

**On The Edge:
The Impact of Changing Demographics on an
Inner-Ring Suburban District**



**CORRIE STONE-JOHNSON
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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Suburban Typographies



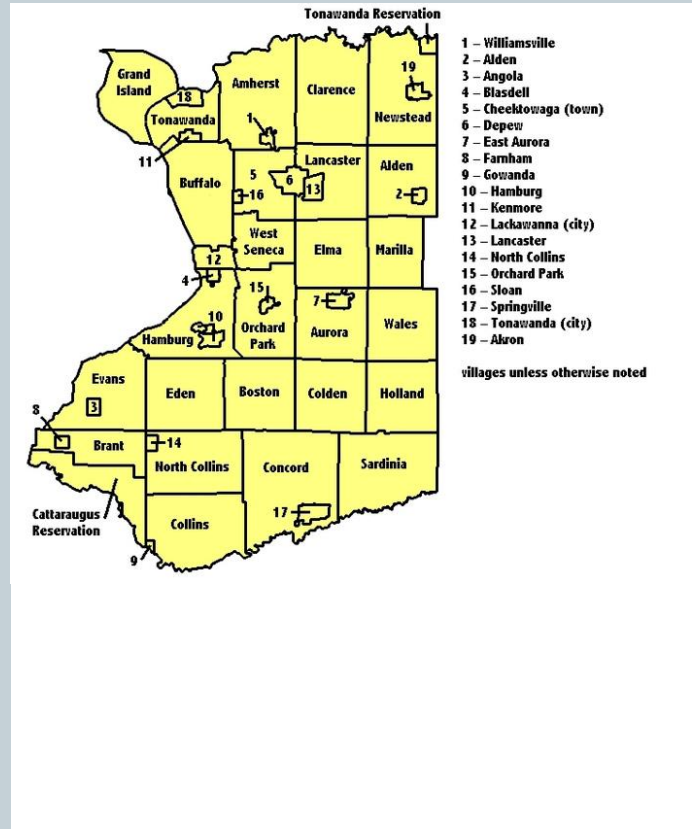
Cluster	Description
Executive enclaves	High shares of white students, low poverty, minimal racial change
Countywide districts	Very large districts, racially diverse with moderate percentages of black and Latino students
Stable, mixed income	Very little racial change; few minority students, mixed SES, many located from from central city
Inner-ring transitioning	Extremely rapid racial change, small size, moderate percentage of minority & low-income students, few whites, located close to central city
Satellite cities	Moderate racial change, low-income students with high percentage of black and Latino students, larger size
Developing immigration meccas	Slower racial change, larger size, moderate percentages of Asian, Latino, and low-income students

