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What's Culture got to do with it? Leadership for Culturally Responsive SEL Implementation

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, WHAT'S CULTURE GOT TO DO WITH IT? LEADERSHIP FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SEL IMPLEMENTATION, by LINDSAY WELLES WYCZALKOWSKI, 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 & Human Development, Georgia State University.

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WHAT'S CULTURE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

LEADERSHIP FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SEL IMPLEMENTATION

by

LINDSAY WELLES WYCZALKOWSKI

Under the direction of Dr. Kristina Brezicha

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived culturally responsive leadership practices that support the implementation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). This case study was of a large urban district, located in the Southeastern United States, in its fifth year of a social and emotional learning initiative. District, school and SEL program leaders were interviewed for perceived culturally responsive leadership implementation behaviors within four domains. These domains are critical self-reflection, culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, culturally responsive and inclusive environment and student and community advocacy. Interview data were triangulated with observations and document analysis. The findings have illuminated several behaviors and practices within culturally responsive leadership that support SEL implementation. Based on this study, recommendations for professional development are provided for both pre-service and in-service leaders on cultivating culturally responsive leadership behavior that supports strong SEL school programming.

INDEX WORDS: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Culturally Responsive Leadership. Social and Emotional Learning

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DEDICATION

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1 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING LITERATURE REVIEW MANUSCRIPT

Within the next three decades, the population of the United States will shift to a minority-majority (Brown, 2006). Educational reform efforts over the last 50 years has done little to close the achievement gap for students of color living in urban communities (Brown, 2006; Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005; Sleeter, 2011). Accountability policy, such as *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* have only made matters worse (Leithwood, Jacobson, & Ylimaki, 2011; Sunderman & Kim, 2007; Tanner, 2013). Power has centralized at the federal and state level, leading to standardization and the homogenization of curriculum (Leithwood, et. al., 2011; Sunderman &Kim, 2007; Tanner, 2013; Wirt & Kirst, 1997). This has also placed districts and schools under extreme pressure to increase student performance in order to avoid school closure or state takeover (Leithwood, et. al., 2011; Wirt & Kirst, 1997). This one-size fits all approach to school improvement has ultimately widened the achievement gap for diverse learners, learners of low socio-economic backgrounds, students of color, and English Language Learners (Brown, 2006).

While the achievement gap widens, so does the economic divide between the white middle class and minority students in urban communities (Greene, 2010). However, there is a growing body of research on alternate approaches to teaching and leadership that support the academic achievement of diverse students in urban communities (Durlak, 2015; Sleeter, 2011). Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) (Gay, 2010), social and emotional learning (SEL) implementation (Durlak, 2015), and culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) (Khalifa, Goodman, & Davis, 2016) provide hope to educational reformers for closing the opportunity gap for minority

students (Johnson, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Khalifa, et. al., 2016, Durlak, Weissberg, Dyminicki, 2011; Durlak 2015).

Problem

Culturally responsive pedagogy (Sleeter, 2011) and social and emotional learning implementation (Durlak, 2015) both have shown promise for increasing academic performance of diverse learners (Ladson-Billings 1995; Durlak, et. al., 2011; Sleeter, 2011). While, the pedagogical practices of culturally responsive teaching overlap with social and emotional learning, researchers study these two strands independently of one another (Ladson-Billings 1995; Durlak, et. al., 2011; Sleeter, 2011). This is problematic due to the current trend of urban districts using SEL to improve outcomes for diverse learners (Kedziora & Yoder, 2016; "Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security", 2015). Educational reform initiatives targeting underrepresented minority populations must take factors such as culture, class, and the socio-political context into consideration, or run the risk of further perpetuating the systemic marginalization of students (Kedziora & Yoder, 2016; Kim & Slapac, 2015; "Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security", 2015). Therefore, this study begins with a review of literature that describes the pertinent research on culturally responsive pedagogy and social and emotional learning, identifies how the two strands intersect, and provides a congruent leadership framework that may supports the culturally responsive implementation of social and emotional learning in large urban districts of color.

Research on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) emerged over 30 years ago to investigate teaching pedagogy that best supports the academic, social and emotional needs of African American students in urban communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Historically, research conducted in CRP has been in the form of small-scale case studies, resulting in various pedagogical

frameworks (Sleeter, 2011). While there is a large body of research on CRP, the widespread use of any one specific CRP framework has not gained traction in large-scale reform (Sleeter, 2011).

Studied for almost as long as CRP, research on social and emotional learning has predominately been in the evaluation of curriculum or the implementation of large-scale initiatives. While research within CRP, discusses social and emotional competency, such as self-awareness (Gay, 2002; Hilliard, 1992), social awareness and relationships (Kim & Slapac, 2015) as fundamental in supporting the learning of diverse student populations, research in SEL does not explicitly discuss cultural schema as a component of developing social or emotional competency (Durlak, 2015). For example, a search in ERIC EBSCO on culture and SEL retrieves a single relevant study evaluating SEL curriculum for cultural referents (Garner, Brown, & Vesely, 2016). However, culture is the lens through which learning occurs and all knowledge is built on one's prior experiences (Hammond, 2014, Ladson-Billings, 1995). Because culture is a critical component to any learning, research on culturally responsive instructional practices must become part of social and emotional learning implementation research. While this study highlights the gap in research on the intersect of culturally responsive teaching pedagogy and SEL implementation at the classroom level, it does not seek to address this gap directly, but instead looks at culturally responsive SEL implementation through the lens of leadership.

School-based leadership is critical to the success of any school-wide reform initiative and has largely been the focus of educational leadership researchers (Johnson, 2007; Khalifa, et. al., 2016; Marks & Printy, 2003). However, in the era of broad-based reform efforts, the need for coordination, training, materials and support from central office leadership has been punctuated (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton & Newton, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Wright, 2009). Just as there is a gap in the research explicitly exploring the intersection of culturally responsive pedagogy and

social and emotional learning implementation at the classroom level, there is limited research regarding leadership practices, at the district and local school level, which support strong culturally responsive social and emotional learning initiatives in large urban minority school districts (Durlak, 2015, Khalifa, et. al., 2016, Osher & Kendziora, 2015). This study was conducted to fill the gap in the research through an investigation of the following two guiding questions.

Guiding Questions

Through the lens of the culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, et al, 2016) and social and emotional learning implementation (Durlak, 2015), this study investigated the following guiding questions:

1. How do district leaders support schools with critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and professional learning, culturally responsive inclusive environments, and engage with families within a social and emotional learning initiative?
2. How do school leaders implement critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and professional learning, culturally responsive inclusive school environments, and engage with families in a social and emotional learning initiative?

Review of Literature

A review of literature was conducted to investigate the current scholarship on culturally responsive teaching practices, social and emotional learning, and culturally responsive leadership. The following is a historical look at diversity and multiculturalism in education as well as a synopsis of the research on culturally responsive teaching and implications for students (Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings 1995; Sleeter, 2011). Additionally, this review provides an overview of the current research on social and emotional learning (Durlak, 2015) and investigates the intersection of social and emotional learning and teaching with diverse students in mind (Durlak,

et. al., 2011; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings 1995; Sleeter, 2011). Finally, the literature on culturally responsive leadership is discussed, including the framework that was employed for this case study (Santamaria, 2014; Khalifa, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is a term constructed from over thirty years of research within the fields of anthropology, sociology, socio-linguistics, communications, and multicultural education (Sleeter, 2011). An understanding of CRP has largely been derived from small-scale case studies of teachers identifying practices that support the learning and cultural identities of students of color, English language learners, indigenous students, and students living in urban or low-socio-economic communities (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Sleeter, 2011). Names like culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally congruent teaching, culturally appropriate teaching, culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy have all been used to describe the teaching style and practices that acknowledge and involve home culture and language in the classroom. While this strand of research has provided various terms and frameworks, CRP was used in this study to describe a teacher's stylistic practices which support diverse learners, specifically students in urban minority communities (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010, Sleeter, 2011).

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) first conceptualized *culturally relevant pedagogy* in the 1990's. Her multi-year case study "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy", identified the commonalities among teaching practices of eight effective elementary educators in a predominately African American, low-income school district in Northern California. In this groundbreaking study, Ladson-Billings (1995) constructed a framework for culturally relevant pedagogy.

Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that while the eight teacher participants had a variety of pedagogical practices, there were three consistent themes. The first common theme was high expectations for all students. The teachers in this study believed that every student had the capacity to learn and held each child to this expectation. Because of this mindset, all students in the classroom were successful in terms of academic achievement. Secondly, the teachers valued cultural competence. They used the students' fund of knowledge in their teaching. Funds of knowledge refers to the wealth of knowledge students bring in from their households, community and social network (Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005). Students used prior knowledge, including cultural knowledge to co-construct new meaning and bridge the gap between home and school. Finally, teachers in Ladson-Billings (1995) study included socio-cultural critique in the curriculum they developed. Students were encouraged to think critically about cultural norms, and how knowledge is presented and created at school and by the society.

Gay's (2002) research expanded culturally relevant pedagogy to culturally "responsive" pedagogy by punctuating the importance of a teacher's ability to make academic learning more meaningful to students by situating the acquisition of new academic content within the lived experience of the learner. Culturally responsive practitioners have a knowledge of diverse cultures and include diverse perspectives into the curriculum, instructional delivery and communication. Gay also reinforced the criticality of the teacher's role in building a caring and supporting classroom community that is responsive of students' needs (Gay, 2002; Gay 2010).

Teacher critical reflection is a common theme in the research on culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Gay, 2010; Hilliard, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teacher self-awareness allows for greater understanding of the influences one's own culture plays in perceptions and misconceptions of students' intellectual potential, as well as learning and language ability

(Hilliard, 1992). Based on inaccurate assumptions, teachers who are not critically self-aware may lowered expectations, resulting in "teaching down" to the students' perceived level of ability (Hilliard, 1992).

In additions to teacher critical self-awareness, the classroom must be a safe space for students to confront the socio-linguistic complexities that come with membership in contrasting community and school cultures. Kim and Slapac (2015) called this the development of the "third space"; a space for students to bring competing knowledge together in order to synthesize and grapple over alternate modes of social norms that come from the various cultures they belong. This type of critical transformative pedagogy may be explicit or weaved into academics. Kim and Slapac (2015) suggest that, "curricula should be designed to destabilize the widespread stereotypes about minority people and cultures" (p. 22). Specific activities like close reads prompting discussion and autobiographical reflections offer students opportunities for self-reflection and cross-cultural understanding. Integration of socio-political and cultural critical inquiry and reflection in curricula, empowers students to not only develop the critical thinking skills required to master content but also to develop a voice in their own education and life.

Research on CRP has reinforced the need for educators to move beyond the simple inclusion of cultural referents (Sleeter, 2011), toward the emphasis of the classroom as a safe space to explore personal and collective cultural identity, develop social-awareness of other cultural perspectives (Kim & Slapac, 2015), all while building strong relationships both teacher-student and student-student (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2014). Therefore, implicit in the teaching practices of culturally responsive pedagogy is the educator's role as a facilitator of the social and emotional development for diverse and potentially marginalized students (Hammond, 2014).

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL), intrinsic to culturally responsive pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Hammond, 2014), has been largely developed as a separate framework. In the last few decades, school reformers have begun using SEL implementation to support the social and emotional and academic needs of students, regardless of culture or socio-economic status (Durlak, 2015; Garner, et. al, 2016). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional, Learner (CASEL), describes SEL as the process though which individuals, both children and adults "understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, show and feel empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" ("What is SEL," 2016).

Research suggests that in the United States' education system, 40%-60% of students are chronically disengaged (Enterprises, 2013). These percentages increase drastically for low-SES students of color. Ultimately, this chronic disengagement leads to students dropping out and engaging in other risky behaviors like substance abuse, violence, attempted suicide, and depression (Hawkins et al., 2005). Social and emotional learning initiatives, as a preventative practice, focus on improving school culture, student engagement, student behavior, and peer relationships (Enterprises, 2013).

The definition for SEL was first derived from Daniel Goleman's (2006) work on emotional intelligence. Goleman's research suggests that humans not only have social and emotional intelligence, the brain has the capacity to build social and emotional competency throughout life. Additionally, social and emotional competency is a better predictor of success in the classroom and adult life than intellectual ability alone (Durlak, 2015; Durlak, et. al., 2011; Goleman, 2006; Hawkins, et. al., 2005).

There have been numerous studies conducted on SEL programming since its inception (Durlak, 2015; Enterprises, 2013; Jones, et. al., 2015; Hawkins, et. al., 2005). One of the largest studies on the impact of SEL was conducted through a meta-analysis of the programming of over 200 sites, involving almost 300,000 students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Researchers found that the explicit teaching of SEL though curriculum and alignment of school-wide practices lead to increased social and emotional competency of students, including higher rates of self-confidence, persistence on tasks, and positive social interactions with teachers and peers. Additionally, students in the study showed an average of an eleven percentile point gain in academic achievement on standardized testing (Durlak, et. al., 2011).

According to a longitudinal study, students who were exposed to explicit SEL classroom instruction in elementary school had higher social and emotional competency nine years later (Hawkins, et. al., 2005). Another study published in 2015, confirmed the long-term benefits of social and emotional competency by inversely correlating higher social competency in kindergarten to lower rates of reliance on public assistance, school dropout and drug abuse in adulthood (Jones, et. al., 2015).

Further illustrating the benefits of SEL, students in schools that implement SEL report feeling safer, having a stronger sense of community, and a greater foundation for success both academically and socially (Enterprise, et. al., 2013). There is also an economic benefit to SEL implementation. For every dollar spent on SEL, there is an eleven dollar return on investment (Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand, & Zander, 2015). In a study evaluating spending on SEL interventions, researchers found a significant monetary benefit to implementing SEL. A district or school's investment in teaching social and emotional skills, leads to improved student attitudes about school, promotes positive social behavior, and increases academic performance.

Therefore, reducing the costs associated with conduct issues, disruptive behavior, emotional distress, and substance abuse. Therefore, there is a large student financial opportunity cost of doing business as usual ("Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security," 2015). Beyond lowering costs in pupil spending, there is data showing an economic benefit to implementing SEL associated with teacher retention. Teachers in schools with strong SEL programming are twice as likely to report that their school has a positive climate, making them want to stay in their school and in the profession. Thus, reducing the cost associated with teacher attrition (Enterprise, et. al., 2013).

Teachers' Cultural, Social and, Emotional Competency

Just as with culturally responsive pedagogy (Hammond, 2014), the classroom teacher plays a critical role in teaching, modeling, and providing a safe and supportive environment for students to learn and develop social and emotional skills (Enterprise, et. al., 2013; Pierce, 2014). In schools with traditionally marginalized populations, teacher critical self-reflection heavily influences the delivery of content and facilitation of a safe a supportive environment (Gorski, 2006; Hilliard, 1992).

Teacher SEL.

