THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' ACTIONS ON HIGH

PERFORMING HISPANIC SCHOOLS

by

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DEDICATION

For my mom and dad, Dolly and Bill Broadus, who never lost their faith in me and for my beautiful sons, Ashton Julian and Brant Jackson, who gave me the extra love and motivation I needed to finish.

myself, editing my thinking, editing my work, and coaching me through. Your support has been invaluable.

Words cannot express how grateful I am to my mom, dad, and my sons for all of the sacrifices you have made on my behalf. Your belief in me is what sustained me through this journey. I love you guys.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page

ABSTRACT

As changing demographics have shifted Texas to a majority-minority state, Texas public schools have struggled to address the needs of both the changing population and the longstanding disparities in educational achievement between racial and ethnic groups. Building on research by Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), this study identifies the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools in Texas. Looking through the lens of sociocultural theory, this study operationalizes the four aspects of the Implementing Best Practices dimension of the framework developed by Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999): advocacy-oriented assessment, culturally responsive pedagogy, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement. In addition to demonstrating the continued relevance of the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) work, this study suggests additional pieces of the framework. Further, this research reveals a relationship between principal mindset and sustainability of school improvement efforts. The results of this study have implications for policy-makers, those who prepare educational leaders, and researchers of school improvement practices.

Keywords: school improvement, educational equity, Hispanic students, principal preparation, community engagement, educational leadership, Turnaround Principal

I. INTRODUCTION

The demographics of Texas are changing. A U.S. Census Bureau report predicts Hispanic populations driven by immigration and high birth rates will increase by 530% between the years 1980 and 2040 in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a). Murdock et al. (2003) state, "Hispanic population growth has also been the single largest determinant of population growth in the state for each of the last two decades" (p. 18). Changing demographics bring about the need to re-examine the education system as Texas public schools have struggled to address the needs of both the changing population and the longstanding disparities in educational achievement between racial and ethnic groups. Teachers, administrators, students, and communities must work together with a sense of urgency to: (a) improve scores; (b) close achievement gaps; (c) teach the skills needed for success and; (d) ensure Texas students are fully and equally educated. According to Jordan (2010).

> The pursuit of educational equity has long been a goal of reform efforts in the United States. Yet creating a system of education where all children have equal access to quality instruction and widely available opportunities to learn to their fullest human potential has been elusive. (p. 142)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), born in and built upon the Texas education system, intended to change these inequities. Bailey and Karp (2004) further explain, "under NCLB, all schools receiving federal funds are required to reach 100 percent passing rates for all student groups in state tests by the 2013-2014 school year. The declared goal is to have all students meet state standards and to eliminate academic achievement gaps" (p. 53). Bailey and Karp (2004) submit this underfunded and

unachieved goal has been nonetheless a main preoccupation of schools and districts across the state. State, region, district, and school reports, known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) showcase passing rates of students and highlight academic achievement gaps. AEIS reports, now most recently re-named the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) are used by district and school leaders to identify the gaps between current achievement levels and the standards set forth by the state in response to the NCLB bill of 100% passing rates. The 2012-2013 TAPR for Texas indicates 51.3% of Texas public school students are Hispanic and 17% are enrolled in a bilingual or ESL Education program (Texas Education Agency, 2013). Texas was also ranked first in the US for the percentage of uninsured children, and budget cuts continue to threaten children's programs serving disadvantaged children (Murdock et al., 2012). According to Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999):

> These students are by far our most vulnerable. They are more likely to drop out of school than are other students. They disengage at an early age, resulting in an alarming statistic that has remained constant for the past 20 years, Only 5% to 6% of these students are graduating from our institutions of higher education, a condition that places profound limitations on their ultimate influence on social and educational policy in our society. (p. 3)

In 2010, the statewide average of students passing the exit level TAKS and graduating by their expected graduation rate was 90%. Results varied for student groups as 95% of white students passed while 86% of Hispanic students passed. According to the April 2006 Census report (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a), 87.9% of non-Hispanic White students graduated compared to 64.2 % of Hispanic students. While tremendous growth has been

seen over the last twelve years, this disparity continues in 2012 with an 87.7% graduation rate for Hispanic students versus a 93.3% graduation rate for White students. The picture of educating Hispanic students in Texas continues to look bleak (TEA, 2013a).

Taking Action

The alarming educational inequities for Hispanic students signal a need for change. Educators must take action, and this work begins with educational leaders. Theory and policy can impact statewide decisions, but transformation must happen where the students are being taught, in the classrooms of Texas. According to Ladson-Billings (2002), the majority of educators do not have the experience or educational background to prepare them for the growing diversity of their students. This is significant for a state whose demographics are quickly changing. New practices must be considered to ensure fair and equal access to a successful academic experience for all Hispanic students of Texas. Taylor and Sobel (2011) state:

> To teach children from diverse backgrounds effectively, schools need teachers who understand the impact of students' home and community cultures on their educational experience and who have the skills to interact with students from a range of backgrounds. Thus, the sociocultural lens which teachers bring to the classroom is an important factor in ensuring effective teaching and learning for a diverse population of students. (p. 5).

Accordingly, educators must ensure they are meeting the needs of students of diverse populations and provide instruction that results in high student achievement. Scheurich and McKenzie (2004) state, "school leaders need to help teachers reframe their thinking about students, families, and communities and, thus, move their thinking from a deficit

3

orientation to an assets-based one" (p.609). According to Howard (March 2007), "Educators of *all* racial and cultural groups need to develop new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage our changing populations" (p 17). Districts and schools across the state are working hard to ensure academic achievement of all students. However, the question is whether they know *how* to ensure academic achievement for our changing demography? Are Texas district and campus level school leaders looking at Hispanic student achievement through a socio-cultural lens? If most Texas educators don't have the background that prepares them for the growing diversity of their students, how do we build the knowledge that ensures Texas Hispanic students the opportunity for a successful academic experience? In the forward to a book by Fullan (2010) entitled All Systems Go: The Change Imperative for Whole System Reform., Senge states, "No institution has a more crucial role to play in the historic changes coming than school because no institution has greater potential to impact how a society changes over the long term" (p. xi). These institutions called school are run by leaders: principals, deans, counselors, teachers, collectively they shape the institution of school. Primarily, the principals' leadership role on the campus has tremendous impact on the academic achievement of the institution.

The Power of the Principal

Principals have pronounced impact on the success of schools. Jesse, Davis, and Pokorny (2004) state, "Nearly all studies of effective schools have identified school leadership as a key characteristic" (p. 25). Fullan (2010) states, "Powerful principals are obsessed with the instructional core of personalizing learning and getting results for each and every student" (p. 14). In a study conducted by McKenzie, Skrla, Scheurich, Rice,

and Hawes (2011), leadership was found to be one of the three central components to large urban high school's academic success. The leadership focus was on continuous instructional improvement and principals worked in conjunction with district leadership (2011). McKenzie, Skrla, Scheurich, Rice and Hawes (2011) state, "Informants described leadership for instructional improvement as originating at the district level and often as providing a coherent framework within which the school's own efforts were to be nested" (p. 110). Likewise, in a study conducted by Marks and Printy (2003), the authors found a positive correlation between cultivating teachers' leadership and school performance. High levels of commitment coupled with a coherent framework for improvement from district leadership create powerful principals. These core beliefs include believing all children can succeed, keeping the school child centered, treating children with respect, highly valuing the culture and language of the child, and ensuring the school exists to serve the community. Shared values, assumptions, beliefs and expectations affect the decision making and actions of the principal (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999). A principal's role on the campus has great impact on student success as they create high levels of commitment, strongly focus on instructional improvement, and set the working foundations for schools by laying out core beliefs that children can be successful.

The Hispanic student population in Texas is our most vulnerable group of students. Educational leaders are, as a result, being called upon to assume a greater responsibility for Hispanic students. Public schools are operating on fewer resources and increased accountability while the academic gap continues to widen. Do Texas leaders have the skills, resources and cultural understandings to serve our most vulnerable student group in the best possible way? The thought of failing significant numbers of our

Hispanic students in Texas is terrifying and yet we continue to conduct school in ways that extinguish hope for many Hispanic students and families.

Purpose of the Study

In spite of the grim picture of Hispanic student performance in Texas, there are schools that are successfully serving large numbers of Hispanic students. A study conducted by Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) identified eight such schools, three elementary, three middle, and two high schools. They found that required knowledge, responsive school cultures, disciplines of a learning organization, and action dimensions were characteristics of highly successful schools serving a majority of Hispanic students. The study further suggested these four components of successful schools do not operate in isolation from one another, but complement and build on one another to form a strong foundation for a successful school. Drawing from Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner's (1999) framework, the purpose of this study was to examine the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic high schools. As principals of high performing schools, the participants in this study are unique because of their success with the Hispanic population in their school, a phenomenon that is, unfortunately, all too rare. This study, conducted 13 years after the original research, adds a layer to the conceptual framework Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) developed to explain learning communities in high performing Hispanic schools. Because of my own work, which centers on supporting principals in low performing schools, I wanted to discover if the original Reyes, Scribner, Scribner (1999) framework could be operationalized. My own quest to support the work of principals started with the examination of the best practices in the Reyes, Scribner, Scribner work. While their research took a much more extensive look at the high

6

performing learning community, including the principal, I was specifically curious about viewing this work solely through the lens of the principal. In addition, I was curious about how the work of Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) translated outside the area of Texas known as The Valley. Because The Valley has a very strong and deeply rooted Hispanic community and culture I wondered if and how the framework might transmute in different areas of Texas where the Hispanic community and culture were not as deeply rooted.

Because over half of Texas public school children are Hispanic, many principals throughout Texas work in predominantly Hispanic schools. However, few of those schools are high performing Hispanic schools, defined by high numbers of students graduating in four years, and college readiness indicator scores. Surprisingly, little research has been done on the specific actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools. This study helps fill that gap by examining the work of principals in high performing Hispanic schools. Based on the success of schools in Texas serving large numbers of Hispanic students, my examination of high performing Hispanic schools uncovers practices that may help to create more favorable learning conditions for Hispanic students and help secure a more equitable education for Texas Hispanic students.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

What are the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools in Texas?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support community and family involvement to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support collaborative governance and leadership to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support culturally responsive pedagogy to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support advocacy oriented assessment to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

Drawing from the work of Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), this research explored what principals of high performing Hispanic schools do to implement each of these best practices within their learning community.

Conceptual Framework

Culture influences human development. McBride (2011) states, "Culture is the fabric of life, the theme that runs through humanity and its expressions and behaviors. Culture encompasses, but is not limited to, the beliefs, values, norms, language, food, and clothing that a group shares" (p. 7). This research is nested in a sociocultural framework by taking into account social interactions of the principal of the school and cultural contexts of learning that the principal creates on the campus. By nesting the research in

the sociocultural framework, we are acknowledging that culture impacts the development of students as well as the decisions and actions of the principal of the school.

Altshuler and Schmautz (2006) discuss cultural influence in a broader construct. They discuss that individuals' self-concept – weighing their own strengths and weaknesses – is affected by cultural norms. Altshuler and Schmautz (2006) state, "Thus, lowered academic self-concept of Hispanic students may be exacerbated if they respect and adhere to cultural values" (p. 9). Positive self-concepts foster positive achievement while negative self-concepts have negative impact on academic achievement. The culture of Hispanic students and its influence on academic success cannot be measured by length of time a student is in the U.S., nor can it be measured by how well the student speaks English. Culture clashes between the Hispanic culture and the culture found in U.S. schools are present. White cultures predominantly hold an idiocentric view of self, emphasizing freedom, expression and independence as opposed to the Hispanic culture of allocentrism. The allocentric view emphasizing interdependence and collaborative processes over autonomous actions can be seen as a barrier to educational success in the current state of education (Altshuler & Schmautz, 2006). The education system in which we currently operate is designed to be competitive in nature. The system is also designed to promote individual learning and working alone. While the allocentric view is dominant in the Hispanic culture, culture clashes between the allocentric and idiocentric views are commonplace across generations. Perez (2011) states, "Today more is known about the important role that acculturation plays as a moderator of the well-being of Hispanic youth, and it is acknowledged that full assimilation into mainstream U.S. life does not take place in just one generation" (p. 205).

The Principal and Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky uses the word "experience" to connect a persons' environment to their development (Gredler & Shields 2007). Hispanic students come to school with individual cultures and understandings. Additionally, principals are driven by their own connections to their environment and come to school as the leader with their individual cultural understanding of what Hispanic students need to be successful in their school. Ibanez, Kuperminc, Jurkovic, and Perilla (2004) support this by stating, "Immigrants and their families bring with them culturally distinctive ways of perceiving and making sense of their reality (cultural attributes), but they also create new ways of understanding their surroundings (cultural adaptations)" (p. 560). Cultural attributes refer the values that are unaffected by acculturation while cultural adaptations refer to the values that change with acculturation. While Hispanic students' culture is connected to their experience just as a Principals' cultural understanding is connected to their leadership "experience", Delgado Gaitan (2012) suggests that educators must also be aware of cultural backgrounds in order to provide opportunities for students to participate fully in their own learning. A Principal's own cultural sensitivity and attentiveness to the cultural awareness of their students and learning community may also affect the availability of opportunities for students to participate in their own learning. Delgado Gaitan (2012) states, "Central to this matter is a mainstream community that needs to create a learning environment that supports variance and change" (p. 308). While looking at the actions of principals in high performing schools with high populations of Hispanic students, this study was guided by the assumption that the culture in which people grow up and the influence of the culture impacts learning and behavior.

The sociocultural framework acknowledges the assumption that principals selected for this study may possess a cultural knowledge that influences their work. In addition, the actions of the principals in this study may be influenced by how they were raised and their own cultural understanding. Principals also have been influenced by the cultural context of learning in principal preparation programs, and we acknowledge that this influences their work and their actions as principals. To support this, Vygotsky wrote that social and cultural processes drive individual development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). His sociocultural framework connects the social interaction and cultural context of learning. We believe that the impact of culture on students in the classroom is significant and shapes the functioning of the mind and creates behavior. In addition, the belief that a principal's actions on a campus can connect social interactions and cultural contexts of learning on a campus is prevalent in this study. Vygotzsky (1981) maintains, "Culture is the product of social life and human social activity. That is why just by raising the question of the cultural development of behavior we are directly introducing the social plane of development" (p. 164). Principals' cultural understandings impact their values, beliefs, and knowledge and how responsive they are to the cultures represented in schools. In addition, principals' values, beliefs, and knowledge are also impacted by the act of leading in the culture of high stakes accountability. Because accountability test scores are such a powerful public measure of school success, a competitiveness between principals surfaces designating some principals as more effective or more successful, placing further undue pressure on principals, and adding to the culture of competition among principals that also impacts their values, beliefs, and actions as a principal. According to the framework of Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999), required knowledge,

responsiveness to school cultures, and the disciplines of a learning organization all impact the actions dimensions found in professional learning communities of successful Hispanic schools (p. 191). We know many schools in Texas with high populations of Hispanic students are not performing well on standardized state tests. We acknowledge that the cultural differences of students do make a difference on their academic success. Within the socio-cultural framework, we can also assume that a principal's cultural background and cultural understanding may also impact the actions taken as a leader on a campus. To research the performance of predominantly Hispanic schools and the actions of the principals leading these schools, we recognize that culture impacts the academic performance of students and school leaders and will look at this study through a sociocultural theoretical lens to make discoveries of the role of the principal and how the principal's cultural understanding impacts the success of their school.

Action Dimensions

Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999), developed a conceptual framework of learning communities for high-performing Hispanic students using a sociocultural lens. This conceptual framework highlights the required knowledge (learning conditions), responsive school cultures (cultural elements), disciplines of a learning organization (building capacity to succeed), and action dimensions (implementing best practices) necessary for developing high-performing schools.

Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) share, "The framework consists of four broad categories that are requisite to the development of the capacity within a school, as a learning community, to provide outstanding results for all students" (p. 191). For this study, the fourth category of action dimensions, *Implementing Best Practices*, was the

focus. Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner describe, "the fourth category [action dimensions] concerns making *what we know* and *how we think and feel* contribute to *how we work together* in ways that ensure that *what we do* produces outstanding results for all students" (p. 192). Within the action dimensions, Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) derived the following best practices from their research: community parent involvement, collaborative governance and leadership, cultural responsive pedagogy, and advocacy-oriented assessment. The Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) research revealed common themes around each of the best practices identified, and also described evidence of how each theme manifested itself in the study.
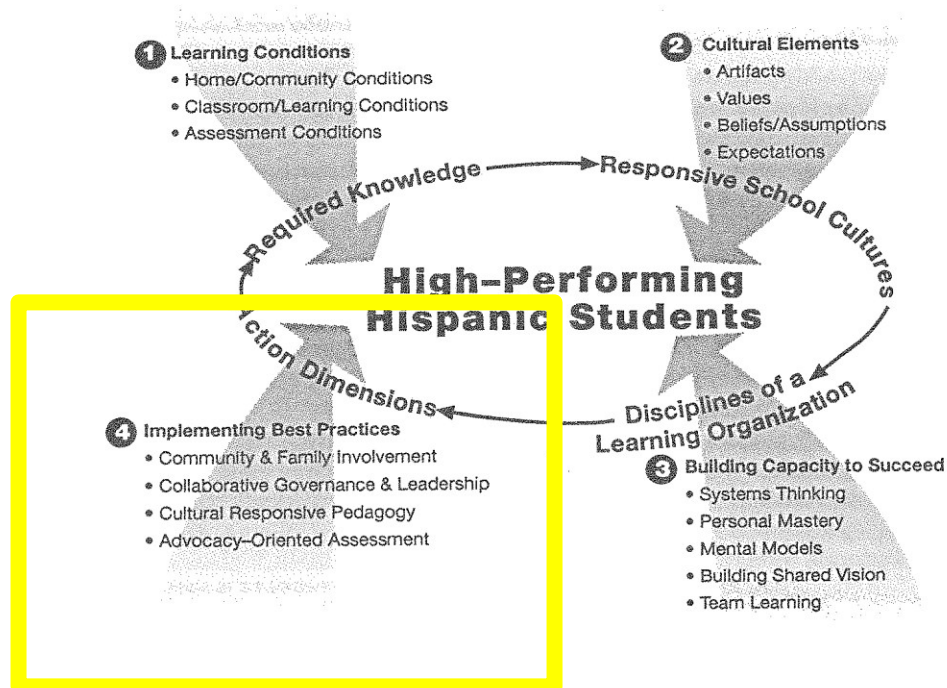
(Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999, p. 191)

Figure 1. High-Performing Hispanic Students

Community and Family Involvement

According to Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999), "Community and parent involvement represents an integral part of the relationship building for the borderland

13

schools we studied" (p. 193). To summarize the findings from Reyes, Scribner, and

Scribner (1999), they found evidence of building collaborative relationships with parents

identified through the following five best practices:

1. Supportive, personal relationships that reinforce a feeling of belonging to the

   "school's family" (school, home, and community) are nurtured by school staff…

2. Community members are encouraged to contribute to the school in ways the

   community consider important….

3. Parents are encouraged to become involved in both formal and informal activities

   associated with schooling….

4. Access to needed information is provided for community members and parents in

   ways that facilitate a culture of respect and collaboration….

5. Adult education opportunities are used to enhance the skills of community

   members and parents, to enable them to help their children and others within the

   school…. (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 193-195).

In addition to building relationships with parents, Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999)

found that empowering the surrounding community resulted in significantly higher levels

of community and family involvement. Researchers from the study found three various

models of community, community as a resource, the traditional community, and the

learning community.

Collaborative Governance and Leadership

In the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) study, learning communities were

"acquired more rapidly because people enjoy a genuine sense of responsibility for student

success" (p. 195). The following themes were found within the best practice of Collaborative Governance and leadership:

1. The human potential of all involved with the high-performing learning community takes precedence over traditional notions of bureaucracy….

2. Everyone is willing to engage in and to be held accountable for innovative practices that will improve learning conditions for their students….

3. All members of the learning community are empowered to make fundamental decisions about what us to be done to ensure student success….

4. Because leadership is a pervasive concept shared by all, all members of the learning community became self-actualized….

5. An essential function of the collaborative governance and leadership is the principal's capacity to communicate meaning and inspire people to actively participate in collegial and collaborative processes….(Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 196-199).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

According to Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999), a requirement of student success in a high-performing learning community is culturally responsive pedagogy. The following themes were found by Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999):

1. Teachers believe that every student has the ability to achieve, and they communicate this belief to students, parents, and colleagues….

2. Teachers provide a caring environment and students are viewed as the most valuable resources of the school….

3. Teachers empower their students, providing opportunities for experimentation, innovation, discovery and problem solving.…

4. Teachers make use of two-way "instructional conversations" with students that encourage goal-directed activity and the use of higher-order thinking skills on the part of the students.…

5. Teachers use students "funds of knowledge" as the basis of their instructional strategies…. (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 200-203).

Advocacy-Oriented Assessment

Advocacy-oriented assessment keeps the focus on the needs of the students. According to Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), "School personnel use a diverse array of assessment data to promote the individual learning of students" (p. 204). The following themes emerged from the 1999 research study supporting Advocacy-oriented assessment:

1. Advocacy-oriented assessment is practiced through the understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity and its relationship to academic achievement.…

2. Language assessment is conducted to determine linguistic competence in the native language and English.…

3. Teachers and assessment personnel use instructional interventions and modifications to address learning difficulties.…

4. Teachers and assessment personnel work together through collaboration and consultation to set high expectations for linguistically diverse students.…

5. There is a commitment to authentic assessment procedures for the benefit of linguistically diverse Hispanic students…. (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 204-207).

Evidence of how these individual themes manifested themselves within the schools was found by using the field guide as a tool during the site visit (see Appendix A).

Design of Study

This qualitative study examined the work of three high school principals who were leaders of high performing Hispanic schools. Specifically, this study explored the actions of the principal through the framework of high performing Hispanic schools developed by Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999). While the original research study examined the entire learning community in high performing Hispanic schools, this study focused only on the principal. For the purpose of this study, a high-performing Hispanic school is defined as a school that meets the following criteria:

1. High schools serving grades 9-12

2. Schools with over 600 students

3. Graduation rate of 90% or higher (graduating in four years with no exemptions)

4. Met college readiness standards (ascending order)

Information was gathered from the three participating principals using field site visits and interviews with the principals. Information gathered was analyzed and coded to identify common themes and strands in relation to the themes developed from the 1999 framework developed by Scribner, Scribner and Reyes (1999).

Definitions of Terms

To assist with consistency of the student and clarity of understanding, the following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

Actions –Performing a process or act. Specifically, actions as defined by what the principal does to address the research questions.

AEIS reports - found on the TEA website provides vast amounts of information about every public school and district in Texas, including information about academic performance, staffing, finances, and programs (TEA FAQ).

Assessment bias –"refers to the qualities of a test that offend or unfairly penalize test-takers because of those test-takers personal qualities such as their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or similar group-defining characteristics" (Popham, 2004, p. 58).

Assessment/ test/ measurement –"I will interchangeably employ the terms the terms test, assessment, and measurement. Most of the time, I'll be using the term assessment because it appears to be the term most currently favored by educators" (Popham, 2010, p. 3).

Formative assessment –" formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics" (Popham, 2004, p. 138).

High stakes test –"any tests whose results are seen to reflect the quality of educators' instructional performances" (Popham, 2004, p. 22).

Hispanic – "Hispanic or Latino" refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, April 2006b). Although Latino is more a term commonly utilized in contemporary research, in keeping with the language of the original Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) study, I will use the term Hispanic unless specifically quoted differently.

White - "White" refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicated their race(s) as "White" or reported entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian (U.S. Census Bureau, April 2006b).

Principal- The head administrator of a public school.

School leader – "A school leader is any educator whose routine responsibilities call for improving a school's instructional success" (Popham, 2010, p. xii).

STAAR – The newly developed state accountability system in Texas. The acronym STAAR stands for the State of Texas Assessment for Academic and Readiness test.

Acculturation - ''phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups'' (Redfield, Linton & Herskovitz, 1936).

Delimitations

The focus of the study is on principals serving large populations of Hispanic students in Texas. Because of its history as a former Mexican state and its continued

intertwined sociopolitical relationship with Mexico, Texas is a unique setting in which to study educational issues related to Hispanic students. For this reason, the findings from this study may have transferability to other states that are experiencing high growth of Hispanic populations. In addition, while the findings of this research may be lessons for all schools, the focus of the study is specific to high schools. Finally, this study examines the principal's perspective of his or her work. While data was collected from various sources (site visits, interviews, and school documents), the primary data source was the campus principal and the analysis centered on the principal's perceptions of his/ her own actions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The work of principals in schools has long been studied. They have been the focus of the efforts to understand the performance of schools for many years. Many factors contribute to the success of a principal. This chapter reviews the literature on school leadership practices in effective schools and the characteristics of successful Hispanic students to establish a foundational understanding of current research into the work of principals in high performing Hispanic schools in Texas.