Erie County School Districts



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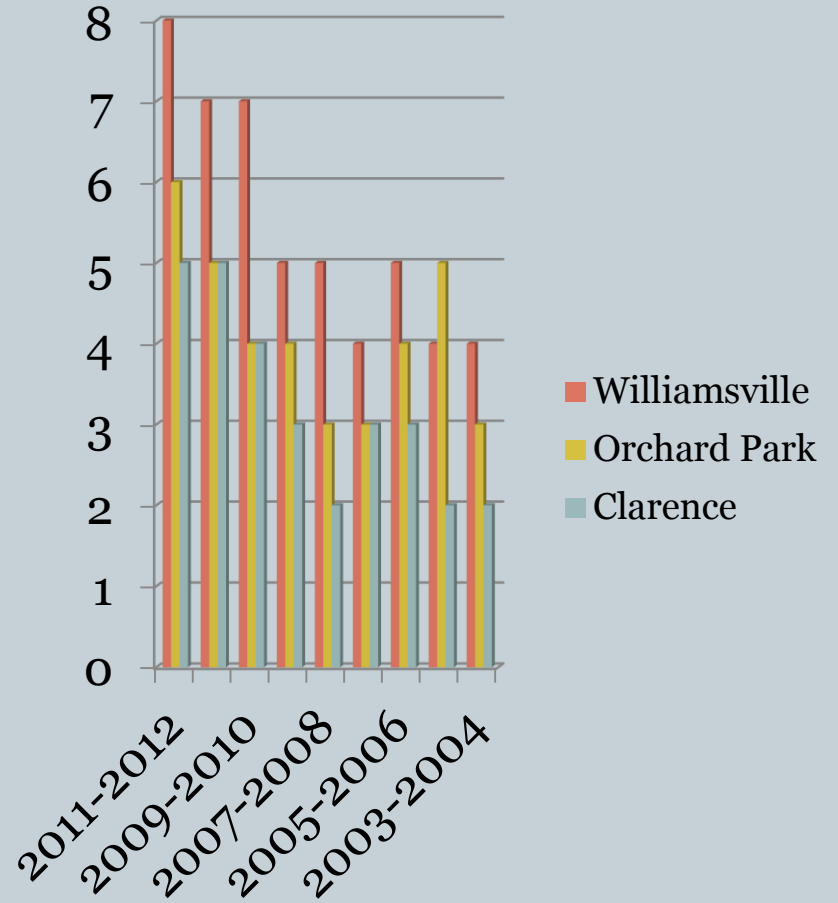
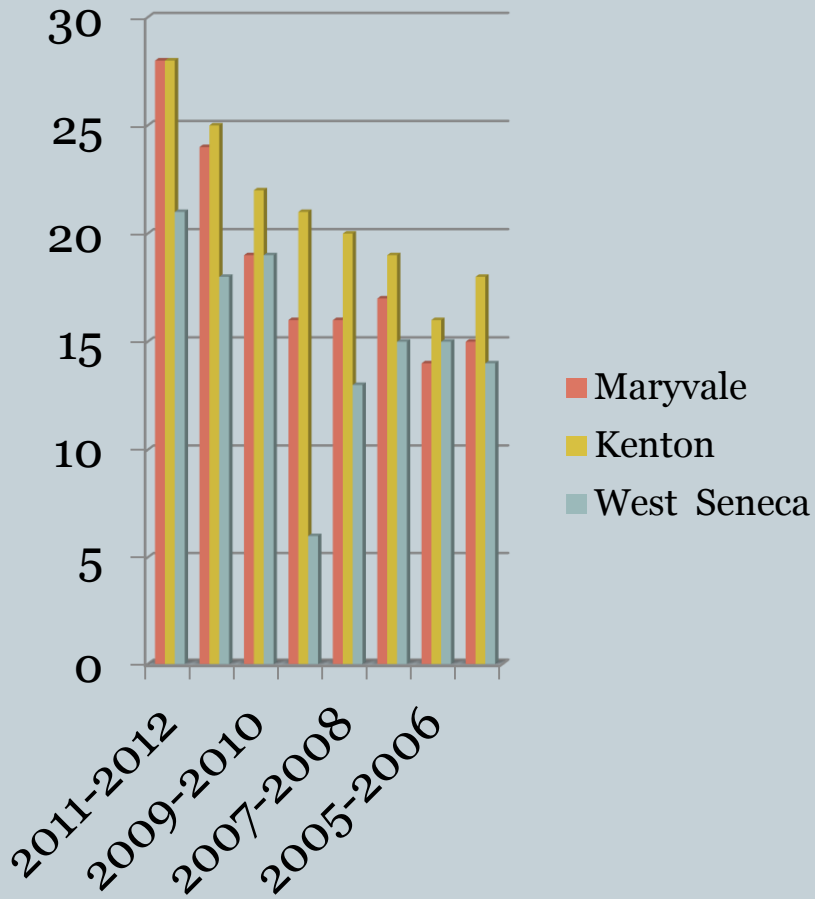