Teachers are the primary implementers of social and emotional learning programming. Research shows that teacher perceptions and attitudes about students has major implications for the development of SEL skills. In a recent longitudinal study, researchers found that kindergarten students who were rated has having higher social skills by their teachers had better outcomes in adult life than those who were rated lower on the scale (Jones, et. al., 2016). In contrast, children who were rated as having weaker social competence were more likely to drop out of high school, abuse drugs, and/or need government assistance. Although this study's findings make clear the link between skills like social competency in childhood to future success in adulthood,

it also illustrates how teacher attitudes, and cultural perceptions play a critical role in the social and emotional learning of diverse students (Jones, et al., 2015). Teachers who are not critically self-reflective in analyzing how their own race, class, and language play a role in how they view their students' competency and needs, run the risk of further marginalizing students and families (Hohl & Solorzano, 2012).

In a study comparing teacher perspectives of social and emotional intelligence of 89 African American children (age 3-5 years) from economically stressed homes, found that teachers misinterpreted the pro-social behavior of their African American students as poor social skills (Humphries, et.al. 2012). This illustrates that teachers may have false perception and assumptions of behavior linked to cultural displays of student social and emotional intelligence, particularly of African American students with low-SES. Behavior that might be perceived as symptoms of poor emotional regulation or as anti-social may be rooted in the conflicting cultural values inherent to the educational system, the dominant culture, and the teachers and students in the classroom (Ertem, 2013).

Teacher criterial introspection around cultural identity and the development of culturally responsive teaching of social and emotional learning to support linguistically and culturally diverse students is not a component of mainstream teacher preparation or in-service training (Hilliard, 1991; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2014; Sleeter, 2011). Once teachers enter schools, the school leader is charged with the training and support of teacher learning. Therefore, leaders of schools with diverse populations or in urban communities must, themselves, be trained on creating inclusive school cultures where collaboration and discussion around issues of social inequities are recognized, understood, and critiqued (Brown, 2007; Hilliard, 1991; Reyes & Wagstaff, 2005). However, the trend in education policy over the last several decades has

moved toward accountability policies that have ultimately lead to standardization and a shift in power from schools and districts to states and the federal government (Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Leadership and SEL Implementation

In the last decade, individual teachers, schools, districts, and states have begun implementing SEL education as a countermeasure to national accountability policy ("Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security," 2015). The move toward accountability policy began 50 years ago through the enactment of ESEA, which provided funding at the national level to states for educational improvement for all students (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). Unfortunately, the enacting of ESEA has created more control at the national and state level, leaving local educational agencies with less influence over policies (Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

ESEA and accountability policy that has followed like "No Child Left Behind" that have done little to close the achievement gap for students of color and students that reside in low opportunity communities (DeMatthews, 2018). In fact, students of color are far more likely to be incarcerated, labeled as having emotional disturbances, and identified for special education programs, than their more affluent white counterparts (DeMatthews, 2018). With such a great divide and drive to improve academic outcomes and decrease at risk behavior, school districts are using policies like social and emotional learning as a way to meet the needs of the whole child while also meeting the demands of state and federal guidelines (Durlak, 2011; "Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security," 2015).

The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional (CASEL), a non-profit organization dedicated to the research, practice, and furthering of social and emotional learning, was founded in 1994 by researchers, by child advocates and leaders in educational policy (Durlak,

2015). As part of CASEL's work to develop best practices and promote SEL, in 2011 the organization created the Collaborating District Initiative (CDI) (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The purpose of the CDI was to scale up fragmented SEL implementation efforts seen at the individual classroom and school level to large scale district-level implementation (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The CDI originally began with three collaborating districts and grew over the course of six years to ten partnering districts, which served over 900,000 students nationwide (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017).

The SEL implementation process, within a districtwide effort, is targeted within three levels (Durlak, 2015; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). These levels are the classroom, school-wide, and with the community (Durlak, 2015; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). At the classroom level implementation consists of SEL curriculum and instructional pedagogy that teaches, reinforces, and allow students to practice SEL skills (Durlak, 2015; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017). At the school level, practices and policies should align and build staff capacity for SEL implementation in the classroom (Durlak, 2015; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017). At the community level, family and community partnerships should be established to promote social and emotional development of children (Durlak, 2015; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017).

As part of the CDI, participating districts followed a theory of action to implement SEL at all three levels (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The theory of action included conducting a resource and need assessment, developing a shared vision, building central office capacity, designing and implementing professional learning, aligning financial and human resources, communi-

cating to stakeholders, establishing standards for SEL, adopting evidence based curriculum, integrating SEL into all initiatives, and developing and implementing a continuous improvement plan for SEL implementation (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016).

In the evaluation of eight of the districts in the CASEL CDI, researchers looked at how districts implemented SEL using the CASEL theory of action, as well as, what the school and student outcomes had been after six years of implementation. Data was collected through interviews and district documents, a district rubric for implementation, a staff SEL survey, school climate scores, and student social and emotional competency measures (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). The findings of this study showed significant increases in school climate scores of the first three CDI districts (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). It also showed increases of SEL competency were most significant at the elementary school level (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Overall, student suspension decreased and academic achievement increased for the CDI districts (Kendziora &Osher, 2016). This study not only reinforces the student benefit of SEL programming in individual schools, but supports the scalability of SEL for districts (Kendziora &Osher, 2016).

Another finding of the CDI study was that the sequencing of activities and focus of all the districts in the study shifted from year to year and were not consistent between districts (Kendziora &Osher, 2016). No district in the CDI had a common approach to implementation at the three levels. This has caused CASEL to rethink its theory of action in support of a looser model for implementation that consists of targeted efforts to the three domains of classroom, schoolwide and within the community (Kendziora &Osher, 2016). Therefore, there may be no one clear path to implementation, because multiple approaches produced positive results. Regardless of the pathway, CDI districts focused on embedding SEL in every aspect of the classroom,

school and within community and family engagement. They also sought to integrate SEL into all aspects of the district policies and functions ("Key implementation insights", 2017).

A CASEL report on key findings from the CDI study, highlighted several insights to district-wide SEL implementation (Kendziora &Osher, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017). Among the data, there is evidence that systemic implementation is possible, even with changes in leadership and small budgets. However, engagement of leadership at the school and district level is essential for systemic implementation ("Key implementation insights", 2017).

School and district leadership, plays a key role in SEL implementation (Kendziora &Osher, 2016; "Key implementation insights", 2017). Leaders are responsible for overseeing, supporting and implementing SEL practices at three levels; the classroom, school-wide and within the community (Durlak, 2015). While the research on SEL supports the use of SEL as a large school reform initiative, there is a gap in the literature on the preferred educational leadership framework for an SEL leader to operate. In addition, the scholarship on SEL provides little guidance on specific leadership practices for SEL implementation within diverse communities (Durlak, 2015; Garner, et. al., 2014).

Hilliard (1991) argues that the leader plays a critical role in recognizing and cultivating the untapped potential of teachers and creating environments where all students can achieve and thrive. Leadership practices are critical in school and student success, and only second to teacher quality on the impact of student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003). The coordination and professional development involved in successfully implementing SEL programming requires strong leadership practices at both the school and district level (Durlak, 2015). Given the growing body of research calling for culturally responsive practices and the potential for teacher and leader misconceptions of students that further marginalize students in communities where culture, race,

language, and class are a factor, leadership for SEL implementation must have a culturally responsive component in minority urban communities (Garner, et. al., 2014; Khalifa, 2016).

Culturally Responsive Leadership

There is a growing body of research on alternative leadership styles, which support more equitable, inclusive and culturally responsive schools (DeMatthews, 2018; Kim & Slapac, 2015). Social justice leadership practices have been widely discussed in the literature for supporting marginalized students (Bogotch, 2000; Brown, 2006; Carlisle & George, 2006; Furman, 2012). While there is not a single definition or framework for social justice leadership, the rich discussion on this topic provides useful tools in establishing a leadership praxis of critical self-reflection and action for decision-making, resource allocation, critical pedagogy, and systems to create inclusive school environments (DeMatthews, 2018; Furman, 2012).

However, in recent years there have been some emerging case studies of leadership practices that promote culturally competent schools (DeMatthews, 2018; Johnson, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Santamaria, 2014). In a 2006 study, scholars found that leadership practices at the school level must not be divergent from the expectations leaders have for the classrooms in their buildings. Inclusion and equity, high expectations, and reciprocal community relationships needs to be happening at all levels for more than just surface level change to occur (Carlisle et al., 2006). Therefore, practices at the school level must mirror the expectations in classroom to develop a culturally responsive school. While this framework necessitates further study for school-wide culturally responsive practices, it provides a glimpse of how culturally responsive leaders, at the school level, contribute to and support practices at the classroom level (Carlisle et al., 2006).

In a yearlong case study of minority leaders, Santamaria (2014) described culturally responsive leadership by nine leadership characteristics that better support educational equity and

diversity in schools. This alternative critical leadership style included facilitating critical conversations, thinking about school policy and curricular decisions through the lens of critical race theory, building group consensus with teachers and stakeholders, and noticing and combating the threat of stereotypes. Leaders in this study promoted academic discourse around socio-political issues, honoring constituents and diversity in schools, while still building trust with those in political or economic authority.

Although culturally responsive leadership has only been formally conceptualized within the last decade, there is evidence demonstrating that culturally responsive educational leadership positively influences academic achievement within the school environment (Bustamante, 2009). Students in more culturally competent environments are more likely to succeed in school (Bustamante, 2009; Dee & Penner, 2017). Unfortunately, leaders may willingly or unwillingly, perpetuate the status quo due to unconscious personal biases and other socio-political factors (Kim & Slapac, 2015). Therefore, in order to create culturally responsive schools, school leadership must model and facilitate both critical self-reflection and advocacy (Bustamante, et al, 2009; Kim and Slapac, 2015).

Critical reflection and advocacy have remained a common theme in the literature in both culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership (Bustamante, et al, 2009; Furman, 2012; Khalifa, et. al., 2016; Kim & Slapac, 2015). A recent meta-analysis of literature (Khalifa, et. al., 2016), has provided a specific framework for culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), highlighting four key behaviors, inclusive of critical self-awareness and advocacy, to support culturally diverse students in historically marginalized communities. The categories provided by this framework are critical self-reflection, culturally responsive curriculum and teacher preparation,

culturally responsive and inclusive schools environment, and engaging student and parent communities in context (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

The first component of the CRSL framework is critical self-reflection. Critical self-reflection refers the building of a personal awareness of one's own culture and identity in order to establish beliefs that set the stage for culturally responsive practices. Leaders with critical self-awareness, reflect on their own assumptions about race, class, language, social-economic status and therefore build a strong awareness of the inequitable factors that adversely affect the success of diverse learners in their school (Khalifa, et. al., 2016, Khalifa, 2018).

While critical self-awareness in leadership serves as the foundation for cultivating culturally responsive practices within a school, the second component of CRSL involves leadership cultivating culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum in classrooms. Not all leaders have the capacity to train staff on culturally responsive practices, however leaders can promote culturally responsive teaching through providing teachers opportunities for their own critical reflection, in order to build a greater awareness of the needs of diverse students. Leaders can also support the selection of culturally responsive teaching materials and curriculum (Khalifa, et. al. 2016).

The third component of CRSL is creating a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment. This is done in two ways. First, a culturally responsive leader promotes the cultural identity of students. They also think critically about and avoid policies and practices that disproportionally marginalize students. Therefore, culturally responsive school leaders think reflectively regarding their contribution to the discipline gap and are willing to have difficult conversations with staff regarding the use of punishment and exclusionary practices (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

The final component to culturally responsive leadership is engagement with students and parents in indigenous community context (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). Khalifa and his colleagues (2016) argue that this layer of CRSL is the most prevalent in the literature and describe this tenet as the school leader's ability to understand, accommodate and advocate for students and families in the context of the community (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). For example, when working with families, culturally responsive leaders allow for overlap in culture and language of families in school spaces (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Originally conceptualized for school leadership, Khalifa (2018) expanded culturally responsive school leadership to central office leadership. Therefore, this new framework has the potential for providing all levels of leadership, in practice and in preparation, with specific areas of focus when seeking to create more culturally responsive schools and districts. However, there is much work to be done, in terms of studies that may provide exemplars of actual practices within these four categories that work in minority urban communities (Khalifa, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Given the connection of culturally responsive pedagogy to SEL and the critical role of leadership practices to support both, this study combined the culturally responsive school leadership framework (Khalifa, et. al., 2016) and SEL implementation at the school, classroom and community levels (Durlak, 2015) to investigate leadership practices that support culturally responsive (CR) SEL implementation district-wide. As previously described, culturally responsive leadership lays out four tenets for CR leadership practices (Khalifa, 2018). They are 1) critical self-reflection, 2) culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, 3) culturally responsive school environments, and 4) engaging students and parents in community context within the implementation process of a district SEL initiative (Khalifa, 2018).

These four components of CR leadership were originally conceptualized for school level leadership (Khalifa, et. al., 2016) but later expanded to central office (Khalifa, 2018), illustrating the need for these pillars to be applied to all levels and variations of leadership who support diverse learning populations. This case study further expands the use of the theoretical framework for culturally responsive school leadership to SEL school reform initiative leadership, at both at the school and district level, who either set the policy agenda or lead the implementation of the SEL.

Social and Emotional Learning Implementation

From research on social and emotional learning implementation in schools and districts, a model was created of specific practices that promote implementation in the classroom, school-wide, and with the community. At the classroom level, SEL implementation must be inclusive of student culture, while teaching, modeling and providing students with opportunities to learn and practice social and emotional skills (Durlak, 2015; Garner, et. al., 2014). SEL at the school level requires leadership to set a shared vision inclusive of the staff, student and community values, provide on-going professional development on social and emotional learning for teachers, create systems that foster inclusion, as well as develop a reciprocal relationship with families and the community (Durlak, 2015). Large-scale implementation of SEL, requires a district leadership to enhance systemic SEL programming and increase sustainability in schools through alignment, support, training and stakeholder engagement (Durlak, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Leadership for SEL Implementation

This study applies the culturally responsive leadership framework to the implementation levels of social and emotional learning. The purpose of merging these two frameworks is to

identify leadership practices that acknowledge and honor the socio-cultural and linguistic identities of the students and families in large urban minority districts when SEL is implemented system-wide (Durlak, 2015; Garner, 2014; Khalifa, 2018).

The culturally responsive school leadership framework offers a critical lens to social and emotional learning implementation. Therefore, when applied to SEL, culturally responsive school leadership calls for the use of leadership behaviors, which promote critical self-reflection, culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, culturally responsive and inclusive school, and engagement with students and communities (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

The current discourse on SEL implementation describes practices that promote inclusive classrooms, school culture, and a reciprocal relationship with families and community. However, leaders attempting to create inclusive spaces for minority students or students in disadvantaged communities must be committed to applying a critical consciousness to all decision-making (Durlak, 2015; Garner, 2014; Khalifa, 2018). Critical consciousness is the understanding attained through the continuous practice of critical self-reflection and learning about student and their indigenous context (Khalifa, 2016). Therefore, culturally responsive leaders apply critical consciousness to each level of SEL implementation.

