Democracy, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, means a government by the people; especially rule of the majority, it is further defined as a government in which supreme is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections; and the common people especially when constituting the source of political authority; and the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges. As this dictionary clearly demonstrates, there are numerous methods in which scholars and political theorists use to define and develop indicators in which to explain what exactly democracy is and how it is supposed to work. The definition which was provided by the dictionary holds that citizens ought to participate directly or indirectly in changing the perspectives of governance. This observation of democracy clearly belongs to the participatory school of democracy in that it calls upon citizens to actively influence government, and not as Dewey so eloquently stated.

“If the masses are as intellectually irredeemable as its premise implies, they at all events have both too many desires and too much power to permit rule by experts to obtain. The very ignorance, bias, frivolity, jealousy, instability, which are alleged to incapacitate them from share in political affairs, unfit them still more for passive submission to rule by intellectuals...rule by an economic class may be disguised from the masses; rule by expects could not be covered up... it could only work if the intellectuals became the willing tools of big economic interest” (Dewey, 169, Tercheck and Conte).

Factors which may help to determine whether or not a healthy democracy exists can all depend upon how an individual defines democracy. For the purposes of this paper, I chose to define democracy as one in which citizens within a given community are able to have equal access to the services in which the community provides; and whether or not they can unite or
compromise within any given situation. Therefore I will pay particular attention to whether or
not the separation or rather a concentration of one ethnicity or race in a given area is more likely
to receive better education, more informed citizens, and a better understanding of an overall
awareness of political involvement in their neighborhoods. In order to measure whether or not
these factors may play a significant part throughout the community, I first decided to focus on
whether in fact there exist economic disparities within the Township of Annville and the City of
Lebanon. In order to complete this enormous task, I chose to divert my attention to
socioeconomic conditions which prevail within the two communities. I examined whether or not
there were any differences between what students were being taught in two areas within the same
county.

“In large-scale diverse nations
as well as small, homogenous,
ones, a common core curriculum
appears to be the only practical
means for achieving universal
readiness at each grade level...
universal readiness, in turn, is
the only means for achieving uni-
versal competence and for comb-
ing excellence with fairness”
( Hirsch, 70).

Lebanon County was first settled in 1723 by an act of assembly in 1823 from portions of
Dauphin and Lancaster Counties. The county has 26 municipalities including: 7 boroughs, 16
second class townships, 2 first class townships, and 1 third class city. Demographically, Lebanon
city is composed of 78.9 percent of whites; 16.4 percent of Hispanics; and 3.2 percent of Blacks
(city data). Within Lebanon city, there is also a substantial amount of an ethnic European
descendants comprising of 34.8 percent of Germans; 7.5 percent Irish; 4.8 percent Italian; 3.0
percent Dutch; and 3.1 percent English descent. The total population of 24,013 with females making up a majority of the population.

Annville, one of the 16 second class townships, is composed of 1.08 percent Blacks; 95.4 percent Whites; and 1.79 percent Hispanic. The total population count for the township of Annville is 4,518. Annville also has a significant amount of German descent.

Now that we have reviewed the racial and ethnic make up of the two areas, let us now direct our attention to the economic factors which may have an impact on racial attitudes within the county.

“The 2002 median household money income was $42,409” (U.S. Census Bureau). However, the median household income in 2000 within Lebanon city was 27,259 dollars, compared to 37,415 dollars within Annville.

“The wealthy people of Lebanon are wealthier than the wealthy in Annville” (Stephanie Solesky). According to theorist of the school of pushing for inclusion, Cornel West sees a healthy democracy as one where everyone strives to meet the basic necessities minorities.

“One essential step is some form of large-scale public intervention to ensure access to basic social goods- housing, food, healthcare, jobs, education, and childcare” (West, 267, Terchek and Conte).

Therefore, I am advocating for equal access between the minority and the white majority populations within Lebanon County in terms of education and other services in which the county provides. I am arguing against a single group of people having a significant advantage over the rest of the population. Cornel west and I are advocating for a reevaluation of the economic, jobs,
education and other resources in which public provides, and along with this reevaluation there must also be a standard in which all schools and facilities must uphold.

In order to determine whether or not there are differences in the educational systems we must first examine the curriculums of two prominent schools within Lebanon County: Annville Cleona High School and Cedar Crest High School.

“At Annville Cleona, the environment is geared towards academics but, however; in Lebanon teachers are more concerned with getting the students to class”(Stephanie Solesky).