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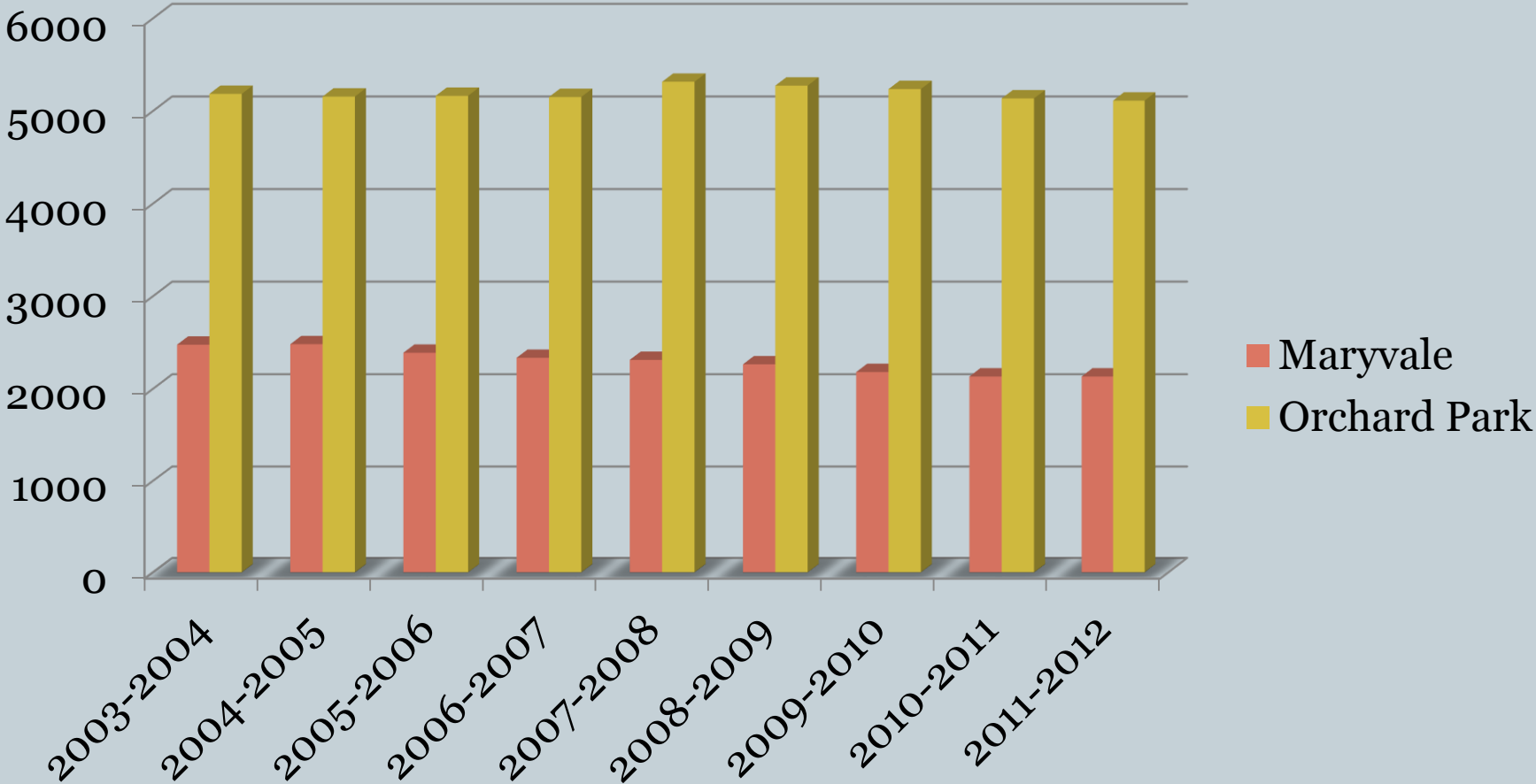
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/91/Erie_County_NY_map_labeled.png/667px-Erie_County_NY_map_labeled.png

