Educational Policy Studies Dissertations   Department of Educational Policy Studies

Spring 5-13-2016

The Influence of Leadership Practices on Parental Involvement within Schools with English Language Learners

Tamara J. Candis
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/eps_diss

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT WITHIN SCHOOLS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, by TAMARA J. CANDIS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

_____
James Kahrs, Ed.D.
Committee Chair

_____
Yinying Wang, Ed.D.
Committee Member

_____
Karen Bryant, Ed.D.
Committee Member

_____
Date

_____
William L. Curlette, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Department of Educational Policy Studies

_____
Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education and Human Development

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Tamara Candis
Dept of Educational Policy Studies
30 Pryor Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

The director of this dissertation is:

James Kahrs
Department of Educational Policy Studies
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Tamara J. Candis

ADDRESS: 30 Pryor Street, Room 450
                            Atlanta, GA 30303

EDUCATION:

Ed.D.	2016	Georgia State University
		Educational Policy Studies
Ed.S.	2009	Lincoln Memorial University
		Administration and Supervision
M.Ed.	2001	Alabama A&M University
		Elementary Education
B.S.	1997	Alabama A&M University
		Social Work

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2013- present	Principal Hopkins Elementary
	Gwinnett County Public Schools
2010-2013	Assistant Principal Rockbridge Elementary
	Gwinnett County Public Schools
2002-2010	Teacher
	Gwinnett County Public Schools

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:

Teaching Tolerance	*Making Sense of Privilege*	Fall 05
G. C. T. E.	*Utilizing Picture Books to Teach Grammar and Writing*	02/2010

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

2012	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

The Influence of Leadership Practices on Parental Involvement Within Schools with English
Language Learners

by

TAMARA J. CANDIS

Under the Direction of James Kahrs

ABSTRACT

Effective leadership is a critical component to student learning and engaging parents of English Language Learners (ELL). The primary purpose of this instrumental multiple comparison case study was to determine the degree in which the Georgia Vision Project's recommendation, to be responsive to the cultural make-up of the communities they serve, has impacted two different high implementation school districts. The secondary focus of the research examined the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations.

Awareness of viable cultural approaches for engaging ELL students and parents can be acquired by teachers during the pre-service or in-service training. However, this may be impossible if administrators lack cultural understanding themselves. Family members of English Language Learners often struggle to remain involved in their children's academic activities due to their limited English proficiency and fear communicating with the staff. Consequently, administrators play a key role in creating effective professional development for teachers and welcoming school environments for ELL families.

Interviews of district and school leaders, parent instructional coordinators, and parents were conducted. Supporting documents were also gathered. Dedoose was used to assist with the analysis and coding of the data collected using a general inductive approach. The data collected revealed the impact of the Vision Project implementation within each district. Also, several themes emerged from the findings 1) stable school district leadership, 2) consistent mission and vision implementation, 3) clearly outlined strategic goals and priorities, 4) frequent communication with internal and external stakeholders, 5) leadership development academies for succession planning, 6) specific organizational structure for central office and schools, 7) alignment of Vision Project educational components to the district initiatives, and 8) a commitment to restoring confidence in public education.

The study contributes to the development of educational leaders in schools with diverse student populations. The findings reveal the necessity for school leaders to assess parents' perceptions of their child's school, given the impact parents can have on children's attitudes about school, and the importance of supporting parental engagement. The success of students will require leaders to acknowledge the power of parents and community as important resources.

THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON PARENTAL INOLVEMENT
WITHIN SCHOOLS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

TAMARA CANDIS

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Education Doctorate

in

Educational Leadership

in

Educational Policy Studies

in

the College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2016

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the many people who encouraged me, prayed with me, and stood in the gap to pray for me when I grew weary. I want to begin with my parents, Marion Sr. and Blanche Orr, who instilled a love of learning in me and were my first teachers. They taught me to dream big because all things were possible with God. To my dad, thank you for showing me love, not biology makes a family. To my mother, words cannot express how eternally grateful I am for the choices and sacrifices you made to help me become the person I am today. Your wisdom, understanding, love, and encouragement helped light the way during this journey. Thank you for introducing to me what is one of my favorite scriptures, Jeremiah 29:11.

Foremost this work is dedicated to Terence, Aaron and Jordan. I love each of you with all of my heart. To my husband Terence, whom I met when I was freshman in college, thank you for your love and support. I'm sure you never imagined 20 years, 2 children, and 3 degrees later, I would be in school again. Thank you for all the big and small things you did to keep life moving at home when I could not. You will never know how much I truly appreciate your commitment and dedication to our family. Aaron and Jordan time has flown by quickly, but during this time you also grew into handsome young men who I am proud to call my sons. I appreciate the support of each of you and the sacrifices you made for me to achieve this goal. Terence, Aaron and Jordan thank you for your understanding when I missed games or other events to attend class. As you've watched me finish this work, in spite of everything I pray you have been inspired to continue your education. Jeremiah 29:11 will always be one of my favorites because it talks about the plans God has for us. This process has made me look to another scripture to find encouragement and peace. *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time will be nothing compared*

with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18. Thank you for you love, encouragement, and support.

I am blessed to have an extensive support system to consistently encourage me. My siblings, my cousins, my aunts, my uncles, my in-laws, my nieces, and my nephews have always been my cheerleaders. To Carol for calling me every morning to let me vent or make me laugh on my way to work to help me keep it all in perspective. To Joyce for her weekly sanity check, encouraging me, praying for me and staying my friend even when I was too busy to go on outings.

I would like to thank my leadership team for their prayers, encouragement, assurance the school was running smoothly, and keeping me laughing when I wanted to cry. You also always tried to remind me to have a balance between work, graduate school and home.

God knew I would need three beautiful, strong, intelligent, thoughtful, and spirit filled women to help me on this journey. Women, with whom I could laugh, cry, vent, pray, and PRAISE God. Dionne Cowan, Jennifer Pinkett-Smith, and Katika Lovett, thank you for adopting me into your circle and covering me with the word of God.

And last, but certainly not least, I would like to dedicate this work to my sister, Jelita Bridgeforth, who encouraged me to accept the challenge of pursuing my EdD. She told me 2016 is coming, what you will have achieved or be doing when it comes is up to you. Thank you for always being one of my biggest supporters and encouragers regardless of how big or small the task. She reminded me to take one day at a time and to never forget how much I was loved. You are truly a blessing to me.

With God's help, I have accomplished an important goal in my life. It is with thankfulness and gratitude that I give God all the GLORY for keeping me each and every day through this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: POLICY AND PRACTICE

Literature Review Introduction

Imagine the first day of school and a child is seen in the halls appearing lost. Slowly, a teacher approaches and asks the question, "What's your name?" On first impression, the question seems fairly easy and simple enough for any child who is school age and able to speak to provide an answer. The assumption inherent in the questions is that child speaks English rather than another language. A question that appears simple holds the potential to turn a child's world upside down in a matter of seconds. Additionally, the adult who attempts to provide assistance may feel defeated when they are unable to communicate the information needed to comfort the lost student. Similar stories like these and many others happen every day in schools across the nation, as Hispanics became the largest growing population according to the most recent U.S. census (U.S. Census, 2010). The census data revealed the overall population increased by forty-three percent and more than half of the growth in the United States population between 2000 and 2010 was due to the Hispanic residents (p. 2). In 2014, the U.S. Census data reported Hispanics were the largest minority group in America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), the term Hispanic refers to persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Southern or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (p. 2).

As the general population grew, so did the number of Hispanic students matriculating within the schools (Christensen, Schneider, & Butler, 2011). Parents have immigrated to America searching for better opportunities for themselves and a quality education for their children (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). However, with this growing transformation in school demographics, the challenge has been to connect the cultural backgrounds of parents to the expectations of schools in relationship to parental involvement. The numbers of Hispanic students tri-

pled in the past thirty years and were predicted to grow to over one-fourth of all K-12 students by 2030 (Smith, Stern and Shatrova, 2008, p.8). This data was confirmed in 2014 by the National Center for Education Statistics, which predicted the total school population would be thirty percent by the year 2023 instead of by 2030 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). In addition Hispanic origins, many students who immigrate to America are also labeled as English Language Learners (ELL). English Language Learners are defined by The National Council Teachers of English as an active student learner of the English language. Students identified as ELL benefit from various types of language support programs, often used mainly in the U.S. to describe K-12 students (Albert, Ennis, & Vargas, 2008, p. 2). Approximately eighty percent of the Hispanic students make up the U.S. English Language Learner population and speak Spanish as their native language (Burden & Byrd, 2013; Garcia & Jensen, 2007; Calderon, Slavin & Sanchez, 2011).

Two questions often loom in school districts: How can schools more effectively involve the parents of their English Language Learners and How can schools deal with the sudden increases in this population (Azzam, 2009, p. 92)? Although, students within the schools reflect more diversity, schools are predominantly staffed with Caucasian teachers and leaders. Less than 19% of all teachers are minorities (Boser, 2014; Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013). Consequently, this leaves school leaders grappling to determine what practices help create a learning environment and school climate inclusive to the needs of all stakeholders, while providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children (Boser, 2014). Schools are missing the opportunity to involve parents in their child's education considering family engagement with children's learning is strongly associated with students' academic

outcomes and well-being (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012). Schools can support student success by understanding and improving the way parents view the school.

When the barriers of language and culture serve as impediments to the promotion of a positive connection between school and home, how do leadership practices influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations? This question, along with three additional questions regarding the impact of the Georgia Vision Project in two high implementation school districts will be addressed in this multiple comparison research study. The research questions guiding the Vision Project focus are:

1. How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in your school district?

2. What are the features of the education component of Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy of the Vision Project specifically impacted learning in your school district?

3. How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped to build the capacity of self and others in your school?

To enhance education in Georgia, a partnership between the Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia School Superintendents Association developed the Georgia Vision Project document (hereafter the "Vision Project") in 2009 to display the creation of a new vision for public education (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010). The planning team that created this document represented twenty-five local school districts and consisted of thirty-members composed of fifteen local school superintendents and fifteen members of local boards of education from across the state of Georgia. The purpose of the Vision Project document was to offer a series of recommendations that when implemented effectively are intended to transform public education in Georgia (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010).

The comprehensive Vision Project document is extensive and divided to include an introduction, guiding principles, key issues, current practices of promise, and recommendations for each of the educational components. The seven components in the Vision Project include: 1) Early Learning and Student Success; 2) Teaching and Learning; 3) Teaching and Learning Resources; 4) Human and Organizational Capital; 5) Governance, Leadership, and Accountability; 6) Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy; and 7) Financial Resources. Embedded within each of these educational components are recommendations designed to move public education from a culture of compliance to a culture of innovation to educate the more than ninety percent of school age children in the state. Therefore, the Vision Project initiative was designed to ensure all children have an excellent and equitable educational opportunity to prepare them for college, career, and life (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010). In order to achieve this goal, the steering committee recognized the importance of creating meaningful engagement of communities with their public schools and identified Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy as a component. The focus of this component is to proactively create a positive environment that is sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities served by the public schools (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010).

According to the Vision Project document (2010), it is imperative that the culture and climate of a school is reflective of cultural competence in serving an increasingly diverse student population. School climate and school culture are terms with different meanings and frequently used together (Bitterman, Goldring, & Gray, 2013). School climate and culture relate to the behavior of teachers and students in the school environment. "School culture reflects the shared ideas – assumptions, values, and beliefs – that give an organization its identity and standard for expected behaviors and school climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the

school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place" (Tableman & Herron, 2004, p. 1). Culture was described as the personality of a school, whereas climate is the attitude of the school (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Parent perceptions of school climate influence whether or not and how families will engage with the school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Positive perceptions of school climate among parents are associated with higher levels of parent involvement (Brooks, Adams & Morita-Mullaney, 2010). Culture, Climate and Organization Efficacy as outlined in the Vision Project (2010) can also impact parental involvement and overall success of a school becoming a hub in the community.

Parental support for children's success is important, especially so for children of immigrants who balance the cultural, linguistic, and social differences between home and school (Research by Calderon et al., 2011, p. 115). Therefore, it is vital to review the practices within schools promoting parental involvement by examining Title I, Bilingual Education, and Civil Rights laws impacting ELL students and parental involvement, cultural understandings of parental involvement, and the impact of school leadership practices on parental involvement. Schools belong to the communities and should be a welcoming environment to parents. Schools should encourage parental involvement and support of their children regardless of the school demographics, the primary language of the parents, and the school leaders (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Turner & Kao, 2009).

School laws are created to provide guidance and mandates to govern the standards to help ensure all students have a fair and equal opportunity for a quality education. Schools are required to adhere to the laws passed to support parental involvement and English Language Learners or risk being sued or losing vital funding (ELL Funding, 2011; Stover, 2007). School leaders are

primarily responsible for ensuring the laws are followed. They are also tasked with developing a plan of action to support and monitor the implementation of the mandates (Mora, 2009). Leaders are also accountable for the creation of professional development programs or systems for creating culturally competent teachers and staff to support the various needs of students of diverse populations (Calderon et al., 2011; Mora, 2009). An awareness of faculty perceptions helps leaders to consider possible adjustments to their practices to increase parental involvement in schools. Schools, communities, parents, and students will ultimately benefit from leaders who are willing to be reflective on their practices and make the necessary modifications to improve parental involvement (Garcia & Jensen, 2007).

Purpose

From the beginning of the Republic, public education in America has faced many challenges because it is the one enterprise in the world impacted by a myriad of factors. Although the United States is comprised of immigrants who fled to this country in search of religious or social freedom, one challenge some researchers continue to recognize is the education of children from diverse cultures from around the world (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). In the United States today, K-12 students are more racially and ethnically diverse than ever before. Children of immigrants comprise more than twenty-five percent of the total U.S. young-child population ages eight and under (Park & McHugh, 2014, p.1). Often ill-equipped to help facilitate immigrants' integration and socialization in American society, schools are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasing population of culturally and linguistically diverse students and parents who are unable to speak proficient English (Keithley, 2013).

Definition of ELL

While not all ELL children's parents are born outside of the U.S., children from immigrant families are often classified as English Language Learner (ELL) students, (Vera et al., 2012). One definition of ELL is an active learner of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs used mainly in the U.S. to describe K-12 students (Albert, Ennis, & Vargas, 2008, p. 2). Vera et al., (2012) defined ELL students as children whose English has not yet developed to the point where they can take full advantage of instruction in English (p. 184). About seventy-nine percent of English learners in the United States speak Spanish and are Hispanic (Calderon et al, 2011 p. 104). Over the last forty years, legal and legislative decisions have impacted English Language Learners (ELL) across the nation. Even though the federal government requires school districts to provide services to English learners, it offers states no policies to follow in defining, identifying, assessing, placing within and exiting from support services, and instructing ELL students (Calderon et al., 2011).

Policies, Laws and Court Cases Impacting ELL Students

During the civil rights era of the 1960's, federal and state governments created laws and policies to address the concerns of language minority students in public schools. In 1968, The Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968) was heralded as landmark legislation (Mora, 2009). It was passed to allocate funds to support the challenges faced by ELLs to support the educational needs of these students.

Another landmark case impacting the education of ELL students was the unanimous Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) which held the lack of language accommodations for students with limited English proficiency constituted a violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the operation of

all federally assisted programs (Misco & Castaneda, 2009). *Lau v. Nichols* required school districts to take affirmative steps to protect the civil rights of limited-English proficient students. The unanimous decision of the court stated children who do not speak English are entitled to equal access to the curriculum (Misco & Castaneda, 2009).

Following *Lau v. Nichols,* the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 mandated no state deny equal education opportunity to any individual based on race or national origin and required states, "take appropriate action to overcome language barriers" (Misco & Castaneda, 2009, p.182). In order to protect illegal immigrants from those who assumed the rules in the above court cases did not apply, *Plyer v. Doe (1982)* made it clear that illegal residents and their children, though not citizens, are entitled to all the protections under the Fourteenth Amendment (Misco & Castaneda, 2009, p.182).

In 1998, the National Educational Goals Panel suggested children must be ready for school and schools must be ready for children (National Educational Goals Panel, 1998). For the most part, schools and districts have emphasized the readiness of children for school (Rothstein-Fisch, Trumbull, & Garcia et. al, 2009). Some researchers would argue when it comes to helping ELL students and parents, schools and districts fall short of the goals. In the case of immigrant children (those who are born outside of the U.S. or who are children of parents who immigrated as adults) the readiness of schools is of critical importance (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Verdugo and Flores (2007) contend that although the challenges posed by ELL students and their families are significant; there are no clear strategies for educators to use to improve the educational experiences of this population.

Numerous court cases have been heard since the first laws to impact English Language Learners were passed. However, the debate continues regarding how to best meet the educational

needs of English Language Learners in schools. The history of ill-defined and regularly shifting laws demand equitable educational opportunities for minority language students is well documented (Lopez & McEneaey, 2012, p.419). Even though many laws exist to support the instruction provided to ELL students, there are no direct laws to impact how to support parents of ELL students (Batt, 2008). If a school receives federal Title I assistance, there are requirements to be met under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 appropriates funds to states to improve the education of limited English proficient students by assisting children to learn English and to meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards. Legislation for limited English proficient students is found under Title III of NCLB. In 2002, the Bilingual Education Act was amended and replaced by the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (Title III of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The accountability from NCLB for ELL subgroups to show measured growth and improvement on assessments in Reading, Language Arts, and Math left schools grappling with how to improve the academic performance of English Language Learners (Batt, 2008). The inconsistencies across the country in defining ELL subgroups developed as a result of the flexibility provided to states with the NCLB authorization and focused attention on how to educate this rapidly growing population in U.S. schools (Batt, 2008).

Parental Involvement Laws

There are provisions to strengthen ties between families and schools in several pieces of federal legislation, including the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of 1994, Title I of the Improving Schools Act of 1994, the 1994 School-To-Work Opportunities Act, and NCLB (Des-

imone, 1999). Researchers contend one of the major factors and predictors of students' success is parental involvement (Desimone, 1999; Nam & Park, 2014; Tan & Goldberg, 2009). Parent involvement has been supported nationwide by K-12 educational policy and research studies (Nam & Park, 2014). In 1997, the United States Department of Education promoted the importance of parent involvement as the eighth goal of the National Education Goals: "School partnerships will increase parent involvement and participation in promoting social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (Section 102, Goal 8, subsection A). As a result, school districts across the nation lobby to increase parental involvement citing the benefits of social and academic growth (Tan & Goldberg, 2009).

Another initiative within the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act), required parents to have a central role in their child's academic progress. This mandate is based on four principles to provide a framework through which families, educators, and communities can work together to improve teaching and learning. The initiatives within this mandate are supported through Title I funding and require schools to make parental involvement a priority, " with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, or have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

The Family Engagement Act of 2013 addresses the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's Title I family engagement provisions. This legislation seeks to expand capacity building and technical assistance at the state and local levels in order to strengthen the overall quality and effectiveness of family engagement programs (Park & McHugh, 2014, p.5). As national policies have identified parental involvement as a critical component of the educational experience, laws to help promote parental involvement have evolved.

Parental Involvement Definition

Building bridges between schools and parents is important for effective schools. Therefore parents are encouraged to become involved in the education of their children (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). Yet what is parental involvement? Ask teachers, parents, community members, or students and the definition and the meaning will vary based on the group of respondents. Teachers tend to define parental involvement as, "participation in formal activities such as school events" (Smith, et al., 2008). Conversely, Hispanic parents defined involvement as, "working informal home activities: checking homework and reading to children" (Smith, et al., p. 9). Nam and Park (2014) define parent involvement as the regular participation of parents in their children's academic learning and other school activities; the acceptance of responsibility for their children's attendance, behavior and willingness to learn in school; and the provision of practical help to school and at home (p. 312). Christensen, Schneider, and Butler (2011) define parental involvement as activities parents carry out to enhance their child's academic performance and emotional and social well-being (p.77).

A statutory definition of parental involvement provisions in Title I, Part A of the ESEA is to set parameters by which schools will govern or schools will implement. The statutory definition of parental involvement under these provisions is defined as follows:

> The involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—
>
> that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;

that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appro-

priate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education

of their child; and

that other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1118 of

the ESEA(Parental Involvement*) [Section 9101(32), ESEA.]* (Department of

Education, 2004, p. 3).

The definition of parental involvement or how it is enacted at local school has never been

clarified. Although this may be true, there are two common terms found in all of the definitions

"parent" and "involvement". Parent involvement is a term difficult to quantify and qualify, and it

can have significant implications and impact on the academic success for all minority groups,

and particularly for Hispanic or Hispanic populations (Park & McHugh, 2014). Given the grow-

ing population and segregation in schools, it is important to understand how the Hispanic con-

centration in schools impacts parental involvement (Klugman, Lee & Nelson, 2012.).

Parental Involvement Opportunities

Parental involvement is not a new concept. Over the past three decades, schools in the

U.S. have sought to increase the involvement of parents. It is assumed that the parents, legal

guardians, or *in- loco parentis* (person legally responsible for the welfare of the child) automati-

cally knows how to become involved in the education of their children (O'Donnell & Kirkner,

2014). Parent involvement consists of activities and programs to build a partnership between

parents and schools for the educational success of students (Nam & Park, 2014). Because fami-

lies do not always include a biological parent, it is important to use and include parental and fam-

ily involvement interchangeably. Family involvement is a comprehensive concept encompassing

both home and school based (e.g., reading, monitoring homework, discussing school, promoting

higher education; e.g., attending conferences and events, joining the PTA, volunteering) activities. Family involvement in children's education has been found to be predictive of higher academic success and social and emotional functioning (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

Types of Involvement. Parent involvement programs hold the potential to positively impact Hispanic children and families, thereby helping schools to reach educational goals. Unfortunately, schools have often been less effective in engaging Hispanic families, especially when they do not speak the dominant language or are recent immigrants (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Parental involvement can take many forms, including participation in formal school activities to informally engaging in beneficial educational activities at home (Klugman et al., 2012; Collier & Auerbach, 2011; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Researchers (Klugman et al., 2012; Collier & Auerbach, 2011; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008) categorize those forms of parental involvement into two main categories: formal or traditional and informal or non-traditional. Traditional forms of parental involvement and non-traditional form distinctions are being made to help parents navigate the approaches to involvement (Collier & Auerbach, 2011).