Annville Cleona’s curriculum offers two career pathways: Academic College Prep and Academic Tech Prep, and these two different pathways allow students to choose the area of academics they wish to further develop. At an early age, usually before entering high school, students decide along with the guidance of their parents which academic career path to follow. However, students have the discretion to decide whether or not to combine the two pathways. “I took college prep my first three years of school, and I spent my last year learning the academic tech prep”(Shannon Arndt). The academic tech option gives students the basic educational requirements needed which will enable them to succeed in future job opportunities. As a graduate from Annville Cleona High School, I found that many students combined the studies of both academics because they were weak in some areas like math and sciences. Consequently if a student was weak in science, she had the chance to choose a science in academic tech prep which suited her learning abilities. However, in the end, the student would not have learned the basic mathematic and science skills needed in order to make a successful transition from high school to college mathematics and sciences. The main difference between the two academic career paths at Annville Cleona is in the math and science requirements. For instance, Applied Biology and College Prep Biology both
require the same amount of work from its students, but Applied Biology is separated into two categories: Applied Biology One and Applied Biology two. This separation between the two applied math and sciences causes the students who follow the academic tech prep path to be lagging behind, however, because the college prep students would have already completed the course.

In order to fulfill the requirements of graduation at Annville Cleona, students must complete 25 credit hours including four English credits; three math credits; three science credits; four social studies credits; one credit of physical education; one credit of fine arts; half a credit of health and family and consumer sciences; and one credit in technology. The difference between the two career paths has the potential to cause a power struggle in that one class may dominate the other. For, Foucault, an unhealthy democracy is one in which the bourgeoisies class do not control the sole means power because he states that if given the power they will abuse it.

Another fundamental and critical aspect in having and maintaining equality in democracy is that all citizens must be well educated in order to provide some form of rational input to the system, and this can only be attained if citizens are provided with the same forms of facilities and social welfare initiatives. Habermas would argue that the flow of information between citizens would thereby create an equal exchange of ideas.

“The individual can get a clear sense of commonalities and differences, hence a sense of who she is and who she would like to be, only in the public exchange with others who owe their identities to the same traditions and similar formation processes”(Habermas, 239, Terchek and Conte).
For Habermas a healthy democracy consists of an arena where citizens can argue and discuss the best methods of influencing and changing government. Habermas would say that democracy becomes pathologic when citizens are uninformed and are unable to effectively influence and change governance with their ideas and information. An unequal access of information between students in the curriculum at Annville Cleona would be viewed as damaging to the community as a whole; according to the theorist of discourse and democracy.

Now that we have examined the educational requirements, which may aid in providing some information on socioeconomic factors within Annville township’s secondary schools; let us turn our attention to Cedar Crest High School, another school within Lebanon, as we try to determine whether or not education within Lebanon County is indeed different.

“At Annville I was taught math better, but at Cedar Crest I basically had to teach myself” (Sandra Dekyi). Students, who attend Cedar Crest High School, can also choose from a variety of career paths. Cedar Crest offers a variety of academic career pathways including: business, communication/arts, engineering, physical sciences, applied technology, health, agricultural, and life science, as well as human and public services. The various academic career choices help to prepare students for further educational instruction as they may apply. When concentrating on one of these career options, students must fulfill seven credits of general education requirements which consist of: four credits of English; four credits of science; four credits of History; and half a credit in one of the following courses: health, family and consumer science, government, economics, physical education, introduction to technology, art foundation, or music key boarding and program electives. As well as 2.5 credits worth of program electives during their senior year. Seniors of Cedar Crest High School must complete a graduation
requirement which includes thirty hours of community service, independent study, research, a
non-paid work study program, or a creativity project.

After having had examined the two school districts, let us now compare the similarities and the differences. Cedar Crest’s senior graduation project requires of its students to put more effort and involvement because some of the projects relate to the community and a chance at on hands experience.

Now that we have determine the factors which make Cedar Crest High School unique, let us focus our attention on what some theorist of democracy would say about the situation of the two school districts throughout Lebanon County.

I had the opportunity to attend an Annville town hall meeting, and at this meeting very few people showed up. One reason for this apathy could be the time in which the meetings were scheduled. The meetings were held every other Tuesday at 7:30 P. M. and they could last for two hours or more. Once I heard about the scheduled times, I began contemplating whether or not the meetings were held at this time to exclude certain people within the county from coming. For instance, the young single mom; busy juggling work, home, and school. Another aspect which I found unique was that different communities borrowed ideas from each other. For example, Russell Diamond introduced a resolution, which the citizens of Westmoreland County had drafted to acknowledge the unfairness of property taxes. He proposed that if the citizens in Annville formulated their ideas into one draft resolution for; their representatives would have some kind of working knowledge of the needs of his area. Participatory theorist hold that citizens can make informed decisions, and it is in their best interest to do so because if not they risk having important decisions made in the hands of a few.
Iris Marion Young, would argue that the differences in the education system of Lebanon county is beneficial because having all the students learn the same amount of information would create a society where people did not challenge and value the different perspectives of the education of which they had obtained.