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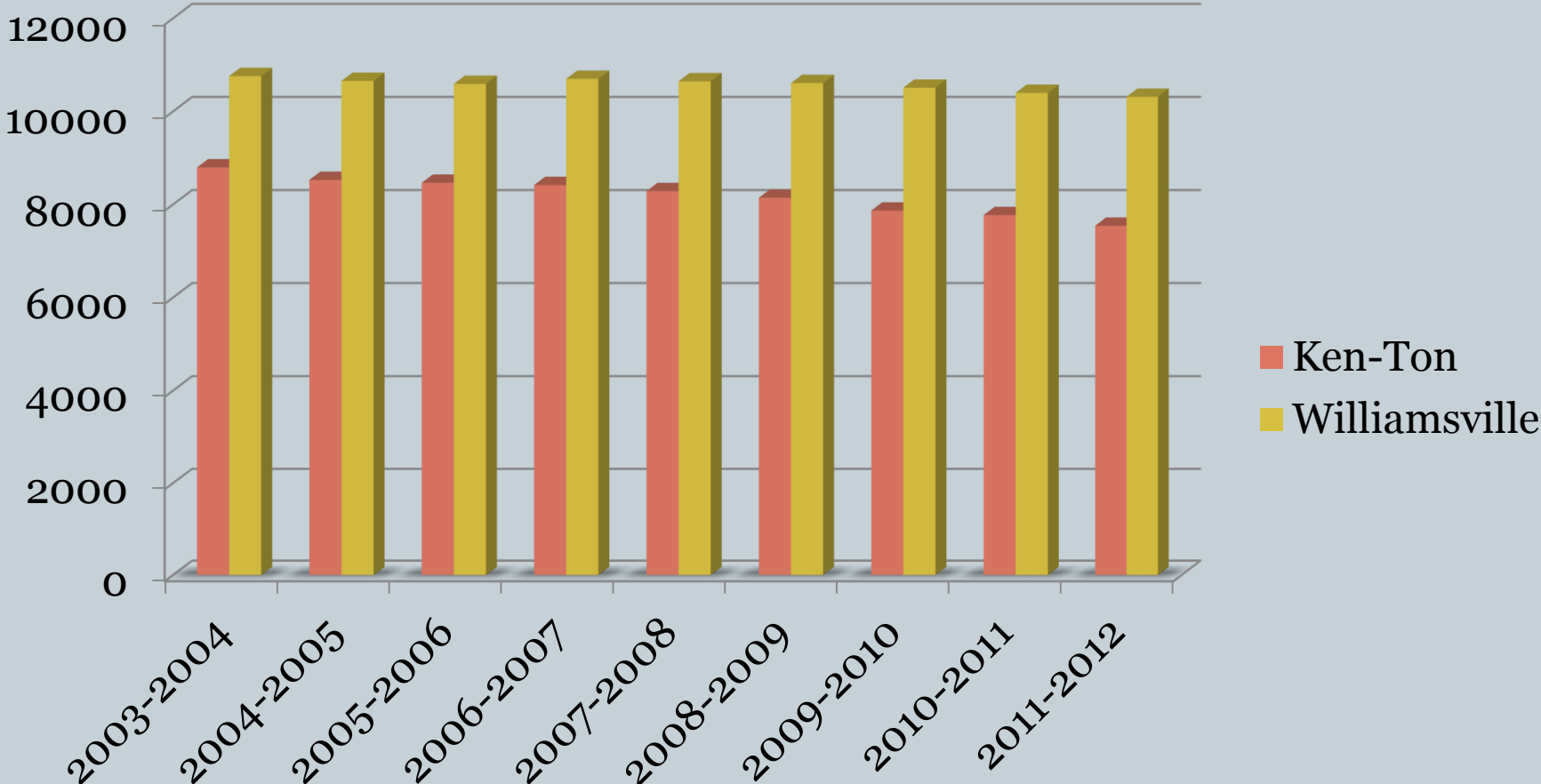
% Qualify Free Lunch