The Role of the Principal

Dufour and Marzano (2011) paint a picture of educational leaders as being in a love affair with their work, the purpose of their work, and the people they serve. The best leaders exude passion, and that passion drives them daily in the face of complexities and pressures that come with a multifaceted position (p. 194). This passion drives a principal as the job has become increasingly important and increasingly more difficult. While expectations for the principal to improve test results become increasingly pressing, they must still continue to perform all of their traditional duties and responsibilities, including running the day to day operations of the school, and staying responsive to students, parents and community members (Fullan, 2001). The role of the principal is essential for academic achievement of students. Principals who focus on systemic planning for improvement and have a clear sense of purpose keeping a student centered school at the forefront are found to be most successful (Ovando & Cavazos, Spring 2004, p. 9). Ovando and Cavazos (Spring 2004) summarize, "research suggests that the role of the principal is essential for the academic achievement and success of all students and the school itself" (p. 9). Sergiovanni (2000) suggests, "The presence of children and young

21

adults in a learning and developing environment and the responsibility that schools have

to serve these students well are still other characteristics that make schools unique and

that require us to view school leadership differently" (p. 167). Strong communication

skills are used consistently to build close relationships and ensure communication is

effective. Principals also use effective communication skills to provide emotional support

to the people around them. They provide encouragement and support for both students

and teachers to express themselves. In addition, trust is identified as a strong component

of effective principals. Cotton (2003) states, "Effective principals not only share

information, but they also listen and take the suggestions of staff and constituents

seriously, acknowledging that they do not have all the answers" (p. 16). Noddings (1995)

ascertains that,

> care must be taken seriously as a major purpose of schools; that is, educators must
>
> recognize that caring for students is fundamental in teaching and that developing
>
> people with a strong capacity for care is a major objective of responsible
>
> education. (p.4)

The role of the principal is passionate, humble, purposeful, and essential for a school's

academic success.

Leadership

Principals' responsibilities are great, and because of this, the leadership style the

principal possesses is profoundly important. There are a variety of leadership styles that a

principal choose to employ. Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) they found that

collaborative governance and leadership is one of the key characteristics to creating

learning communities for high performing Hispanic students (p. 191). This notion of

shared leadership is portrayed as having a great impact to success in the high achieving

Hispanic schools included in the study. According to Hargreaves and Shirley (October,

2008), "Trust, cooperation, and responsibility create the collegiality and shared,

committed, professional learning that improve classroom effectiveness and raise

standards with students" (p. 142). On the contrary, Jesse, Davis, and Pokorny (2004)

found that in their study of nine effective high achieving Latino middle schools, a diverse

array of leadership styles amongst the nine principals was found, as well as substantial

variation in how each of the principals carried out the tasks of a functioning school. This

research did not find leadership style to have impact upon the success of the school

studied. Researchers Jesse, Davis and Pokorny (2004) did find similarities in the nine

principals they investigated, including support for teachers and a climate of mutual

respect (p. 33). However, Marks and Printy (2003), found that when looking at low

achieving schools, "administrators were the most likely to centralize authority and

control. These administrators feared that broadening decision making would threaten the

control they needed to maintain to keep their schools from even greater failure" (p. 388).

According to Hargreaves (May, 2003):

> In a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of the few.
> The burden is too great. In highly complex, knowledge-based organizations,
> everyone's intelligence is needed to help the organization flex, respond, regroup,
> and retool in the face of unpredictable and sometimes overwhelming demands.
> Locking intelligence up in the individual leader creates inflexibility and increases
> the likelihood of mistakes and errors. (p. 696)

Marks and Printy (2003) found a strong relationship to exist between shared leadership and authentic quality pedagogy on a campus. Shared leadership gives opportunities to allow teacher leaders to share the responsibility of student success. Richard (2008) concludes:

> In sharing leadership, principals collaborate with teachers to evaluate issues related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As part of this collaborative process, teacher leaders provide valuable insight and ideas to principals as they work together toward school improvement. Principals who tap into the expertise of teachers throughout the process of transforming their schools and increasing the focus on learning are more successful. (p. 23)

According to Printy (2008), principals orchestrate conditions in which great teaching and learning thrive. This orchestration from the principal creates opportunities for the principal to influence pedagogy on a campus. Marks and Printy (2003) ascertain, "When the principal elicits high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers and works interactively with teachers in a shared instructional leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are organizations that learn and perform at high levels" (p. 393). Printy (2008) notes instructional practices such as distributed leadership, leadership content knowledge, and the use of instructional rounds reinforce school leadership and classroom teaching. Marks and Printy (2003) suggest that because of the accountability system, principals have responded to demands of increasing standards through instructional leadership, but as demands continue to increase, an interactive role of shared instructional leadership with teachers in the areas of curriculum instruction and assessment will be critical to school success. (p. 392)

Principals In Successful Schools.

It is widely understood and recognized that principals have an important impact on the success of schools. In fact, the widespread popularity of this idea is evident in the proliferation of trendy publications that include simple lists telling individuals "how to" be a successful principal or school leader. However, not only do these books fail to scratch the surface of actions principals must take, they also fail to address serious issues and challenges that arise in schools with unique populations. The connection between a principal's tenure at a school and the positive impact on test scores is no surprise. The longer the principal is at a campus, the more opportunity they have for positive culture building, cultivating relationships with students and teachers, as well as the organizational experience of consistent policy and system implementation. The experience of a principal is an important factor when considering the principals influence on high performing Hispanic schools. Ovandos and Covazos (Spring, 2004) state, "While the literature supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable effect on school effectiveness and student achievement, and that they play a key role on the campus, limited research highlights the role of the principal in majority/ minority context" (p. 8). Scribner, Crow, Lopez, and Murtadha (2011) state:

> Literature on successful school principals frequently maintains that what separates them from less successful colleagues is that their actions are governed by larger goals and purposes (e.g., all students learning or raising standardized achievement scores). Their actions are seen as means to an end. (p. 416)

Literature on successful principals includes values and beliefs and suggests that principals who aligned their values and actions were more successful principals

according to Scribner, Crow, Lopez, and Murtadha (2011, p. 396). They go on to state, "Examining how educational leaders themselves define success provides the opportunity to broaden these narrow outcome measures to examine more complex notions of students learning, teacher engagement, and other outcomes (e.g., community partnerships and equity)" (p. 397). According to Rice (2010) recent research by CALDER demonstrated that "principals with experience and skills found to be related to effectiveness are less likely to be working in high-poverty and low-achieving schools, raising equity concerns about the distribution of effective principals" (para.6).

The principal serves as the hub of the operations of the school building including operating systems as well as how the systems in place impact student achievement. Principals serve as the leader of the school and are charged with ensuring successful daily operations of the school building. In addition, it is the principal's responsibility to ensure the mission of the school is met and to ensure that all students are successful. Kathleen Cotton (2003) summarized 26 behaviors principals do in successful schools. She classified these into five categories: establish a clear focus on student learning, interactions and relationships, school culture, instruction, and accountability. Lambert (2006) discusses principal behaviors in leadership capacity development (p. 245). This figure defines leadership capacity in three phases: instructive, transitional, and high leadership capacity. Each of these phases identifies principal attributes and behaviors as it connects to the principal's leadership capacity or as it pertains to the capacity of the campus and the leadership capacity needed for that campus. In Lamberts figure, the instructive phase identifies the principal as the teacher, sponsor or director. According to Lambert (2006), "One deliberate strategy in the instructive phase is called pacing and

leading the community, or walking alongside of and being empathic, so that community members know they are understood before asking a question or going in a new direction" (p. 244). During the transition phase, teachers are beginning to emerge into leadership with a varying degree of the range of teacher development. In the transition phase, the principals' role is to be a guide or coach. Lambert (2006) states, a principal, "Uses formal authority to sustain conversation, insist on a professional development and inquiry agenda, mediate the demands of the district and state, and set reform pace" (p. 245). In the transitional phase, the principal begins to let go and allow teachers to make discoveries together. Lastly, the high leadership capacity phase defines principals as the colleague, critical friend, and mentor. Lambert (2006) explains, "The principal relinquished and shared critical roles and responsibilities, while teachers had a more dominant role in initiating new actions and posing critical questions" (p. 249). Lambert suggests that a principal's behavior transitions as the needs of the school shift. Principals may vary in their style and approach but nonetheless lead the school organization in keeping the focus on student learning and success.

Successful Hispanic Schools

Ovando and Cavazos (spring 2004) research reveals that successful Hispanic school principals are focused on: high student achievement, engaged in goals setting, support teachers to enhance school culture, monitor student performance and emphasize teacher accountability for the performance of students. (p. 7). This focus builds the culture of the school impacting attitudes and perceptions resulting in a positive academic performance. Senge (2006) suggests "A school's culture is not static. It is a continual process in which attitudes, values and skills continually reinforce each other. In high-

27

performing schools, a nurturing professional community seems to be the "container" that holds the culture" (p. 326). This "container" is deeply impacted by how professional communities are supported by the principal. Noddings (2002), states, "Education may be thought of as a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding, and appreciation" (p. 283). These constellations of encounters can be seen exhibited through professional school communities and are marked by reflective dialogue, unity of purpose, collective focus on student learning, collaboration and norms of sharing, openness to improvement, deprivitization of practice and critical review, trust and respect, renewal of community, and supportive and knowledgeable leadership (Senge, 2000, p. 328).

While successful professional school communities can be defined above, success in schools is most publically measured by state accountability test scores. As the state accountability test is transitioned to the STAAR, and the new test increases in rigor and cognitive complexity, the state must set new performance standards resulting in performance data from the 2011-2012 school year being established in October 2012 (TEA, March 2012). Because of this transition to STAAR, no state accountability ratings will be assigned in 2012. Jordan (2010) suggests there has been a clear preference for quantitative factors within the accountability system. He says "quantitative factors are not useless as they provide specific information about what happens in school" (p. 150). Jordan (2010) adds that there are unmeasured factors that must be taken into account when looking at achievement and accountability such as teacher quality and subjectivity of the test, ie, test items placing selective value on learning (p. 150). Wilcox and Angelis (2011) found that decisions in higher performing schools are driven by data. This data is

collected from a variety of sources including but not limited to state assessment data. Other data sources are surveys from teachers and community, as well as student surveys. Teachers also compare benchmarks across the state to guide them in program reflection and improvement (p. 75). Actions within the school are based on evidence. Davis (2005) recognizes that improved test scores are not necessarily reflective of strong instructional practices, but they do represent success in the Texas education system (p. 24) thereby giving test scores great value in the state. By defining successful schools by student performance on standardized state test scores, it is my hope that identified schools are also showing evidence of success beyond state accountability test scores. Wilcox and Angelis (2011) found in their study of high performing schools that:

> Higher performing schools foster higher achievement among every group of students. In the face of the demands of the national and state accountability systems, the higher performing schools show evidence of being dynamic, flexible, focused, disciplined, proactive, and rooted in a shared and longer vision for student achievement that goes beyond state and national mandates. (p. 13)

The best practices identified in the action dimension of the framework as described by Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) add value to the rest of the framework as they describe the actions taken to produce successful schools. These best practices are derived from lessons learned throughout the research. Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) lay out the best practices as follows:

> I.   Community and family involvement are essential to the development of a high-performing learning community for Hispanic students.

29

II.   High performing learning communities for Hispanic students depend on leadership at all levels to support collaborative governance that empowers students to succeed.

III.   Culturally responsive pedagogy is required for students to succeed in a high-performing learning community for Hispanic students.

IV.   IV. Advocacy-oriented assessment that motivates the individual learning of the student is critical to sustaining a high-performing learning community for Hispanic students. (p. 192)

Because the framework of Reyes, Scribner and Scribner is based on research that is now 13 years old, an exploration of more current literature will determine the relevancy of their best practices to today's work.

Best Practices of Leaders in High Performing Schools

Parent and Community Involvement

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates all schools receiving title I funds to create, in partnership with parent and community members, a school, family, community involvement pact (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Though this pact is mandated, it is often overlooked. The value of community and parent involvement is essential for the high-performing Hispanic schools and many reform initiatives rely heavily on this involvement. "Inherent to NCLB and previous reform initiatives is the belief that parents, families, and community members are critical contributors to improving academic achievement" (Bryan, 2005 p. 220). Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) further support this theory through "The belief that student academic success can be improved through programs designed to increase parent

involvement in education is widespread in both the academic and policy-making arenas"

(p. 572). In the study of High-performing Hispanic schools, Reyes, Scribner and Scribner

(1999) found that proactive measures were taken in the school get to know the

community and parents of students in culturally relevant ways (p. 193). Mattingly,

Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) ascertain, "Parenting, volunteering,

and supporting home learning result primarily from the efforts of parents; but

communicating, participating in decision making, and collaborating with the community

also require commitment and effort from schools" (p. 552). This thinking supports the

notion of parent and community involvement being the responsibility of not only the

parent but also the school. Increasing accountability standards often leave our teachers

with little time to reach out to parents and community, but Sanders (2003) reminds us

that, "when describing the importance of community involvement for effective school

functioning, proponents most often focus on the mounting responsibilities placed on

schools by a nation whose student population is increasingly placed at risk" (p. 162).

Schools are overwhelmed by the increase in academic demands as well as the social and

emotional needs of students. In order to meet all of these needs, schools must seek

supportive resources from the students' communities (Sanders, 2003, p. 162). The

research of Lopez, Scribner and Mahitivanichcha (2001) finds that in order for the needs

of parents to be met effectively, it is necessary to have a professional development

program that acknowledges culturally relevant values, norms, and lifestyles, as well as a

working knowledge of community resources available to parents. Once the needs of

parents are met in a holistic fashion then they will have the opportunity to focus on parent

involvement that will make a real difference in their child's education (p. 283). In looking

through the opposing lens, Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) found that high performing Hispanic schools drew upon the resources of the community, established working relationships between the community and school personnel, and served as learning centers for the community (p. 195). While the role of a leader is difficult, it can be made much easier through the support and engagement of community and parents. However, the principal must recognize the power of parents and community and the need to manage this resource effectively (Horvat, Curci, & Partlow, 2010). High performing schools work with parents and community, using them as resources and inviting them to serve as an integral part of their school. At the same time, the school becomes a resource for parents, providing them with tools and knowledge to assist their child in his/ her academic achievement. This balanced and delicate relationship was repeated throughout the literature on successful community and parent involvement.

Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance begins with a vision. Senge (2000) suggests that the shared vision process has three different steps: 1) gives voice to concern, 2) gives opportunity to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future generating momentum and trust, and 3) creates action (p. 291). Governance in high performing Hispanic schools begins with a clear mission and vision where every stake holder can clearly see their role in students succeeding and staff being a part of student success. This visioning develops high performing schools (Reyes, Scribner & Scribner, 1999). In addition, Nel Noddings' ethic of care provides an important understanding of collaborative governance and leadership. Noddings (1988) states, "Caring is suggested as both a moral orientation to teaching and as an aim of moral education" (p. 215). Collaborative governance and

leadership empowers all stakeholders to take responsibility and have a voice for action. All voices are valued, and actions are driven by the shared vision of the school. Harris (2012) states, "While the idea of shared, collaborative or participative leadership is far from new, distributed leadership theory has provided a new lens on a familiar theme" (p. 7). This notion of distributive leadership focuses on the interactions of school leaders, as opposed to the actions. The research of Harris (2012) indicates that distributive leadership is only successful with the support of the principal and the principal plays a key role in building leadership capacity on the campus. Marks and Printy (2003) explain further, "To enlarge the leadership capacity of schools attempting to improve their academic performance, some principals involve teachers in sustained dialogue and decision making about educational matters (p. 370).

Distributive Leadership

Maxwell, Sheurich, and Skrla (2009) describe distributive leadership as all school stakeholders being responsible for leadership and not just the formal leader of the school. They state, "Diffusion of leadership tasks among individuals in differing roles in a school, often described as distributed leadership, has emerged as an innovative concept for describing the deployment of leadership within schools" (3rd para.). Within distributive leadership, stakeholders have the opportunity to influence one another. And, the outcomes of those influences are trust, authenticity, and a sense of pride (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 198). Scribner, Sawyer, Watson and Myers (2007) identify that, "In the school context, our understanding of leadership is enhanced by examining the multidirectional social influences occurring between teachers, administrators, parents, students, and other stakeholders" (p. 69). This strong influence extends beyond the school

walls and empowers people to think beyond themselves and for the good of the school community. This thinking is driven by a clear and coherent vision shared by all learning communities. In a study by Goddard and Miller (2010), the results found "achievement was positively related to school capacity and collaborative leadership, and there was a reciprocal relationship between collaborative leadership and school improvement capacity" (p. 222). With increasing demands for improved student performance, different leadership styles must be evaluated, and strong principals must be studied. Individual leaders cannot hope to transform schools. Harris (2012) states, "System transformation will not be achieved by leaders or schools acting alone. Much will depend upon the formation of new networks, partnerships, alliances or federations to share leadership knowledge, collectively address problems and share expertise" (p. 17). Fullan (2010) further supports this and adds,

> the power of collective capacity is that it enables ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things – for two reasons. One is that the knowledge about effective practice becomes more widely available and accessible on a daily basis. The second reason is more powerful still – working together generates commitment. (p. 72)

These networks must exist within and outside of the school community for shared and distributive leadership to drive school improvement. In addition, support must be given to leaders to ensure they are empowered to share leadership among the school community. "High performing learning communities for Hispanic students depend on leadership at all levels that supports collaborative governance and, ultimately, success for all students" (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 195).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) describe culturally responsive pedagogy as, "one that is structured to connect what is being learned with students' funds of knowledge and cultural backgrounds" (p. 203). Haviland and Rodriguez-Kiino (2009), state, "Although culturally responsive pedagogy acknowledges students' experiences and life achievements, its main premise is to holistically integrate these experiences into the curricula, using them as a launching pad for students to acquire new knowledge" (p. 201). By this, students are able to "nest" themselves into the curriculum and see where the learning fits into their life, values, and cultural understanding. Noddings (2003) states, "children should not be told that their cultural knowledge is a deficit; it is a resource, sometimes even a treasure" (p. 153). Standardized curriculum has replaced culturally responsive teaching practices across the nation as more of an emphasis is placed on standardized assessment. Districts want to ensure students are prepared to pass standardized state tests and to ensure this happens, standardized curriculum is put into place. By standardizing curriculum students are receiving the same knowledge in the same way and principals and school leaders are able to easier evaluate teaching practices. The consequence of a prescribed curriculum possesses a strong educational impact according to Sleeter and Cornbleth (2011). By negating the importance of culture and race, we disempower the educational impact of culturally responsive pedagogy and focus attention on closing achievement gaps through standardized curriculum and teaching, regardless of the fact that the standardized programs are based on the language, values and experiences of white English speakers (Sleeter, 2011). As a result of the demographic shift in the US, educators are trying to

develop a better fit between the cultures of the home and the cultures of the schools. Research indicates that culturally responsive delivery of classroom instruction is positively correlated to improvements in academic achievement (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007). Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) state, "As more and more students from diverse backgrounds populate 21st century classrooms and efforts mount to identify effective methods to teach these students, the need for pedagogical approaches that are culturally responsive intensifies" (p. 64). Within a culturally responsive classroom, learning happens in a culturally supportive context where student strengths and interests are built upon, and this increases academic performance (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007, p. 64).

Advocacy-Oriented Assessment

Student advocacy assessment is crucial to the success of English language learners. According to Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), "Assessment should define expectations for students, teachers, schools, and school districts, as well as educational agencies" (p.169). While discussing advocacy oriented assessment, Kim, Gendron, Toro, and Fairborn (2011) states:

> Challenges associated with educating increasing numbers of ELLs have been exacerbated by educational policies based on accountability agendas, outcomes-based curricula, and standards-driven testing that do not comprehensively take into account the unique characteristics and needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners. (p. 10)

The purpose of assessment is to guide instruction and monitor progress, but this process of guiding and monitoring may not look the same in every classroom. According to

Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999), when studying high performing, low income, linguistically diverse schools, teachers must utilize a diverse array of data to promote individual student learning, instead of relying on data from norm-based high stakes assessments that ignore students' diverse backgrounds. These norm based assessments should be given little notice when deciding individual student success in high-performing Hispanic schools (p. 204). In a framework developed around culturally relevant pedagogy by Brown-Jeffy, and Cooper (2011), identity and achievement are aligned with the concepts of identity development, cultural heritage, multiple perspectives, affirmation of diversity, and public validation of home-community cultures (p. 72). As teachers become more culturally attuned to their students and aware of their own identities, they begin to accept the unique identities of learners, embrace this diversity, and create an equitable learning environment. Teachers must show interest in what is culturally appropriate as students must have an opportunity to explore their own knowledge and understanding. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) go on to state, "Part of the developmental appropriateness is taking students where they are and getting them to where they need to be with innovative teaching methods and assessments" (p.76). Fairbairn and Fox (2009) conclude that it would be ill advised to look only at standardized testing to determine a school's success. Rather, more information regarding the academic success of English language learners can be gleaned from ongoing assessments that that take linguistic and cultural diversity into account (p. 21). Using assessment processes that do not consider the diverse needs of students negatively impacts academic success. According to Romo and Falbo (1996), "schools commonly use norm-referenced tests to track student progress. This tracking progress significantly decreases the likelihood of graduation from

37

high school and success in college for Hispanic students" (p. 20). Further complicating

the use of norm-referenced assessment, Powell and Rightmyer (2011) state, "The national

literacy panel on language minority children and youth found comprehension, time and

vocabulary can severely impact a second language learners performance on a

standardized test compromising the validity of test scored for language minority

students" (p. 95). According to Wright and Arizona State University (2005), the varied

state and federal policies conflict with and negate many of the testing accommodations

originally intended to support ELL student performance on standardized tests. While the

NCLB act was designed to ensure a fair and equitable education for all students, the high

stakes accountability and state and federal policies surrounding it have created

unintended consequences for assessing English language learners. Kohn (2000)

ascertains, ''Fairness aside, high-stakes testing has radically altered the kind of

instruction that is offered to the point that teaching to the test has become a prominent

part of the nation's educational landscape'' (p. 20). Altering the landscape of bilingual

programs and assessment for ELL students has significant impact on students and

teachers alike. As students struggle with cultural assimilation and expectations to acquire

the English language quickly, teachers struggle to identify the needs of their students and

to find time to nurture the development of their students (Irizarry, 2011, p. 29).

Important Considerations in Educating Hispanic Students

History of Hispanic Students and Education

Hispanic students have struggled for an equal educational opportunity since the

Peace Treaty was signed in 1848. Miguel Jr. (2011), states, "Since the signing of the

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Anglo historians and scholars of education had

argued that ethnic Mexicans were either indifferent to public education or opposed to its establishment" (p. 7). Miguel (2011) states that scholars argued Mexican Americans, "preferred to live a life of superstition, ignorance, and poverty than one of enlightenment offered by education" (p. 7). This way of thinking sets the stage for the struggle that Mexican American students have faced for decades. Irizarry (2011) supports this by stating, "Latinization in the United States has been an ongoing process in which Latinos have attempted to assert and preserve their cultural identities in the face of constant pressures to assimilate, shed their cultural identities, and adopt anglo cultural norms" (p. 25). The Mexican American's struggle in Texas with desegregation started in the early 20th century according to San Miguel (2005). In the mid 1940's numerous Mexican American parents in Alpine, Texas unsuccessfully demanded schools desegregate. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s Mexican American students continued to lose desegregation battles as Texas, California, and Arizona led the fight. According to San Miguel (2005), the Brown ruling had little immediate impact on Mexican American desegregation efforts. San Miguel Jr. (2005) states, "The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, 1955) decision of the 1950s had no appreciable impact on ongoing Mexican American desegregation litigation during the 1st decade of its implementation. In the long run, however, it led to a shift in the community's litigation strategy for achieving equality of opportunity in the United States and for improving academic achievement in Latino schools" (San Miguel Jr., 2005, p. 1). Although desegregation had begun to take effect, schools for Latinos were still highly segregated. As the late 1970s approached, schools increased in becoming oppressive institutions, stripping Latino students from their language and culture. Miguel Jr. (2011) supports this by stating, "Most of these schools

als-o continued to be controlled and administered by non-Latinos who used them as instruments for eliminating the culture and language of Latino students and for maintaining the social and economic subordination of the Latino community" (p. 11). This led Latinos to continue to struggle for better schools. As Latinos abandoned the desegregation struggle at the end of the 1970s, a focus on bilingual education began to gain momentum (San Miguel, 2005, p. 13). San Miguel (2005) explains:

> The quest for equality was not just about eliminating various forms of discrimination in education. It was also a struggle for specific types of demands, such as power, inclusion, quality education, and pluralism. Latino activists and educators wanted schools that reflected their community, respected their cultural and linguistic heritage, and met their academic needs. (p. 14)

Unlike other cultures represented in the US, Latinos are not a monolithic group as Latinos represent Mexican descent as well as Puerto Rican, Central and South America, Cuban, and other Latino backgrounds. Each of these groups owns different histories, different stories, and different journeys to the US. Irizarry (2011) goes on to state, Latinos "today remain one of the most segregated groups in US schools" (p. 24). The US made an attempt to respond to the ethnic movement but the response was hurried and not well thought out. Banks (2007) explains, "Courses and programs were developed without the thoughts and careful planning needed to make them educationally sound or to institutionalize them within the educational system" (p. 5). There was an attempt to represent Hispanic culture in the school, but the attempt was feeble at best. In addition to developing courses and programs that represented a more accurate view of cultures, Latino groups demanded ethnically diverse teachers and school leaders to serve their

40

community schools. They believed these individuals would become role models for students. With high numbers of drop-out rates and even lower numbers of Hispanic students continuing to graduate from college, ethnic diversity in teaching staff continues to be a struggle. Irizarry (2011) supports this by stating, "Approximately 85 percent of teachers in US schools are white European Americans – mostly monolingual, middle class women" (p. 33).

