

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR A DIVERSE SOCIETY

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By
Thomas A. Buonanno
May 2020

Examining Committee Members:

Christopher McGinley, Secondary Education
Michael Smith, Middle Secondary Education
Janice Laurence, Adult Organizational Development
Joseph Haviland, Middle Secondary Education

©
2020

By

Thomas A. Buonanno
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Given the increase of language minority students in school districts across Pennsylvania, school leaders are faced with the demand to address the unique needs of students learning English. Previous research suggests that state initiatives to simply assimilate students may not have been successful in meeting their needs. Furthermore, research and theory also suggest that leaders demonstrating cultural proficiency may be more effective in meeting the needs of English learners who are also ethnic minorities. The approach leaders take may be a function of the ethical paradigm that informs their decision-making. In order to understand the extent to which elementary school principals in one school district display cultural proficiency and to investigate the ethical paradigms that inform their decision-making, I conducted interviews with five principals in one large diverse school district in Pennsylvania. Drawing on a framework of Cultural Proficiency, I found in general there to be an over-appreciation of diversity and under-appreciation of cultural proficiency at the conclusion of this study. Additionally, there was an observed tendency for these school principals to view their leadership role as one that functions primarily within the confines of executing district policies at the building-level. Though each participant expressed the importance of advocacy for their students, they did not pursue policy creation or change within a broader political context. Despite the similarities among participants, my analysis suggested variations in the participants' concepts of their role as school leaders to support English Language Learners and language minority students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr. Christopher McGinley and Dr. Michael Smith for guiding me in the completion of my research. Dr. McGinley's unwavering support helped me overcome everything that stood in the way of me completing this dissertation. Dr. Smith's passion and experience in this field was another critical element in my success. I would also like to thank Dr. Steven Gross and Dr. Joan Shapiro for their dedication to social justice and education leadership. I am grateful for Dr. Shapiro and Dr. Stefkovich for giving me the opportunity to publish my work in their book. I am also thankful to all that participated on my dissertation committee, including Dr. Joseph Haviland and Dr. Janice Laurence. I also appreciate the guidance of Dr. Judith Stull and Dr. Ducette in the final stages of completing this study.

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Valentina, and the inspiration of my daughters Olivia and Emma. *Nuestro idioma es nuestra cultura, es lo que somos. Siéntanse orgullosas.* No child should ever feel his or her language and culture are deficits, nor should they have to give-up any part of their identity when stepping into a classroom. Our strength is found in our differences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions.....	6
Assumptions.....	6
Limitations	7
Delimitations.....	8
Definitions.....	8
Significance of the Study	12
 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	 13
Literature Framing the Significance of This Study.....	13
Ethical Frames of School Leadership	15
Turbulence Theory: Gauging Internal and External Forces	21
Cultural Proficiency and the Sociocultural Context of Schools	24
Cultural Proficiency as Democratic Leadership	41
Implications of the Literature.....	61
 3. METHODOLOGY	 62
Critical Qualitative Approach.....	63
Data Collection	64
Geographic Location.....	65
Instrumentation	65
Summary of Methodology	68
 4. FINDINGS.....	 69
Introduction.....	69
Data Collection	69
Restatement of the Research Questions.....	70
Summary of the Framework	71
Participating School District.....	73
Participating Schools and School Profiles	87

Puri Elementary School	88
Grandridge Elementary School.....	101
Montes Elementary School.....	113
Marymount Elementary School	124
Palermo Elementary School.....	131
Cultural Proficiency as a District Initiative and Commonalities Among Participants.....	141
Summary of Findings.....	145
5. IMPLICATIONS	151
Problem Investigated	151
Implications for the School District.....	151
Implications for School Leaders	156
Implications for Research	159
Reflection.....	160
REFERENCES CITED.....	163

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Pennsylvania Reporting of EVASD Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup (2007-2017)	75
2. Pennsylvania Reporting of LEP and Percentage of EVASD Enrollment (2012-2017).....	76
3. Demographic data reported in 2017 by East Valley Area School	77
4. Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup – Middle Schools A and B (2007-2017)	86
5. East Valley School District Middle School Student Groups (2017)	86
6. East Valley School District Middle PA School Performance Indicators (2017)	86
7. Dissertation Participant Profiles (2017-2018)	88
8. Puri Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017	89
9. Grandridge Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017	101
10. Montes Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017	113
11. Marymount Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017	125
12. Palermo Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017	132

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Millions of children are divided by institutional racism and the inability to obtain a quality education. This widely accepted cyclical phenomenon has become commonplace and reform is often misguided and inconsistent. Though many educators strive to be change agents in order to mitigate external forces, many unintentionally perpetuate the devaluing of cultural capital within their schools. Educational reform must consider the racial and cultural divide in our nation, which mirrors economic inequality and racial injustice. Given the apparent inequities when viewing the issue through a socio-economic lens, however, the brutal reality of the achievement gap is that it is “more about racial-ethnic demographic disparities than it is about economic differences,” proving to be: historical, quantifiable, qualitative, persistent, and go beyond test scores (Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008, pp. 8–9). Furthermore, the continued underachievement of non-white students suggests that we, as a society, yet to have the political will to educate minorities equally. If the goal for schools is to prepare every student to be productive members of society, the guiding educational leadership practices must preserve each student’s identity as well as cultivate an inclusive school community.

An introspective look is the first step and would require school leaders to evaluate: inclusive practices; curricula, assessment; professional development; ethical decision-making; and the nature of their external partnerships. School leaders who create learning spaces where diversity exists as an asset for learning promote strong parent and community partnerships. Assessing one’s self-awareness and cultural knowledge is a first step school leaders can take when attempting to leverage the social and cultural capital of

stakeholders. School principals may be more effective in establishing a positive school culture when community partnerships are also diversified and built on a foundation of democratic principles, reaffirming schools as pillars of community – spaces for democracy and inclusiveness. Schools serve both a practical and symbolic importance to a community, making it critical that school leaders assess how the community perceives them and their school. The community partnerships created or continued by the school leader may be a sustaining force that preserves the school entity’s role of bettering the quality of life for the entire community. The school district is essentially entering a social contract of sorts, a mutual agreement of providing leadership and the commitment of resources. Leveraging cultural proficiency as a leadership tool may shield children from the sociopolitical implications of discriminatory policies and improve community relations through healthy culturally inclusive organizational behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

National trends in English Learner education policy in Pennsylvania and nationwide have produced outcomes that neglect the cultural capital of language minority students, effects of which are observable in student achievement at an early age and economic capacity later in life (Flores, N., Kleyen, T., & Menken, K., 2015; Mavrogordato, & White, 2020; Rodríguez, Carrasquillo, & Lee 2014). These policies have been identified as “restrictive language policies (Callahan & Gándara, 2014),” which are designed to assimilate through an abandonment of cultural identity by using a myopic view of inclusive practices. Furthermore, the policies result in a widening of the achievement gap between students of the dominant culture and ethnic minorities (García & Menken, 2010; Lindsey et al., 2008; Rodríguez et al., 2014). An extensive body of

literature, as well as the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards (PILS) framed by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), characterize effective school leaders as culturally competent, “acting ethically and ensuring cultural responsiveness” (ISLLC, 1996, p. 5). Furthermore, the ISLLC framework aligns with other scholarly work that characterize school leaders as being driven by moral purpose with strong ethical convictions, and having a child-centered approach (Bellah, 2000; Beck, 1994; Begley, 2006; Fullan, 2014; Shapiro & Gross, 2015; Puriefoy, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2013; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). However, dissonance between best practices and school programming is evident. As the ethnic and language minority student subgroups rapidly increase, referred to in this study as the demographic shift, school leaders may see less confident and prepared learners under the current educational policies. Cultural proficiency and its influence in organizational behaviors and leadership practices may yield improved outcomes for English learners and language minority students in general (Cummins, 2009; Franco et al., 2011; Karlin, 2007; Menken & Solorza, 2014). Though the rhetoric of many PA schools and school districts prioritize diversity within their vision and mission statements, Pennsylvania school code, specifically as it relates to language minority students and Educating Students With Limited English Proficiency (LEP): 22 Pa. Code §4.26, drive organizational behaviors that, at times, result in implementation that is monocultural and monolingual in nature. Pennsylvania school districts continue to face litigation for violating the rights of English Learners, such as *Issa v. School District of Lancaster* (2017); therefore, school leaders need tools to be proactive rather than reactive to secure educational opportunities for language minority students, including refugee students. Inquiry into the cultural

proficiency of school principals and how they navigate the driving educational policies governing their schools through an ethical frame may propel conversations about the realities of connecting their intentions to best practices and ELL policy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to critically examine the ethical behavior and the level of cultural proficiency of five elementary school principals who have received training in creating equitable practices within their schools. Each participant leads an elementary school in a large suburban school district that borders a large metropolitan city. Cultural proficiency within the context of this study is defined as “educating all students to high levels through knowing, valuing, and using their cultural backgrounds, languages, and learning styles within the context of teaching [and leadership]” (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 21). Semi-structured 30–45 minute interviews and school-based artifacts were used to collect data to characterize culturally proficient leadership practices and ethical educational decision-making. The Franco et al. (2011) Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric and Continuum was used to categorize and norm the data collected. As part of the investigation, I identified links or gaps between the principal’s cultural proficiency, organizational systems, and the ethical nature of program decision-making for English learners. The Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm and the Gross (2014) Turbulence Theory were used to make meaning of the data.

Five participating elementary school principals, each of who lead a K-5 school, were sampled. A school district in Pennsylvania was selected for multiple reasons. The population of foreign-born PA residents has grown from 508,291 in 2000 to 691,242 in

2009, an increase of 36%, whereas the native residents remain static (O’Conner, Abedi, & Tung, 2012). Language diversity in schools has also expanded from 138 in 2002 to 211 in 2009 (O’Conner et al., 2012). The School District of Philadelphia was the subject of a significant action-oriented ethnographic study by David Johnson and Rebecca Freeman in 2009, which indicated that the EL population was rapidly increasing in the city and called for policy reforms, resulting in litigation and additional program resources. Discussion of ELs in the context of urban education is common. Less is known; however, about how elementary school principals and their schools are prepared to meet the educational needs of English Learners outside urban school districts. Regardless, each local education agency (LEA) across the state of Pennsylvania must have a written program that includes a description of the instructional model implemented, the process for identifying ELs, the criteria to exit, and a monitoring process for after they exit (See 22 Pa. Code § 4.26). The LEA is then offered options for English language instructional programs. Aside from standardized tests and a yearly norm-referenced test, the accountability for each child’s learning is within the locus of control. An increasing body of literature has identified state educational policies, similar to those in Pennsylvania, as discriminatory, monolingual, monocultural, and as a result, widening the achievement gap for English learners (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Cummins, 2009; Iddings, Combs, & Moll, 2012; English & Varghese, 2014; Flores et al., 2015; García & Flores, 2013; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Menken & Solorza, 2014; Zhao, 2013).

Research Questions

As a researcher and practitioner, the commitment of this study is to work collaboratively with colleagues to evaluate the perception of diversity and the educational needs of English Learners. The outcome is intended to inform colleagues of practices that promote and restrict agency as an educational leader. The research questions driving this qualitative study were include the following:

1. To what extent is the principal culturally proficient when defining and implementing school programming for English learners?
2. Upon what ethical paradigms do principals rely in their work to support English Language learners?

Assumptions

The investigator assumed that participants answered honestly. This assumption was supported by the delimitation of anonymity. The investigator also assumed that the principals were aware and knowledgeable of local, state, and federal policies regarding the education of English learners, as this falls within Educational Leadership Policy Standards set forth by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), delegated by the Council of Chief State School Officers intended to serve as a “broad set of national guidelines that states can use as a model” (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The investigator assumed that the principals had an understanding of the best practices embedded within the ISLLC standards, as it was needed knowledge for their state licensure. The investigator acknowledged the inability to confirm that meaningful professional learning and development was provided to the principals in order to understand, program, and implement meaningful education

programs for English learners. In other words, though the investigator could probe the principal as to their leadership preparation program, an authentic assessment to confirm or nullify the effectiveness of their leadership program was not be pursued as part of this study.

Specifically, with regards to the critical nature of cultural proficiency assessment, the investigator assumed that all demographic groups of students were not be served well by current programs and practices based on nation-wide data on ELL achievement. In addition, the investigator assumed that the current educational practices aligned with, if not contribute to the inequity among demographic groups. Further, the investigator assumed that the current resources within the system were not being allocated in ways that ensure equitable outcomes for all students and that it was possible to remove barriers and/or reallocate resources so that the needs of all are met. Lastly, it was assumed that not everybody in the system was aware of the barriers, equity gaps, and resource misallocations; and, if they were aware, not everyone was willing to do what it takes to realign the system to be inclusive of the educational needs of underperforming students (Lindsey et al., 2008, pp.).

Limitations

This study took place in the state of Pennsylvania, limiting explicit transferability to other states given the nature of state educational autonomy. The small number of participating principals ($N = 5$) also limited transferability among and between educational settings. Because of limited availability for participation, convenience sampling was used for participants; however, purposeful selection of the school district was used.

Delimitations

Participating principals had received professional development of cultural proficiency, provided by their school district. In addition, the principal had some experience planning school improvement activities, which was a control factor designed to ensure certain experiences typical to the nature of the profession such as: building relationships with students and parents, community partnerships, knowledge of stakeholders, year-to-year school improvement activities and redesigning those activities based on informed decision-making, knowledge of trends under leadership. Using a small sample size was limiting when seeking generalizations about the data.

Definitions

Cultural Proficiency and the Five Essential Elements

Within the context of leadership, cultural proficiency is defined as the ability to “understand [and change] that schools are microcosms of inequities in society” (Franco et al., 2011, p. 75), while holding a vision of social justice, student-centered leadership, and “advocacy for all students and communities as a normal part of professional responsibility” (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 24). Using this lens is grounded in the commitment to “educating all students to high levels through knowing, valuing, and using their cultural backgrounds, languages, and learning styles within the context of teaching” (Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008, p. 21). The Five essential elements that frame cultural proficiency are *assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, institutionalizing cultural*

knowledge. The literature review further describes the meaning and context of each essential element.

The Continuum of Cultural Proficiency

The Five Essential Elements of cultural proficiency are measured along the *Continuum of Cultural Proficiency*. The continuum is a six-point rubric: the first three points focus on unhealthy behaviors at the individual or organizational levels. Unhealthy behaviors are characterized as *cultural destructiveness*, *cultural incapacity*, and *cultural blindness*. In contrast, the other three points on the continuum focus on healthy behaviors, characterized as *cultural pre-competence*, *cultural competence*, and *cultural proficiency*.

English Learner (EL)

The author believes firmly in the advocacy against the deficit model projected upon school-age children (and adults) who are non-native English speakers. Terms used to refer students learning English for the first time as a school-aged child will vary per the context of the discussion. Identifiers or labels are typically based on language conceptualization, role, and instructional emphasis (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Terms such as English Learners (ELs) and English Language Learners (ELLs) are typically found in research on this student population. In addition, the term emergent bilingual or biliterate students have been used synonymously (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008).

Language Minority Students and Families

Students and stakeholders referred to as language minority are non-native English speakers. The term is used to describe non-dominant cultural groups despite English proficiency.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The term Limited English Proficient/Proficiency (LEP), which has already been proven as a damaging label for children (Flores et al., 2015), is found in much of the state and federal policy related to the teaching and learning of students and may be used when summarizing or quoting specific language within the policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002).

Multiple Ethical Paradigm

Multiple Ethical Paradigm (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) characterizes the ethical frame of decision-making. The ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. The literature review further describes the meaning and context of each ethical lens.

Sheltered Instruction (SI)

Many ESL programs provide sheltered instruction, which extends instructional time for additional language supports specifically for English learners. In addition, sheltered instruction “draws from and complements methods advocating for both second language and mainstream classrooms,” with targeted instructional techniques (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 13). In 1996, Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, as part of the National Center Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE), developed a method of sheltered instruction as an explicit model to train teachers and

collect data to evaluate change and the effect on English language development (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 15). This became known as *SIOP*, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol.