At the classroom level, culturally responsive school leaders go beyond encouraging their teachers to create inclusive classrooms. They systemically develop culturally responsive teachers, who also apply a critical lens in creating spaces and adapting or creating SEL lessons that honor identity and take neighborhood context into account (Durlak, 2015; Garner, 2014; Khalifa, 2018). This can be achieved through continuous professional development, analysis of student data to identify culturally responsive gaps, and work to shore gaps through adding supports (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

At the school level, critical self-reflection and culturally responsive and inclusive school environment are directly applied by leadership to create practices that not only promote positive school culture (Durlak, 2015), but bring the neighborhood culture into the students' educational space (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). For example, culturally responsive leaders use critical self-reflection to drive the strategic mission and vision for SEL in their school (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). Therefore, they recognize the value of their students' cultural identities and evaluate school-wide systems that either perpetuate or dismantle the status quo for their traditionally marginalized students (Khalifia, et. al., 2016). Thus, culturally responsive leaders, engaging in SEL implementation, builds a culturally responsive and inclusive school culture informed by the diverse cultures, languages and learning styles of their pupils (Durlak, 2015; Garner, 2014; Khalifa, 2018).

At the community level, the CR leadership framework suggests that school leaders develop meaningful relationships with and advocate for students and families (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). They listen to the needs of the community and advocate for families to support students. CR leaders implementing SEL in schools must recognize that their school is situated in a complex web of socio-political factors effecting students' social and emotional wellbeing (Durlak, 2015; Garner, 2014; Khalifa, 2018). Students coming from underserved communities may have a greater need for support when addressing social and emotional learning (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Therefore, CR leaders support families' basic needs, as a precursor to students developing social and emotional competency, without further marginalizing families in the process (Kendziora & Osher, 2016; Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Students learn SEL skills in the context of supportive environments where they feel seen, supported, and connected to others (Durlak, 2015). Culturally responsive leadership for social

and emotional learning sees and promotes the strengths of their students and communities in indigenous community context (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). Therefore, implementation of SEL is not an attempt to reprogram students, but to systemically teach, model, and support students in applying self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making in their own cultural, linguistic and socio-political schemas (Garner, 2014; Kendziora & Osher, 2016; Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Khalifa and his colleagues (2016) noted that culturally responsive school leadership increases the likelihood of systemic implementation of culturally responsive teaching practice across classrooms. This suggests that culturally responsive district leadership may increase culturally responsive school leadership across schools (Khalifa, 2018). Applied to a district-wide SEL initiative, culturally responsive district leadership and support increase culturally responsive social and emotional learning across schools. Culturally responsive district leadership supports initiative implementation by strategically setting the mission and vision for culturally responsive SEL, providing culturally responsive professional learning, aligning systems of support for schools and family in indigenous context and, through critical analysis of implementation for continuous improvement (Khalifa, et. al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Kendziora & Osher, 2016).

Given the need for culturally responsive SEL implementation with minoritized students (Garner, 2014; Kendziora & Osher, 2016), the tenets of culturally responsive leadership should be applied to each level of SEL implementation. At the classroom level, culturally responsive leadership provides training to teachers that gives them the skills to teach SEL with students' cultures in mind and create inclusive classroom community. At the school-wide level culturally responsive leaders create culturally responsive and inclusive school culture where students can feel safe to learn and practice SEL skills. Finally, culturally responsive leadership recognizes the

value of the community and families, while also understanding the need for advocacy for families in traditionally marginalization communities. In a district-wide effort for systemic implementation, district leadership must also apply the tenets of culturally responsive leadership in their initiative support (Durlak, 2015; Khalifa, et. al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Kendziora & Osher, 2016). While bringing these two strands of research together already makes a significant contribution to the literature on both culturally responsive leadership and SEL, this study seeks to further contribute to discourse on leadership and SEL, by offering examples of practices leaders can use at each level to implement SEL in culturally affirming ways with students and families (Khalifa, 2016, Khalifa, 2018; Durlak, 2015).

Conclusion

Children are a country's greatest asset. In a society with growing diversity, there is also a growing need to empower minority students and respond appropriately to the increasing diversity in schools. While standardization and privatization seem to be making traction as a systematic way to increase student achievement and streamline educational practices, it further neglects the serious and detrimental impact homogenization has on students already pushed to the fringes due to non-conformity with dominant culture (Sleeter, 2011). While the American education system has been underserving minority, low-income students for years, the current demographic shift toward a more diverse population, increases the demand for schools to address issues of diversity (Wright & Harris, 2009).

Understanding that much of the current attempts made in schools and traditional education preparation programs at multicultural education, amount to nothing more than a glorification of surface level cultural understanding, leading to misconceptions and reinforcement of stereotypes (Brown, 2006; Kim & Slapac, 2015, Kim, 2011; Sleeter, 2011), there is a real and urgent

need for research-based strategies to build cultural competence in both teachers and leaders. Traditional school reform efforts have failed to raise the achievement of minority students (Brown, 2006; Sleeter, 2011). While historically viewed as an appropriate framework to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of diverse learners, there is no research on large-scale reform efforts centered on culturally responsive pedagogy (Sleeter, 2011).

SEL initiatives, on the other hand, have gained popularity in recent years, as a well-researched framework for enhancing social and emotional competencies and increasing student achievement on a larger scale (Durlak, 2015). However, leadership plays a critical role in student success (Marks & Printy, 2003). Therefore, there is a need for leadership practices that best create the conditions for SEL programming in minority urban communities (Khalifa, 2018). This study addresses this gap and adds to the literature on the culturally responsive district and school leadership practices used in implementing a culturally responsive social and emotional learning initiative in a large urban minority-majority district.

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2 CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT

While national and state reform efforts have shown to be ineffective in closing the achievement gap (Brown, 2006), there is growing research on alternative pedagogy and curriculum to improve learning outcomes for students of color living in urban communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2010; Durlak, 2015). These approaches are culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and social and emotional learning (SEL) (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Durlak, 2015; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, 2011; Sleeter, 2011). While three decades of literature on culturally responsive education (Kim & Slapac, 2015) and SEL implementation (Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Shand, Zander, 2015; Durlak, 2015) shows promise for supporting social, emotional and academic outcomes for minority students (Durlak, et. al., 2011), the leadership practices that support culturally responsive social and emotional learning have not been sufficiently studied (DeMatthews, 2018; Durlak, 2015; Furman, 2012; Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, &Vesely, 2014; Goleman, 2006; Khalifa, Goodman, Davis, 2016; Kim & Slapac, 2015; Sleeter, 2011).

Brief Study Overview

Given the gap in the literature for district and school level leadership practices that address both CRT and SEL in urban communities of color, the culturally responsive school leadership framework (CRSL) (Khalifa, et. al., 2016), consisting of the four key strands (critical reflection, professional development, inclusive environments, and community advocacy) was applied to the SEL implementation model as the theoretical framework for this study (Durlak, 2015).

Research Questions

The following two research questions were addressed:

1. How do district leaders support schools with critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curriculum and professional development, creating inclusive environments, and engaging the community in social and emotional learning initiative implementation?

2. How do school leaders implement critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curriculum and professional learning, inclusive school environments, and engage students and families in a social and emotional learning school initiative?

Based on the aforementioned questions, a qualitative case study was conducted of the SEL initiative in one minority-majority urban district in the southeastern United States, which was in its fifth year of SEL implementation (Osher & Kendziora, 2015). Purposeful sampling of participants was conducted and the participants included the district superintendent, three SEL district initiative leaders, three school principals and their SEL school initiative leaders (Merriam, 1988). Data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, observations, and document review (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Data was analyzed through inductive and deductive coding methods to identify common themes (Saldaña, 2015). Trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability of the study were established through triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Significance of Study

This study provides a significant contribution to the literature on both culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, et. al., 2016) and social and emotional learning implementation (Durlak, 2015). Culturally responsive school leadership, is a newly emerging framework, and therefore under researched (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). This study adds to the scholarship on culturally responsive school leadership and provides exemplar leadership practices for principals and

district leadership. Additionally, as researchers continue to study SEL, the findings of this case offer practices for leadership that support culturally responsive SEL implementation in urban districts of color.

Methodology

Various research methodologies have historically been applied in the social sciences (Creswell, 2014). Research methodology is determined by a multitude of factors such as the researcher's epistemology, literature gap, research problem, theoretical framework, and research questions (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012).

Qualitative research, based on the constructivist paradigm, includes approaches such as ethnography, narrative inquiry and life histories, phenomenology, and case study (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012; Creswell, 2013). While each requires different approaches, they all seek to construct meaning from perspectives, experiences, and social interactions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). For example, ethnography allows for the understanding and interpretation of cultural patterns of behavior, while phenomenological studies get at the lived experience of an individual or group. Case study research, in comparison, is the study of a bound system called "the case" (Yin, 1984). A case can be single or multiple event(s), institution(s), a process or a program (Merriam, 1988; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Research in educational leadership commonly utilizes the case study approach in order to understand leadership practices and behaviors for leadership preparation programs or to support the improvement of leadership practices in schools or districts (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012).

A qualitative case study approach is the most appropriate method for investigating "how" questions (Yin, 1984). Therefore, in careful analysis of the potential research design options, the

case study approach was chosen for this study. The decision was made based on the study's research questions, which ask "how" leadership behavior supports culturally responsive social and emotional learning implementation (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). Merriam's (1988) approach to case study design was used in this study for several reasons. Merriam's (1988) research approach takes a purely constructivist bend, which aligns with my personal epistemology as a researcher.

Merriam discusses that in case study research the interest lies in understanding a process rather than evaluating an end product. The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and must "become intimately familiar with the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1988, p.19). Additionally, data collected must be descriptive because meaning is made from inductive reasoning. Merriam's (1988) five step approach includes observing a problem of study, conducting a review of literature for the relevant and historical research, which leads to the construction of a theoretical framework. Then research questions should be carefully crafted and finally the selection of a site made (Yazan, 2015). Research positionality influences research design due to the subjective nature of qualitative methodology (Merriam, 1988). The following section addresses how researcher positionality influenced the design of this study.

Researcher Positionality

As the researcher of this study, it is important that I provide context for this study through thorough explanation of my epistemological leaning and discussion of how this study came to be. I also attempt to include critical reflection of assumptions made when choosing the research focus and case in this study. The philosophical underpinning of this study was social constructivist theory. The constructivist epistemology is the position that knowledge is not found or acquired, but subjectively constructed through the interpretation of social interaction (Merriam,

1988). Therefore, the goal of this case study was to interpret the perceptions of leaders who were leading a social and emotional learning initiative in a large majority-minority urban district for a common understanding of practices that support both cultural identity and social and emotional learning.

My interest in this study comes from several years of personal experience in developing and implementing a social and emotional learning initiative in a large urban school district. Over my own tenure as a leader in social and emotional learning, I have come to the understanding that culture and social and emotional development are intricately connected (Hammond, 2014). This sparked my interest in how leaders who support traditionally marginalized students interweave culturally responsive practices into SEL implementation. Therefore, a district was selected with a majority-minority student population. My interest was to discover what, if any, culturally responsive leadership practices were evident at the district and school level within a SEL initiative.

As a district leader of social and emotional learning, my involvement in and understanding of SEL implementation put me in the unique position to have intimate knowledge of the phenomenon in which I studied and deeper discernment in the selection of participants. However, my connection to SEL and my own personal experiences with implementation also create potential limitations due to researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). I seek to mitigate researcher bias and increase the trustworthiness of this study through complete transparency throughout the study by the inclusion of my research positionality, a thorough description of the case, study participants, and the use of an audit trail as part of data analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam, 1988).

Sampling

Purposeful sampling is used in this qualitative case study. Merriam (1988) discusses that a case must be a bound system such as a person, social unit, institution, or program. This study is bound by the SEL initiative of one large majority-minority urban school district. Therefore, a unique-case selection criteria was used in determining participant selection (Merriam, 1988, Yin, 1994). The following is a description and historical context of the case as well as the criteria for and number of participants which were selected for this study.

Case Description

Several factors weighed in on the selection of the case for this study. Because this research was focused on the perceived intersection of culturally responsive leadership and SEL implementation, the case was selected based on the following criteria. The first criteria was that the case be of a large urban majority-minority district, implementing SEL districtwide. Additionally, to increase the potential for culturally responsive leadership, a school district was chosen based on the likelihood of using culturally responsive practices (Osher & Kendziora, 2015; Santamaria, 2014). Santamaria (2014) suggests that leaders belonging to traditionally marginalized groups are more likely to practice alterative and culturally congruent forms of leadership. These minority leaders have the unique perspective that comes with personally experiencing racial, gender, linguistic and/or class oppression, and the socio-political context of their students and families, while also understanding leadership practices. Therefore, the case site was selected based on it being a minority-majority urban district with majority minority leadership and an established district SEL initiative (Durlak, 2015; Khalifa, 2018; Osher & Kendziora, 2015; Santamaria, 2014).

Participants in this study include central office and school leadership involved in leading the SEL initiative (Durlak, 2015; Osher & Kendziora, 2015). District leadership selected for this

study either were setting the agenda for SEL or leading SEL implementation. Leadership at the school level were selected from a pool of schools that have served as model SEL sites. Participant selection criteria is described in further detail after a historical context of the case is given, in order to provide further transparency and context for participant selection.

Historical context.

The district that provides the case for this study is seated in a large urban center in the southeastern United States. It serves majority minority students, with almost three fourths of the students identifying as African American[1]. In the wake of a cheating scandal, the newly appointed superintendent created a district SEL department and SEL was rolled out over a 3-year period in order to improve district and school culture [1].

The rollout was coordinated by the newly formed Social and Emotional Learning Department within the Office of Student Services, a division within the district overseeing discipline, special education services, and mental health services. In the third year of rollout, the SEL department was moved to the Office of Teaching and Learning. This was done in order to create an alignment with SEL and academic content. The district is now in its fifth year of the social and emotional learning implementation [2]. After four years of SEL implementation, the school system has seen a reduction of student suspension and arrests. Employee engagement and graduation rates have increased [3]. Several schools have also been designated as exemplar model SEL implementation sites for leaders around the country to visited and observe SEL implementation in action.

Participants.

[1-3] *Citation not included to protect anonymity. Citations provided upon request*

As stated, the participants in this study include leadership at both the central office and school level in the aforementioned district. Within district leadership, the superintendent and the director of social and emotional learning was interviewed for their perspectives in setting the district vision and agenda for SEL policy. Additionally, the district middle school SEL coordinator and high school SEL coordinator were interviewed. Their participation was elicited to provide the best perspective on the overlap of SEL implementation and leadership practices that support schools and the culturally identity of the students district-wide. All district leaders interviewed identified as African American and all but the SEL director was part of the initial decision-making and implementation of the SEL initiative.

At the school level, the study gained the perspectives of three principals and their school-based SEL initiative leaders (Merriam, 1988; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The school level leaders were selected based on the criteria of successfully leading SEL in a minority-majority school (Osher & Kendziora, 2015). "Successful SEL schools" are schools that were identified by district SEL initiative leadership as consistent implementers of SEL and used as model site for SEL observations. Out of all the schools in the district, 15 had been used as a model site for visits from other leaders from within the district, the state and around country looking to learn about SEL implementation.