Disparities continue to exist between white students and students of color over 50 years after Brown vs. Board of education and students of color are grossly represented in drop-out rates. Darder (2012) states, "Of those students of color who manage to graduate from high school and enroll in college, fewer than 50 percent complete degrees" (p. 2). Gaps between the academic performance of white students and Hispanic students continue to grow. And, the struggle to represent the culture of our Hispanic students in schools continues to be a challenge today. Until the education system can personalize the learning to represent the growing Hispanic culture, students will continue to fail. Banks (2007) support this by stating, "To help students of color and low-income students to experience academic success, and thus become effective citizens, the schools must be restructured so that these students will have successful experiences within a nurturing, personalized, and caring environment" (p. 13). San Miguel Jr. (2005) adds to this argument:

> They [Latinos] turned to bilingual education as a more appropriate strategy for eliminating discrimination and for improving the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking children in the country. Bilingual education held out a greater

possibility for meeting the special needs of Mexican American and Latino

students in segregated or desegregated settings. (p. 234).

Creating a bilingual education for Latino students thus creating a more culturally

nurturing and personalized environment for students leads to increased academic success.

Today 456,051 students in Texas are enrolled in bilingual education (PEIMS, 2010).

English Language Learners

John F. Kennedy helped to spark the creation of Title VI in 1963. Title VI

indicated that schools must use funds from taxpayers without discrimination and provide

alternative language programs to ensure Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students have

access to programs in the schools. LEP is an acronym meaning Limited English

Proficiency referring to students who do not speak English as a native language. LEP

focuses on the limitation a student has as opposed to ELL (English Language Learner)

which focuses on non-native English speakers who are learning English. According to

PEIMS data gathered in the spring of 2010, with just over 800,000 English Language

Learners in Texas, 91% of those students speak Spanish. While not all English language

learners are Hispanic and not all Hispanic students are English language learners, Texas

English language learning students bring a strong Hispanic cultural representation to

Texas schools. Romo and Falbo (1996) state, "Student cultures are very powerful in

influencing student behavior. For some, the student culture is more powerful that the

student's home culture or the adult school culture" (p. 192). With such a range of cultural

and ethnic groups, multicultural education is a prevalent "buzz word" in Texas.

Multicultural education is best defined by Banks (2007), "multicultural education means

a total school reform effort designed to increase educational equity for a range of cultural,

ethnic, and economic groups" (p. 7) (Texas Education Agency, LEP). According to TEA, only 79% of English language learners met the learner progress criteria in 2010. Solorzano's (2008) research concludes the reasons for Hispanic students' poor performance on high stakes testing are complex but can be traced to substandard schools, unprepared teachers, low expectations, system wide barriers, and inappropriate programs and placement for English Language Learners (ELLs). These inappropriate placements and bilingual programs with varied levels of implementation throughout the state have only added to the struggles of Texas ELL students and their academic performance. In response to the low success rate of ELL students on the standardized state test, the Texas education agency added code relating to LEP students. In May 2006, Texas Education Code §21.457 was enacted. It stated, "The commissioner shall develop and make available training materials and other teacher training resources to assist teachers in developing the expertise required to enable students of limited English proficiency to meet state performance expectations" (Texas Education Code, 2006). Creating and sustaining effective bilingual programs, and giving teachers the preparation they need to teach from a multicultural perspective, are struggles educators face. Banks (2007), "The challenge of multicultural educators, in both theory and practice, is how to increase equity for a particular marginalized group without further limiting the opportunities for another such group" (p. 7). Schools are certainly set up to encourage students to shed their cultural identities and students are encouraged to fit into anglo cultural norms. According to Irizarry (2011),

> before working with Latinos are other students from culturally and linguistically
> diverse backgrounds, educators need to recognize and reflect upon their own

assumptions regarding cultural difference and the role of education in shaping the

cultural landscape of the United States. (p. 33)

Multicultural education, according to Banks (2007), "allows educators to explore

alternatives to systemic problems that lead to academic failure for many students and it

fosters the design and implementation of productive learning environments, diverse

instructional strategies, and a deeper awareness of how cultural and language differences

can influence learning" (p. 383). Paredes and Scribner (2001) agree that few bilingual

programs exist in secondary schools that provide students access to curriculum in their

native language (p. 209). Irizarry (2011) ascertains, "With the pressures of accountability

and high student achievement districts are using more scripted curricula to enhance

students outcomes, and tests are not culturally relevant. Without the cultural relevance,

students become disengaged in school resulting in failing grades and dropouts" (p. 32).

Scribner suggests that effective instruction for Hispanic students must possess key

elements of high expectations, parental involvement, and an emphasis on language and

culture (p. 209). In an ironic twist, efforts to ensure all students are successful have

resulted in the pressures of high accountability and have ultimately subtracted cultural

relevancy of education out of the curriculum. This very cultural relevancy, in the past,

provided a connection to the work and resulted in effective instruction for Hispanic

students. Powell and Rightmyer (2011) suggest that the paradigm of the classroom must

change from a culture of evaluation to a culture of learning. They state, "The role of

assessment, then, is to learn from the students and families we serve so that we can

appropriately scaffold their learning" (p. 90). With this in mind, effective instruction for

Hispanic students must center around language and culture as well as high expectations

and parental involvement. These components of effective instruction for Hispanic students are often the first things to crumble under the high stake accountability pressures.

No Child Left Behind

Historical Perspective

We are approaching a landmark year of the pursuit of educational equity, 100% passing, the result of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was signed by George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. The NCLB requirements are meant to increase student achievement through establishing testing standards and requirements. 100% passing standards are expected to be met by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Because of the increasingly high standards, more schools are failing than ever before. Schools failing to meet federal accountability standards are identified as schools in need of improvement, and must follow burdensome sanctions as identified by each individual state. Accountability standards, and the fear of not meeting those standards, are primary drivers of school improvement in the state of Texas. Originally developed to ensure equitable access and academic success for all students, Jordan (2010) states:

> The pursuit of educational equity has long been a goal of reform efforts in the Unites States. Yet, creating a system of education where all children have equal access to quality instruction and widely available opportunities to learn to their fullest human potential has been elusive. (p. 142)

Despite the fear of increasing standards, educators are still struggling to develop systems that honor the true intent of the reform efforts of the NCLB.

The U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary Education act -

Title I, Sec.101 is titled, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged.

The U.S. Department of Education (2001) states, "The purpose of this title is to ensure

that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality

education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic

achievement standards and state academic assessments" (U.S. Department of Education,

2001). Schools in Texas receiving Title I federal funding are subjected to the sanctions of

the school improvement program if they fail to meet federal accountability standards,

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The Texas Education Agency mandates, "Districts,

campuses, and the state are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures:

Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and

districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools)" (Texas

Education Agency, February 2013). The NCLB requires schools to meet or exceed the

ever-increasing standards. If a school fails to meet AYP, they are identified as a school in

need of improvement and are subjected to numerous federal statutes interpreted by

individual states:

> If a campus, district, or state that is receiving Title I, Part A funds fails to meet
>
> AYP for two consecutive years, that campus, district, or state is subject to certain
>
> requirements such as offering supplemental education services, offering school
>
> choice, and/or taking corrective actions. (Texas Education Agency, February
>
> 2013)

Schools in Texas are identified in the school improvement program through stages. The

higher the stage, the more support the school is identified as needing. At stage three,

schools are identified as needing corrective action and at stage 4 and above, schools must

undergo restructuring. Corrective action and restructuring choices for school include but

are not limited to: replacing school staff, decreasing management authority at the campus

level, appointing an outside expert to advise the campus on its progress towards making

AYP, restructuring the internal organizational structure of the campus. As a school

progresses to each successive stage, federal sanctions, requirements, and oversight

correspondingly increase. Darling-Hammond (2004) states:

> The goals of No Child Left Behind are to improve achievement for all students, to
>
> enhance equity, and to ensure more qualified teachers. However, its complex
>
> regulations for showing "Adequate Yearly Progress" toward test score targets
>
> aims at "100% proficiency" within ten years have created a bizarre situation in
>
> which most of the nation's public schools will be deemed failing within the next
>
> few years. (p. 15)

With 2014 almost upon us, our nation is scrambling to find alternative solutions to keep

our schools from failing. The fear of state mandated requirements, and intensified

emphasis on summative assessment for schools and districts failing to meet federal

accountability, drive fear deep in to the heart of school administrators across Texas.

Mathis (May 2003) opines, "The assumption is that the fear of these penalties will drive

schools to even higher levels of performance" (p. 684). Stiggins and Chappuis (2005)

add, "The demands of No Child Left Behind have intensified the use and attention given

to summative assessment because states are required to articulate their achievement

standards and report annual evidence of the proportion of students meeting those

standards" (p. 17). These high impact testing systems put much pressure on districts and schools and principals bear an overwhelming responsibility of the success of the school.

The increased accountability has been met with much heated discussion around the moral and ethical outcomes and consequences of the accountability systems. Students vary in their level of success on standardized test scores across the country and consistently, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds have a significant impact on student scores. While school districts struggle to react to the increased accountability standards, researchers offer different perspectives and views. Linda Darling-Hammond (2004) states, "Determinations of school progress should be constructed to reflect a better grounded analysis of schools' actual performance and progress rather than a statistical gauntlet that penalizes schools serving the most diverse populations" (p. 25). Powell and Rightmyer (2011) add, "While the expressed purpose for standardized testing has shifted from social efficiency to accountability, the results are nevertheless the same; some students are determined to be "less capable" than their peers, and these students tend to be those from marginalized populations" (p. 90). The impact of the NCLB act on educators and students has been significant. Schools serving high populations of Hispanic student, students identified as low socio-economic and African American students are at most risk for being identified as low-performing with the consequence of harsh sanctions and penalties. Jordan (2010) states:

> The role of increased accountability via state-based systems as an approach to obtaining equity is hotly debated. Although advocates are many, several studies have found the consequences of high-stakes testing, which are nonobvious and

perhaps unintended, have not helped advance the nation towards equitable

schooling. (p. 142)

While the NCLB act has impacted educators across the country, states like Texas,

California, and Arizona, with increasing numbers of Hispanic populations, continue to be

the most impacted by the increasing standards.

Perspective from Texas

Texas was one of the first states to develop a statewide testing system in the

1980s mandated by the Texas legislature. Between 1994 and 2002, the statewide testing

system was the TAAS, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, and the the data was was

managed by PEIMS, the Public Education Information Management System. In 2002, the

TAAS was replaced by the TAKS, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. In the

2011-2012 school year, Texas changed its accountability testing system from the Texas

assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to the State of Texas Assessment of

Academic Readiness (STAAR). The STAAR test promises to test students at higher

cognitive levels and also raises the level of rigor for test takers. Standards are still being

established for the new STAAR test. According to the TEA news release (June 8, 2012),

"Just as it did with the TAAS and TAKS tests, the state is phasing in the passing

requirements for STAAR. The number of questions students must answer correctly will

increase at intervals until 2016, when the final passing requirements will be in place"

(Texas Education Agency, June 2008). TEA states that the purpose of the phase in is to

allow educators and students an opportunity to adjust to the high level of rigor of the

accountability system and test. Mathis (May 2003) states, "Since each state determines its

own standards, has its own social and political culture, and has its own level of student

needs, a great variety of outcomes exists" (p. 680). With the release of the new STAAR test and test passing standards still unknown, school leaders have increasing fear of the accountability system and a sense of the unknown is greater than ever. As the accountability system continues to grow and develop, so do the responsibilities of and accountabilities for principals. Heilig and Darling-Hammond (2008) argue that, "By all accounts, managing this system has been a major preoccupation for Texas schools and districts" (p. 77).

While Texas is in the midst of kicking off the new STAAR and establishing passing standards, the time continues to tick to 100% passing in 2014. In Texas, where almost 1,000 campuses have entered into the school improvement program in the 2011-2012 school year, principals are struggling to lead schools as districts are refusing much needed title I funds, replacing principals, cutting campus staff, dissolving resources, and closing campuses, to name a few responses. In addition, with financial assistance at an all-time low, the state has been forced to re-vamp school improvement programs. In order to handle the number of schools entering the program, both levels of support and the sources of that support have been redistributed. The countdown is on. And, while we are waiting for a savior, campus principals, district leaders, and providers of state support continue to shift resources and redesign programs of support campuses not meeting federal accountability.

Assessment

Assessment drives many of the public schools across Texas. From an early age, students prepare for the STAAR assessment tests, some taking benchmark and practice tests to prepare and familiarize students with the approach to testing as early as 1ˢᵗ grade.

Texas assessment not only encourages teachers to teach to the test, but it also burdens the teaching and administrative staff with complex requirements. Linda Darling-Hammond (2007) supports this by stating:

> The complex requirements of the law have failed to achieve these goals, and have provoked a number of unintended negative consequences which frequently harm the students the law is most intended to help. Among those consequences are a narrowed curriculum, focused on the low-level skills generally reflected in high stakes tests; inappropriate assessment of English Language Learners and students with special needs; and strong incentives to exclude low-scoring students from school, so as to achieve test score targets. (p. 245).

Meier and Wood (2004) add:

> Since NCLB judges schools solely on the test scores, schools that have students who do poorly on these tests will face the greatest pressure to focus on the tests. This means that schools who serve children who are poor, have limited English skills, require special education services, or are recent immigrants to this country, for example, have the most incentive to carry out the practices identified earlier – pushing out to students, narrowing teaching and the curriculum, limiting the school experience. (p. 47)

This limiting of the school experience through benchmark testing, narrowing the curriculum and teaching as well as pushing students out, deeply impact our students and teachers and the quality of education received. In addition, according to Chappuis and Stiggins (Oct 2005) "Summative tests typically fail to provide a picture of student learning with sufficient detail to tell teachers how to help individual students" (p. 17).

Without the picture of student learning to help inform teachers, individual student needs go unknown (Chappuis & Stiigins 2005). The unintended negative consequences of the Texas accountability system can be felt statewide. As the state continues to re-vamp its assessment system, and at the same time attempts to negotiate through the federal accountability system, school leaders are struggling, scared, and ready forclemency .

Instruction

Establishing a clear focus on student learning first begins with a vision of student success. This mission and vision can be the tool campuses use to keep a clear focus on student learning. Sterrett (2011), states:

> Schools and other organizations spend an abundance of time on developing their visions, often bringing in outside consultants to help. A school's vision should be more than empty words plastered on a marquee sign; it must have rich, relevant meaning. It is up to the leader to embody this vision every day. Each and every interaction serves as an opportunity to highlight where the school is headed. (p. 9)

The school is embodied not only by the leader but held by the teachers, students and all other school stakeholders including community members. Such a diverse crowd of people can only embrace a shared school vision when that vision is captures meaning for everyone. Scheurich (1998) supports this by advising that a vision should not only be strong but must be particular (p. 468). This strong and focused vision sets the intention of the daily operations of the school. Hargreaves (2003) further explains how to establish a particular vision by stating, "The primary responsibility of all school leaders is to sustain learning. Leaders of learning put learning at the center of everything they do" (p. 696). Kowalski (2010) describes effective administrators as visionaries with a clear focus on

what their school will look like in the future. He states, "In the absence of this image, school personnel are likely to be reactive rather than proactive" (p. 48). Keeping school personnel proactive about their own personal needs as well as the needs of the students is critical in the fast paced world of academics. Staying proactive in our practice provides teachers and leaders opportunities to anticipate and prepare for challenges. This planning produces teachers and leaders who are better equipped to face potential challenges prior to experiencing them. Establishing a focus on student learning must be coupled with how we will ensure student learning is occurring. Fullan (2011) discusses vision in relation to concrete implementation. He discusses that vision must be coupled with the implementation strategy, or the vision is useless. Fullan (2011) further explains, "In short, problems get solved, a "we" (rather than "us-them") identity around a common vision gets strengthened, and people come to know the implementation strategy" (p. 74). Fullan (2011) ascertains that by creating a shared vision, we are not only finding solutions to challenges, but connecting others and familiarizing them with solutions. Bolman and Deal (2003) note "vision turns an organization's core ideology, or sense of purpose, into an image of what the future might become" (p. 252). Because of the importance of vision to a school, it must be clear to the entire school community, the vision must continue to grow and stakeholders grow to understand what their role is in achieving the vision. Sterrett (2011) observes that successful leaders must "cultivate clarity regarding values and fundamental purposes that are most important" (p. 13). The work of a principal cannot be in isolation and empowering other leaders ensures the vision of the school is carried out. Richard (2008) states, "School principals who focus on a vision for their schools nurture the leadership capabilities of their teachers. Additionally, if their schools

53

are moving in the right direction, they model effective leading and learning. Combining these efforts with using data appropriately, as well as monitoring what takes place at the classroom level, will increase the likelihood that schools will achieve their goals for student learning (p. 13). Establishing a vision with a clear focus on student learning ensures that administrators and other stakeholders share a common goal of student learning.

The Actions of Principals

With the growing Hispanic population in Texas, educators should take an interest in how to serve Hispanic students in the best possible way. The literature tells us that while Hispanic students show academic gaps when compared to their white counterparts. The literature also informs that Hispanic students can be successful in school environments that (a) center best practices around community and family involvement, (b) use collaborative governance and leadership, (c) demonstrate culturally responsive pedagogy and, (d) promote advocacy-oriented assessment. Principals greatly impact the work on a campus. This study will set out to discover what principals are doing to support these best practices in successful Hispanic schools. This review of the literature not only drives this study, also it also serves as a guide to the research questions, and the methodology. This literature review may also inform other educators who are interested in the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools.

III.   METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Studying the actions of principals from the field gave the researcher a better understanding of the world in which principals live. Delamont (2012) states, "My aim is to better understand the world in which I live and to share this understanding, with all of its limitations, with whoever takes the time to read it." (p. 387). The world of the principal is complex and full of inspiration as well as limitations. Sharing the world of the principal, from the perspective of the principal, empowered the research because it allowed principals to relate to their own experiences, and perhaps gain new insight into their work as they try to ensure the success of Hispanic students. In looking at this study through a sociocultural lens, it was important to acknowledge my own perspective and experiences as they influenced how I understood and approached the data. In my work with schools across the state as a school improvement facilitator, I am sensitive to the burdensome sanctions campus and district leaders are faced with when not making state and/or federal accountability standards. In supporting campus principals through the maze of school improvement, I see firsthand the shaken and broken spirits of leaders and school staff wearing the label of *failure* as they work with best intent to ensure quality educational experiences to their students. The support I provide to these schools is often seen as a threat when in reality, I recognize that standardized test scores tell very little about the real work happening on a campus. Helping school leaders negotiate their journey of school improvement leaves me wondering in what other ways I can provide support. The majority of schools I work with are Title I schools serving high numbers of low socioeconomic students as well as schools with high numbers of Hispanic students.

My experiences working to sustain and encourage principals drove my research question: What are the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools in Texas?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support community and family involvement to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support collaborative governance and leadership to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support culturally responsive pedagogy to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What actions do principals in high performing Hispanic schools perform to support advocacy oriented assessment to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

Design of the Study

Qualitative researchers bring the data to life by giving voice and description to the data. According to Patton (2002), "They [researchers] take us, as readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to have been there. They capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words" (p. 47). By communicating someone else's words, the researcher had opportunity to share the perspective of others, as well as a responsibility to ensure their stories are shared correctly. Patton (2002) explains three elements of credible qualitative inquiry: (a) rigorous methodology with attention to credibility, (b) the training and expertise of the

researcher and, (c) a philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry (p. 552). With

attention to rigorous method, credibility, and a philosophical belief in qualitative

research, the use of a qualitative approach to the work opens opportunities for the

researcher to dive deep in to understanding the actions of principals and obtaining a

clearer picture of the intent of the principal as they carry out their responsibilities as a

school leader. Rossman and Rallis (2003) list the following principles of good qualitative

practice as:

> Comfort with ambiguity, capacity to make reasoned decisions and to articulate the
>
> logic behind those decisions, deep interpersonal or emotional sensitivity, ethical
>
> sensitivity of potential consequences to individuals and groups, political
>
> sensitivity, perseverance and self-discipline, and awareness of when to bring
>
> closure. (p. 54)

Through site visits and interviews with principals, discoveries were made around

decisions and the logic behind decisions that principals are making daily as well as the

ability to unwrap a deeper understanding of the principals' actions in implementing best

practice throughout their campus. This study explored rich explanations of principals'

behaviors in high performing Hispanic schools. Rossman and Rallis (2003) state,

"Qualitative researcher seeks answers to their questions in the real world. They gather

what they see, hear, and read from people and places and from events and activities" (p.

4). This study drew from the research of Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), which

examined high performing Hispanic schools taking a general qualitative approach from a

sociocultural perspective. Likewise, this study explored the actions of principals in high

performing Hispanic schools taking a general qualitative approach through a social

cultural lens, taking into account how beliefs and culture of principals influences actions. While having a better understanding of the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools, I also hoping that others gain insight from this research to have a better understanding of how work can be shifted to better prepare and inform principals of predominantly Hispanic schools. This study served as a resource for principals to inform them about practices that better serve Hispanic students.

Participant Selection

Selecting exceptional principal participants was crucial for this study; therefore, participant selection was purposeful. Flick (2007) states, "For interviews, sampling is oriented to finding the right people – those who have made the experience relevant for the study. Sampling in most cases is purposeful; random or formal sampling is rather the exception" (p. 80). Patton (2002) describes purposeful sampling as information-rich cases. He states, "Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues if central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 46).

To select the best participants for the study, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) for the state of Texas was used to find specific schools to access. I first matched the types of schools Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) used when they conducted their study of high performing Hispanic schools. Reyes, Scribner and Scribner state (1999),

> The three elementary, three middle, and two high schools were selected on the
> basis of the following criteria: (1) school enrollment of 66.6% or more Mexican
> American students; (2) schools with well-above average standardized test scores

on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills [TAAS]; and (3) schools that had

received state and national recognition (e.g., mentor schools, blue ribbon schools).

(p. 10)

I focused on High schools as Texas sees the majority of student drop outs from the high

school level. In addition, student graduation serves as a culminating milestone for public

school in Texas. I narrowed the search by first looking at all high school campuses,

grades 9-12, in Texas who had more than 600 students with a minimum of 66.6%

Hispanic enrollment. I filtered out all of the charter campuses as I looked specifically at

the traditional public school.

Defining "high performing" helped to narrow the search even more. While the

1999 study of Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner looked at TAAS test scores well above the

state average, this did not inform the current study. Students are currently taking the State

of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Standards are also much higher

now than they were in 1999. Many high performing schools are now struggling to meet

the current accountability requirements. Because of the newness of the STAAR and the

changing accountability system as a whole, standards are still being established.

Moreover, standardized state testing information was not utilized as an indicator of

student success due to conflicting research regarding standardized state tests being

indicators of student success. Starting with the *The Myth of the Texas Miracle in*

Education (Haney, 2000), researchers have argued that , while at first glance high-stakes

accountability in Texas appears to have resulted in widespread improvement in public

education, further analysis reveals adverse impacts on students and evidence that high-

stakes test results are a bad proxy for student success (e.g., Hamilton, McCaffrey, &

59

Stecher, 2000; Nichols & Berliner, 2007). These researchers concluded that standardized

state tests had a negative impact on lower achieving students. Other findings, as well,

supported that the academic progress of these students was being adversely affected

(Haney, 2000).   For these reasons, Instead of looking at STAAR and end-of-course exam

grades to define "high-performing," I defined "high performing" by looking at graduation

rates and college readiness indicators.