Turbulence Theory

Gross (2014) provides an in-depth theoretical framework to analyze intrinsic and extrinsic tensions of organizations. Educational leaders face dilemmas or make intentional decisions to mitigate or increase the degree of tension to enact change. Degrees of turbulence provide an “enhanced ability to calibrate the severity of the issue at hand” (Gross, 2014 p. 9). Gross (2014, p. 17) defines the degrees of turbulence as:

- *Light*: Associated with ongoing issues, little or no disruption in normal work environment, subtle signs of stress
- *Moderate*: Widespread awareness of the issue, specific origins
- *Severe*: Fear for the entire enterprise, possibility of large-scale community demonstration, a feeling of crisis
- *Extreme*: Structural damage to the institution’s normal operation is occurring

Three additional components to Turbulence Theory: positionality, cascading, and stability, are an integral part. Positionality is a descriptor used to identify role and implication before, during, and/or after turbulence. Turbulence may be heightened by the response of the organization or its members, seen as a cascading effect linking to organizational dynamics and degrees of turbulence. The ability of the organization to withstand the dynamic force(s) characterizes the stability of the organization or individual. Stability, as resilience to turbulence, relies on flexibility through sustained movement to remain insulated and adaptable.

Significance of the Study

I collected data to compare the ethical frame of school leaders to the extent of cultural proficiency they demonstrated during the data collection process. Given that interpretation and implementation of language policy exists at the local level, researching the decision-making of school leaders allowed for a better understanding of the realities and pragmatism of decision-making. This critical qualitative study identified the ethical lenses within the Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) Multiple Ethical Paradigm to interpret perspective-driving implementation of ESL policy as it relates to cultural proficiency.

Given the changing demographics in Pennsylvania, this investigation of cultural proficiency may better inform best practices for establishing a culture of learning that views culture as an asset. Many studies focused on English learners in the urban context and a notable ethnography was conducted in Philadelphia (See Johnson & Freeman, 2010); however, additional research beyond the urban setting provided a deeper understanding of diversity in Pennsylvania schools and the need for continued leadership development in the area of cultural proficiency. There has been significant research into cultural proficiency and culturally responsive teaching as a method to improve outcomes for children; however, less is known about how school leaders can ethically navigate the current restrictive language policies to create educational spaces to utilize cultural capital and implement policy through a lens of cultural proficiency (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Exploring power, political forces, and social contexts observed within schools may serve as a contribution to this area of research, specifically in order to identify barriers and discuss transformational practices for the fields of educational leadership and English Language Learner education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section begins with ethical lens that can be used as a framework for school leaders to interpret complex dilemmas, known as the Multiple Ethical Paradigm (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). I present the characteristics of decision-making perspectives and explain how tension may be created or mitigated to enact change, known as Turbulence Theory (Shapiro & Gross, 2015). I next present the importance of cultural proficiency as a leadership practice when considering the needs of English Learners. I then present additional scholarly works that define the school principal as a civic leader, responsible for advocating for policy change through a democratic lens. Lastly, I present the current landscape of ESL education in Pennsylvania, emphasizing that the educational outcomes for language minority students carry social and economic implications.

Literature Framing the Significance of This Study

Multiculturalism and its relationship to democracy and education in the United States has led to further research into the nature of the relationship between ethnicity and educational achievement. Many scholars view the current systems in place marginalize last segments of the population, specifically in the ability to participate in our democracy, economy, and schooling. In addition to ethical perspectives as a tool to promote democratic educational reforms (Shapiro & Gross, 2015), cultural proficiency is another skill set relevant in school leadership and scholarly research, specifically as an additive element to instructional and organizational practices (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2013; Mavrogordato & White, 2020; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Research has already determined that the cultural proficiency and its respective elements lead to improve

learning outcomes for ethnic-minority students and their ability to effectively participate in a democratic society (Carrasquillo, & Sool Lee, 2014; Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989; Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2007; Rodríguez, 2008; Orelus & Malott, 2012; Thomas & Collier, 2000). Scholars have also found that ethical paradigms combined with elements of cultural proficiency can be used to support the development of democratic and culturally astute school leaders (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2015). The use of an ethical frame, specifically one that aligns with a moral purpose for school leaders, emphasizes a holistic approach to meeting the needs of language minority students. For example, Callahan, DeMatthews, and Reyes (2019) have criticized current policies for educating English Learners as undemocratic and called for additional research for determining what exactly a program for “ensuring social integration” should look like.

Other scholars have presented arguments that Neoliberal and Conservative agendas have dampened the inclusion of multiculturalism and deeper conversations about race in schooling, reinforcing the dominant culture, assimilation, and monolingual approaches to schooling (Chomsky, 2003; Darder, 2012; García, 2012; Orelus & Malott, 2012; Leistyna; Steinberg, 2012). Though the aforementioned concerns exist nationally, scholars point to a gap in research into the effectiveness of ESL programs beyond border-states with Mexico. The literature reviewed informed the design and interpretation of this study. The literature provided the context needed to determine if elementary school principals in a non-border state with a growing language-minority population, Pennsylvania, knowingly or unknowingly use elements of cultural proficiency as leverage points to improve schooling. The literature illustrates that Pennsylvania

Education Policy continues to grapple with best practices for equitable programming and delivering of instruction to English Learners. As is the case in other states, PA school districts have faced litigation because their respective policies and system behaviors failed to ensure appropriate educational programs for language minority students (Everson & Hedges, 2019). Restrictive language policies, limited agency, and lack of awareness to the economic impacts, have all contributed to the ineffective school practices. There is a call for additional research in cultural proficiency and the ethical frames needed to inform democratic leadership practices (Agirdag, 2014; Callahan & Gándara, 2014, Labaree, 1997; Rodríguez, Carrasquillo, & Lee, 2014).

Ethical Frames of School Leadership

Many scholars establish school leadership as a caring profession with moral purpose and obligation (Purple, 1989, Fullan, 2013). Scholars suggest that an ethical frame used to guide good intentions and proactive policy development will lead to better outcomes for marginalized students (Evans, 2013). Using an ethical framework in tandem with a democratic approach, positions school leaders to operate with a sense of urgency at the school-level while maintaining a broader societal perspective. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) along with Gross and Shapiro (2013), use ethical frames and metaphors to support school leaders in navigating complex dilemmas, with an ultimate goal of creating democratic ethical educational leaders. Using ethical lenses help “frame complex, multilayered information and help them make decisions” while at the same time keeping the best interests of students at the center of decision-making (Honig & Hatch, 2004, p. 20). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) explain how ethics evolved to the study of “disposition or character, customs, and approved ways of acting” (p. 10). They add that

from a critical perspective, “one might ask: Ethics approved by whom? Right or wrong according to whom?” (p. 10). As a result, they establish a theoretical framework using ethics to guide school leaders as facilitators of democracy with the goal of integrating social justice into school reform (Gross & Shapiro, 2016).

Multiple Ethical Paradigm

This section presents how Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) analyze the behavior and decision-making of educational leaders through a *multiple ethical paradigm*. The ethical lenses of *justice*, *care*, *critique*, and *profession* compose the paradigm, with each lens overlapping at times based on dilemmas or other dynamic factors related to one’s perspectives. The framework is a tool used to consciously act with reason and reflect using critical analysis. Using the lenses is a metacognitive approach to guide and shape practice, creating an awareness of the influential capacity of educational leaders, who serve the best interest of student at all times by upholding the virtue of responsibility over accountability (Shapiro, 2006, 2008; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2013; Shapiro & Gross, 2005, 2008, 2013). Each ethic is presented below along with its context and origin.

Ethic of Justice. The *ethic of justice* serves as a model that focuses on rights, laws, and policies, and concepts of fairness, equality, and individual freedom (p. 11). Citing Delgado (1995), Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) explain that the ethic of justice is “part of a liberal democratic tradition that believes in faith in the legal system and in progress” (as cited in Shapiro & Gross, 2013, p. 6). Supported by the works of other scholars, Shapiro and Stefkovich draw on the work of Strike (1991) by explaining the context of the ethic of care as that which commits to human freedom by creating “procedures for making decisions that respect the equal sovereignty of the people”

(Strike, 1991, p. 415 as cited in Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016, p. 11). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) also cite the summative work of Starratt (1994), explaining the ethic of justice to have originated from two schools of thought, “one derived from the work by Hobbes and Kant and more contemporary scholars such as Rawls and Kohlberg and more contemporary scholars such as Rawls and Kohlberg; the other rooted in the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey” (p. 11). In sum, the ethic of justice combines the social contract of an individual giving up some rights for a common good, such as social justice, with the ability to view society as individuals who behave through shared understandings (p. 11). Lastly, Shapiro and Stefkovich explain that:

Viewing ethical dilemmas from this [ethic of justice] vantage point, one may ask questions related to the rule of law and the more abstract concepts of fairness, equity, and justice. These may include, but are certainly not limited to, questions related to issues of equity and equality; the fairness of rules, laws, and policies; whether laws are absolute, and if exceptions are to be made, under what circumstances; and the rights of individuals versus the greater good of the community. (p. 12)

In sum, when school leaders analyze dilemmas or primarily operate through the ethic of justice, they ask questions such as: Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to a particular case? If there is a law, right, or policy, should it be enforced? And if there is not a law, right, or policy, should there be one?

Ethic of Critique. The ethic of critique redefines or reframes concepts of democracy, social justice, power, culture, and language. The nature of this ethic is the outcome of tension between the ethic of justice and concept of democracy. The ethic of critique aims to challenge the status quo and ethics of those in power, specifically to expose inconsistencies. This ethic “raises difficult questions by critiquing both the laws

themselves and the process used to determine if the laws are just.” Furthermore, the ethic of critique forces us to take an introspective look at our morality and how it “may have been modified and possibly even corrupted over time” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016, p. 14). Based on critical theory, the ethic also analyzes the intersection of identities and how inequities in schools mirror or reproduce those found in society (Bourdieu, 1977). In terms of origin, the ethic of critique also stems from Freire’s (1970) work and that of other scholars who sought to address the contradictions and oppressive practices often found in traditional public schooling models. School leaders that operate from the ethic of critique are also activists, who challenge “isms” and lead political action. Additionally, the lens of critique directs attention to social class and inequity, specifically in the context of the growing divisions created by wealth and power. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) summarizes the purpose of the ethic of critique:

Thus, by demystifying and questioning what is happening in society and in schools, critical theorists may help educators rectify wrongs while identifying key morals and values...Such a process should lead to the development of options related to important concepts such as oppression, power, privilege, authority, voice, language, and empowerment. (p. 15)

When school leaders analyze dilemmas or operated for the lens of critique, they ask questions such as: Who makes the laws? Who benefits from the law, rule, or policy? Who has the power? Who are the silenced voices? Ultimately, however, the ethic of critique calls educators to go beyond questioning and take action to ensure the success of all students, especially those who are marginalized by the current system.

Ethic of Care. The *ethic of care* is derived from feminist theory to conceptualize moral decision-making as actions of loyalty, trust, empowerment, and emotion in the forms of empathy and compassion. The *ethic of care* challenges the patriarchal nature of organizational structures in schools and society through empathy and compassion,

“heavily focus on the knowledge of cultures and of diversity” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016 p. 18). Shapiro and Stefkovich, with the consensus from many other scholars, associate dominant and patriarchal characters with the ethic of justice. In contrast, leading through an ethic of care safeguards the value of cultural identity and diversity in a greater hierarchal system by “requiring leaders to consider multiple voices in the decision-making process” (p. 18). Shapiro and Stefkovich support their characterization of the ethic of care by also citing the work of Noddings (1992), who advocates that the primary function of schools is to care for children through a sense of utilitarianism, which contrasts ideas such as standardized achievement and individualism. Questions relevant to the ethic of care emphasize relationships and connections, with the goal of solutions that show a concern for others as part of decision-making. The ethic poses questions such as: Who will benefit from what I decide? Who will be hurt by my actions? What are the long-term effects of a decision I make today? And if I am helped by someone now, what should I do in the future about giving back to this individual or to society in general? (pp. 18-19).

Ethic of Profession. Lastly, the *ethic of the profession* considers the moral aspects unique to educational leadership. Shapiro and Stefkovich agree the ethics of justice, critique, and care, are complementary; however, a fourth ethic is needed to capture the tension between personal and professional code of ethics:

... we believe that, even taken together, the ethics of justice, critique, and care do not provide an adequate picture of the factors that must be taken into consideration as leaders strive to make ethical decisions within the context of educational settings. (p. 19)

The need for this ethic was identified as a competency by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders (NPBEA, 1996), and included in its

revision: Educational Leadership Policy Standards (NPBEA, 2008). Shapiro and Stefkovich direct attention to Standard 5, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.” Shapiro and Stefkovich also cite the function of Standard 5:

1. Ensure a system of accountability for every student’s academic and social success
2. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior
3. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity
4. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making
5. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling. (NPBEA, 2008, pp. 4–5)

The ethic of the profession was once considered to be within the ethic of justice, specifically because the school leadership role is often grounded by codes, rules, and policies. For example, Shapiro and Stefkovich cite the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators (1992) as a framework that was enacted into state law. Other relevant organizations that established their own ethical code are the National Education Association and American Association of School Administrators; however, Shapiro and Stefkovich point out that:

Ethical codes set forth by the states and professional associations tend to be limited in their responsiveness in that they are somewhat removed from the day-to-day personal and professional dilemmas which educational leaders face. (p. 21)

On the other hand, Shapiro and Stefkovich recommend using professional codes of ethics as guiding principles for the profession. Furthermore, school leaders should develop their own ethical code based on experiences. At the same time, however, scholars

acknowledge there to be unrealistic expectations in the moral decision-making by school leaders (Fullan, 2014; Nash, 1996). In sum, the ethic of profession considers questions related to justice, critique, and care but goes beyond to inquire: What would the profession expect me to do? What does the community expect me to do? And what should I do, based on the best interests of the students, who may be diverse in their composition and their needs?

Turbulence Theory: Gauging Internal and External Forces

School reform has always been and will continue to be controversial. Though sluggish, at times, seemingly stagnate or even retroactive, history tends to bend towards justice. Gross (2013) uses turbulence as a metaphor to explain a natural part of the reform process and transformation. In flight, for example, turbulence serves as the force for taking-off or external force that will destroy an airplane. With respect to educational organizations, turbulence will either lift us to greater success as institutions or create a sense of chaos because of disruption to operations and functioning. Turbulence may be episodic, or a continuous force caused by external or internal forces and used intentionally to enact change. More broadly, Turbulence Theory provides insight as to the state of micro and macro organizational structures. The ability to shield the organization from turbulence or external pressures that pose a threat is a critical skill needed by school leaders. Additionally, leveraging turbulence as a tool to enact needed changes or transformation may also establish the effectiveness of school leaders (Gross, 2013). Lastly, contextual forces such as *positionality*, *stability*, and the *cascading* of events, affect the degree of turbulence and how turbulence is perceived. Gross (2013) established

a framework to gauge levels of turbulence based on the aforementioned contextual forces and volatility.

Positionality

Positionality refers to the way in which members of an organization may experience turbulence differently. Gross developed positionality as an element of Turbulence Theory based on concepts that stem from Standpoint Theory, combining contrasting views of individual and group affiliation (Collins, 1997) with the notion that individuals have multiple overlapping identifies (Kezar, 2000). Kezar (2000) also explains the theory as “the knower impacts what is known” (p. 726). When exploring positionality as it relates to turbulence, one begins by defining the functional groups involved with the issue or dilemma. In terms of schooling, Gross (2013) presents the typical groups as students, faculty, staff, administration, parents, board members and the wider community. When considering the perspective of the functional groups, Gross also uses a lens of demographics mitigate risk of over generalizing or assumptions. Demographic affiliations are complex; however, Gross directs attention to the larger patterns that relate to the specific turbulent condition as being what is most important.

Cascading

Included within the context of Turbulence Theory is the concept of cascading. The cascading phenomenon emerges when circumstances are observed as impacting episodes of turbulence. The cascading effect also has a tendency to increase or amplify the level of turbulence. Gross emphasizes that school leaders consider environmental forces when responding to dilemmas, specifically to strategically prioritize their response.

