose of the study. This was to determine whether or not school choice has an effect on the type of schooling chosen by Haitian parents in New Jersey.

**Design of the study.**

To fulfill the purposes of the study, it was necessary to first obtain a representative sampling of Haitian and Haitian-American high school students, college students, teachers, and parents to complete a survey form concerning attitude toward the American education system and familiarity with school choice. The population sample was obtained by several methods. First, the researcher asked individuals in her neighborhood to refer her to individuals of Haitian background involved in New Jersey school districts. Second, the researcher visited Haitian churches in six different counties in New Jersey—Essex,
Passaic, Union, Monmouth, Hudson and Middlesex—and requested volunteers to participate in the study. Third, the researcher contacted Haitian-American community centers in some of the counties. The researcher requested the help of Haitian pastors and appeared as a guest on several Haitian radio shows to encourage the community to participate in the study.

A total of 600 surveys were distributed in the Haitian Community in the same six counties mentioned above. The surveys consisted of an informed consent form, a demographic data sheet, and a 22-item Likert-type questionnaire. Some of the surveys were written in English and some in French to make it convenient for those participants who preferred one of these languages over the other.

Of those who completed the survey, 20 individuals who were agreeable to being interviewed by the researcher for this study were identified. Interviews were conducted either in Haitian Creole or English based on the respondent’s request. Parents of young students were contacted prior to the interview of their child.

All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcriber. Interviews in Haitian Creole were first translated into English by a
translator, then transcribed. After the transcription, the researcher checked for accuracy by simultaneously listening to the tape and reading the text.

Summary statistics were determined for the responses to the surveys. In addition, Pearson's correlation test was performed to determine whether there was any significant relation (at the .01 and the .05 levels) between answers reflecting adjustment to the American education system and answers reflecting familiarity with school choice.

Findings of the study.

Twenty interviews were carried out as planned, tape recorded, and then professionally transcribed, with the transcriptions being checked for accuracy against the tape recording by the researcher. These interviews were presented in Chapter IV in their entirety. In the next major section, Discussion, the interviews will be analyzed and discussed.

The cross-sectional survey was conducted in order to determine the attitudes and adjustment of participants to the American educational system as well as to determine their familiarity with school choice. Results for the various questions were summarized in Chapter IV.
In order to answer the fifth research question, the results were also tested by Pearson’s correlation test. Research question 5 was the following: Within the Haitian-American community in New Jersey, is adjustment to the American education system related to the understanding of issues that surround school choice? To answer this question, Pearson’s test was used to compare answers to survey questions that reflected adjustment to the American education system and answers to questions that reflected familiarity with school choice. For both adult and youth participants, a number of positive correlations were found between answers to the two sets of questions at both the .01 and the .05 significance levels.

Discussion

Analysis of the interview questions.

The purpose of this section is to analyze the responses of the interviewees. The questions were developed from the review of the literature presented in Chapter II. Four sets of open-ended questions with amplifying sub-questions were presented to each interviewee. Appropriate probe and follow-up questions were initiated by the researcher during the interviews.

In order to communicate the essence of the findings, the participants’ responses were analyzed with the
specific purpose of seeking evidence of dimensions, themes, patterns, and categories related to the Haitian-American community and its understanding of school choice. To do this, the researcher developed an organizational system from an inductive analysis of the data. The development of an organizational system is critical in analyzing data (Patton, 1990). When an inductive analysis is used, the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis (Patton).

To develop an inductive organizational system, first the researcher made comments in the margins of the interview transcriptions. After the identifying and coding process was completed, primary dimensions, themes, patterns, and categories emerged. Patton (1990) calls this process content analysis. One should understand that there is no absolutely right way of stating what emerges from the analysis. There are only more and less useful ways of expressing what the data record (Patton).

Patton (1990) also identified ways of representing the patterns that emerge from analysis of the data. One way would be for the researcher to use the categories developed and articulated by the people studied; these are
the indigenous concepts. Another way would be for the researcher to develop terms to describe categories or patterns for which the people studied do not have labels or terms; these are the sensitizing concepts.

Tables 18 and 19 list the organizational patterns and/or categories developed from the responses provided by the interviewees to the four sets of questions, and summarizing the results for the replies of the 20 interviewees. Table 18 summarizes the results for the first two sets of questions, while Table 19 summarizes the results for the second two sets. The four questions correspond to the four research questions of the study that were identified in Chapter I. By focusing on the answers to each of the four questions, the discussion and analysis that follow enable the first four research questions of the study to be addressed.

Question 1 was the following: How much choice has the Haitian-American community exhibited so far in the education of its children in New Jersey school districts? Responses are summarized below and in Table 18.