Formal or Traditional Involvement. In general, formal parent involvement includes external activities in which parents are physically present at the school for a school-related function or in which they initiate contact with the school (Auerbach, 2007). Formal parent involvement typically entails visible participation in schools such as attending back to school night; PTA Meetings; parent teacher conferences; school events; volunteering at the school in the classroom, cafeteria, or school building; and helping with the school fundraisers or field trips (Klugman et al., 2012; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Hispanic parents may purposely choose to avoid formal school participation out of respect for their children's teachers. As a culture, Hispanics highly respect teachers and trust the American education system (Auerbach, 2007). Generally, contact-

ing a teacher is commonly believed to be disrespectful because it challenges the teacher's author-

ity and would be counterproductive to the educational experience (Auerbach, 2007; Nam & Park,

2014). Among Hispanics, parental involvement in formal school activities is lower than those of

non-Hispanic whites. On the other hand, they are involved more informally (Turney & Kao,

2009). It is equally likely parents from different cultures may simply value academic involve-

ment at home over visible involvement at school (Zarate, 2007).

  Informal or Non-Traditional Involvement. Informal parent involvement includes behav-

iors, activities, and emotional support occurring in the home. Home activities include reading

books, telling stories, engaging in arts and crafts, playing games, playing with construction toys,

practicing with numbers and letters, and doing science projects (Klugman et al., 2012). Non-

traditional involvement builds on the strengths of the family, motivates parents to advocate for

themselves and their children, and incorporates cultural and linguistic scaffolds throughout the

curriculum (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Often, Hispanic parents provide moral and emo-

tional support by boosting their children's self-esteem, talking with their children about future

ambitions and the value of education applauding their progress or hard work (LeFevre & Shaw,

2012). Culturally relevant educational research has found Hispanic parents often provide infor-

mal (i.e., invisible to educators) academic support for their children, such as helping with home-

work, encouraging scholastic endeavors, providing a quiet homework setting, discussing future

plans with their child, making sure the children arrive at school on time, eliminating potential

distractions by providing a quiet time and place to do homework, regularly helping with home-

work, and monitoring school attendance (Auerbach, 2007; Zarate, 2007).

  Cultivating opportunities for informal interactions to capitalize on learning from parents

has shown to be effective. Research has shown Hispanic parents favor informal and more per-

sonal relationships with teachers (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Rothstein-Fisch et al (2009) suggests in an effort to involve Hispanic parents, educators should be creative with open houses. For example, school leaders should invite the entire family for a picture to demonstrate a desire to know the family. Students can lead conferences to engage children in describing their accomplishments to parents as the families and teachers sit back and listen to the children. This allows students to represent individualistic values and share their individual progress instead of listening to the teacher. Another idea suggested is to allow group conferences for the whole family to be conducted in a parent-friendly format. The aim is to increase parents' feeling of comfort, help parents gain knowledge from other parents and allowed the teacher to learn more from families (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009).

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is encouraged during curriculum nights, open houses, registrations, school assemblies, and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings (Keithley, 2013; Nam & Park, 2014; Auerbach, 2007). However, the researchers believe the expectations of parental involvement are different around the world. In some countries teachers are respected, educated masters in the community. In these settings, parents will do anything to support the infrastructure of the school, yet simultaneously, they do not feel competent to serve in a collaborative role as a partner in the education of their children. Parents release the academic education of their children to the teachers and principals. Educators must be aware parents from other cultures see their roles differently (Keithley, 2013; Nam & Park, 2014; Auerbach, 2007).

Research conducted by the Educational Policy Research Institute at Arizona State University and the Public Interest Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder have identified five barriers that make it difficult for parents of English Language Learners to engage with their

children's schools in today's "anti-immigrant and English-only climate." The barriers include: 1) school-based barriers, 2) lack of English proficiency, 3) parents' educational level, 4) disconnection between school culture and home culture, and 5) logistical issues (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008, p. 8).

Hispanic immigrant parents are less likely than white native-born parents to be involved in formal ways in their children's schools. Hispanic parents are more likely to cite barriers such as inconvenient meeting times, not feeling welcome, and language problems to prevent them from formal involvement (Turney and Kao, 2009). These barriers are associated with a lack of understanding of the American school system and difficulty with structural assimilation, which is the large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions (Klugman et al., 2012). Parents are expected to know and to be involved in school-based activities valued by the mainstream educational system. This concept contrasts with expectations of their home countries, where education is deferred to their children's teachers and parents are not to intervene in the schooling process, which is another example of structural assimilation (Klugman et al., 2012). Most middle and upper income families do not face this problem or challenge because they are familiar with the educational system (Christensen et al., 2011).

School Based Barriers. School based barriers display a negative perspective of ELL families and an unwelcoming school climate (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008, p. 22). Hispanic parents often lack the knowledge of the U.S. Educational system and expectations of school personnel (Bamaca, 2010) and are unfamiliar with how to navigate the U.S. Educational System (Ceballo, 2004; Parra-Cardona, Cordova, Holtrop, Villarruel, & Wielding, 2008). Parents are unfamiliar with education in the U.S., specifically knowledge of procedures and what is expected of them and their children (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Given the complexity of the U.S. educa-

tional system, securing advantages for children requires parents not only engage with schools but also know the teachers' and school policies (Christensen et al., 2011). Involvement in formal school activities such as attending PTO meetings, volunteering in the classroom, and attending parent teacher nights indicates social integration of parents into the American system of education (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009).

English Proficiency. Hispanic parents may also be less formally involved because they feel uncomfortable communicating with school staff for several reasons. The parents might have limited English proficiency and might be unable to ask questions, lack familiarity with the school system, perceive discrimination, or feel the school discounts Hispanic's social and cultural capital (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Due to some Hispanic parents' lack of English proficiency and their unfamiliarity with American culture, the parents believe they are often obstacles to their children's success (Kim, 2011). ELL families struggle to remain involved in their children's academic activities due to their limited English proficiency (Parra-Cardona et al., 2008). Language is a significant barrier to participation because it is intimidating not to be fluent in the language and to go into a school and ask questions (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011; Klugman et al., 2012).

Parental Educational Levels. In research conducted by Kim (2011), participants did not consider their ability to speak their native language and their expertise in their native culture to be a resource. Parents who see themselves as hindrances to their children's success are unable to capitalize on their useful knowledge and information are denigrated along with the social capital ethnic social networks can offer (Kim, 2011). The results from the study revealed participants were unaware literacy in their native language could provide a good foundation to develop literacy in the majority language, English (Kim, 2011).

Another impact of educational levels on parental involvement is the ability to be excused from work whenever needed. Many parents are not able to visit the school for parent conferences or other activities due to their work situations to support academic success (Christensen et al., 2011). Many immigrant families are low wage workers, and although being involved with their child's education is a priority, it is unlikely they have the flexibility in their work schedules or financial resources needed to help ensure student success. Work schedules can also limit the amount of time allotted to help with homework, and limit availability to build social relationships to acquire information from those who frequently visit the school and interact with teachers (Christensen et al., 2011).

School Culture vs. Home Culture. In Latin America, parents leave the job of educating children largely to the school. Conversely, in America parents are expected to play a more active role (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Fundamental differences in culture-based beliefs about child development and learning guide the different expectations for children on the part of parents and teachers. Many parents believe they can trust the school to take care of their children, and their personal involvement is less important than the influence of the teacher (Christensen et al., 2011). Cultural differences may result in Hispanics being involved more in the home than on the school campuses, resulting in their contributions being overlooked by staff (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).

Logistical Concerns. Logistical concerns can pose barriers, including the inability to leave work for school functions, difficulty securing childcare, time of the meetings, transportation problems, not being aware of when functions are scheduled, nor understanding the value of participating in school activities, safety issues, and lack of interesting things for parents (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014; Klugman et al., 2012; Ramirez & Soto-Himan, 2009). Lack of

time due to multiple jobs, long hours, and stressful working conditions limit the amount of time parents can spend focusing their attention to their child's academic success (Bamaca, 2010; Parra-Cardona et al., 2008).

The issues surrounding ELL students are complex and varied, but not impossible to overcome. Identifying and attempting to remove the barriers of parents to parental involvement is important (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). Additionally, it is important to note U.S. born Hispanics do not often face the same kind of challenges immigrant Hispanic families face. These include language barriers, unfamiliarity with the American educational institution, and the prospect of role reversal. Role reversal in this context would be described as the feeling of fear immigrant parents' feel about their authority being challenged by their more acculturated children (Klugman et al., 2012; Farruggio, 2010). Involvement by immigrant parents is also important because it will help them to become familiar with the US school system and to gain confidence in their parenting skills in relation to their child's education and schooling (Nam & Park, 2014). Research continues to show a positive correlation between children's school success and parent's involvement indicating the significant role parents play in their children's academic development (Harper & Pelletier, 2010).

School Climate

School leaders are encouraged to create environments in which parents feel welcome at school, believe their concerns are important, and that they play a meaningful role in school decisions affecting them and their children (Calderon et al., 2011). Children attend schools from an increasingly broad range of linguistic, cultural, religious and academic backgrounds. This growing population of English Language Learners (ELLs) creates a sense of urgency for schools to understand, support, and value the array of student's native language practices as a way to em-

brace both the ELLs' first language and their native cultures (Kim, 2011). "When families feel welcome in schools and participate actively in children's education, children's attendance, general achievement, and reading achievement improve" (Padak & Rasinski, 2010, p. 294).

Building bridges and abandoning misconceptions are pivotal to increasing family involvement in schools (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009, p.8). English Language Learners and their parents must attempt to balance cultural, linguistic, and social differences between home and school. This creates a crucial need to develop open communication to allow students and teachers to discuss problems encountered. Support networks for students who are having difficulty are provided to build positive relationships between home and school (Calderon et al., 2011; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011).

In order to increase the parental involvement in high ELL population schools it is imperative for leaders and teachers to become culturally responsive and to exhibit those qualities when interacting with parents. The school leaders are encouraged to create an atmosphere welcoming to parents and not allow them to feel intimidated by the faculty (Calderon et al., 2011; Mora, 2009). A significant discrepancy exists between what leaders and teachers believe parents should do and how parents believe they are to support the teaching and learning at the school. Even though trend data from years ago predicted there was going to be an increase in ELL students in K-12 public education, little to no evidence exists to suggest preparations were made to embrace the parents of these students (Garcia & Jensen, 2007; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011).

Creating opportunities for open dialogue to explain parental involvement and to ensure translated documents from the school is easily understood can generate a stronger partnership between school and home. Ramirez and Soto- Hinman (2009) encouraged staff flexibility, a willingness to change behaviors, and to learn about new cultures. These behaviors demonstrate to

families there is not a belief the dominant culture is superior to theirs and working together will help students to be successful in school (p. 82). Good news phone calls, texts, or emails can make a big difference in how parents feel about the school (Calderon et al., 2011).

Schools with bilingual and culturally competent staff to develop sustainable relationships with family members have parents who are more likely to involve themselves in schools and classrooms where Spanish is spoken regularly (Jansen& Garcia, 2008). "Minority-language students develop a stronger sense of self and are more likely to apply themselves academically when teachers show them their language and culture are welcomed in school" (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Asking students to share something from home and describing why it is important is an example of bridging school and home connections. Schools identified as exemplary in supporting new immigrant parents and children found not only celebrating cultural diversity resulted in improved academic achievement, but also high levels of interest in the students' cultures, languages, customs, and values made a number of schools welcoming to parental participation and involvement (Padak & Rasinski, 2010).

For families to become active participants in the school, they must first feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what their children are doing in school. To create a more welcoming climate, educators can providing fact cards printed with important school information, soliciting parents' help in creating the school handbook, hanging parent friendly signs, displaying students' work all over the school, setting up a parent area in the school with cultural and recreational resources, greeting visitors as soon as possible, making parent callers feel comfortable with leaving a message, returning parent phone calls promptly, inviting parents to share their expertise at the school, holding several open houses throughout the

year, forming partnerships with community and faith based organizations, and reaching out to new families who enroll at the school (Padak & Rasinski, 2010).

No ideas are too small to help make a big a difference in parents and community members feeling welcome when they visit the school because it can set the stage for school partnerships to blossom (Padak & Rasinski, 2010). Much of the research on family school relationships clearly indicates increased levels of parental involvement in schools are connected to better outcomes for students. The relationship between parents and school personnel can be complicated when race and class differences exist between a predominantly White middle-class principal and teaching staff and parents of lower socioeconomic status, thereby increasing the social distance between school personnel and parents (Horvat et al., 2010). Although schools want and promote parental involvement, there often exists a tension regarding what kind of involvement schools want and what parents press for on behalf of what they think their children or all children in the community need (Horvat et al., 2010).

Early childhood education is fertile ground for growing cultural understanding with the potential for providing a positive first encounter with mainstream school values for immigrant children and their families. For many immigrant families, this may be the first time a non-relative, with values and socialization beliefs different from those of the home, cares for the child (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Richard Spradling, the 2012 International School Superintendent of the Year, once reflected a common goal voiced by parents around the world is to have a school care for their children. Parents know when schools are high-need schools, and so do school leaders (Medina et al., 2014). Due to a lack of time, resources, or skills, schools may need to work with community organizations to strengthen family involvement, to create more welcoming school environments for diverse families, and to improve family–school relationships

(O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Schools must also make their environments more welcoming for caregivers to practice new skills learned in training classes (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

Teacher Perceptions of Climate

Climate is associated with teacher job satisfaction, attrition rates, and school improvement efforts (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Student outcomes such as behavior problems, substance abuse, and student achievement comprise the ideas of teachers' and students' perceptions of climate (Schueler et al., 2014). Given teachers are the frontline mediators between parents and school personnel; this likely leads to further role strain, especially if parent and community support is poor. Teachers may become exhausted and overwhelmed with the task of aiding children's development (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). In addition, many educators are welcoming students into their classrooms viewing a picture quite different from the school day images of their own childhood and unprepared to meet the needs of the diverse and linguistically different learner and parent (Garcia & Jensen, 2007).

Training for Staff

As ELL populations continue to increase, many classroom teachers are not being adequately trained to differentiate or support these students (Keithley, 2013). However, as of 2000 forty-one percent of teachers had taught English learners, whereas only thirteen percent had received any specialized training. Calderon, et al. (2011) believe schools should improve the training, knowledge, and skills of individual teachers through extensive professional development seminars. Training should include hands on practice with teaching techniques in order to make a significant impact on the lives of students and to yield better outcomes in student learning. Gaps in achievement between English learners and English proficient students signal an increased need for staff preparation and whole school commitment to the English learner population. Ulti-

mately, this creates links between home and school to effectively address the needs of students and to prepare teachers who are unprepared to teach these diverse students (Calderon et al., 2011).

It is imperative for leaders to help teacher candidates view all students positively. Teachers must recognize the multiple strengths students bring to the learning context and provide the special services entitled to them (Chetham et al., 2014). "Schools who serve English learners and other language minority children, especially in regions where most families are struggling economically, provide children their best and perhaps only chance to achieve economic security cannot leave anything to chance (Chetham et al., 2014, p. 43)."

Mora (2009) supports the need for targeted professional learning which goes beyond teacher credentialing and certification programs in the appropriate use of materials and strategies to promote achievement. Stuft and Brogadir (2011) not only supported professional development for the teacher, but also for the principal and school leaders. Lucas (2000) embraced the idea of professional learning through the lens of everyone in the school being constantly engaged in learning. The question is not if, but when teachers will begin to teach ELLs. It is essential for teachers to develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions for providing instructional strategies to optimize learning.

Effective teaching is a critical component to student learning. The time is right and the cause is worthy for American educational leaders to address the problem now (Smith et al., 2008). One element of leadership for success is intensive ongoing staff development for all staff members (Calderon et al., 2011). Awareness of diversity is important, therefore consistently creating professional development opportunities relating to the social and cultural perspectives is essential (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011).

The quality of the instruction, not the program, is what matters most (Calderon et al., 2011). However, there is a critical need in literacy development for teachers to show respect for the student's primary language and home culture; "Just as language and identity are interwoven, so are culture and identity" (Calderon et al., 2011, p. 111). Further studies conducted found no one approach produces academic excellence for English Language Learners. Rather high achievement is associated with factors including the school's capacity to address the needs of the students, a focus on standards based instruction, shared priorities, high expectations, ongoing assessments, and data driven decision making (Mora, 2009). Stufft and Brogadir (2011) support this finding adding one of the most important factors for success is the school and teachers have high expectations for all students, including English language learners. They also added the need to couple this with effective instructional leaders, sound instructional programs, and staff development for teachers (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011).

The administration provides the staff with sound educational and staff development programs, as well as opportunities to addresses the issues surrounding the cultural, political, and ethnic backgrounds of English language learners (Kurtz-Costes & Pungello, 2000). When all faculty members participate in staff development, it helps everyone on the faculty understand the difficulties ELL students encounter. Trained personnel can also serve as mentors to provide learning and teaching resources for ELL students (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011).

Professional development needs to include knowledge and skills with culture, in addition to language and learning activities combined with an understanding of child rearing perspectives among families from diverse backgrounds (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Learning about culture should happen in a non-threating manner. Providing staff training to work with diverse populations can increase family involvement, reduce the negative perceptions of Hispanic families and

provide an understanding of the different types of parental involvement would be beneficial to parents (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

During parent teacher conferences or open houses, not all parents are receptive to divulging information about their children and may perceive the questioning from teachers as prying. Therefore, it is very important to be culturally sensitive when parents become reserved during the questioning of their children (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009). Using positive statements such as, "I enjoy your child's…," or "I like having your child in class" is way to develop a rapport with parents (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009, p. 80). These small phrases show the teacher cares about their child and garners much respect from parents. School leaders successfully navigate the challenges to help ELL parents become more involved foster two-way communication and parental guidance for home support (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009; Panferov, 2010). The authors (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009; Panferov, 2010) encouraged providing positive messages to parents to help establish an open line of communication between parents and schools.

Communication

Even though the term Hispanics is used, the diversity within the population exists in regards to socio-economic status, race, age, country of origin, and degree of acculturation bound only by a common language. A common language can become not so common when multiple factors are added, including dialect and level of understanding. Spanish speaking students represent twenty-percent of the students enrolled in public schools. About seventy-nine percent of English learners in the United States speak Spanish as their native language (Stuft & Brogadir, 2011; Calderon et al., 2011).

Effective communication is the foundation to solid partnerships with families and can lead to positive relationships and easier resolutions when problems arise (Padak & Rasinski,

2010). To aide better communication, Padak and Rasinski (2010) recommend using various forms of communication such as printed letters and emails to keep parents informed, create classroom and school calendars, translate written documents, arrange for translators during school events, promote informal activities for interactions between staff and families, and add a parent corner on the school website with helpful tips.

Principals are encouraged to tap into funding sources to develop translated materials and to furnish interpreters to assist in communicating with parents in their language. Written and verbal communication skills are critical for principal success. Finding key personnel within the community to help facilitate meaningful communication is vital to reach the general population in an acceptable manner to build credibility (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). School principals need to make accommodations for multi-language communication between staff and parents. Letters to parents in their native languages and interpreters at school programs and conferences have proven to be effective strategies to promote participation of immigrant parents (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010).

Communication from the school is generally written in English, including difficult to understand educational jargon. The Spanish translation can sometimes be a challenge for parents. However, failure to send home school calendars, lunch menus, general information, or newsletters in Spanish can result in a higher level of frustration and confusion for children and parents (Smith et al, 2008). School communication should be delivered in a variety of forms including mailings and ideally offered in the parents' first language. In order to do this, the school leaders must know and understand their stakeholders. If information is sent home via email, one cannot assume parents will check their email regularly. Schools should not assume parents can translate

the written information sent home to gain meaning or understanding (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009).

  Forms of Communication A school newsletter created by students including school information, classroom procedures, and learning objectives, test prep tips, and announcements of upcoming events can serve dual roles as an educational opportunity for students and a helpful communication vehicle for parents (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009). Websites should include areas or pages in the common languages of the school (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009). Informal communication is also important to parents when they are dropping students off or picking them up from school (Calderon et al., 2011). Ramirez and Soto-Himan (2009) encourage schools to contact parents within the first two weeks in the school year with a positive phone call to demonstrate interest and learn what can be done to help parents to be involved in their child's academic success. Ensure openness to participation in meetings by parents who do not speak English by providing translators (Calderon et al., 2011).

  Moreover, if the staff do not speak the home language of children and families and the immigrants are not English proficient, then communication problems arise, making cultural demystification much more unlikely (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). U.S. schools must improve communication with immigrant parents and create an atmosphere in which the parents desire this communication. Immigrant parents should be able to improve support for their children by communicating and interacting with their schools and their teachers (Nam & Park, 2014).

Parents' Perception of Climate

  "The quality and character of school life [which is] based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures" (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009,

p. 182). Most research has focused on the student and teacher perceptions of climate, it is important to note parent perspectives to get a more accurate depiction of school climate (Schueler et al., 2014).

Parent's perceptions of school climate can influence whether and how parents engage with the school (Hoover-Dempsey, et al., 2005). Positive perceptions of school climate are correlated with higher levels of parental involvement. Research supports engagement with children's learning is strongly associated with students' academic success and wellbeing. Schools should attempt to understand and improve the way parents perceive the school (Schueler et al., 2014). Parents' perception of the school impacts their decision to move to neighborhoods close to the school, withdraw their students from school, and motivate their students to improve their academic performance. Keeping this in mind, school leaders must be able to assess parents' views of the school to attract and retain students (Schueler et al., 2014).