Stability

In addition to positionality and cascading, a third force related to Turbulence Theory is stability. Gross defines stability as the relationship between the object examined and the dynamic forces confronting it. The perception of stability is a significant factor when assessing an organization's response to turbulence. Different organizations affected by the same stressor or force may yield different outcomes because of their perceived stability. Stability was able to insulate them from the turbulence. Gross also explains that stability should be dynamic and flexible, adding that rigidity is rarely an indicator that an organization will withstand turbulence. Stability is relative, not an absolute condition.

Establishing Turbulence

Gross establishes four levels of turbulence described as *degrees of turbulence*. Gross (2013) defines degrees of turbulence as: *Light* – associated with ongoing issues, little or no disruption in normal work environment, subtle signs of stress; *Moderate* – widespread awareness of the issue, specific origins; *Severe* – fear for the entire enterprise, possibility of large-scale community demonstration, a feeling of crisis; and *Extreme* – structural damage to the institution's normal operation is occurring. Turbulence Theory also infuses self-reflection of leadership practices and their outcomes, specifically to promote self-awareness and the ability to remain *centered* during times of perceived stillness and change. Gross recommends that school leaders ask the following questions when considering turbulence:

What is likely to happen to the current level of turbulence if no attention is paid to the situation in the short and medium term (raising the issue of cascading)? Would more turbulence help or harm the organization's pursuit of its goals (reflecting the potential for positive results from turbulence)? How might contemplated actions reduce the level of

turbulence (when that level is considered too high and, consequently, harmful)? (p. 54)

By using the Gross's questions to consider, school leaders may be able to better calibrate the threat and extent of internal and/or external forces in order to measure their response accordingly.

Turbulence Theory in the Context of Ethical Decision-making

Shapiro and Gross (2013) worked collaboratively to use Turbulence Theory and Multiple Ethical Paradigms as complementary frameworks for decision-making. Both theories require deep reflection into individual and organizational behaviors while taking into account the emotional context of decision-making (Shapiro & Gross, 2013).

Turbulence is first used as a preliminary assessment of disruption, with consideration of positionality and cascading effects. After a level of turbulence is established, ethical lenses are applied to provide perspective and inform action. Turbulence is then reconsidered in order to estimate how the response or action may influence the level of turbulence. Ultimately, Shapiro and Gross justify using the theories in tandem on the basis of Glaser and Strauss (1967), who state that theories for solving dilemmas require relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations, and applications (p. 3 as cited in Shapiro & Gross, 2013, p. 13).

Cultural Proficiency and the Sociocultural Context of Schools

We learn by drawing on background knowledge; hence, what was learned in the home (language, tradition, etc.) can be embraced in order expand on learning because learning by its very nature is cumulative (Cummins 2009; Marzano, 2008). From infancy to adulthood, we are affected by everything in the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, family, school, community,

and any global forces that affect them, contribute to social and emotional development. The more caring and nurturing the environment and relationships, the better it is to attain growth (Kezar, 2000). School leaders may be to cultivate a positive school culture and curricula by remaining conscious of the physiological, social-emotional, and developmental needs of students and staff (Bernhardt, 2013).

Cross et al. (1989) established a basis for developing “culturally competent practices as a system of care” to support children. Her work specifically focused on addressing an “ethical dilemma” found when she analyzed the manner by which minorities receive medical treatment. Her work was guided by the reality that minority groups, “Historically, they have had limited access to economic or political power, and have, for the most part, been unable or not allowed to influence the structures that plan and administer children's mental health service systems (Cross et al., p. 6). Cross et al. (1989) established a “six-point Cultural Competence Continuum” that analyzes “cross-cultural relations,” cultural dynamics, and the “adaption of services to meet culturally-unique needs” (Cross et al., 1989, p. 13). In addition, Cross et al. (1989) established a Culturally Competent System of Care containing five essential elements, which was adapted by Lindsey et al. (2007). Cross et al. (1989) described the elements as “contributing to a system’s, institution’s, or agency’s ability to become more culturally competent” (p. 18). Ultimately, Cross et al. (1989) present the “value base for cultural competence” in terms of “a system of care,” with the goal to “provide a foundation for policy, practice and attitudinal development” (p. 22).

Research suggests that school leaders who consciously reinforce the value in cultures through promoting culturally proficient practices may see less intolerance by

students or faculty towards non-dominant cultural groups within their building and community. Lindsey's adaption of Cross's work continues the evaluation of healthy and unhealthy behaviors of the dominant culture at all levels, specifically as it relates to equitable schooling for marginalized communities. The manner by which Lindsey (2017) establishes cultural proficiency as a guiding principle to inform schooling includes the work of Cross et al. (1989) and also align to the thought, research, and theories of Bronfenbrenner, Cummins, Dewey, Kezar, and Vygotsky. Cultural Proficiency may shield students from intolerance and instill democratic principles in all members of the school community, thus meeting the holistic needs of students, especially language minority students.

Cultural Proficiency as a Leadership Paradigm

Lindsey's collaboration with other scholars resulted in conceptual frameworks of Culturally Proficient for community engagement, curriculum design, leadership practices, and inquiry into organizational behaviors (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2008; Lindsey, 2017; Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2007; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Cross et al. (1989) specified the path towards competence in cultural awareness begins with the recognition of culture as the predominant force in people's lives and organizational behaviors. The commitment to Cultural Proficiency is reinforced by the very nature in which cultures, ethnicities, and races have been identified as minority groups in the United States and how they stems from a euphemism for those excluded from the dominant group of *Americans*, leaving people stigmatized and discriminated against (Devillar & Jiang, 2011). The reproduction of stigmatization continues to surface in educational policies through strategic use of terms such as economically disadvantaged, achievement gap, and

Limited English Proficient students; all of which have been proven to impact a person's sense of worth, belonging, and cause long-term psychological damage (Flores, Kleyen, & Menken, 2015). The use of such language calls attention to reality that within society and our schools, people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture (Lindsey et al., 2008; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Furthermore, the language and cultural differences also influence the attitudes of the culturally dominant, primarily stemming from communication barriers and misunderstandings (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002).

Cultural Proficiency recognizes that people have group identities and individual identities, all of which are assets. In acting in the best interest of students and in the spirit of democracy, school leaders would take into account students' voices in this regard, rather than making system-wide expedient decisions (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). Scholars emphasize that diversity within cultures is vast and significant. The overlapping of race and social class or intersection of gender and ethnicity also represent the dynamics of cultural diversity, and at times, create conflict within educational settings (Shapiro, et al., 1995). Hicks (1981) explained the asymmetrical nature of conflict in that "individuals or groups in their relation to their economic and political systems do not share similar consciousness or similar needs at the same point in time" (as cited in Shapiro et al., 1995, p. 31). Similar to Cross's emphasis that cultures have unique needs, Lindsey (2011) explains unique cultural needs at both the micro and macro level of schooling, carrying implications for curriculum, partnerships with stakeholders, and professional development planning.

Franco, Ott, and Robles (2011) expand Lindsey et al.'s work in cultural proficiency and leadership framework to support school leaders in the assessment of the

healthy and unhealthy organizational behavior of schools. They were particularly inspired because of the discrimination and stereotypes they have faced in their leadership, specifically gender and ethnicity. In an interview with Lindsey in 2011, Franco, Ott and Robles shared that they saw evidence of being underestimated as effective school leaders because they were Latina. As a result, Franco et al. (2011) collaborated to develop a cultural proficiency framework for leadership development and training. Their dedication was grounded in addressing “barriers that impede social and academic progress for women and people of color,” which have “fueled dedication to serving equitably the academic and social needs of all students” (p. 57). Similar to other scholars in the fields of language learning, ethics, and democratic education, their purpose for the research was guided by an “understanding and appreciation for cultural assets” (p. 58).

Ethical Tensions. Leading with cultural proficiency requires the ability to recognize ethical tension and do what is socially just. Franco et al. (2011) “use the conceptual framework to share how our cultural assets form the basis for core values that guide us as educational leaders” (p. 60). They also present the notion that “recognizing and understanding the tension that exists for people and schools in barriers versus assets prepares you to better serve the student in your classroom, school, and district” (p. 60). The aforementioned belief parallels Gross’s (2015) Turbulence Theory and Shapiro and Stefkovich’s Multiple Ethical Paradigm, in that Franco et al. recognize that tension serves as a lever for change and democratic leaders must view dilemmas through multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, Franco et al. (2011) presents a Zone of Ethical Tension between barriers and the guiding principles for cultural proficiency, described as a “pivot point where educators have stark choices,” explained as:

We choose to be a victim of social forces and to believe in either cultural deficit theory or, every bit as damaging, the intractability of systemic oppression. [or] We choose to believe in our capacity to be effective in cross-cultural interactions. (p. 60)

Ethical tensions immerse when organization or individuals do not recognize and consider culture to be a predominant force in society, nor that people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture. Furthermore, marginalized non-dominant populations have to be at least bicultural, which creates a distinct set of issues to which the system must be equipped to respond.

Barriers to Cultural Proficiency. In order to create or promote healthy leadership and organizational behaviors, school leaders can first identify the impediments. Lindsey (2017) points out that “recognizing and acknowledging the Barriers to Cultural Proficiency is a very important first step to understanding how to overcome resistance to change that resides within us and within our schools” (p. 47). Without recognizing the barriers, school leaders have a “skewed sense of reality that impedes one’s ability to pursue ethical and moral avenues in meeting the academic and social needs of nondominant groups of students” (Lindsey, 2017, p. 28,). Personal, professional, and institutional impediments “to moral and just service to a diverse society” are identified as being resistant to change; being unaware of the need to adapt; not acknowledging systemic oppression; and, benefiting from a sense of privilege and entitlement (p. 48).

Lindsey (2017) points out that many educators struggle with change that involves issues of culture, causing an adversarial relationship between members of the school and those forcing the change, who are being perceived as an outside force judging the current practices as deficient (p. 27). Ultimately, Lindsey (2017) identifies “systems of oppression as having two effects – on those who are harmed and on those who benefit” (p. 27). Those who are harmed respond from an emotional connection and become knowledgeable of practices that impact them negatively. Other the other hand, those who benefit become oblivious to systemic oppression because they can choose not to see. Furthermore, Franco et al. (2001) along with Lindsey (2017) acknowledge that school policies and practices also reflect societal barriers. For example, as in society, students are often coerced or required to surrender parts of their identity in order to conform to the current system.

The Achievement Gap. Though diversity is celebrated in many schools, there remains a lack of urgency to sway educators and the American public away from accepting terms like *achievement gap* as commonplace, which ultimately creates complacency that White student simply outperform minority students. Lindsey (2017) emphasizes that the term achievement gap is at times also used to oversimplify a discussion of academic achievement, using a scope of standardized test scores or school performance indicators disaggregated by race. The context of the achievement gap is beyond academics or racial lines and comprises socioeconomic, cultural intolerance, and educational disparities between white and non-white students. Language minority students are one particular subpopulation where this phenomenon is present. They are often identified as economically disadvantaged, in programs that are under-resourced,

and the current direction of education policy is designed to discount the cultural capital English Learners (ELs) bring to the classroom. As stated previously, the psychological implications of exclusion of language minority students are measurable. Evidence links student wellness, lowered expectations, peer and teacher relationships, school readiness, attendance, and access to educational opportunities (Flores et al., 2015).

The term *achievement gap* also asserts an undertone within the rhetoric that minorities cannot perform well academically, and the pace of learning must be slowed to accommodate accordingly. Franco, Ott, and Robles (2011) suggest that this mindset of acceptance results in teaching practices of “charity” or empathy, not of equity and high expectations. English-only school practices, the emphasis of English-learning over other academic skill development, underscores the void within the educational experience of language-minority students, leaving them ill-prepared for college and the workforce (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; García, 2008). The phenomenon highlights disconnect between schools and the communities they serve. Stakeholders expect residents to finish school with the tools needed to improve quality of life within his or her community. Education must be relevant to those served by the institution. The current status-quo educational practices, however, continually disenfranchise children by judging their achievement through successful assimilation and performance on exams that are culturally-partisan (Gándara & Hopkins 2010; Lindsey et al., 2008; Shapiro, Sewell, & DuCette, 2001). The racist and classist push to silence these children and their communities is evidenced by the restrictive language education policies and the manifestation of a pipeline to undesirable low-paying jobs. The English Learner subgroup, of which, 75% live in or below the federal poverty level (Leistyna, 2012)

participate in academic programs that are nested in the monoculturalistic paradigm of many US school districts' organizational behaviors.

The Culturally Proficient Leadership Continuum

The continuum of cultural proficiency divides the healthy and unhealthy behaviors into the domains of Cultural Destructiveness, Cultural Incapacity, Cultural Blindness, Cultural Pre-competence, Cultural Competence, and Cultural Proficiency. The agency of the leader or organization stems from the following leverage points of cultural competence: Assessing Cultural Knowledge, Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. Each leverage point serves as standards for personal, professional values as well as organizational policies. The framework for Culturally Proficient Inquiry and Leadership was adapted from Cross et al. (1989) by Lindsey et al. and Franco et al. to ultimately define a shared vision for school leaders to serve with a moral purpose, grounded in ethical democratic perspectives for schooling.

Characterizing Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviors. Lindsey (2017) defines five cultural competencies as measured along the *Continuum of Cultural Proficiency*. The continuum is a six-point rubric originally established by Cross et al. (1989). The first three points focus on negative individual or organizational behaviors, identified as *cultural destructiveness*, *cultural incapacity*, and *cultural blindness*. Behaviors of the first three points on the continuum would be characterized as monocultural and monolingual approaches to pedagogy and stakeholder partnerships, including deficit-mindset and policies. The remaining three points on the continuum focus on practice: *cultural pre-competence*, *cultural competence*, and *cultural proficiency*. Characteristics of individual

or organizational behaviors may be reflective practices that examine how students are underserved or the leader is a catalyst for change (Franco et al., 2011; Lindsey et al., 2008).

Cultural Destructiveness. Behaviors characterized as culturally destructive are action-steps or thought that seeks to “eliminate the vestiges of the cultures of others” (Lindsey et al., p. 24). Cultural destructiveness is the most negative end of the continuum.

Examples of cultural destructiveness would be any and all education policies that replicate inequalities or perpetuate the achievement gap. Systems that use educational placement as a way to restrict or eliminate cultural heritage and identity are characterized as culturally destructive. Such systems are often founded on the notion that one race is superior and other cultures should be eradicated. Furthermore, “coupled with vast power differentials...the dominant group [will] disenfranchise, control, exploit, or systematically destroy the minority population” (Cross et al. p. 29).

Cultural Incapacity. Cultural incapacity promotes abandonment of the nondominant culture, making it appear wrong. Historically, these practices were seen in exclusionary laws against minorities. Recent school-oriented examples include teacher assumption that parents of some cultural groups do not care because of their lack of participation in school activities or that English learners are destined to underachieve. Cultural incapacity does not “intentionally seek to be culturally destructive but rather lack the capacity to help minority clients or communities” (Cross et al., 1989, p. 30). Still, extreme bias and racial superiority of the dominant group are present. Cultural incapacity may manifest itself in school behaviors by disproportionately allocating resources and supporting segregation as a desirable policy.

Cultural Blindness. Cultural Blindness refrains from or refuses to recognize the culture of others, reinforcing the idea that cultural difference serves little value.

Accepting assimilation, as commonplace is a form of cultural blindness, as is the dismissal of achievements by certain subgroups (Lindsey et al., 2008). Cultural blindness is near the mid-point of the continuum. At times, school organizational behaviors or leadership practices may express the philosophy of being unbiased, but at the same time, they function with the belief that the needs of students are the same, regardless of culture.

Cultural blindness originated from a well-intended liberal philosophy; however, the consequences are ethnocentric programs that only benefit the most assimilated students and often do not include community input or guidance (Cross et al., 1989). Cultural strengths are ignored, and assimilation is highly valued. Cross (1989) explains the perception of the dominant culture as viewing minorities through a “cultural deprivation model, which asserts that problems are the result of inadequate cultural resources” (p. 30).