Respondents #1, #2, and #3 attended a public high school in Essex County. Respondent #4 had attended a private grammar school, but currently was attending a public high school in Passaic County. Respondent #5 had
Table 18

Bases for Interviewees' School Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>School choice</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Private-elementary</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>No money/No choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public-H.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Private-elementary</td>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public-H.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>No money/No choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No money/No choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No money/No choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No money/No choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Other parents</td>
<td>Religion/Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Not in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Private-elementary</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public-middle and H.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>School, parents, Internet</td>
<td>Good programs, better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>School, parents, Internet</td>
<td>Religion, better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>School, parents, Internet</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>School, parents, Internet</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Middle-</td>
<td>School, parents, Internet</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ssex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Chose public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>School, parents</td>
<td>Better ed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19

Interviewees' Attitudes and Influence on Education, and Their Adjustment to Education in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Attitude toward Education</th>
<th>Influence on Child's Education</th>
<th>Has Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Father attended College</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Both parents: secondary education</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Both parents: secondary education</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mother: nurse Father: higher ed.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mother: secondary education</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GED and diploma in computer operations</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MA/MS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Technical/Professional</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BA/BS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>BA/BS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mother: elementary Father: secondary</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Technical/Professional</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BA/BS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Did not finish college</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>MA/MS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>BA/BS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>MA/MS</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Both parents: secondary education</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
attended a public elementary school and grammar school in Essex County. The children of Respondent #6 also attended public elementary and high schools in Essex County. The children of Respondent #7 attended public schools in Monmouth County. The children of Respondent #8 attended public schools in Essex County. Respondent #9 and #11 planned to send their children to a private school.

Respondent #12 had attended a private school up to sixth grade. She was currently attending a public high school in Essex County. Respondent #13 planned to send his children to a private school. Respondent #14 had attended public schools in Essex County. Respondent #15 was sending her child to a private school in Union County. Respondent #16 had attended a public high school in Essex County.

Respondent #17 was sending his children to a public high school in Middlesex County. The children of Respondent #18 were attending a public high school in Essex County. Respondent #19 had attended a private high school in Haiti. Respondent #20 was sending his child to a private school in Essex County.

Of the 20 individuals interviewed, 10 (50%) attended or sent their children to public schools; 7 (35%) attended or sent their children to private schools; and 3 (15%) ha
attended private schools first and finished their studies in public schools.

Question Two was the following: How much information was acquired before making a choice? And what influenced that choice? Responses are summarized below and in Table 18.

Respondent #1 was referred to a private school by family friends during eighth grade, but had continued high school in the public school of his town due to lack of funds. The parents of Respondents #2 and #3 had moved to a particular town in Essex County where they believed that the school system was better. The parents of Respondent #4 had moved to a particular town in Passaic County based on recommendations of family members. She was attending a public high school due to lack of funds. Respondent #5 had moved to New Jersey because of her family and had attended public schools due to lack of funds. Respondent #6 lived in a town in Essex County where housing was affordable. Her children attended public school in that town due to lack of funds. Respondent #7 lived in Monmouth County and had never inquired about the school system. Her children attended public school due to lack of funds. Respondent #8 also did not receive any advice on how to choose a school and could not afford to send his children to private
school. Respondent #9 would investigate a school and ask other parents before choosing a religious school.

Respondent #11 would also look into the performance of a school before sending his children to a particular religious school. The parents of Respondent #12 had moved to a particular town in Essex County for a better education based on the advice of family members.

Respondents #13, #16 and #17 would ask other parents about a particular school district before moving into a town. They would also visit the school and speak to the teachers and would look up information about the school. Respondent #14 would do the same before choosing a religious school for his children. Respondent #15 had researched her child’s school before choosing that school. She had placed her child there because she believed that she would receive a better education. Respondent #18 had not receive any information on how to choose a school, and his children were attending a public school in Essex County because he believed in public education. Respondent #20 had researched the private school that his child was currently attending.

Of the 20 individuals interviewed, only 4 (20%) had neither received any information on their children’s school prior to their enrollment nor received any advice
on how to choose a school for their children. Five (25%) said they had limited resources and therefore could not exercise any type of choice. Forty-five percent would either move to a town where the education provided is better or would place or had already placed their children in a private school. Fifteen percent said that religion influenced or would influence their choice.

Question Three was the following: How well has the Haitian-American community adjusted to the American education system in terms of the community members' level of education, the community's attitude toward education, and the community's influence on the education of its children? Responses are summarized below and in Table 19.