Leaders often decide to focus on particular areas of climate, such as school safety. However, Schueler et al., (2014) researched parent perceptions of academic climate which they define as how supportive the school environment is for student learning. Conversely, social climate describes how supportive the environment is for student well-being and social development (Schueler et al., 2014, p. 315). It is important for school leaders to attempt to measure parents' perceptions given the amount of influence parents have on children's attitudes about school. Understanding parent's perceptions of school climate can ultimately help to improve learning environments for children and increase family involvement (Schueler et al., 2014).

Parents' Perceptions of Involvement

Where parents decide to send their children to school and their level of engagement are influenced by their perceptions of the school. Immigrant parents pointed their frustration toward

unfamiliarity with the U.S. School System, language barriers, and feeling disrespected which is highly likely to be perpetuated by differences in cultural values and beliefs (Panferov, 2010; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). The responsibility lies with all school personnel to help parents navigate the school culture and to help make the school experience positive for families. Most parents want their children to succeed; however, many families of English Language Learners believe they should not participate in the learning process out of respect for the teacher (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009). Similarly, Smith et al., (2008) also supported the high level of respect Hispanic parents have for teachers and added the parents do not want to over step their boundaries. These researchers portend Hispanic parents believe it is the school's responsibility to instill knowledge and their role as a parent is to provide nurturing and character building (Smith et al., 2008, p. 9). Being culturally sensitive about the factors impacting the amount or type of involvement can provide a different perspective rather than assuming parents do not care about their child's education.

Parent involvement is regarded as a support for individual students and for the school. However, Hispanic parents may feel the support they offer is not enough to help their child achieve academically (Bamaca, 2010). Hispanic parents do provide supportive home environments and do care about a good education for their children (Nam & Park, 2014). Parents believe teachers have low expectations for Hispanic students and do not talk with the parents about their children's education. This is another factor to contribute to the lack of parental involvement in schools. These conflicting beliefs between educators and Hispanic parents are present, in part, because Hispanic parents typically have different beliefs regarding what it means to be involved in their child's education. The school views parents who are not at school as uncaring or uninterested when in fact; it is most often further from the truth (Marx & Larson, 2012).

School Leaders' Perceptions of Involvement

The very essence and fabric of American society has been comprised and built upon the sacrifices of immigrants. Families who flee to America for a better life for their children, only to work long hours for minimum wage, have been largely criticized for their lack of involvement in their children's education (Auerbach, 2007). There is widespread belief among school administrators and teachers Hispanic parents are not involved in their children's academic activities and do not care about their children's academic success because their involvement goes unrecognized by the school due to its less typical nature (Campos, 2008).

U.S. school staff and Hispanic families may have very different ideas on what constitutes family involvement, and schools often overlook the valuable contributions Hispanic parents make to their children's education (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). National statistics (NCES, 2003) indicate Hispanic parents are less likely than white parents to attend general meetings, school events, participate in school committees, or volunteer. In the United States, these activities are recognized as common forms of parental involvement (Campos, 2008; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). Parents' lack of participation should not be linked to a lack of interest or concern for their children's progress or the school's success.

Attitudes are birthed from experiences and assumptions made about students and their families. It is important for teachers to be aware and to determine how their beliefs impact teaching methods and interactions with students (Ramirez & Soto-Hinman, 2009). A common misconception among teachers is assuming every immigrant family has the same background and encounters the same challenges (Ramirez & Soto- Hinman, 2009). School leaders simply asking questions and cultivating openness can avoid this misunderstanding. Most educators' perceptions of Hispanic culture(s), families and people were misconceived based on stereotypes and lack of

knowledge. Simplified stereotypes are more evidence of the biases embedded by teachers and experienced by Hispanics in schools. Lack of regard for education is also a common disturbing perception of teachers with no basis in reality. Although there is limited educational background of some Hispanic parents, no evidence exists to support the belief education is not valued. This belief is instead a stereotype not based on evidence, but deficit thinking (Marx & Larson, 2012). Their study found many of the teachers were unable to relate to their students of color. Consequently, racism influenced their misconceptions of these students.

Suggestions for Improving Involvement

Hispanic families, particularly immigrant ones, face numerous challenges in U.S. educational settings including cultural discontinuities between parents and teachers, indifferent or unresponsive school officials, language barriers and work demands prevent parents from complying with schools' expectations (Klugman et al., 2012). Most ELL students and their families are faced with the demands of learning a new language and adjusting to new and sometimes conflicting cultural norms while learning academic content (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009; Collier & Auerbach, 2011). Involvement is a voluntary process on behalf of the parent and school involvement can help parents learn how to help with homework, what to discuss at home with their children, and the importance of education and setting expectations. However, involvement requires time and resources generally related to household income and family priorities (Christensen et al., 2011, p.77).

Focus on training to help parents learn how to be involved or help with academics. Building leadership skills can teach parents how to work more effectively with schools and become advocates for their children. How to organize community and school partnerships is an additional type of leadership training for parents (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Schools offering workshops

to introduce immigrant parents to the school and providing information about the school's and teachers' expectations help parents to support their children's academic success (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). During workshops, encourage presenters to make more personal and cultural connections with parents to encourage their voice and enhance language development (Collier & Auerbach, 2011). Offering suggestions to parents about home literacy practices to support literacy in English is another best practice (Collier & Auerbach, 2011). Schools need to be prepared to mentor parents about how to partner with teachers and explain to them how they can positively influence their child's education and success (Ramirez & Soto- Hinman, 2009).

A renewed perspective also provides school leaders and teachers with the ability to be prepared to explain the importance of partnering with the school for their child to be successful. Panferov (2010) suggested providing specific examples of how they can be formally involved within the school to become engaged. For example, clarify to parents what it means to volunteer in classes to assist with students. Provide specific details to parents on how to serve as translators at school events or how to share information about their culture with the school. Additional examples included showing parents how to be informally involved through finding resources available at the school or local libraries. Arranging parent workshops about the curriculum and assessments to help them assist with homework can also be very beneficial, even if they are not literate themselves (Panferov, 2010, p. 111).

Successful parental involvement programs begin with a needs assessment to determine language preferences, concerns of parents, and relevance which makes engagement much easier (Collier & Auerbach, 2011). Hispanic families, especially new immigrants or monolingual Spanish- speakers can be encouraged to increase their involvement by creating a well-designed program to yield positive outcomes for children, families, and schools (O'Donnell & Kirkner,

2014). Including Hispanic families' input on program development and implementation will attract families to the program (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Involvement opportunities should be ongoing, not just once a year. When possible, provide childcare, transportation, translation, food, flexible scheduling, and culturally relevant programs can help foster increased parental involvement in schools and eliminate or reduce barriers (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014).

Leadership Impact on Parental Involvement

One of the most critical attributes of effective schools for ELL students is strong leadership (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Many schools desire to show parents and families their home's cultural values and norms are important, but there are very few resources on how to do so (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Building principals are the primary gatekeepers for educational change (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010, p. 147). Based on a principal's belief system regarding an equitable and inclusive education for all students, the vision is set for the school (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). The expectations of principals are critical for ELL student success because the school can determine the level of support provided to engage and empower parents (Aronson & Diaz, 2015). School leaders also set the tone for connecting parents with the support and resources to meet their physical and psychological needs in a respectful manner (Lopez, Scribner & Mahitivanichcha, 2001). Successful principals understand these needs and place a high priority on connecting with ELL families and connecting the families to the school (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

Cultural Understanding. Administrators need to have a basic understanding of students' and families social, economic, and cultural issues as they relate to their native country. Moreover, formal educational experiences, religious, and political views to have an awareness of the types of issues students might bring to school and issues being faced at home impact student out-

comes (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Principals are encouraged to gain an understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds to actively engage immigrant parents and focus on developing authentic, worthwhile, respectful, and cooperative relationships with parents (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Rather than ignore the vast experiences ELLs bring to schools, principals must lead the way to integrate students' language, values, and customs into the schools and to embrace the diverse qualities they bring with them.

It is important for school leaders to promote equity among groups and to support goals of cross-cultural competence while creating positive and ongoing interactions with students' families and the community (Garcia & Jensen, 2007). Principals who implement a variety of approaches to develop strong relationships among the school and immigrant families and communities are most effective in promoting ELLs in their schools (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Principals play a key role in facilitating ELL's success in urban schools (Garcia & Jensen, 2007; Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Exemplary urban principals cultivate ELLs through supporting and educating themselves and staff members about the diverse cultures to make up the student body (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). Principals must be aware of the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity within the school in order to model and facilitate academic and cultural education and competency and should be stewards of a school's culture and climate by taking ELLs beyond learning English (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). They ensure the structures, people, and processes in the school are helping students to make meaningful connections to better understand the educational system as well as social and economic institutions (Lucas, 2000). Principals are leaders in supporting their parent's involvement in their schools.

Teacher Support and Training. Leaders play a key role in making professional development available, accepted, and effective. The first step principals need to take is to recognize

ELLs are the responsibility of all teachers, not just ESL/bilingual teachers (Keithley, 2013). Experimentation with new strategies built on the cultural strengths of children and families acquired at the pre-service or in-service level may be impossible if administrators lack cultural understanding (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Principals can address the needs of teachers by providing support systems and training more often and in smaller increments, incorporating the training into new teacher mentoring, encouraging staff to participate in training opportunities and creating opportunities within the school (Keithley, 2013). Time, money, and qualified staff are needed to deliver professional development opportunities focusing on cultural and linguistic differences and teaching approaches.

Engaging Parents. Leaders should facilitate opportunities to promote social capital among Hispanic immigrant families. Klugman et al., (2012) describe this as a source of social support for families to provide information on how to engage with schools and comply with schools' expectations for parental involvement and thus become more involved in the school and at home. Their parents and communities act as a vital source of valuable social capital which is defined as the resources embedded in the networks of relationships among groups which may enhance an individual's productivity. In the educational context, social capital can be understood as the ways in which students benefit by being members of social networks providing them with positive role models, encouragement, support, and advice (Klugman et al., 2012).

Family structure, household resources, parents' education levels, their educational aspirations for, and interaction with their children, are examples of social capital as it relates to education (Turney & Kao, 2009). Parents can provide social capital to their children by spending more time with them or by engaging in activities to enhance education (Kim, 2011). Effective principals learn to work with parents and the community (Horvat et al., 2010). In addition, recent work

examining administrators' relationships with parents found principals value parental involvement primarily for its power in raising student achievement (Auerbach, 2007). Recent research focuses on the power dynamics often underlying the capacity of schools to work with a variety of parents and the capacity of parents to connect with schools. Horvat et al. (2010) conducted research focused on the notion of cultural capital which analyzes the cultural resources in the home to facilitate the adjustment to the school and community.

Leaders and organizations do not exist in a vacuum (Horvat et al., 2010, p.723). Therefore, it is important for leaders to be trained to assess and understand how they are impacted by the context in which they reside. Building a highly reliable organization with the ability to share information broadly, to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, while holding all staff responsible for progress toward shared goals will lead to success of ELL students. The success of students requires leaders to acknowledge the power of parents and community as important resources. When the principal learns to co-exist and manage the relationships to engage the community successfully by encouraging and supporting the environment, the role of principal can be less complicated (Horvat et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Years of extensive research indicate students and schools perform better when parents are involved in the education of their children. The challenge facing leaders on how to engage parents in high ELL population should become a priority focus. Consequently, it remains such because attention was not paid to the census data over 40 years ago and local schools have not adapted the status quo to embrace the growing diversity within the schools to truly communicate with families within the school communities. Hispanic children bring a welcomed set of talents

to the classroom and educational process. It is important to capitalize on those strengths to improve the educational outcomes of students (Garcia & Jensen, 2008).

As noted earlier, when the first legislation impacting English Language Learners was passed in 1968, there was an awareness of difficulties faced by students. Every 10 years the U.S. Census confirmed exactly what was happening within communities and ultimately, within schools. Despite all of this knowledge and understanding, schools still grapple with how to effectively communicate and formally involve parents in the educational success and wellbeing of their children. It is the responsibility of educational leaders to help many ELLs and their families understand the expectations of American educational institutions. Additionally, educational leaders are responsible for providing staff development to teachers to dismantle the preconceived ideas and stereotypes about parents being unconcerned about their child's progress in order to create a partnership to help each student achieve at their personal best. School by school, leader by leader, family by family, and child by child, change can occur in an environment to eliminate the repetitive cycle of poverty and lack of involvement. Despite poverty within our schools and communities who are diverse in language and opportunity, there exists a potential to achieve greatness.

While researchers argue schools' and teachers' capacities to help immigrant parents and children are generally poor, it is possible to provide outreach to immigrant parents. Translators at school meetings and translated documents to parents are beneficial. Parent-liaisons, special classes for immigrant parents and childcare services allow parents to attend meetings at school and are more likely to exist in schools serving a large Hispanic community and thus in turn promote Hispanic parents' involvement (Klugman et al., 2012).

There is abundant evidence to suggest that in order for schools to be ready for children they must consider culture and its role in human development and schooling. This is critical, especially for immigrant children and their families (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009). Parental involvement programs should be ongoing, culturally relevant, responsive to the community, and should target both families and staff (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). All parents cannot be involved in the same manner. However, understanding the workings of culture can benefit teachers, students, and families to achieve balance between values of home and school; thereby increasing parent involvement and academic success (Rothstein-Fisch et al., 2009).

References

Albert, N., Ennis, S., & Vargas, M. (2008). *National Council Teachers of English*. Retrieved from eric.gov/C2010BR-04

Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parent involvement: Challenges in contested times*. Retrieved from eric.ed.gov/ ED506652

Aronson, R., & Diaz, A. (2015). The power of partnerships in ELL instruction. *Principal Leadership*, 15(6), 16-18.

Auerbach, S. (2007). From moral supporters to struggling advocates: Reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color. *Urban Education*, 42, 250-283.

Azzam, A. (2009). Getting parents-and a system-on board. *Educational Leadership*, 66(7), 92-93.

Bamaca, M. A. (2010, May 17). *How Hispanic parents can help children succeed in school*. Retrieved from http://www.education.com/reference/article/important-role-parents-Hispanic-youth-succed/

Brooks, K., Adams, S. R., & Morita-Mullaney, T. (2010). Creating inclusive learning communities for ELL students: Transforming school principals' perspectives. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(2), 145-151.

Batt, E. G. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: Potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education*, 15(3), 39-43.

Bitterman, A., Goldring, R., & Gray, L. (2013). *Characteristics of public and private elementary and secondary school principals in the United States: Results from the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey* (NCES 2013-313). Washington, DC:

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Boser, U. (2014, May). Teacher diversity revisited: A new state-by-state analysis. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/report/2014/05/04/88962/teacher-diversity-revisited/

Burden, B. & Byrd, D.M. (2013). *Methods of effective teaching: Meeting the needs of all students* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Calderon, M., Slavin, R., & Sanchez, M. (2011). Effective instruction for English learners. *Future of Children*, 21(1), 103-127.

Campos, R. (2008). Considerations for studying father involvement in early childhood among Hispanic families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 30(2), 133-160.

Ceballo, R. (2004). From barriers to Yale: The role of parenting strategies in Hispanic families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 26, 171-186.

Cheatham, G., Jimenez-Silva, M., Wodrich, D., & Kasai, M. (2014). Disclosure of information about English proficiency: Pre-service teachers' presumptions about English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(1), 53-62.

Christensen, K., Schneider, B., & Butler, D. (2011). Families with school-age children. *Future of Children,* 21(2), 69-90.

Collier, S., & Auerbach, S. (2011). "It's Difficult because of the Language": A Case Study of the Families Promoting Success Program in the Los Angeles Unified School District. *Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 10-15.

Cohen, J., McCabe, E., Michelli, N., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 111, 180–213.

Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & McCloskey, M. (2009). *The challenge of assessing school climate.* Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/The-Challenge-of-Assessing-School-Climate.aspx

Desimone, L. (1999). Linking parent involvement with student achievement: Do race and income matter? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 93(1), 11-30.

ELL Funding. (2011). *Course Crafters Guide to the ELL Market, 2011-2012*. Retrieved from http://www.coursecrafters.com/Market-Research.html#guide2011

Farruggio, P. (2010). Hispanic immigrant parents' Views of Bilingual Education as a Vehicle for Heritage Preservation. *Journal of Hispanics & Education*, 9(1), 3-21.

Garcia, E. & Jensen, B. (2007). Helping young Hispanic learners. *Educational Leadership*, 64(6), 34-39.

Grayson, J., & Alvarez, H. (2008). School climate factors relating to teacher burnout: A mediator model. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 1349–1363. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2007.06.005

Harper, S. N., & Pelletier, J. (2010). Parent involvement in early childhood: a comparison of English language learners and English first language families. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 18(2), 123-141. doi:10.1080/09669760.2010.496162

Hill, N. & Tyson, D.F. (2009). Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology,* 45(3), 740-763.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106, 105–130.

Horvat, E., Curci, J., & Partlow, M. (2010). Parents, principals, and power: A historical case study of "Managing" parental involvement. *Journal of School Leadership*, 20(6), 702-727.

Janzen, J. (2008). Teaching English language learners in the content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 1010-1038.

Jeynes, W. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficiency of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. *Urban Education*, 47(4), 706-742.

Keithley, M. (2013). Collaboration keys for English language learners. Retrieved from http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/standards/research%20support%20for%202013%20stands.pdf

Kim, H. (2011). Parents' perceptions, decisions, and influences: Korean immigrant parents look at language learning and their children's identities. *Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 16-19.

Klugman, J., Lee, J., & Nelson, S. (2012). School co-ethnicity and Hispanic parental involvement. *Social Science Research*, 41(5), 1320-1337.

Kuperminc, G. P., Darnell, A. J., & Alvarez-Jimenez, A. (2008). Parent involvement in the academic adjustment of Latino middle and high school youth: Teacher expectations and school belonging as mediators. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(2), 469–483.

Kurtz-Costes, B., & Pungello, E. P. (2000, March). Acculturation and immigrant children: Implications for educators. *Social Education*, 64(2), 121-125.

LeFevre, A. L., & Shaw, T. V. (2012). Hispanic parent involvement and school success: Longitudinal effects of formal and informal support. *Education and Urban Society*, 44(6), 707-723.

Lopez, F. & McEneaney (2012). State implementation of language acquisition policies and reading achievement among Hispanic students. *Educational Policy,* 26(3), 418-464.

Lopez, G. R., Scribner, J. D., & Mahitivanichcha, K. (2001). Redefining parental involvement: Lessons from high-performing migrant-impacted schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(2), 253-88.

Lucas, T. T. (2000). Facilitating the transitions of secondary English language learners: Priorities for principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 32(2), 842-16.

Marx, S., & Larson, L. L. (2012). Taking off the color-blind glasses: Recognizing and supporting Hispanic/o students in a predominantly white school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(2), 259-303.

Medina, V., Martinez, G., Murakami, E., Rodriguez, M., & Hernandez, F. (2014). Principals' perceptions from within: Leadership in high-need schools in the USA. *Management in Education* (Sage Publications, Ltd.), 28(3), 91-96. doi:10.1177/0892020614537664

Misco, T., & Castaneda, M. E. (2009). "Now, what should I do for English language learners?" Reconceptualizing social studies curriculum design for ELLs. *Educational Horizons*, 87(3), 182-189.

Mora, J. (2009). From the ballot box to the classroom. *Educational Leadership*, 66(7), 14-19.

Nam, B., & Park, D. (2014). Parent involvement: Perceptions of recent immigrant parents in a suburban school district, Minnesota. *Educational Studies* (03055698), 40(3), 310-329.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2014). *Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools.* Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp

National Education Goals Panel. (1998). The national education goals report: Building a nation of learners. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

O'Donnell, J., & Kirkner, S. L. (2014). The impact of a collaborative family involvement program on Hispanic families and children's educational performance. *The School Community Journal,* 24(1), 211-234.

Padak, N. & Rasinski, T. V. (2010). Welcoming schools: Small changes that can make a big difference. *The Reading Teacher,* 64(1), 294–297. doi: 10.1598/RT.64.4.12

Panferov, S. (2010). Increasing ELL parental Involvement in our schools: Learning from the parents. *Theory Into Practice*, 49(2), 106-112. doi:10.1080/00405841003626551

Park, M. & McHugh (2014). *Immigrant parents and early childhood programs: Addressing barriers of literacy, culture, and systems knowledge.* Retrieved from http://migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-parents-early-childhood-programs-barriers

Parra-Cordova, J., Cordova, D. R., Holtrop, K., Villaruel, F., & Wieling, E. (2008). Shared ancestry, evolving stories: similar and contrasting life experiences described by foreign born and U.S. born Hispanic parents. *Family Process*, 47(2), 157-172.

Ramírez, A.Y. & Soto-Hinman, R. (2009). A place for all families. *Educational Leadership*, 17(1), 79-82.

Rothstein-Fisch, C., Trumbull, E., & Garcia, S. (2009). Making the implicit explicit: Supporting teachers to bridge cultures. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 24(4), 474-486.

Schueler, B. E., Capotosto, L., Bahena, S., McIntyre, J., & Gehlbach, H. (2014). Measuring parent perceptions of school climate. *Psychological Assessment*, 26(1), 314-320. doi:10.1037/a0034830

Smith, J., Stern, K., & Shatrova, Z. (2008). Factors inhibiting Hispanic parents' school involvement. *Rural Educator,* 29(2), 8-13.

Stover, D. (2007). The big fixes now needed for "No Child Left Behind." *Education Digest*, 72(7), 4-11.

Stufft, D. L., & Brogadir, R. (2011). Urban principals' facilitation of English language learning in public schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 43(5), 560-575.

Tableman, B., & Herron, A. (2004). School climate and learning. *Best Practice Briefs*, 31(1), 1-10.

Tan, E. T. & Goldberg, W. A. (2009) Parental school involvement in relation to children's grades and adaptation. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(4), 442-453.

Theoharis, G., & O'Toole, J. (2011). Leading inclusive ELL: Social justice leadership for English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(4), 646-688.