Graduation Rate

A four-year graduation rate, without exclusions, was identified as one of the areas to

identify schools. Simply stated, this indicator consists of students following their

expected graduation date, graduating in four years with their class of 2011 (TEA, 2013).

Because of the simplicity of this graduation indicator and because it captures students

graduating on the traditional four year graduation plan, this indicator was selected for this

study. The four-year graduation rate without exclusions is calculated by the number of

students who received a high school diploma by August 21, 2011 divided by the number

of students in the 2001-2008 cohort. The TEA definition states,

> **Completion Rate:** This indicator shows the status of a group (cohort) of students
>
> after four years in high school. The cohort consists of students who first attended
>
> ninth grade in 2003-04. They are followed through their expected graduation as
>
> the class of 2007. Any student who transferred into the 2003-04 cohort is added to
>
> it, and any student who transfers out of the 2003-04 cohort is subtracted from it.
>
> *Graduated.* Based on the 2003-04 cohort, this shows the percent who received
>
> their high school diploma on time or earlier - by the end of the 2006-07 school
>
> year. It is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\textit{Number of students from the cohort who received a high}}{\textit{school diploma by the end of } 2006-07}$$
$$\textit{Number of students in the } 2003-04 \textit{ cohort}$$

The graduation rate is a lagging indicator, so it always runs a year behind. The 2012 state and federal goal for this indicator is 90%. I intended to look at campuses that have 90% or more of all students graduating in 4 years, with no exclusions, but had to lower the percentage of students graduating for the study as there were no schools that qualified for the research after filtering the data by 90%. A graduation rate of 82.5% was used to filter the data. Dropout rates were also noted in the school profiles. TEA defines dropout as,

> **Dropout:** A dropout is a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a GED, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die. (http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2008/ glossary.html#complete)

College Readiness Indicators

According to TEA (2013), "These [college readiness] indicators are grouped together to help provide a picture of college preparedness at a given high school or for a specific district. They can be used by educators as they work to ensure that students are able to perform college-level course work at institutions of higher education" The 2011-2012 indicators include the following: Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion; Recommended High School Program/Distinguished Achievement Program Graduates; AP/IB Results; Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Higher Education Readiness Component; SAT/ACT Results; and College-Ready Graduates. Specifically in this study I looked at

college ready graduates. To be considered college ready, a graduate must have met or exceeded college ready criteria on both the exit-level TAKS and the SAT, or ACT. The table below explains.

Table 1

College Ready Criteria

Subject	Exit-level TAKS		SAT		ACT
ELA	>=2200 scale score on ELA test AND a "3" or higher on essay	OR	>=500 on Critical Reading AND >=1070 Total	OR	>=19 on English AND >=23 Composite
Math	>=2200 scale score on Mathematics test	OR	>=500 on Math AND >=1070 Total	OR	>=19 on Math AND >=23 Composite

For this study, I placed the schools in ascending order looking at college ready graduates for both ELA and Math for 2011 graduates. In addition, I purposefully chose schools from different regions of Texas and intentionally did not qualify schools from the Valley (south Texas). This differed from the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) study as the schools in their study were all from the Valley (south Texas). This project looked at various regions to get a broader sense of successful actions of principals statewide. After schools meeting criteria were identified, I then determined the length of time the principal had been at that specific campus. Because I wanted to get a clear sense of principal actions and the impact of those actions on high performing Hispanic high schools, the number of years a principal has served on that campus was important.

Principals having served that specific campus for over three years were considered for this study.

Combining All Indicators

In summary, the following table shows each of the indicators met by campuses after being selected for this particular study. Campuses selected for this study have met all of the indicators identified. Each of the indicators were determined by looking at statewide 2011-2012 AEIS reports.

Table 2

Indicators Met by Campuses

Campus	% Hispanic	Graduation	College Ready	Principal years on campus
- Over 600 total students - High school (grades 9-12)	- 66% or more Hispanic students	- 82.5% or higher 4 year graduation rate no exclusions - All students	- 2011 indicators for both Math and ELA - All students	- 3 or more years

After filtering the data, and omitting schools from the Valley, 21 schools surfaced as high performing Hispanic schools. Schools were put in rank order by graduation rate and college career readiness scores. I then made contact with the schools and districts starting with those with the highest graduation rate and college career readiness scores to see how long the principal had been serving at that particular campus. Out of the 21 viable schools, 14 campuses had a first year principal and two other principals were out for the semester and not available on the campus to interview. Out of the five campuses remaining, I made a selection based on the similarities of the campus size, location, and

demographics. However, the fact that 14 campuses had a principal who had served on the campus for less than three years made me wonder about the significance of the impact principals exert on the academic success of the Hispanic students on the campus. This concern was reinforced by research conducted by Fuller and Young (2009). Their analysis of tenure and retention rates for principals resulted in seven significant findings:

1) Principal tenure and retention rates vary dramatically across school levels, with elementary schools having the longest tenure and greatest retention rates and high schools having the shortest tenure and lowest retention rates.

2) High school retention rates are strikingly low for all schools—just over 50% of newly hired principals stay for three years and less than 30% stay for five years.

3) Principal retention rates are heavily influenced by the level of student achievement in the principal's first year of employment, with principals in the lowest achieving schools having the shortest tenure and lowest retention rates and those in high achieving schools having the longest tenure and highest retention rates.

4) The percentage of economically disadvantaged students in a school also has a strong influence on principal tenure and retention rates, with principals in high-poverty schools having shorter tenure and lower retention rates than principals in low-poverty schools.

5) Principal retention is somewhat lower in schools in rural and small town districts and somewhat greater in suburban districts whose students tend to be White and not economically disadvantaged.

6) The personal characteristics of principals such as age, race, and gender appear to have only a small impact on principal retention rates.

7) Certification test results appear to have little impact on principal retention rates. (p.3)

The campuses in this study were identified as high poverty campuses with Hispanic student populations of 66% or greater. Principals serving these campuses were found to have shorter tenure. This was evident from the data collected to identify campus principals to interview for this study who had been on their campus for three or more years.

Upon initial contact with the principal, I requested district/ campus policy and procedures of researchers with in the district to ensure followed established district/ campus policy.

Data Collection

In this study, two interviews with the principal and a field site visit were the primary sources of data.

Interviews

Interviews are a dominant way of collecting data for qualitative research. Delamont (2012) states,

> The research interview provides an opportunity for creating and capturing insights of a depth and level of focus rarely achieved through surveys, observational studies, or the majority of casual conversations held with fellow human beings. We interview in order to find out what we do not and cannot know otherwise. And we record what we hear in order to systematically process the data and better understand and analyse the insights shared through the dialogue (p. 384).

The protocol developed for the interview process shaped the data collected. Saldana (2011) states,

> Interview formats can range from highly structured, consisting of a set of prepared and specific questions to be asked in a particular order of each participant, to unstructured, consisting of nothing more than a general list of topics for possible exploration." (p. 32).

Flick (2007) suggests, "in an interview study we should try to ask the same questions to all of our participants, to ask questions in a similar way to all of them and not to leave out a relevant topic or question in some of the cases" (p. 64). In this study, an interview guide was used to guide the interview with principals (Appendix B). This guide served as a tool to stay on focus and ensure the interview time was best utilized. In addition, because multiple principals were being interviewed, consistency was important. While I recognized that consistency within the interview was important, I also wanted to ensure flexibility was honored as I wanted to ensure I captured all pertinent information to help add to the data collected. Flick (2007) states, "Interviews may be easier to compare if they are done in a consistent way, but very good interviews always profit from the flexibility of the researchers to adapt their questions to the individual participant and to the course of the concrete interview" (p. 64). Because of the desire to remain flexible but also use the interview guide to help focus the interview, a semi-structured interview protocol was followed. Delamont (2012) supports this by stating, "For a semi- structured interview, the schedule should guide rather than determine the shape of the interview. I like to keep the opening and closing questions more or less the same, but the conversations proceed in different directions in moving from beginning to end." (p. 372).

Through the use of an interview guide to help keep focus but also using a semi-structured interview format, interviews presented the researcher with rich data complimenting each of the interviews.

Along with a field site visit and document review, two interviews were conducted with each participant: one interview prior to the field site visit and one afterwards. The study was limited to meeting the participant face-to-face a minimum of once, and visiting the campus once. While planning for interviews, flexibility was important and the incorporation of a flexible design ensured that I was able to adapt the interview process based on the needs of the study (Fick, 2013). The first interview was conducted prior to the field site visit in order to allow the researcher opportunity to gain insight into the perceptions of the principal and his/her own actions on the campus. The second interview provided an opportunity to ask questions or clarify information regarding the field site visit, conduct member checking on the transcriptions and interpretation of the data collected, as well as seeking further information that assisted in the analysis.

Field Site Visit

A field site visit took place at the campuses where the principals selected for the study were serving. According to Patton (1990), "Qualitative approaches emphasize the importance of getting close to the peoples and situations being studied in order to personally understand the realities and minutiae of daily life, for example, life in a program" (p. 46). Quality time at each of the campuses led by the principal in the study greatly informed the research. Each campus was visited for approximately four to five hours while the researcher walked the campus, identified artifacts, observed interactions between students and teachers, as well as recorded evidence of community involvement

67

in the school. Throughout the site visit I talked with teachers, community members, and parents who were on campus. I purposefully spoke with two to three adults found on the campus for the purpose of expanding the site visit data. A structured field note observation document was used to assist in ensuring the appropriate information was being collected (Appendix A). Through this site visit, I intended to find evidence of action dimension best practices throughout the campus. While I recognized I may not find evidence of these best practices, I understood that it's absence would inform the study, as well.

Document Collection

In addition to the site visit and interview, online campus documents were analyzed to assist in triangulating data and ensure a deeper understanding of the principal's actions on Hispanic students in the school. Patton (2002) states, "Program documents provide valuable information because of what the evaluator can learn directly by reading them; but they also provide stimulus for generating questions that can only be pursued through direct observation and interviewing" (p. 233). Document analysis was limited to public documents, such as documents posted on the website, the campus improvement plan, and the principal's memos to parents and students.

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Data Analysis

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The analysis of the data began with listening to the interview tapes prior to transcription and re-reading the field notes and memos from the site visit and interviews. Maxwell, Sheurich, and Skrla (2009) states, "Listening to and interviewing tapes prior to transcription is also an opportunity for analysis, as is the actual process of transcribing interviews or of rewriting and reorganizing your rough observation notes" (p. 96). After I

reflected in a field journal for a few hours after the interviews and sit visits, I transcribed the interview, I read the interview transcripts and used open coding as an analytic tool. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), "Coding entails thinking through what you take as evidence of a category or theme. Categories are concepts – abstractions" (p. 286). A list of coding themes, or categories, were developed based on the evidence of best practices found in the previous research by Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999). A typological analysis was conducted to identify relationships and support generalizations the data provided. Hatch (2002) states, "Typologies are generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives, and initial data processing happens within those typological groupings" (p. 152). According to Hatch (2002), the steps of typological analysis are as follows:

1. Identify typologies to be analyzed

2. Read the data, marking entries related to your typologies

3. Read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in entries on a summary sheet

4. Look for patterns, relationships, themes within the typologies

5. Read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of your patterns

6. Decide if your patterns are supported by the data, and search the date for non-examples of your patterns

7. Look for relationships among the patterns identified

69

8. Write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations

9. Select data excerpts that support your generalizations (p.

153).

The relationships and patterns identified and supported the codes used as I continued to

use this analysis for the field visit and recursive analysis. After the field site visit and

interview were conducted, coding was completed and themes identified. I used coding to

look more deeply and find connections to the coding themes developed with the site visit

data as well as the interview and acquired documents. The researcher coded all field

notes and transcripts and connections were made between all of the data gathered.

Saldana (2011) states "Through field note writing, interview transcribing, analytic memo

writing, and other documentation processes, you gain cognitive ownership of your data,

and the intuitive, tacit, synthesizing capabilities of your brain begin sensing patterns,

making connections, and seeing the bigger picture" (p. 90). I coded the data two times by

hand. The first coding I looked specifically for the overall themes from the 1999 research

around culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy-oriented assessment, collaborative

governance and leadership, and community and family involvement. The second coding

round was used to refine the themes and look for new themes or ideas that emerged from

the data. After the site visit data, interviews, and documents were coded, I organized the

materials using a matrix and notecards. The combination of analytic recursive analysis,

coding, and the matrix, combined with reflexive free-writing to construct an analytic

memo assisted in the analysis of the data. I interpret the data through the lens of my own

understanding, a commonsense understanding and a theoretical understanding to build

the story of the research. Through this interpretation process, according to Rossman and

Rallis (2003), I "aim to tell a richly detailed story that respects these contexts and connects participants, events, experiences, or discourses to larger issues, theories, or phenomena" (p.289). After analysis and the continued building of the analytic memo, findings were first compared to themes found in the 1999 study and then I nested new findings into the conceptual framework of Reyes, Scribner, andScribner (1999).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative data triangulation ensures that data is adequately cross-checked data. Patton (2002) gives meaning to triangulation by describing, "Checking interviews against program documents and other written evidence that can corroborate what interview respondents report" (p. 559). Two interviews with three different principal interviews, and campus documents from participants will gave information to inform the research questions and I triangulated the collected data. In addition to triangulation, I used participant validation to ensure the researchers interpretation of the interviews and the analytic memo correctly captured the intent of the participant. Rossman and Rallis (2003) state, "You [the researcher] take emerging findings back to the participants for them to elaborate, correct, extend, or argue about" (p. 69). Through the strategies of triangulation and participant validation, the research is credible and rigorous.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the actions of principals in high performing Hispanic schools. This study looked at the actions of the principal in the areas of community and parent involvement, collaborative governance and leadership, cultural responsive pedagogy and advocacy-oriented assessment, complementing the work of Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) looking at high performing Hispanic schools within

the context of the learning community. This qualitative study examined the actions of principals in three high performing Hispanic high schools. Through interviews, and collecting and reviewing campus and community documents, I identified specific actions or behaviors of principals in high performing Hispanic high schools. The design of this study lent itself to looking critically at the qualitative data. Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer (2012) state that critical researchers, "rely on in-depth interviews to reveal ways in which dominance and persistent inequities are transferred to the behaviors, opportunity structures, and meaning systems of vulnerable populations" (p. 77). In addition, the collection of data was observed through the lens of a sociocultural framework and was conducted through a critical paradigm. According to Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012), "Critical researchers always locate the behaviors and meaning held by individuals and groups within larger systems of dominance and control" (p. 77). Through the lens of a socio-cultural framework, research questions were designed to explore the behavior of principals within the organization and I looked closely at how this behavior contributes to the success of the students served through this organization.

IV. RESULTS

Introduction

This study explored the leadership actions of three principals, two Hispanic men and one Hispanic woman, all of whom were embedded in their communities, and possessed with a deep passion for students and their success. Despite their similarities, each brought very different leadership styles to the table. Their campuses posed different challenges and opportunities, but these principals had strong records for ensuring students on the campus they served were attending school, graduating, and prepared for college. After examining campus demographic data, graduation rates, and college career ready scores I created a profile for each campus. Principal profiles were also created based on responses the three principals gave when asked questions around the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) conceptual framework focused on culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy-oriented assessment, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement.

Williams High School

School Profile

As I approached the dauntingly large campus sitting at the bottom of the hills of a large Texas border town, the tall McDonald's sign sticking up high above everything else dwarfed the flat adobe style buildings that dominated the city. A sign pointing me toward the campus easily directed me into the parking lot. The school is a beautiful campus with a welcoming archway and signs marking the parking areas allocated for students and reserved parking for visitors to the campus. The welcoming arch over the entry to the school displayed the name of the school and invited me in. Although I arrived during a

passing period, there was a sense of calm on the campus as students transitioned to their next class. The administration office was quiet and clean, and I was greeted by multiple people asking me how they could assist. Williams High School is a public high school located in El Paso, Texas. The school is built on government property but is part of the El Paso school district. Approximately 1/3 of the students are from Fort Bliss, another 1/3 are from the nearby neighboring community, and the remaining 1/3 are students who live throughout the city and attend the engineering magnet program offered by the school. While the school serves three diverse populations of students, it was not possible to delineate what home community a student was from when on the campus. At this campus, everyone appeared to be a Williams Bulldog.

The school serves approximately 1,900 students on a 9-12 campus. Demographics are diverse with 66.9% Hispanic students, approximately 10% African American students, and 20% White students. Approximately 58.6% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged, and 6.7% of students are identified as limited English proficient (LEP). Williams has approximately 160 staff members with 57% of those staff members Hispanic. Teachers at Williams have an average of 10 years of experience.

Table 3

Student Demographics-Williams

Classification	% of Population
Hispanic	67.3%
African American	11.8%
White	16.3%
Economically Disadvantaged	61.0%
Limited English Proficient	6.5%

Table 4

Student Graduation Rates-Williams

	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
All Students Graduation Rates	83.9%	82.7%	83.5%
All Students Drop Out Rate	4.5%	8.7%	8.7%
Hispanic Students Graduation rates	81.3%	80.1%	79.4%
Hispanic Students Drop Out Rate	5.4%	8.6%	10.8%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Graduation Rates	81.5%	80.9%	83.1%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Drop Out Rates	10.2%	10.8%	8.6%

Table 5

College Career Readiness Scores-Williams

	Class of 2007	Class of 2008	Class of 2009
All Students College Career Readiness Scores	44%	51%	49%
Hispanic Students	42%	46%	48%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas)	27%	36%	40%

Principal Profile

The principal invited me into her office with a smile as she asked me to make myself comfortable. Her office was decorated with framed pictures of past graduates, posters of wrestling teams, soccer teams, football teams, and drill teams, autographed footballs and soccer balls balanced on every bookshelf and chest. Williams's mascot, the Bulldog, was plastered on every wall in the form of drawings, flags, and posters.

Bulldog figurines, Bulldog beanie babies, Bulldog stuffed animals of every size and shape, Bulldog metal art, Bulldog plates, Bulldog gumball machines, Bulldog mums, evidence of the spirit of the Bulldog captured in time over the last 14 years. Every wall of the office breathed Bulldog pride. The principal's small desk sat in the corner and the majority of the office was taken up by a large meeting table. We sat in the center of the office where she was fully prepared for the interview, with the questions I had previously sent and the message her secretary had left her from the first time I called. She appeared confident, down to earth, and calm. Dr. Martinez, inspired to become an educator by her high school history teacher, has been the proud principal of Williams High School for 14 years. Because she opened the campus, she is also the only principal this campus has ever known. She started her career with a bachelor's degree in history and no intent to pursue a career in education. She now laughs at the disconnect between her original aspiration to be a museum curator and her current role as a high school campus principal. While laughing, she said, "Well, I had no intention ever to be a principal or ever to even be in education. My big goal was to be a museum curator, so I don't know what went horribly wrong." While becoming a high school principal may not have been in her master plan, she shared how it was a natural fit for her. Martinez stated,

> I've done everything I can do as a classroom teacher. I've impacted as much as I can do as an AP. Now, it's time for me to impact more people, more students, more staff, by being a principal. It's the great Spiderman quote, you know, it's now with great power comes great responsibility and that's how I see this job to be.

Dr. Martinez had a warm presence and fluttered about with confidence. Fourteen years into her principalship at Williams, she wore her Bulldog spirit with pride. Martinez told me,

> I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity fourteen years ago to open the school, and one of the things I really wanted to do was to sort of put my money where my mouth was. I had all these ideas of what it would be to be a successful school and now I had a chance to do that.

She went on to say,

> I would have never imagined I would be still here. Most people don't stay in these jobs this long. It's stressful. I love what I do. I love my community. I love my kids. I have an amazing staff, but it is. The stress at times, they're always changing the rules of the game, but it also always gives me a new challenge so maybe that's what's keeping me around.

The passion and commitment she holds for the Williams community were evident. Williams staff members spoke of her with much respect and seemed to reflect a similar kindness towards the students as that possessed by Mrs. Martinez possessed. She bragged,

> Every school I'd gone to I had to sort of assimilate myself into the staff, into that community. Well, this [opening Williams] was going to be an opportunity to build a staff and to set the expectations and the traditions and just sort of help educate the community on what we could do here.

She went on to explain,

> you sort of build, you know, a tradition and a passion and a pride for your campus one class at a time, and because we'd had some rough years in this part of town there were a lot of families that were ready for a new start even though there were traditionally every generation had gone to either A high school or B high school, they were ready to come to this high school. They were ready for their child to have something different.

The school, like the principal's office, exuded Bulldog spirit. The walls of the hallways were covered with spirit; evidence of student work, mottos and quotes encouraging students to be their best, and advertisement flyers reminding students of upcoming events. The displays invite you to be a Bulldog and communicate a sense that the students belong to and own this campus. Martinez stated, "I want kids to leave this high school feeling this was an amazing experience and help set the foundation for what they are going to do for the rest of their lives." It is evident through our conversation that Dr. Martinez' culture impacts her leadership and actions in the school.

Community and Family Involvement

This tight knit community is known for its warm hospitality and deeply ingrained culture. Even while on the plane traveling to this Texas town, I was asked about my visit and, most importantly, where I planned on eating. It became apparent to me, even before I arrived, that loyalties to particular high schools were ingrained in the culture of the city and the high school you attend is an important part of who you are. The principal had intentionally laid the foundation to capture this deeply ingrained

culture and harness it within the walls of Williams High School. Nothing short of intentional, the principal shared,

> The part of town where the school is does not have the best history in terms of just a lot of issues. When people think of this part of town, it's one of those, you know, high gang area, high crime area, probably the most active regional police force is right here in our part of town and I was like, 'I don't care about any of that. We're going to show people what students in this part of town can do and not just because we have a magnet program, but because we are going to bring people in here who believe in it and who believe in these kids and we're going to make a difference.' And so, that's just sort of where we started 14 years ago, and we started one class at a time.

> Bringing communities together through the opening of a new school is challenging, and Dr. Martinez had a bigger challenge as well. She was merging communities from the military base, nearby civilian neighborhoods, and students from across the city attending the campus magnet program. She recalled,

> One of the interesting challenges with my particular community as I mentioned is we have a strong military presence and then we've got, it's about, I'd say about 35%, almost 40 sometimes are military dependent and the other 60% are civilian or neighborhood, and sometimes they work really well together and sometimes they don't seem to mesh well.

> According to Dr. Martinez, the contrasting communities that the school serves approach the campus in different styles. She stated,

Our Hispanic parents tend to be not as forceful in terms of being involved and I don't mean forceful in a bad way. Our military parents tend and a lot of them are Hispanic, we have huge diversity on our campus, but just because they move around so much they want to be involved. They want to know what's going on. They're going to ask questions. They are going to be at those parent-teacher conferences.

She went on to share more about the non-military Hispanic families stating,

Our Hispanic parents, we have to do a lot more to bring them in to make them feel comfort coming in. We've got Hispanic families that have been here for generations. We have a lot of people who are newcomers. They've just come to us in the past year or two because of the violence across the border". The newcomers, she states, "are probably intimidated by the whole system. They're not as comfortable. This is a whole new experience for them. Getting them to get up here sometimes is a huge victory to us just to show them that we care about your child and we want the best for them.

Her strategy for involving parents was through student activities. She noted,

What draws all parents in and it's going to draw them in from high school to elementary is their kids' activities. And so, that's where we really build as much as we can parental involvement through the activities their students are involved in whether they're athletics, the arts, music, leadership, that's where we try to get parents in as much as we can because we know that's what will draw them.

Family Liaison

Dr. Martinez talked about the many supports she has on the campus to assist in getting parents involved and helping them to feel comfortable at the school. Her goal is to ensure every parent knows at least one person on the campus they would feel comfortable talking to. She stated,

We have a very active, very successful parental involvement program here. We have a half time parental involvement liaison. We have a risk coordinator who goes and does a lot of home visits, you know, works very closely. We also have a social worker, they call them alpha coordinators, also does a lot of home visits, goes to those homes to really pull those parents in and make them feel comfortable and make them feel welcomed. That's usually the number one thing is making parents feel welcome in your school and them comfortable having at least that one adult on campus they can go to whether it's about attendance or my child's not doing well.

She ensures parents not only have at least one point of contact on the campus, but that they also know they can always speak to her. She maintains a high level of visibility for parents and the community.

It's just, you know, trying to be at as many activities as I can, you know, so that they know who I am, Whether it's calling to make an appointment, walk-in basis, you know, emailing. If someone contacts me I'm going to follow-up immediately. I just want to be accessible. I want to answer questions. Sometimes just a simple email back is huge because it's something that they, was worrying

them is easy to solve. I just try to make it personal. I try to be in the classrooms.