Respondent #1's father had some college education. The parents of Respondents #2 and #3 had some secondary education. The mother of Respondent #4 was a nurse, and her father had received some higher education. The mother of Respondent #5 had received some secondary education. Respondent #6 had obtained her GED and a diploma in computer operations. Respondent #7 had received some secondary education. Respondents #8, #16, and #18 had obtained a Master's degree. Respondents #9 and #13 had obtained a technical/professional degree. Respondents #10, #11, #14, and #17 had obtained a Bachelor's degree. The
mother of Respondent #12 had not completed her elementary education, and her father had not completed his secondary education. Respondent #15 had not completed her college degree, but intended to go back and finish. The parents of Respondent #19 had a secondary education, and Respondent #20 had obtained an Associate degree.

Among the 20 individuals interviewed, 8 (40%) of the interviewee or their parents had received and/or completed a college education. Three (15%) had obtained a Master’s degree, three (15%) had a technical/professional degree, and six (30%) (either the interviewee or his or her parents) had not finished high school. However, all 20 interviewees and/or their parents had a very good attitude toward education. All of the parents strongly influenced the education of their children, and all seemed well adjusted to the American education system.

Question Four was the following: To what extent does the Haitian background influence the choice made by Haitian-American parents in New Jersey school districts? Responses are summarized below and in Table 19.

As reported in the literature, in Haiti parents prefer to put their children in private schools. The interviews seemed to show that same preference among Haitian-American parents in New Jersey. As reported
previously, of the individuals interviewed, 50% chose or
would choose private school education as their first
choice for themselves or their children (Respondents #1,
#4, #9, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #19, and #20). Of the
remaining interviewees, 20% had moved or would move to an
area where they believe the school district offered a
better education (Respondents #2, #3, #16, and #17). Of
the remaining 30% only one individual had chosen public
school education Respondent #18). The other 25% had no
choice but to attend or to send their children to the
public school of their town since the town offered
affordable housing (Respondents #5, #6, #7, #8, #10). All
25% would prefer to move, attend, or send their children
to a private school if they could afford it.

It is also reported in the literature that Haitian
parents value education greatly. All of the respondents
confirmed this in their interviews. Respondent #1’s answer
about his parents’ involvement was, “My parents care about
my education a hundred percent, and that’s unlike many
parents in my district... They are after me all the time
unlike a lot of parents in my district who don’t focus
really on their kids’ education.” Respondents #2, #3, and
#12 considered themselves Haitian students because their
customs and mannerisms were typical of Haitian students.
Respondent #4 reported that her parents “see education as the main thing, the main force. . . It’s more than anything you can have, because knowledge is what they based their whole life upon for us, their children.”

Respondent #4 also saw herself as a Haitian student because of “my family, my language, my culture, my religion, my way of dressing, the way I was brought up and my background. I’m not American,” she continues, “I was born here, but I’m not American.” When asked if the Haitian background made a difference in her education, respondent #5 answered: “Education is really important in my family on both sides. . . I can’t imagine how it would be any different.” When asked whether she considered herself a Haitian or an American student, she replied: “It depends on the situation I’m in. . . I’m not sure whether I should call myself Afro-American or Haitian. . . According to the U. S. government, I’m American.”

**Discussion of survey results.**

The fifth research question asked whether adjustment to the American education system is related to understanding of school choice in the Haitian-American community in New Jersey. In order to answer that question, Pearson’s correlation test was used to compare answers to the two sets of survey questions that reflected each of
those variables. As a result, a number of positive correlations were found at both the .01 and .05 significance levels for both adult and youth participants. Some of these results are especially worth noting.

First, among adults it was found that satisfaction with the educational experience in the United States, which is an indicator of adjustment to the American education system, was correlated with familiarity with school choice, understanding of the American education system, and whether information about school choice had been received ($P = .006, .003, \text{ and } .039$, respectively), which were all indicators of familiarity with school choice issues. It was also found that adults' satisfaction with their children's school was highly correlated with several indicators of familiarity with school choice. These findings suggest that in general, the more familiar parents are with school choice issues, the more satisfied they are with their children's schools and with the American educational experience in general. This could partly be because parents who are more familiar with issues of school choice tend to feel more included within the American educational experience and perhaps somewhat more in control of their child's education.
Among the 33 young people who completed the survey, there were also positive correlations between educational satisfaction and indicators of school choice. For example, satisfaction with the U.S. educational experience was correlated with whether their current school had been chosen \((P = .002)\), and their satisfaction with their current school was correlated with whether information about school choice had been received \((P = .001)\). These results suggest that in general, for younger participants, too, the more familiar they are with school choice, the more satisfied they are with their American educational experience.