Turney, K., & Kao, G. (2009). Barriers to school involvement: Are immigrant parents disadvantaged? *Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 257-271.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2011, May). *Hispanic population quick facts*. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov

U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). *Changing nation: Percent Hispanic of the U.S. population:1980-2050.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/newsroom/facts-for-features/2014/cb14-ff22_graphic.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *No Child Left Behind Act*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *Parental involvement, Title I Part A: Parental involvement guidance.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.pdf

Vera, E. M., Israel, M. S., Coyle, C., Cross, J., Knight-Lynn, L., Moallem, I., Bartucci, G., & Goldberger, N. (2012). Exploring the educational involvement of parents of English learners. *The School Community Journal*, 22(2), 183-202.

Verdugo, R. R., & Flores, B. (2007). English-Language learners: Key issues. *Education and Urban Society,* 39(2), 167-193.

Zarate, M. (2007). *Understanding Hispanic parental involvement in education.* Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED502065.pdf

2 THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT WITHIN SCHOOLS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Introduction

A review of print and online media reports could lead the reader to develop a perception that public education and public schools are failing students. Negative perceptions of schools are portrayed in movies like "Waiting for Superman" and "Bad Teacher." Additionally, "Waiting for Superman" makes viewers cry, rather than laugh. Proponents of public education believe such popular movies provide an inaccurate and one-dimensional picture of teachers, students, and public schools. The various laws and influences of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Common Core, and Race to the top have heightened the debate about public education. As accountability increases with high stakes testing to measure student success, teacher effectiveness, and report card grades for schools, negative opinions continue to surge. In 2009, the Georgia School Super-intendents Association Board of Directors and the Georgia School Boards Associations Board of Directors sanctioned the Georgia Vison Project to dispel the negative myths about public educa-tion and garner support for public education (Georgia Vision Project, 2013).

Leadership practices within schools with high English Language Learner (ELL) popula-tions influence school climate and the degree of parental involvement (Klar & Brewer, 2013; Baecher, Knoll & Patti, 2013). One of the most critical attributes of effective schools for ELL students is strong leadership (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Effective school leaders ensure fami-lies of ELL students are connected with their schools (Klar & Brewer, 2013). Meaningful com-munity engagement is an important component of the Georgia Vision Project to improve the quality of education within the state of Georgia. The community engagement recommendations can be found embedded in Component 8: Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy, one of

the seven components from the Georgia Vision Project. Effective leaders of ELL students were those who could communicate with families and enlist their support in creative and meaningful ways to bridge the school–home divide (Peterson & Heywood, 2007). This, in turn, motivates parents of ELL students to work with their child's school regardless of their social background (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). This may contribute to learning experiences of both the students and the parents (Baecher et al., 2013). Using a multiple instrumental case study approach, the impact of the Georgia Vision Project on public education and the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations were examined. This model allows for two or more cases or research sites with the same attributes to be explored to provide insight into an issue or theme (Creswell, 2014; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Boozer, 2015; Stake, 1995).

"Everything rises and falls on leadership," (Maxwell, 2007). Leaders within the state determined it was time for renewed faith in public education. Hence, a partnership between leaders of the Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia School Superintendents Association developed the Georgia Vision Project to display the creation of a new vision for public education (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010). The project is divided into seven educational system components and provides an introduction, guiding principles, key issues, current practices of promise, and recommendations for each. The goal of the Vision Project is to provide all children in Georgia an equitable and excellent education, which prepares them for college, career, and life (GA Vision Project for Public Education, 2010). This study will examine the Vision Project and describe the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in two school districts. The research questions guiding the study include:

1. How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in your school district?

2. What are the features of the education component of Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy of the Vision Project specifically impacted learning in your school district?

3. How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped build the capacity of self and others in your school?

The secondary focus was explored through the context of Standard 8.0: Culture, Climate, & Organizational Efficacy, one of the seven Vision Project components. The following research question guided the secondary study:

4. What leadership practices are being implemented to influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations?

Standard 8.0 stresses the importance for school leaders to develop intentional processes for building positive relations with external stakeholders. The premise is community engagement and support is critical to school success. The Vision Project recommendations expand this to include leadership practices, which influence parental involvement in school districts with high ELL populations. The implementation of these practices was explored through the context of looking closely at the following Vision Project recommendations:

8.2 Make each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents, staff and the larger community.

8.4 Determine stakeholder perceptions of schools and school districts.

8.6 Develop school and district cultures that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve (GA Vision Project for Public Education in Georgia, 2013).

Theoretical framework

Social justice leadership serves as the theoretical framework utilized to determine the leadership practices being implemented to influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. As public schools become more diverse and the number of English Language Learners increases, the implications for social justice leadership have emerged as a major focus for educational leaders to improve the educational outcomes of historically marginalized groups (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Kemp-Graham, 2015). The concept of social justice focuses on groups, which are most often underserved, underrepresented, and undereducated and face various forms of oppression in schools (Dantley & Tillman, 2010, p. 23). While there are various definitions of social justice leadership, a common theme involves the recognition of the unequal circumstances with actions directed toward eliminating inequalities (Bogotch, 2002; Dantley & Tillman, 2010; Furman, 2012). Theoharis' (2007) definition of social justice leadership informed this qualitative research study. It is defined as principals whose vision, mission, and decision making is driven by a desire to advocate, lead, and provide equitable access in spite of issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States which expands to include English Language Learners (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223).

"No fixed or predictable meanings of social justice exist prior to actually engaging in educational leadership practices" (Bogotch, 2002, p. 153). Based on this premise, social justice leadership is a process that is continually reconstructed, reinvented, and critiqued in response to shifting needs of the school and community (Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, & Hodgins, 2007). School leaders who exhibit social justice orientations not only recognize inequality, but also possess the ability to implement or eliminate practices to improve and provide an equitable and in-

clusive education for all students (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). Social justice leaders resist, "the historic disconnect between marginalized families and schools … to create warm and welcoming school climates and also reached out to the community and in particular to disenfranchised families" ((Theoharis, 2007, p. 237). Leadership for social justice is, "action oriented" and "involves identifying and undoing these oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (Furman, 2012, p. 194). Examining the implementation of leadership practices to influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations through the lens of social justice leadership provides an opportunity to determine what specific ongoing actions, skills, habits of mind, and competencies are continually being created, questioned, and refined (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014, p. 847).

This multiple instrumental case study will examine the influence of leadership practices on parent involvement in schools with high ELL populations in two Vision Project implementation school districts. A qualitative research design, "locates an observer in the world and interprets findings in their natural settings to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). It allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed within culture, and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Qualitative research is an umbrella concept inclusive of various forms of inquiry to help provide understanding and explain the meaning of social phenomena with minimal disruption to the natural settings (Merriam, 1998, p. 5). Yin (2014) specifically adds that case study research covers the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis (p. 17).

Methodology

The purpose of this research study is to determine to what extent the Georgia Vision Project's implementation has impacted school culture in two different high implementation school districts. Additionally, these school districts were studied to determine which leadership practices are being implemented to achieve high levels of parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. Although teachers work directly with English Language Learner (ELL) students, strong leadership, and the role played by school leaders are of vital importance. Strong leadership is one of the most critical attributes of effective schools for ELL students (Baecher, Knoll, & Patty, 2013; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). This research will examine the practices implemented by leaders within two school districts, and will develop a framework based on these practices for other school leaders with similar populations. Ultimately, it may inform the research literature on parental involvement in schools. The focus and method of collecting data will help bind this multiple instrumental case study to remain reasonable in scope (Creswell, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

Researchers hold individual beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions, which has the potential to influence the research. As a result, it is impossible to disconnect from what you know or believe to be true as a researcher (Charmaz, 2006). The Georgia State University Review Board process was followed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in the study. Consent to participate in this study was obtained from all participants prior to the start of this study (Creswell, 2012). Each participant was provided with a consent form (Appendix B) to read and sign prior to beginning the recorded interview. The secondary research question focused on examining the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations.

Therefore, parent interviewees in the study included parents with limited English proficiency, which is considered a vulnerable population. In order to protect the vulnerable populations in the study, a certified translator translated all emails requesting an interview (Appendix B) and informed consent forms (Appendix A) from English to Spanish for limited English proficiency and bilingual participants. All non-native English speakers were offered a translator for the entire interview and follow-up interview process, if needed, for any questions. All of the parent interviewees were bilingual, chose to speak English, and chose not to have a translator present although offered. They preferred for the interview to be conducted in English.

Participants were continuously informed about their right to withdraw from the study without penalty. Nine participants were interviewed from Destination and nine from Pioneer districts. One of the district participants in Destination withdrew from the study immediately following the review of the transcript, but was replaced by another participant from the district. Participants received copies of all documents including the Georgia State Informed Consent and Vision Project documents, if applicable. The pseudonyms Destination and Pioneer were assigned to the districts, Green and Bronco were assigned as pseudonyms for the two elementary schools within the districts, and each participant was also assigned a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality and protect their identities (Table 1).

Table 1
Interview Data Collection Chart

Interview	Interviewee	Pseudonym	Date/Time		Number of Minutes for Interview	Number of Pages Transcribed
		Destination Public Schools- Green Elementary				
1	DTI	Dr. Everson	7/23/15	2:00 PM	33	16
2	DCI	Dr. Parsons	8/20/15	4:00 PM	36	14
3	DEL	Ms. Duggar	7/24/15	1:00 PM	48	21
4	DSL	Ms. Milliken	7/23/15	4:00 PM	60	29
5	DAP	Ms. Aspen	7/24/15	8:00 AM	53	23
6	DPI	Ms. Latten	8/21/15	8:00 AM	27	12
7	DPI	Ms. Rivera	8/21/15	9:00 AM	20	2
8	DP2	Ms. Demarco	8/21/15	9:45 AM	22	6
9	DP3	Ms. Urstadt	8/21/15	11:30 AM	24	4
Total Minutes					323	127
		Pioneer Public Schools- Bronco Elementary				
1	PTI	Ms. Renaldo	9/2/15	4:00 PM	41	18

2	PCI	Dr. Caman	7/20/15	3:00 PM	56	24
3	PEL	Ms. Weston	7/22/15	8:30 PM	61	35
4	PSL	Dr. Waverly	7/6/15	11:00 AM	88	27
5	PAP	Ms. Lann	8/28/15	8:00 AM	39	17
6	PPI	Ms. Ventura	8/28/15	9:00 AM	53	24
7	PP1	Ms. Napier	9/8/15	3:15 PM	27	4
8	PP2	Ms. Chanel	9/14/15	10:19 AM	25	4
9	PP3	Ms. Pedro	9/10/15	4:00 PM	18	2
Total Minutes					408	151

Case design

Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County Public Schools are Tier 1 districts determined by utilizing the Vision Project's Executive Director as an informant regarding which districts were implementing the project with fidelity. Implementing with fidelity was defined as tying one or more recommendations of the Vision Project to the district's strategic plan or other operationalization (Berry, 2014). A multiple instrumental case study design was employed to collect data for the two districts selected for the study because they met the criteria of implementing the Vision Project with fidelity. Additionally, Destination and Pioneer School Districts were deemed by project leaders to address the secondary focus of leadership practices influencing parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations as determined by their district's average in comparison to the state of Georgia average.

Data Collection

High fidelity Implementation Districts

Destination County Public Schools (DCPS). Destination County Public Schools is a small urban Title I charter public school district located in Southeast Georgia. Five members, elected to serve four-year terms on a non-partisan basis, govern the Board of Education in Destination County Public Schools. Monthly meetings are held for school business, and the Superintendent serves as the Chief Executive Officer who is appointed by the board. The current Superintendent has been in office for more than five years. The leadership guides the policies and decisions in the district through their mission and vision to prepare students for college and careers while providing an exemplary education for every student. Destination County Public Schools consists of twelve schools which includes over three elementary schools (pre-kindergarten through grade five), one middle school (grades six through eight), a ninth-grade academy, one

senior high school (grades ten through twelve), and one alternative school (grades six through twelve) to serve the approximately 7,400 students within the district (GADOE, 2014). Destination County Public Schools employs over 1,095 individuals spread among the twelve schools and support offices within the district.

  Pioneer County Public Schools (PCPS). Pioneer County Public Schools is one of the largest urban public school districts in the state of Georgia. Five members who are elected on a staggering basis to serve a four-year term on a non-partisan basis also govern the Board of Education in Pioneer County Public Schools. The members represent different geographic districts based on geographic boundary lines. Monthly meetings are held for making decisions and addressing the community. The CEO/Superintendent is appointed by the school board and has served for over ten years. The leadership guides the policies and decisions in the district through their mission and vision to prepare students academically and behaviorally for college and careers to compete among the best in the world. Pioneer County Public Schools employs over 6,000 individuals spread among the one hundred schools and support offices to serve the more than 150,000 students (GADOE, 2014). Pioneer County Public Schools consists of over sixty elementary schools (pre-kindergarten through grade five), almost thirty middle schools (grades six through eight), about twenty high schools (grades nine through twelve), and several charter and special entity schools to serve the approximately 170,000 students within the district (GADOE, 2014).

  Destination Public Schools is considered a Title I district because over seventy-five percent of students receive free and reduced lunch, while Pioneer County Public Schools is considered a majority minority school district because of the demographic make-up of its student body. Pioneer exhibits a significant difference in student population from Destination. Pioneer also has

a larger percentage of students identified as English Language Learners (Table 2) (GOSA, 2013). Destination and Pioneer County Public Schools list strategic goals and priorities for accomplishing their mission, vision, and supporting the students in their districts. In Destination County Public Schools, there is evidence embedded within the guiding principles of the connection to the Vision Project; however the connection to the Vision Project in Pioneer County Public Schools is not as apparent and is interwoven into the strategic priorities (Georgia Vision Project for Public Education, 2014). While a connection to the Vision Project is not explicitly stated in either district, the strategic priorities found on the district websites and within district documents in Destination County Schools align to the Vision Project components of a) Teaching and Learning, b) Governance, Leadership, and Accountability, and c) Financial Resources. Based on the district website and documents obtained, the alignment to the Vision Project in Pioneer County Schools is aligned to the Vision Project components of a) Early Learning and Student Success, b) Teaching and Learning, c) Human and Organizational Capital, and d) Governance, Leadership, and Accountability. Even though Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County Public Schools differ in geographic location, student demographics, and student enrollment, they both desire to transform education in Georgia based on their resolution in support of the Georgia Vision for Public Education.

Table 2

Case Study School District Characteristics for the 2014-2015 School Year*

Variable	Destination	Pioneer
Number of Students	7,400	170,000
White/Caucasian students (%)	50	27
Black/African American students (%)	31	31
Asian/ Pacific Islander students (%)	1	9
Hispanic students (%)	16	28
American Indian/Alaskan Native students (%)	1	1
Multiracial students (%)	1	4
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible students (%)	$\geq$75	$\geq$55
English Language Learners (%)	$\geq$7	$\geq$16

*Georgia Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), 2013)

Participants. The instrumental case study includes eighteen participants, including nine

individuals from Destination and Pioneer school districts (three district leaders, three school

leaders and three parents). The school system's leader or his or her designee's knowledge about

the Vision Project's implementation was used to access and identify participants (Berry, 2014).

Nine of the participants in the study were leaders chosen from the approximately 1,100 Destina-

tion County Public Schools employees and from over 15,000 employees within Pioneer County

Public Schools (see Table 3). Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was uti-

lized for selection of three leaders within Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County

Public Schools based on theory or concept sampling techniques as identified by their connection

to the Vision Project and the ability to help formulate a theory or specific concepts. Non-

probability purposeful sampling of participants was chosen to discover, understand and gain in-

sight of the leaders' knowledge of the Vision Projects implementation (Creswell, 2012). In addition, through purposeful homogenous sampling the most can be learned from these participants about the secondary focus regarding their knowledge of leadership practices influence on parental involvement in high ELL population schools within their school district (Merriam, 1998; Creswell 2012).

Table 3
Participant Demographics

Variable	Destination	Pioneer
Number of Participants (3 District, 3 School Leaders and 3 Parents)	9	9
Years of Experience (District and School Leaders)	10-20	10-20
Age of Participants	27-60	24-55
White/Caucasian Participants (%)	67	45
Black/African American Participants (%)	0	22
Hispanic Participants (%)	33	33
Other Participants (%)	0	0

Due to the unfamiliarity of the elementary schools with characteristics of the secondary focus within Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County Public Schools, the snowball sampling method was used with the district leader interviewees or informant to recommend elementary schools for participation (Creswell, 2012). The criteria presented for inclusion in the multiple instrumental case study was an elementary school identified as having a high ELL student population greater than the Destination County Public Schools average (7% Destination County Public Schools, 16% Pioneer County Public Schools). In addition, the leadership

practices needed to influence parental involvement. Even though there were seven elementary schools in Destination County Public Schools and over seventy schools in Pioneer County Public Schools, all schools did not meet the above criteria. The three school leaders were selected from a pool of candidates within each district to include principals, assistant principals, and parent instructional coordinators. The principals interviewed in Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County Public Schools identified three parents from each of their schools to be interviewed to gain parent perceptions of the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement.

Four interview protocols were developed for this study (See Appendix). The questions were used to guide the semi-structured interview and were based on the interviewee's position and the focus of the research. The first protocol (Appendix 1) was for the three district level interviewees, and the second protocol (Appendix 2) was for the two principals regarding the primary research focus of the implementation of the Vision Project. Both the first and second interview protocols consisted of twelve questions. The third interview protocol (Appendix 3) consisted of fourteen questions and was designed for the principals, assistant principals and parent instructional coordinator concerning the secondary focus of the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. The final protocol (Appendix 4) was developed with thirteen questions to gain the parent's perspective on the influence of leadership practices and parental involvement.

Interviews. The interviews were held within the employing school district of the participants to build rapport and to reduce the potential for socially desirable responses (Krefting, 1991). Participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identities (Creswell, 2012). The data collection process included a one-hour minimum, semi-structured audio recorded one-on-

one interview of a district leader within Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer County

Public Schools. The school system's leader or his or her designee's knowledge about the Vision

Project's implementation was used to select the schools used in the study. The additional inter-

views within each district were semi-structured and audio recorded. Notes were taken with an

interview protocol to guide the research (Creswell, 2014). Yin (2014) stresses the importance of

the interview process and necessity to include questions satisfying the line of inquiry while sim-

ultaneously putting forth "friendly" and "nonthreatening" questions (p. 110).

Interviews are essential sources of information as reflected in the studies about human af-

fairs or actions. However, they should only be considered verbal reports due to common prob-

lems of bias, poor recall, and inadequate or inaccurate articulation (Yin, 2014; Merriam, 1998).

Therefore, it is necessary to corroborate interview data with additional sources of information,

which is a major strength of case study data collection and enhances credibility (Yin, 2014, p.

113). The use of multiple data provides different sources of evidence and allows the conclusion

in case study research to be more convincing (Yin, 2014).

Documents. (Appendix D). In addition to each one-on-one interview, supporting docu-

ments were also gathered as sources from Destination County Public Schools and Pioneer Coun-

ty Public Schools to triangulate the data. According to Yin (2014), triangulation is a validity pro-

cedure occurring when more than a single source of evidence supported the case study findings.

Documents included public and private records regarding the fidelity of implementation or

alignment to the Vision Project, organizational structure charts, district initiatives, leadership

practices, and parental involvement. The documents provided information about individuals

mentioned in an interview and specific details to support information gathered from other

sources (Yin, 2014, p. 107). Leadership practice documents including types of school communi-

cation to parents in English or Spanish regarding school events or curriculum was collected. Parental Involvement documents demonstrating parental involvement at schools including visitor log data, school pictures, PTA information, and school workshops will also be assembled. Creswell (2012) stresses the importance of checking documents for accuracy and credibility. Copies were made of the documents and any identifying information was removed. Each data document is one piece of the puzzle, with each piece contributing to more in depth understanding of the school districts in this study (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). The multiple sources of data uncovered findings for convergence to form themes or categories employed during this study to analyze the data from interviews and documents (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Time frame. A frequent concern about case study research noted by Yin (2014) is the potential for the research to take too long and become unmanageable due to the complex data collection process. A minimum of one semi-structured interview with each of the Vision Project designees or secondary focus designees, local school designees, and parent designees was conducted. The data collection process was conducted over approximately four to six months. Coordinating face-to-face interviews with eighteen participants in two districts approximately three hundred miles apart increased the amount of time required for data collection. Collection of documents and artifacts occurred simultaneously throughout the study. After the interviews were conducted, the information was transcribed and provided to the interviewees for member checking to improve credibility (Thomas, 2006). The data analysis process began following the verification of the interpretations of the data.

Data Analysis

Before meaning can be established, it is important to note, "Whatever the study and method, the indications of form, quantity and scope must be obtained from the question, chosen

method, selected topic and goals, and in an ongoing process, from the data" (Morse & Richards, 2006, p.73). A constructivist framework and general inductive approach to data analysis were used in the research to make coding decisions about the categories and themes throughout the qualitative data collected in this study to represent a concept of potential interest (Charmaz, 2006; Yin, 2014). The general inductive approach has some similarity with the pattern coding, but the outcomes of inductive coding differ from pattern coding. The general inductive approach with thematic analysis may involve causes or explanations and relations among people to obtain an understanding of a phenomenon, rather than test a hypothesis (Thomas, 2006; Jebreen, 2012).

Examining the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations was framed using the general inductive approach. The strength of utilizing this approach allows the research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes implicit in the summary of raw data without imposing the restraints of structured methodologies. A general inductive approach provides a systematic process to allow research questions to be answered without having to wrestle with complex issues of philosophy and technical language (Thomas, 2006). This approach also allows for a model or theory to be developed based on concepts or themes made through interpretations made from the data. Establishing clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings ensure these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated by others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research). The development of the categories into a model or framework summarizes the data and conveys key themes are an outcome of utilizing the inductive analysis approach (Thomas, 2006). Inductive analysis begins with multiple sources of information, broadens to several specific themes, and then on to the most general themes represented by the perspectives, which move from the concrete to the abstract (Creswell, 2012).