I try to be in the halls. I have things that I'm trying to take care of all the time.

Student Involvement

Dr. Martinez believes,

What draws all parents in and it's going to draw them in from high school to

elementary is their kids' activities. And so, that's where we really build as much as

we can parental involvement through the activities their students are involved in

whether they're athletics, the arts, music, leadership, that's where we try to get

parents in as much as we can because we know that's what will draw them.

During my visit, this philosophy of drawing parents in through activities was

clearly felt throughout the campus. From brochures to signs hanging in the hallways,

there was no shortage of activities for students to be involved in at this high school. In

addition to student activities, Dr. Martinez stated, "We have very, very active booster

clubs from everything from band to choir to the sports that we are always looking at ways

to bring the parents in." While I visited the campus, I did notice a small number of

parents. Noticeably, one parent in particular, was working at a computer in the library.

Martinez explained,

So, some of the parental involvement things that we do is to help them, you know,

technology. We've, in the past, we haven't done it the last few years, but we've

had English classes for some of our Spanish speaking parents. The district now

provides a lot of resources for parents in order to get the help they need, get

GEDs.

Martinez believes that by making a connection with every parent who walks in the door she takes advantage of the opportunity to make a connection. She shared,

every parent that comes through my office, whether it's because of a disciplinary situation or just because they call. You know, they are concerned, there might be attendance concerns. I walk them through, we set them up on a system our district has called Parent Portal. They can come in and use computers at our library if they don't have a computer at home and it actually gets them online so they can monitor their child's grades. They can email with the teachers. They can monitor attendance every day. It just helps empower them to be involved in their children's education and to help monitor what's going on. The number one thing that sometimes we get ahold of these parents is because of attendance.

Visibility

A student's family member was in the computer lab accessing his child's grades when I arrived at the library. He called the librarian by name when he needed assistance, and she joyfully approached him and helped him access his child's information. After she assisted him in printing his document, he left quietly without interruption.

Evidence was seen throughout the school building of the Mexican American culture and the military influence on the campus. Well known Mexican American faces were displayed throughout the campus, building cultural competence and connecting students to a common community. Dr. Martinez showed her passion to create community and family involvement on the campus. Between advocating for the campus community and making connections with community stakeholders, the principal showed that that

there is value in connecting the community and families with what is happening on the campus.

Collaborative Governance and Leadership

As we were visiting, Dr. Martinez was approached by a faculty member who asked for her input on the best way to manage an emotionally difficult campus situation. The previous weekend, two students had lost several family members. The principal told me the story of two brothers who had experienced this tragedy, with tears in her eyes, openly feeling the grief of the students. Her compassion for the students and openness to share the grief she was feeling for the young men caught my attention and opened this principal up to be seen as a very compassionate person. As the faculty member shared a document on how to help a grieving Bulldog, the principal asked how she was planning to disseminate the information. The principal told the faculty member she had already spoken with the children and let them know where to go if they needed to talk or needed a break during the day. The principal facilitated the discussion, and helped the faculty member identify a viable option for disseminating the information as she modeled her care for the students and support for the faculty member. The principal shared,

> I do expect people to care about our kids and to work hard for them. I just
> reinforce that mostly is just that feeling that these kids are your kids. This is
> important. This isn't, it's not, you can't walk away from this job and not care. If
> you don't care then you don't need to be here.

It was apparent from the many pictures of students in her office and the way she talked about the students that she meant exactly what she said about this not being just a job. From the pictures around her office and her deep passion for her job, I envisioned her

as the matriarch of the high school; patient, quiet and full of wisdom. Dr. Martinez reiterated her belief by stating, "My number one, and they could tell you, I preach is all the time is I want them to treat these kids as if they are their own." She went on to recount how she keeps the culture of caring alive on her campus by stating,

> I always stress new teachers get to know your kids, know their names, call them by name. That is huge for me to walk down the hall and call a student by name. They'll be like, 'You know who I am?'

By modeling a caring environment for campus teachers and students, she creates an environment where it is the expectation for adults to care for and feel the same passion the principal does for the students. Dr. Martinez shared that gaps began closing when she started having individual conversations with students on her campus. She recalled that it was amazing what she found out about the students once she got them talking. Another way Dr. Martinez cultivated the expectation for students to be successful was by setting expectations for teachers to use innovative practices in the classroom. She provided professional development opportunities for teachers and continues to be eager to learn alongside her teachers as an active learner. Evidence of innovative practices could be seen throughout the school building. In the halls, there were multiple flyers using barcodes for students to obtain additional information via mobile devices. In the computer lab, a teacher was utilizing a smart board to assist in teaching a concept to his students. Computer labs were full of students and the teacher was facilitating a discussion while students searched for information online. Dr. Martinez believes in the power of encouraging teachers to think innovatively about their practice. She said that by,

encouraging them through positive reinforcement, providing the training, providing, I think probably the incentives are just when they see the kids really enjoying the class and really getting it because they are interacting with the material in a completely different way and just having more energy and more engagement.

In addition to encouraging innovative thinking, banners were found above many teacher classrooms displaying the college they attended, further pushing a culture of success and a college going environment. Students in the senior hall had applied the college-going culture even more by creating and hanging posters in the hallways highlighting their colleges of interest.

Throughout the campus, there were many character building signs hung on walls. Signs reading, "Expect problems and eat them for breakfast," "There are no shortcuts to any place worth going," and, "Dream big and dare to fail." These signs entice students to work hard and to not be afraid of failure. These character building signs were found so often, that I found myself re-affirmed in my own "dream big" world. Students are challenged to believe in themselves and push themselves to achieve greatness.

Teachers are given the opportunity to lead throughout the course of the day. Dr. Martinez has established leaders across departments by assigning department heads and truly believes, "every teacher is a leader in their classroom." In addition, she provides multiple opportunities for leadership positions across the campus and encourages teachers to serve as a leader on the campus. She stated,

encourage taking control of your classroom. Make it a wonderful place to learn but also have an opportunity to be a leader whether it's a level leader, whether it's

within the department, and even cross-curricular connections and that's something we've always wanted to talk about doing more of.

Throughout my field visit, I found that the campus was exceptionally large and offered many areas for teachers to find reprieve and create opportunity for their own learning and planning. I did not observe any team meetings or find opportunity to see groups of teachers working together.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Dr. Martinez claims to model the behavior she wants to see in her teachers. She indicates that she models a strong belief in students and shows outwardly that she cares for them. Because she was the first principal at the high school, she had the unique opportunity to hand select her staff and set expectations for behavior from the moment the school opened. She stated, "As a principal you have to model that belief in everything that you do and say when you're working with teachers." She seemingly not only models behavior that she expects from teachers to students, but she also shares that she models and pushes for the type of behavior she expects to see in teachers. She said, "So, it's really just modelling that that is who you are and what you believe in and that is what you expect the campus to be as well." She shared her belief of supporting both the student and the teacher by stating, "You want every situation to be sort of a win-win. You want to support your teachers, but you've also got to support your kids." By supporting both students and teachers on the campus, she believes she creates an open and trusting environment where everyone is set up to be successful. By utilizing this approach, she seems to have created an environment in which she believes teachers feel confident to

experiment in a safe environment. According to Martinez teachers are set up to empower students in the classroom. She stated,

> you know, just making it more, they have more ownership of it, and just creating it kind of it's okay if your classroom gets a little busy and a little noisy that's all right because that means that they're, as long as you're out there facilitating and end monitoring, making sure they are engaged and they are focused and on task I'm not looking for the perfect classroom where there's rows and rows and rows and everybody is quietly working."

Because of her strong beliefs she discusses encouraging teachers by allowing them permission to move into a more innovative and engaging classroom setting and respond to student culture in a more purposeful way. She added, "Kids are different, so are teachers, but letting them know the vision is we want the kids engaged. We want them empowered." She further stated,

> We've got to get away from the old school mentality of I'm a teacher and I'm going to lecture and you are going to learn. We've done a lot of training. We've invested a lot of money into providing a more technology oriented learning environment so that the kids are more in control of it and the teacher becomes more of a facilitator and they're still the leader.

> Dr. Martinez shared her beliefs about culturally relevant pedagogy,
> Especially with Hispanic students, sometimes culturally they'll be more like, 'Well, if I just sit back you won't call on me.' Some of our other cultures are a lot more, they are more willing to jump in and get engaged. Hispanics traditionally will be a little bit less so. They are thinking, 'I'm behaving myself so as long as

I'm behaving myself you'll leave me alone and I don't have to participate.' Don't allow that to happen.

Between supporting students, inviting parents to be a part of the school, and engaging and encouraging students to be a part of the learning, the campus appears to have developed a culture to ensure the success of the Hispanic students. In addition to the culture and expectations for behavior, there was physical evidence that students have a place on this campus. On the walls, painted handprints with student's names written across the palm or below the print indicated that these students had a place here. Pre-Engineering Magnet Star Student of the Month pictures were proudly displayed in the showcase near the cafeteria. Miniature student figurine cutouts were exhibited in the hallway colored and autographed by the student the figurine represents. Student classwork was found in front of each classroom. Poems, paintings, quotes, and pictures of current students and past graduates were found sprinkled throughout the campus walls. A strong military feel was present, honoring the military families the school serves, with pictures and paintings representing fallen heroes and reminders not to forget our loved ones serving abroad. When asked about supporting and building a culturally responsive learning environment, Dr. Martinez stated,

> that is just something you reinforce in everything you say and that you do. If it is
> something that you are very visibly supporting, it's not something that you just
> say at the opening faculty meeting in August and then you don't touch on it again.

Dr. Martinez believes that, "most teachers, I would say probably 99% of the time teachers want kids to be successful. We don't really get anything out of them not being successful." She went on to state, "Your expectations mean nothing if they're up here

and the kids are still down here and there's nothing that's bridging those. That's not good teaching."

Advocacy-Oriented Assessment

Going back to the conceptual framework of Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), Dr. Martinez is no stranger to advocacy oriented assessment and spoke confidently about resources she feels teachers have on the campus and her expectations of how teachers should use these resources. When asked about advocacy oriented assessment, she named multiple programs deigned to be implemented on a campus such as, SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) , language learning strategies, TLA (Teacher Language Awareness), PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), and use of word walls and vocabulary development. According to Martinez, teachers meet in PLCs as well as their "core" teams or department level teams to not only plan for assessment but make decisions about how they will use data from assessments. She stated,

> every teacher has a copy of who their ESL kids or sp-ed kids even their GT.
> Now though it's more like this is an ESL student, this is their level of writing,
> this is their level of speaking, this is their level of reading, and giving the
> teachers more information so that they are better prepared.

Martinez uses this beginning level assessment data to guide teachers on how to establish student groups and assist the teacher in how he/she supports that particular student. Student level data are infused through the lens of the teacher. Martinez shared that even seating charts should have the individual needs of students marked on them to assist the teacher in identifying support for students. Martinez stated,

90

The number one thing with these is knowing who they are, knowing where they

are, where they are starting out and what your goal is, and usually the goal is to

get them to that next level by the end of the school year. We do a lot of common

assessments especially with the end.

Starting with the end in mind enables teachers to establish plans to reach their end

goals. It also ensures students are prepared to meet their end goal as well as accomplish

the objectives the teacher has set out. Martinez referenced the use of data assessment

programs such as Eduphoria and shares her thoughts on how teachers use these

programs in their teams. Drawn from what Principal Martinez shared, being aware of

and using the data teachers have seemed to be an important piece in understanding

where students are and how to move them to the next level. Martinez stated,

So, we need to be more aware and use our time and use those assessments

wisely. And it is, it's sort of hard because we do want everyone to be successful.

It's sort of like you don't want to leave anyone out, but in the bigger picture,

you've got to cover everything. It's just sort of working smarter.

Martinez emphasized the use of assessment on her campus and notes that she has

systems in place to assist teachers in using formative and summative assessment to

discover their students' level of understanding. Martinez discusses formative and

summative assessment with confidence and shared freely how she communicates the

importance of this piece to her campus team.

Summary

Dr. Martinez leads with heart and models the importance of family community

engagement. She appears to be an integral part of the community and communicates an

understanding of the diverse needs of the many different families her school serves. Based on my short time at Williams, it seems that Martinez' connection with the community and her understanding of the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy, the halls and classrooms of Williams High School are covered in evidence of the value of both. Martinez' clear eye for advocacy oriented assessment keeps students and teachers on track in knowing what skills have been mastered and what needs to be re-taught. Martinez' seeming ability to lead with her heart has great impact on the community and success of Williams High School.

Central High School

School Profile

Central High School students are bussed in from all around the city but the school is nestled among an affluent neighborhood surrounded by large mansion-like homes and an upscale community golf course. Central High School does not have a student attendance zone; it is only attended by students who have been chosen through a lottery. As you drive up to the campus, you are greeted by a large, clean, beautiful building. Remarking on the appearance of the building, Mr. Suarez says, ""Don't let the shiny glass and the new building and everything fool you. This is not a magnet program." The parking lot is clearly labeled but I felt lost trying to find the entrance to the school. Once inside, I was greeted by a staff member sitting behind a desk in the hallway signing people in and directing them to where they needed to be. She was armed with a walkie-talkie and upon my arrival was talking to a hall monitor about which students had signed in late and comparing that to the students the hall monitor had found walking in the

hallway. I was quickly pointed in the direction of the administrative office and warmly greeted by the principal, Mr. Suarez.

Central High School is a comprehensive high school serving approximately 1,900 students. The campus opened in 2001 and unlike a traditional comprehensive high school, Central students are chosen to attend by lottery. Mr. Suarez. explained,

It's a lottery process because we only have so much room. We have three floors, so as long as you live in Irving ISD and go and attend the [Irving ISD attendance zone] you can apply and there's no admittance criteria or anything. It's just address and phone number. We take in 525 students every year and usually about 900 apply. Last year it was the highest we ever had apply it was 1,200 and that was because we opened programs similar to this at the other high schools.

Table 6

Student Demographics-Central

	% of Population
Hispanic	71.6%
African American	8.2%
White	12.0%
Economically Disadvantaged	77.4%
Limited English Proficient	14.5%

Table 7

Student Graduation Rates-Central

	Class of 2007	**Class of 2008**	**Class of 2009**
All Students Graduation Rates	No Data Available	95.7%	97.5%
All Students Drop Out Rate		3.9%	1.3%
Hispanic Students Graduation Rate		94.5%	97.2%
Hispanic Students Drop Out Rate		5.0%	1.4%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Graduation Rate		83.5%	82.0%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Drop Out Rate		14.2%	9.2%

Table 8

College Career Readiness Scores-Central

	Class of 2007	**Class of 2008**	**Class of 2009**
All Students College	No Data Available	37%	43%
Hispanic Students		36%	31%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas)		30%	32%

Central High School focuses on six career specialization areas including; art and communication, culinary and hospitality, engineering, health science, information technology, and legal studies. After a receiving general classes in each of these areas during their freshman and sophomore years, students choose to "major" in one of the areas their junior year, narrowing their scope of study. The campus is spread throughout three floors with innovative computer labs, a court room, a large culinary teaching room complete with a café where students even serve teachers on Thursdays and Fridays. In addition, the campus provides medical and dental labs and a full scale media lab and

media studio. The specialization areas are clearly evident. In each classroom we visited, there was substantiation of innovative technology being used, teachers had tables in their rooms configured to compliment various teaching and learning styles. The campus is large, warm and friendly, and it was evident through the art and signs on the walls that students had a sense of belonging.

A unique feature of Central High School is the absence of traditional high school sports. At Central, students have the opportunity to play intramural sports offered outside of the school. Central has early release every Monday to give teachers the opportunity to meet with their teams and departments. Every grade level team has their own team room they can configure in the way that works best for that specific team. Central teachers also hold an advisory class every morning to check in with students, help monitor their progress, assist with work, and serve as a mentor to their advisory group. Upon my arrival, Mr. Suarez told me, "we've done those things intentionally to make the career focus that much stronger. Instead of it being core and CTE, we've really worked to blend them so that they are not stand-alone pieces. We have a total of 1700 students, mostly Hispanic, mostly low socioeconomic, high at-risk." It is clear that the campus is set up intentionally to create an environment imitating post-secondary learning.

Principal Profile

After a kind greeting, Mr. Suarez led me to his office. It was a warm room with a desk to the side and two small couches separated by a table. The office was decorated with certificates and pictures of family, but had a business-like feel, nonetheless. He was eager to share his work with the campus beginning with his initial arrival as principal. I was struck by his openness to share his personal struggles as a leader, reflections of his

own disappointments, failures, and successes. He was personable and gave his full attention to the work at hand. He related that he had been a principal three years prior to coming to Central High School and shared his initial need, as a new principal to a comprehensive high school, for further professional development and learning. Mr. Suarez talked about the stress he felt coming in to a high performing campus with a toxic culture and his work to change the culture of the campus. He is thoughtful and strategic in his work at Central High School, with a clear drive to tackle one goal at a time to make change. He is driven in his purpose to improve academic instruction, starting by building a culture of care. He recalled that when he first came in as principal, the school was stagnant. He went on to state, "I think that way I came in it was kind of stagnant and needed to move, but it was still very shiny and like this is a great school and people were expecting that continuation of that program". The expectation of the school to do well added additional pressure to Mr. Suarez as he worried about not only continuing the past work of the school but igniting a new spark and energy for the campus to grow. Mr. Suarez stated, "I think that sometimes makes it more difficult, you know, than the fact that sometimes you're low performing and you get every single resource [thrown at you] to improve your performance, it can be just as stressful I think."

He said he continues to serve as the principal of Central High School because of the challenge. He was open and honest in his reflection about the wear the principalship has had on him. He feels worn down and is concerned that his leadership may become stale. He stated, "You deal with some pretty hefty stuff that sometimes you don't want to deal with."

Mr. Suarez shared his mission as the principal of the campus,

We were recognized nationally before I got here, but that one little piece, the teacher collaboration, the improvement of instruction, the care for the students' needs, that's what I felt my role was going to be in these five years.

He went on to state, "It's been fun. My entire time as an educator has been fun." He was reflective in his role as a leader at Central High School and wondered what doors may open for him as a continuing leader, and for Central, if he shifts out of the principalship after this year. There was an underlying current of exhaustion and desire for a change that could be felt throughout our conversation and he was transparent in his plan of moving out of the principalship at the end of the year. He stated, "With my friends and my close confidants I've made that conscience choice that this may be my final year." He talked in the past tense about his tenure as principal and seldom spoke of his personal future goals with the campus other than sharing that he feels they are ready for a new voice. He questioned if he has "done enough for someone else to come in and finish the job." Is the staff ready for a new voice to drive further success for the campus? He believes, "You have to continue to improve yourself and you have to surround yourself with people that will challenge you." This belief also drives Mr. Suarez in the idea that the school, too, must continue to be challenged and that may mean for him that it is time for a new principal. Mr. Suarez stated,

I would say next to the superintendency this is one of the hardest in the school district, you know, and it's taken its toll on me physically and also emotionally, but I've never let it beat me down, but it can if you let it, but sometimes also shift is needed for me so I don't, I feel refreshed.

When asked what has kept him going as the principal for the last five years, Mr. Suarez responded,

So, I stick around and like I said every year graduation, that's the best part I always tell the kids is that I get to shake your hand at the very end of it. I'm the last one that you see, and that's more reward than anything in the world and that's what keeps me coming back, but whew it takes its toll.

Mr. Suarez' energy and clear vision for the school were contagious as he talked about his strengths and failures transparently. While speaking to Mr. Suarez I immediately understood that his commitment to the work was genuine and inspiring and impacted by his individual cultural understanding.

Community and Family Involvement

Community and family involvement is discussed as an important piece to the success of campus. Central High School has a community center located to the right of the main doors of the campus. It is clearly labeled and appears from the main hallway of the school to be a safe and warm environment. I did not have the opportunity to explore the community center because it appeared to be closed during my visit to the campus. Mr. Suarez described the community center, a visual centerpiece of the school,

That used to be a career center. We've changed it to be a community center to where it's, I have a parent liaison there and it's the center for when anybody, parents need support they come in through there and they can find support anywhere from using internet to getting some social services or just recommendations for social services to getting support and filling out certain paperwork if needed.

The community center is meant to be a hub for parents to check grades, talk with counselors and seek support in helping their child be successful. Mr. Suarez described his efforts to involve more parents and explained this was an ongoing challenge at the campus. He hosts multiple events throughout the school year for parents to attend and explains that parent attendance at these events is very small. He noted that the most common way to get parents to attend the campus is through student involvement. He stated,

Once again getting the parents here, doing events like the community fair, doing events like science night and having them bring the family over and do things like that has really showed the kids that it's a community center here instead of just a school.

Mr. Suarez continues to increase parent involvement at the campus, and emphasizes increasing parent involvement is an ongoing goal. Mr. Suarez pointed out that parents are notified when a student is struggling academically and are expected to come to the school to meet with teachers and counselors when their child is not successful. Mr. Suarez said,

We are holding them accountable making the parent come here during their work time because they have to give up for their kid, this is their kid we're talking about, ultimately we need them to be successful and we will get down to business and that's how I will respect the accountability component."

Parent support, when a child is struggling academically or behaviorally, is embraced as an important component on the campus. With the lack of extracurricular activities, parent involvement must be purposeful and expectations for parents are high as

well. Mr. Suarez shares his strict expectations for teachers to be in regular contact via phone with parents and contact them for any absences or concerns they may have.

To ensure a positive outreach to the community and community stakeholders, Mr. Suarez explained his new parent ambassador program,

> I'm going to select parents from specific populations, specific areas of the neighborhood, race, religion, big churches in town, parts of the city and bring them in and train them about our school and how it works and let them be our voice also in the community because they're influencers.

He took this idea a step further and explained how he will train a group parents to increase graduation rates and ensure students are supported in their journey to college enrollment. He said,

> We're also going to take a group of parents, about sixty parents, thirty English speaking, thirty Spanish speaking and train, we call it project 2015, take sixty juniors and guide them from this next semester up until graduation with the intention of 100% college enrollment or post-secondary enrollment. In the same way teaching those sixty parents every single step of the way what it takes to do this process. Our five counsellors can't do it all.

Mr. Suarez shared innovative ideas to increase parent and community engagement keeping his eye on the mission of ensuring students are set up for post-secondary success. Based on our discussion, Mr. Suarez expressed a clear sense of the role of the community on the campus and to the success of the students. He presented himself as innovative and thoughtful about how he utilizes parents to drive positive initiatives while not shying

away from difficult conversations with parents and holding them accountable to provide support to drive their child's success.

Collaborative Governance and Leadership

Mr. Suarez has established very clear structures supporting collaborative governance on the campus. From teachers to students, systems are seemingly in place to ensure all voices are heard and valued. Mr. Suarez expressed that students and teachers are encouraged to actively serve as leaders on the campus by leading campus initiatives. Signs serving as reminders for food drives, coat drives, and yearbook sales plaster the walls of the hallways in the common areas and as we pass them he mentions that all of these are student-led projects. He mentioned that he welcomes student-led initiatives and is proud that the students have an important voice on the campus.

Mr. Suarez discussed a time when he honored the student voice,

we installed a cultural fair last year. Our students, this is a very diverse campus, they wanted to celebrate their cultures and we had never really paid attention to that. Well, I told them, "Okay, let's do it." They put it together, they organized it, gave them all the funds they needed, and they made it happen.

In addition to student driven activities like the cultural fair, Mr. Suarez actively seeks student input through the spirit council. Mr. Suarez explained, "We have a [spirit?] counsel of students that meets and they provide me with perspective and they provide me with guidance as to what things on campus they need." Honoring and distributing leadership to students empowers them, gives ownership and a sense of pride in their campus community of learners. It also sends a message to the campus community that students are an important part of the campus community.

Mr. Suarez described how teacher leaders, such as department chairs and team leads, have opportunity to be heard on the campus. He explains that these campus leaders meet with him to provide weekly updates. He is seemingly meticulous to ensure leaders are in place who will uphold the mission and vision of the campus and states that he does not hesitate to change leadership when needed. He shared that the campus is too large for him to be everywhere so he relies on the leadership around the campus to serve as an extension of his leadership. He described when he first came to Central High School he had a difficult time implementing change because leaders who were in place were neither loyal to him nor the initiatives of the campus. After observation and reflection, he was able to find teachers whom he empowered as leaders and were loyal to his vision of Central. This was an important step to begin changing the culture of the campus and creating a more caring instructionally-focused atmosphere. He paralleled the placement of the "right" teachers in the right positions to a game of chess. The work was seen as challenging and strategic. Based on our conversation, it seemed clear that Mr. Suarez depends on his leaders to carry out the plans of the campus. He shared stories that led me to believe there is ample leadership opportunity on the campus and that he works closely with these campus leaders during weekly meetings and early release days.