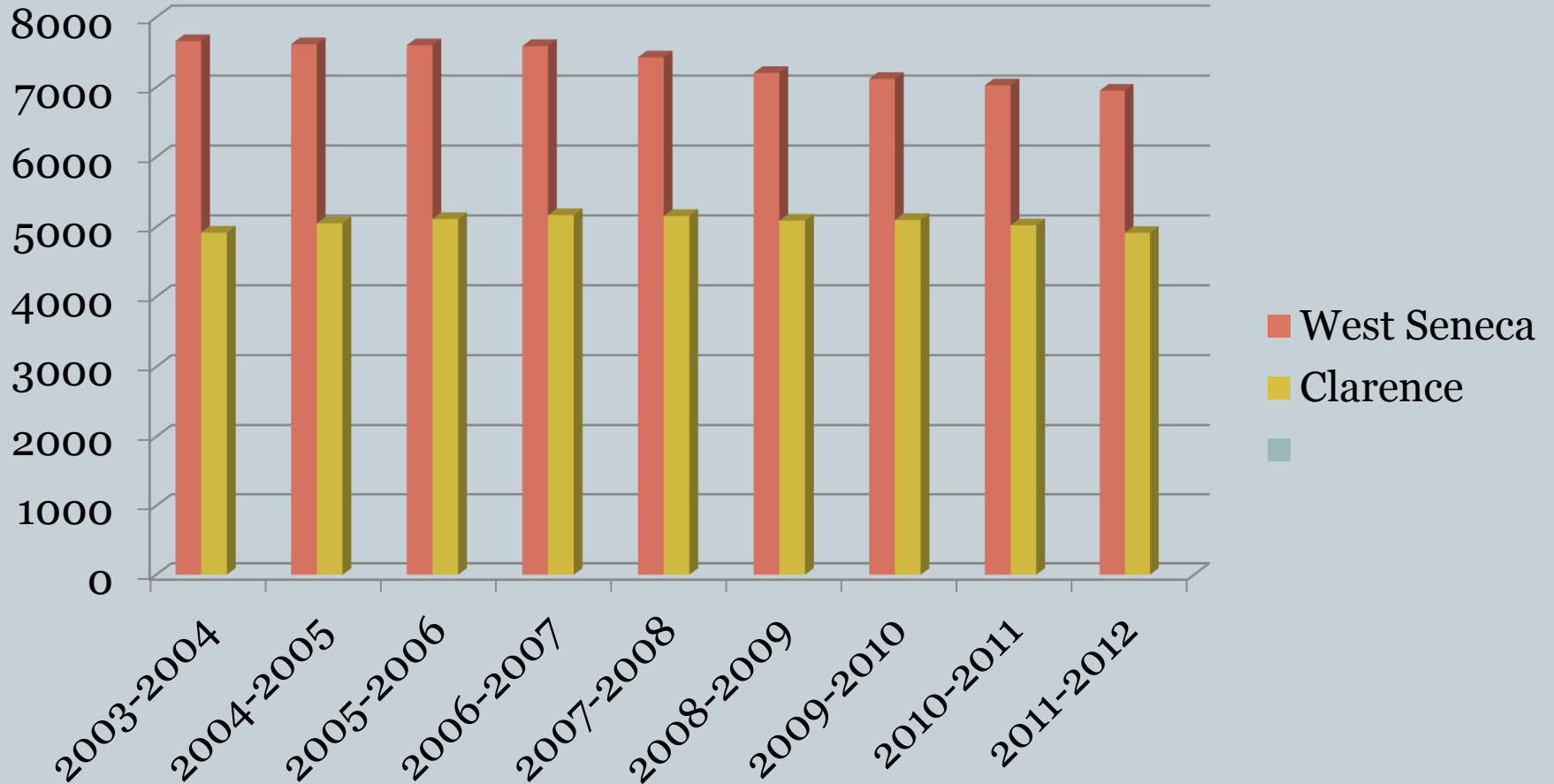
Two Suburbs



Two Suburbs



Two Suburbs

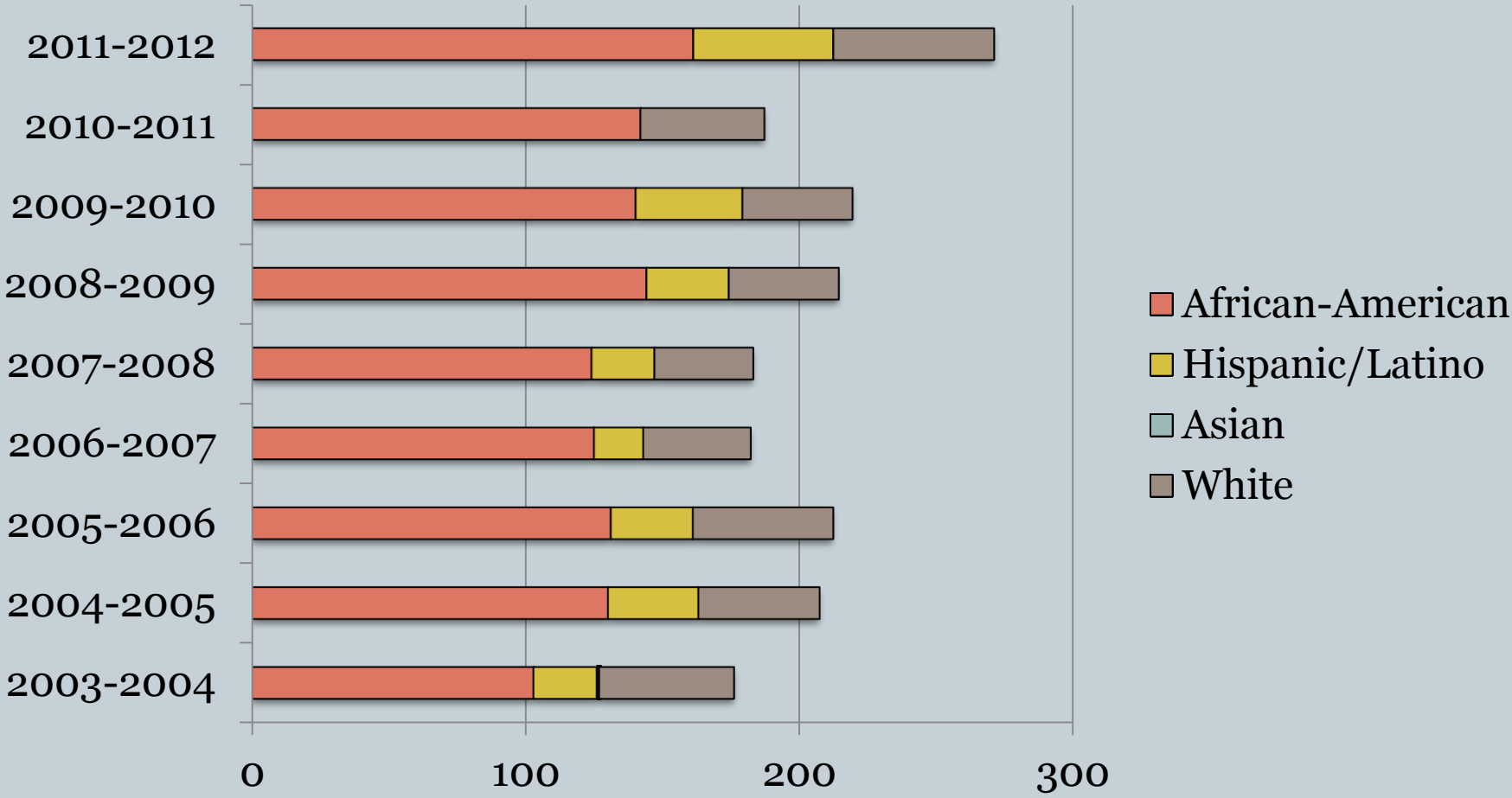


District Research



- Suburban school district (closest to satellite city)
- Approximately 2,100 students.
- Survey
- Interviews
- School & Community Meetings