The model sites included three high schools, two middle schools, and ten elementary schools. Leaders from these schools, both the principal and their school-based SEL initiative leader, also known as an SEL liaison, were invited to participate in this study. Three leadership pairs were selected from this pool. Preference was given to the first responding schools with the interest and agreement of both the principal and the corresponding SEL liaison to participate in this study as each grade band level (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Therefore, one high school, one

middle school, and one elementary school principal-SEL liaison pair were selected to participate in this study and interviewed separately for their perspective of implementation at their grade band school level. In total, this study included ten leaders, four from the district level and six school-based leaders within three schools. The following is a table describing the demographics of participants in this study and a brief description of each school.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Central Office Leadership

	Leadership Role	*Ethnicity*	*Gender*	*Primary Language*	*Years of Experience Leading SEL*
Participant 1	*Superintendent*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*5*
Participant 2	*SEL Director*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*2*
Participant 3	*High School SEL Coordinator*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*5*
Participant 4	*Middle School SEL Coordinator*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*5*

School-Based Leadership

	Leadership Role	*Ethnicity*	*Gender*	*Primary Language*	*Years of Experience Leading SEL*
Participant 5	*Elementary School Principal*	*African American*	*Male*	*English*	*4*
Participant 6	*Elementary School SEL Liaison*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*4*
Participant 7	*Middle School Principal*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*5*
Participant 8	*Middle School SEL Liaison*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*4*
Participant 9	*High School Principal*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*4*
Participant 10	*High School SEL Liaison*	*African American*	*Female*	*English*	*3*

Southeast Elementary School.

Southeast Elementary School (a pseudonym) began the roll out of the SEL initiative four years ago, as part of the second wave rollout to all school. This school is a small title one elementary school, serving almost 300 students, 90% of which are identified as African American or Hispanic. This school also supports a large English Language Learner student population. The elementary school principal, an African American male, was new to the principalship when beginning the SEL initiative and was in his fourth year of leading this school when interviewed as part of this study. The elementary school SEL liaison, an African American woman, served as counselor for over 10 years at the school before the principal was hired and selected her to also serve as the SEL liaison to run the SEL initiative when the district began the rollout.

Southeast Middle School.

Southeast Middle School (a pseudonym) began the roll out of the SEL initiative as part of the initial district rollout five years ago. This middle school is also a title one school, serving around 800 students, 100% of which identify as African American or Hispanic. The principal, an African American female, was a tenured principal when the district rolled out SEL to her school and selected her instructional coach to serve in the SEL liaison role. The SEL liaison, also an African American female, had been at the school for several years before the SEL rollout.

Southeast Alternative High School.

Southeast Alternative High School (a pseudonym) was part of the second wave of SEL implementation, four years ago. One hundred percent of students in this alternative high school are either African American or Hispanic and qualify for free and reduced lunch. The 300 students attending this high school primarily come for credit recovery. The principal, an African American female, served as the principal before the rollout of SEL. Her selected SEL liaison,

also an African American woman, worked at the school prior to the SEL rollout, as a community and student advocate.

At all three levels (elementary, middle and high) the students are majority minority and living below the poverty line. Both the elementary school and the high school were relatively small schools in comparison with other schools in the district and were either part of the first or second wave of school to roll out SEL in the district. Like the student population they served, each school in the study had minority leadership, identifying as African American and female, with the exception of the elementary school principal, who was an African American male.

Sampling limitations.

Limitations of this study may exist due to potential researcher bias and a small non-representative sample. Issues with bias were mitigated through the researcher's positionality and a detailed explanation of the selection for participants and sites (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Limitations with size and non-representative sample occurred because those selected to participate in this study were chosen based on their standing as model cites. This study was interested in learning about leadership practices schools used as strong implementers of SEL. Therefore, this study was not interested in schools that were not high implementers of SEL. This makes the study sample non-representative of general SEL implementation. Additionally, only one school was selected at each grade band level within the district and the high school selected was an alternative high school. This posed additional limitations because it does not represent implementation in a traditional high school. While the researcher attempts to mitigate limitations with transparency and description of the participants, location, and historical context for transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018), this study's findings can be strengthened with future research. It

is also important to note that this study has gone through IRB, which allowed for further scrutiny in the approval process and protection for participants.

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection is the process through which the investigator details the events, situations, perspectives, interactions and observed behaviors within the case (Merriam, 1988). There were multiple methods used in data collection for this study. The goal of using multiple methods was to use the triangulation process to strengthen the study and achieve validity in communication to the reader (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Merriam, 1988). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis in order to strengthen the transferability of this study (Merriam, 1988; Merrriam &Tisdell, 2015).

Merriam discusses that "data are nothing more than ordinary bites and pieces found in the environment" (Merriam, 1988, p. 67). Some data are concrete, while others are more abstract, but all are data and only become applicable based on the researcher's interest and perspective (Merriam, 1988). Data collection for this study was guided by the research questions and theoretical frameworks of this study (Merriam, 1988). Therefore, it is important to point out that in the SEL implementation process the district in this study developed a number of practices and documents. The superintendent led the development of a shared district mission and vision. Staff at the district and school level received professional learning and standards for teaching excellence inclusive of SEL. Schools adopted evidence based SEL curriculum and the superintendent began a blog, which she wrote several blog posts about SEL ("CASEL Sustainability Report," 2018). Therefore, leader interviews, professional learning observations, and document analysis were included in this study (Osher & Kendziora, 2015).

Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four district initiative leaders, three school principals, and their three school level SEL initiative leaders in an elementary, middle, and alternative high school. The interview questions (see Appendix A) for each participant were developed and aligned with the two guiding research questions of this study (Merriam, 1988). Because the guiding research questions were developed through the culturally responsive leadership framework and SEL implementation model, each interview question addressed one of the four components of culturally responsive leadership and SEL implementation at the classroom, school-wide, or community level. For each interview question, a follow up question prompt was prepared and used, if needed, in order to ensure that the interview was fruitful in addressing the study's guiding questions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Merriam (1988) recommends interview questions which elicit participants' insights into experiences, feelings, and behaviors. Interview questions were prepared based on these question categories. Each interview lasted for one hour or less, interviewees were asked to participate, and told that they could stop the interview at any time. Pseudonyms were provided for anonymity. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using voice to text transcription software. Interviewer reflections regarding non-verbal communication and other pertinent information were documented directly following the interview. Member checks were conducted to ensure internal validity (Merriam, 1988). Therefore, participants had the opportunity to view their interview transcripts for accuracy before the data were analyzed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Observations.

Two observations were conducted in this study (Merriam, 1988). Both observations were conducted at one of the monthly employee onboarding training days, which the district provided for all new employees. This staff onboarding process has been used in the SEL implementation

process as a hortatory tool to inspire voluntary participation in the SEL initiative and as a capacity building tool to support basic understanding of SEL (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Since this new employee orientation was required for all staff newly employed by the district, these observations provided useful data regarding culturally responsive leadership practices for SEL implementation throughout the school system, including the school and district level.

The first observation was of the on-boarding speech conducted by the superintendent. In her speech, the superintendent provided the mission and vision of the school district and discussed the need for social and emotional learning implementation. The second observation was conducted of the district SEL implementation team providing SEL professional development for new staff. In this session, which directly followed the superintendent's onboarding speech, the SEL team discussed the need for SEL, how it was implemented across the district, and provided an overview of the CASEL definition of social and emotional learning.

The data collected included the setting, participants, activities and interactions, frequency and duration, along with subtle factors based on the four tenets of culturally responsive leadership as it related to social and emotional learning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Observations were conducted as observer participant. Therefore, the researcher was in the room but not a direct participant in the experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Raw observational data were collected on-site and observer field notes consisting of insights, reactions, feelings, and interpretation were recorded immediately following field observations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Document review.

Documents were also reviewed as part of this study. Documents, according to Merriam, constitute any communication that does not come from either interview or observation (Merriam,

1988). Documents include written or symbolic records that are relevant to the research questions (Merriam, 1988). Documents for analysis included the district and schools' mission and vision, district definition of teaching standards of excellence and the SEL district and school training catalog. Artifacts from the three schools of the leaders participating in this study that illustrate student culture, SEL implementation and components of a culturally responsive and an inclusive school environment were collected through photograph recording. Additionally, a superintendent blog post on social and emotional learning was reviewed (Creswell, 2013).

Table 2

Documents Reviewed in the Study

Component of the CRSL Framework	Document Reviewed	Context
Critical Self-Reflection	District Mission and Vision Statement and Definition of Teaching Standards of Excellence	District
CR Teacher PL and Curriculum	District SEL Professional Development Catalog	District
CR and Inclusive School Environment	Photograph of an SEL designated bulletin board	Elementary School
	Photograph of encouraging statements on the wall	Middle School
	Photograph of encouraging statements on the wall	High School
Engaging with Students and Families	Superintendent Blog Post on Social and Emotional Learning	Public Access

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection (Merriam, 1988). Merriam (1988) recommends this as a part of the research process in order to reduce and make sense

of large amounts of data. Therefore, the interviews collected in this study were transcribed directly after the interview, using a computer transcription service that transcribed voice to text. The researcher then reviewed and correct the interview transcription for errors. The researcher provided each interviewee with their own transcript for review (Merriam, 1988). Once the transcripts were member checked for accuracy, the researcher reflections written directly following each interview were attached as field notes to each interview transcript. The observation field notes were typed during the observations and checked for errors directly following the observation. Then all documents collected for analysis were organized and prepared for the first cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016).

Two cycles of coding were conducted. Analytic memo writing was used to capture the process (Saldaña, 2016). Analytic memo writing documents the researcher's reflections, reasoning, and process for categorization during coding. This allows the researcher to record the data analysis process, critically self-reflecting on the data analysis enterprise and also adding to the audit trail (Saldaña, 2016).

In the first cycle of coding, elemental coding methods were applied to look for emerging themes in the data (Saldaña, 2016). Elemental coding, commonly used in qualitative research, includes structural, in vivo, initial (also known as open coding), and concept coding (Saldaña, 2016). In the second cycle of coding, the codes were further condensed into larger categories or themes. First pattern coding was utilized to initially condense the individual codes into larger code categories called meta codes (Saldaña, 2016). Finally, elaborative coding was employed to organize the meta codes into even larger categories based on the study's theoretical framework (Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, the categories created are inclusive of the four tenets of the cultur-

ally responsive leadership framework and SEL implementation, but not exclusive of other relevant categories that emerged but do not fit within the theoretical underpinning of this study (Durlak, 2015; Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

First coding cycle.

In the first cycle of coding, each document (interviews, observations, and documents) was reviewed in several rounds, as needed, to provide a holistic understanding of the full data set (Saldaña, 2016). Insights, reflections, big ideas and participant quotes were written in the analytic memo (Saldaña, 2016). Guided by the research questions, the data were reviewed and initial codes generated through the use of multiple elemental coding methods. Elemental coding methods include coding techniques, such as structural coding, in vivo coding, initial coding, and analytic coding (Saldaña, 2016). Structural coding, most appropriate for interview data, allows for the application of a conceptual phrase, usually taken from a research question, to be utilized for categorization (Saldaña, 2015). In vivo, also known as inductive coding, often used in grounded theory, yet applicable to most forms of qualitative research, uses the participant's actual words to form categories for data (Saldaña, 2015). Initial coding, often referred to as open coding, is also used in grounded theory but can be applied to other qualitative methods and refers to the process of fracturing data down into small parts and then categorizing it by contrast and comparison (Saldaña, 2015). All of these specific coding styles were employed and provide alternative lenses to identify and filter the data for patterns, and reoccurring themes based on significant ideas, words, phrases, and quotes (Saldaña, 2015). After the first coding cycle was complete, the researcher listed the codes and organize them into larger categories through a process called code mapping (Saldaña, 2016). For this study the list of initial codes that were condensed

into categories though copying and pasting codes from transcripts margins into a separate document where the codes were grouped based on similarities and components of the theoretical framework of this study. In this process the initial 83 codes found were condensed into 43 code categories. The code mapping process was documented in the analytic memo. The analytic memo acted as the researcher's reflective preparation for the second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2015).

Second coding cycle.

Further refinement of the coded data occurred through a second cycle. In the second cycle of coding, the goal was to review and finalize the significant code categories determined in the code mapping process and finally elevate to broader themes (Saldaña, 2015). Therefore, there were two rounds of coding that occurred in the second coding cycle. The first round of coding involved the use of the pattern coding methods to condense the list of 24 categories further into even broader subcategories (Saldaña, 2016). Sixteen subcategories were developed. Then the elaborative coding process was used to group subcategories of codes into the final categories or overarching themes and the subcategories within each theme were further condensed (Saldaña, 2016). Each round was done several times and data were finally organized into findings, inclusive of four themes for culturally responsive leadership for social emotional learning, each containing three subcategories of practices perceived at the district and school level (See Appendix B). Therefore as discussed previously, the findings of this study come from the employment of both inductive and deductive data analysis methods in each cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, the categories that were developed are inclusive of the four tenets of the culturally responsive leadership framework and SEL implementation, but not exclusive of other relevant categories that emerged in the data (Durlak, 2015; Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Ethical Consideration

It is imperative that research is conducted in a manner that mitigates any ethical concerns throughout each stage of the study. Various methods were used to protect participants and the validity of the study. First, this study sought to minimize any potential harm to participants through informed consent and anonymity. All participants sign an informed consent to participate in the study. Additionally, at the beginning of each interview, all subjects were informed that they may stop the interview at any time and can withdraw their consent to participate. Additionally, participants' roles were used, instead of names to preserve anonymity. The name of the schools within the case and the school district in this study were also changed to further protect participants. As mentioned previously, this study has gone through the IRB approval process, which includes a check for ethical considerations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the level at which a study provides the reader with trust that the findings of the study are credible, dependable, confirmable and transferable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Among considerations for trustworthiness are potential issues that arise from the limitations caused by researcher bias, as well as the methods for collecting and analyzing data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Credibility.

Creditability of a study is determined by the degree at which the participants' viewpoints are congruent with the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Merriam, 1988). There are several approaches researchers take to establish credibility of a study, among them are transparency of potential researcher bias, triangulation to corroborate evidence and participant member checks

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). All the aforementioned methods were applied to this study and are described below.

To increase credibility, transparency of the researcher's connection to the case study and relationship with participants was provided in the researcher's positionality section. Additionally, the researcher conducted an audit trail in the data collection process. An audit trail, which is a thorough description of how the data was collected and analyzed, was written during the data collection process in field notes, researcher reflections, and analytic memo (Merriam, 1988; Saldaña, 2016).

Creating further credibility, the member checking process was completed. Member checking involves participants being asked to check their interview transcript for accuracy before it is coded. Member checking is an important step in establishing credibility. It ensures that interview data is as close as possible to the participant's real perception of the case. Triangulation refers to the method of using multiple data sources and data connection processes, in order to corroborate the data, thus creating a more robust data set, and therefore strengthening the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Dependability and Confirmability.