The results for a number of the survey questions were interesting in themselves. For example, in relation to influences on education, about 67% of adult participants and 55% of the younger participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their parents had influenced their education. Further, about 67% of adult participants and 42% of youth participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their Haitian background had influenced their education. These results suggest that although the influence of both parents and the Haitian background is perceived to be less by the youth participants than by the adult participants, each of
these influences was substantial for both sets of participants.

Another noteworthy result of the survey was that over half (56%) of the adult participants indicated that they had received some information about how to choose a school; however, they are not fully aware of the issues surrounding school choice. Over one-quarter (26%) indicated that they had not. Moreover, about 47% said that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was enough educational information available to Haitian parents. These results suggest that there are a substantial number of Haitian and Haitian-American parents in New Jersey who are not receiving adequate information about school choice options. Helping to confirm this, about 60% of the youth participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was enough educational information available to Haitian parents.

One further result that is worth noting is that adult and youth participants were similar in regard to their answers to the question of whether their parents had a good attitude toward education. About 82% of adults and 79% of youth participants agreed or strongly agreed with that statement, which reinforces the findings from the
interviews that there is a strong positive attitude toward education within the Haitian-American community.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Haitian-American community is not fully aware of the issues surrounding school choice. Only the ones involved in the fields of education are aware of other school choices such as magnet schools. None of the interviewees mentioned nor seemed to be aware of the voucher system, charter schools, scholarship programs, or education tax credits. The extent of their choice was to place their children in the public school of their town or in a private school. If they could not afford private education, they would either move to a better town or let their children attend the public school of the town they lived in.

2. The Haitian-American community seems to be limited in its ability to make the most adequate choice of schools for its children. Language seems to be the first limitation. Many Haitian parents do not speak English fluently; therefore, they cannot fully be aware of the amount of involvement necessary in their children's education. Educated parents seem to be able to obtain
information on the different school systems and seem able to choose the appropriate school for their children. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural gap that grows between the Haitian parent and his child (Hallman et al., 1982) is another source of frustration.

3. School choice will probably benefit the Haitian-American community, especially the parents who can neither afford to pay for private education nor move to an area where the school district has a good reputation. As Wells (1990) stated, given the right circumstances, school choice can enable low-income and minority families to avoid poorly run and overcrowded urban schools. It may increase, Wells continues, parent involvement in education.

4. The Haitian-American community seems well adjusted to the American education system. In terms of the community members' level of education, the parents emphasize the need for their children to pursue and obtain a high level of education. The study revealed that many Haitian parents themselves are either pursuing higher education or intend to. In terms of the community members' attitude toward education, the study also revealed that education in the Haitian-American community is a priority. In addition, the study showed that the
Haitian-American community has a strong influence not only on the education of its children, but also on the upbringing of its children. Hallman et al. (1982) reported that unlike American parents, Haitian parents do not equate education with schooling. Haitian culture makes a difference between instruction, which is the concern of school and education per se, which is acquired in the home and is the concern of parents, families, and kin groups.

5. The Haitian background strongly influences the everyday life of the community. In his study, Stepick (1982) reported that 84.5% of the Haitians surveyed wanted to maintain their Haitian heritage. All the respondents in this study admitted their Haitian background and the influence it had on the accomplishment of their goals in life. Religion seems to also play an important role in the Haitian-American community, which is not surprising since as reported in the literature, Haitians are religious individuals. As a result, both the Haitian background and religion influence the choice made by Haitian-American parents in New Jersey school districts.

6. Moreover, the study revealed that some aspects of the adjustment of Haitian-American community members to the
American education system are positively correlated with aspects of members' understanding of school choice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are presented:

1. It is recommended that the school districts in New Jersey attended by Haitians and Haitian-American students make an effort to provide pertinent information to the community by way of Haitian newspapers and Haitian radio and television programs. It might be necessary to offer incentives such as scholarships for students of dedicated parents or even awards for Haitian parents in order to encourage them to attend the meetings.

2. It is recommended that the leaders in the Haitian-American Community be in touch with the school districts and serve as liaison between the districts and the parents.

3. It is recommended that school administrators and guidance counselors create programs that involve the Haitian-American community. They may encourage the many Haitian professionals of the community to take a
leadership role and serve as role models for the younger generation.

4. It is recommended that administrators, guidance counselors, teachers, and staff members of school districts attended by Haitian and Haitian-American students become familiar with the learning style as well as the lifestyle of the Haitian community in order to provide adequate instruction to these students.

5. It is recommended that more Haitian-background teachers and school staff members be hired in the six districts investigated in this study to facilitate communications between school and home.

6. It is recommended that replication of this study be conducted to determine and analyze the same data on a larger scale. It might be necessary to have the surveys completed in a contained area rather than letting people complete them at home. This may ensure a higher return rate.