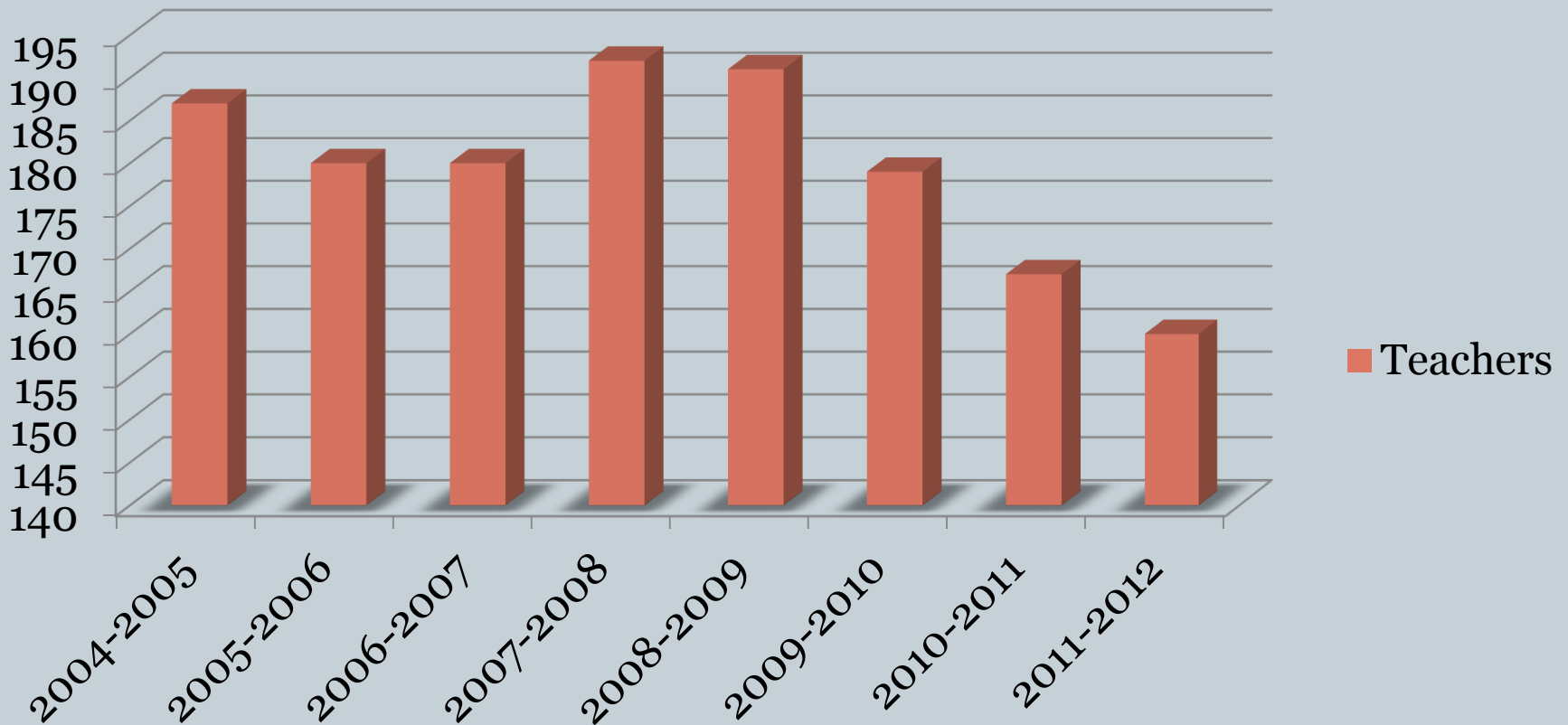
Racial Changes in District Over Time



Impact: Teacher Loss



Teachers



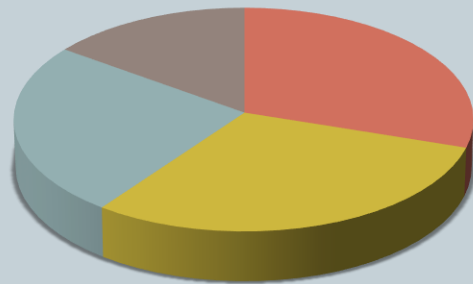
Surprising Impact



- Work of counselors dramatically impacted by this shift in both the number of teachers/staff and the sharp rise in poverty in the district.
- Initial survey of climate and understanding of work of counselors and psychologists– 2011
 - 54% of students disagree/strongly disagree that they have met with counselor concerning educational or vocational plans;
 - 50% of students disagree/strongly disagree that counselor has helped them to examine their abilities as they pertain to future plans; and
 - 52% of students disagree or strongly disagree that they have been advised as to which courses to take to reach their college/career goals.