Dependability of a study is determined by whether the steps of the study can be traced (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Confirmability of a study supports the degree to which the study is based on objective data collected and not on researcher's subjectivity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Qualitative research is interpretive in nature, confirmability, like dependability, can be derived from a detailed and accurate account of the research process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). In this study, the audit trail detailing a thorough account of the research methods, including data collection, and analysis was used to establish dependability and confirmability (Saldaña, 2015).

Transferability.

Transferability refers to what extent the findings of a study can transfer to another context, i.e. what findings can be applied to similar conditions. Transferability was achieved though descriptions of the participants and the historical context of the case (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify culturally responsive leadership practices that support the implementation of social and emotional learning in a large urban district. Through the lens of culturally responsive leadership and social and emotional learning, data was collected in the form of ten interviews, two professional development observations, and the analysis of eleven documents. The findings presented in this section answer the two overarching research questions. They are 1) How do district leaders support schools with critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and professional learning, culturally responsive inclusive environments, and engage with families within a social and emotional learning initiative, and 2) How do school leaders implement critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curricula and professional learning, culturally responsive inclusive environments, and engage with families within a social and emotional learning initiative?

Guided by these research questions, participants were asked to reflect on their personal experience with the rollout of SEL and the ways in which the SEL initiative addressed the needs of the diverse learners in their schools and district. These leaders were also questioned on perceived leadership practices used in the implementation process that supported students and families from traditionally marginalized communities. Participants described changes in adult mindset, behavior, and strategy that resulted from the implementation of SEL. They discussed specific leadership practices they perceived as creating these outcomes. Interviewees also explained

how they engaged with families and the community around SEL. Interview data was triangulated with observation data and supporting documents.

Based on analysis of the data, four findings are offered. Each finding, consists of a broad theme providing insight into district leadership practices that support, and school leadership practices to implement, the culturally responsive rollout of SEL in one large urban majority minority district. The findings of this study are *Shifting Adult Mindset, Adjusting Practices, Envisioning the School as a Community,* and *Building Bridges of Support with Students and Families.* Within each of these four areas, exemplars of district leadership support and school implementation are provided, as specific culturally responsive leadership practices at the elementary, middle, high school, and district level.

Finding 1: Shifting the Adult Mindset

The first prominent theme that emerged in the data found that participants focused on shifting adult mindsets in the CR implementation of SEL at both the district and school level.

This was illustrated by the superintendent's remark:

> I mean, it's just getting people not to feel sorry for them [students], but to have empathy for them and to think and behave in ways that fundamentally change the systems that have broken their communities for so long. I'm asking for a heart and mind shift, which I think comes from social emotional leadership.

This intended shift in district adult mindset, through the SEL initiative, speaks directly to the use of critical self-reflection to build a critical consciousness of the adult behaviors and systems that traditionally marginalize students and families. Therefore, leading to a change in practices and

systems of oppression to practices and systems of support for students. This was done by building adult capacity for social and emotional skills, such as self-awareness, empathy, and relationship skills.

All participants reported that they worked to shift the mindset in the district and grew their own and other's capacity for culturally responsive social emotional leadership through three primary methods. These methods were 1) professional learning, 2) modeling social and emotional competency, and 3) collaboration. The following descriptions provide examples of reported culturally responsive district and school leadership practices used to shifted adult mindsets across district departments and in schools.

Professional learning.

Professional learning was used as a key lever in shifting adult mindsets. All participants reported that professional learning (PL) played a critical role in both understanding and applying SEL in ways that were culturally responsive. For example, professional learning was described as building adult capacity for critical self-awareness and social-awareness.

The district SEL director explained:

> We recognize that we have to be able to support adults to understand who they are and then be able to self-manage who they are, and then be able to be socially-aware and understand who their kids are. And so I think that's one of the reasons why we're really digging into the five competencies now and really digging into adult SEL. It starts with awareness, right? With a self-awareness first, who am I? What makes me tick? Why do I make the decisions that I make and how does that impact my classroom or my school or

> my leadership style or my interactions with other people or my interactions with my students. So I think building that self-awareness helps to at least trigger, Hey that this is why I'm doing this.

The SEL department focused on building social emotional competency through critical self-awareness, a key tenet of culturally responsive leadership, in the development and delivery of all professional development. The SEL department trained individuals and teams serving in different capacities and functions in various departments. They also trained instructional personnel and supported staff at each school site. Although school leadership reported training their own staff on topics related to SEL, district coordinators played a primary role in training.

One strategic way professional development was provided to all employees, regardless of department or function, was through new employee orientation. As part of the on-boarding process, the superintendent and the SEL department each conducted a 90 minutes training. In observation, the superintendent discussed SEL as a focus in the district, guiding the mission and vision. The district SEL team then provided capacity-building experiences that included critical self-reflection of their own SEL competency in connection to co-workers and students. The superintendent commented, “I think I’ve learned that you have to be intentional about professional learning supports for the adults.” Citing how the new employee training ensured that all new employees, regardless of role or department, understood how SEL was part of their work in supporting schools and providing hope for students who live in traditionally marginalized communities.

In addition to all new employees, the SEL department leaders noted that they trained other departments directly on culturally responsive SEL practices. Among the list of depart-

ments mentioned, were transportation and nutrition. The high school SEL coordinator reflected, "We do a lot with other divisions and departments at central office…cause our marginalized students, they're not just marginalized in the classroom. People label and judge folks everywhere they go throughout our district. Even on buses." Thus explaining that professional development was provided for all departments, not just school personnel, to shift adult mindsets.

Specific to school level implementation, school leader participants reported that the district SEL department provided most of the professional learning for school staff. According to school leaders interviewed, PL provided by the district SEL coordinators focused on changing mindsets about students, building self-awareness, understanding identity, relationship building strategies, as well as Restorative Practices. The middle school principal commented that it had been important that staff be, "given that space to say, we're going to focus on you as the whole person…the whole staff members. We've been talking about focusing on students--the whole child. What about the whole teacher? The whole administrator? So we have shifted to that this year." Therefore, much of the training was focused on building the personal social and emotional competency of the adults and developing strong adult bonds, as opposed to just focusing on how to implement SEL with students. Thus, providing space for adult critical self-reflection and modeling SEL for students.

School level leadership also report that the district SEL coordinators modeled culturally responsive SEL practices to use in the classroom through PL. For example, the middle school liaison stated:

> And I remember one time hearing a teacher say, you need to leave your problems outside the door when you come in. And as adults we don't do that. And so how do you tell the

> kid to drop everything and come on in and learn when whatever has taken place in their home? Maybe it's an eviction, maybe, you know, they didn't have food. I don't know. I'm just saying. Yeah. And I think these SEL moments have kind of said, wait a minute, let me just step back and, and really address.

SEL moments, described by the middle school liaison, were opportunities teachers received to critically self-reflect in training. SEL moments also functioned as modeling for how teachers should support students address issue in their classroom communities.

School level leaders also led professional learning, responsive to the needs of the adults and students in the school. For example, the high school SEL liaison reported that she conducted training for the staff to deal with issues around bias, how to empathize with students, and about building a positive outlook. Only the SEL liaisons reported conducting professional development around SEL and only two out of three reported consistently training staff themselves. Therefore, the SEL department coordinators played a key role in supporting the continuous and consistent practice of critical self-reflection in the development and delivery of SEL training.

Modeling social and emotional competency.

Modeling social and emotional competency was described by the overwhelming majority of participants as a strategic way they shifted adult mindsets. Modeling included two major areas. One was displaying leader social and emotional competency. This was described in interviews as showing “vulnerability”, “sharing personal experiences”, “showing empathy” and “kindness”, “self-awareness with making-mistakes” and “connecting” personally with staff and students.

The second way leaders described modeling was by holding themselves and others accountable to use behaviors that honor and welcomed all stakeholders. The district and school

leaders used modeling to provide clear expectation for staff and students of what was expected. This illustrated by the superintendent's comment that, "instead of saying, 'we've got to fix the kids', you really are saying, 'I've gotta be better at my own social and emotional development so that I can demonstrate and model for kids in a way that makes it possible for this work to be successful.'" This statement explains why adult modeling was considered an important part of shifting adult mindsets.

At the central office level, support was provided by modeling SEL competencies in training across the district. "You can't become what you haven't seen" (middle school SEL coordinator). The central office SEL team modeled through training, coaching, feedback and though their interactions with school personnel.

The high school principal described how modeling was helpful in the rollout of SEL to her staff:

> Modeling what it should look like, you know. So even in her [High school SEL coordinator] modeling, you know, we were able to see exactly what she was looking for, but also she came in and she made it work for us, you know, we became the first students.

Another example is the elementary school SEL liaison comment, "it also was an accountability piece for me to know that this is, this is what I'm working toward." when discussing district support. All leaders at the school level explained how supported they felt by their SEL coordinator.

Participants at the high school, middle school and elementary school level provided varying examples of leadership modeling. They included greeting each staff member each morning, modeling empathy with teachers, being vulnerable, discussing mistakes, and asking for input.

The middle school principal reflected on modeling vulnerability:

> I talk about my hurts and my traumas as an adult. So I shared that with my staff members that you have to pause for your own wellbeing too. Maybe it's a luxury that people haven't been afforded--the space. And that's the one thing as a district we need to make sure, especially with things going on now with our district, we need to make sure that we have a space for staff members. We really do.

School level leaders led by example. The elementary school SEL liaison explained that, "when you're a leader and you have a leadership role, people are always watching you." She further went on to say, "Every day is not a perfect day, but both staff and students are looking at whether the leader is practicing what they are asking others to do." Modeling was used by leaders as a tool to reinforce the desired shift in behaviors that reflected a more culturally responsive and socially emotionally supportive adult mindset.

Collaboration.

In addition to professional learning and modeling, leadership at both the district and school level shifted adult mindsets by engaging and empowering staff in a collaborative process. This process of collaboration was identified as taking a "strengths-based approach" in working with others to get input and align programing. Additionally, the leaders in this study, at both levels, discussed relationship building as a critical component of learning other's strengths. Relationship building was described as listening, building trust, connecting on a personal level and doing things to show appreciation and care. Collaboration allowed leaders to work on the adult mindset shift throughout the organization in the day to day one on one and group interactions. For example the superintendent stated that she had to "work with and through people to get things done." Much of the information that moves an organization happens in the informal inter-

action that takes place in collaboration, such as meetings, work groups, or committees. Therefore, culturally responsive leadership happened in the informal interactions and formal meetings where the SEL initiative was planned, executed, or weaved into preexisting systems.

From a district standpoint, the district SEL department discussed gaining buy-in by engaging other leaders, across departments and in schools, to have ownership over the implementation of SEL based on their expertise. "Figuring out what people are good at it and asking them to do more of that." was how the district middle school SEL coordinator described her collaboration practices. Understanding the strengths honors individual identity and requires building of relationships, both identified components of promoting culturally responsive environments (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

The school leaders reported that collaboration from the district was done through observations and feedback of teacher-teacher, teacher-student interactions and social and emotional learning instruction in the classrooms. District coordinators also modeled lessons in the classroom and helped to embed SEL into school strategic plans. Schools reported that these district practices provided a feeling of support, inspiring them and holding them accountable to implement social and emotional learning strategies with their students and staff.

The elementary school SEL liaison reported:

> The first two years, the SEL district coordinator worked with me very closely and was, um, really, really helpful. Even though I may have recognized the importance, but it also was an accountability piece for me to know that this is, this is what I'm working for. I have to do this. Because I see its significance.

Collaboration with the district made the roll out of SEL feel like a partnership between district and school. Collaborative walkthroughs, modeling culturally responsive SEL practices, and strategic planning are noted practices in the research for culturally responsive leadership, specific to critical self-reflection and the development of culturally responsive teachers (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

School leadership practices identified as collaborative were, working toward a common goal and pinpointing school programming overlapped to provide cohesion and consistency. Additionally, engaging and empowering the staff by asking for their opinions and giving them input in the decision-making process was described as a common occurrence. The high school principal noted, “The engagement is driven by them [staff] too”, in talking about her interactions with staff members when making implementation decisions. The elementary school principal, commented, “I think one of the first things that's most important is that as a leader you've got to realize is that people let you lead them.” Through engagement and empowerment, leaders perceived SEL implementation as responsive to the needs of the teachers, staff, and students. Therefore, SEL implementation was done in relationship, and inclusive of all voices. The high school SEL coordinator explained, “I think what SEL has done is helped us to, um, think more deeply about what we see in people and ask the right questions and make the right connections so that we won't make assumptions (…) take steps towards vulnerability, (…) really know and understand the people around us.” Therefore collaboration was used to shift adult mindsets in the context of relationships and community.

Professional learning, modeling and collaboration were all found to be used by both district and school based leaders to shift adult mindsets toward more critical self-awareness about practices and behaviors used when supporting student and adult social and emotional wellbeing.

Additionally, the modeling and collaboration behaviors of leaders in this study, highlighted behaviors that developed culturally responsive teachers and a more inclusive and culturally responses district and school environment. The purpose of this shift in mindset, discussed in the aforementioned finding, were ultimately designed to adjust leadership and teacher practices to be more responsive to the social and emotional needs of diverse learners and while addressing systems and practices that perpetuate the marginalization of minority students.

Finding 2: Adjusting Practices

The second finding of this study was that the SEL initiative provided leaders the tools to adjust their practices to be more culturally responsive of students. “SEL allows the heart to see what the eyes can’t” (HS Principal). Participants at both the district and school level consistently articulated that while SEL is good for all students, the SEL implementation framework provided a needed structure and processes to support traditionally marginalized students in underserved communities. The elementary school principal pointed out, “that's the power of SEL and what it does for a school environment. It helps you [students] to become visible. It helps you see behind the behavior, the heart of the person. I think that's the beauty of SEL and how we do it. It helps us, helps the adults figure out what's really happening, what's the real issue, what's the real crisis and not the surface level thing. That makes sense.”

Offered here are the specific practices that were identified consistently by all participants as supporting the students and adults’ need to feel seen, valued and heard, and to learn in an environment based on relationships and restoration. Within the SEL structure participants described three major practices. These practices were making space for diverse students, adapting and creating culturally responsive lessons to teach SEL, and building supportive relationships.

Making Space.

All participants discussed that the SEL initiative gave educators and students in classrooms permission to take time in the academic day for emotional expression, affirmation of identity, and community building. Several participants said that they made or held space for social and emotional learning by setting aside time for adult and student self-expression and connection.

The elementary school principal explained:

> I feel like as a leader, I think SEL has taught me how to be present for the adults when they have an issue or when you have crisis to the hold space for them to kind of share their concern. And also with children, they know it. It's given me a greater sense of awareness of how I engage with children, um, and engage with adults and parents and teachers, staff and parents.

Leaders in this study mostly described making space for adults as informally allowing time to discuss feelings, share personal experiences, and build meaningful connections. However in the classroom, a formal block of time was set aside in the schedule each day for teachers to make space with students through collaborative structures, lessons and curriculum. The district leaders supported this notion of making space in several ways and school leaders implemented practices for making space in their schools as described below.

District leadership set the expectation for time in the schedule for teachers to make space in the classroom with students and provided training. The superintendent explained that she wanted to "see the teachers embracing and implementing the instruction [SEL] at the start of the day. So we're setting the tone right for the rest of the day." The middle school coordinator also commented that she encouraged schools to allot time for this. The SEL director discussed

schools needing to set aside time, “to really process those issues in a way that is responsive to the needs of the people who are experiencing it.”