Cultural Pre-Competence. In contrast, cultural pre-competence is the first step in cultural awareness, in that the school leader recognizes barriers to cultural proficiency, specifically ethnic groups are served to varying degrees by the dominant culture. Furthermore, Lindsey et al. (2008) explain that when “one does not know the workings of a diverse setting... a person or organization can move in a positive, constructive direction or they can falter, stop, and possibly regress” (p. 25). Behaviors by organizations may manifest themselves as hiring minority staff (many of who are assimilated into the dominant culture), conducting a needs assessment, tracking students, and exploring how to improve programs to meet the needs of specific student groups – such as English

learners. Other attributes may be seen in the expressed desire for civil rights and how the organization or school leader may need to change practices. Cross et al. (1989) warn that one danger of pre-competence is developing a false sense of accomplishment, specifically a belief that accomplishing one goal fulfills an obligation to minority communities. On the other hand, Lindsey (2017) refers to pre-competence as the *breakthrough* phase because school leaders begin to identify behaviors that promote or create inequity.

Cultural Competence. The interactive relationship, where the educator or educational leader becomes additive in multicultural settings is the defining aspect of cultural competence. Cultural competence is characterized by Cross (1989) as:

...acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, and a variety of adaptations to service models in order to better meet the needs of minority populations. (p. 31)

Cultural competence is an inclusive model for diverse perspectives, especially those by minority communities. Furthermore, input from minority communities is sought as part of an active engagement model of partnership. Terrell and Lindsey (2009) add that cultural competence can be seen as an interactive arrangement in which response can be characterized as additive to cultures that are different from yours, especially with respect to diverse settings. Lindsey et al. (2008) illustrate other examples such as school leaders recognizing demographic shifts and a direct correlation to the need for change in instructional practices and leadership. Additionally, Lindsey et al. (2008) emphasize that culture is a normal part of educator conversation.

Cultural Proficiency. Franco et al. (2011) define cultural proficiency as the ability to “understand [and change] that schools are microcosms of inequities in society” (p. 75), while holding a vision of social justice, student-centered leadership, and “advocacy for all students and communities as a normal part of professional responsibility” (Lindsey et al. 2008, p. 26). Cross et al. (1989) describe those who embody cultural proficiency as “holding culture in high esteem...advocating for cultural competence throughout systems,” in order to further “improve relations between cultures throughout society” (p. 32). Policies may be seen as flexible and culturally impartial. Lindsey et al. (2008) characterize school leaders who demonstrate cultural proficiency as “holding a value for social justice embodied in the attitude of ‘doing what is right for all students’ and advocate for students and community groups as a normal part of their professional responsibility” (p. 26).

Elements of Culturally Proficient Leadership. Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, and Jew (2008) defined cultural proficiency as school leaders “educating all students to high levels through knowing, valuing, and using their cultural backgrounds, languages, and learning styles within the context of teaching” (p. 21). Addressing issues of access and achievement gaps is a moral issue and the guiding principles of cultural proficiency “show the way to build a powerful moral and philosophical framework for professional practice” (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 103). Terrell and Lindsey (2009) point out, “The culturally proficient educator has internalized *advocacy* as a means of *social justice* for those historically underserved in our schools” (p. 117). They also emphasize that considering “how we approach and deal with the treatment of students based on their sexual orientation, faith, and ableness is a test of educational leaders’ commitment to an

inclusive democratic society (p. 88). The guiding principles known as the five essential elements are used as standards for the analysis of cultural proficiency. The principles were adapted from Cross et al. (1989). The continued work in cultural proficiency in education maintains the same names for each element but redefines each within the context of schooling: *assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, institutionalizing cultural knowledge*. The school leadership paradigm also parallels Cross et al.'s framework for a Culturally Competent System of Care, in that the attitudes, policies, and practices must be congruent at all-levels; practice must be based on accurate perceptions of behavior; policies must be impartial; and attitudes should be unbiased.

Assessing Cultural Knowledge. The component of assessing cultural knowledge is the awareness and reaction to cultural diversity in cross-cultural settings. Diversity within cultures is also vast and significant (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 23). School principals are civic leaders and therefore must forge relationships with all members within the community. Franco et al. (2011) define this element as:

The extent to which the leader uses personal experience to develop, maintain, and provoke a moral imperative (passion, knowledge, wisdom, diligence, and courage) for making positive changes that benefit underserved stakeholders in schools and in the community. In addition, Assessing Culture considers the extent to which the leader perceives aspects of culture as assets and strengths (not deficits) to harness and optimize for effective teaching, learning, and leadership. (p. 74)

As leaders of increasingly diverse and demographically shifting communities, principals must acknowledge their strengths and limitations in cultural knowledge. The

ability to assess cultural knowledge leads to informed decision-making though limiting intended or unintended bias from dominant culture or language perspectives. Self-assessment reveals the existing systems or cultures as a first step to better incorporate cross-cultural perspectives and involvement.

Valuing Diversity. Cross et al. (1989) emphasizes, “To value diversity is to see and respect its worth” (p. 34). Valuing diversity considers that choices is influenced by culture and though people share common needs, various cultures go about meeting those needs differently. Part of valuing diversity includes creating formal and informal decision-making groups, characteristic of democratic leadership. Inclusive practices, especially with people whose perspectives and cultures are different, encourage shared decision-making and problem solving. Franco et al. (2011) define the element of valuing diversity, in terms of educational leadership as:

The extent to which the leader is aware of, values, learns about, supports, and promotes his or her [their own] culture and the culture of others. Additionally, valuing diversity considers the extent to which the leader seeks, respects, and values multiple diverse ideas, opinions, cultural perspectives, experiences, and styles to inform decisions for the good of the community. (p. 76)

Franco et al. (2011) add that cultural pluralism is seen as a way to meet the needs of all stakeholders, through the distribution of power.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Lindsey et al. (2008) define managing the dynamics of difference as the “recognition of conflict as a natural and normal process that [also] has cultural contexts that can be understood and can be supportive in creative problem solving” (pp. 20-21). Effective leaders may use conflict as a catalyst for

understanding and change about educational and societal injustice. Cross et al. (1989) explain the dynamics of difference as cultural interactions within the context of history and the current political relationship between groups, adding that without understanding of cross-cultural dynamics, misinterpretation and misjudgment may occur. The *management* is important because when one violates the norms of another there are consequences (Cross et al., 1989).

Franco et al. (2011) defines managing the dynamics of difference in terms of educational leadership as:

The extent to which the leader solicits diverse points of view, opinions, learning, communication, and leadership styles to promote flexibility in meeting organizational goals and to make decisions, which reflect stakeholder issues. Additionally, managing the dynamics of difference considers the extent to which the leader embraces risk to make decisions and take actions, which may not be popular with the dominant cultures, anticipates criticism, persists in the face of criticism, inertia, barriers or reversals, and accepts personal and professional consequences advocating for underserved students and other stakeholders. (p. 77)

Modeling problem-solving and conflict resolution can be observed in organizational culture and cultural contexts of the communities within the school (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009).

Adapting to Diversity. The purpose of cultural proficiency is to build a cross-cultural system of educational practices to meet the holistic needs of students and the school community. Lindsey et al. (2008) defines adapting to diversity as “having the will

to learn about others and the ability to use others' cultural experiences and backgrounds in educational settings" (p. 26). Franco et al. (2011) define adapting to diversity as:

The extent to which the leader (1) helps others understand the sources of assumptions that may obscure the truth about the organization's effectiveness and diminishes personal responsibility for achieving it and (2) builds capacity to transform the organization's ability to achieve outcomes for equity and justice. (p. 77)

As a leadership practice or competency, adapting to diversity is also organizational synergy (See Maslow, 1998), in that cross-organizational effectiveness is observed and marginalized stakeholders are heard. School leadership that demonstrates proficiency in this area would have "the ability to use others' experiences and backgrounds in all school settings" (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 104).

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. The final essential element, institutionalizing cultural knowledge, extends adaptability and organizational synergy through trust. Through this lens, leaders facilitate an understanding among all in the community that meeting the needs of the underserved contributes to the common good. Likewise, educational benefit is found in diversity and creating a foundation of cultural understanding. Franco et al. (2011) define institutionalizing cultural knowledge as:

The extent to which the leader communicates openly, frequently, and effectively with all stakeholder groups and creates a culture of community collaboration and inclusive decision making focused on meeting the needs of underserved students and their parents/guardians. Additionally, institutionalizing cultural knowledge is defined in the extent to which the leader promotes a persistent vision of education as the vehicle for closing societal gaps, makes a difference in the lives of others, and creates support networks and structures for mentoring greatness in others. (p. 81)

Evidence related to this element would be seen as making cultural experiences and perspectives an integral part of the school's professional development (Terrell & Lindsey, 2011).

Implications for Culturally Proficient School Leadership. Cross et al. (1989) stress that “change occurs in a complex interplay between practice and policy set in the context of politics and the culture of the system” (p. 40). Furthermore, Cross et al. (1989) point out that policy evolves through research, goal setting, and advocacy. School leaders may be able to support the goal of creating equitable schooling through the use of the Culturally Proficient Leadership Rubric (Franco et al., 2011). The framework includes elements that align with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders (NPBEA, 1996). Both the Cultural Proficiency Continuum and Five Essential Elements serve as tools to inform curriculum-design, leadership and organizational behaviors, community engagement, and policy development. Cultural Proficiency, used as a framework for leadership practice, focuses on school leaders being able to develop deeper relationships with all those within the school community.

Cultural Proficiency as Democratic Leadership

Principals, who are student-centered and lead learning within their schools, perceive the learner as a “participant in society rather than an object to be manipulated by society” (Gross & Shapiro, 2016; See Kliebard, 2004). Nevertheless, public education remains accountability-driven and arguably unethical to the extent that teachers, students, and parents can feel alienated. Principals are limited by policies that do not reflect an understanding of their role and unique opportunity for community development. Leaders are made managers and given a mandated *curriculum agenda*. Children remain stuck

within the competitiveness that is American schooling. As an example, Freire's (1973) *banking model* remains mostly intact and relevant today. The U.S. education system continues to foster a "test-polluted and accountability driven environment ... [with a] curriculum based on competition [that] sets up numerous students to work dead-end jobs, join the U.S. military, or live behind bars" (Porfilio, 2012, p. 69). Porfilio (2012) highlights that this is particularly true for students with disabilities, low-income students, and language minority students, who "realize the curriculum positions them to be merely workers, who lack the power to promote a culturally relevant and stimulating environment" (p. 69). Furthermore, Bourdieu (1977) linked education to reproduction of the social order, suggesting that the devaluing of cultural capital may be present in schools since the phenomenon is present in modern American society. The facade of educational rhetoric hides inequities in American society, and acceptance or complacency of the achievement gap limits the capacity of school leaders. School leaders, however, are positioned to be the civic leaders who mend rifts within society by reshaping perspective and educational leaders that provide relevant learning experiences that meet the needs of the communities they serve. Cultural proficiency may provide a framework to do so.

Scholars have called for school leaders to have an inner sense of responsibility for social development and the ability to cultivate equity (Gross, 2009). Gross (2009) establishes a vision for redefining school leaders as Democratic Ethical Educational Leaders (as cited in Shapiro & Gross, 2016). This type of leader is guided by an inner sense of responsibility and ownership that is expressed through the care of the faculty, families and communities they lead. Gross and Shapiro define the career of an educational leader as more of a calling rather than an employment opportunity. The

democratic ethical educational leader has a sense of moral purpose to further the social development on a world scale. Furthermore, the agency of school leaders can be measured by their ability to not only meet the instructional needs of students but also the needs of the community, which includes influence on policy and the manner in which it is implemented (Mavrogordato & White, 2020; Reese, 2000; Warren, 2011).

Today's era of education reform in the United States is at its tipping point. As Fullan (2014) points out, "We have put the principal on a pedestal, and now we expect miracles; a few can pull it off, but mere mortals have little chance" (p. 7). As the US continues to trail other leading industrial nations in student achievement (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Devillar & Jiang, 2011), we are at a pivotal moment to evolve. Changing from the industrial age of monocultural and linear education practices to a balanced multicultural and holistic development paradigm, will redefine policy and the approach of school leadership to support democracy. Principals are in a unique position to lead the learning of this phenomenon given their ability to forge relationships with communities, many of which are becoming increasingly diverse. School leaders that acknowledge the shortfalls of current educational policies and realities of institutionalized racism become transformational and democratic. As community leaders, they have a duty to serve the stakeholders in a democratic manner, which requires them to leverage the social and cultural capital of the stakeholders they serve (Lindsey et al., 2008; Orr & Rogers, 2010; Terrel & Lindsey, 2009).

Fullan (2014) also points out that "[a] system perspective makes sociological sense," because those involved will prosper (p. 98). Rifts in a community (or region) because of cultural misunderstanding or opposition to diversity will only depreciate the

progress made within school districts and devalue democracy because “there really cannot be democracy without community [and] vice-versa” (Gacia, 2012, p. 210). These ideas are drivers for school leaders who strive to create a healthy democratic learning environments and educational institutions. As key players in policy change or development, they are liaisons with unique abilities and functions, giving them the power to lead micro and macro changes in communities. This notion can be identified as *the principal advantage* – that the school principal, as a change agent, holds a unique political position because it can be the mobilizing influence and capacity-building force for a community.

With increasing pressure and responsibilities, principals are under a microscope (as are teachers) and boxed-in by accountability (Fullan, 2014; Mehta, 2013, 2014). The autonomy of the principal, however, continues to be restricted by a press for standardized learning (Mehta, 2014). There is also a continued emphasis for a narrow leadership style characterized as “technical-rational authority,” where “emphasis [is] on principals being instructional leaders and basing their practice on teaching-effectiveness and school-effectiveness research” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 31). Twenty-five years later, pressure from education policies continue to favor the principal’s role as the direct instructional leader with technical-rational authority; however, in order to create meaningful growth, principals must lead learning through empowering stakeholders by capacity building and see teacher learning as professional capital, calling for redefinition of the instructional leadership model (Fullan, 2014). As whole school instructional leaders, principals link changes in school culture and climate to the best knowledge and practices for student learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2012). They are responsible and expected to improve collective

efficacy along with pedagogy. Combined with academic emphasis and the trust of faculty, parents, and students, collective efficacy is the “cognitive face of academic optimism - the thinking and believing side” (Wu et al., 2013, p. 179). Effective school principals are able to think globally as systems players and function as agents of change by connecting transformational leadership to practices within their organizations (Fullan, 2014). They also include equal representation of the school community in decisions, which establishes trust, a necessary component for democracy (Bellah, 2000). Principals that lead learning become accessible, focus on growth, and promote inclusiveness.

Democratic Leadership and Multiculturalism

The educational system that principals face, however, is guided by policies that do not encourage multiculturalism and participation of diverse cultural groups (Gándara & Hopkins, 2009). The outcome is evidenced in the achievement gap, economic disparity, and continued segregation of our schools and communities (Lindsey et al., 2008).

Democratic ideals, in contrast, rely on the educational leader’s ability to mobilize stakeholders and provide access to the tools that enable full participation in the school community. In practice and planning, actions for mobilization translate to school improvement activities based on agreed upon needs as well as positive parent and community partnerships (Puriefoy, 2005). School cannot solve social problems alone. Essentially, school leaders need the support of the community to propel local school efforts toward an equity agenda and should offer the moral and ethical obligation of schools in a democratic society as the justification for this agenda (Evans, 2013).