7. It is recommended that research be conducted to determine if significant differences exist between the academic performance of Haitian-American students in public schools and that of Haitian-American students in private and/or parochial schools.
8. It is recommended that further research be conducted in order to determine whether significant differences exist between the academic performance of Haitian students and that of Haitian-American students.

9. It is recommended that research be conducted to determine whether significant differences exist between Haitian and Haitian-American students who had access to ESL programs and/or bilingual education and those who did not.

10. Finally, it is recommended that the New Jersey Department of Education conduct studies to determine which community or communities would in fact benefit from school choice. It will have to provide adequate information and training that will enable Haitian parents to make the appropriate choice for their children.
References


Appendix A

Approval from Institutional Review Board
December 1, 1998

Hildegarde Vernet
17 nelson Place
Maplewood, NJ 07040

Dear Ms. Vernet:

The Institutional Review Board For Human Subject Research at Seton Hall University reviewed your proposal entitled “An Investigation of the Haitian-American Community in New Jersey and Its Understanding of School Choice.” Your project has been approved as amended by the revisions submitted to the Chair of the IRB. Enclosed please find the signed Request for Approval form for your records.

The Institutional Review Board Approval of the project is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. Any changes to the research protocol must again be reviewed and approved by the committee prior to implementation. Thank you for your cooperation. Best wishes for the success of your research.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Hallissey, Ph.D.
Acting Chair
Institutional Review Board

/pls

c: Anthony Colella
Appendix B

Letter to Pastors

in English and French
March 5, 1999

Dear Pastor and church members,

As a doctoral student in the School of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, I would like to invite you and your church members, age 16 and older, to participate in a study that will analyze the Haitian-American community in New Jersey and its understanding of school choice (the freedom to choose the right school for your children). This analysis will be based on data collected from the members of the community. Your participation is sincerely encouraged in the belief that the results of this study will be particularly beneficial to the Haitian community in New Jersey.

As a member of the Haitian community, a teacher and a parent I have grown to realize and appreciate the value of a good education. It is for this reason that I have chosen to pursue this topic for my study, which has been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee and my advisor, Dr. Anthony Colella.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. Conducted with the utmost regard for your privacy, the study will be completely anonymous and will greatly assist in my efforts to accomplish this goal.

I am requesting that you and the church members, age 16 and older, complete the attached documents which include a questionnaire, a demographic data sheet and an "Informed Consent Form" within two weeks in order that data may be analyzed in a timely fashion. Some forms are in French and others are in English. The completion of these forms should take no more than 20 minutes. After completing these forms, please collect and place them in the envelope provided. If you have any question, please feel free to contact me at (973) 761-7452.

I trust that you will support me in my quest and thank you in advance for your cooperation in this research project. The results of my study will be made available upon request to all participants.

Sincerely,

Hildegarde Vernet
Le 5 Mars 1999

Cher Pasteur et membres d'église,

Je suis une élève de l'université de Seton Hall sise à South Orange, New Jersey. Je fais partie du programme de doctorat du département de l'Administration et de la Supervision Scholaire. Je vous invite, vous et les membres de cette église, âgés de 16 ans ou plus, à participer dans un projet de recherche qui vise à étudier la communauté haitiano-américaine à New Jersey et son attitude vis-à-vis du programme de choix libre d'école pour les enfants. Cette étude sera basée sur les informations collectées dans la communauté haitienne. Votre participation est chaudement encouragée vu que les résultats de ce dit étude bénéficieront particulièrement la communauté haitienne de New Jersey.

En tant que membre de la communauté haitienne, enseignante et parente, j'ai eu l'opportunité d'apprécier les biens faits d'une bonne éducation. C'est pour cette raison que j'ai choisi de poursuivre ce projet de recherche qui a été révisé et approuvé par le comité de thèse et mon conseillé de thèse, Docteur Anthony Colella.

Votre participation est strictement volontaire. Conduit avec la plus grande considération pour votre vie privée, cette étude sera complètement anonyme and m'assistera grandement dans mes efforts à accomplir un but éducatif.

Je vous demande, vous et les membres de l'église âgés de 16 ans ou plus, de bien vouloir compléter les documents ci-joint dans un délai de deux semaines. Chaque paquet contient un questionnaire, une feuille d'information demographique et une forme de consentement. Ces formes peuvent être rempli soit en français ou en anglais. Compléter ces formes prendra environ 20 minutes. Après les avoir rempli, je vous prie de bien vouloir collecter ces paquets et les placer dans l'enveloppe procurée. N'hésitez pas de me contacter si vous avez des questions à propos de ce projet. Mon numéro de téléphone est le (973) 761-7452.