Coding is not simply part of data analysis: it is the "fundamental analytic process used by the researcher" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). It transports researchers and data collected from transcript to theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). When coding the data, boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident or distinguishable in real world situations (Yin, 2014). This systematic process allowed the data to be broken down, compared, and categorized into new categories through which themes and theories were constructed. Each school district was an independent case study and the connections to the Georgia Vision Project were evaluated. A cross case analysis was completed to compare and contrast the themes emerging from the data within each district (Yin, 2014).

Thematic analysis is a flexible method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns in data. Themes are determined by the relationship between the research question and patterned responses within a set of data (Braun & Clark, 2006; Jebreen, 2012). An inductive approach to thematic analysis means the themes are linked to the data, but the data is not being forced to fit in a pre-existing coding frame. When formulating categories, the researcher comes to a decision through interpretation regarding which things to include in the same category (Dey, 1993). Thematic analysis can examine the effects of experiences, events, and realities operating within society and make any assumptions transparent (Jebreeen, 2012). Braun and Clark (2006) identify six phases of the thematic analysis process which includes: 1) Becoming familiar with the data, 2) Generating initial codes, 3) Searching for themes, 4) Reviewing Themes, 5) Defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report (p. 87). Within these phases transcribing data, finding interesting features of the data, collating the data, generating a thematic map and clear definitions of each theme emerge to generate a report of the analysis. Applying the thematic analysis process to code the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL

populations provided a structure to analyze systematically the organization in two school districts. Fossey, Epstein, Findlay, Plant, and Harvey (2002) described this type of comparison in thematic analysis as a constant comparative method, which compares groups with seemingly unrelated data to create a definition of categories or themes within data.

Version 1.0 qualitative computer analysis software was used to assist with further analysis of the data collected (Dedoose, 2016). Using a database, like Dedoose improved the reliability of this study as it enables the data to be tracked and organized, while also recognizing the limitations of distancing the researcher from the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). In this study, data analysis included strategies for achieving credibility (confidence), transferability (applicability), dependability (consistent), and confirmability (neutrality), which are crucial components in the process (Yin, 2014; Krefting 1991). Key elements included in this study to enhance trustworthiness included: enough details to ensure validity and credibility; a design appropriate for questions; clearly written case study questions; appropriate sampling strategies; systematically collecting and managing data; and analyzing the data correctly (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Although Dedosoe was the qualitative computer software used to assist with the data analysis, twenty codes were initially generated for this thematic analysis approach. As mentioned earlier, when utilizing a thematic analysis approach the data is linked to themes, but there is not a need for a pre-existing coding framework. Therefore, decisions were made to categorize the data based on the relationship between the responses and the research question. Dedoose created a word cloud based on the frequency of the patterned responses used by the participants during the interview. From the codes, themes emerged to address the research questions (Table 4) (Braun & Clark, 2006; Jebreen, 2012). The larger the word in the word the cloud below the more prominent the codes and themes were expressed by the participants (Figure 1).
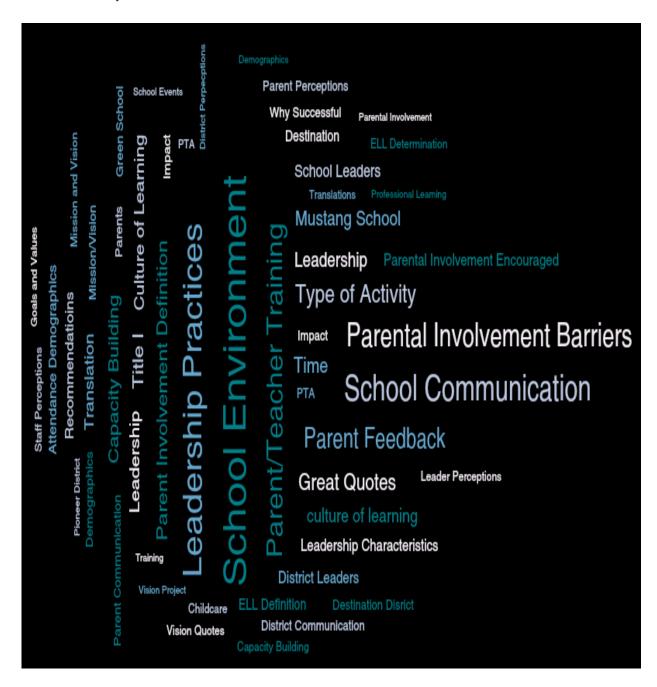
Table 4
Thematic Analysis Table

Research Questions	Emerging Themes
1. How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in your school district?	Stable school district leadership, consistent mission and vision implementation, clearly outlined strategic goals and priorities, frequent communication with internal and external stakeholders, leadership development academies for succession planning, specific organizational structure for central office and schools, alignment of Vision Project educational components to the district initiatives, a commitment to restoring confidence in public education
2. What are the features of the education component of Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy of the Vision Project specifically impacted learning in your school district?	District expectations for all students to learn at high levels, utilizing Title I parent instructional coordinators to engage families, creating processes to welcome students who are linguistically diverse and continuous quality improvement through the on-going monitoring of school improvement plans
3. How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped build the capacity of self and others in your school?	Parent involvement coordinator facilitating many workshops for parents including English Classes, On-going professional development for teachers and leaders within the schools and at the district
4. What leadership practices are being implemented to influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations?	Creating an inviting school environment for families, frequent communication with families to keep them informed about school events and workshops, translating documents and meetings for Spanish speaking families, strategies being implemented to reduce or eliminate parental involvement barriers, ensuring the safety and security of all students, high expectations for teaching and learning for all students, and the visibility and accessibility of the principals to parents

Figure 1
Thematic Analysis Word Cloud

Results

Internal Contexts + Vision Project Implementation = Learning and Leadership?

The first research question aims to understand how the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in Destination and Pioneer school districts. While the majority of the district and school leaders who were interviewed knew specifically about the Vision Project without reviewing any of the Vision documents, all of the leaders, once provided with the documents, could explicitly see the alignment in their districts. However, Destination's account of the Vision Project implementation was vastly different from that of Pioneer. One distinct finding was the impact the implementation of the Vision Project had in Destination district. Dr. Everson, Dr. Parsons, and Ms. Milliken categorized the Vision Project as a "blessing". They believed it allowed for everyone in Destination, including the stakeholders, to "be on the same page to create a learning environment for success and restore trust in the district" (Dr. Everson, personal communication).

Many years ago, Destination encountered some disorder or instability in their board of education leadership structure and feared losing their SACS (Southern Association of College and Schools) accreditation and the trust of their stakeholders. Dr. Parsons describes the Vision Project framework as the vehicle used to guide them in the right direction under the leadership of their new superintendent. After reviewing the Vision Project documents, Ms. Duggar revealed it looked like Destination copied the Vision Project as a template for their strategic plans. While the Vision Project provided the framework, the district and school leaders conducted the legwork necessary to implement the work with high fidelity. In addition to creating and aligning the strategic plans and goals for the district, several community meetings were held to regain the faith and trust in Destination Public Schools. Ms. Evans, Ms. Milliken, and Dr. Parsons credit the Vi-

sion Project implementation as a pivotal part of the success in Destination and their ability to maintain their accreditation while restoring confidence in public education within their community.

Pioneer has been a leader within the school districts in Georgia for many years based on information obtained from the district website. Ms. Renaldo, Ms. Weston, Dr. Caman, and Dr. Waverly report the seven education components, guiding principles and recommendations existed within Pioneer prior to the inception of the Vision Project. Dr. Caman added, "One of the major goals for the Vision Project is to communicate the exceptional quality of public education and make sure that children receive the same education no matter where they are in the state of Georgia". Ms. Weston supported this statement by adding that Pioneer was attempting, on a smaller scale within their district, to convey the same message for many years. Pioneer is now able to form an alliance with the Vision Project to publicize confidence in public education across the state.

 The members created the seven education system components within the Vision Project to outline needs to be addressed to formulate a new perspective of public education in Georgia. Using thematic analysis, the researcher discovered parallel internal contexts within both districts connected to the vision of, "providing all children with an equitable and excellent education preparing them for college, career, and life" (GA Vision Project, 2010). The mission and vision found on the website for each district focuses on preparing students for college and careers. The mission and vision in Destination and Pioneer serve as the foundation for guiding the work in the districts and help to articulate to the community their objectives.

Mission and Vision. According to Dr. Everson and Dr. Parsons, the community supported the mission of Destination, and was easily understood by stakeholders. Signs were made to

create buy-in and garner support from the community. However, three years ago the leaders in the district believed it needed to be modified to include college and careers. Dr. Everson and Dr. Parsons added, "*Education is more than just graduating from high school and was not the ceiling, but the beginning.*" In Destination, many schools adopted the mission and vision of the district as their schools' mission and vision. Ms. Milliken, principal at Green Elementary, explained after working closely with the district to create the strategic plan the school leadership team and staff decided having the same vision and mission as the school district would signify their alignment to moving in the same direction.

However, in Pioneer many of the schools have mission and vision statements independent of the district. Ms. Weston, Ms. Renaldo, and Dr. Caman believe the mission and vision in Pioneer are very clear. The mission and vision attempt to make sure all kids are learning to the best of their ability and have options for reaching their full potential. Ms. Weston was passionate about the clarity in the mission and vision to provide excellent instruction and support for every student regardless of race or language. The leaders in Pioneer also recently modified their vision using simplistic terms to explain college and careers. Dr. Waverly and Ms. Lann acknowledged the district's mission and vision as the anchor, which undergirds their school mission and vision for every student to be the best they can be. The commitment to achieving the mission and vision in Destination and Pioneer was evident in their organizational structures, core beliefs, strategic plans and goals.

Organizational Structure. The organizational structure within each district provides a foundation for building consistency to support the mission and vision in addition to monitoring the programs, services, and activities offered. Destination is a much smaller district than Pioneer. The size of Destination limits the number of separate divisions overseeing the day-to-day opera-

tions within the district. Many school and district leaders within Destination serve in multiple roles to ensure the curriculum and instruction are aligned. Some principals within the district also serve as curriculum directors and there are lead teachers who serve as coordinators or coaches. Ms. Latten, the academic coach at Ms. Milliken's school is also the parent instructional coordinator. For example, Principal Milliken, principal of Green Elementary also serves as the curriculum director for K-5 Literacy (subject changed to protect identity) in the district. In addition, Ms. Milliken only has a part-time assistant principal, Ms. Aspen. Having dual roles for principals and leaders sometimes presents a challenge because these leaders with dual roles are still expected to be effective in their contractual roles.

On the other hand, Pioneer district has over six different divisions with specific roles and responsibilities within their organizational structure to oversee the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. While all of these divisions are working toward one common goal, Dr. Caman acknowledged one of the challenges in a large district is preventing silos and creating the communication tools needed to accurately disseminate information to all individuals. Principals in Pioneer are not required to serve in a dual capacity outside of the school in a district position. Dr. Waverly, principal of Bronco Elementary, has four full time assistant principals and one part-time employee to help with the daily operations at the school. Another example of the organizational structure in Pioneer that is different from Destination is the structure of the schools within the district. Even though, Pioneer is a large district their schools are organized into communities with several elementary schools, one or two middle schools and one high school. The school leaders within these clusters work together vertically to ensure they are meeting the various needs of the students and community.

Learning and Leadership. Stable leadership has been an important factor in the success of Destination and Pioneer School Districts as shared by interviewees. Both Boards of Education are comprised of five members who were elected on a staggering basis to serve a four-year term on a non-partisan basis. The board members for each district were elected to serve for more than two terms. The members in Pioneer represent different geographic areas based on district boundary lines. The school board appoints the CEO/Superintendents in both districts. The CEO/Superintendent in Destination has been serving for over five years, and the CEO/Superintendent in Pioneer and has been serving for over ten years. Both districts hold monthly meetings to make decisions and to address the community.

Destination and Pioneer districts communicate with their school and district leaders monthly, at a minimum, with an in-service at the board of education or district-learning center. Each district provides leaders with a calendar outlining the meeting dates for the year. The Superintendents of both districts facilitate portions of the meetings to provide timely information and updates regarding educational trends and policy legislation. The district and divisional leaders meet weekly within their respective areas and also with the Superintendent to provide updates on district initiatives, discuss current educational issues in addition to the progress on the strategic priorities and goals. There is also an intentional focus by the Superintendents to provide an organizational structure to support academics and achievement for all students regardless of race, language, or socio-economic status. While each of the districts has strategic priorities, each school is required to create a plan with long and short-term goals for school improvement. The goals for each school are guided by the district goals and are written to increase student achievement for all students. Based on information from the interviews, Destination and Pioneer

hold schools accountable for meeting goals and offer support to schools and their leaders to help them to meet their goals.

The development and support provided for school leaders is structured differently within Destination and Pioneer. In Destination, assistant principals are often selected from academic coaches within the district who have served on various curriculum committees. Principals are generally selected from assistant principals within the district. Dr. Parsons reported all new assistant principals and principals within Destination are mentored by a veteran colleague in the same position within the district. Destination Superintendent, Dr. Little, monitors principals' progress and evaluates them.

However, as shared by Dr. Caman, "*Pioneer has leadership academies designed for teachers who desire to be assistant principals, assistant principals who aspire to be principals, and a district leadership program.*" These leadership academies require in class face-to-face training led by the superintendent and/or district leaders, writing assessments, and panel interviews. An additional requirement for those who participate in the academy is a three-month residency with a principal for aspiring principals and a summer internship during summer school with an assistant principal for those who seek to be assistant principals. Each assistant principal and principal appointed in Pioneer is assigned a mentor from the district office who is a former or retired administrator. While, Destination may not have a leadership academy, the Superintendents who serve at the helm of Destination and Pioneer ensure the principles that undergird the organization are developed and communicated to all stakeholders.

Communication and Feedback. As a means to ensure all stakeholders have knowledge of district information, leadership opportunities, and opportunities for input, Destination and Pioneer translate all documents disseminated from the district office. Ms. Duggar and Dr. Parsons

disclosed Destination only translates documents in Spanish because it is the majority second language. In contrast, Pioneer is a majority minority district, with over twenty-two various languages spoken. Ms. Weston and Dr. Caman reported Pioneer does not translate documents in every language. They translate based on the languages represented by the majority of the students in the district, which includes Spanish (See Table 1). Ms. Weston also pointed out the internal language database as a resource utilized in Pioneer. The database holds many translated district documents easily accessible for leaders and teachers. Stakeholders within each school district have an opportunity to participate in school decision making by becoming members of the school councils, Parent Teacher Associations/Organizations (PTA/PTO), and Title I Planning Committees for Title I schools. When new leaders are appointed as principals in Destination and Pioneer, the superintendents provide stakeholders the opportunity to give input regarding the type of leader they believe would meet the needs of students and community. While the process is different, stakeholders within each district also have the ability to make recommendations about modifications in curriculum and input on the goals of the district.

Culture of Learning + Culture of High Expectations = Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy?

Our second research question examines the degree to which the features of the education system component Culture, Climate and Organizational Efficacy of the Vision Project specifically impacted learning in Destination and Pioneer districts. The designers of the Vision Project believe all organizations have a culture and a climate. Culture refers to the processes and procedures for how things are completed within an organization and climate describes how individuals feel about how things are completed (Baecher, Knoll, & Patti, 2013). When a positive correlation exists between the two of these separate variables, and often-linked together terms, the assump-

tion is an organization will have an optimal opportunity to produce a desired result or intended

effect (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher determined evidence existed within Destination and

Pioneer districts to support all of the recommendations with a specific emphasis on the follow-

ing:

8.2 Make each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents,

staff and the larger community.

8.4 Determine stakeholder perceptions of schools and school districts.

8.6 Develop school and district cultures that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural,

racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve (GA Vision

Project for Public Education in Georgia, 2013).

Title I Designation. Whether it was the framework or a pre-existing situation, Destina-

tion and Pioneer have created cultures of learning at high expectations to support students re-

gardless of the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic status. Dr. Everson detailed Destina-

tion as a 100% Title I district which means that all the schools within the district are designated

as Title I. Ms. Renaldo indicated 45% of the schools in Pioneer are designated as Title I. Title I

designation provides school districts with additional federal funding to support students with a

low socio-economic status. Title I school status also provides support for the families through a

Parent Involvement Coordinator (PIC).

The parent involvement coordinator is responsible for helping to make each school an in-

viting place to be for students, parents, and the larger community. The parent involvement coor-

dinators serve as liaisons between the school and parents to work as equal partners to ensure the

academic achievement of students. Destination and Pioneer employ parent involvement coordi-

nators within schools to help build the capacity of parents to serve as advocates for their schools, and to provide the support necessary to help meet the diverse needs of the families.

Cultural Diversity. In addition to the parent involvement coordinators, Destination and Pioneer provide support to students who are racially, ethnically or culturally diverse. One specific strategy is connecting students who are linguistically diverse in middle and high school with support in the Newcomers Center to help them transition smoothly into the schools in the United States. Destination and Pioneer utilize the state of Georgia guidelines to determine which students are evaluated to receive support as an English Language Learner (ELL). A student is evaluated if a parent indicates on the registration paperwork another language is spoken in the home. Based on the outcome of the initial assessment, students receive language assistance support for classroom instruction to help them improve the language proficiency. Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) is administered yearly to ELL students to determine their proficiency levels for exiting the program.

High Expectations. Destination and Pioneer have created cultures of high expectations for all students to receive a quality education and be prepared for college or careers. Both districts have aligned themselves with the Vision Project to ensure high levels of learning occurs daily to ensure equitable education experiences for all students. Dr. Parsons, Dr. Everson, and Ms. Milliken discussed how each school in Destination has a school improvement plan following the same template as the district improvement plan with nine strategic goals. Included in the nine goals are a challenging curriculum, increasing student success, multiples measures of student learning, and increased parental engagement. The school's strategic plan also serves as the Title I plan for the school. According to Dr. Everson, Ms. Milliken, Ms. Aspen, and Ms. Latten the plan is developed utilizing the data from state assessments and feedback from stakeholders to ensure

the plan accurately addresses the needs of the students, staff, and families within the school. Dr. Parsons, Dr. Everson, and the area superintendent of curriculum meet with Ms. Milliken to monitor the school improvement plans and to make recommendations for modifications as needed. Yearly, Ms. Milliken is required to present a state of the school address to Dr. Little at one of the board meetings regarding the implementation of the school improvement plan.

Pioneer utilizes school improvement plans to set a culture of learning and high expectations in their district as well. Dr. Waverly, Dr. Caman, Ms. Weston, and Ms. Renaldo highlighted the autonomy each school is given to create the number of goals needed for their schools to improve based on the data from local, district, state and national assessments. Dr. Caman noted however, the necessity to streamline the school improvement plans. This streamline is to ensure all of the district strategic goals and priorities are being addressed within each school plan regardless of the geographic location of the school. The school improvement plans address the areas of student achievement for all students in the four content areas, college and career preparation, and stakeholder perceptions. Ms. Renaldo, Dr. Waverly, Ms. Lann, and Ms. Ventura all said the school improvement plan also serves as the Title I plan for Title I schools. Dr. Waverly and her area superintendent monitor the school improvement plan implementation at Bronco Elementary by performing monthly instructional visits in classrooms. The area superintendent, not Dr. Waverly, is required to provide the update regarding the implementation of the school improvement plan to the Pioneer superintendent during one of the cabinet sessions. Based on the district website, interviews conducted, and the numerous achievement awards earned in Pioneer, the researcher was able to confirm the existence of a culture of learning at high expectations prior to the inception of the Vision Project.

Professional Development + Vision Project Implementation = Capacity Building?

The last research question for the primary focus seeks to understand how the implementation of the Vision Project helped build capacity within the district. While there appears to be no direct correlation in the research to the implementation of the Vision Project and capacity building there are several measures being utilized to ensure leaders, teachers, staff and parents are increasing their knowledge. According to the strategic goals and priorities documents in Destination and Pioneer, the districts are committed to training and retaining a highly qualified staff, which is in direct correlation to the Vision Project Component of Human and Organizational Capital. *"No matter how modern the facility, how savvy the technology, or how abundant the teaching supplies, the expertise of the teachers and leaders has the greatest impact on the quality and extent of student learning"* (Vision Project, 2013). Destination and Pioneer create a culture of learning and high expectations for students and adults by building the capacity of teachers and leaders through professional development workshops and activities.

Professional Learning. Teachers and leaders in Pioneer and Destination participate in on-going professional learning. Each school in Destination and Pioneer has a professional learning plan embedded in their school improvement plan. The professional learning is tailored to meet the individual needs of the teachers in each school. Although the improvement plans are created at the beginning of the year, the professional development plan can be changed based on the assessment or teacher observation data.

Ms. Milliken, Green Elementary Principal in Destination, said," *We have job-embedded professional learning on a weekly basis. We address all of our opportunities for growth through our professional learning plan."*

Dr. Waverly, Bronco Elementary in Principal in Pioneer, said, "*We spend a great deal of time orchestrating a framework for ongoing professional development on a weekly basis, as well as full-day professional learning on a quarterly basis to include teachers, paraprofessional and office staff."*

Based on the interviews Pioneer offers more professional learning courses, held throughout the district, than Destination. Often the various department divisions in Pioneer will host training tailored more to their specific area of expertise. For example courses might include building quality assessments, how to utilize technology with students, and strategies to meet the needs of ELL students. In part, the number of employees in Pioneer allows for more facilitators and participants to be engaged in the learning. During the summer, Pioneer also facilitates a leadership conference for school and district leaders. Dr. Caman, Ms. Weston, Ms. Napier, and Dr. Waverly highlighted the conference as being one of the pinnacle learning events for leaders in Pioneer. In addition, a curriculum and technology conference is hosted for teachers. While there may be a difference in the frequency and delivery of the professional learning offered in Destination and Pioneer, the districts' organizational structures and cultures embed capacity building through a reflective practice with all employees and stakeholders.