On the other hand, Labaree (1997) explains that conflicting goals for American education has brought contradiction and debilitation; however, it has also provided us

with an open structure of education that is vulnerable to change, giving educators and citizens alike an alternative set of principles and practices that support the indivisibility of education as a public good. Labaree (1997) cites numerous reform attempts that have shown mediocre educational outcomes for students and stakeholders:

Big problems call for big changes, and a wide range of such changes have been suggested: Restructure the organization of schools; permit parents to choose which school their children attend; promote specialized magnet schools; establish autonomous charter schools; create Black academies; professionalize teaching; require competency testing for teachers; open up alternative routes to teaching; upgrade the professional education of teachers; establish national achievement tests for students; require performance testing as a prerequisite for endorsed diplomas; equalize school funding; make funding dependent on school performance; extend the school year; reinforce basic skills; increase vocational education; beef up the academic curriculum; develop national curriculum standards; increase multiculturalism within the curriculum; end bilingual education; stabilize the American family; provide economic opportunities for the poor; institute prayer in schools; attack the roots of racism; promote traditional values; and so on. (p. 40)

Furthermore, Labaree (1997) explains how we depend on the political competence of our fellow citizens, including school leaders and school stakeholders, since we put ourselves at the mercy of their collective judgment about the running of our institutions. School leaders' roles in policy interpretation and implementation center on the effective selection, dissemination, and use of information (Evans, 2013). Unfortunately, Evans (2013) points out that policy and practice still largely relegate such families to passive, accommodationist roles in maintaining the status quo of schools. Family engagement practices focus on how to remediate "those" parents and families to conform to dominant norms, expectations, and agendas; "thus, the voices, insights, and contributions of nondominant families are rarely central to educational theory, policy, and practice" (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020, p. 39). Evans (2013) emphasizes that school leaders

must use their power to privilege community resources that have a vested interest in the students and community, which includes leveraging cultural capital as an asset.

Gutmann (2005) also establishes a connection between multiculturalism and democratic education by explaining cannot be culturally neutral adding, “cultural predisposition skews their future choices, even if it does not uniquely determine who they will be, or how they will decide to live their lives” (p. 410). Gutmann describes democratic education as conscious social reproduction, *conscious* in that “education aims to cultivate the capacity in all children to reasonably reflect on their own lives and the society and world within which they live” (p. 410). Principals must be committed as civic leaders to preserve reciprocity with the community. Leading a child-centered institution shapes identity of school leaders first and foremost. With a mission that is both unwavering and transformative, educators are presented with the challenge to fill the void of a community, given the reality that schools may be the only functional institution within a community (Cucchiara, 2013).

Though the principal may wish to act out of the common good to create an inclusive school community, he or she needs to balance pluralistic beliefs and the independent interests of parents – a major paradox of public education (Corcoran and Goertz, 2005). Corcoran and Goertz (2006) explain the paradox as:

Middle-class Americans seem to simultaneously embrace two opposing principles: all children should have equal opportunity for a good education and –through hard work– upward mobility and economic success, and families should be able to use their resources to secure educational advantages for their children. (p. 30)

Hence, school leaders may lead conversations with parent groups from a different perspective, with continued awareness in the common good and acting from a position of moral purpose (Fullan, 2011). On the other hand, many parents have independent

interests and they act from of a position of self-purpose. Many of the parents of our most marginalized students, however, have been “missing at the table” and we must be sure that their interest is represented in our public engagement efforts (Warren, 2011).

Shifting Landscape. The country’s growing racial diversity has led to rising interracial tensions and conflict (Gándara & Hopkins 2010). To further complicate the matter, intergenerational poverty has solidified into minority groups, creating a permanent underclass (Borrero, Lee, & Padilla, 2013; Bourdieu, 1996). Nearly 60 million people, more than one in five Americans, now speak a language other than English at home. Of those, two-thirds (62%) speak Spanish, making Hispanics the largest language minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). This makes students who are learning English as a second language the fastest growing demographic in the United States education system, growing at a faster rate than students only speaking English (Gándara, 2009). In Pennsylvania, Johnson and Freeman (2010) studied the School District of Philadelphia, the largest school district in the state, using action-oriented ethnographic research to examine policies that explicitly work to promote bilingualism, from 1995-2005. According to Johnson and Freeman (2010), the EL population in the School District of Philadelphia at that time was approximately 10 percent (as cited in Menken & García, 2010). Though the EL subgroup steadily increased nationwide since, the EL population in the School District of Philadelphia declined slightly to approximately 8.6 % in 2014 (NCES, 2014). On the other hand, the EL enrollment in Pennsylvania statewide increased 24.6 % from 2002 to 2009 (O’Conner, Abedi, & Tung, 2012). The flux of migrant and EL populations beyond urban education environments suggests a need to further explore how educational programing and decisions are being made beyond the

urban setting with respect to the increasing EL subgroup in Pennsylvania. School leaders must also be mindful, however, that the type aggregated demographic data reported by schools often obscures other minority groups within the larger and generalizing demographic categories reported. For example, it may be challenging to consider subgroups of Asian and African English learners.

Lastly, English language proficiency is an accountability metrics under Title I, which creates “increasing pressure on states and districts to ensure EL students are learning English” (Mavrogordato, & White, 2020, p. 5). Therefore, there continues to be an increased focus on the understanding and carrying out policy on the ground. Mavrogordato and White (2020) explain that, “although researchers have explored school leaders’ enactment of social justice practices, very little research has explored how school leaders promote and practice social justice through the policy implementation process” (p. 5).

Assimilation and Standardization of the Language Minority. The assimilation and segregation of language minority students has compounded an educational crisis, one that has severe negative domestic and global economic implications (Callahan & Gándara, 2014). Nearly all government led educational policies and reforms have in some way or another been said to discriminate, scrutinize diversity, and assimilate children (Casellas & Shelly, 2012; Cummins, 2009; DaSilva Iddings, Combs, & Moll, 2012; Gándara, Losen, August, Uriarte, Gómez, & Hopkins, 2010; García & Flores, 2013; Johnson, & Freeman, 2014; Menken & Solorza, 2014; Wiley & Wright, 2004). In other words, policy has been used to indoctrinate children to a dominant language and culture at school. In addition, oppressive testing practices and the standardization of learning has

denied relevant educational opportunity to think critically and creatively (Zhoa, 2013). The monolingual and monocultural consciousness of today's education system has been studied by examining the social dynamics and school leadership perspectives of diversity (Franco et al., 2011; Lindsey et al., 2008). Conclusions indicate that neglect of social capital and pressures to assimilate reinforce a range of negative outcomes for children such as: depression, risk of substance abuse, and a widening of the achievement gap (Flores et al., 2015; Lindsey et al., 2008; Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2014). Nevertheless, school policies and practices remain monoglossic (García, 2009) and assimilation remains a key objective. Because of the changing demographics across the US, challenging this English-only status quo is inevitable and school leaders are in a unique position to transform restrictive language policies as key stakeholders.

In contrast, leveraging the cultural capital of students improves learning outcomes for both monolingual and bilingual students (Bourdieu, 1986; Cummins, 2009; Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011; García, 2009; Hornberger, 2002; Lindsey et al., 2008; Rodriguez, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2000). Teaching is augmented when the student's background knowledge is activated or primed, "allowing the teacher to reach beyond the confines of the classroom to engage students" (Moll & Greenberg, 1990, as cited in Rodriguez, 2003, p. 92). Teachers effectively prime students for learning by associating a new concept or content with that which is culturally or linguistically familiar. This parallels the widely accepted instructional practice of using schema as the foundation for introducing new content (Danielson, 2002, 2007; Marzano, 2008). Bilingual and biliterate students are able to transfer the skills in their native language to the new language (Cummins, 1986),

potentially accelerating instruction and learning; however, teachers need to facilitate and promote this process in their pedagogy organically and purposefully.

Implications of Assimilation on Democratic Leadership. Gándara (2010) argues that our schools become less democratic and uphold a false sense of achievement for children when narrow measures are used to generalize student achievement and categorize children. Though there was an increasing backlash to NCLB (2002) and the barrage of testing, the philosophical underpinnings remain, only this time with more emphasis on privatizing education through the creation of more charter schools. Scholars have argued that neither NCLB (2002) nor ESSA (2015) will address the growing gap between White and non-white students because the gap is not educational in nature (Lindsey et al., 2008). Closing the achievement and opportunity gaps require massive social and economic policy changes (Mathis, 2016). Pedro Noguero, Agnew Professor of Education of Education, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, Human Development, and Executive Director of the Metropolitan Urban Education at New York University, explains the immediate implications and outcomes of these policies in his lecture at
Boston College:

The achievement gap is really nothing more than an education manifestation of inequality... The reason our school reform policies don't work, and we don't have a strategy to successfully educate the most disadvantaged children is that we expect schools to solve problems that are not really exclusively educational in nature... We have ample evidence that something is fundamentally wrong with how we're educating our children in most schools in America. We place far too much emphasis on testing and not nearly enough time on getting children excited about learning." (October 5, 2012)

This reality suggests the school principal needs pragmatic optimism in order to enact transformation within the schools they lead. Noguero presents a reality that “Principals cannot wait for policy makers to brokerage their decisions (personal communication, March 29, 2016).

These unintentional and intentional decisions made by educators, specifically when they neglect the cultural capital of their students leads to lower self-esteem and cultural isolation; thus, reinforces the achievement gap between culturally dominant white students and minorities (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009; Lindsey et al., 2008; Wentworth, Pellegrin, Thompson, & Hakuta, 2010). This phenomenon is the consequence of discrimination against immigrants in society (Spencer-Rogers & McGovern, 2002), which is then replicated in the classroom (Bourdieu, 1986; Cummins, 1997; Gándara, et al., 2010; Wiley & Wright, 2004). Bowles and Gintis (1976) also theorized that schools reproduce society’s social classes in classrooms (as cited in Shapiro, Sewell, & DuCette, 1995). Societal power relationships manifest as early as kindergarten as evidenced by research indicating that many teachers underestimate Hispanic children before they even enter the classroom (Ready & Wright, 2011). Even the verbiage used to refer to school-age children learning English identifies them as having a deficit, that they are limited (Flores et al., 2015). Education policies have prioritized English instruction over rigor in the classroom, thereby reinforcing a hierarchal value in languages and assimilation.

Not Just a Border-State Issue

Research of the language minority student population has focused on border-states with disproportionately high numbers of language minority student enrollment who

are primarily Hispanic and Latino. The nationwide trends are well studied; however, more research on the smaller yet growing population of English Learners (ELs) in some states and local districts is needed. Pennsylvania for example, a state with educational challenges that are rural and urban is a valuable study because PA carries unique migrant patterns. School enrollment trends indicate greater language diversity than border-states. The trend of growing language minority subgroups should increase the consciousness of local PA policy actors. Even when analyzing data on Hispanics, arguably the most widely studied EL subgroup, it is clear that specific migrant pattern from Mexico to PA is uniquely distinctive. As is the case elsewhere, specific towns and regions from the country of origin can be found in tightly knit communities throughout Pennsylvania. In other words, Latino communities and their specific needs cannot be generalized because of language.

In an analysis of a legal battle that occurred in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Everson and Hedges (2019) illustrated the importance for school leaders and teachers to be knowledgeable about current legal precedent when creating district and school policies affecting English learners. The decision resulted from a lawsuit brought by the ACLU of Pennsylvania, the Education Law Center of Pennsylvania, and pro bono counsel Pepper Hamilton LLP on behalf of a group of refugees from Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Burma who have fled war, violence, and persecution in their native countries (ACLU, 2016). “These students were thrown into a fundamentally inappropriate alternative accelerated program where they languished in classes they didn’t understand. One of our clients was pushed through four years of high school in 18 months, without learning English or acquiring basic skills,” said Maura McInerney, senior staff attorney at the

Education Law Center. Lancaster has taken in 1,300 refugees since 2013, 20 times more per capita than the rest of the country, according to the report (BBC, 2017). The judge also ordered that the district provide instruction to allow the students to become proficient in English and ensure equal access "to the full range of educational opportunities provided to their peers, including curricular and non-curricular programs and activities" (NBC, 2016).

Pennsylvania ESL Policy and Origins. The Pennsylvania school code for education programming for English Learners (ELs) and teaching English as a second language (ESL) is stated as follows:

Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English, for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under chapter 4, section 12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction (22 Pa. Code § 4.26. ESOL).

The ideals embedded in Pennsylvania Education Code, chapter 4 section 26, regulates educational program to teach English to speakers of other languages (ESOL). The code's origins are from the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects against discrimination for access to housing, education, and employment. More specifically, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination in accessing federally funded programs and thereby protecting students receiving a public education. Shortly after, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act of 1968, which included Title VII, The Bilingual Education Act (BEA). The ESEA is the basis for today's ELL education policy, though less emphasis is now given to bilingual education. As the economic, but mainly social demands increased for English proficiency, the policy evolved to emphasize English language acquisition. Soon after, the Equal Educational Opportunities

Act (EEOA) of 1975 redefined the language of educational programming, intended to ensure access and participation. The EEOA was the outcome of *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the Supreme Court ruling that stated, “Identical education does not constitute equal education under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” The implication called for states and local education agencies to not only redesign programs but also reconsider *how* to meet the needs of students with language barriers.

Castañeda v. Pickard (1981) strengthened the framework for the EEOA, providing criteria to evaluate the authenticity of education programming for English learners. Later, Congress passed Title VII of the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, where semantics finally appeared correlating language proficiency and economic status. This marked another pivotal moment for the rights of immigrant children in the United States. The advancement of language acquisition policy and the ideology supporting language proficiency-based education program requirements for schools remains present in today’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, specifically Title III, and the recent attempt of the Race to the Top Act of 2011, H.R. 1532, 112th (2010). Today’s Pennsylvania regulation of instructional programs for English learners is consistent with the elements, characteristics, and paradigm of prior laws and regulations regarding programming for English learners: the right to access education despite language barriers, a procedure for identifying students, and an evaluation process for educational programs. As stated in the code, bilingual and bicultural education is included; however, NCLB (2002) and the current attempts to change policy continue to emphasize language proficiency.

Consistency Between Policy Design and Implementation. Good policy is supported by the means for implementation. For example, initially, NCLB (2002) received a majority of support from Latinos; however, once the legitimacy of this unfunded mandate was uncovered, it became yet another example of propaganda to attract the Hispanic vote. In a 2002 brief, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLEA) opposed the legislation for a variety of reasons after initially agreeing for the bill. Their rationale was explained as:

“the discriminatory and burdensome requirement in Title I and Title III for parental consent for ESL instruction, a three year limit on the services that [limited English proficient] children could receive for assistance in learning English and keeping up with . . . math and reading; and consolidation and/or elimination of numerous programs that provide resources for schools.” (Casellas and Shelly, 2012, p. 263)

Currently, the predominant measurement of the English language acquisition by students within the Pennsylvania public education system is determined by the organization World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and their framework for language development standards (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007, WIDA, 2012). WIDA provides matrices and “scaffold[s] trajectories for academic language development” (WIDA, 2012, p.6) with the intent to drive teaching and learning in the classroom; however, the implementation and judgment of teachers has been found to be inconsistent and unreliable (Llosa, 2011). Considering Pennsylvania’s recent adoption of Common Core State Standards, it can be argued that the aim of Chapter 4, Section 6, of the Pennsylvania education code is to remove barriers for ELs to gain access to deeper learning. Unfortunately, many programs are designed from the perspective that speaking a foreign language is a problem that needs to be fixed (Crawford, 2004), thereby tracking students to sheltered classrooms and resulting in limited access to rigorous content

(Callahan, Wilkinson, & Chandra, 2010; Kano & Kangas, 2014). In contrast, translanguaging – “the flexible use of their [English learners] linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds” (Celic & Seltzer, 2011), is an innovative educational model for the instruction of emergent bilinguals that can be considered by Pennsylvania schools under its public education code.

Implementation Challenges and a Critique of the Status-Quo

The country’s growing diversity has led to rising interracial tensions and conflict (Gándara & Hopkins 2010), making multicultural education essential for a stable democracy. Education policy initiatives for ELs have historically been linked to immigration, the right to an education, and civil rights (Losen, 2010). Yet under-represented minorities remain absent from the White middle-class dominated teaching force, which remains untrained and unqualified to teach English learners effectively (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). This inadvertently reinforces the country’s long history of marginalizing minorities (Freire, 1993) and influences the perspectives of parents. As Cole (2013) points out, “Historically, schooling in the United States has been actively structured to silence the linguistic capital of culturally and linguistically diverse students” (p. 147). This serves as a disadvantage for White English-only teachers when trying to build relationships or social capital with parents and the community, especially when implementation is misaligned to the policy’s design. Nevertheless, the role educators play in civic engagement is critical and necessary, especially in urban schools where the achievement gap between white and non-white students is drastic and parents have less social capital (Orr & Rogers, 2010). The reality for urban educators is that daily operations require them to solve non-instructional related problems without the means to

do so, making community engagement a strategy used to influence successful resolutions (Noguera, 2014). Today, civic engagement remains the most effective step in the advocacy for equitable quality education (Puriefoy, 2005) and high levels of social capital in immigrant families help buffer children from the disadvantages associated with the schools they attend (Gándara & Contreras, 2010).