Je crois que vous me supporterai dans ce projet de recherche et vous remercie d'avance pour votre coopération. Les résultats de cette recherche seront disponibles sur demande à tous les participants.

Sincèrement,

Hildegarde Vernet
Appendix C

Consent Forms and Surveys

in English and French
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(for adult participants)

Each participant must complete this form and submit it with the other documents.

Dear Ms. Vernet,

I agree to be a voluntary participant in a study that will analyze the Haitian-American community in New Jersey and its understanding of school choice (the freedom to choose the right school for your children). This analysis will be based on data collected from the members of the community. My participation is sincerely encouraged in the belief that the results of this study will be particularly beneficial to the Haitian community in New Jersey.

Conducted with the utmost regard for my privacy, the study will be completely anonymous. My participation includes the completion of two instruments: a questionnaire and a demographic data sheet. The completion of these forms should take no more than 20 minutes. I also understand that I may be randomly selected to participate in an interview with the researcher.

It is understood that the interview will be tape recorded for reference purposes only and may be conducted in Creole. I further understand that statements made during this interview may also be included within the study. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research. The results of the study will be made available upon request to all participants.

I understand that this project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at anytime.

Subject or Authorized Representative __________________________ Date ____________

I will participate in the 30-minute interview with the researcher ___________ YES phone #: __________________________

_________ NO
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(for participants age 16 and 17)

Each participant must complete this form and submit it with the other documents.

Dear Ms. Vernet,

I agree to be a voluntary participant in a study that will analyze the Haitian-American community in New Jersey and its understanding of school choice (the freedom to choose the right school for your children). This analysis will be based on data collected from the members of the community. My participation is sincerely encouraged in the belief that the results of this study will be particularly beneficial to the Haitian community in New Jersey.

Conducted with the utmost regard for my privacy, the study will be completely anonymous. My participation includes the completion of two instruments: a questionnaire and a demographic data sheet. The completion of these forms should take no more than 20 minutes. I also understand that I may be randomly selected to participate in an interview with the researcher.

It is understood that the interview will be tape recorded for reference purposes only and may be conducted in Creole. I further understand that statements made during this interview may also be included within the study. Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research. The results of the study will be made available upon request to all participants.

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I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at anytime.

Subject or Authorized Representative [Signature] Date

Parent or Legal guardian signature [Signature] Date

I will participate in the 30-minute interview with the researcher _____ YES phone #:  

_____ NO
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

Each participant must complete this form and submit it with the other documents. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM. All responses will be strictly confidential.

1. Age: ________

2. Gender: Male __________ Female __________

3. Highest degree held:
   elementary school ______
   secondary school ______
   high school diploma or baccalaureat ______
   BA/BS ______
   MA/MS ______
   Ed.D/Ph.D ______

4. Where did you go to school? And for how many years?
   Haiti (How many years?) ______
   Catholic or religious school __________
   Private or non-religious school __________
   Public school __________
   United States (How many years?) ______
   Catholic or religious school __________
   Private or non-religious school __________
   Public school __________

5. Profession __________________________

6. Family income per year __________________________

7. Type of household:
   single parent ______
   two parents ______

8. How many years have you been in the United States? ______

9. How many years have your children been in the United States? __________________________

10. How many children do you have? ______

11. In what grade are your children? __________________________

12. Age of the children: __________________________
13. Where do your children go to school?
   Catholic or religious school____
   Private school____
   Public school____

14. Why did you choose that school for your children?

15. What town do you live in? ________________________

16. What county do you live in?
   Essex ________
   Union ________
   Passaic ________
   Monmouth ________

17. How many years have you lived in this town? ______

18. Where did you live before? ________________________

19. Why did you decide to live in this area? ________________________

20. What are your plans for the future? ________________________

21. What language do you understand the most:
   English _____
   French _____
   Creole _____
QUESTIONNAIRE

Each participant must complete this form and submit it with the other documents. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM. All responses will be strictly confidential.