“Universally formulated standards or norm, for example, according to which all competitors for social positions are evaluated, often presumes as the norms and capacities, values and cognitive and behavioral styles typical of dominant groups, thus disadvantaging others” (Young, 272, Terchek and Conte).

An unhealthy democracy for Young would be one in which everyone within a given society had the same identity, a society that punishes and inhibits diversity on all levels. However, I would argue that the most important thing is to provide students with the same level of education, at least within the same county, in order to provide similar political involvement within Community; I would further assert that the group of students who make up the population of better educated individuals should not neglect the feelings and attitudes towards the rest of the citizens in the county. Sheldon Wolin eloquently states that, “democracy should not depend on elites making a one-time gift to the demos of a predestined framework of equal rights” (Wolin, 244 Terchek and Conte).

Economic disparities within the county cause students who live in poorer areas of the county to become increasingly hostile. “Kids at Annville Cleona are more relaxed and not as aggressive; but the kids at Cedar Crest are more intimidating (Sandra Dekyi). After having attended elementary school in Queens, New York, I find that those children tend to be more belligerent because they feel the need to protect themselves; no one else will do it for them.

“Two-thirds of minority students
still attend schools that are predominantly minority, most of them located in central cities and funded well below those in neighboring suburban districts” (Hammond, 53).

However, once I moved to Pennsylvania, and started attending Annville Cleona, I noticed that the students at this school were less aggressive and knitted together in tight familiar groups. Therefore I would argue that students from the two different schools should be able to interact, and there should also be a free flow of exchange of educational information.

Recently, within the last year and a half, the tiny city of Lebanon has experienced an influx of minorities from Philadelphia, Reading, and even as far away as New York City. Currently within Lebanon County there are approximately 113,662 whites; 1548 blacks; and 5,969 of the Hispanic population. Clearly, a small town such as Lebanon was not prepared to accommodate these new migrants into the city, and as a result there was a large movement of the white population into areas that have a least number of minorities. As the competition for jobs, housing, and educational facilities increased; so did the racial animosity amongst the masses. Let us observe whether or not a high level of one race in a particular area is provided with better resources within the county.

“People in this area are more conservative” (Stephanie Solesky). Throughout Lebanon County religion plays a major role in everyday living, and as a result the population consider themselves to be conservative Christians.

“Hence, for Liberals, black people are to be “included” and “integrated” into “our” society and culture, while for conservatives they are to be “well-behaved” and worthy of “acceptance by “our” way of life”(West, 263, Ter-
Consequently, they were almost unwilling to adapt to the new wave of people who were flooding into the city and county; of different ethnic and racial statuses. “The unwillingness to be a stone in an edifice contributes over the long term to the health of a democratic society” (Connolly, 215). The mobilization, of whites within Lebanon County may be viewed as a healthy democracy in itself, in that their resistance to diversity allowed them to come together as a community. “I’m Catholic, and when I was a kid growing up, we were not allowed to associate with Protestants, and often times we beat the crap out of them ... basically wherever you go you’ll find that people set up barriers amongst each other” (Mr. Solesky). The unification of the whites, in turn caused minorities within Lebanon to form their own community programs and resources which would allow them to better their own tight knit communities.

“When citizens can only meet in public for certain purposes, they regard such meetings as a strange proceeding of rare occurrence, and they rarely think at all about it... when they are allowed to meet freely for all purposes, they ultimately look upon public association as the universal, or in a manner the sole, means, which men can employ to accomplish the different purposes they may have in view” (Tocqueville, 206).

The community organizations which are most prevalent within the county include a healthy variation of religious, political, and economic groups which seek to improve the conditions throughout the community. Local churches within the community such as Fairland Brethren in Christ, Trinity United Methodist, and First Evangelical Congregational Church provide its members as well as people within the community with services that strive to better the county a
a whole. The Lebanon Chamber of Commerce provides economic information and direction for fellow members within the city, and the Lebanon County Democratic Committee forces the County to become and maintain political involvement and participation.

“The citizen of the United States is Taught from infancy to rely upon His own exertions, in order to resist The evils and the faculties of life; he Looks upon the social authority with an Eye o mistrust and anxiety, and he claims Its assistance only when he is unable to Do without it” (Tocqueville, 95).

Lebanon County is similar to every other town in the United States in that it has economic disparities amongst its citizens based on socioeconomic factors. Chantal Mouffe, a theorist of postmodernist critiques, is in favor of a radical and pluralistic democracy

“The project of a radical democracy must try to defend democracy and to expand its sphere of applicability to new social relations”(Mouffe, 229, Terchek and Comte).