Mr. Suarez made it clear that he holds very high expectations for teachers and students. His expectations are clearly articulated when he works with teachers and he commonly makes it clear that high expectations are set because that is what is best for students. When speaking with teachers, he stated,

> I know you guys are trying the best for your kids. You know, we just have to
> make sure the work we're doing is purposeful and is getting you the results that

you want. That's all I want. I mean, if it's not working let's find a way that it works, because I know you want more as a teacher. I know you want the kids to be successful.

Mr. Suarez continues to keep the students at the forefront by maintaining a high level of respect for the teachers. He has made it clear that the teachers are an extension of his work and that their role must be nurtured and respected. He stated,

Allowing that respect for the teacher and the work and the job that they do by supporting them and at the same time taking care of the staff because our staff knows who's not doing the job. They do, and they get discouraged and burned out when they're not taken care of and they're not addressed because then they have to pick up more slack, and they wonder Why am I working this hard? When they can get away and still be working here.

Mr. Suarez exuded a strong sense of collaboration and easily articulated how he works strategically with collaborators to ensure his work is carried out throughout the campus. He sees his teacher leaders as extensions of himself and uses them eagerly to ensure the campus initiatives and vision are carried out.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As a Hispanic male leader, Mr. Suarez seemed to easily create a culturally responsive environment for his Hispanic students and community of parents with ease. His open-door policy with teachers and students as well as his expectation of high standards across the campus contribute to his work. While not specific about how he reinforces culturally responsive pedagogy throughout the campus, Mr. Suarez spoke easily about actions that support a culturally responsive pedagogy on the campus.

Cultural responsiveness was clearly evident in the actions he talked about, but did not seem to be intentional. I did not see evidence of intentional culturally responsive pedagogy across the campus.

Advocacy Oriented Assessment

Mr. Suarez has worked with staff to hold them accountable for implementing good instructional strategies and ensuring students with linguistic diversity are successful. To model this he relied on 30 teachers to put specific instructional strategies in place and used these teachers to model the use of these specific strategies. He explains that a focus on instructional interventions and an awareness of assessment practices specific to the needs of his students is a goal he keeps. Mr. Suarez stated, "That's been my approach ever since was not necessarily programmatic, but picking a strategy and teaching." He went on to share that students identified as English Language Learners (ELL) struggle on his campus with large gaps in reading and writing. ELL student support was a huge need on the campus. Mr. Suarez made swift changes in personnel to ensure students were supported in this area through the use of instructional strategies. He brought in experts to provide professional development in supporting ELL students and strategically placed teachers in these areas who were committed to using these instructional strategies. He recalled that the teachers using these strategies influenced other teachers on the campus, proving that these specific strategies were good not only for ELL students but were good instructional strategies for all students. Suarez discussed how utilizing teacher leaders to influence peer teachers permeated across the campus. When he first arrived as principal on the campus he recalled teachers were using many different programs with no specific focus. Mr. Suarez explained,

The last two years we have really made this focus on making it smaller instead of just broad. We focus on something and we attack it. Last year was the student, was really huge on the student care and developing of a child. This year: reading and writing, reading and writing, reading and writing through that seven steps book, and that's all we talk about. If it doesn't have to do with reading and writing across the curriculum we are not going to deliver it at any of our trainings

He claims to have led the teachers in narrowing the focus by limiting the program to one. In addition to this one program, he talked about his efforts to focus on five specific teaching strategies. Mr. Suarez reflected,

That first year was like pulling teeth, but I got about thirty teachers to commit to a program that we used to have here in [Irving] that taught with specific strategies for ELL [including] students and it was a twelve hour program throughout the year. That one year I was able to get all those teachers to start spreading the word. 'Oh, these are just good strategies. I don't have to do anything different. If I do this I can do it for all my kids and I'm serving all my kids by doing this.'

With a focus on the strategies used, he noted the campus was able to implement the strategies more effectively. By having a deep understanding of what teachers are to teach, he seems to have empowered teachers to focus on the "how" by allowing them to use the art of their individual teaching style.

Mr. Suarez leads his campus to focus on learning standards as opposed to assessment. He shares his belief that the campus is not ready for common assessment and intends to bring in common assessments slowly. He said teachers on the campus are starting to utilize common assessments, but his focus is unpacking the TEKS and

105

ensuring teachers have a good sense of the learning standards by focusing on what they should be teaching. Specific assessment practices were not addressed. Mr. Suarez shared that the campus had recently lost access to their curriculum and that the focus this year was rebuilding this curriculum in order to ensure teachers knew what to teach.

High Expectations

The culture of the school is heavily imbued with a culture of care for the students. Mr. Suarez has a strong dedication to the belief that student success is dependent on the teachers caring for them. He does believe in high expectations for the students and makes it clear that even though there is a high expectation for students, the students will learn when they understanding and believe they are listened to and cared for even when they make wrong decisions. He was clear that when a student is in trouble or not living up to the high expectations, they must understand they made a bad choice, they are not bad kids. He explained the importance of keeping a high level of respect for the students and how he creatively addresses behavior that does not match the high expectations established. He talked about a recent example,

> We've been struggling. They've been kind of slacking a little bit. And so, instead of coming over the PA and knocking them or talking to them in an assembly or whatever, we just reward the students that are doing it well and we have them shine and that has helped us a lot more with our high school kids than anything. The attack on them has, in the past, created more rebellion than it has more support for some of the things we want them to take on.

By taking a different approach, he ascertains that students feel they are in a safer more supportive environment. He described what a safe and supportive environment looks like on his campus,

> I mean where your door is literally open and the kids can walk in and you can walk around and they know you and they stop you and they want to talk to you and they come in and they feel comfortable coming in and voicing a concern with me without being afraid.

Creating an open and safe environment for the students where expectations are clear has opened opportunities for learning and contributed to creating a safe learning environment.

In order to further support students, teachers use advisory periods to mentor students and help them set goals with their specific needs in mind. Advisory time is strategically designed to create positive relationships between students and teachers, provide opportunity for mentorship, and help students reach their goals within their career tracks. Mr. Suarez identified the benefits by stating, "being able to speak up to what their needs are in the social arena has been helpful". Mr. Suarez noted that students excel in project-based learning and teachers are encouraged to allow students to learn through discovery and problem solving. Student labs put the learning in the hands of the students and allow them to learn through experimenting in a hands-on setting. Mr. Suarez is working with teachers on specific instructional strategies to assist students in their success. He stated, "any type of instructional changes wouldn't happen unless the kids felt respected and safe in our building." He stated that he commonly shares with teachers,

> We'll try something different, but do not fall trap to just doing what you've always done. I always tell them you are more likely to struggle in the changing face of

our students, in the changing face of education and how we deal with instruction

if you keep that mindset.

Teachers are encouraged to work with students in creative ways, to foster their individual

learning styles, and to think about instruction in non-traditional ways to keep up with the

diverse needs of students.

Summary

Mr. Suarez easily communicates his strategy as a principal. While his campus was

not a low-performing campus upon arrival, much of his language matches the practices of

a turnaround principal (Reform Support Network, n.d.). He is passionate about the work

happening on the campus with a clear vision of the future of the campus. Community

family engagement and collaborative governance and leadership seemed to be areas of

intense focus on the campus for Mr. Suarez.

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Forrest High School

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School Profile

Forrest is a small town located outside of Houston. The community is quaint with

small houses lining quiet streets and either a church or a school on every corner. Forrest

High School is one of two high schools in the community and is a massive grouping of

buildings filled with kind staff and a warm atmosphere. Mr. Garcia has served as the

principal of Forrest High School for the last four years and as a Forrest High School

graduate, he proudly serves his alma mater with fierce commitments to the school and

community.

Table 9

Student Demographics-Forrest

	% of Population
Hispanic	91.6%
African American	4.7%
White	2.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	79.0%
Limited English Proficient	10.8%

Table 10

Student Graduation Rates-Forrest

	Class of 2007	**Class of 2008**	**Class of 2009**
All Students Graduation Rates	83.4%	78.6%	82.7%
All Students Drop Out Rate	9.9%	7.8%	4.6%
Hispanic Students Graduation Rates	82.8%	80.3%	82.6%
Hispanic Students Drop Out Rate	11.8%	6.9%	4.4%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Graduation Rates	73.8%	73.7%	76.1%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas) Drop Out Rate	11.3%	14.4%	13.1%

Table 11

College Career Readiness Scores-Forrest

	Class of 2007	**Class of 2008**	**Class of 2009**
All Students	12%	32%	51%
Hispanic Students	11%	34%	51%
Statewide Campus Group (like campuses in Texas)	18%	27%	52%

I arrived at the school and easily found the front of the building. Sidewalks were

covered with fading painted yellow jackets, the school mascot. As I entered the building,

it was clear that all visitors are expected to check in at the office. The office was a warm

space full of students and parents. Staff members were assisting students in finding a

teacher they could not locate and a large number of parents whose students had missed an

excess of school days were waiting to talk to assistant principals.

Principal Profile

The principal, Mr. Garcia, greeted me warmly after greeting a few of the parents

in the office by name and escorted me to his office where we sat with a desk between us.

His office was professionally decorated but had a worn loved feel about it. Mr. Garcia

was ready to get to work and quickly asked me where we would begin. He had

unexplainable familial warmth about him and as he explained his journey to the

principalship, I immediately understood that his warmth came from his passion for the

school he serves. Mr. Garcia grew up in Forrest, was a student of Forrest ISD in

elementary, middle, and high school. He attended Forrest High School, the very school

he later came back to lead as principal. He explained that he started as a substitute

teacher, worked as a permanent teacher after he received his degree, and then decided,

with his two sisters, to go back to school to get his masters' in school leadership. He and

his sisters completed the school leadership program and they currently all serve as

principals in the Houston area. Mr. Garcia stated,

> even though we are different we still handle a lot of the same issues, either parents
>
> or teachers or administration that we can bounce ideas off of each other. What do
>
> you do with this? In this situation, I did this. Or this is what I would have done.
>
> This is how I would have handled it. Even resources where we find teachers. Hey,
>
> we, I've got a good candidate, but they're elementary. I can't use them. I'll send

them to you.

He went on to say the support system helps him as a principal as he continues to keep up with best practices and ever-changing state statutes and stated, "It really has made it easier for me to do my job." Mr. Garcia finds support through his sisters but admitted this is a difficult job. He discussed the pressure and stress that seem to come from everywhere. He talked about what keeps him inspired in this position by explaining,

What keeps me going is that I grew up in this community, I still live in this community, and these are my neighbors. I can't look my neighbors in the eye and say I didn't do the job that I'm here to do as to the best of my abilities and still look at them. I can't do that. This community and the values and the core beliefs that I grew up with keep me wanting to do the best I can, give back to the community that gave to me, and that keeps me going. I see these kids, they're like me. It seemed clear based on our visit that Mr. Garcia's actions were guided by his cultural understanding and impacts his behaviors and actions on the campus.

This seemingly powerful connection to the community was woven throughout our conversations. Mr. Garcia stated,

but the core beliefs have always been Forrest is a community, and it's my way of giving back to that community, and giving back to the kids that look like me and that look like my kids. So that, even in the hard times that has not changed. That drives me every day that I come. I want kids to be successful.

Mr. Garcia jokingly discussed how on the hard days he would love a central office job but quickly added he would not want to be taken away from the kids. Talking about students on the campus put a smile on his face and it was clear from our visit that

111

he is committed to the community and the students of Forrest.

Building Collaborative Relationships with Parents

Mr. Garcia seemingly has very strong sense of community and a commitment to build relationships with parents. He discusses that his efforts are supported from the superintendent who is active in the small community and also places emphasis on parent involvement. Garcia goes on to relate that she [the superintendent] insists that the principals in the district involve the community in everything that happens on the campus. Mr. Garcia feels supported in his vision. He stated, "I believe in transparency. Everything that I do parents know. There is no secrets with me. And I believe in communicating with the parents on, if not on daily basis, a lot during the week". Mr. Garcia explains that he communicates with parents that the school is not only educating students but preparing them for success after high school. He stated,

> Parents, this is what we're here for. You know, so we want you as part of the planning process. We want you to come to our school. I want you when you walk in the door that you feel this is home not just for the kids, because a lot of times we do stuff for the adults.

Mr. Garcia exhibits a strong commitment to the parents of the students he serves and does not hesitate to have difficult conversations with parents about their students' performance. He explained,

> That's my job is to communicate with these parents one-on-one as much as possible, but let them know where their kids are at. Let them know what they need to do. Let them know what we are offering. Let them know the different programs that are available.

112

Mr. Garcia's stated, "I can't do my job unless the parents understand why I'm doing what I'm doing."

Mr. Garcia stands firm in his work to build strong relationships with parents. He spoke passionately about communicating effectively with the parents of his students and providing clear expectations to his leadership team about communication with parents. He stated,

> We, as you saw, there were five parents out there. I could have given them a letter saying your child has an attendance problem, but, no, I sit down and talk to them, let them know what personally what's going on with their kid, what we're going to do, what they need to do, what the child needs to do. So, we communicate one-on-one with them as much as we can.

The power of the relationship between the school and the parents was a running theme throughout our entire time together. He summed up his passion for building relationships with parents by stating, "We talk to parents. We listen to their concerns." As the parent of a high school student, Mr. Garcia seemed to always be talking through the eyes of a parent. His own daughter attends his school and he expresses that he firmly advocates for the rights of parents and will not allow them to be passed around or blown off.

Mr. Garcia is seemingly an integral part of the community of the school. His personal experiences as a graduate of the high school and his current connection serving as principal of the school his own child attends mean he is not only the principal, but a highly visible representative of the community as well. His seeming transparency and willingness to be open and available to parents and community perhaps contribute to his success as a leader.

Establishing Collaborative Governance and Leadership

Forrest High School is a large older campus that is very spread out. As we toured the campus, there were many different halls, different buildings, and areas slightly tucked away in hard to find locations. Naturally, feeling connected in this older more traditional looking high school would seem to be a challenge. Mr. Garcia spoke about how he connects leaders, creates space for all voices to be heard, and what he expects of the leaders at Forrest to ensure collaborative governance in a very large disconnected institution. When I asked Mr. Garcia how he led this large campus, he confidently stated, "I have a strong team that I have chosen." His commitment to his leadership team, growing teachers as leaders, and their accountability to one another, were recurring themes throughout our discussion. Mr. Garcia said that his leadership team is very strong and he attributed this to the fact that he was able to choose his own team from the beginning. He stated,

> I have a strong team that I have chosen. Luckily, I've built up that trust at the end building [Central office] where last year I was the only principal, it's a fact that I was allowed to choose the assistant principals.

Mr. Garcia was allowed to hand select his leadership team and he has many people on this team on whom he relies heavily to ensure strong leadership is provided throughout the building. He explained who is on his administrative leadership team, "I have two associates, and then I have two assistant principals and I have a testing director, and at-risk coordinator, special programs coordinator, and a 504 coordinator." He described the nature of the team is one of shared responsibility and shared accountability. He explained,

We're all accountable to each other. I'm accountable to you if I don't do my job, and you're accountable to me, to parents, and kids if you don't do your job, and we lead that way. I am not in any way a micro-manager. That's just not my style. What we do is we plan together.

He attributes most of the success of his administrative team to three things. He said, "A lot of it is that shared planning, that shared responsibility and holding each other accountable for it." Accountability seems to be of huge importance to Mr. Garcia and he spoke to it often. He stated,

It's what I talked about earlier about shared responsibilities, shared accountability, and I tell them, you're all accountable not only to me, you're accountable to the superintendent. You're accountable to the teachers. You're accountable to parents. You're accountable to students. We're all, but most importantly you're accountable to each other, because if you don't do your job then it, the whole team suffers, so you have to be accountable to the guy right next to you.

Mr. Garcia relies deeply on the accountability that helps to hold people responsible for their work.

It was clear, based on our conversation, that Mr. Garcia has effective systems in place to assist in making his school run smoothly. From something as small as the way to document phone calls, to clear expectations about the roles and responsibilities of each position on the campus, Mr. Garcia seemingly knows exactly who is responsible for what and what each job should look like on the campus. He stated,

If it doesn't get done, if you don't do your job, then it's on me because I either didn't give you the skills or give you the correct directive or guidance or I didn't

hold you accountable so it's on me, but I'm going to hold each of you. You know

your job, and I'm going to hold you accountable for your job.

Mr. Garcia's vision for what each position looks like was very clear, and he shares that he

has conversations with teachers and administrators about expectations often. He stated,

I consider myself a teaching principal. There's a lot of principals that do their job

and not worry about building leadership. I don't see myself as that. I see myself as

my responsibilities is building that leadership, the leadership levels from a

teacher, starting as a teacher maybe one day being a department chair. From that

department chair, maybe one day being an instructional specialist from that. Or

maybe a teacher from being on my leadership team to being one day an assistant

principal.

With this mindset, Mr. Garcia is able to capitalize on opportunities to teach his staff his

expectations and also give them a view of their area of potential growth. As a self-

professed teaching principal, he has many candid conversations with teachers and

administrators about expectations as well as feedback of their current work. He stated,

when I'm talking to them like in the hall, I'll be teaching them, you know, you

gotta look for this or when you talk to that parent make sure you do this, this, and

this. I want them to come to me with questions because it's my job to get them

ready.

Mr. Garcia grows teachers through his current leaders. He relies heavily on his

instructional team called the Instructional Framework Team (IFT). This team, made up of

department chairs and teacher leaders, meets with the associate principals of the campus

and works together on making decisions for the campus. Mr. Garcia stated that he feels

this is the team that helps to develop "buy-in" on the campus as the teachers are able to voice their opinions and make important decisions on the campus while being validated for their opinions and thinking. He shared that the decision making that happens in the Instructional Framework Team is critical and said,

It creates a, one, trust, but it creates a we're working together for a common goal. It's not a dictatorship of we are going to do this, we are going to do that. They understand why we want to do it, and if there is a question of why I want to do something that way they'll present it to them [other teachers].

Mr. Garcia also uses faculty meetings to build collaboration and model collaborative leadership by stating,

In our faculty meeting I'll explain to them why I made the decision that I did. So, when they have that buy-in, when we develop those leaders and they go back to their departments, the buy-in is almost 100%, because it is everybody collaborating, contributing to it.

Mr. Garcia seems to rely heavily on his collaborative leadership skills, just as he also depends heavily on the shared decision making of his leadership and instructional framework team. While he has an acute awareness of the needs of the campus, he also knows strategically how to ensure his leadership team and campus staff take ownership of, and understand those needs, and are prepared to fully implement them.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Mr. Garcia is passionate about the topic of culturally responsive pedagogy. Raised in the community, he was one of seven children. His dad was a construction worker and his mother served as a homemaker taking care of all of the children. With much

enthusiasm, Mr. Garcia proudly stated, "I made it to work as a principal." He shared his belief and passion by stating, "All of our kids are capable, that no matter where they come from. I don't care if they're Hispanic, African American, White, Chinese. I don't care. They're all capable of being successful." He went on to say,

We are capable of producing doctors and engineers and with any of our kids. It does not matter what their color is or what their economic background is, but we have to work every day and hard every day because I do not want them to come back and say, 'Mr. Garcia you did a poor job. I wasn't successful because I didn't have the skills.

While Mr. Garcia speaks to culturally responsive pedagogy, there was little evidence of this pedagogy throughout the campus. Mr. Garcia recognizes the value in seeing himself in the students he serves. Through his personal connection and understanding of the deeply embedded Hispanic culture of the campus and community, Mr. Garcia has been able to make culturally responsive decisions based on the needs of the students and the community but evidence of this throughout the campus is absent.

Advocacy Oriented Assessment

When discussing how to help teachers understand the cultural and linguistic differences of students, Mr. Garcia said his campus focuses on a number of activities including, SIOP strategies, a program focused on strategies to engage English Language Learners (ELL), utilizing English-rich interactive notebooks to help focus on vocabulary, and ensuring an ELL specialist is on every planning team. Mr. Garcia said these practices are applied to all students. He states, "let's tailor our program to meet everybody's needs and fill in those gaps. The kids that are already strong, it strengthens them. The kids that

are already weak get stronger." He passionately expresses his belief that by providing appropriate resources to teachers and students, he can better address gaps in learning and ensure teachers have the tools they need to help students be successful. He believes in taking away excuses so everyone can be successful. He stated,

> I'm a big believer in if you take excuses from everybody and if you have all of this in front of you and there's no reason, no excuse why that lesson wasn't a lesson that was top notch, or that, oh, if you get your results back from a test. Oh, all my ESL kids did really bad. You had that resource right there.

He believes that planning for the success of the student starts by examining the needs of the student and making decisions about which teacher will be best for that student. Instead of asking his best teachers to teach Advanced Placement courses, Mr. Garcia points out that his best teachers are teaching students who need the most support. He shared,

> We make sure they are in the right classes with the right teachers and we assess them, our district assesses them twice a year, but we're doing, what we're trying to do is build up our own assessments so we're assessing where the kids are at all times.

He not only relies on assessment of the students but also assesses the effectiveness of his teachers for the students they are teaching, as well as programs currently utilized on the campus. He said, "So, it's assessing, constantly assessing where the kids are. Constantly assessing the program to see if it's meeting the kids [needs]." He stated, with much confidence, "It's a constant assessment of how they are, where they are and where they are going." Mr. Garcia expects administrators to be involved in the planning process and

in the monitoring. He shared,

> I want to see where you [teachers] are actually teaching and that's how I want my
> administrators involved in that planning process and also in monitoring it. I want
> you [administrators] to monitor to make sure that the lesson, one, is based on
> good practices and is fitting the needs of all of your, all of our students.

Mr. Garcia seemingly does not shy away from having difficult conversations with teachers if they are not meeting the expectations of the campus. He said, "If you're not doing what's best for our kids we will have a difficult conversation." He holds high expectations for students as well as teachers.

After our conversation it seems that advocacy-oriented assessment is evident at Forrest High School and in the work Mr. Garcia conducts with his staff. While ensuring high expectations of all, he also seems to ensure programs at the school are specific to his high percentage of English Language Learners. In addition, he encourages teachers to use specific strategies to assess students enabling them to match instruction to student needs. Mr. Garcia uses assessment strategies specific to his campus demographics to not only understand where they are in the learning process, but also to ensure best placement with teachers, and guide coaching and support services to the students.

High Expectations

Mr. Garcia speaks often of his high expectations for students and staff. He firmly believes it is an educator's job to bring out the capabilities in students and to nurture and strengthen their capabilities and he sets out to do this every day. Mr. Garcia discussed the importance of greeting students and holding expectations of paying attention to every

child and engaging with them through positive conversation and not only treating them well but also holding them to high standards and expectations.

Mr. Garcia talked about a program he started where each administrative team member serves as an academic coach for a group of low performing students. He shared,

> We're going to take interest in their attendance and their discipline and how they are doing in their tests, their grades, everything. We are going to bring them into the office and they are going to be on Mr. Garcia's team or Miss. Morris' team and so forth.

Many of these children he had never met. He explained his reaction,

> to me, you know, I, you know, it was a moment of, you know, in one of those moments you get, told my associate, "You know, we just made invisible kids visible. All it took was come in and sit in my office for a few minutes. How are you doing in your class? And then they see me in the hallway"

The idea of making invisible kids, visible is very powerful for Mr. Garcia. He explained further,

> But it, that's our job and I didn't realize it at first. Being an administrator for ten years before I got this job, I, you don't, things get in the way of it and you don't do things, but when you turn invisible kids visible it changes your life. It really does.

Because of this experience, the program has grown and now teachers are becoming inspired to make invisible kids visible and they are choosing to coach students. It seems evident that Mr. Garcia holds much pride in this work.

Summary

Coupled with Mr. Garcia's commitment to the community and parents of the students of his school, he has a clear sense of what teachers need to be successful, the vision to drive the campus forward, and the courage to hold others accountable for the work that needs to be done. Mr. Garcia appears to have a strong sense of community, as he relies on community and parents to ensure students are best prepared to be successful on his campus. It also appears that he builds strong leaders through collaborative leadership, empowering leaders on his campus to ensure the campus vision is met. In addition, Mr. Garcia noted that he is strategic in ensuring students diverse backgrounds and learning styles are kept in mind as he supports teachers in providing appropriate resources to best meet student's needs. His seeming focus on the student and community and how the teachers work with both are an integral piece of his leadership at Forrest High School.

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Cross Case Analysis

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The findings of this study allow several conclusions to be drawn based on Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner's (1999) conceptual framework for high performing schools. Using their conceptual framework, I operationalized the behaviors of principals independently, through the lenses of culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy-oriented assessment, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement. Using the framework to categorize each of the principals' actions, as documented through this study, we can better understand specific behaviors or actions principals take in enacting the conceptual framework of Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner

(1999). In addition, the findings of this study suggest the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) framework maintains relevancy almost 15 years after its initial development.