Place an "X" in the box that best describes your position. Place an "X" in the "No Opinion" box if you feel that a particular statement does not apply to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>NO OPINION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am familiar with school choice.</td>
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<td>2. My educational experience in the U.S. has been very good.</td>
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<td>3. I am pleased with my school or my children's school.</td>
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<td>4. I would prefer to go or my children to go to another school.</td>
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<td>5. My parents have a good attitude toward education.</td>
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<td>6. My parents influenced my education.</td>
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<td>7. I know what I want to do in the future.</td>
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<td>8. I am being prepared in my school for the future.</td>
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<td>9. My Haitian background and upbringing influenced my education.</td>
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<td>10. I consider myself an American student.</td>
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<td>11. I consider myself a Haitian student.</td>
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<td>12. I fully understand the American education system.</td>
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<td>13. I received information about how to choose a school.</td>
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<td>14. I chose my school or my children's school.</td>
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<td>15. If I could choose a school I would choose a public school.</td>
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<td>16. If I could choose a school I would choose a religious school.</td>
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<td>17. If I could choose a school I would choose a non-religious private school.</td>
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<td>18. I prefer to go to school in United States.</td>
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<td>19. I prefer to go to school in Haiti.</td>
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<td>20. There is enough educational information available to Haitian parents.</td>
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<td>21. I belong to a parent association or organization.</td>
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<td>22. I understand and speak English very well.</td>
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FORME DE CONSENTEMENT
(pour participants adultes)

Chaque participant devra compléter cette forme et la soumettre avec les autres documents.

Chère Mme Vernet,

J'accepte d'être un participant volontaire dans votre projet de recherche qui vise à étudier la communauté haitiano-américaine à New Jersey et son attitude vis-à-vis du programme de choix libre d'école pour les enfants. Cette étude sera basée sur les informations collectées dans la communauté haïtienne. Votre participation est chaudement encouragée vu que les résultats de ce dit étude bénéficieront particulièrement la communauté haitienne de New Jersey.

Conduite avec la plus grande considération pour ma vie privée, cette étude sera complétement anonyme. Pour participer il me faut compléter deux formes: un questionnaire et une feuille d'information démographique. Compléter ces formes prendra environ 20 minutes. Je comprends aussi que je peux être sélectionné au hasard pour participer à une entrevue avec le chercheur.

Je comprends que l'entrevue sera enregistrée afin de faciliter le procédé et peut être fait en Créole. De plus, Les déclarations faites durant l'entrevue seront en partie incluses dans l'étude. Tout sera fait de façon strictement confidentielle. Les résultats de cette recherche seront disponibles sur demande à tous les participants.

Je comprends que ce projet a été révisé et approuvé par le Conseil de Révision Institutionnelle des Recherches de Sujets Humain de l'Université de Seton Hall. Ce Conseil croit que les procédés de recherche utilisés ici sont suffisants pour sauvegarder la vie privée, le bien-être, les libertés civiles et les droits des participants. Le président du Conseil de Révision peut être joint au Bureau des Services de Recherches et de Dons. Son numéro de téléphone est le (973) 275-2974.

J'ai lu le matériel ci-dessus, et mes questions ont été répondu de façon satisfaisante. J'accepte de participer à cette activité, sachant que je peux m'en abstenir à n'importe quel moment.

Participant ou Personne autorisée __________________________________________ Date ____________________________
J'aimerais participer à une entrevue d'une trentaine de minutes OUI Numéro de téléphone _____________
avec le chercheur OUI NON

_____________________________
FORME DE CONSENTEMENT
(pour participants âgés de 16 et 17 ans)

Chaque participant devra compléter cette forme et la soumettre avec les autres documents.

Chère Mme Vernet,

J'accepte d'être un participant volontaire dans votre projet de recherche qui vise à étudier la communauté haitiano-américaine à New Jersey et son attitude vis-à-vis du programme de choix libre d'école pour les enfants. Cette étude sera basée sur les informations collectées dans la communauté haitienne. Votre participation est chaudement encouragée vu que les résultats de ce dit étude bénéficieront particulièrement la communauté haitienne de New Jersey.

Conduite avec la plus grande considération pour ma vie privée, cette étude sera complètement anonyme. Pour participer il me faut compléter deux formes: un questionnaire et une feuille d'information démographique. Compléter ces formes prendra environ 20 minutes. Je comprends aussi que je peux être sélectionné au hazard pour participer à une entrevue avec le chercheur.

Je comprends que l'entrevue sera enregistrée afin de faciliter le procédé et peut être fait en Créole. De plus, les déclarations faites durant l'entrevue seront en partie incluses dans l'étude. Tout sera fait de façon strictement confidentielle. Les résultats de cette recherche seront disponibles sur demande à tous les participants.

Je comprends que ce projet a été révisé et approuvé par le Conseil de Révision Institutionnelle des Recherches de Sujets Humain de l'Université de Seton Hall. Ce Conseil croit que les procédés de recherche utilisés ici sont suffisants pour sauvegarder la vie privée, le bien-être, les libertés civiles et les droits des participants. Le président du Conseil de Révision peut être joint au Bureau des Services de Recherches et de Dons. Son numéro de téléphone est le (973) 275-2974.