In addition to the expectation of setting time in the schedule for making space and teaching SEL, the SEL department promoted the use of the circle structure with adults and students. The circle structure was used by teachers and modeled in professional learning, as a collaborative structure to teacher SEL and build community. In the data collected from the 90 minute SEL training, the SEL director and two SEL coordinators, presenting, referred to the circle structure by several names; morning meeting, community gathering, and circle time. The circle structure was described and observed by the researcher as standing or sitting in a circle and using question prompts to invite personal and emotional expression, discussion of relevant topics or to build relationships through interactive play. The SEL department also modeled a circle with new employees during the New Employee Orientation and discussed its application with adults and students.

The SEL high school coordinator remarked:

> Circles can literally be anything you want them to be, even with staff that have tensions and conflict on the staff, you get in a circle. I feel like there is power in the circle, even if I'm standing there without a voice, cause I don't know what to say yet.

In addition to the district level training for all new employees, the district SEL coordinators provided schools with training on the circle structure. “I started with getting [school staff] in circles and [said] here's some small things that you can do in circles”, reflected the high school SEL coordinator. The middle school leaders explained that the SEL middle school coordinator supported their school by training, modeling and giving feedback on the circle structure to leaders and teachers.

School leaders described their implementation of circles in various ways. However, leaders at each level described the use of circles in the classroom as a "non-negotiable", meaning they held teachers accountable for putting the structure in place consistently. The middle school principal explained that she changed her master schedule and made it a school-wide expectation that teachers circle up with students each morning and make space for vulnerability. She explained by saying, "[In] the morning gathering circle, it's okay to share tears. It's okay to be vulnerable. That is a huge culture shift for the African American community." Having this moment to build self-awareness and relationships before beginning academics was discussed extensively by all school leaders as one of the most meaningful ways they implement SEL for their students of color. This speaks directly to how culturally responsive leaders leveraged SEL by using the circle practice to create a "third space" for students to collectively grapple with identity, culture, and indigenous context (Kim & Slapac, 2015). Thus, molding culturally responsive spaces for students (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

The middle school principal commented:

> I'm smiling because just a few minutes ago I was on the sixth grade hall and the teacher's not there cause he has cancer and the kids know that he has cancer. So today was one of his treatment days. And um, they had a sub. The sub's a little late and the kids asked the assistant principal and I, 'can we go ahead and start a community gathering?' And they started it. They ran the whole thing this morning. The sub came in, she was like, 'what is this?' And they told her to come and get into the circle, but they needed each other. And, especially in the community where you have shootings and people who, and deaths in the community, the kids look forward to the mornings here. I remember when it used to be the opposite.

Making space through setting aside time in the schedule and the use of circles was a major adjustment in practices leaders used to implement SEL in a culturally responsive manner. Specifically, the practice of circles was found, in this study, to promote both a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment and engage students and staff in indigenous context (Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Adapting and creating culturally responsive lessons to teach SEL.

Adapting and creating lessons to teach SEL in ways that were relevant, responsive, and affirming to the cultural identities of students was another practice leaders used to roll out SEL with traditionally marginalized students. Although the district provided SEL curriculum to schools that was not specifically representative of or responsive to the student population, the elementary, middle, and high school leaders all had strategies to support teachers in adapting lessons to be relevant to students. Lessons were added or adjusted based on specific events, cultural expression or experiences students had in relation to their identity and community context.

The district leadership supported schools by providing training, materials, and culturally responsive lesson ideas. They also tailored the SEL curriculum schools used to meet the needs of their diverse learners. The school leadership implemented the culturally responsive lessons and worked with teachers to use the SEL curriculum provided, as a guide for topics to discuss, while allowing flexibility in making lessons more relevant to the students they serve.

The data revealed that the district SEL coordinators supported the school SEL liaisons and teachers in various ways to adapt lessons. First, they set the expectation that schools would need to and should adapt lessons to their student population. Second, they modeled how to do this in teacher trainings and in classrooms with students.

The middle school SEL liaison discussed district support:

> I think what has been helpful are the sessions that really make you take a look and reflect on yourself as a teacher and how you interact with the students. [Modeling from the SEL coordinator] it' been beneficial. It's just having the teachers to realize they are not perfect and there is a better way to see, a better way to do it, a better way to experience, a better way to be transparent, especially with your students and [address] things that are going on with their lives.

The district coordinators used critical self-reflection in their trainings to provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate how they teach SEL and adapt their teaching to students' in the cultural context with which they live.

The high school principal discussed using the lessons as an outline to provide a structure, but that they had to help teachers make the experiences more relatable. Leadership perceptions on curriculum adaptation differed in grade bands. The middle and high school leadership empathized that the structure of the lessons made things a lot easier for teachers to effectively teach SEL with students, but needed to be adjusted to meet their students' needs. The elementary school SEL liaison did not discuss needing to adjust the elementary SEL curriculum. In fact, she suggested that the supplemental SEL curriculum created by the district was culturally responsive to her students' diverse identities. This supplemental curriculum was a collection of children's literature with diverse main characters and accompanying lesson, which highlighted aspects of student identity. The elementary school supplemental SEL curriculum was mentioned by three participants as being very impactful in promoting the positive identity development of culturally and socio-linguistically diverse students and acknowledging their social capital through the SEL initiative.

The elementary school SEL liaison explained:

> I think with the implementation of the SEL book of the month, it has, um, spotlighted the various identities and cultures, cultural backgrounds within our student body, which has allowed students to have a positive sense of being as well as, um, saying, Ooh, they look like me.

The SEL books, participants discussed, are an example of culturally responsive leadership practices that not only support culturally responsive teaching but also a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment through the implementation of SEL.

Building relationships.

Where the current educational focus is on academic performance (Leithwood, et. al., 2011), each participant in the study emphasized the need for adjustment in practice toward a more relationship centered focus. For example, the superintendent and SEL department professional development spent a significant portion of their interview discussing why relationships were so important in supporting children who come from traditionally marginalized communities. Relationships are a major component of two culturally responsive tenets, promoting culturally responsive environments and engaging students, parents, and indigenous context (Khalifa, et. al., 2016). The district and school leaders used relationship building to develop deeper understanding of their diverse students' perspectives and needs.

The superintendent explained "Our kids. They're not needy. They're worthy. Kids need us to be more empathetic." Reflecting on the need for relationships in schools, she went on to discuss how strong relational bonds between adults and children provide a common language of "hope, pride and joy." The words trust, empathy, connection, support, and listening were used by participants when discussing the adjustment in practice they made toward behaviors and practices that promoted the building of relationships. The high school SEL coordinator offered her

insight by saying, “So, what SEL does is help us to understand that I don't have to let go of me to embrace you.” This exemplifies the understanding that these culturally responsive leaders developed a critical self-reflection practice in relation with others. Relationships acted as the arena, in which a critical consciousness is developed. Through the context of the relationship, and not in isolation, leaders, teachers, students, and families offer their own unique socio-political, cultural perspectives, while learning from one another to create a shared understanding. Just as with adjusting practices like making space, participants regarded relationship building as important for both adults and children.

The elementary school principal explained this by saying:

> I feel like SEL has heightened my awareness of little details that they then make a difference. Um, cause I was an administrator for four years before coming here. And I feel like SEL, like just the way I engage with staff, like text message on their birthdays. I say ‘hi, how are you? How are you feeling? What are you doing?’ Just showing that sense of caring concern for the adults. I think SEL made me realize that we take time to take care of the children. A lot of times we neglect what the adults need and they are people as well. And I think, I think SEL has really heightened understanding of human interactions.

Using a common language for positive communication, allowing students and staff to feel heard, and affirming identity were consistent strategies for relationship building.

At the district level, the superintendent supported the SEL initiative by providing the expectation for strong relationships (staff-staff and staff-student). In her new employee training, she had attendees practice statements that provide hope versus defeat. She explained that providing hope was the most important way the adults in the school district could support students. For example, the superintendent asked, “Which is the biggest indicator for collage success?” After

the audience gave various answers, she states, “The answer is hope. More important than grades and the SAT.” she went on to ask, “What gets us feeling hopeful? Relationships. Connection. There is not line item for hope in the budget. Hope costs nothing. The one thing that matters in kids is free.” The adjustment to a relationship centered culture was a shift in practices that was expected at the district and school level. The district SEL team did not provide specific practices used to support relationship development in schools, however all reported relationships being a focus. For example the director of SEL pointed out that she wanted staff to “build relationships with those different from us…because nothing is less inspiring than coming into a school building and not being seen or not being heard…and then continuing to be marginalized, right?” Overall, these leaders showed a critical consciousness regarding the marginalization of students. They also articulated a need for other leaders, teachers and staff to develop the same awareness of how educational behaviors, systems, and practices negatively affect vulnerable student populations. In the context of a relationship, these culturally responsive leaders created the structure for continuous critical self-reflection and cultural learning with staff and students.

School level leaders offered a multitude of ways they built empathetic and reciprocal relationships with students and staff. The high school principal expressed that she used listening, finding out the needs of students and staff and matching them with the right resources and solutions. She regularly took the time to talk to her staff and used empathy to understand their professional and personal concerns.

With regard to students and staff, high school principal explained:

> So it's up to me and other teachers to find out where's your [students’] hope? Where does it live in this building? How many teachers have a light off for you? You know that commercial by the hotel. We're gonna leave the light on for motel eight. So what do you do to

> foster that for your teachers? Now? That's the easiest question I've had. I have to leave the light on for them and if I don't, I will grow teachers who won't have the capacity to give back because I haven't given them my power to pull from. I'll have a teachers who, uh, doing business as usual. It can't be that way. This is a different place. We have different seeds in the ground. We are tilling here, it can't be that way. I know all of their stories. I know the one to send cards to on certain days. I know the ones that say, how's mom? I know the one that says, uh, if you're going to leave today, make sure that when you sign out that I know it. That's the teacher who's been tipping out. And the reason I want to know it is because I want to make sure that everything is okay because there's no reason for you leave without me knowing.

This data illustrates the intentional and purposeful way leaders in this study built relationships with staff, in order adjust teacher behavior toward relationship-based education practices with students.

The middle school principal discussed working with her staff on listening and other communication strategies to build relationships. The elementary school principal explained that he used the language of SEL to probe children to get to the root cause of issues. The school liaisons' responses supported their principal's notion of relationship building. For example, the middle school SEL liaison reported, " now the kids are [saying] good morning. And even sometimes the kids even respond and say, how are you? So just the interactions between the adults and the students." All participants reported that children in their schools had become more supportive of peers, helpful, and collaborative in the classroom.

The elementary school SEL liaison described the shift in student behavior:

> Now we're beginning to really see how its impacting students who've had it since kind of like kindergarten or first grade, cause they're now in fourth and fifth grade. Just the skills of, of uh, interactions in and how to treat one another. You can see the influence and the impact.

The data supported relationship building as a key component of the SEL initiative. It was evident at the district level, as well as in schools, amongst adults, within student peer interaction and between students and adults. The practice of relationships building in the SEL initiative provides an example of a culturally responsive leadership practice within three CRSL tenets; promoting critical self-reflection, culturally responsive and inclusive school environments and engagement of students and parents in indigenous context.

Finding 3: Envisioning School as Community

The third finding of this study was that leaders implementing SEL envisioned their school as a community. This finding falls under the culturally responsive leadership frame of promoting a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment. Words like greeting, family, pride, community resources, encouragement, positive interactions and restorative practices were all how leaders envisioned schools as inclusive communities to support diverse learners. There were three consistent practices leaders discussed when envisioning schools as communities. They were creating a welcoming school environment, providing a safe place, and reframing discipline from punishment to accountability.

Creating a welcoming environment.

The first component of envisioning school as a community was to create a welcoming environment. A welcoming school environment was described by participants as being clean, having a cheerful front office staff, and a sense of pride inside and outside. It was also described in

the interactions between all stakeholders feeling like a family. For example, the high school SEL liaisons, “We always were there for one another. We were like family.” Participants described culturally responsive and inclusive school environments, using terms such as embraced, seen, valued, heard and connected. Additionally, a welcoming environment has elements of the people that make up the school. Participants described the creation of a welcoming environment as the acknowledgement and representation of student and family socio-cultural capital within the school. Examples participants gave were displaying student work, art from local artists, and positive statements about student identity in their schools.

> The high school SEL liaison explained the importance of having all identities and cultures represented, even visually:
>
> These kids come from all walks and he sees some of all different types of culture up here. But, because of social emotional learning, we don't try to single one person out. We don't make people feel as if, you know, you're different or anything. We discuss those cultures and we bring them together through social emotional learning.

Culturally responsive and inclusive artifacts were posted around each school as part of creating a culturally inclusive welcoming school environment.

The superintendent told a story about how she noticed there was trash outside of a school and had the facilities team remove it even though it was not on school property. She used this story to illustrate how important it was for children to enter a building that feels clean and cared for. The superintendent explained, “So when they come into school outside, inside you have a sense of pride. They're treated respectfully the moment they walk in the door.” Additionally,

she mentioned the front office and custodian being important in making the school feel welcoming. The high school SEL coordinator also discussed the importance of all adults welcoming students in small moments of interaction.

The high school SEL coordinator stated:

> Those little moments [with bus drivers], I think are magical for students. Before they even step foot in a school. Same thing in the cafeteria. Those moments also matter because that kid (…) you're rushing through that line is about to have the only meal that they're going to have that day.

District leaders perceived everyone's role in the district counting in creating a welcoming school environment.

The district supported school in creating welcoming school environments through setting expectations, training and providing opportunities for critical self-reflection. The SEL department supported schools by training instructional and non-instructional personnel, as well as in departments across the district. Additionally, they supported school leadership with critical self-reflection on how to create more welcoming schools for students.

For example the middle school SEL coordinator recalled:

> I remember a principal telling me before SEL, he didn't even think it was a big deal to walk around the classrooms. But now he's like 'every morning, first I like to stand in the atrium and I like to see the students when they walk in the building.' He said, 'cause you know what? You really can see if something's going on with them.' So he doesn't stand in the atrium every day, but there's an extra somebody on duty. That's where their duty is so that they can catch kids before they get to the hallways to make sure that they have

everything they need to have a successful day. That's a difference in a school that would not have happened before SEL.

The district SEL coordinators supported critical self-reflection of building leaders to envision their school as a community by creating a more welcoming environment, both physical space and through interactions. This is an explicit example of a culturally responsive district leadership practice promoting culturally responsive school leadership behaviors.

All school leaders provided a variety of examples for practices used to create a welcoming school environment. At the high school level, the principal and SEL liaison painted a picture of how they created a welcoming school environment through their interactions in taking time to talk to people and greet everyone and having a common expectation of helping one another. The high school principal explained that a welcoming school environment means that, "students are talking to adults about their issues, high fives, positive quotes, encouraging quotes [on the walls]." The middle school leaders also discussed positive interactions and greetings as a huge component of creating a welcoming school environment.