Principal actions identified in the study are each associated with one of the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) conceptual framework pieces: culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy-oriented assessment, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement. Looking through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, I identified the action of the principal as connecting with the community culture. Through the lens of advocacy-oriented assessment, the principal action identified was identifying needs by using appropriate assessment, focusing and aligning teaching and learning resources to the needs of teachers and students, and inspiring a culture of growth and innovation. Through the lens of collaborative governance and leadership, principal actions included creating strong teams with a clear vision for student and teacher success and developing relationships with parents as accountability partners. And lastly, through the lens of community and family involvement, principals advocated for the campus community and connected with the community.

Conceptual Framework	Summative Actions			Overarching Actions
Culturally responsive pedagogy	*Principal connecting with community culture*			Principal *modeling high expectations* for the campus community
Advocacy-oriented assessment	*Principal identifying needs by use of appropriate assessment*	Principal *focusing and aligning teaching and learning resources* to the needs of teachers and students	Principal *inspiring* (or stimulating) a culture of growth and innovation	
Collaborative governance and leadership	*Principal creating strong teams with a clear vision for student and teacher success*	Principal *developing relationships* with parents as accountability partners		Principal *reflecting on personal practice*
Community and family involvement	*Principal advocating for campus community*	Principal *connecting with community*		

Figure 2. Observed leadership actions of participating principals.

Through the research, each of these behaviors or actions were found to be a prevalent part of the work of the participating principals. In addition to the actions listed above, two other behaviors were identified that flowed throughout the pieces of the conceptual framework. Throughout the interviews, principals discussed how they modeled high expectations for the campus community and reflected openly and candidly

on their personal practice. How each action was carried out, while varying slightly from principal to principal, is also important. The principals in this particular study had passion for, and deep understanding of, the work that helps to define each of the specific actions. It is important to note that each action is specifically defined by how and what that specific action looks like in the work of the participating principals.

Principal Modeling High Expectations for the Campus Community

Across the four pieces of the Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) framework, the emergent theme of the action of the principal modeling high expectations for the campus community was prevalent in all cases. Paredes and Scribner (2001) suggest that effective instruction for Hispanic students must possess key elements of high expectations, parental involvement, and an emphasis on language and culture (p. 209). Principals interviewed shared stories of modeling high expectations for students, teachers, parents, and the entire campus community. There was a strong belief articulated by each principal that students can achieve when high expectations are set. The principal of Williams High School stated, "we need to push them into AP to challenge them and we're not talking about test or pass the, we want them to pass the test, but we believe in them that they can do this rigorous course." The Forrest High School principal stated, "We are capable of producing doctors and engineers with any of our kids." Through modeling this belief, the principal demonstrated that he holds the expectation that teachers will hold students to the same high expectations. He stated that holding high expectations for students also means supporting them to reach the expectations laid out for them. Dr. Martinez said, "I want to create the atmosphere and I want our teachers to have high expectations for the kids, but you need to find a way to support them and pull them up to those expectations."

The principals interviewed all said they continually raise the bar for students and challenge them to continue to grow. Each emphasized that they model high expectations for teachers as well as students and expect teachers to work to a high standard. According to the principals interviewed, teachers are encouraged to be reflective in their practice, increase their level of rigor, and support and assist all students to be successful in their classrooms. All of the principals hold each and every teacher to the same high expectations showing support and encouragement along the way. As evidenced in the interviews, the principals agreed that a different placement may be necessary when a campus team member (teacher, assistant principal) fails to meet the expectations of the principal. And, they all spoke about the necessity of meeting courageous conversations head on and discussed the benefits of transparency and honesty.

Principals Reflecting on Personal Practice

Another behavior found across the elements of the conceptual framework was reflection on personal practice. Reflection around exhaustion, self-doubt, life after the principalship, motivation and supports, as well as personal beliefs around leadership philosophy were named. Examining the reflections of the principals made me think about how important it is for successful principals to reflect and take the time to examine and evaluate their leadership role. Each principal, without prompting, discussed what keeps them at the school and how stress and exhaustion are an ongoing part of their world. Mr. Garcia best summed up this theme by stating, "The pressure and stress come from everywhere." Mr. Suarez said, "It's just tiring, you know? It is a stress thing you don't even feel until it's too late." Self-doubt was prevalent for each principal as they talked about how they deal with their doubt and stress. During the dialogue, their reflections of

126

doubt were often shadowed by a shared story of motivation, followed up by a passionate statement of their personal belief about leadership. Mr. Garcia said that what keeps him going is his connection with the community. He stated,

> What keeps me going is that I grew up in this community, and these are my neighbors. I can't look my neighbors in the eye and say I didn't do the job that I'm here to do as to the best of my abilities and still look at them. I can't do that. This community and the values and the core beliefs I grew up with keep me wanting to do the best I can, give back to the community that gave to me, and that keeps me going.

Each principal spoke how the position becomes stressful and exhausting, not waiting for a question to prompt their thoughts. After numerous interruptions and a seemingly stressful call from one of her superintendents, Dr. Martinez shared,

> I would have never imagined I would be still here. Most people don't stay in these jobs this long. It's stressful. I love what I do. I love my community. I love my kids. I have an amazing staff, but it is. The stress at times, they're always changing the rules of the game, but it also gives me a new challenge so maybe that's what's keeping me around.

It was apparent, by the many pictures and high school memorabilia covering her office and the way she spoke about the students and campus, that her heart and soul are entangled with that of the school. She appeared tired but determined. These sweet and honest reflective moments came across as acknowledgments of the difficulty of the job backed up by a reminder of why they are still committed to their role on the campus.

Seeing value in self and value in the hard work they have committed to on a daily basis was an important part of the reflection.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

When looking for culturally responsive pedagogy, one of the principals made connections with community culture, both within and throughout the campus. Haviland and Rodriguez-Kiino (2009), state, "Although culturally responsive pedagogy acknowledges students' experiences and life achievements, its main premise is to holistically integrate these experiences into the curricula, using them as a launching pad for students to acquire new knowledge" (p. 201). By this, students are able to "nest" themselves into the curriculum and see where the learning fits into their life, values, and cultural understanding. In one of the three schools, evidence of culturally responsive pedagogy throughout the campus evidenced by paintings and murals of the cultural representation of the community and school, as well as through culturally relevant student work and displays. In addition, the principal spoke about how she works to embed the fibers of the culture into the campus and teaching community. Dr. Martinez shared, "It's really just modelling that that is who you are and what you believe in and that's what you expect the campus to be as well." Within a culturally responsive classroom, "learning happens in a culturally supportive context where student strengths and interests are built upon," and this increases academic performance (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007, p. 64). The other two principals, while talking about how they are responsive to the culture of the campus, did not give specific examples of how they were driving culturally responsive pedagogy on their campus. While these two principals both spoke to the value of being Hispanic and looking like the students, there was no evidence

that this pedagogy was in place throughout the campus. While each of the campuses may have had culturally responsive pedagogy, it was only evident to me on one of the three campuses.

Advocacy Oriented Assessment

Advocacy-oriented assessment keeps the focus on the needs of the students. According to Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), "Assessment should define expectations for students, teachers, schools, and school districts, as well as educational agencies" (p.169). While discussing advocacy oriented assessment, Kim, Gendron, Toro, and Fairborn (2011) state:

> Challenges associated with educating increasing numbers of ELLs have been exacerbated by educational policies based on accountability agendas, outcomes-based curricula, and standards-driven testing that do not comprehensively take into account the unique characteristics and needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners. (p. 10)

Three commonalities found throughout the responses to questions about advocacy oriented assessment were the principal *identifying* needs by use of appropriate assessment, the principal *focusing* and *aligning* teaching and learning resources to the needs of teachers and students, and the principal *inspiring* a culture of growth and innovation.

Principal identifying needs by use of appropriate assessment. In a time when assessment seems to drive the overall work of educators, it is of no surprise that principal behavior centers around assessment. It is important to note however that the action is "identify." Successful principals identify needs by use of appropriate assessment.

According to Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999), "School personnel use a diverse array of assessment data to promote the individual learning of students" (p. 204). The principals in this study discussed using this action for two focused and specific reasons. First, assessments are used to inform the needs of the campus, teachers, and students. Secondly, assessments are used to engage students in their own learning. Mr. Garcia said, "It's constant assessment of how they are, where they are and where they are going." Identifying needs by assessment through informing and engaging creates an environment where student and teacher growth and progress are drivers of student learning creating an environment of success. Dr. Martinez stated,

> knowledge is power, so the more information that we can give them [teachers] in a user friendly way, I can give them tons of charts and graphs, but if it's something that they are saying, 'Okay, now I understand why I need to group this student differently.'

She discussed using assessment to help students be most successful in the classroom by stating,

> Identify. Know who your ESL student groups are, know who your SPED students are, who your sub-groups are so that when you're grouping kids, when you're pairing people up, when you're doing peer-tutoring, you know who you are putting together, and that, that's going to be a good combination. That is going to be supportive and helpful for all students involved. It's about awareness more than anything.

All principals discussed the importance and value of assessing students at all times, whether small or large scale assessment, the value is being able to make decisions

about where the student is in the learning process and meeting that student's individual needs. This action also seemingly compliments establishing high expectations on a campus and empowers students and teachers.

Principal focusing and aligning teaching and learning resources to the needs of teachers and students. Each principal shared an overall vision for their campus and a strong and narrow instructional focus, and affirmed they work to ensure all stakeholders know and understand the vision and area of focus. Hargreaves (2003) explains "The primary responsibility of all school leaders is to sustain learning. Leaders of learning put learning at the center of everything they do" (p. 696).Dr. Martinez discussed her campus instructional focus by stating, "With the accountability program our ESL and SPED are the two populations we've really got to focus on." She went on to explain further, "If you just look at our ethnicities, we have gaps, but those subgroups in and of themselves, even though they are relatively small compared to the overall population we are leaving them way behind." She spoke with a sense of urgency around these gaps and the goals specifically focused on the ESL and SPED students. Mr. Suarez said,

> We focus on something and attack it. Last year was the student, was really
> huge on the student care and developing of a child. This year: reading and
> writing, reading and writing, reading and writing through that seven steps
> book, and that's all we talk about. If it doesn't have to do with reading and
> writing across the curriculum we are not going to deliver it at any of our
> trainings, we're not going to ask you to take time off for it, or anything
> like that.

Each of the principals seemed to have a clear "laser-like focus" on the instructional needs of the campus and how they will "attack" those needs. Kowalski (2010) describes effective administrators as visionaries with a clear focus on what their school will look like in the future. He states, "In the absence of this image, school personnel are likely to be reactive rather than proactive" (p. 48). The principals interviewed shared the vision for their campus openly and freely with all stakeholders and the principals speak to ensuring that all resources are aligned to ensure the vision and instructional focus are supported.

Principal stimulating a culture of growth and innovation. The principals interviewed spoke to intentionally developing leadership potential throughout their campuses and have a focus on continuing to grow through new learning, not only with themselves but with campus leaders. Scribner (1999) supports this by stating, "Teachers empower their students, providing opportunities for experimentation, innovation, discovery and problem solving" (p. 200). Specifically, all three principals reflected on their personal instructional growth and understanding. Mr. Suarez said, "You have to continue to improve yourself and you to have to surround yourself with people that will challenge you." This year, Mr. Suarez shared that he re-organized his departments to ensure instructionally strong leaders are in place to push his own learning and the learning of the campus. He went on to state, "I'm actually growing as an instructional leader. I think I've always been good with the heart part. That's just me as a person, but the growing as an instructional leader is one of my areas of growth every year." Dr. Martinez said, "We've invested a lot of money into providing a more technology oriented learning environment so that the kids are more in control of it and the teacher becomes

more of a facilitator and they're still the leader." According to Dr. Martinez, this investment pushes teachers out of the traditional teaching style and gives teachers tools to further engage students. All of the principals said that they are open to new ideas and allow colleagues to grow through the development and ownership of new thinking and new approaches to the work.

Collaborative Governance and Leadership

"An essential function of the collaborative governance and leadership is the principal's capacity to communicate meaning and inspire people to actively participate in collegial and collaborative processes…."(Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 196-199). Behaviors found supporting collaborative governance and leadership were principals *creating* strong teams with a clear vision for student and teacher success and principals *developing* relationships with parents as accountability partners. According to the principals, creating strong teams with a clear vision for success not just for students but also teachers, ensures that all stakeholders are invested and accountable for the success of the campus. Harris (2012) states, "While the idea of shared, collaborative or participative leadership is far from new, distributed leadership theory has provided a new lens on a familiar theme" (p. 7). This notion of distributive leadership focuses on the interactions of school leaders, as opposed to their actions. The research of Harris (2012) indicates that distributive leadership is only successful with the support of the principal, and the principal plays a key role in building leadership capacity on the campus. By developing the leadership of stakeholders and ensuring they know how they are accountable for student success, these principals seemingly established collaborative leadership and ownership throughout the campus and ensured everyone felt a sense of responsibility.

133

Principal creating strong teams with a clear vision for student and teacher

success. The participating principals all rely on teams of teachers and fellow

administrators to create success for both students and teachers. Marks and Printy (2003)

explain further, "To enlarge the leadership capacity of schools attempting to improve

their academic performance, some principals involve teachers in sustained dialogue and

decision making about educational matters" (p. 370). These principals shared that teams

are thoughtfully developed with a vision for student and teacher success and create

opportunity for investment or "buy-in" into the how the campus creates opportunities for

success. Mr. Garcia stated, "So, when they have that buy-in, when we develop those

leaders and they go back to their departments, the buy-in is almost 100%, because it is

everybody collaborating, contributing to it." Mr. Garcia went on to say,

> It creates a, one, trust, but it creates a we're working together for a common goal.
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> It's not a dictatorship of we are going to do this, we are going to do that. They
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> understand why we want to do it, and if there is a question of why I want to do
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> something that way they'll present it to them.

He also noted that there is power in teachers understanding why decisions are made

because they are empowered to share the rationale with their colleagues creating a deeper

sense of ownership and investment. Starting with strong administrative teams, clear and

focused teaching teams serve to hold administrators and teachers accountable for the

success of all students. Mr. Suarez discussed how creating a sense of investment with

teachers is an intentional act and the power of peer influence. Mr. Suarez stated,

> you do have to be intentional of what things you put in place for them to come to
>
> that conclusion whether it's through a training, whether it's through a specific

leader or whether it's through meeting with a specific teacher that is kind of doing it and they kind of meet together and decide this is a good idea. They will listen to their peers more than they will listen to me.

Each of the principals said they rely heavily on strong teacher teams and view them as their extended influence across the campus.

Principal developing relationships with parents as accountability partners. The principals shared that they ensure positive relationships are established with parents and utilize them as accountability partners for student success. Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) state "The belief that student academic success can be improved through programs designed to increase parent involvement in education is widespread in both the academic and policy-making arenas" (p. 572). Mr. Garcia stated his beliefs about parental involvement, "I think you get parents involved when they believe that you're giving their child every advantage, every benefit you can for them to be successful". Dr. Martinez described how they build parent involvement on their campus,

> We really build as much parental involvement through activities their students are involved in whether they're athletics, the arts, music, leadership, that's where we try to get parents in as much as we can because we know that's what will draw them.

She went on to discuss when working with parents new to the country, "We have to work a little harder to find those events, those activities to draw them in." Strong lines of communication are established and parent voices are heard and respected. Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, and Kayzar (2002) ascertain, "Parenting, volunteering,

and supporting home learning result primarily from the efforts of parents; but communicating, participating in decision making, and collaborating with the community also require commitment and effort from schools" (p. 552). Dr. Martinez shared her perspective about ensuring a parents' voices are heard. She supports this by saying,

> If you are willing to listen, you'll have a parent supporting you for life if it's sometimes it's just that moment that you sat down for that thirty minutes that maybe you didn't have, but you took it anyway just to hear them out and sometimes you can help them, sometimes you can't, but just the fact that you took the time to listen is huge.

Parents have an established space on the campus through use of community and parent centers and parents are used as mentors to support students in their learning. In his first year as principal, Mr. Garcia changed the student support center to a community center. He described it this way,

> That used to be a career center. We've changed it to be a community center to where it's, I have a parent liaison there and it's the center for when anybody, parents need support they come in through there and they can find support anywhere from using internet to getting some social services or just recommendations for social services to getting support and filling out certain paperwork if needed.

Similarly, Dr. Martinez said,

> We have a half time parental involvement liaison. We have a risk coordinator who goes and does a lot of home visits, you know, works very closely. We also have a social worker, they call them alpha coordinators, also does a lot of home visits,

goes to those homes to really pull those parents in and make them feel

comfortable and make them feel welcomed.

Principal Martinez noted that she also provides a place where parents are empowered to

support their children in their educational success. She explained,

I walk them through, and we set them up on a system our district has called Parent

Portal. They can come in and use computers at our library if they don't have a

computer at home and it actually gets them online so they can monitor their

child's grades. They can email with the teachers. They can monitor attendance

every day. It just helps empower them to be involved in their children's education

and help monitor what's going on.

Dr. Martinez also said that they build parent capacity by providing English classes for

Spanish speaking parents. She stated,

Getting them up here sometimes is a huge victory to us just to show them that we

care about your child and we want the best for them, every parent that comes

through my office, whether it's because of a disciplinary situation or just because

they call.

According to the principals, creating space for parents to be supported and involved in

their child's education was common in the three schools while two of the three were very

focused in how they used the centers to involve parents.

Community and Family Involvement

Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) found evidence of building collaborative

relationships with parents identified through the following five best practices:

1. Supportive, personal relationships that reinforce a feeling of belonging to the "school's family" (school, home, and community) are nurtured by school staff…

2. Community members are encouraged to contribute to the school in ways the community consider important….

3. Parents are encouraged to become involved in both formal and informal activities associated with schooling….

4. Access to needed information is provided for community members and parents in ways that facilitate a culture of respect and collaboration….

5. Adult education opportunities are used to enhance the skills of community members and parents, to enable them to help their children and others within the school…. (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999, p. 193-195)

While discussing community and family involvement, the principals shared stories of advocating for the campus community, and made efforts to connect with the community.

Principal advocating for campus community. Serving as an advocate for the campus community was a common action of the principals interviewed. They seemed to passionately instill and model a culture of care throughout their campuses and ensured students and teachers are respected. McBride (2011) states, "Culture is the fabric of life, the theme that runs through humanity and its expressions and behaviors. Culture encompasses, but is not limited to, the beliefs, values, norms, language, food, and clothing that a group shares" (p. 7). Since his arrival on the campus, Mr. Suarez stated he has changed the culture of the campus to one that has a genuine care for kids. He said,

> That's one of the things that I've really, always has been consistent with me from day one is we need to show them we care. They want us, they need us, and they

need, in this situation, they even need us more for other support they may bit be

getting at home- that emotional support, emotional development and that's why I

tell teachers, when you work here you're not only delivering instruction, you're

also being a mentor, a true mentor for these kids.

Dr. Martinez contributed, "My number one, and they could tell you, I preach is all

the time is I want them to treat these kids as if they are their own." She went on to share,

"Be that teacher that you want your own child to have and then build a relationship with

them. Get to know your kids. Know something more than just their name. Know

something about them." She powerfully stated, "If you will establish these relationships

with these kids they will do amazing things for you." Dr. Martinez firmly believes that,

"if you don't care for kids, you don't need to be here." All three principals spoke to the

importance of caring for students. They all confirmed the use of rewards and incentives

for both teachers and students is powerful. In addition to celebrating and rewarding

students by giving them opportunities to showcase their work, Mr. Suarez said he also

provides incentives for performance through as activities like "dress for success" day and

rewarding them through uniform passes and other types of similar incentives. Mr. Garcia

similarly showed me areas of the campus providing incentives for showcasing student

work such as a culinary bistro, theatre, and metal shop where students can gain skills and

practice their art. Delgado Gaitan (2012) state, "Central to this matter is a mainstream

community that needs to create a learning environment that supports variance and

change" (p. 308). There seemed to be many similarities between the three schools around

incentives and rewards for students and teachers. Teacher incentives were discussed by

the principals as intrinsic, such as being rewarded by student response for innovation and

excellence in teaching while student rewards and incentives were more closely connected with showcasing and celebrating work and physical rewards of school dress passes and other similar type rewards. Teachers seem to be celebrated and the principals spoke to serving as an advocate for the students and teachers on the campus. While all three principals talked about serving as advocates for teachers, Mr. Suarez was most expressive in regards to advocating for teachers. He discussed a time when through district mandate, teachers lost a planning period. He worked closely at the district level to re-gain this time for his teachers. He stated, "I told them then, I will never stop fighting for trying to get you this time back, and I will find ways to do it, even if it doesn't mean that we get you six of eight. So I went to bat at the district level." He continues to fight for his teachers to have more planning time within the day and he said, "This year I'm going to ask for us to dismiss early." The principal advocates ferociously and persistently for the needs of the students and teachers.

Principal connecting with community. All three principals talked about making connections with the community. Reyes, Scribner, and Scribner (1999) found that empowering the surrounding community resulted in significantly higher levels of community and family involvement. While the role of a leader is difficult, it can be made much easier through the support and engagement of community and parents. However, the principal must recognize the power of parents and community and the need to manage this resource effectively (Horvat, Curci, & Partlow, 2010). One principal discussed being active in the community and visible not only at extracurricular activities, but by serving as the leader of the campus throughout the community. Dr. Martinez said her presence in the community helps to prove her students are successful. She stated,

We're going to show people what students in this part of town can do and not just

because we have a magnet program, but because we are going to bring people in

here who believe in it and who believe in these kids and we're going to make a

difference.

The principals interviewed discussed strategically using connections with the community

to ensure student success and were aware of community perceptions of the school while

proactively taking steps to ensure community perceptions remained positive. Dr.

Martinez also influenced the community by involving parents and community members

in the Campus Improvement Team (CIT). In addition, she shared,

Our engineering department has mentoring programs as well as business

alliances, so we always go to our parents first in terms of which businesses they

are involved in, what contacts they have, empowering them to feel a part of the

community.

Using the community to influence the perceptions of the schools by involving them in

what is happening within and throughout the school is a powerful tool all three principals

employ in various ways.

A Critical New Dimension: Principal Mindset and Sustainability

While analysis of the data was guided by specific aspects of the Reyes, Scribner,

and Scribner (1999) framework, I also considered emergent themes not associated with

the guiding framework. Only one such theme emerged, and it did so with intensity.

Throughout the interviews with participants, dialogue often centered on exhaustion,

stress, and the challenge to maintain motivation to stay in the position. Not only was this

theme captured throughout the interviews, but it was visibly apparent in voice and facial

changes when the individuals talked about their own mindsets. What is perhaps most remarkable about this theme is that it surfaced repeatedly without prompting. No questions were posed to stimulate a discussion about exhaustion, stress, or motivation. Nonetheless, each principal discussed how stress and exhaustion are an ongoing part of their world. Mr. Garcia best summed up this theme by stating, "The pressure and stress come from everywhere."

This relentless stress and exhaustion was evident when the participants responded to questions about how they approach their work. All three discussed strategies for sustaining the work in spite of the pressure and fatigue. Mr. Garcia said, "I come with a smile on my face every day and I leave with a smile on my face. During that time I may not smile very often, but at least I have two smiles every day." Mr. Garcia also noted what keeps him going is his connection with the community. He stated,

> What keeps me going is that I grew up in this community, and these are my neighbors. I can't look my neighbors in the eye and say I didn't do the job that I'm here to do as to the best of my abilities and still look at them. I can't do that. This community and the values and the core beliefs I grew up with keep me wanting to do the best I can, give back to the community that gave to me, and that keeps me going.

The intense pressures of the principalship can lead to self-doubt and exhaustion. Mr. Garcia's commitment to his community and students simultaneously increase that pressure and also serve as a motivator for his efforts to ensure students are successful. He told me, "I'm not going to let these kids down. I'm exhausted when I leave. I drink too many Red Bulls." Mr. Garcia went on to share,

142

You know, we don't do this job for the money. I've never done it for the money.

You know, I've done it because I think you're meant to be in places, and Forrest

High School is where I'm meant to be. Maybe one day when it's, as I told my

superintendent, I've never been asked to leave a dance, I've always known when

to leave, and I'll know when to leave.

Mr. Garcia is aware of his own work, what he offers the campus, and serves with the

heart of knowing when his time is up and the positive influence on the school wanes, he

will leave. Dr. Martinez shared a story of the previous weekend when the family of two

of her students was killed driving to the Friday night high school football game. She

appeared tired, hurt, and personally affected by the tragedy. After numerous interruptions

and a seemingly stressful call from one of her superintendents, she said,

I would have never imagined I would be still here. Most people don't stay in these

jobs this long. It's stressful. I love what I do. I love my community. I love my

kids. I have an amazing staff, but it is. The stress at times, they're always

changing the rules of the game, but it also gives me a new challenge so maybe

that's what's keeping me around.