J'ai lu le matériel ci-dessus, et mes questions ont été répondu de façon satisfaisante. J'accepte de participer à cette activité, sachant que je peux m'en abstenir à n'importe quel moment.

Participant ou Personne autorisée ____________________________ Date ____________

Signature du parent ou de la personne responsable ____________________________ Date ____________

J'aimerais participer à une entrevue d'une trentaine de minutes avec le chercheur OUI NON Numéro de téléphone ________

__________________________
FEUILLE D'INFORMATION DEMOGRAPHIQUE

Chaque participant devra compléter cette forme et la soumettre avec les autres documents. N'ECRIVEZ PAS VOTRE NOM SUR CETTE FORME. Toutes vos réponses seront strictement confidentielles.

1. Age: __________

2. Sexe: Male __________ Female __________

3. Niveau d'éducation:
   Ecole primaire __________
   Ecole secondaire __________
   Baccalauréat __________
   Etude professionnelle __________
   Diplôme universitaire __________
   Maîtrise __________
   Doctorat __________

4. Où avez-vous été à l'école? Et pendant combien d'années?
   Haiti (Combien d'années?) __________
   Ecole catholique ou religieuse __________
   Ecole privée non-religieuse __________
   Ecole publique __________
   États-Unis (Combien d'années) __________
   Ecole catholique ou religieuse __________
   Ecole privée non-religieuse __________
   Ecole publique __________

5. Profession ___________________________________________________________________

6. Salaire annuel __________________________________________________________________

7. Type de famille:
   un seul parent __________
   deux parents __________

8. Depuis combien d'années êtes-vous aux États-Unis? __________

9. Depuis combien d'années vos enfants vivent-ils aux États-Unis? __________

10. Combien d'enfants avez-vous? __________

11. Dans quelle classe sont vos enfants? __________________________________________________________________

12. Age de vos enfants: __________________________________________________________________
13. Ou est-ce que vos enfants vont à l'école?
   Ecole catholique ou religieuse _____________
   Ecole privée non-religieuse _______________
   Ecole publique ___________________________

14. Pourquoi avez-vous choisi cette école pour vos enfants?

15. Dans quelle ville habitez-vous? ___________________________

16. Dans quelle contée habitez-vous?
   Essex ___________
   Passaic _________
   Union ___________
   Monmouth _______

17. Depuis combien de temps habitez-vous dans cette ville? ______

18. Où habitez-vous auparavant? _______________________________

19. Pourquoi avez-vous choisi d'habiter dans cette ville? _______

20. Quels sont vos plans pour l'avenir? ________________________

21. Quelle langue comprenez-vous le mieux?
   Anglais __________
   Créole ___________
   Français _________
QUESTIONNAIRE

Chaque participant devra compléter cette forme et la soumettre avec les autres documents. N'ÉCRIVEZ PAS VOTRE NOM SUR CETTE FORME. Toutes les réponses seront strictement confidentielles.

Nettez un "X" dans le carré qui décrit le mieux votre opinion. Si une déclaration ne s'applique pas à vous mettez un "X" dans le carré "Pas d'opinion".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>ENTIEREMENT D'ACCORD</th>
<th>D'ACCORD</th>
<th>PAS D'ACCORD</th>
<th>DESACCORD TOTAL</th>
<th>PAS D'OPINION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Je suis au courant du program de choix libre d'école</td>
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<td>2. Mon expérience du system éducatif américain est très bonne.</td>
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<td>4. J'aimerais aller à l'école ou envoyer mes enfants à l'école ailleurs.</td>
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<td>5. Mes parents accordent une grande importance à l'éducation.</td>
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<td>QUESTIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Mes parents ont influencé mon éducation.</td>
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<td>7. Je sais ce que je veux faire dans le future.</td>
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<td>8. Je suis bien préparé pour l'avenir dans mon école.</td>
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<td>9. Ma formation en tant qu'haïtien a influencé mon éducation.</td>
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<td>10. Je me considère un élève américain.</td>
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<td>11. Je me considère un élève haïtien.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Je comprends très bien le système éducatif américain.</td>
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<td>15. Si j'avais le choix j'aurais choisi une école publique.</td>
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<td>16. Si j'avais le choix j'aurais choisi une école religieuse</td>
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<td>17. Si j'avais le choix j'aurais choisi une école privée non-religieuse</td>
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<td>18. Je préfère aller à l'école aux États-Unis.</td>
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<td>19. Je préfère aller à l'école en Haïti.</td>
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<td>20. Il y a assez d'information sur l'éducation disponible pour les parents haïtiens.</td>
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<td>22. Je parle et comprends très bien l'anglais.</td>
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