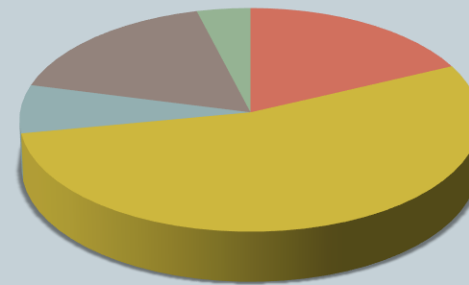
Counselors' Work

Suggested Time



- Responsive Services (25-35%)
- Individual Planning (25-35%)
- Curriculum (15-25%)
- System Support (15-20%)

Actual proportion of work time



- Responsive Services (18%)
- Individual Planning (54%)
- Curriculum (7%)
- System Support (17%)

Individual Planning



- “A large part of what we have and what I have on my desk right now is making sure that they have the requirements to graduate, and that’s a huge part of tracking every exam that each students takes, every class they take and making sure they have what they need to get out of here in 4 years.”

Responsive Services



- Responsive services: individual and small-group counseling; individual/family/school crisis intervention; conflict resolution; consultation/collaboration; and referrals
- Counselors report spending less time in this area than guidelines suggest.

Crisis Services



- “Again, when we had our social worker some of those personal, social things...and I’m not saying that she did all of that because we always were counselors so we wanna help with kids and work with their issues but what we are now seeing is that the top 1%, the most needy kids, the most at-risk kids.”

Lack of Individual Counseling and Collaboration



- “So a lot of times there’s days that I can’t be with students about careers because something comes up and we have to attend to that, and without a social worker who used to take some of those kids or some of our very needy students and work with them individually, I especially felt that this year without her being there that there’s a good percentage of certain days that’s just taken up with that.”

Perceptions of Teachers



- Concerns about accessibility
- Uncertain of role of counselors
 - “I don’t know what they do. They’re like little magicians down there.
 - “I don’t know the specific things they’re doing but I know that they definitely have more things going on.”
 - “I see them as a jack of all trades and a master of none because they don’t...you can’t physically or mentally do what’s expected of you.”

Curriculum Development



- New curriculum intended to both improve services provided to students AND hew more closely to professional guidelines.
 - Raising quantity and quality of college awareness opportunities;
 - Ensuring data collection and tracking over time to see if changes have been made as a result of the curriculum changes ;
 - Ensuring that more collaboration exists between stakeholders.

Implications for Curriculum Success



- Specific attention to:
 - Raising quantity and quality of college awareness opportunities
 - ✦ this will require teacher participation
 - Ensuring data collection and tracking over time to see if changes have been made as a result of the curriculum changes
 - ✦ this requires time in a context where counselors are already overworked
 - Ensuring that more collaboration exists between stakeholders
 - ✦ large issue: interviews demonstrated that teachers have low awareness of the work of counselors and counselors have expressed concern about implementing curriculum in teachers' classroom

Avenues for Change



- College and career readiness needs to be a whole school effort.
 - This requires strengthening connections between teachers and between teachers and counselors.
 - Counselors must also be allowed to exercise their professional duties without also being asked to take on additional work.

Avenues for Change



- Competition between policy efforts (teacher evaluation and college and career readiness) in a sense pits teachers and counselors against each other. Teachers (and administrators) do not know how to make time for the “extra stuff.” On the other hand, when the “extra stuff” does not get done, counselors are faulted.
 - Strengthened support system. Countries such as Finland and Singapore view teachers as a first line of defense.
 - Leadership must be activated and empowered to view student (personal) support as equal priority to academic support.