It was apparent by the many pictures and high school memorabilia covering her office

and the way she spoke about the students and campus that her heart and soul are

entangled with those of the school. She appeared tired but determined.

Mr. Suarez, too, spoke about his stress. However, whereas Mr. Garcia and Dr.

Martinez conveyed a sense of determination and commitment to their schools in face of

the stress, Mr. Suarez seemed somewhat defeated by it. He wondered aloud if the campus

was ready for a new principal, a new voice. He said,

They've heard a lot from me and at some point it's just human nature you start it starts sounding the same and you know will it sound differently , it might be the same goals and same everything, but hear it from someone else and have I reached that point? You know? Sometimes I feel I have and what keeps me around after that is the kids, you know, seeing then in graduation, seeing them come here, and just seeing them in the mornings or when I'm having a bad day we don't go into any classrooms, that's what keeps me around is the kids, but it may be time for me to, you know, just make a shift into administration at central office.

Self-doubt was evident in his own rhetorical question of whether he is doing enough and his reflection on whether or not the teachers still "hear" him. He went on to share conversations he has had with his supervisors about self-doubt. He said, "I've told my bosses, 'You will change me, you will move me if you don't feel that I'm doing the right job'". Mr. Suarez stated,

It is a stressful, stressful job. The high school principalship is very demanding. I would say next to the superintendence this is one of the hardest in the school district, you know, and it's taken its toll on me physically and also emotionally, but I've never let it beat me down, but it can if you let it, but sometimes also shift is needed for me so I don't, I feel refreshed.

He then went on to share,

Even in a school like this, every year we've gotten accolades and we're always recognized because we are the shiny school over here and people see different things, but it's very, very tiring. It's very stressful in ways that, you know, some

people can't even imagine and that I think it's what doesn't, what doesn't keep

people around too long.

Mr. Suarez stated, "It's just tiring, you know? It is a stress thing you don't even feel until

it's too late."

I found it so striking that all three principals voluntarily brought up the issues of

stress and exhaustion that I reexamined my notes on the schools that were potential

candidates for this study. I was reminded that out of the 21 principals whose schools

qualified for the study based on high student performance, only 5 had principals that had

been on the campus for more than three years. Of those 5, only three were currently

working on the campus.. Principals are not staying at these high performing Hispanic

schools for long. The stress described so vividly by the participants in this study is likely

a contributing factor to this phenomenon.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This research study lends further support to the well-established notion that the actions of principals impact the overall academic achievement of the campus. As Ovando and Cavazos (Spring 2004) summarize, "research suggests that the role of the principal is essential for the academic achievement and success of all students and the school itself" (p. 9). This study focused specifically the behaviors of principals in high performing Hispanic high schools. Because of the changing demographics of Texas, it is more important than ever that principals have the skills and competencies to lead schools to high performance, especially those schools serving large populations of Hispanic students. . The results of this study suggest that the framework for understanding high performing Hispanic schools developed by Reyes, Scribner, and Scriber (1999) nearly two decades ago continues to have relevance today. This study operationalizes certain aspects of the framework by identifying the behaviors of principals as they enact the framework. Further, this study builds upon the framework by identifying additional aspects of principal leadership in high performing Hispanic schools..

New Dimensions of the Framework

Utilizing a socio cultural lens, this study examined the perspectives and experiences of principals in high performing Hispanic schools. This examination revealed leadership actions related to the four aspects of the Implementing Best Practices dimension of the original Reyes, Scribner and Scribner (1999) The results of this study suggest that in enacting the best practices of culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy oriented assessment, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement, principal action is undergirded by high expectations and reflection on

146

personal practice. Further, the results of this study suggest that principal mindset is related to sustainability of school improvement gains.

Leadership Action of Principals in High Performing Hispanic High Schools
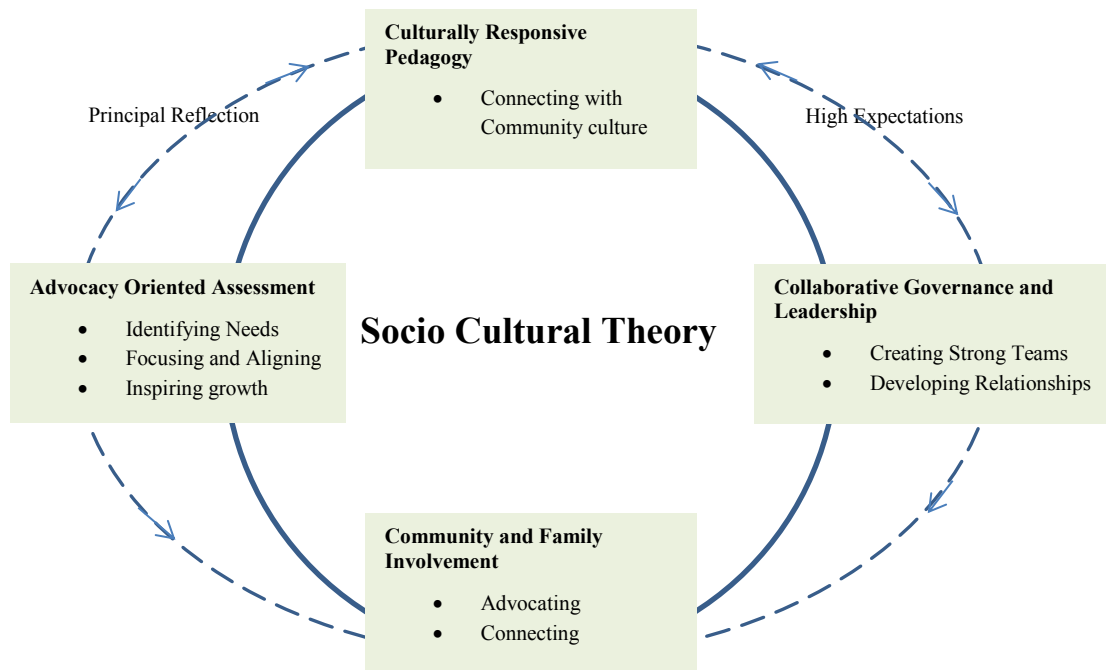
Figure 3. Leadership actions of principals as they relate to socio cultural theory.

Two Kinds of Principals

Findings in this study are consistent with the literature around high performing Hispanic schools. Principals staying on high performing Hispanic campuses for more than three years are few and far between. Because principals are leading in these schools for such a short amount of time there are implications for how we prepare and recruit individuals to sustain principal longevity on the campus. This study gives insight into the principal mindset and begs to re-examine our educational systems as opposed to individual people when looking at the role of the principal. Each principal I talked to appeared to be hard working and were definitely succeeding on their campus. Based on

my research, I examined two principals who shared intent to stay with the campus with no discussion of leaving. I will refer to this class of principal as the stay around principal. I also examined one principal who was a Turnaround principal (Reform Support Network) and felt as if his tenure was over because he had achieved his intended impact upon the campus. The differences between these two classes of principals reflected the systems of support the principal relied on, how the principals approached the work, and the sustainability of the principal.

Stay Around Principal

The stay around principal reflects a commitment to serving their current campus and a deep rooted loyalty to their school and community. Both principals identified as stay around principals had deep connections to their work and a personal commitment to the community. One stay around principal had opened the campus 14 years ago and was from the community. The other had attended high school where he now serves as a leader, his family grew up in the community, and his children attend school in the district. The stay around principals commonly talked about their investment in the community and investment in the school. They only mentioned leaving their current position if someone asked them to leave because they were being ineffective leaders. Both principals had a warmth and softness about them as they spoke about their school and the work they did to positively impact student s. I was most struck by the stay around principals' sense of calm as they spoke about their campus and the systems they had in place to ensure student success. The shared a strong desire to connect with the students and families in their schools. They identified systems of team work and collaboration and spoke to empowering teachers and students. The stay around principals appeared to be

energized and motivated by being a contributing member of the community and had a deep connection to the community they served as well as a deep rooted investment in the success of the campus community, primarily teachers, students, and families. The stay around principals operated in a collectivist manner, often referring to the team and the organization as *us*.

Turnaround Principal

The Turnaround principal is known as coming in achieving quick and rapid change on a campus. The appeal of the Turnaround principal in a low performing school is that they come in and "clean house" with an eye on replacing up to half of the staff, dramatically change ineffective systems, and make quick change for quick success on a campus. A brief by the Center for Public Education (2013) suggests that there is little research to support or show the lasting impact of the Turnaround principal on a campus. This is of interest as the Turnaround principal in this particular study spoke often about his work being complete on the campus and his eagerness to move to another position with no reference to systems that would support sustaining the work of the campus. The Turnaround principal commonly referred to the work he has facilitated during his tenure on the campus as *his* work, as opposed to *our* work. His motivation was seemingly driven by his individual contribution to the campus and the impact his work had on the campus. He rarely spoke of effective systems of support for teachers but rather talked of his work on the campus as a game of chess where he strategically puts things in place and situates people to influence quick change. There was an undertone of "winning" when he was able to influence the campus with an idea or a new perspective. While he spoke fiercely about advocating for teachers and community, the language he used made him appear as

the *hero,* saving the day, as opposed to being grounded in strong systems that could sustain achievement. While the Turnaround principal was able to articulate positive changes he made on the campus, the changes made were dramatic and strong. He talked about his impact on the campus as creating "winds of change". I was curious what would happen to the "wind" when a new principal replaced this strong Turnaround principal. There was a strong shift in mindset between the stay around principals and Turnaround principal.

Implications for Policy and Practice

What do the findings of this study suggest about the current policy and practice environments for high school principals serving in schools with large populations of Hispanic students? While the findings clearly illustrate it is possible to be successful in what many would consider highly challenging schools, the findings also suggest current policy and practice environments make it difficult to do so. The educational leadership literature is replete with evidence that principal tenure matters (Kearney and Herrington 2010). The revolving door of leadership has been cited as a factor in chronically failing schools (University Council For Education, 2008), and yet current federal school improvement policy promotes a model predicated on abrupt leadership change with little attention to leadership longevity. According to the Reform Support Network (n.d),

> The turnaround is a quick, dramatic, sustained change in the performance of an organization. Although teachers are the single most important school-based factor in student learning, in low-performing schools, the principal's role is paramount for dramatically improving student performance. Turnarounds do no happen without bold leadership. (p. 1)

150

The Chicago Public Education Foundation (2008) lays out clusters of competencies for success for turnaround leaders. The clusters include driving for results, consisting of achievement, initiative and persistence, monitoring and directiveness, and planning ahead. Influencing for results is another cluster including competencies of impact and influence, team leadership, and developing others. The problem solving cluster includes analytical and conceptual thinking as competencies needed of turnaround leaders, and showing a confidence to lead includes the sole competency of self-confidence. Turnaround leaders are expected to make fast and aggressive change to turn the school around and are encouraged to openly monitor performance, personally confront performance problems and fire low performers. According to Herman, Dawson, Dee, Greene, Maynard, Redding (2008), "A turnaround school is more likely to consider replacing staff unable to easily make the transition with those already qualified to do so" (p.5). In this study the participants had vastly differing mindset about their work and their sustainability. The principal who showed more characteristics of the true turnaround principal referred many times throughout our visit to his exhaustion and the stress, physically and mentally, the principalship has taken on him. He spoke about school change aggressively and referred to debilitating stress. While the other two principals also talked about stress, they did so in the context of stories about what kept them motivated to serve as a principal in their community. The stay around principal spoke about stress as a driver and motivator to continue to successfully serve the campus. The turnaround principal spoke of wanting to move to central office and shared that he would like for this to be his last year, while the other two principals showed no indication of wanting to move on to another position.

With more and more emphasis on the business-like turnaround leader model (Reform Support Network) there is a greater likelihood that we will continue to struggle to sustain principals and the changes they make on a campus over time. Federal policy continues to increasingly emphasize turnaround principals. Some fear this current policy fails to recognize the power of culturally responsive schools and the ability of sustained school leadership to contribute to lasting academic achievement. Current policy encourages turnaround systems that ascribe to the notion of the *hero* principal who comes to a campus to shake things up and aggressively make changes, thereby saving the day. This model relies on quick change but does not take into account that impulsive change is often not lasting, instead producing a yo-yo effect on achievement. These wildly disparate achievement level in turn incapacitate the school, making it virtually impossible to sustain academic success. In addition, the turnaround model suggests people, not systems, are the problem. If we are to achieve long-term success, we must focus on building principals who will not only implement change, but who are also willing to stay with the school to support sustained achievement by developing effective systems for school improvement. This creates broader support for long-term success, and prevents placing the burden solely on the principal. Consider school improvement models that address factors that allow principals to maintain leadership longevity by recruiting principals from the community, helping to develop cultural responsiveness and fostering leadership skill sets as opposed to management skill sets. Policy makers should consider a focus on how we build leaders to stay in place longer and find systems of support to keep them from becoming physically and emotionally exhausted, resulting in early burnout. Policy makers may consider moving from the model of the hero principal to the

152

stay around principal – one who not only transforms a school but stays there to institutionalize support systems. Stay around principals are more likely to adopt culturally responsive leadership roles, acting as change agents in the school. In addition, policy makers should reconsider the role of the turnaround leader on a campus and truly weigh the long term impact of this approach to leadership not only on the campus, but on the individual principal as well. Policy makers should consider the impact and power of long term sustained student achievement on a campus and carefully weigh the long term damage a turnaround principal can have on a campus. Instead, precious resources should be invested to develop, train, and support stay around principals, encourage principal longevity, and sustain academic achievement.

Principal preparation programs may consider providing opportunities for promising principals to learn more about cultural responsiveness and prepare principals for the many demands and stress the principalship offers and provide them with tools and resources to keep stress from becoming debilitating. Principal preparation programs may consider conducting case studies closely examining the stay around principal and the turnaround principal and consider ensuring promising principals are well aware of the positive implications of principal tenure on long term sustained academic achievement.

Implications for Further Study

Because there is a lack of extensive research around the leadership actions of principals in high performing Hispanic high schools, I recommend several opportunities for further study. Examination of principal actions through the lens of rural, urban, suburban area campuses as well as an extensive look into the actions of principals in middle schools and elementary schools would contribute to the research. Another study

153

examining years of service and principal longevity at the elementary and middle school level would also be advantageous to learn more about principal turnover at the elementary and middle school level. In addition, a further study may include a deeper examination of principals in high performing Hispanic high schools and the number of years they have served the campus. Further study into the principals' years of service may uncover additional research questions around principal retention, recruitment, and principal mindset. In addition, research around the stay around principal versus the Turnaround Principal (Reform Support Network) in examining longevity and the principal mindset will contribute positively to the field. Through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, advocacy-oriented assessment, collaborative governance and leadership, and community and family involvement, specific actions can serve to guide current administrators and can assist in planning for next steps in school improvement.

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

Field Guide

Community and Family Involvement	
Supportive personal relationships that reinforce a feeling of belonging to the "school's family" (school, home, and community) are nurtured by the school staff.	
Community members are encouraged to contribute to the school in ways the community considers important.	
Parents are encouraged to become involved in both formal and informal activities associated with schooling.	
Access to needed information is provided for community members and parents in ways that facilitate a culture of respect and collaboration.	
Evidence	**Notes:**

Build on cultural values of Hispanic parents
   o Build on the strength of extended family
   o Build on and understand Mexican American cultures, values, and experiences	

Stress personal contact with parents
   o Use strategies that stress personal contact
   o Provide opportunities for formal and informal involvement at school and home
   o Create opportunities for positive interaction
   o Engage in small talk
   o Call parents by phone
   o Make home visits	

Foster communication with parents
   o Initiate communication
   o Make information accessible	

Create a warm environment for parents
   o Create opportunities for shared experiences
   o Initiating opportunities for parent interaction
   o Welcome parents
   o Show empathy
   o Engage students and parents	

Facilitate structural accommodations for parent involvement
   o Create parent centers
   o Team with parents
   o Organize parent advisory committees	

Additional field resource:

Empowering the surrounding community
   o The community as a resource model

- The community is perceived as a resource for funds, services, and volunteers
  - Staff went to eh community to learn about interests and needs
  - Staff increased community contributions by maintaining a network of relationships with key community members
  - School staff provided education to the caretaking adults of the students
  - Schools solicited resources from hospitals, the police, churches
  - School personnel found meaningful ways for community members to contribute skills and knowledge to the schools
- The traditional community model
  - Strong Mexican-American cultural identifications are upheld
  - A seamless relationship appears to exist with the school as a center of activity for the surrounding community
    - Relationship building long before children ever arrive on the campus
    - Community values were integrated into and supported by the schools
- The learning community model
  - School is a community based and self-empowering place where personnel see themselves as solutions to their school's problems
  - Development of the surrounding community is seen as an important way of strengthening schools.
    - Proactive approaches are used to forge relationships with the community
    - Proactive approaches are used to meet family needs through collaboration with available social services and health agencies
    - Staff sponsored and organized school initiatives that met family and community needs
- Community encompasses multiple layers if the larger community as well as the larger context of state, regional, and federal governments
- Community can be limited to all those participating of the larger context involved directly in learning for, about, and with Hispanic learners.

Additional Notes:

Collaborative Governance and Leadership
The human potential of all involved in the learning community to take precedence over the traditional notions of bureaucracy is encouraged.
Everyone is willing to engage in and to be held accountable for innovative practices that will improve learning conditions for their students.
All members of the learning community are empowered to make fundamental decisions about what is to be done to ensure student success.
Individual members of the learning community can realize their own leadership potential

Evidence	Notes:

• Communication and collaboration among administrators, professional staff, and in the community
  o SBDM team, shared decision making, listening, collaboration, coordinated planning and communication, parent well informed
  o Communities of learners strive for their personal best, practice team learning, and progress within the parameters of a shared vision.	

• A clear coherent vision and mission
  o All working towards same goals
  o Exhibit a clear, coherent mission (including administrators, teachers, students)	

• Leadership styles of effective administrators o Viewed self as facilitators to get resources to students, parents and teachers to achieve student success, listen, available, visible, high degree of dedication, recognize importance of building trust, understand that people have different styles – both teaching and learning, build on the strengths of staff and students, respect professional judgment of teachers and staff, think of self as coach, recognize that teachers are the key to school effectiveness	
• Humanistic leadership o Express genuine concern for values, capacities, and achievements of	

157

students, model behavior they expect from students and staff, collaborative governance with students and teachers	

• Empowerment of professional staff, parents, and the community
    o Site-based management, responsibility for school success is placed on campus, central office staff were open and accessible, collegial relationships with board members, teachers are active participants in the personnel decisions of the school, students are empowered through decision making
    o Learning community members have the confidence to accept or reject innovations based on careful critical and collaborative reviews of them. – "Will this work for our students?"	

• Importance of professional development o Continued PD of staff, sharing of ideas, emphasis on staying current in the literature, preference for trainer of trainer models of PD	

• Ethic of care
    o Caring institution, idea of "whatever it takes", parent involvement in creating a community atmosphere in the school
    o Manifest a culture of caring and responsibility for student's academic performance	

• Success for all
    o Belief of administrators and teachers that's students were all bright and capable of success (even ones who had been labeled as disadvantaged)
    o It is the responsibility of the administrators and teachers to see to it that all children are learning
    o Schools engage students with enriched instructional materials previously limited to only a few, labeled gifted.	

• Emphasis on Accountability
  o Administrators and staff accepted responsibility for school performance, analyzed student data to determine areas of weakness, school held self-accountable for the CIP, principal viewed shared decision making as a way to hold more people accountable for school performance
  o Not driven by state mandates accountability standards
  o Emphasize accountability based on the belief that all children can learn	

• Culture of innovation
  o Principals encourage innovation in the quest for continual improvement, principal encourages flexibility to try new things or ideas, atmosphere of experimentation
  o Climate of innovation exists (promising new ideas and procedures can be tested for their efficacy to the mission of the school)	

Additional Notes:

Cultural Responsive Pedagogy	
Teachers believe and communicate to students that they have the ability to achieve.	
Teachers provide a caring environment for students.	
Teachers to empower students by providing opportunities for experimentation, innovation, discovery and problem-solving.	
Teachers make use of two-way instructional conversations with students – Goal directed and problem solving.	
Teachers to use students' funds of knowledge as the basis of their instructional strategies.	
Evidence	**Notes:**
- Accept students as they are	
- Classroom teachers are committed to the idea that all children can succeed at high levels (no bell curve)	
- Everything within the school and the classroom are driven by the needs of the children.	
- The culture and first language of the child are highly valued.	
- Collaborative flat organizations	
- Ample use of teaming	
- Openness to new ideas	
- High consensus on goals	
- Classroom learning – incorporation of students' interests and experiences, the "funds of knowledge" they bring with them into the learning situation.	

Additional Notes:

Advocacy Oriented Assessment	
Teachers understand cultural and linguistic diversity and its relationship to academic achievement.	
Language assessment is conducted to determine linguistic competence in students' native languages and English.	
Multi-disciplinary teams develop instructional interventions and modifications to address learning difficulties.	
Assessments benefit linguistically diverse students.	
Evidence	**Notes:**
- Best assessment practices take into consideration the entire learning environment, the effectiveness of instruction, availability of resources needed to remedy student learning difficulties.	
- Staff maximized resources by working closely through collaboration and consultation on behalf of students	
- Overall philosophy of the schools and the leadership of the schools facilitated growth and empowerment of teachers and assessment personnel	
- Alternative assessment procedures were used to reflect literacy learning across content areas	
- Teachers used standardized test scores only to provide information after a period of instruction during which interventions and modifications were provided	
- Teachers used portfolio assessment, curriculum based assessment, whole language instruction, informal reading inventories, and informal procedures for assessing competencies and weaknesses in writing and spelling	
- Every student is expected to achieve at the highest level possible.	

Additional Notes:

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Introduction and background

- Where did you grow up?

- Who were some of your influences as a child?

- Tell me about your growing up experiences?

- Tell me about your education experiences.

    o Describe your k-12 experience? What was your education like?

    o Where did you go to school?

Tell me about your professional background.

- What does it mean to be a principal to you?

- What does it mean to be the principal of a predominantly Hispanic high school?

- Why did you want become a school leader?

- What kind of school leader do you envision yourself to be?

- What are your strengths as a school leader?

What actions do you take to support community and family involvement to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What does community and family involvement in schools look like to you?

- What is your biggest challenge around supporting community and family involvement on your campus?

- In what ways do you support personal relationships to reinforce feelings of belonging to the school family?

- How do you encourage community members to contribute to the school in important ways?

- How do you encourage parental involvement in both formal and informal campus activities?

- What actions do you take to provide access to information needed by parents and community members to facilitate a culture of respect?

What actions do you take to support collaborative governance and leadership to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- How would you describe your leadership style?

- What challenges do you face in supporting collaborative governance and leadership within your campus?

- In what ways do you encourage the human potential of all involved in the learning community to take precedence over the traditional notions of bureaucracy?

  - What actions do you take to create judgment free learning communities where everyone cares for one another?

- In what ways do you support everyone's willingness to engage in and be held accountable for innovative practices that improve learning conditions for their students?

- How do you ensure all members of the learning community are empowered to make fundamental decisions about what is to be done to ensure student success?

- How do you facilitate individual members of the learning community to realize their own leadership potential?

What actions do you take to support culturally responsive pedagogy to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What does culturally responsive pedagogy mean to you?

- What challenges do you face to support culturally responsive pedagogy on your campus?

- In what ways do you create a culture where teachers believe and communicate to students that they have the ability to achieve?

- What actions do you take to create a culture where teachers provide a caring environment for students?

- In what ways do you encourage teachers to empower students by providing opportunities for experimentation, innovation, discovery and problem-solving?

- What actions do you take to ensure teachers make use of two-way instructional conversations with students?

  o Conversations driving goal-directed activity

  o Conversations that use higher order thinking skills

- What actions do you take to encourage teachers to use students' funds of knowledge as the basis of their instructional strategies?

What actions do you take to support advocacy oriented assessment to enhance the academic success of Hispanic students?

- What does advocacy-oriented assessment mean to you?

- What challenges do you face to support advocacy-oriented assessment on your campus?

- In what ways do you ensure teachers understand cultural and linguistic diversity and its relationship to academic achievement?

- What actions do you take to ensure language assessment is conducted to determine linguistic competence in students' native languages and English?

- How do you ensure multi-disciplinary teams develop instructional interventions and modifications to address learning difficulties?

- What actions do you take to ensure there is a commitment for assessments to benefit linguistically diverse students?

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