Maximizing learning outcomes for emergent bilingual English learners is the twenty-first century education dilemma. Educators are bound by the confines of an accountability-model governed by the inability to implement policy. Emergent bilingual students represent the fastest growing demographic in the United States education system, growing at a faster rate than their English-only counterparts. Despite this reality, appropriate funding to support these learners remains absent from the Pennsylvania state budget. Given the social-emotional implications for children and the lack of readiness to absorb this population within the current American framework of public education, topics related to the teaching and learning of the English learning student population warrants continued scientific research to inform practitioners. Furthermore, the analysis of state ESL policies and school practices restricting the use of native-language instruction could limit the ability of schools to reduce the English learner achievement gap (Rumberger & Tran, 2010).

The challenge remains for advocates, lawyers, researchers, and educators to apply the literature, case law, and economic reform needed to address the sense of crisis in educating these children. The difficulties to implement this and similar state policies have yet to be skillfully addressed. Moving forward, the participants in the policy process must align action with current research, hence making decisions that are researched-based.

Losen (2010) provides three immediate critical actions to address the needs of English learners. These actions are aligned with current research, case law, and are pragmatic:

(1) Building the policy-relevant research base to challenge state initiated restrictive language policies; (2) using the reauthorization of the ESEA to develop better and more valid measures of long-term achievement for ELs; and (3) using the courts and Congress to eliminate restrictive policies and drive deeper shifts in policy and resource distribution, especially instructional resources, to improve our capacity to meet the needs of these students (p. 213).

The Supreme Court ruling in *Lau v. Nichols*, which essentially explained that access and placement are not synonymous, is disregarded and absent in the language of the English learner policy found in the Pennsylvania public school code (22 Pa. Code § 4.26.

ESOL). Currently, it can be argued that Pennsylvania does not have adequate accountability measures to assure the achievement of English learners, achievement beyond language acquisition. Given the shifting demographics of the United States, the use of data-driven practices in the field, and the recent backlash against standardized tests, the climate is at a tipping point. The dissonance between research and policy is growing. Current research identifies a need for culturally proficient practices and bilingual education; however, policy remains stagnant. The accountability measures under Title III, specifically to attain English proficiency and meet AYP requirements set by state standardized tests, further separates the practices of implementation from the ideology that grounds the policy.

As the US continues to trail other leading industrial nations in student achievement (Devillar & Jiang, 2011), we are at a pivotal moment to evolve from the industrial age of both monolingual and linear education practices and radically shift how American society thinks about education and our children's future role in the global economy. For the U. S. education system has a whole to ignore the body of evidence

showing the advantages of bilingualism in schools speaks to its own exclusionary practices. Carrasquillo (2011) asked a group of 25 bilingual professionals in business-related fields to identify the perceived benefits of their own bilingualism. At the conclusion of Carrasquillo's study, it was determined that leveraging bilingualism as a skill will promote global competitiveness as a nation, successful career options, and also promote international unity (Rodríguez et al., 2014).

Callahan and Gándara (2014) also present a body of research and analysis demonstrating that the future of the national economy relies on the success of Hispanics in the domestic and international markets. As part of this literature, Agirdag (2014) asserts that linguistic assimilation is detrimental to the economy (Callahan & Gándara, 2014, p. 178). Furthermore, Agirdag (2014) points out, "Like cultural capital, multicultural capital has the potential to be converted into economic capital," and "Given the increasing importance of transnational economies, it is likely that *multicultural capital* will increase in value in the future" (Agirdag, 2014, p. 178). This creates direct pressure on K-12 institutions to cultivate balanced bilingual students with tangible outcomes, such as California's biliteracy seal on high school diploma. Though ongoing efforts and advocacy to meet the needs of language minority students has continued for decades (Cummins, 2009, Cummins & Swain, 1986; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; García & Menken, 2009; DeJong, 2011; Ruíz, 1984; Thomas & Collier, 2000), the realization of the economic impact may be the tipping point. This reality requires educators to balance the agency of responsibility with accountability if they are to be authentic leaders and act in the best interest of children (Gross & Shapiro, 2013a; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2015; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). Otherwise, educators may extend the inequities already

apparent in the education of these children due to an assumption that their educational needs are the same as a monolingual child (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008).

Implications of the Literature

Continued research in cultural competency and educational leadership is needed because of the increasing diversity in U.S. public schools. The recognition of multiculturalism, specifically multilingualism, has led to improved learning outcomes, which presents an opportunity for educators and students. The unfortunate reality has been assimilation and discrimination towards the culturally different as evidenced by education policy and lack of educational opportunity. Given that certain education regulations and policies are ultimately designed and/or interpreted by the States, investigation into their interpretation and translation to practice will serve the interest of Pennsylvania educational leaders pursuing equity in their schools and communities.

The next section outlines the methodology of this study, explaining how the Cultural Proficiency framework of Lindsey et al. (2008) and adapted by Franco et al. (2011) will be used to capture the perceptions of elementary school principals with increasing EL enrollment. Using the Franco et al. (2011) indicators of culturally proficient leadership and the continuum leads to *how* school leaders reinforce unhealthy organizational behaviors in schools. The *why* school leaders are (or are not) leveraging the cultural competencies can be better assessed through a framework of ethical decision-making and Turbulence Theory.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The complexity and authenticity of student-centered decision-making in face of external pressure was investigated by collecting qualitative data. The nature of qualitative research bridges theory to data and constructs a ‘holistic’ account of the emic point of view (Giampapa, 2012). This investigation examined an individual’s ethical paradigm, his or her cultural proficiency, and the way in which he or she negotiated positionality from both a micro and macro perspective to meet the needs of English learners. Qualitative data collect was the most appropriate method to investigate the questions posed.

The methodology of data collection included variations of the questions used for self-reflection and self-assessment within leading texts by scholars of cultural proficiency. The underpinnings of ethical leadership and cultural proficiency are used as a framework for questioning the participants. Given that principals are uniquely positioned to influence communities and the role as leaders is changing, they were appropriate subjects for further study. Transferability was sought through thick descriptions of the educational setting and organizational behaviors (Merriam, 2009). In addition, Cultural Proficiency, Turbulence Theory, and Multiple Ethical Paradigm, are research-validated frameworks used to inform school leadership practices. Validation used to check for understanding of the participant was done through follow-up questioning.

Critical Qualitative Approach

The role of principal may vary across school communities throughout the state; however, all participants were bound by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. School community stakeholders as policy influencers and their agency within district were data points established by qualitative inquiry. I examined drivers of school principals, drivers that suggested insights into thinking and decision-making within the context of external pressures of accountability and each school leader's sense of purpose. I collected data related to perspective and leadership behaviors, then categorized the principal using the Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) Multiple Ethical Paradigm and Franco et al. (2011) Culturally Proficient Leadership framework.

Ricento (2000) identified the analysis between micro-level interactions as they relate to macro-levels of social organizations, an area of need for further research (as cited in Menken & García, 2010, p. 15). The qualitative approach of this study captured each school principal's ability to articulate how his or her ESL program was implemented. The personal experiences of navigating external pressures and their accompanied turbulence provided context to the political climate within the district and his or her school community. Hypotheses related to school organizational behaviors were established through consistencies within the literature and data.

As part of this study, I considered restrictive language policies as analogous to decades of educational policy that segregated schools and communities. On the other hand, I also considered contemporary neoliberal approached to language policy that are driven by assimilation. Within the context of this study, federal, state, and local policies

served as external driving forces; however, focus remained on the implementation of policy.

Participants and Student Groups

Purposeful participant selection was considered to capture data regarding equity, race, and politics within a large diverse school district. Principals were the target participants for this study because of an identified need for continued research in the area of culturally proficient leadership as identified in the literature. Furthermore, school principals are often the mediary between the school as an institution and the community. Participants were also questioned regarding his or her role and interaction with local policy decision-making. English learners and students identified as *Limited English Proficiency* (LEP) were the target student group discussed. This subgroup was chosen in order to also capture foreign-born ethnic minorities and language minority students.

Data Collection

Data was collected from the interviews of five elementary school principals, who lead culturally diverse schools within a large suburban district. Initial attempts were made to include additional participants. Because of leadership turnover and attrition, limitations for the study would only allow for five participants. Each participant received professional development to develop culturally informed practices by the school district, in an effort to promote equity. Two semi-structured interviews, 30 to 45-minute each, were conducted for each participant as part of the data collection process, for a total of ten interviews. The principals were required to discuss experience in designing and implementing ESL programs and partnerships with stakeholders. Additional questions related to the school leader's ethical frame were posed. Artifacts and observation of the

learning environment were collected using a camera and document scanner. I used follow-up questions to verify understanding with the participant. I used professional contacts in order to gain access to participants. Participants in the study in no way had subordination or authoritative status over me.

Geographic Location

East Valley Area School District, a large school district neighboring an even larger urban district served as the primary location of the investigation. At the time of the study, the district's current enrollment was approximately 12,000 students. The district is located in the southeastern region of Pennsylvania. The site provided multiple advantages. I was most familiar with the PA education code, local policies within PA school districts, and had educational leadership experience in PA schools. Convenience was also considered to allow for at least two site-visits per participant. Though convenience was used, the vast majority of studies focused on English learners and ESL programs have taken place in California, Arizona, Texas, Florida, New York, and Massachusetts. Pennsylvania may not rank at the top; however, trends in data suggest a racial demographic shift that is understudied.

Instrumentation

I served as the primary investigator and instrument. I collected observational data guided by the Franco et al. (2011) Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric and conducted semi-structured interviews using an interview. At time, I deviated from the interview protocol in order to seek clarification or pursue something established in the moment (Merriam, 2009), specifically statements that proposed action or changing organizational behaviors. Photos and primary documents of the schools were used as artifacts. Rich

descriptions of the environmental contexts and leadership decision-making were included as part of the study.

Interviews were coded using the three phases of coding as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2007) to develop grounded theory (as cited in Merriam, 2009). The transcripts of the interviews were aggregated into units of data and categorized through the cultural competency framework, beginning with an open coding strategy. One participant did not provide consent to the recording; therefore, shorthand transcription of the conversation was used. The original intent of the study was to use Atlas-Ti to code the data; however, the Atlas software does little to recognize context, so I had the assistance of a graduate student to also code independently and cross-reference categories. Furthermore, the interview questionnaire was designed to correlate to questions related to the ethical frame and cultural proficiency leadership continuum. Ultimately, I was able to determine themes based on the theoretical framework and provide internal reliability of the data.

Ethical Analysis. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) and Gross (2016) align their ethical frameworks for decision-making with the PSEL 2015 leadership standards, particularly Standard 5: “An education leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (NPBEA, 2008, pp. 4–5, as cited in Shapiro and Gross, 2013, p.7). The four ethics that comprise the Multiple Ethical Paradigm are: Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Justice, and Ethic of the Profession. It is important to note that many times these ethical perspectives do not stand-alone in that they often overlap to execute a decision or reach a consensus.

Validity and reliability

The sample size for the study was relatively small ($N = 5$). Purposeful selection of the school district targeted the ethnically and racially diverse ELL population; however, convenience sampling was used for selecting participants. Evidence of participant disqualification through the established limitations adds validity. I aimed to discover the implications of decision-making and link the nature of their occurrences (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). In order to establish reliability in responses or authenticity within the responses collected, the participants had experience in making programming decisions and allocating resources to support organization visions and policies as a Pennsylvania elementary school principal. Most importantly, each participant received training in cultural competence. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously by the primary and assistant researcher to ensure exhaustion and internal reliability.

Principals were given the opportunity to express their own perception of their organization, leadership style, and philosophy of education in order to balance the nature of the critical lens used as part of analysis. Member checking and probing was used to press for explicit answers. Though the element of self-reporting to a researcher may contaminate data, systems within schools are typically challenging to transform immediately (Morgan, 1997), thereby making the observance of cultural proficiency in organizational behaviors verifiable. Furthermore, an essential part of the investigation was to uncover the nature of the participant's ethical paradigm. The use of prior frameworks grounded in scholarly research, such as the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric (Franco et al., 2011), Multiple Ethical Paradigm (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011),

Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2016), and the defined Democratic Ethical Educational Leader (Gross & Shapiro, 2016), supported confirmation, objectivity, and transferability of the selected categories. Triangulation of the data through use of multiple sources will further confirmed themes across participants.

Ethics of the Researcher. As a practitioner, I am a certified principal in Pennsylvania, trained in observing and evaluating domains of teaching and learning, school cultural, and organizational dynamics and behaviors. As part of this qualification, I am knowledgeable of collecting observable data with objectivity. In addition, I am knowledgeable of state and federal education policies that guide school improvement activities and data analysis. My experience in action planning and coordinating programs for English learners aided my ability to recognize the uniqueness or themes in the data collected. Integrity, rigor, and participant anonymity drove all elements of this investigation.

Summary of Methodology

The logistical planning of this investigation consisted of purposeful selection of the school district and convenience sampling techniques and data collection measures in order to justify an appropriate methodology. Strategies such as member checking and an interview protocol were utilized to guide the interview process. The use of frameworks grounded in prior research and the support of a colleague to code data improved the internal reliability and analysis of findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to critically examine the ethical behavior and the level of cultural proficiency of elementary school principals who lead culturally and linguistically diverse schools within a large suburban district. In this section, I provide profiles of the participants, their schools, and the school district. I also provide a richer description of the context of this study and how data collection led me to seek additional information beyond the scope of the initial proposal. In this section, the Culturally Proficient Leadership Continuum (Franco et al., 2013) and Multiethical Paradigm (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) used to characterize each of the participants. Lastly, I present an analysis of Turbulence (Gross, 2016) considering both participating schools and the school district.

Data Collection

Initially, I aimed to analyze the perception of diversity and awareness of cultural capital; examine the extent to which TESOL programs are strategically planned; and, determine the extent to which the education of this increasing subgroup of bilingual students was aligned to the needs of their communities. As discussed in the Literature Review, research in TESOL and related fields establish a correlation between English Learner achievement and implications for the domestic economy, specifically highlighting the needs and advantages of biliterate students. The language diversity within East Valley Area School District is vast; however, the district does not have a

bilingual education program at this time, thus affecting data collected and scope of this study.

During the study, I collected data to compare each participant's ability to articulate programming and the needs of English learners with the elements of the cultural proficiency framework. Furthermore, I determined a relationship between characteristics of ethical lenses and self-described implementation of programming and stakeholder engagement. I examined neighborhood catchment boundaries and juxtaposed community demographics, which presented glaring inequities within the district. After learning the stark demographic and socioeconomic contrasts among schools within the district, I widened the scope of my study to district planning documents, periodicals, and sought evidence of litigation used as a tool to enact change. Additional data and analysis of the school district was included to better contextualize perspectives of the participants and organizational behaviors.

Restatement of the Research Questions

The interview questions and protocol were structured to align with the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Rubric (Franco et al., 2013), as well as serve as a guide for interpretation of the participants' perceptions or statements. Cultural proficiency, described in depth as part of the Literature Review, was defined as "educating all students to high levels through knowing, valuing, and using their cultural backgrounds, languages, and learning styles within the context of teaching [and leadership]" (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 21). The participants discussed experiences in designing school improvement activities to increase equity; scholastic achievement of the English learners in their elementary school; and the extent of actions taken to foster partnerships with

ethnic-minority stakeholders. Responses were used to determine the extent to which diversity and cultural capital were valued. The following research questions guided the design and conclusion of the study:

1. To what extent is the principal culturally proficient when defining and implementing school programming for English learners?
2. Upon what ethical paradigms do principals rely in their work to support English Language learners?