Parent Involvement Coordinator. Parents are vitally important stakeholders in Destination and Pioneer school districts. As discussed earlier, one of the major roles and responsibilities of the Parent Involvement Coordinator is to help build the capacity of staff and parents. With the staff, the PIC is expected to train teachers and staff on effective communication tools and strategies to work closely with parents as equal partners to ensure the academic achievement of their students. The Title I Meetings held each year offer parents opportunities to provide feedback regarding the types of workshops they would like to see offered at the school. Based on this infor-

mation, the workshop calendar is created for each school. The primary focus for these workshops

is centered on instruction and assessment in the four core content areas of literacy, math, science,

and social studies. Title I schools are allowed to allocate Title I funding as a resource to help pay

for professional learning. Title I schools are required to have a certain number of learning events

for families. The districts also offer English classes for parents who desire to learn to speak Eng-

lish. The events calendar and Title I Parent Involvement calendar at Green and Bronco Elemen-

tary Schools reflect workshops at local schools and within the district to help build the capacity

of parents to help them understand the curriculum within Pioneer and Destination.

Table 4
Case Study School Characteristics for the 2014-2015 School Year*

Variable	Green Elementary	Bronco Elementary
District	Destination	Pioneer
Number of Students	<500	>1,200
White/Caucasian students (%)	60	6
Black/African American students (%)	10	17
Asian/ Pacific Islander students (%)	0	12
Hispanic students (%)	30	63
American Indian/Alaskan Native students (%)	0	0
Multiracial students (%)	0	2
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible students (%)	100	90
English Language Learners (%)	25	60

Leadership Practices + Leadership Characteristics = Parental Involvement?

The secondary focus in this research was to determine the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. The findings to support this research question include perspectives from district leaders, school leaders, and parents from two Title I schools, Green Elementary in Destination and Bronco Elementary in Pioneer. Themes emerging from the participant findings reveal a positive correlation between leadership practices and characteristics to parental involvement. The most noted leadership practices and characteristics included creating an inviting school environment, effective communication, providing various types of family engagement activities, opportunities to provide feedback, reducing barriers to involvement, and modeling fairness.

Parental Involvement. Green and Bronco Elementary schools are both designated as Title I schools. With this designation, there are certain requirements by the Federal government for each of these schools to provide outreach to parents to assist students who are at risk of not achieving academic success. Title I schools are required to have, at a minimum, a part-time Parent Instructional Coordinator (PIC) to create calendars and workshops for parents to attend at the school. At Green Elementary in Destination, the PIC is part time and also serves as an academic coach for part of the day. However, Bronco Elementary has a full-time PIC whose main responsibility is working to increase parental involvement. Although Green Elementary has a part-time Parent Coordinator, they are still required to meet the guidelines regarding parental involvement.

During the research process, it was discovered that one challenge presented with parental involvement was determining the definition and expectations for the term. This arises as a challenge because without establishing a clear understanding of the term for school staff, teachers, and parents at Green and Bronco Elementary an assumption can be made that parents do not

want to be involved. Parental involvement can be considered comprehensive and is inclusive of formal and informal involvement by parents. In order to ascertain participants' interpretation of parental involvement each participant was asked to define the term in their own words. Following are perspectives from leaders and parents.

School Leaders:

Ms. Milliken found the definition to be very broad and included coming to read to the class, coming for conferences, signing your child's agenda every night, responding to teacher notes or talking to the teacher. "We consider it parent involvement whether it is in person, on the phone, through emails, notes home, or attendance at parent nights and do not discount the manner in which they choose to be involved."

Ms. Ventura added "'For us, if a parent is checking their child's folder, signing the agenda, making sure their child is getting their homework done, staying in touch with the teachers, sending notes when their child is absent, making sure their child is at school, those things count as parent involvement even if they never set foot in the building, they're still involved in their child's education because they're doing the things at home to support what we're doing in school"

Parents:

All the parents detailed similar definitions to include participating in the PTA, helping and being involved in the school activities, attending conferences and English Classes, communicating with teachers, and helping with homework as parental involvement.

When participants were questioned regarding whether they thought all school staff and parents shared the same common understanding a resounding response was "no". Many parents

interviewed believed the perception of teachers was parents had to be in the building to be involved and parents believed they could be involved by supporting their child at home. School leaders did not share this sentiment. Ms. Aspen stated, *"Most parents, even if not physically involved at the school, are involved through e-mail or notes with the teacher and taking the time to actively read the newsletter and participate as best as they can."* Ms. Weston shared, *"They do not understand the degree to which we want them to be involved and understanding what is going on with their child at school to help their child at home is important."* This difference in perception often leads to misunderstandings and misconceptions about parents. Especially parents from different cultures that hold teachers and schools in high esteem and believe their way of supporting the school is giving teachers autonomy to make the best decisions for their children.

During the probe about parental involvement, a shift in thinking and terminology surfaced by leaders in Pioneer. Ms. Renaldo and Dr. Waverly stressed the importance of not excluding individuals with the term "parental involvement" and preferred to use "family engagement". Ms. Renaldo verbalized, *"The word parent is often utilized, but really parent is not always a biological mother or biological father or both in a household. So the focus should be on family engagement."* Dr. Waverly added, *"When we say parent, we eliminate the other people who were family. So at Bronco Elementary we say family involvement, because families come in all forms, and many of our students are raised by grandparents, aunts, [and] extended families. Family involvement broadens the realm of influence, because parental involvement can be taken literally, which seems to be more exclusive than inclusive to the school environment."*

School Environment. School environment or climate developed as one of the major impacts on formal school involvement which directly ties back to the Vision Project recommendations of making each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents, staff

and the larger community. Green and Bronco Elementary Schools created an environment where parents feel valued and welcomed each time they walk in the door. Parents noted the visibility of the administrators throughout the school daily and teachers who were working hard to help their children learn. At Green and Bronco Elementary Schools, there was evidence of administrators who genuinely cared about students and willing to help with academic, social, behavioral, or personal concerns for students and their families. Ms. Latten, *"I think all of our teachers are extremely friendly and we truly love the children and the parents. We have a heart for children and love what we do. I believe our passion comes through, and the parents know this about us and our school. It helps them to feel a sense of safety."*

Safety and security was another factor parents discussed as an essential component to making the school environment positive. Ms. Pedro admitted, *"As a new parent I initially did not understand why I could not go to the classroom whenever I wanted to daily, but then I heard the principal explain why the safety measures are in place. Now, my perspective has changed because I am involved at the school. I am thankful for the safety measures because I can leave my kids at school without worry."* Both Green and Bronco Elementary Schools have the entries secured during school hours. The leaders accounted the challenge of helping the parents and community understand the paradigm shift and the need for increased security measures. Each of the schools requires all visitors to sign in upon entry, have cameras and a buzzer system. Green's buzzer system gains entry into the area of the building with classrooms, while Bronco's buzzer gains entry into the school. The Vision Project believes locating schools within communities provides greater opportunity for increased parental and community involvement which is likely to have a positive impact on school safety (GA Vision Project, 2010, p. 64).

Green and Bronco Elementary Schools are located within the communities in which they serve. However the school history at Green varies from Bronco. Green Elementary has a long rich history and been in existence for over 100 years with many generations of children from the same family attending the school. To express the level of commitment by the community, Ms. Milliken the current principal at Green, shared community members and former students come back to participate in the annual Fall Festival even though it is tailored toward school aged children. While the leaders and demographics of the small school nestled within this community have changed over the years, the community support and warm/inviting environment has remained the same. Each of the three parent participants indicated all of their children between the ages 5 and 15 attended Green Elementary. Parents indicate the front office staff at Green Elementary greets and welcomes them by name. They attribute the size of the school and personal connections as contributing factors to emitting a "homey" feeling when they go to the school. However, their positive dispositions, friendly attitudes, and helpful nature are what the parents of Green Elementary value most. Ms. Urstadt provided an account of when her child was having difficulty academically: the school worked around her schedule and would allow her to come during lunch and after work to share strategies to help her child be successful. Ms. Urstadt added, "*When my children come home happy, I am happy.*"

A slightly different story exists at Bronco Elementary, which is over 40 years old. Although, it is also nestled in a suburban community it is much more transient in its student population than Green. The redistricting in Pioneer when new schools are built and the changing landscape near Bronco has attributed to the instability of the student population. The leaders and demographics have changed over the years at Bronco Elementary; however, the parents are proud to have their children attend the school. Ms. Napier and Ms. Chanel have sent children to the

school previously, and Ms. Pedro is having her first experience at the school. Ms. Napier, Ms. Pedro, and Ms. Chanel raved about the friendliness and professionalism of the front office staff and the warm inviting feeling when entering the school. The parents also acknowledged the bilingual receptionist who always greets visitors like friends with a smile and sincere desire to provide assistance.

Over the past few years, the volunteers at Green and Bronco Elementary have doubled in number. The increase at Green Elementary may be attributed to Volunteer Days, a designated day each month at the school for parents to come in to complete various tasks such as school improvement projects, clerical tasks for teachers, and working in different areas of the building to support students. Creating a calendar to publicize these specific dates each month allows parents who are able to make arrangements with their work schedules instead of expecting them to be able to come daily. Bronco Elementary increased the number of volunteers through careful organization and matching volunteers with their interests, strengths, and level of comfort. In addition, they designated specific parking spaces for volunteers, preprinted individualized visitor/volunteer badges, and a parent center stocked with beverages and snacks for their leisure while they are helping in the school. The Bronco parents value the level of appreciation they feel when coming to volunteer in the school. It has a positive effect on their desire to continue volunteering and urging others to come. One often overlooked and undervalued mode of communication is conversations between parents in support of the school.

Communication. Communication was one of the most reoccurring themes in the research regarding leader influence on parental involvement. The leaders at Green and Bronco Elementary Schools use multiple methods to communicate with their families about the events occurring at their schools. Green is a much smaller school situated in a rural area and not as many

parents have internet access, whereas Bronco is located in a more suburban area. The main forms of communication utilized at both schools were the monthly school newsletter with event calendar, robo calls, and website. Bronco also utilizes stickers and Remind, a phone text messaging system, to keep parents informed. Green would prefer to use Facebook as another way to promote school activities. Teachers at Green are required to complete a weekly newsletter for parents and the student agendas and teacher technology pages are the weekly forms of communication to parents at Bronco. There was not a method of communication preferred by more of the parents than the other. Parents appreciated the different forms and the frequency of the communication from the school to home regarding workshops and events at the school.

All communication distributed from Destination and Pioneer School Districts to Green or Bronco Elementary Schools is translated in Spanish to parents. Pioneer also distributes documents in other languages. Documents disseminated to parents from the school are also translated in Spanish, but documents created by teachers are often in English only. Although bilingual, the parents interviewed revealed they would prefer to read the English version of the document. During parent workshops and teacher-parent conferences, interpreters are available to assist parents who need help with understanding what is being shared. One of the major differences between the type of assistance Bronco Elementary can provide to parents and Green cannot is the number of staff members available to help translate for parents. Green currently does not have any bilingual staff members, while Bronco has a bilingual Parent Outreach Liaison (POL) and more than ten other staff members who are able to provide interpretation support to families. While the number of available translators may not be equal at each school, Destination and Pioneer School Districts provide translators to the local schools upon request to ensure parents are able to support the academic success of their children. The leaders at Green and Bronco Elementary

Schools work to ensure communication does not become a barrier to parental involvement at school through providing multiple modes of communication.

    Parental Involvement Barriers. Each of these Title I schools is mandated to have workshops for families to help parents understand the school's academic standards, assessments and student progress. These workshops are created based on feedback provided by parents. Not only are parents able to provide feedback on the topics, but also about the time and format for these events. Interestingly, Green and Bronco Elementary Schools host their family night events at 6:00 p.m. This was the time selected by parents as the best for their schedules. Many of the parents at Green Elementary are migrant workers who are unable to take off work or receive a phone call during the day. This can be a challenge for the school because many of the parents are unable to attend events regardless of the time. Parents who were interviewed explained 6:00 p.m. was the best time because it provides them an opportunity to get off work and give the kids a snack prior to attending the event. Years ago, Title I allowed for schools to buy food or snacks for school family nights, but with the budget cuts and new regulations schools are no longer able to provide this luxury to parents without an additional resource. The Green Elementary PTO became the financial contributor to provide dinner for families during their family nights to encourage participation and eliminate dinner preparation as barrier for attendance.

    Transportation was the largest barrier identified in the findings to preventing parents from being involved in the schools. Although both schools are located within the community, the attendance zones for Green and Bronco Elementary Schools span over twenty miles making it very difficult for families who do not have a car or working parents sharing transportation. The individuals who live closest to Green and Bronco Elementary Schools are able to walk during pleasant weather conditions. Some Bronco parents can afford to take a taxi to the school for events,

but the rural area of Green Elementary does not allow for parents to consider this mode of transportation even if they can afford it. One solution Green implemented during parent teacher conferences to increase participation is hold conferences at a community center nearest where most of the students reside. This has dramatically increased Green's attendance rate at conferences because parents are able to walk or carpool to the center.

Additional barriers were discovered in the research as reasons why parents do not attend events. One was a cultural understanding of the expectations of American school culture as noted by Ms. Ventura, Ms. Urstadt, Ms. Napier, and Ms. Renaldo. Parents who have immigrated to America may not grasp being at the school is not interpreted as a sign of disrespect, but parents are welcome. Not to mention parents believing students should be prepared to work in the fields or take care of children and not sitting in the house reading books. Ms. Ventura also mentioned sometimes parents do not identify or make a connection to the event being offered as necessary for them until teachers or school leaders personally invites them. Dr. Caman, Dr. Waverly, Ms. Lann, and Ms. Weston discussed parents' unpleasant experiences with school related to their inability to speak and understand the language well even with a translator as hurdles. Childcare was rarely mentioned as an obstacle to involvement. This may be in part to the intentional planning of the leadership at Green and Bronco Elementary Schools to offer childcare during workshops and include activities for younger children during family nights.

Leadership Practices and Characteristics. Creating a culture of high expectations for students regardless of race, culture, or socio-economic status is a priority for Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly. The exploration of practices influencing parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations all point back to having effective leaders at the helm of the school. Researchers (Dolby, 2012; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013) often describe this type of leadership as social justice

leadership. This type of leadership was defined earlier in the literature as leaders who advocate improving the educational outcomes for marginalized students (Berkovich, 2014; Pazey & Cole, 2013). As leaders, Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly, write their school improvement plans to ensure the success of all students by including accountability measures throughout the year. Whenever making decisions, Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly seek the input of parents if it is going to directly impact their households. They also utilize their school leadership teams, PTA/PTO, and School Councils to help communicate the goals and monitor the data to create adjustments to the implementation process if needed for school improvement.

Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly make themselves accessible and visible to parents during the school day, workshops, and parent conferences to greet parents or hear concerns. Parents noted the amount of effort Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly take to ensure any concerns with students are addressed in a timely manner. Listening to the voices of the stakeholders and establishing open lines of communication between the school and home was a necessity for influencing parental involvement. Ms. Ventura mentioned, "*It can be hard for leaders to hear improvement is needed in areas, but being able to be a reflective practitioner who listens without becoming defensive is essential to helping to build trust with teachers, parents, and the community."* Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly have a laser focus on knowing their stakeholders and building relationships with them by understanding the cultural diversity represented in the school. Researchers would describe this characteristic as being culturally competent (Salmona, Partlo, Kaczynski, & Leonard, 2015). Dr. Waverly supported this by adding, "*Know your school culture, know your staff, know your community and know your students. It helps with building relationships and planning professional learning for the growth and development of staff and parents."*

Parents described Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly as nice, compassionate and kind-hearted leaders who want the very best for their children. They are very conscious of their facial expressions and tone of voice when interacting with others. Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly ensure their body language always exhibits a positive approachable demeanor. They aim not to have their body language misinterpreted by others. Ms. Ventura stated, "*Parents may not be able to understand what you are saying, but they read the facial expressions and watch the interactions of the principals with others to determine if they are welcome.*"

While the work at Green Elementary in Destination and Bronco Elementary School in Pioneer are similar, each district and school has certain characteristics and traits to make their school and school districts unique, or at least different, from others. One of these key components is leadership. Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly are responsible for overseeing every area of the school. Their realm of influence includes, but is not limited to the school environment, communication with stakeholders, and reducing or eliminating barriers to influence the parent involvement in their schools. Ms. Milliken, Green Elementary School principal, and Dr. Waverly, Bronco Elementary School principal, not only set the expectations for their school environments, but also lead by example to improve the educational outcomes of students in their schools by connecting school personnel and family members in the home.

Summary

Pioneer and Destination School Districts differ in geographic location, student demographics, and student enrollment. However, they both desire to transform education in Georgia based on their resolution in support of the Georgia Vision Project for Public Education. The strategic priorities in Pioneer and Destination School Districts show an implicit connection to the Vision Project and are not explicitly stated. The organizational charts, websites, other documents

collected and interviews conducted provide context for the development and implementation of the seven education components of the Georgia Vision Project: 1) Early Learning and Student Success; 2) Teaching and Learning; 3) Teaching and Learning Resources; 4) Human and Organizational Capital; 5) Governance, Leadership, and Accountability; 6) Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy; 7) and Financial Resources.

The influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations was aligned closely to the component of Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy. Leaders and parents in Destination and Pioneer School Districts regard the principals as having a significant impact on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. The principals' expectations make each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents, staff and the larger community. Utilizing stakeholder perceptions of schools and school districts they create plans for improvement. Thereby developing school and district cultures that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve (GA Vision Project for Public Education in Georgia, 2013).

Findings

The findings of this study indicate Destination and Pioneer School Districts exemplify high fidelity implementation as initially indicated by Vision Project's Executive Director. Both Destination and Pioneer School Districts are public education districts in Georgia who are working to achieve the mission to provide all children an equitable and excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and life. The data also revealed the school leaders play a pivotal role in the degree or extent of parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. This section will provide an overview of the significance of the findings, describe themes discovered and connect the results to previously conducted research.

The impact of the internal contexts and the implementation of the Vision Project on learning and leadership in Destination and Pioneer School Districts were examined in research question one. Several themes emerged from the findings (see Table 4): 1) stable school district leadership, 2) consistent mission and vision implementation, 3) clearly outlined strategic goals and priorities, 4) frequent communication with internal and external stakeholders, 5) leadership development academies for succession planning, 6) specific organizational structure for central office and schools, 7) alignment of Vision Project educational components to the district initiatives, and 8) a commitment to restoring confidence in public education. The level of impact in implementing the Vision Project was more evident in Destination than Pioneer. Destination utilized the Vision Project educational components to help build their framework for their district improvement plan. The Vision Project materials informed Destination's refined strategic goals and priorities and were interwoven into the local schools with the template used to create the school improvement plan. There is a complete alignment in the Destination regarding the expectations for implementation. In Pioneer, the consistent board of education and superintendent leadership created a comprehensive set of strategic goals and priorities prior to the implementation of the Vision Project. Several staff members in Pioneer were involved in various committees to help create the recommendations outlined in the Vision Project document. To this end, it appears many of the educational components may have been modeled after the work completed in Pioneer.

The features of the Vision Project specifically impacting learning were investigated in Destination and Pioneer in research question 2. Several themes (See Table 4) emerged from the findings: 1) district expectations for all students to learn at high levels, 2) utilizing Title I parent instructional coordinators to engage families, 3) creating processes to welcome students who are

linguistically diverse and 4) continuous quality improvement through the on-going monitoring of school improvement plans. As noted earlier, the implementation of the Vision Project in Destination created a systematic structure to monitor learning through the creation of the district improvement plan and the school improvement plans. While plans can be well written, monitoring district and school plans by the district leaders creates an expectation for learning at high levels for all students. In Pioneer, there was no evidence to support the Vision Project specifically impacted learning. Based on the interviews and documents obtained, Pioneer is a leader in the state of Georgia where many districts and state leaders look to them for examples of exemplary practice. Due to their large size, Pioneer employs more than six area superintendents whose primary role is to provide on-going support and monitor the implementation of the school improvement plans through classroom visits and data reviews. Pioneer also uses an internal method of measuring individual school effectiveness. Schools performing below the expected target are given additional curriculum and instruction support from the district. This support is provided in Pioneer in an effort to impact learning and improve student achievement. Destination and Pioneer are focused on improving the educational outcomes of all students within their districts with a focus on continuous quality improvement.

The ability to build capacity of self and others through the implementation of the Vision Project was explored in Destination and Pioneer School Districts in Research Question 3. Two themes to emerged (see Table 4): 1) parent involvement coordinators facilitating many workshops for parents including English Classes and 2) on-going professional development for teachers and leaders within the schools and at the district. Much of the structure in every area in Destination, including building capacity is built on the foundation of the Vision Project document. Building the capacity of self and others in Destination School District was apparent in their

commitment to professional learning for leaders, teachers, and parents. The monthly meetings with school leaders to provide timely information and training and the job-embedded professional learning based on the needs of the school. In addition, the school improvement plans also address the need to build the capacity of parents through workshops provided at the school. The parent instructional coordinator at Green Elementary in Destination School District coordinates the workshops for parents to help them gain a better understanding of the curriculum. Again, in Pioneer no evidence exists to imply the Vision Project implementation influenced the building of capacity of self and others in the district. The foundational principles established in Pioneer School District are centered on professional learning and development for leaders, teachers and parents. Through Pioneer's monthly meetings with leaders, leadership academies for aspiring assistant principals and principals, professional learning for teachers throughout the district weekly, and parent workshops coordinated by the parent instructional coordinator a commitment to building capacity has been established. Destination and Pioneer School Districts are dedicated to building the capacity of leaders, teachers, and parents to help ensure every child in every classroom has an opportunity to receive a quality and equitable education.