At the elementary school level, leadership also explained that they played jazz music in the lobby and displayed student work from the SEL book of the month, but noted, "It feels like people care. Yeah. People care. We care about the children and we care about each other. You know." This remark was made to illustrate that everyone in the school played a vital role in creating a welcoming school environment. Also, other aspects of the initiative, such as making space, culturally responsive SEL curriculum and relationship building were all used as tools to promote a welcoming school community. Thus, showcasing how these culturally responsive leaders created an inclusive school environment by using other areas of the initiative and through allowing for the overlap of the student and neighborhood culture into the school space.

Providing a safe place.

The participants in this study described their intentionality in providing a safe place for staff and students as a critical component of envisioning the school as a community. Just as with creating a welcoming environment, providing a safe place for students in the school also falls within the culturally responsive leadership framework. Specifically, providing a safe space supports an inclusive and culturally responsive school environment. The leaders in this study capitalized on the SEL initiative. They develop systems of support for both adults and students by building trust, emotional intelligence and fostering healthy relationships. A barrier to creating safe places in schools was a reluctance of vulnerable. Allowing oneself to be vulnerable enough to open up about needing support was noted as a cultural shift in schools brought on through SEL implementation. The middle school principal explained that, "…there's a stigma, especially in the African American community that [being vulnerable], it seems like a weakness." However, she went on to describe how SEL was teaching her staff and student how to freely express emotion and "dismantling the stigma." Through the process of implementing SEL, all leaders perceived SEL as a catalyst to creating more trust, stronger relationships and therefore, greater emotional safety to be vulnerable among staff and students. The district provided support to schools through training and setting the expectation within the SEL rollout. School leaders intentionally built trust in relationships by showing care and concern, making sure SEL was used as a tool by staff and adjusting systems in their schools to focus on relationships.

The district leaders all described their intentionality in supporting schools to address students' basic need for safety and stability through SEL.

The SEL director, explained that from a students' perspective, they need to believe:

> I can depend on coming into my teacher's classroom and getting supplies or getting a cookie or something to eat if I'm hungry or if I need somebody to talk to. I can depend on that teacher to be the person that I can talk to. Having people to understand that sometimes school is the only safe place is probably the most important part of our programming for kids.

It was perceived by all participants that inherent to teaching SEL was creating a space in which students and staff felt safe to discuss challenging emotions, personal situations, and to build strong connections with others. While schools were supported in "making space" to explicitly teach SEL, the district also messaged that a "safe space" for emotional wellbeing must be established in order to cultivate social and emotional learning. This goes to the heart of how leaders in this study saw the need to move beyond the surface level SEL inclusive school practices, to creating inclusive and culturally responsive school environments, which promote vulnerability and foster authentic connections.

At the school level, trust and support for the adults were discussed as necessary elements in encouraging teachers to create a safe place for students. The high school principal explained, "I care enough to ask or they [staff] trust me enough to tell me. If I don't take the heavy burden off of them [staff], how can I ask them to take the lift off the children?" One example of a leadership practice used to build trust and support was how the elementary school principal made it a daily practice of walking around the building and greeting each staff member to assess the teachers' emotional capacity to receive children that day. He stated, "Cause if something happened at home, in your personal life, and you are still dealing with that, me saying good morning gives me a chance to assess whether you're ready [to greet children]." He went on to explain that if he feels there is a problem, he will say, "Hey listen, go to the car and go get a cup of coffee, come

back and (…) we'll split your class up. Every day I'm in the building, I do that." Creating a safe space for adults, so they can create a safe place for students was consistent in interviews. Outcomes were described by participants, as students wanting to be at school and talking to the adults more often.

The high school principal illustrated the outcomes best:

> When you come into a place that, um, you have the tenets of SEL, you know, working, um, it does create a different culture. And as a result, you know, uh, kids start to find themselves. I've seen kids go from not talking to being, you know, at the top of their game. I've seen kids walk in, mope all day and after their whole gate changes. You know, I've seen kids have a conversation with a teacher and walk away, you know, feeling hopeful.

Providing a safe place for students through SEL was reported to increase school culture and students feeling of hopeful.

Moving toward a system of accountability.

The last component of envisioning school as a community was explained by participants as changing how they handled behavior. Leaders reported specific practices they used to switch their discipline methods from punitive, exclusionary practices, to a system of accountability and reintegration. Restorative practices was discussed by district leadership as an alternative method to exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspension. Schools level leaders, while not formally stating their use of Restorative Practices in interviews, did describe moving toward discipline practices that where more relationship-based, citing listening and using empathy as a method to get to the root cause of behavior in order to build systems of accountability and fixing problems. Leaders in this study created more inclusive school environments by focusing on the

main issues as opposed to ostracizing students. The high school principal explained this new approach to student discipline, “We still welcomed you. You're still a part of this, but let's talk about what happened and let's work together to fix it.” This transference of practices was directed by the district and carried out at the school level as part of the SEL initiative.

The district supported the change in student discipline by training individuals at all levels and across departments on Restorative Practices. Additionally the entire district police department was trained on this specific framework. According to the superintendent, this strategy was part of the district’s push to deconstruct the systems of oppression that disproportionally suspends and eventually jails black and brown students.

This sentiment exemplified by the superintendent’s statement:

> “So poverty and intergenerational poverty in [this city]. The residual way of deeply segregated racist, um, you know, systems and designs of the past still plays out. So when you take deep poverty like what we see and that many people see in urban settings, right? You have to take social emotional learning beyond the foundational.

Therefore, the social and emotional learning initiative added supports and frameworks, beyond simply teaching an SEL curriculum in schools, to address issues for students living in systemically marginalized communities.

The district SEL director and coordinators all mentioned Restorative Practices as a way of changing the systems that marginalize students of color. The middle school SEL coordinator noted, “I think that there's been [a shift]. Some schools have really looked at (…) what does the suspension rate look like for students of color? What, what work are we doing?” The district leadership provided training as the primary mechanism for developing systems of accountability.

School leaders discussed using their own self-awareness to respond to situations with students, such as recognizing when they were triggered and breathing to calm down. Systematically affirming students' identities, building personal connections with students to promote positive behavior, and doing more listening and asking questions than before the SEL initiative. Additionally, leaders discussed "getting to the root cause of issues" and looking for solutions to issues that built and reaffirm community with students. The middle school principal explained that she was, "letting the students express themselves and I just have a conversation with them."

The elementary school principal gave an example of purchasing classroom rugs as a response to negative behavior trend data with his fourth and fifth grade students. In reflection, he thought the issue might not be with the individual students, but with a lack of a sense of community in their classrooms. Therefore, instead of using punitive measures, such as suspension, he bought the teachers classroom rugs. The rugs provided a physical meeting space for the classroom, and helped clarify the expectation with the teachers to provide better support for students in building relationships and a sense of community. As a result, discipline issues went down. The leaders in this study described becoming more critically self-aware about how they handled student discipline through leading the SEL initiative in their schools. Self-awareness is one of the five SEL competencies, but also described in the culturally responsive leadership framework as a practice under critical self-reflection (Durlak, 2015; Khalifa, et. al., 2016).

Finding 4: Building Bridges of Support with Students and Family

The fourth finding of this study showed that the leaders of the SEL initiative at the district level and the school level, viewed their interaction with families in terms of building bridges between understanding the needs of families and the resources and partnerships that could meet

those needs. This was done in three ways. The first way was by partnering with families to understand their needs and the needs in the community. The second was locating and securing resources. The last way was through building parent capacity to understand SEL and support their children. These three methods all account for practices within the culturally responsive leadership domain of engaging students, parents, and indigenous context by developing positive and meaningful relationships, serving as advocates, and connecting directly with students and families.

Partnership with families.

Partnerships were created with families through building trust, providing support and through advocacy. While the district leaders in this study provided much less data in this finding subcategory than schools, all participants reported that the SEL initiative had positively influenced relationships with students and families in context of the community.

From the district standpoint, partnering with families through SEL was the missing piece of the initiative. The superintendent cited the creation of school governance teams as a way of being inclusive of parents and community, however, engagement with parents was mostly described as engaging them enough to attend meetings to help direct their resources. The SEL director discussed collaborating with the district parent liaison and serving on a committee for family engagement, but the SEL department did not formally direct their support toward parents and families. They supported schools partnering with their families and communities, via social and emotional capacity building of the adults in the school, as shown by the first three findings of this study.

In contrast with the district, school leadership discussed their partnerships with parents in terms of building trust, mediation, and advocacy.

The high school principal explained:

> I always say that for our [school] system, I think family engagement is a checklist. But for us, it's the work. [We] went to court [recently] and got a kid off who was looking at 30 years. As a result, I think our biggest cheerleaders are our parents, this year, because we've held true to those promises.

She went on to discuss that school personnel consistently work on building relationships between the school and the parents, the parents and the students, and remove barriers for families. All school participants described situations in which they built trust with parents, mediated between parents and their children, and advocated for students and families.

Providing for basic needs and wellbeing.

School leadership used partnerships to help meet the basic needs and wellbeing of students and families. Partnerships were either developed by the district and funneled to the schools or found directly by schools and utilized to provide support that the school could not provide themselves. The district and schools used these partnerships to give resource, such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation and mental health and physical wellness to families. While the district found, attained, and directed resources, the school leaders disseminated the resources to their families.

The superintendent described her push within the SEL initiative to include community partnerships:

> I mean they don't have access to quality health care. They didn't get quality early childhood education. They didn't get (…) stable food and housing and, and supports in their lives. So when kids have gone through that kind of trauma, not to mention like violence in their communities, they're going to need more. You're going to have to lean in more

> with those extended supports. So I think everybody needs [SEL] it. Then for those who need more, we have to do more.

Partnerships were used to serve the needs of families and provide support the district did not have the capacity to provide themselves.

The school leadership reported utilizing the partnerships provided by the district to strategically help their families. The high school SEL liaison mentioned several times in her interview, that she strategically partnered with students and families to understand their needs and match them with the appropriate support. Examples ranged from organizations providing bail bonds, legal and counseling services to donations of beds, food, gift cards, and furniture. The middle school liaison added that they work with partnerships to provide "experiences with those in the community (…) with people who look like our children." The elementary school principal discussed using partnerships to remove language barriers and childcare barriers for families.

Reflecting on his experience, the elementary school principal said:

> So we have parent meetings. Um, they had one last Thursday, as a matter of fact, it was the SEL IB parent meeting. Um, and they, we talk about what SEL is and why we do SEL. Parents need to know, I want to pair it up to be able to advocate for their child, um, and not have to worry about, um, not knowing what's going on cause they don't understand the language. And so we're moving the language barrier is huge. And then working on this year when we have led meetings after school, having childcare, that was so parents could really come and engage and learn more and not have to worry about trying to babysit or handle, so, I think we really work on giving parents access and making things, um, accessible for them in their language or in their space or in their time. I think give them information, let them know that we stay working parallel together.

Providing resources for parents to advocate, participate and making the educational space accessible was a focus for leaders in this study building bridges of support for their families.

Family capacity building.

The final element of building bridges of support for students and families was identified as capacity building. Leaders at the district and within the school all had some focus on building capacity with their families. The basic findings in this area were related to increasing student leadership, building a parent community and providing social and emotional training to parents. The superintendent explained, “We still struggle with (…) parents and the outside communities. So, you know, we do all we can while we're in school, but if it's not reinforced at home, they're basically going back in the same environment. So kids will sometimes lead from the bottom up.”

There was consensus by district leadership, supporting schools, that building student capacity to become leaders was critical for engagement with families. The district SEL director cited work the district did to create student voice committees. However, answers regarding directly engaging parents with social emotional learning experiences varied. The district SEL director discussed partnering with other departments that engage families, while the SEL district coordinators both discussed facilitating some level of direct parent SEL capacity building though parent nights and roundtable discussions. They also discussed indirectly building parent capacity by training partners who work with families.

The school level leadership responses varied regarding parent capacity. Most of participants at the school level discussed some element of capacity building with families. Where the leadership at the high school and middle school level did not mention providing formal learning experiences around SEL to families. For example, the middle school SEL liaison found it difficult to get families to come to events, stating “Now they don't come out to the games but you

know, academics or even the football games. Yeah. And I don't know how you could promote SEL too."

However the middle school principal commented:

> "Parental engagement is difficult here. It's like they trust us so much, that they think we have it. Uh, I will tell you that when there are difficult situations, especially with parents and students. We help facilitate those conversations with the parents. I call it immediate jump in SEL. When a parent is struggling (…) just getting them to use an SEL strategies, to get them to breathe."

Based on the data, family capacity building in the middle school took place in individual relationships, as opposed to workshops or school events.

The elementary school leaders in contrast, described a robust program for parent engagement with SEL. Both the principal and liaison described their approach to parent learning as modeling morning meeting, and mindfulness.

The Elementary school SEL liaison described her parent workshops:

> "I can do the circle and do it in the same format that the teachers do it in school so parents can see. I do my mindful minute with the kids. I may not do that with the adults, but I'm going to give them the idea of, you know, being in a circle, doing the greeting, let's share this share activity kind of thing."

In addition to modeling activities, the elementary school leaders also discussed working to remove barriers for things like language difference through the use of language translation apps. This shows culturally responsive engagement with parents because these leaders acknowledge the cultural experience and context of their families, while advocating and removing barriers.

Summary of Findings

Four findings were presented in this study to answer the two research questions of perceptions of district and school leadership that was culturally responsive in the support and implementation of a social and emotional learning initiative in a large urban majority-minority district. The data from ten interviews, two professional development observations and document analysis were presented in this section as findings that illustrated extensive examples of leadership behavior that supported the diverse identities of students in the district during the SEL rollout.

The data revealed that leadership in central office and at the school level had four primary foci. They were 1) Shifting adult mindsets through professional learning, modeling and collaboration, 2) Adjusting practices to make space for staff and students, adapt and create culturally responsive SEL lessons, and building relationships, 3) Envisioning their school as a community by creating a welcoming space, proving safety and support, and moving toward accountability as opposed to punishment with regard to discipline. Finally, the leaders in this study 4) Built bridges of support with students and families by partnering, providing for basic needs and wellbeing, and building parent social and emotional capacity. Within each finding there were several practices leaders used. Below is a table that illustrates the findings of this study.

Table 3

Summary of Findings

Shifting the Adult Mindset	Adjusting Practices	Envisioning School as Community	Building Bridges of Support with Students and Family
Professional Learning Modeling Collaboration	Making Space Adapting & creating culturally responsive SEL lessons Building Relationship	Creating a welcoming space Providing a safe place Moving toward a system of accountability	Partnering with families Providing for basic needs and wellbeing Building Capacity

In conclusion, the data did offer specific central office leadership practices used to support schools and specific behaviors school leaders used to implement in schools. These practices were offered throughout the findings through participant quotes. Overall, support from central office leadership was done through training, providing resources and partnerships, coaching and accountability in collaboration with schools. This study also found that the school leader's role in implementation was to set and model the expectation, schedule the time, hold others accountable, provide support to students and staff, adjust curriculum resources, and match community partners with student and family needs. The discussion section below provides further insight through the interpretation of the findings of this study.