Summary of the Framework

This section summarizes the theoretical framework for the study and defines key theories guiding the design and interpretation of its findings. Cultural Proficiency is summarized with reference to the Cultural Proficient Leadership Continuum, the tool used to describe the leadership practices of participants in this study. The concept of Multiple Ethical Paradigm (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) is summarized as a reference for interpreting the lens of decision-making of the participants. Lastly, Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2011), a concept used to describe organizational health and change is defined along with the gauge used to characterize climate, known as degrees of turbulence.

Cultural Proficiency

Five key elements of Cultural Proficiency were used as measures for analysis: assessing cultural knowledge; valuing diversity; managing the dynamics of difference; adapting to diversity; and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Participants were characterized on a continuum of culturally proficient leadership (Franco et al., 2011), which is an adaptation of the work of Lindsey et al. (2008). The range of the continuum included: cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-

competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency. Domains of the rubric included: Assessing Cultural Knowledge – the awareness and reaction to cultural diversity in cross-cultural settings; Valuing Diversity – inclusiveness of shared decision-making and problem-solving across cultural lines; Managing the Dynamics of Difference – the recognition of conflict as a natural and normal process that is supportive in creative problem solving; Adapting to Diversity –the will to learn about others and ability to use others’ cultural experiences and backgrounds in educational settings; and, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge – facilitating an understanding among all in the community that meeting the needs of the underserved contributes to the common good, thus creating a foundation of cultural understanding.

Multiple Ethical Paradigm

The behavior and decision-making of educational leaders can be analyzed through a *Multiple Ethical Paradigm* (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). The ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) characterize ethics in the following manner: *Ethic of Justice* focuses on rights, laws, policies, and concepts of fairness, equality, and individual freedom; *Ethic of Critique* reframes and challenges concepts of democracy, social justice, power, culture, and language; *Ethic of care*, derived from feminist theory, conceptualizes moral decision-making as actions of loyalty, trust, and empowerment as well as patriarchal nature of organizational structure and society through empathy and compassion; and *Ethic of the Profession*, aligned to the Educational Leadership Policy Standards, places students at the center of the decision-making process with intent to align personal and professional codes of educational organizations.

Turbulence Theory

Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2011) provides a framework to analyze intrinsic and extrinsic tensions of organizations. Gross asserts that turbulence is a tool that school leaders can use to mitigate or increase the degree of tension as a methodology to enact change. As stated in the Literature Review, degrees of turbulence are defined as: *Light* – associated with ongoing issues, little or no disruption in normal work environment, subtle signs of stress; *Moderate* – widespread awareness of the issue, specific origins; *Severe* – fear for the entire enterprise, possibility of large-scale community demonstration, a feeling of crisis; and *Extreme* – structural damage to the institution’s normal operation is occurring. Turbulence Theory also infuses self-reflection of leadership practices and their outcomes, specifically to promote self-awareness and the ability to remain *centered* during times of perceived stillness and change. Gross (2011) also includes the following components to further contextualize Turbulence Theory: positionality, cascading [effects], and stability. *Positionality* is a descriptor used to identify role and implication before, during, and/or after turbulence. The *cascading* effect of turbulence is defined as a ripple effect linking organizational dynamics to degrees of turbulence. Lastly, *stability* is capacity for an organization to withstand dynamic forces or resilience to turbulence, relying on flexibility through sustained movement to remain insulated and adaptable.

Participating School District

This section presents an overview of the East Valley Area School District’s data from 2005 to 2017. The data reported in this section includes students classified as economically disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) student count, and student subgroups racial descriptors.

East Valley Area School District

East Valley Area School District (EVSD) is a large suburban school district, serving approximately 14,000 students, throughout 14 different schools. The geographical size of the district is approximately 9 square miles and located in the southeastern region of Pennsylvania. Families identified as economically disadvantaged increased 44%, from 23% to over 67% in the last seven years. When analyzing the context of East Valley Area School District, information and data collected indicated that the district faces similar challenges to many urban districts: teacher attrition, leadership attrition, low achieving schools, increasing suspension rates, litigation challenges, fiscal challenges, and the struggle to provide an appropriate education to each child in the district despite joint efforts of stakeholders.

The community has become more diversified than many metropolitan cities in the US. According to the 2016 district Comprehensive Plan (2015), “There are 899 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students speaking over 53 different languages. Over 555 students also meet the state criteria for immigrant status. In addition, the district annually educates more than 380 students who have refugee status and/or limited formal schooling.” Throughout the duration of this study, tensions related to class, ethnicity, and race were evident as well as apathy towards creating equity within the district by a minority yet influential group of stakeholders. In Table 1 below, are the details outlining an economic shift in the district from 2005 to 2017.

Table 1.

Pennsylvania Reporting of EVASD Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup (2007-2017)

EVSD School	Reported percentage of enrollment by year										
	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
EV High School	66%	66%	66%	61%	55%	55%	38%	36%	37%	36%	32%
EV Kinder	55%	36%	47%	37%	39%	39%	23%	32%	37%	–	30%
EL. School A	41%	42%	40%	35%	32%	32%	18%	17%	11%	8%	7%
EL. School B	86%	86%	86%	79%	80%	80%	76%	55%	67%	73%	74%
EL. School C	85%	88%	89%	81%	83%	83%	80%	77%	80%	42%	79%
EL. School D	51%	51%	52%	47%	44%	44%	30%	25%	26%	25%	23%
EL. School E	41%	40%	43%	35%	32%	32%	29%	23%	27%	21%	26%
Middle School A	84%	85%	84%	81%	75%	75%	60%	66%	60%	61%	63%
Middle School B	53%	51%	49%	43%	37%	37%	29%	31%	29%	26%	28%
<i>East Valley Area School District Participating Schools</i>											
Marymount EL.	78%	80%	78%	76%	73%	73%	63%	64%	61%	52%	51%
Puri EL.	56%	57%	60%	49%	49%	49%	37%	33%	36%	35%	38%
Palermo EL.	90%	88%	88%	83%	86%	86%	83%	72%	76%	79%	78%
Montes EL.	83%	83%	85%	79%	78%	78%	79%	66%	61%	70%	64%
Grandridge EL.	64%	60%	62%	56%	54%	54%	44%	43%	45%	44%	40%

Data from the National Center for Education Statistic (NCES) and Pennsylvania

Department of Education was used to triangulate trends in enrollment and poverty.

English Language Learners in the District

As predicted during the design and planning the study, a notable increase of English learning students was evident. Within the last decade, enrollment data from Kindergarten to 12th grade indicated an 11% increase in student identified as English Learners. As stated previously in the study, urban schools were traditionally the

epicenters for multiculturalism and English Learners; however, this study presents a suburban district where the influx of EL enrollment exceeds that of nearby major cities. O'Connor et al. (2012). After analyzing the data, it was apparent that Pennsylvania has become more linguistically diverse as well, with the number of languages spoken increased by approximately 44 percent, with 138 languages in 2002 to 211 languages in 2009. East Valley Area School District has been and continues to be one of the most linguistically diverse school districts in the Pennsylvania over the last decade. Aggregated data regarding achievement of ELL and/or LEP compared to their non-ELL peer-group was available; however, PDE along with the National Center for Educational Statistics have yet to provide a comparison of economically disadvantaged and LEP and/or ELL students. LEP count and percentage of school enrollment are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2.

Pennsylvania Reporting of LEP and Percentage of EVASD Enrollment (2012-2017)

EVSD School	LEP Count and Percentage by Year									
	2017		2016		2015		2014		2013	
	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.
EV High School	297	8%	246	7%	262	7%	225	6%	175	5%
EV Kinder	64	11%	33	5%	52	9%	33	5%	65	10%
El. School A	16	6%	16	6%	23	8%	19	6%	16	6%
El. School B	116	17%	101	16%	79	12%	80	13%	61	10%
El. School C	40	12%	56	16%	49	15%	44	13%	46	14%
El. School D	16	3%	16	3%	10	2%	21	3%	28	4%
El. School E	16	2%	22	3%	21	3%	24	4%	22	3%
Middle A	165	11%	148	10%	150	10%	142	10%	124	8%
Middle B	34	3%	38	3%	30	2%	36	3%	30	2%

Table 2 (continued).

East Valley Area School District Participating Schools

EVCD School	LEP Count and Percentage by Year									
	2017		2016		2015		2014		2013	
	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.	LEP	Pct.
Marymount El.	77	10%	67	9%	69	9%	76	10%	73	10%
Grandridge El.	14	3%	12	2%	11	2%	6	1%	5	1%
Palermo El.	40	7%	35	6%	34	6%	41	7%	42	7%
Montes El.	64	23%	56	20%	60	21%	63	22%	53	19%
Puri El.	28	6%	19	4%	28	6%	24	5%	28	6%

Additional data reviewed as part of the study was the Pennsylvania Department of Education's demographic data reported. Below in Table 3, East Valley Area School District student enrollment percentages above 1% are reported.

Table 3.

Demographic data reported in 2017 by East Valley Area School District

	Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *								
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
EVSD Kinder	604	11%	55%	23%	46%	12%	16%	3%	No
El. School A	262	6%	41%	10%	29%	7%	49%	5%	No
El. School B	683	17%	86%	18%	63%	14%	3%	2%	Yes
El. School C	349	16%	85%	23%	59%	10%	5%	2%	Yes
El. School D	618	3%	51%	7%	36%	6%	44%	7%	No
El. School E	721	2%	41%	5%	26%	5%	57%	6%	No
Middle School A	1,462	11%	84%	22%	61%	10%	5%	1%	Yes
Middle School B	1,365	3%	53%	6%	34%	6%	51%	3%	No
EVSD High School	3,717	8%	66%	15%	50%	7%	26%	2%	No

Table 3 (continued).

	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
Grandridge El.	507	3%	64%	4%	25%	7%	59%	6%	No
Palermo El.	550	7%	90%	5%	82%	9%	2%	3%	Yes
Montes El.	279	23%	83%	58%	21%	17%	2%	2%	Yes
Puri El.	469	6%	56%	13%	37%	4%	39%	8%	No

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Context of the Study

This section provides a general description of prior district leadership, community perceptions, English Learner programming, and the scope of data collection. Establishing the context of this study refines interpretation of the findings, specifically because the demographic-shift within the community continues to initiate politically charged debates regarding equity and the allocation of resources. Information from secondary sources and district artifacts is included in the study to present the nuances regarding contrasting perspectives held by stakeholders and school leaders.

Initial requests were sent to 10 elementary schools. Six elementary schools agreed to participate; however, one school was removed because of principal availability during the time of data collection. Initially, the intent of the study was to include a school with a bilingual program; however, schools within the region that had bilingual programs either declined to participate or did not respond to the request. Ultimately, semi-structured 30–45-minute interviews and school-based artifacts were captured from five elementary schools. One participant was unable for a second interview at the time of data collection; however, substantive information was captured in the first interview and the outcome of the initial interview aligned trends found across participants and other elementary

schools. District documents including budget allocations and the district's *Comprehensive School Plan (2017-2018)* and *Equity Plan (2018)* were reviewed and used to contextualize the scope of education programming districtwide. After reviewing artifacts, I refined the research questions to more accurately align to the purpose and value of this study.

Attention was also given to negotiated relationships of power structure, organizational behaviors, and ethical perspectives. Three critical lenses guided the data collection process and reporting: (a) Multiple Ethical Paradigm (Shapiro, 2016), (b) Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2016); and (c) Cultural Proficiency Inquiry and Leadership (Franco et al., 2011; Lindsey et al., 2008). The *Conceptual Framework for Culturally Proficient Practices* was adapted and used to analyze participant responses and provide alignment to the *Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency* (Lindsey et al., 2017). The conceptual framework provides the evidence and justification for the participant's position on the *Cultural Proficiency Continuum* for each of the essential elements.

In addition to Lindsey's *Conceptual Framework for Culturally Proficient Practices* was inclusion of an *ethic descriptor* of the participant. The *Multiple Ethical Paradigm* (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011) was used to determine a primary ethical paradigm from the participants' responses to understand their work as educational leaders. Lindsey acknowledged the phenomenon of ethical tension when a clash of healthy and unhealthy organizational behaviors is evident. Ethical dilemmas of the participants were not discussed at length unless they were relevant to cultural proficiency and equity. The *Multiple Ethical Paradigm* provides a framework for how the ethics of care, profession, critique, and justice are used to navigate dilemmas. Guiding questions

used to identify the ethical paradigm of the participants were included in the research protocol. Given that participants did not have complete autonomy over programming decisions, I felt it necessary to establish an ethical paradigm for each participant to not only support a rich description of his or her approach to the principalship, but also contrast unhealthy organizational behaviors beyond their locus of control. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) emphasized that ethics overlap, especially when framing ethical dilemmas.

The potential for scrutiny and professional reprimand was evident in secondary sources and was less explicit in participant responses. For example, the district's prior superintendent was removed by the school board for pursuing equity over stakeholder demands, specifically an initiative to transport students across the district to address apparent segregative conditions, characterized as disproportionately allocated resources mirror catchment boundaries and racial divides. As a result, accountability to the district's hierarchal leadership structure likely stifled inclination to take political risk thus affecting the assessment of Culturally Proficient Leadership in practice. Each participant's role as community leader was possibly undermined given the prior scrutiny of school leaders pursuing social justice endeavors.

EVSD Comprehensive Planning for Programing and Equity

The district had an operating budget of approximately \$200 million during the 2018-2019 fiscal year; however, the 2018-2019 budget had a nearly \$20 million shortfall. Funding programs linked to TESOL and Special Education, meeting the needs of diverse learners, and fostering community relationships had been the focus of the district's top administrators despite barriers created by a budget shortfall. Two of the district's

concerns stated in the comprehensive plan aligned with the findings of this study: (1) Establish a district system that fully ensures students who are academically at risk are identified early and are supported by a process that provides interventions based upon student needs and includes procedures for monitoring effectiveness; and (2) East Valley Area School District recognized the need to better inform and communicate with all stakeholders in the community.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan that outlined the district's financial platform, the East Valley Area School District's Comprehensive Equity Proposal was created to address apparent discrepancies in resources allocation and unhealthy organizational behaviors. The Equity Plan began with the superintendent's aim to "challenge our assumptions about children's potential and the status quo and increase access, opportunity, inclusion and support for our most challenged learners." School district leadership established a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, and representation from the School Board of Directors to provide recommendations as to how the district can "eliminate gaps in opportunity and access due to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography and gender." The district contracted services to conduct a "cultural audit," which included staff surveys and focus groups, in order to establish a baseline of cultural competency. Included in the plan were four areas of action and multiple objectives to create an equitable school district. The four areas were: (1) Constructing and enacting an equity vision (2) Engaging in self-reflection and growth, (3) Collaborating with families and communities, and (4) Hiring and Placing Personnel.

As previously reported, the superintendent was removed because of his vision for a more democratic and equitable school district. In 2017, the work towards equity

resurfaced under a new senior administrator school in the school district. Equity consultants were contracted to provide support and professional development curricular materials for professional development. The materials focused on culturally proficient teaching, with focus on equity within schools. In contrast to prior efforts to address inequity, the conversation was reframed as creating equity within schools, not districtwide.

Refugee Resettlement Task Force and Refugee Children's School Impact Grant

When researching the English Learner data and programming of the district, an additional noteworthy dynamic that contributed to turbulence within the district was refugee resettlement. According to a secondary source, as of 2011, East Valley Area School District had approximately 11,800 students; nearly 7% were identified as English Language Learners. Of the refugee groups being served, Liberians were the largest group at the time. Information about the refugee program was absent on the district's website and unsearchable on the district's website domain. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website, "[The federal] Refugee grant recipients must create a comprehensive, holistic approach to meeting the academic and social needs of refugee students and their families." However, language of the program's intent focused on assimilation rather than acclimation.

At a summer 2018 board meeting, a local periodical reported a resident asking if the district was a "Sanctuary School District" as a response to a Welcome Schools resolution placing special attention to immigrant students. The resolution read as follows:

Whereas the East Valley Area School Board is committed to the success of all students, regardless of immigration status; all schools within East Valley Area School District will be a welcoming place for students and

families to seek help, assistance, information, and safety if faced with fear and anxiety about immigration enforcement.