The leadership practices being implemented at Green Elementary School in Destination and Bronco Elementary School in Pioneer to influence parental involvement with their high ELL populations was addressed in Researched Question 4. Several themes (see Table 4) to emerged from the findings: 1) creating an inviting school environment for families, 2) frequent communication with families to keep them informed about school events and workshops, 3) translating documents and meetings for Spanish speaking families, 4) strategies being implemented to reduce or eliminate parental involvement barriers, 5) ensuring the safety and security of all students, 6) high expectations for teaching and learning for all students, and 7) the visibility and ac-

cessibility of the principals to parents. The findings demonstrated Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly

work diligently to create an inviting school for students, parents, staff and the larger community

at Green Elementary School in the Destination School District and Bronco Elementary School in

the Pioneer School District. Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly have high expectations of their staff

to interact with all stakeholders in a positive, inclusive manner, but also lead by example by

modeling the expected behaviors. Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly utilize stakeholder perceptions

for suggestions to the school improvement plans through their school councils and leadership

teams, safety and security measures for the school, and how to communicate with parents. Last-

ly, Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly create a school climate sensitive and responsive to the cultural,

racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve. Even though Green

and Bronco Elementary Schools are designated Title I with a larger number of English Language

Learners, their actions indicate Title I and ELL are labels, not conditions impeding learning. Ms.

Milliken and Dr. Waverly work to reduce or eliminate barriers for parent involvement by using

different modes of communication, translate documents for parent understanding, and utilize

their parent instructional coordinators to aide parents in how to meet the social, physical, and ac-

ademic needs of their children. Ms. Milliken at Green Elementary School in the Destination

School District and Dr. Waverly at Bronco Elementary School in the Pioneer School District can

be described as social justice leaders. Ms. Milliken and Dr. Waverly understand the need to serve

as advocates not only in their schools and within their communities to develop social capital

(Salmona, Partlo, Kaczynski, & Leonard, 2015).

Discussion

The purpose of this multiple comparison research study was to determine to what extent

the implementation of the Georgia Vision Project impacted two different high implementation

school districts (Destination and Pioneer). In addition, these school districts were studied to determine which leadership practices are being implemented to achieve high levels of parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. Using interviews, the researcher conducted a qualitative study of district leaders and school leader's perceptions of the Vision Project implementation. In addition, the researcher conducted interviews of district leaders, school leaders and parents to determine perceptions of leadership on parental involvement.

Educational leaders who serve diverse student populations have longed to determine how to engage parents and increase parental engagement. This dissertation sought to explore a dual focus. The primary focus investigated the impact of the Vision Project in two high implementation school districts; Destination and Pioneer. The secondary focus explored the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. To this end, three primary research questions and one secondary question were examined using qualitative research methodology:

Primary Focus Questions:

1. How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in your school district?

2. What are the features of the education component of Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy of the Vision Project specifically impacted learning in your school district?

3. How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped build the capacity of self and others in your school?

Secondary Focus Question:

4. What leadership practices are being implemented to influence parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations?

Limitations

Potential weaknesses or problems within this study are identified as the limitations (Creswell, 2012). One limitation to this study is the data was only collected from two school districts out of the 180 school districts in Georgia. Additionally, the number of participants available for the sample was reduced by the difference in size of employee population between the Destination and Pioneer School Districts. The ELL population in Destination County Public Schools was also lower than the ELL population in Pioneer County Public Schools. As such, the findings will not be transferable to all schools or systems implementing the Vision Project. Another limitation to this study is its focus being primarily on the overarching implementation coupled with the secondary specific focus of the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. Therefore, the findings are not representative of a comprehensive investigation of every Vision Project recommendation (Berry, 2014).

Implications for Further Research

State policymakers should investigate the execution of the Vision Project in one system in order to comprehensively determine the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. One of the most important implications for the Vision Project could be the benefit of districts sharing best practices to glean structures to improve school districts across the state to help create a favorable view of public education. Another implication would be to explore its implementation with school systems more similar in student population, student demographics, and location. Additional research should assess the project's success throughout three school systems as opposed to only two to allow for triangulation across school systems as well as among data types collected (Berry, 2014).

Implications for School Leaders

Some educators think their schools will remain homogeneous; however, this is not the case. As the demographics of students change, educators must be prepared to serve the diverse pupils. The results of this study also have implications for school leaders and teachers. School leaders should supplement the training and education teachers receive during preparation programs with professional development seminars about serving students from various backgrounds and those with varying levels of English Language proficiency. Principals should expect all school employees to exhibit cultural competence and role model a social justice approach to education. Developing skills to foster community and parental involvement for all students, including ELLs, will enhance student outcomes. Failing to do so, may lead to schools falling short of meeting their goals of educating students and preparing them for college and careers.

In addition to informing the training curriculum, the results of this dissertation can be used to support the use of the Vision Project to develop school improvement plans and policies. The Vision Project created a model for engaging parents. District and school level personnel should develop policies and behaviors based on the cultural norms of families represented in the schools. For example, some parents from some Hispanic cultures would only visit the school after receiving an invitation because they consider doing so at other times would be disrespectful to the teachers. Inviting parents to school functions not only encourages involvement of ELL families: it also increases involvement of all families.

Improving Leadership Practice

Several improvements for leadership practice emerged as a result of this dissertation. Unlike many mandates, the recommendations for practice are simple and inexpensive. Most importantly, district personnel and principals must set the tone for working with ELL students and

their families. Principals should fully share their expectations, role model positive behavior, and recognized exemplary employees in this area. Considering every person hired has the potential of supporting or demolishing school culture, setting the tone begins with the hiring process. Candidates, at all levels, committed to the social justice approach to education and serving students from diverse racial and ethnic groups should be hired and retained. In addition to establishing expectations for teachers and administrators, principals also need to recognize the role support and maintenance staff members play in school culture and making ELL learners and their families comfortable.

Communication is also an area addressed based on the results of this dissertation. The frequency, methods, and delivery of communication are important when serving ELLs and their families. Immigrant parents perceive teachers and their roles differently than native parents. Specifically, many Hispanic parents consider teachers the authority in the educational process and find addressing teachers about their children disrespectful. School leaders and teachers need to develop a mutual understanding and develop a communication system to best serve all parties involved. Principals should also foster a sense of belonging and dialogue where parents of all backgrounds feel comfortable speaking to school personnel about their children. Teachers and administrators should also communicate frequently with parents in a variety of formats. Parents should receive correspondence via email, hard copy, telephone, websites, and text. School leaders cannot assume parents have access to or regularly check electronic sources or all hard copy documents reach the parents in a timely manner. Instead of only publishing written materials in English, documents should be translated into the languages read and spoken by the parents. Additionally, schools should have interpreters available to translate conversations instead of relying on the students to fill this role.

Conclusion

In 2009, the Georgia School Board Association partnered with the Georgia School Superintendents Association to create a vision for public education in Georgia. From this commitment the Georgia Vision Project for Public Education was launched. These endeavors led to a comprehensive document outlining foundational principles to help every school in the state of Georgia provide all children an equitable and excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and life (Vision Project, 2010). While extensive, the document is divided to include an introduction, guiding principles, key issues, current practices of promise, and recommendations for each of the educational components. Literature and research are embedded within The Vision Project document to support the educational components, but the document can be easily understood and adapted to any district.

In Destination the influence and impact of the implementation of the Georgia Vision Project was more evident than in Pioneer. Destination and Pioneer both implicitly have the same mission, vision, strategic priorities and goals. The major difference is the method to which the two districts developed their framework for success. The development and monitoring of the school improvement plans of each school within the Destination and Pioneer is another indication of their focus on continuous quality improvement. Each districts' commitment to learning is also apparent in the implementation of the safeguards to support their Title I schools and English Language Learners. It is evident Destination and Pioneer desire to promote *Culture, Climate and Organizational Efficacy* within their districts.

Comprehensive documents can be created, but without a leader who is able to implement and monitor the work the document will be meaningless. One of the most critical attributes of effective schools for English Language Learners is strong leadership (Theoharis & O' Toole,

2011). Parent perceptions of school climate influences whether and how families will engage with the school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Thereby engagement of parents can be maximized when the leaders focus on creating an environment inclusive of all regardless of socio-economics, culture, or demographic status. The parental involvement programs should be ongoing, culturally relevant, responsive to the community, and target both families and staff (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Rothstein-Fisch et al. (2009) remind leaders that not all parents can be involved in the same manner and the importance of developing an understanding of how to negotiate between values of home and school. When all of the factors are considered, the research indicates the barriers to parental involvement can be reduced or eliminated, thereby increasing parental involvement and academic success.

Leaders should continue to facilitate opportunities to promote social capital, a source of social support for families to provide information on how to deal with schools, comply with schools' expectations for parental involvement, and thus become more involved in the school and at home (Klugman et al., 2012). Parents and communities are a vital source of social capital. The networks of relationships created can benefit students by providing them with positive role models, encouragement, and support.

One of the essential leadership practices for leaders within ELL schools is to create parent workshops and staff development for staff and district leaders to clearly define parental involvement expectations. In the United States, being present at the school on a regular basis is perceived as the indication for parental involvement. However, this type of involvement is defined as formal parental involvement (Smith, et al., 2008). Helping students with homework, checking the website for upcoming events, and reading with children nightly are categorized as informal parental involvement activities conducted by parents outside of the school.

Both formal and informal parental involvements are important to supporting the educational outcomes of students. Most parents care about their child's success at school, but cultural differences and understandings can dictate whether parents are involved formally or informally. Educational leaders should seize the opportunity to clearly define the importance and significance of formal and informal involvement to staff, parents, and community members to eliminate the traditional perception of parental involvement to gain the understanding that both types of parental involvement are equally relevant and important to student success.

The changing demographics of K-12 education dictate the need for social justice leaders to build social capital in schools. Highly effective, job embedded professional learning for teachers to support the differentiated learning needs of all students will be key factors in supporting students and families of ELL students. The implications for leaders gained from this case study indicate to increase parent involvement in schools with high ELL populations' leaders must be willing to create, monitor and model the following:

1. An expectation for treating all stakeholders with fairness, dignity, and respect regardless of their socio-economic status, race, culture or language.

2. A warm and inviting school environment

3. Visibility and ability to staff, students, parents, and community members

4. Effective frequent and ongoing communication to parents in various modes and translated when possible

5. Provide on-going and culturally relevant professional learning for all staff

6. Friendly and approachable demeanor to increase positive perceptions of the school

7. Define parental involvement for staff, parents, and the community

Principals leading in the 21st century must develop skills and strategies for creating posi-

tive learning environments for their diverse student populations and their families (Miller &

Martin, 2014). The status quo will no longer be enough. These leaders will effect change by

leading with moral authority in an effort to create equitable learning environments for all stu-

dents and a welcoming one for parents (Medina et al., 2014). The principal's attitude and will-

ingness to engage parents sets the tone for parental involvement to be received by other staff

members. Building bridges between schools and parents is important for effective schools (Ver-

dugo & Flores, 2007). Successful school leaders foster parent involvement by creating structures

and implementing strategies to include regular communication, develop intentional routines for

parent volunteer opportunities, and encourage parent input on decisions impacting the school and

their children (Epstein, 2001; Medina, et al 2014). School principals have the power to influence

Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy at each of their schools. Interwoven throughout

the Georgia Vision Project educational components and guiding principles is the need for engag-

ing all stakeholders regardless of culture, socio-economic status, or race to create a warm, wel-

coming, and inclusive environment to create an equitable education for all.

References

Ahmad, F. Z., Boser, U., & Center for American, P. (2014). *America's leaky pipeline for teachers of color: Getting more teachers of color into the classroom*. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED561065

Baecher, L., Knoll, M. & Patti, J. (2013). Addressing English language learners in the school leadership curriculum: Mapping the terrain. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 43*(2), 421-459. *doi*: 10.1177/1942775113498377

Berkovich, I. (2014). A socio-ecological framework of social justice leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *52*(3), 282-309.

Baxter, P. & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report, 13*(4), 544-559.

Berry, J. (2014). EPS 8360: *Educational policy making and analysis class #3*. [Class handout]. Department of Educational Policy Studies, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

Bogotch, I.E. (2002). Educational leadership and social justice: Theory into practice. *Journal of School Leadership*, 14(1), 48 – 66.

Boozer, W. S. (2015). Approaches to summarizing multiple case studies. Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University.

Boser, U. (2011). *Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color*. Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2011/11/09/10657/teacher-diversity-matters/

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(1), 77-101.

Brooks, J. S., Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H., & Hodgins, D. W. (2007). Distributed Leadership for social justice: Exploring how influence and equity are stretched over an urban high school. *Journal of School Leadership*, 17, 378-408.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: Sage.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990*).* Grounded theory research: Procedures, cannons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology,* 13(1), 3-21.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008*). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3rd.ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational researcher: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39, 124-130.

Dantley, M. E., & Tillman, L. C. (2010). Social justice and moral transformative leadership. In C. Marshall & M. Oliva (Eds.), *Leadership for social justice* (2nd ed., pp. 19-34). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dedoose [Computer Software]. (2016). Retrieved from http://dedoose.com

DeMatthews, D., & Mawhinney, H. (2014). Social justice leadership and inclusion: Exploring challenges in an urban district struggling to address inequities. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(5), 844-881.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists.* London: Routledge.

Dolby, N. (2012). *Rethinking Multicultural Education for the Next Generation: The New Empathy and Social Justice*. Florence, KY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Fassinger, R., & Morrow, S. (2013). Toward best practices in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research: A social justice perspective. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*, *5*(2), 69-83.

Fossey, E., Epstein, M., Findlay,R., Plant, G., & Harvey, C. (2002). Creating a positive experience of research for people with psychiatric disabilities by sharing feedback. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal,* 25, 369-378.

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(2), 191-229.

Georgia Department of Education, GADOE (2014). *Data and reporting student enrollment by grade*. Retrieved from http://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_enrollgrade.entry_form

Georgia Vision Project (2010). *A Vision for Public Education Equity and Excellence*. Retrieved from www.visionforpubliced.org

Georgia Vision Project (2013). *A Vision for Public Education Equity and Excellence Revised Recommendations*. Retrieved from www.visionforpubliced.org

Governor's Office of Student Achievement, GOSA (2013). Retrieved from https://gaawards.gosa.ga.gov/analytics

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research,* 67(1), 3-42.

Jebreen, I. (2012). Using inductive approach as research strategy in requirements engineering. *International Journal of Computer and Information Technology*, 1(2), 162-173.

Kemp-Graham, K. Y. (2015). Missed opportunities: Preparing aspiring school leaders for bold social justice school leadership needed for 21st century schools. *NCPEA International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 10(21), 99-129.

Klar, H.W. & Brewer, C.A. (2013). Successful leadership in high-needs schools: An examination of core leadership practices enacted in challenging contexts. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 49(5), 768-808. doi 10.1177/0013161X13482577

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(2), 214-222.

Maxwell, J. C. (2007). *The 21 indispensable qualities of a leader: Becoming the person others will want to follow* (2nd ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing.

Miller, C. M., & Martin, B. N. (2014). Principal preparedness for leading in demographically changing schools: Where is the social justice training? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership,* 34(3), 711-743. doi 1741143213513185.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Morse, J. M. & Richards, L. (2006). *EPEL: Qualitative research design [Class handout].* Atlanta, GA: Department of Educational Policy Studies, Georgia State University.

Pazey, B. L., & Cole, H. A. (2013). The role of special education training in the development of socially just leaders building an equity consciousness in educational leadership programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*,*49*(2), 243-271.

Peterson, S., & Heywood, D. (2007). Contributions of families' linguistic, social, and cultural capital to minority-language children's literacy: Parents', teachers' and principals' perspectives. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63, 517-538.

Portes, A. (2000). The two meanings of social capital. *Sociological Forum*, 15(1), 1.

Salmona, M., Partlo, M., Kaczynski, D., & Leonard, S. N. (2015). Developing Culturally Competent Teachers: An International Student Teaching Field Experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *40*(4), 3.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research* (5 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(2), 221-258.

Theoharis, G., & O'Toole, J. (2011). Leading inclusive ELL: Social justice leadership for English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(4), 646-688.

Thomas, D. R. (2006, June). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*(2), 237-246.

Walker, D. & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure.

Qualitative Health Research, 16(4), 547-559.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research design and methods.* Washington, D.C.: Sage Publications.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A.1

Interview #1 Protocol Questions for System –Level Interviewee- Primary Research Focus

Facts about the interviewee (demographics):

Gender, age, education background, education background in leadership and management train-ing, total years as a principal, number of years in current school, number of years as principal of the current school, leadership positions before becoming a district employee, experience outside of education.

1. What is the background of this district?
   - variations: What is the story of this district? What is the district's history?
   - clarification: What is history? How far back?
   - probe for a rich and detailed discussion; emphasis on school improvement, principal longevity, community involvement
2. Describe the current mission and vision of the district and how this connects to the Vision Project.
3. Describe the culture of the district as it pertains to learning.
4. How has the Vision Project influenced the learning environment in your district?
   - probe for specific examples of the contribution related to one or more of the Vision Project strands (asterisked strands connect to individual research fo-cus)
     - Early Learning
     - Teaching and Learning
     - Human and Organizational Capital
     - Governance, Leadership, and Accountability
     - Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy*
     - Financial Resources
5. What long-term learning goals (or strategic plan) have you set for your district, and how are these tied to the Vision Project?
   - probe for academic
   - probe other (social-emotional/culture and climate)
6. What challenges does the district face in strengthening a culture of learning?

- o probe for sustainability or creating a culture for schools that may be at different levels of implementation
- o probe for ways implementing the Vision Project recommendations has impacted the culture of learning

7. How does the internal environment of your district impact learning?
   - o probe what works/ what's missing
8. How does the external environment of your district (parent, community, policy, political and system/central office stakeholders) impact learning?
   - o probe what works/ what's missing
   - o probe for specific examples of how the Vision Project has impacted learning
9. How have you developed and distributed leadership in your district?
   - o probe for principal development as well as all stakeholders
   - o probe for ways the Vision Project has impacted this development
10. What short-term/long-term goals have you set to build capacity in your district?
    - o probe for ways the Vision Project recommendations have been integrated into these goals
11. How does the external environment of your district (parent, community, policy (state/federal), political and system/central office stakeholders) influence leadership practices and processes?
    - o probe what works/ what's missing
12. Some culminating questions:
    - o These should serve as the conclusion to the initial section.
    - o Are there any other ideas that you would like to share that have not been covered?

Appendix A.2

Interview #2 Protocol Questions for Principal – Primary Interview Focus

Facts about the principal (demographics):

Gender, age, education background, education background in leadership and management training, total years as a principal, number of years in current school, number of years as principal of the current school, leadership positions before becoming a principal , experience outside of education.

1. What is the background of this school?
     - o variations: What is the story of this school? What is the school's history?
     - o clarification: What is history? How far back?
     - o probe for a rich and detailed discussion; emphasis on school improvement, principal longevity, community involvement
2. Describe the current mission and vision of the school and how this connects to the Vision Project.
3. Describe the culture of the school as it pertains to learning.
4. How has the Vision Project influenced the learning environment in your school?
     - o probe for specific examples of the contribution related to one or more of the Vision Project strands (asterisked strands connect to individual research focus)
         - ▪ Early Learning
         - ▪ Teaching and Learning
         - ▪ Human and Organizational Capital
         - ▪ Governance, Leadership, and Accountability
         - ▪ Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy*
         - ▪ Financial Resources
5. What long-term learning goals (or strategic plan) have you set for your school, and how are these tied to the Vision Project?
     - o probe for academic
     - o probe other (social-emotional/culture and climate)
6. What challenges does the school face in strengthening a culture of learning?
     - o probe for sustainability or creating a culture for schools that may be at different levels of implementation
     - o probe for ways implementing the Vision Project recommendations has impacted the culture of learning

7. How does the internal environment of your school impact learning?
    - probe what works/ what's missing
8. How does the external environment of your school (parent, community, policy, political and system/central office stakeholders) impact learning?
    - probe what works/ what's missing
    - probe for specific examples of how the Vision Project has impacted learning
9. How have you developed and distributed leadership in your school?
    - probe for principal development as well as all stakeholders
    - probe for ways the Vision Project has impacted this development
10. What short-term/long-term goals have you set to build capacity in your school?
    - probe for ways the Vision Project recommendations have been integrated into these goals
11. How does the external environment of your school (parent, community, policy (state/federal), political and system/central office stakeholders) influence leadership practices and processes?
    - probe what works/ what's missing
12. Some culminating questions:
    - These should serve as the conclusion to the initial section.
    - Are there any other ideas that you would like to share that have not been covered?

Appendix A.3

Interview #3 Protocol Questions for Principal/Assistant Principal/

Parent Instructional Coordinator - Secondary Research Focus

Focus on specific linkages to individual research questions

Purpose:

The purpose of the Vision Project Research Study is to determine to what degree the project's implementation has impacted school culture and student achievement in high implementation districts. The secondary focus of the case study will examine the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement within schools with high English Language Learner populations, which his aligned with Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy, one of the seven components from the Georgia Vision Project.

1. How does your school/system define parental involvement?
   o Probes for common understanding
   o Probes for communication of the definition of parental involvement to parents
2. How does your school/system define English Language Learners (ELL)?

   o Probes for common understanding
   o Probes for communication of the definition of ELL
   o Probes for who determines ELL status
3. Describe your experience with schools that have a high ELL population.

   o Probes for student teaching, professional experience
   o Probes for professional learning/training
4. Explain how your school communicates with parents.

   o Probes for types of communication (paper, electronic, web-based)
   o Probes for frequency of communication
   o Probes for feedback from parent
   o Probes for translations and the languages
5. Describe parental involvement activities held at the school.

   o Probes for types of meetings, workshops, activities

- o Probes for frequency of events
- o Probes for translations (languages)
- o Probes for times of events

6. Describe the involvement of parents within your school/district.

- o Probes for who attends
- o Probes for types of meetings, workshops, activities
- o Probes for formal vs. informal involvement
- o Probes for what's working and what's not/barriers (childcare, time of events, working)
- o Probe for how often and time of events
- o Probe for how parental involvement is encouraged

7. Describe the leadership organizational structures in your school/system.

- o Probes for evidence of local school administrative team, grade levels
  - Probe for frequency of meetings, locations
- o Probes for parent organizations PTA, Local school council
  - Probe for frequency of meetings, locations

8. Describe training/professional learning offered to support ELL parents.

- o Probes for leaders areas of focus, frequency, and location
- o Probes for teachers areas of focus, frequency, and location

9. Discuss the implementation of Title I Committees/Workshops.

- o Probes for committee make-up
- o Probes for Parent/Teacher/Student/Compacts
- o Probes for long-term goals, vision, mission, and alignment
- o Probes for leadership of the implementation

10. Discuss the development of the Title I Parent Involvement Workshops/Calendar.

- o Probes for long term goals, vision, mission, and alignment
- o Probes for leadership of the implementation
- o Probes for stakeholder (community, parent, teacher) involvement on topics
- o Probes for timeline of development

11. Describe the characteristics that make your school/system an inviting place for parents

- o Probes for leadership practices
- o Probes for organizational management, safety, security, hub of community

12. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops or events?