Discussion

Based on the two guiding research questions, "how do district leaders support schools" and "how do school leaders implement critical self-awareness, culturally responsive curriculum and professional learning, inclusive school environments, and engage students and families in a social and emotional learning school initiative?", a case study was conducted of a social and emotional learning initiative in a large urban district in the southeastern United States. Through interviews with district and school-based leaders, observations, and document analysis, four findings of culturally responsive leadership practices emerged in support of the culturally responsive leadership framework (Khalifa, et. al, 2016). The findings were that leaders within the SEL initiative shifted adult mindsets, adjusted practices, envisioned the school as a community and built bridges of support with families. All four findings offer specific culturally responsive leadership

practices within the culturally responsive leadership framework (Khalifa, et. al, 2016), both district and school-based leaders used to either support or implement social and emotional learning in a majority minority urban district. They are outlined in the table below.

Table 4

Culturally Responsive Leadership for SEL

Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors	Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers	Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment	Engages Students, Parents and Indigenous Context
Finding 1: Shifting Adult Mindsets Professional Learning ➢ Building adult capacity for SEL ➢ Providing strategies Modeling Social and Emotional Competency ➢ Displaying competency ➢ Holding themselves and accountable Collaboration ➢ Using a strength-based approach ➢ Engaging and empowering others ➢ Building relationships (support and accountability)	Finding 2: Adjusting Practices Making Space ➢ Scheduling time ➢ Using the circle structure to affirm identity, encourage individual voice and build connections Adapting and Creating Culturally Responsive Lesson to Teach SEL ➢ Adapting lessons for relevancy ➢ Creating culturally responsive lessons Building Relationships ➢ Creating a common language for communicating emotions ➢ Affirming the identity of the individual ➢ Listening and providing hope	Finding 3: Envisioning School as Community Creating a Welcoming Environment ➢ Sense of pride in and outside of the building ➢ Inclusive of students identities ➢ Family feeling Providing a Safe Place ➢ Building trust ➢ Providing support and a sense of safety Moving Toward a System of Accountability ➢ Using self-awareness to recognize triggers ➢ Listening to get to the root cause ➢ Building personal connections and reaffirming community	Finding 4: Building Bridges of Support with Students and Family Partnership with Families ➢ Trusting ➢ Mediation ➢ Advocacy Providing for Basic Needs and Wellbeing ➢ Matching partnerships with needs ➢ Using partnerships to remove barriers Capacity Building ➢ Student leadership ➢ Building parent community within the school ➢ Providing learning experiences for SEL

As shown in the table, the findings of this study provide specific culturally responsive leadership practices for each area of the CRL framework, however this study found that while there were specific leadership practices within critical self-reflection practices, this component of the framework was used by leaders to develop their culturally responsive leadership practices in each of the other three areas, as well. For example, while leaders in this study shifted mindsets at the district and schools through practices such as professional learning, modeling and collaboration to build critical self-awareness of staff members and themselves, it was also the basis for adjusting their practices, envisioning their school as a community, and building bridges of support with students and families. The findings of this study highlight specific practices leaders used to be culturally responsive within an initiative in a large urban district. Also, this study found that social and emotional learning was perceived by leaders as providing structure and purpose to their culturally responsive practices in schools. This study shows that the culturally responsive leadership framework has a broader use in the educational leadership space than school leadership. Due to the proliferation of educational reform efforts (Brown, 2006) and the consolidation of school districts (Kirst and Wirt, 2009), the concept of educational leadership has expanded from the two traditionally studied roles of the schoolhouse principal (Khalifa, et. al., 2016) or the superintendent (Santamaria, 2014). There are now various leadership roles in central office and within schools that are charged with leading educational initiatives. Initiative leadership is an understudied area of educational leadership and an important new focus for future research. This study has unique significance in that it 1) offers practices that support the research on culturally responsive leadership and pedagogy and its use in the implementation of social and emotional learning within historically marginalized communities, and 2) expands the culturally responsive leadership framework from school leadership to also include central office

and initiative leadership. Therefore, there are both policy and practitioner implications for these findings based on the unique nature of this case study.

Research on culturally responsive education calls for teachers and leaders to develop their cultural, social and emotional understanding through critical self-reflection (Khalifa, et. al., 2016; Sleeter, 201l) and create classrooms that are culturally responsive and emotionally supportive of students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The discourse on SEL also speaks to creating inclusive classroom environments where students can develop social and emotional skills. Studies show that teacher bias and cultural misconceptions of students can be detrimental to a teacher's ability to recognize culturally diverse pro-social behavior. Therefore, teachers engaging in SEL with students, need cultural competency to educate diverse learners (Jones, et. al., 2015). This study's findings support the research on culturally responsive pedagogy, leadership and SEL by offering exemplars for practitioners interested in culturally responsive leadership practices for SEL in the classroom, school-wide and with families.

Within the classroom space, leaders in this study incorporated critical self-reflection into all professional learning, modeling and collaboration activities. They did this to support teachers in shifting mindsets and thereby, developing a critical consciousness when adapting lessons, creating culturally responsive spaces, and building relationships with students. The shift in mindset and adjustment in practices at the classroom level was facilitated by leadership self-reflection at the school level. Leaders envisioned their school as a community to creating a welcoming environment, created an emotionally safe space for adults and adopted systems of support and accountability. Within the community, the leaders in this study recognized the challenges met by marginalized families and sought ways to build bridges of support. Thus, showing engagement and advocacy.

In addition to offering culturally responsive leadership practices at the three levels of SEL implementation, this study also expands the culturally responsive leadership framework from school leadership to include central office and initiative leadership. Originally developed as the culturally responsive school leadership framework, specific to school leaders, this study supports the expansion of this framework to all forms of leadership that supports schools. Within the findings of this study, it was shown that culturally responsive leadership at the district level was a major factor in the culturally responsive rollout of SEL.

District leadership in this study showed examples of culturally responsive leadership that supported the rollout of SEL across the district by setting a strategic mission and vision for SEL that included expanded support for underrepresented and vulnerable students. District leaders worked to shift the adult mindsets though providing critical self-reflection in all PL, modeling culturally responsive (CR) SEL for leaders and teachers, collaborating across departments and with schools on practices informed by student culture and context. They also held schools accountable to practices that support diverse learners and cultivated partnerships to help school leaders build bridges of support with families. This study elevates the use of culturally responsive school leadership beyond the school house, to district leadership practices that support the systemic roll out of SEL across a minority-majority district seated in urban centers.

Implications

As the educational space evolves, so must research in educational policy and educational leadership. With educational policy shaping the educational arena, this study has major implications for implementation of social emotional learning policy. With increased interest and implementation of social emotional learning initiatives (“Opportunity, Responsibility and Security,” 2015), school districts and schools must determine practices that are culturally responsive to the

students and communities they target. While there is no specific leadership frame offered in the literature for implementation of social and emotional learning within majority-minority communities or with students and communities that have been historically marginalized ("Opportunity, Responsibility and Security," 2015), this study provides support for culturally responsive leadership as an appropriate leadership framework for use by both central office and school-based leadership.

In the field of educational leadership, the literature on central office leadership is not well developed and has a limited scope mostly targeted at the superintendency or other high level leaders, such as leaders who serve is a supervisory role for principals. There is a gap in the literature regarding leadership in central office that supports the implementation of school reform initiatives (Honig, Copland, Rainey, & Newton, 2010). Therefore the findings of this study add to the literature with regard to understanding the potential for central office leadership to roll out school reform initiatives in a way that is culturally responsive by providing training that includes critical self-reflection and distributing resources that are adapted or created with the indigenous context in mind. They can also coach and hold schools accountable to culturally responsive and inclusive practices and develop partnerships with outside organization for schools to use when engaging with students and families. This study offers rich data for perceived culturally responsive central office leadership, however there is opportunity for further research in this area.

This study is also significant in furthering the scholarship on school-based culturally responsive leadership practices. Not only does this study add to the literature with regard to specific practices that support culturally responsive and inclusive schools, but also that support the social and emotional development of students from traditionally underserved and represented

communities. In addition to specific practices within the culturally responsive leadership framework, this study found that school based leaders serve a specific function within the roll out of an SEL initiative. School leadership set and model expectations for SEL, ensured scheduled time for emotional expression and connection, provided both support and accountability to students and staff. They also modify curriculum to be more culturally responsive for students and partnered with families to match them with partnership support. Therefore, there are implications for school leadership and the types of roles school leaders take on within an initiative.

This single instrumental case study of a large urban district's social and emotional learning initiative, has implications for social emotional learning and other such educational reform efforts. This study also has implications for the ever expanding role of central office and the more targeted culturally responsive leadership behaviors in the school house. Further research is needed in these areas to further support or expand the scope of this study. Additionally, this study may provide scholars with a starting point for a new educational leadership framework that supports the social emotional learning of both students and adults as part of the return to whole child education (Durlak, 2015).

Study Limitation

While this study adds to the scholarship and there are major implications for educational research, there are limitation. Some of the limitations of this study were addressed in the researcher positionality, but warrant further discussion as they may impact the transferability of these findings. This case study only examined one district's social and emotional learning initiative. Additionally, the purposeful selection of this district, being a large urban majority-minority district, does not offer the perspective of leadership in districts that are not majority-minority or in suburban or rural settings. The sample size and selection of participants also poses limitations

to this study, in that only designated strong implementers at the school level and only central office staff that support the social emotional initiative were interviewed. Data was not collected from lower or non-implementers, nor was it collected from central office staff in other departments. Finally, as stated in the researcher positionality, the researcher's practitioner's status as a potential known entity in social emotional learning implementation, could have created some bias in the data, due to the potential for interviewees to answer questions more or less favorably. These limitations maybe considered in future studies, when selecting cases and participants. Despite the limitations of this study, the findings add in a meaningful way to the scholarship in educational leadership and offer a strong foundation for future research.

Conclusion

In the changing landscape of public education, culturally responsive leadership is critical to the wellbeing of this nation's shifting majority-minority population. While the student demographic increases in diversity, educational reform policy efforts have led to the homogenization of curriculum, and the proliferation of standardized testing (Brown, 2016). Social emotional learning, largely popularized in the last decade as a call for whole child educational reform, has virtually no literature supporting a specific leadership style that is best suited for an SEL rollout (Durlak, 2015). The newly theorized, culturally responsive leadership framework (Khalifa, et. al., 2016) was applied in this single instrumental case study bound by the SEL initiative in a large urban district of color to better understand how district leaders and school leaders might support and implement SEL within the four tenets of the CRL framework. Through 10 interviews of district and school leadership, professional learning observations and document analysis, four findings of leadership practices within the four tenets of culturally responsive leadership were determined. The data showed that these perceived culturally responsive leaders made efforts to shift adult

mindsets, adjust practices, envision their schools' as CR/inclusive communities, and build bridges of support for students and families in indigenous context. While there are limitations to this study, this research makes a significant contribution to the literature and the findings offer a beginning point for further meaningful research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Interview Questions

District Leaders (Policy Agenda Setters and Implementation Leaders)

- What has been your vision for social and emotional learning initiative implementation?
    - Why do you feel that it is important for students in this district?
- How do you believe culture influences social and emotional learning implementation?
    - Where do you believe the two ideas come together?
- How do you feel the SEL initiative supports the culturally/linguistically diverse students in the district?
- In what ways, if any, has SEL impacted your leadership practices in working with historically marginalized students?
- What training, materials or support has the district provided or continues to provide to schools for SEL implementation that have been most helpful to students in your district?
- What SEL practices have been most successful in supporting students in your district with SEL?
- What have been your successes/challenges of implementation of the SEL initiative?
- How do you engage stakeholders and the community around SEL?

School Leaders (Principals and SEL Implementation Leaders)

- What has been your vision for social and emotional learning initiative implementation?
    - Why do you feel that it is important for students in your school?
- How do you believe culture influences social and emotional learning implementation?
    - Where do you believe the two ideas come together?
- How do you feel the SEL initiative supports the culturally/linguistically diverse students in the district?
- In what ways, if any, has SEL impacted your leadership practices in working with historically marginalized students?
- What training, materials or support has been most impactful for your staff for SEL implementation? Why?
- What SEL practices have been most successful in supporting students in your school with SEL?
- What have been your successes/challenges of implementation of the SEL initiative?
- How do you engage stakeholders and the community around SEL?

	District SEL Leaders	**School SEL Leaders**
Critical Self Reflection	What has been your vision for social and emotional learning initiative implementation? • Why do you feel that it is important for students in this district? How do you believe culture influences social and emotional learning implementation? • Where do you believe the two ideas come together?	What has been your vision for social and emotional learning initiative implementation? • Why do you feel that it is important for students in your school? How do you believe culture influences social and emotional learning implementation? • Where do you believe the two ideas come together?
CR PL and Curriculum	What training, materials or support has the district provided or continues to provide to schools for SEL implementation that have been most helpful to traditionally marginalized students in your district?	What SEL training, materials or support has been most impactful for your staff when working with historically marginalized students?
CR and Inclusion	What SEL practices have been most successful in supporting students in your district with SEL?	What SEL practices have been most successful in supporting students in your district with SEL?

Student Community engagement	How do you engage stakeholders and the community around SEL?	How do you engage stakeholders and the community around SEL?
ALL CR SEL Implementation	○ What have been your successes/challenges of implementation of the SEL initiative? ○ How do you feel the SEL initiative supports the culturally/linguistically diverse students in the district? ○ In what ways, if any, has SEL impacted your leadership practices in working with historically marginalized students?	

Appendix B:

Code Map of Findings

1. **Shifting Adult Mindsets**
    a. Professional learning
        i. Building adult capacity for SEL
        ii. Providing strategies
    b. Modeling social and emotional competency
        i. Displaying competency
        ii. Holding themselves and accountable
    c. Collaboration
        i. Using a strength-based approach
        ii. Engaging and empowering others
        iii. Building relationships (support and accountability)
2. **Adjusting Practices**
    a. Making Space
        i. Scheduling time
        ii. Using the circle structure to affirm identity, encourage individual voice and build connections

   b. Adapting and creating culturally responsive lesson to teach SEL
      i. Adapting lessons for relevancy
      ii. Creating culturally responsive lessons
   c. Building relationships
      i. Creating a common language for communicating emotions
      ii. Affirming the identity of the individual
      iii. Listening and providing hope

3. Envisioning School as Community

   a. Creating a welcoming environment
      i. Sense of pride in and outside of the building
      ii. Inclusive of students identities
      iii. Family feeling
   b. Providing a safe place
      i. Building trust
      ii. Providing support and a sense of safety
   c. Moving toward a system of accountability
      i. Using self-Awareness to recognize triggers
      ii. Listening to get to the root cause
      iii. Building personal connections and reaffirming community

4. Building Bridges of Support with Students and Family

   a. Partnership with families
      i. Trusting
      ii. Mediation
      iii. Advocacy
   b. Providing for basic needs and wellbeing
      i. Matching partnerships with needs
      ii. Using partnerships to remove barriers
   c. Capacity Building
      i. Student leadership
      ii. Building parent community within the school
      iii. Providing learning experiences for SEL