An ailment or a diseased democracy for Mouffe is a society which fails to get beyond the interest of individualism, in particular, Marxist and Social Democracy. I also agree with Mouffe because one solution to the problem in Lebanon county would be aim at striving to provide equal access to education as well as other public goods in which the county supplies. Like John Dewey, I am against having a particular group of people in control of or rather being equipped with the best facilities and other services throughout the county. Dewey asserts the, “a class of experts is inevitable so removed from common interest as to become a class with private interest an
private knowledge, which in social matter is not knowledge at all” (Dewey, 169, Terchek and Conte). According to Dewey, theses experts within the community would only have their own best interest at heart, and thereby fail to incorporate the needs of the masses. An indicator of a healthy democracy is one where the government seeks to include all the concerns of the masses and not simply the privileged few; concludes Dewey.

“What I look for in determining whether if democracy exist is pools and parks” (Glenn Richardson). Throughout the county it is evident that the community is increasingly concerned with giving its citizens a place to gather during times of recreation. There are numerous playgrounds and different organizations provide ample opportunity for citizens to gather and converse. Lebanon provides soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and a Veterans Hospital for citizens throughout the county.

“Every state is a good of some kind, and every community is established with a view to do some good; for mankind always acts in order to obtain that which they think is good” (Aristotle, 55, Terchek and Conte).

Providing these services for citizens in the community, demonstrates that the county is concerned with the overall common good of the people.

Equal access to common facilities requires the townships, cities, municipalities, and counties to stand up against bias attitudes.

“Today in our society a few vestiges of prejudice and discrimination remain,

But we working on them,
and have nearly realized the dream those Enlightened fathers declared to propound... the state and law should express rights only in universal terms applied equally to all, and differences among persons and groups should be purely accidental and private matter... we seek a society in which differences of race, sex, religion, and ethnicity no longer make a difference to people’s rights and opportunities... people should be treated as individuals, not as members of groups; their life options and rewards should be based solely on their individual achievement” (Young, 269 Terchek and Conte).

I would argue that Lebanon County needs to reform its current delegation of services throughout the community; like Iris Marion Young recommends. The varying degrees of the curriculum in which the schools provide for students; should be altered in order to prevent discrimination through unequal education systems. Lebanon, as well as the rest of America, must stop placing stereotype on minorities; the thinking of many whites is that we all look the same, act the same, and think the same. “‘Problem people become indistinguishable and interchangeable, which means that only one of them has to be asked to find out what the rest of them think’” (West, 210, Ford and Ford). Once we, as American citizens, aim at eradicating the amount of hate speech, which categorizes people into stereotypes, can we move towards attaining a democracy in which all people are truly equal; only then can we have a true melting pot.

I am also arguing for the combination or blending in of both of both schools 14. Annville Cleona and Cedar Crest High Schools, in terms of interacting and exchanging ideas in
order to smooth the process of learning. Each school would aid in counteracting the positive aspects of learning with the negative impacts. “Now is the time to make the real promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand’s of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is theme to make justice a reality for all God’s children...it would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment” (King, 20, Ford and Ford).

I also feel as though Lebanon should also try to encourage it students to have an open mind and seek to appreciate other cultures and groups. “Speaking about one’s personal experience or speaking with simple language is often considered by academics and/or intellectuals to be a sign of intellectual weakness or even anti-intellectualism” (Hooks 63, Ford and Ford). We need to move away from this ideology and reconsider the fact that our past journeys and trials make up who we are overall. Another aspect which the county should consider is that schools within the community all have the same equal opportunity to learn the same material; this would help all the citizens to maintain a healthy exchange of information between its citizens. “In a large, diverse nation, the common-school is the only situation available for creating a school-based culture that like a common language, enables everyone to communicate in the public sphere”(Hirsch, 73, Ford and Ford).

Although we have come a far way in terms of the struggle of the Civil Rights Movement, some townships and counties have been stuck in pre-Brown educational requirements. Lebanon county as well as the other small towns across America, need to realize that this neglect in updating and maintaining quality educational facilities; in spite of race.

15. Racial animosity between the dominant conservative white class of Lebanon County
exacerbates the chances of equality within the community; thereby prohibiting the chances of democratic ideas developing.

“Yet even a self-interested majority can govern fairly if it cooperates with the minority...one reason for such cooperation is that the self-interested majority worries that the minority may attack defectors from the majority and they become the next governing majority” (Guinier, 244, Ford and Ford).

We all need to strive for and demand that equal access to jobs and educational facilities are kept open to minorities. Affirmative action, aims to provide minority with equal access to jobs and educational opportunities, but, however; what the initiative fails to accomplish is to shield minorities from being labeled by their peers as “affirmative action babies.”

The solution for Lebanon County is to strive to provide minority students with the same educational opportunities provided by whites, and to educate white students about other cultures and groups.