- o Probes for what's working/what's not

13. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership practices influence on

parental involvement?

- o Probes for what's working/what's not
- o Probes for opportunities to provide feedback

14. What is your school/Systems plan of action for addressing parental involvement in high ELL
   schools?
   - o Probes for professional development for teachers and leaders
   - o Probes for financial resources
   - o Probes for communication

Appendix A.4

Interview #4 Protocol Questions for Parents- Secondary Research Focus

Focus on specific linkages to individual research questions

Purpose:

The purpose of the Vision Project Research Study is to determine to what degree the project's implementation has impacted school culture and student achievement in high implementation districts. The secondary focus of the case study will examine the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement within schools with high English Language Learner populations, which his aligned with Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy, one of the seven components from the Georgia Vision Project.

Facts about the interviewee (demographics):

Gender, age, education background, number of children at the school, number of years at current school, current parental involvement activities, and how many years have you been in America

1. How does your school/system define parental involvement?
   o Probes for common understanding
   o Probes for communication of the definition of parental involvement to parents
2. Explain how your school communicates with parents.

   o Probes for types of communication (paper, electronic, web-based)
   o Probes for frequency of communication
   o Probes for feedback from parent
3. Describe parental involvement activities held at the school.

   o Probes for types of meetings, workshops, activities
   o Probes for frequency of events
   o Probes for translations (languages)
   o Probes for times of events
4. Describe the involvement of parents within your school/district.

   o Probes for who attends

- o   Probes for types of meetings, workshops, activities
- o   Probes for formal vs. informal involvement
- o   Probes for what's working and what's not/barriers (childcare, time of events, working)
- o   Probe for how often and time of events
- o   Probe for how parental involvement is encouraged

5. Describe the leadership organizational structures in your school/system for parents.

- o   Probes for parent organizations PTA, Local school council
  - Probe for frequency of meetings, locations

6. Describe training/professional learning offered for parents.

- o   Probes for areas of focus, frequency, and location

7. Discuss the implementation of Title I Committees/Workshops.

- o   Probes for Parent/Teacher/Student/Compacts

8. Explain how the Title I Parent Involvement Workshops/Calendar is developed.

- o   Probes for long term goals, vision, mission, and alignment
- o   Probes for stakeholder (community, parent, teacher) involvement on topics
- o   Probes for timeline of development

9. Describe the characteristics that make your school/system an inviting place for parents

- o   Probes for leadership practices
- o   Probes for organizational management, safety, security, hub of community

10. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops or events?

- o   Probes for what's working/what's not

11. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership practices influence on

parental involvement?

- o   Probes for what's working/what's not
- o   Probes for opportunities to provide feedback

13. How would you like your school to plan for addressing parental involvement in high ELL
    schools?
- o   Probes for professional development for teachers and leaders
- o   Probes for communication

Appendix B

Georgia State University
Department of Educational Policy Studies
1   Informed Consent

Title: Leadership Practices Influence on Parental Involvement within Schools with High English Language Learner Populations

Principal Investigator: James Khars, Ph.D.
Student Principal Investigator: Tamara J. Candis

I.   Purpose:
You are being invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to examine the implementation of the Georgia Vision Project in your school system as well as the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement within schools with high English Language Learner (ELL) populations. You are being invited because you are a district leader, school administrator, teacher leader, parental involvement coordinator, or a parent in a school with a high population of ELL students in one of the two school districts chosen for the research study. A maximum of 15 participants will be invited to participate in this study. Participation in the study will require a minimum of one hour of your time and no more than five hours of your time over the course of 9 months interviewing with the researcher.

II.   Procedures:
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in at least one semi-structured interviews during a 9 month period of time beginning June 1, 2015. In order to maintain confidentiality, the identity of all participants, schools, and school systems will not be revealed in the final document. You will be interviewed for less than two hours at any one time in your office, school, or at an alternate location within your district that is acceptable to you or at a professional conference location. Each interview will be audio recorded and you will be asked specifically about parental involvement and your perceptions of the leadership practices influencing parental involvement in the school. You will also be asked specifically about the implementation of the Vision Project within your district. You may be asked to participate in a follow-up telephone or virtual interview should any information need to be clarified. The interview transcript will be available for you to review. District leaders, administrators, and teacher leaders will be asked to provide a resume and complete an electronic questionnaire also background and demographic information about educational experiences and local school involvement will be required. Parents will be complete an electronic questionnaire about their experiences with the school and demographic information. The electronic questionnaire will be administered through the on-line platform of Qualtrics. The questionnaire will be accessible through a password-protect account. The password will be a combination of upper/lower case letters, numbers and special characters.

III.   Risks:
In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV.   Benefits:

By participating in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you. The study hopes to gain information in regards to implementing the Georgia Vison Project in your school system, as well as leadership practices influencing parental involvement in high level enrollment ELL schools. This information may be useful to other leaders in other schools that share similar demographics. This study seeks to create a framework to increase parental involvement in their schools.

V.   Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. If you feel uncomfortable with any questions asked you may skip them. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI.   Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Khars and Ms. Tamara J. Candis will have access to the information you provide for the study. Information may also be shared with other entities whose responsibility is to ensure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP). In order to secure the information obtained in this study, the information will be stored in an external hard drive in Ms. Tamara J. Candis' home office. A password-protected file will be created on the hard drive and the information will only be accessed utilizing a firewall-protected computer. To assure privacy rather than using your name your information will be assigned a number letter key. The key to the study number you are assigned will be stored separately from the data files to protect your privacy. Once the research study is completed, all of the audio recordings, transcriptions, and the key will be destroyed, as well the completion and acceptance of the resulting dissertation. However, all documents will be destroyed after December 2018. Any information that may personally identify you will not appear when the study is presented or published. All of the findings will be summarized and reported in group form.

VII.   Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. James Khars(faculty advisor) at 770-366-0215 or jkars@gsu.edu or Tamara J. Candis (student principal investigator) at 678-707-9606 or tnjcandis@gmail.com if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. You can also call or email Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu if you would like to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. You can discuss any questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also call Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in this study.

VIII.   Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

_____   _____
Participant   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent   Date

Universidad del Estado de Georgia

Departamento de Estudios de Políticas Educativas

Consentimiento Informado

Título: Influencia de las prácticas de liderazgo con respecto a la Participación de los padres en las escuelas con alta población Estudiantes que están aprendiendo inglés.

Investigador principal: James Khars, Ph.D.
Principal estudiante investigador: Tamara J. Candis

I.   Propósito:

Usted está siendo invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación. El propósito del estudio es examinar la implementación del "Georgia Vision Project" en su sistema escolar en adición con las prácticas de liderazgo y la participación de los padres en las escuelas con alta población estudiantes que están aprendiendo el idioma inglés. Usted está invitado a participar, porque actualmente es un líder distrital, administrador de una escuela, maestro líder, un coordinador de participación de padres, un padre de una escuela con una alta población estudiantes que están aprendiendo inglés en uno de los dos distritos escolares que fueron escogidos para este estudio. Un máximo de 15 participantes serán invitados a participar en este estudio. Como uno de estos15 individuos se requerirá de su participación de un mínimo de una hora de su tiempo y no más de cinco horas de su tiempo en el transcurso de 9 meses entrevistándose con el investigador.

II.   Procedimientos:

Si decide participar, se le pedirá que participe en al menos una entrevista semi-estructurada durante un período de 9 meses empezando el 1 de junio de 2015. La identidad de todos los participantes, las escuelas y los sistemas escolares será ocultada en el documento final con el fin de mantener la confidencialidad. Usted será entrevistado por menos dos horas a la vez en su oficina, en la escuela o en un lugar alternativo dentro de su distrito en un lugar que sea aceptable para usted o en un lugar de conferencias profesionales. Cada entrevista será grabada en audio y a usted se le preguntara específicamente sobre participación de los padres y sobre su percepción de como prácticas de liderazgo influyen en la participación de los padres en la escuela. También se le preguntará específicamente sobre la aplicación del "Georgia Vision Project" dentro de su distrito. Es posible que se le pida que participe en un seguimiento por teléfono o entrevista virtual si alguna información debiera aclararse. La oportunidad de revisar los expedientes de entrevista le será ofrecida a usted. A los líderes del distrito, administradores y maestros líderes se les pedirá que proporcionen un resumen y completen un cuestionario electrónico para proporcionar información de antecedentes y datos demográficos sobre su experiencia do-

cente y participación en las escuelas locales. A los padres se les pedirá que completen un cuestionario electrónico acerca de sus experiencias en la escuela y la información demográfica. El cuestionario electrónico será administrado a través de la plataforma electrónica "Qualtrics" con una cuenta protegida por contraseña utilizando una combinación de letras mayúsculas, minúsculas, números y caracteres especiales.

III.   Riesgos:
En este estudio, usted no tendrá más riesgo que aquel que pueda tener en un día normal de su vida.

IV.   Beneficios:
 La participación en este estudio no le beneficiara a usted personalmente. En general, esperamos obtener información sobre el"Georgia Visión Project "en su sistema escolar además de las prácticas de liderazgo que influyen en la participación de los padres en las escuelas que tienen alta población de estudiantes que están aprendiendo el idioma inglés. Esta información puede ser útil a los dirigentes en las escuelas con similares características demográficas a fin de crear un marco para aumentar la participación de los padres en las escuelas.

V.   Participación de entrada voluntaria y su retiro:
Su participación en la investigación es voluntaria. Usted no tiene que estar en este estudio. Si usted decide estar en el estudio y luego cambia de opinión, usted tiene el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento. Usted puede saltarse preguntas si no se siente confortable. Cualquiera que sea su decisión, usted no perderá los beneficios a los que usted tiene derecho.

VI.   Confidencialidad:
Vamos a mantener sus archivos en privado en la medida permitida por la ley. El Dr. Khars y la Sra. Tamara J. Candis tendrán acceso a la información que usted proporcione. La información también puede ser compartida con aquellos que aseguran que el estudio es realizado correctamente (GSU - Junta de Revisión Institucional, la Oficina de Investigación en Seres Humanos (OHRP). Vamos a utilizar un disco duro externo en la oficina de la casa de la Sra. Tamara J. Candis, el archivo estará protegido por contraseña y solo se podrá acceder mediante firewall de ordenadores protegidos. Habrá un número tecla de la letra en lugar de su nombre en el estudio. La clave para el número del estudio que se le ha asignado se almacenará por separado en los archivos de datos para proteger su privacidad. Todas las grabaciones de audio, transcripciones y la clave se destruirán al terminar el proyecto, lo que incluye la realización y la aceptación de la tesis, De cualquier manera todos los archivos serán destruidos después de diciembre del 2018. Su nombre y otros datos que pudieran indicar si identidad no aparecerán en la presentación de este estudio o en la publicación de los resultados. Los resultados obtenidos serán resumidos y reportados de manera grupal. Usted no será identificado personalmente.

VII.   Personas de Contacto:
Póngase en contacto con el Dr. James Khars (Asesor de la facultad)al 770-366-0215 o jkars@gsu.edu o Tamara J. Candis (Principal estudiante investigador) al 678-707-9606 o tjcandis@yahoo.com si tiene preguntas, inquietudes o quejas sobre este estudio. También puede llamar si usted cree que ha sido perjudicado por el estudio. Llame o escriba a Susan Vogtner en la Universidad del Estado de Georgia -Oficina de Investigación de Integridad al 404-413-3513 o svogt-

ner1@gsu.edu si desea hablar con alguien que no es parte del equipo del estudio. Usted puede hablar acerca de las preguntas, inquietudes, obtener información o sugerencias sobre el estudio. También se puede llamar Susan Vogtner si usted tiene preguntas o preocupaciones acerca de sus derechos en este estudio.

VIII.   Copia del formulario de consentimiento para el participante:
Le daremos una copia de este formulario de consentimiento para que lo archive.

Si usted está dispuesto a ofrecerse como voluntario para este tipo de investigación y ser grabado en audio, por favor firme abajo.

_____   _____
Participante   Fecha

_____   _____
Investigador principal o Consentimiento obtenido del investigador   Fecha

Appendix C

<Date>

<Name>
<Address 1>
<Address 2>
<City>, GA <Zip Code>

Dear < insert name>

I am writing to request your assistance and participation in a research project investigating the implementation of the Vision Project and the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high English Language Learner (ELL) populations. The research will be conducted within your district at a school. You will be interviewed at the school or at an alternate location within your district that is acceptable to you or at professional conference location.

This research is part of a doctoral dissertation through Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA. You are being asked to participate because you are a parent at a school with a high ELL population.

Within the next two weeks, I will contact you via telephone to answer any questions you might have and schedule an interview, should you choose to participate. Participation is voluntary and creates no more risk than daily living activities. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in at least one interview with the possibility of a follow-up interview during a nine month period of time either face to face or virtual. You will be interviewed for less than two hours at any one time. Participation will require less than five hours of your time over the course of nine months. Participants will have the opportunity to review the findings of the research. Should you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at tnjcandis@gmail.com. I look forward to speaking with you in the very near future.

Respectfully,

Tamara J. Candis

Doctoral Student

Educational Policy Studies

Georgia State University

Follow up email or letter to potential participants

Dear <insert name>,

Thank you for your time to speak with me about my research for my doctoral dissertation regarding the influence of leadership practices on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. I enjoyed speaking with you, and I hope I answered your questions clearly. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at tnjcandis@gmail.com.

Regardless of your decision to participate in this research, the findings of the study will be available to you in English in aggregate form.

I look forward to speaking with you in the future.

Respectfully,

Tamara J. Candis

Doctoral Student

Educational Policy Studies

Georgia State University

Follow up email to potential participants who agreed to participate

Dear <insert name>

Thank you for your time to speak with me about my research for my doctoral dissertation regarding leadership practices influence on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. I enjoyed speaking with you, and I hope I answered your questions clearly. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at tnjcandis@gmail.com.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Per our conversation, we are scheduled for a face-to-face interview on <insert day and date> at <insert time>. We will be meeting in <insert room number and building name>. Please contact me if any of this information is incorrect.

Attached to this email is an informed consent document, which further explains the research procedures. We will review this document prior to the interview. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

I will contact you 24 to 72 hours prior to our scheduled meeting for final confirmation or alteration to the schedule.

Regardless of your decision to participate in this research, the findings of the study will be available to you in aggregate form in English.

I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Respectfully,

Tamara J. Candis

Doctoral Student

Educational Policy Studies

Georgia State University

Follow up email to participants who participated and follow-up needed

Dear <insert name>

Thank you for your time to speak with me about my research for my doctoral dissertation regarding leadership practices influence on parental involvement in schools with high ELL populations. I enjoyed getting to know you during our interview. I would like to speak with you again to ask additional questions for clarification about information gained during our discussion.
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. Per our conversation, we are scheduled for a face-to-face or virtual interview on <insert day and date> at <insert time>. We will be meeting in <insert room number and building name> or on <virtual site>. Please contact me if any of this information is incorrect.

I will contact you 24 to 72 hours prior to our scheduled meeting for final confirmation or alteration to the schedule.

Regardless of your decision to continue in this research, the findings of the study will be available to you in aggregate form in English. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at tnjcandis@gmail.com.
I look forward to speaking with you in the near future.

Respectfully,

Tamara J. Candis
Doctoral Student
Educational Policy Studies
Georgia State University
<Fecha Date>

<Nombre Name>
<Direccion Address 1>
<Address 2>
<Ciudad>, GA <codigo postal-Zip Code>

Querida/o: < insert name>
Me dirijo a usted para solicitar su asistencia y participación en un proyecto de investigación en la implementación de la visión y la influencia de las prácticas de liderazgo en la participación de los padres en las escuelas con un alto número de población de estudiantes que están aprendiendo el idioma inglés (ELL). La investigación se llevará a cabo dentro del distrito, en una

escuela. Usted será entrevistado en la escuela o en un lugar alternativo dentro de su distrito que sea aceptable para usted, o bien en un lugar de conferencias profesionales.

Esta investigación forma parte de una Tesis Doctoral en Universidad del Estado de Georgia, en Atlanta, GA. Se le pide a participar porque usted es un padre de una escuela con una alta población ELL.

Dentro de las próximas dos semanas, yo me pondré en contacto con usted por teléfono para responder a cualquier pregunta que usted pueda tener y programar una entrevista, en el caso de que usted decida participar. Su participación es voluntaria y no ocasionara riegos en las actividades de la vida diaria. Si decide participar, se le pedirá que participe en por lo menos en una entrevista, con la posibilidad de una entrevista de seguimiento, esto durante un período de nueve meses de tiempo, ya sea personalmente o de manera virtual. Usted será entrevistado durante menos de dos horas en cualquier momento. La participación requerirá al menos cinco horas de su tiempo a lo largo de nueve meses. Los participantes tendrán la oportunidad de examinar los resultados de la investigación.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este proyecto, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en el tnjcandis@gmail.com.

Espero poder volver a hablar con usted en un futuro muy próximo.

Respetuosamente,

Tamara J. Candis

Estudiante de Doctorado

Estudios de Políticas Educativas

Universidad del Estado de Georgia

Correo electrónico o carta de seguimiento a los posibles participantes

Querida/o: <insert name>,

Gracias por su tiempo para hablar sobre mi investigación para mi tesis doctoral sobre la influencia de las prácticas de liderazgo en la participación de los padres en las escuelas con una alta población de ELL. He disfrutado mucho el hablar con usted(es), y espero haber respondido a sus preguntas claramente. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta adicional, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en el tnjcandis@gmail.com .

Independientemente de su decisión de participar en esta investigación, todos los resultados del estudio estarán disponibles para usted en inglés.

Me gustaría volver a hablar con usted en el futuro

Respetuosamente,

Tamara J. Candis

Estudiante de Doctorado

Estudios de Políticas Educativas

Universidad del Estado de Georgia

Correo electrónico de seguimiento a los posibles participantes que accedieron a participar

Querida/o: <insert name>

Gracias por su tiempo para hablar sobre mi investigación para mi tesis doctoral sobre la influencia de las prácticas de liderazgo en la participación de los padres en las escuelas con una alta población de ELL. He disfrutado mucho el hablar con ustedes, y espero haber respondido a sus preguntas claramente. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta adicional, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en el tnjcandis@gmail.com

Muchas gracias por haber accedido a participar en esta investigación. Según nuestra conversación, estamos programados para una entrevista personalmente <u>\<insertar fecha y hora\></u> en <u>\<insert\></u>. Nos estaremos reuniendo en <u>\<insertar número de habitación y nombre del edificio\>.</u> Por favor, póngase en contacto conmigo si alguna de esta información es incorrecta.

Adjunto a este correo electrónico hay un documento de consentimiento informado, en la que se explica los procedimientos de investigación. Vamos a revisar este documento antes de la entrevista. Por favor, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo si tiene cualquier pregunta.

Me pondré en contacto con usted de 24 a 72 horas antes de la reunión programada para su confirmación definitiva o para un cambio de horario.

Independientemente de su decisión de participar en esta investigación, todos los resultados del estudio estarán disponibles para usted en inglés.

Me gustaría volver a hablar con usted en el futuro cercano.

Respetuosamente,

Tamara J. Candis
Estudiante de Doctorado
Estudios de Políticas Educativas
Universidad del Estado de Georgia

Correo electrónico de seguimiento a las personas que participaron y el seguimiento necesario

Querida/o: <insert name>

Gracias por su tiempo para hablar sobre mi investigación para mi tesis doctoral sobre la influencia de las prácticas de liderazgo en la participación de los padres en las escuelas con una alta población de ELL. He disfrutado mucho el hablar con ustedes, y espero haber respondido a sus

preguntas claramente. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta adicional, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en el tnjcandis@gmail.com

Muchas gracias por haber accedido a participar en esta investigación. Nuestra conversación, que están programadas para una entrevista en persona o entrevista virtual en <u>insertar fecha y hora></u> en <u>insert>.</u> Nos reuniremos en <u>insertar número de habitación y nombre del edificio></u> o <u>sitio virtual></u>. Por favor, póngase en contacto conmigo si alguna de esta información es incorrecta.

Me pondré en contacto con ustedes 24 a 72 horas antes de la reunión programada para su confirmación definitiva o para un cambio de horario.

Independientemente de su decisión de continuar en esta investigación, los resultados del estudio estarán disponibles en inglés. Si usted tiene cualquier pregunta adicional, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo en tnjcandis@gmail.com.

Me gustaría volver a hablar con usted en el futuro cercano.
Respetuosamente,

Tamara J. Candis
Estudiante de Doctorado
Estudios de Políticas Educativas
Universidad del Estado de Georgia

Appendix D

Case Study Collection Documents

Destination	Pioneer
Destination Website	Pioneer Website
School Governing Council Bylaws	School Council Bylaws
Strategic Priorities and Goals	Strategic Priorities and Goals
District Improvement Plan	
Destination Organizational Structure Chart	Pioneer Organizational Structure Chart
Green Elementary Improvement Plan	Bronco Elementary Improvement Plan
Green Elementary Parent Involvement Compact	Bronco Elementary Parent Involvement Compact
Green Elementary Parent Involvement Policy	Bronco Elementary Parent Involvement Policy