The board responded that EVSD “is not a sanctuary district,” in that they do not create laws or ordinances that obstruct agency in immigration enforcement. The board added that the resolution was there to show that the district will offer the resources and help immigrant families might need. The board unanimously adopted the resolution as part of its instruction and curriculum report.

Information gathered from secondary sources indicated that the district was partnering with Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services (BRYCS) and Lutheran Children and Family Services (LCFS) to assist in the resettlement and educational programming for refugee youth. Information relevant to these partnerships were not found on the district’s website. In partnership with the school district, however, Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services published a description of East Valley Area School District’s educational programming for refugee students on the BRYCS website. BRYCS defined themselves as a national technical assistance program established to strengthen services to refugee children and families. To frame the purpose of their organization, BRYCS used a rationale that refugees received services from many different agencies, which approach the work with separate goals, perspectives, information and resources. The BRYCS website presents as a portal for refugee families.

During the participant interviews, the influx of refugee students was identified as raising the level of turbulence, specifically with regards to TESOL Programs, with participants admitting they needed to be creative, resourceful, and strategic when constructing meaningful educational experiences for new arrivals. Two participants commented similarly in that the refugee students “appear” without school records and

sometimes without any formal education experience. None of the participants could articulate specific information regarding the district's plan or engagement in meeting the learning needs of the refugee subgroup.

Planning for the intake of refugee or students with limited formal schooling students at the school level, i.e. rostering, programming, and home communications, was not individualized or guided by a different process than a typical student/English Learners. Schools did not receive additional identifiers of the students because of FERPA; however, when reviewing pupil pockets, atypical documents that may stand out are foreign medical records, foreign birth certificates, and/or copies of passports as primary identification. Neighboring districts that have participated in the grant and similar partnerships provide a specific handbook or "Toolkit" for faculty to support immigrant refugee students and their families. The handbook is a reference for educators to identify common language, discuss role of law-enforcement, trauma, DACA, and inclusive practices. East Valley Area School District did not mention refugee students in their Comprehensive School Plan nor their Equity Plan.

Information regarding the details of the East Valley Area School District's Refugee Resettlement Task Force and Refugee Children's School Impact Grant was minimal and had to be located through secondary sources. The only district-artifact found was a budget line in the district's 2013 Financial Statements and Supplementary Information, indicating nearly \$100,000 provided indirectly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The funds were identified as being "Passed through Pennsylvania Department of Education: Refugee and Entrant Assistance Discretionary Grants." According to BRYCS, Title III was used to fund services for refugees. EVSD

also used Title III funds to contract Lutheran Children and Family Services to provide free adult ESL classes for the community. Lastly BRYCS reported that East Valley began receiving Refugee School Impact Funding since 2000; however, continued participation has yet to be verified.

BRYCS stated that EVSD's Transitional Education Program (TEP) for refugee students was an English Language Learner program for students with limited formal schooling. BRYCS indicated that the location of the TEPs were at East Valley Area High School and East Valley Middle School A. The description of supports of the Transitional Education Program does not present as an individualized plan for refugees. Within the context of districtwide academic programs, the TEP was simply comparable. Access to a school social worker appeared to be the focus rather than an individualized program.

More importantly, there was significant inequity between the district's two middle schools. Middle School B outperformed Middle School A in every academic measure including English Language Proficiency as seen in Table 6. Middle School A had significant truancy and higher numbers of economically disadvantaged students. Middle School A had a historical trend of being 30%–40% more economically disadvantaged for the past decade as seen in Table 4. Demographic data from 2017 also indicated that Middle School A was primarily Asian and African American whereas slightly more than half of Middle School B's students were White as seen in Table 5. Data tables comparing the district's two middle schools are presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6 below:

Table 4.

Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup – Middle Schools A and B (2007-2017)

EVSD School	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Middle A*	84%	85%	84%	81%	75%	75%	60%	66%	60%	61%	63%
Middle B	53%	51%	49%	43%	37%	37%	29%	31%	29%	26%	28%

* School District Site for Transitional Education Program (TEP)

Table 5.

East Valley School District Middle School Student Groups (2017)

Middle School A and Middle School B Student Groups (2017) *									
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Middle A	1,462	11%	84%	22%	61%	10%	5%	1%	Yes
Middle B	1,365	3%	53%	6%	34%	6%	51%	3%	No

Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Table 6.

East Valley School District Middle PA School Performance Indicators (2017)

	Pennsylvania State Assessments			WIDA EL Proficiency	Attendance
	ELA	Math	Science		
State Average	63%	46%	64%	36%	85%
Middle A	40%	15%	30%	25%	80%
Middle B	48%	21%	37%	38%	94%

Professional Development Focused on Cultural Proficiency

East Valley Area School District's top administration provided principals and the teaching faculty professional development related to cultural proficiency. The scope of the school district's professional development during the time of this study included cultural proficiency as an aim for the 2015 through 2019 academic school years. The text *Culturally Proficient Leadership* by Terrell and Lindsey (2009) was used as a guide for the delivery of the professional development. The district established a partnership with Corwin Press and consultants were used to support the administration in the delivery of professional development sessions.

Participating Schools and School Profiles

This section provides a profile of each participant, including gender, race, and years of experience. Ultimately, maximum variation was not as extensive as initially intended given changes in leadership during the time of the study. Each participating school's demographic data is presented in order to contrast districtwide enrollment data. The presentation of demographic data is used to provide a context for interpreting the participant's cultural environment, specifically in terms of race, language minorities, and economic status as seen in Table 7. The participants in this study lead more culturally and racially diverse schools compared to the majority of schools statewide. Diversity within the student population differed significantly across the district and therefore also guided the participant selection process. Identification of Title I designation is included to present eligibility and a school's participation in the program because some schools elected to not seek the designation despite eligibility.

Table 7.

Dissertation Participant Profiles (2017-2018)

Participant Pseudonym	School	Gender	Native Language	Race	Total Years Experience	Leadership Experience	Time at EVASD
Mr. Adams	Puri	Male	English	White	>15	12	4
Mr. Bell	Grandridge	Male	English	White	>14	6	14
Ms. Cooper	Montes	Female	English	White	>20	3	3
Ms. Deley	Marymount	Female	English	Asian	>18	4	8
Ms. Eddins	Palermo	Female	English	Af/Am	>24	18	5

Puri Elementary School

This section of the findings provides the profile of Puri Elementary School and its principal, Mr. Adams. General background information about the participant is included. Additionally, demographic data about the school and a description of their TESOL program is presented in this section. This section also includes an analysis of culturally proficient practices and organizational behaviors. The Franco et al. (2011) continuum is used as a guide to characterize what was observed. Lastly, the Shapiro and Stefkovich Multiple Ethical Paradigm (2016) and a description of turbulence (Gross, 2016) are presented to gain additional insight as to the perspective Adams.

Mr. Adams became principal in 2014. Prior to his principalship at Puri, Adams taught at another elementary school in the district for 10 years. Adams served as an academic coach and special education department chair at East Valley Area High School prior to becoming a school principal. Over the past three years, Adams received professional development described as “diversity training.” Below are the demographic details about the school in Table 8.

Table 8.

Puri Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017

	Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *								
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Puri El.	469	6%	56%	13%	37%	4%	39%	8%	No

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Puri Elementary serves nearly 500 students, grades Kindergarten through fifth grade. During the study, Puri identified 55% of their students as economically disadvantaged. At the time of the study, Puri was not designated as a Title I School, though over half of its enrollment met criteria as economically disadvantaged. Five percent of Puri's student enrollment was identified as English Learners. The EL subgroup was categorized as an insufficient sample size. After triangulating various data reports and artifacts, the approximate student count was approximately 20 English Learners, the majority of which were from Pakistan and India.

One aspect of context is the level of turbulence. As stated in the literature review, organizational health and stability can be analyzed through the analytical frame of Turbulence Theory (Gross, 2011). Adams stated that school district allocated resources were in accordance with enrollment; therefore, reallocation of resources was dictated by shifts in student enrollment, which Adams explained as "a logistical nightmare in terms of long-term planning." Uncertainty in resource allocation and its impact on planning was identified as the greatest influence on raising turbulence internally. The turbulence of the Puri Elementary School is categorized as *Light Turbulence* because there is widespread

awareness of a racial demographic shift and the fluctuation of programming; however, there are only subtle signs of stress yet no disruption in the normal work environment. Though arguably unethical because of the inequity surrounding this method of planning EL programming, the organization is able to absorb the burden, specifically because the principal is able to adjust accordingly using creative means and flexibility.

Adams had to mitigate this push and pull on the stability of the school. He recognized his role as principal was to be creative in how to address student needs with limited or fluctuating resources, in other words, mitigate the turbulence caused by the district's organizational behaviors. He recognized the cascading effect of fluctuating resource allocations and expressed the importance of consistent funding for educational resources, which are "critical to close the achievement gap and improve academic proficiency [long-term]." The barriers cause by uncertain funding did not present as enough to influence the district's approach, however, and Adams did not articulate any plan or efforts to change how funding is allocated. Adams was in a similar position as the participants from Grandridge, Palermo, and Marymount, in that funding for EL programming was unpredictable. The Montes Elementary principal, Ms. Cooper, had less of a concern because their EL student enrollment has maintained consistent levels, enough to warrant continued teacher allocations. Adams was unique in that he was the only participant to articulate elements of existential thought, specifically in questioning the community's impact on the dynamics of Puri Elementary. Evidence can be seen when Adams stated:

...when I go into the community, what does that look like, and when I'm walking in the neighborhood and the things that I see there – how are all of those things connected to actually what is happening here every single day.

As stated previously in the findings, the greatest number of apartments in the district are within the catchment for Puri Elementary and yearly leases make enrollment projections challenging, making transiency the most pervasive extrinsic influence on turbulence, specifically with consideration to EL programming. Economic disadvantage is a factor that cannot be ignored; however, with regards to the focus of this study, the number of students considered economically disadvantaged did not influence EL programming. The correlation between the two subgroups of economic disadvantaged and EL would be a topic of further study in this school district. Furthermore, the lack of voice from language minority stakeholders is not influential to the extent that their advocacy, if any, influences district's funding methods. If language minority stakeholders are unaware of the inconsistency in programming or feel their voice is less relevant, their participation in funding discussions is improbable. Unfortunately, though it may not be the intent of Adams to reinforce the systemic problem of how EL programs are funded, Mr. Adams's unwillingness to neither participate in the political arena nor advocate for change makes him complicit.

ESL Programming at Puri Elementary School

Adams described the programming for English Learners as a push-in program, with a 0.5 ESL teacher allocation. The ESL teacher is shared with Grandridge Elementary School. Adams described the role of the teacher as follows:

The [ELL] teacher goes from grade-level to grade-level and pushes into those classrooms and services the students, gives the teacher feedback on things they could do or use, and then goes out and goes to the next grade.

After hearing the description, I asked Adams if the teacher served somewhat as an instructional coach. He responded, “There’s an element of that but there is also an instructional element as well.” He continued by clarifying,

She may take those students with her and do direct instruction with them on a specific topic or whatever it is that she needs to cover within the realm of English Learners, or she may just push-in and be like an extra support, and then like I said, she then is coaching the teacher to say ‘these are the things that this particular child needs or should have, and here are the ways you can accommodate that during small-group reading time.’

Later in the interview, Adams added that the ESL teachers attended meetings to discuss school data and as a result, time to service students was lost. When describing a typical day for English learners, Adams stated that, “they are going to be doing what all the other students do.” He added that they would most likely be assigned a “buddy,” another student that can help the EL student to follow directions. Adams added:

Depending on the level of the English learner would determine whether or not they would need more than that...If there were a non-speaker, then we are going to rely more heavily on the English language teacher, then potentially having her make little nametags for everything in the room...so then there’s a written word associated with a picture.

Adams continued by describing a challenge the school faced when an influx of non-English speaking Turkish students were enrolled in the school a few years ago. He stated that the teachers were really nervous explaining:

Not only were they getting a student that was a non-speaker, they were getting a language that was really far away from anything they knew. We really relied heavily on the EL teacher to modify assignments throughout the school day, so she’d be giving them certain things they need to use; this is an ELL reader, this is an ELL packet that has identifying letters and this is how you should work with them.

Adams was then asked where they were headed as a school this year, in terms of supporting English Language Learners, and if supporting ELs was incorporated into their school’s leveling plan. Adams stated that supporting English learners was incorporated

into the MTSS (Multi-tiered system of supports) plan, rather than an action or Leveling-Plan, stating “that’s how I do it here at the elementary level.” He continued by explaining that the EL teacher advises the MTSS team and attends as many meetings as possible included math, reading, and data meetings. However, this year the school team needed to be creative. Adams explained:

We attempt to do through the MTSS process but because of scheduling, it doesn’t always work out. As I mentioned, she is only here about two and a half days a week and we run MTSS four days a week, so this year we had to be really creative with that schedule and kind of make it work for us the best that we could so she could still be servicing the needs of the students that are here but not necessarily be here every day we need her to do the programming.

Adams was then asked how the school as an organization will change and how it will stay the same in supporting English learners in the next 3 to 5 years. Adams believed that there was going to be continued growth in the English learner subgroup, specifically with students speaking less and less of the English language. He explained that five years ago the EL teacher was here twice a week, then enrollment of ELs spiked as the EL teacher was at the school five days a week. However, Adams also explained that it is also challenging to predict what we need [because of enrollment] and how to align programming, stating:

We have the most apartment complexes of all East Valley Area School District, in this catchment area. Because we have the most apartment complexes, our needs fluctuate because of year-to-year leases.

Having an enrollment-driven funding allocation model for English learner supports was a common challenge among several participants. Adams continued:

...what I am leading to is that when we had the EL teacher here full-time, the program was so much stronger because I could schedule her for every MTSS group and she was just pulling her ELL students if they were at that [lower-proficiency] level and then she was able to really service them...

so if I could say anything, that is what I would want in the next three to five years.

Alignment of Leadership Practices and Cultural Proficiency

The following section presents the data collected and its correlation to the culturally proficient leadership continuum (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The components of the continuum are: Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Assessing Culture. When asked about barriers to effectiveness as a school leader across cultural lines, Adams explained that at times, he questioned his competency. He described a home-visit situation in which he felt uncomfortable with his lack of knowledge about the student's culture. Though the intent of the visit was to support the student and family, he questioned if they should have conducted the home visit. He continued by explaining:

I think knowledge is power. The knowledge of the staff members [is an institutional barrier], we have a limited knowledge-base and because we have a limited knowledgebase it creates barriers throughout the system and throughout the school. I think for the most part teachers want to be helpful but sometimes they don't know what that needs to look like for a person from a different culture or background.

He further explained that he learned the importance of cultural nuances when communicating with families and "how important understanding culture is to build relationships and not embarrassing yourself." He also expressed concern that "some parents have a language barrier and may make them feel like they shouldn't be involved." Adams cited the prior example as one reason the school's "home and school [committee] needs improvement." He would like to "make things easier" for parents to access

resources at the school and become involved. Adams was reflective as to how the school and his leadership were serving the needs of the community:

...and even more general, outside of this little school, when I go into the community, what does that look like, and when I'm walking in the neighborhood and the things that I see there – how are all of those things connected to actually what is happening here every single day.

Adams demonstrated *Cultural Competence* as a compassionate, diligent, and skilled professional with a commitment to challenge barriers to educational access for both students and families. Adams would not be characterized as a transformational leader that was breaking-down barriers, attributes of *Culturally Proficient*. Additionally, he intended to improve programming for English learners to a more sustained model but did not articulate as to how he would or could change the enrollment-driven funding for ELL programming.

Valuing Diversity. When asked about the relationship between cultural identity and success in school, Adams stated “cultural identity supports self-esteem...which also creates a more positive climate.” He also added that students are “proud of their culture” and events are hosted for families to “get together and share traditional foods.” In terms of academic success, he stated that he did not know why “some ELs just do better than others.” He believed that “different cultures have different definitions of success” and “some students are coming from places without resources.” When having conversations about student achievement, Adams stated that parent input is also a factor in addition to WIDA and DIBELS scores. He often partnered with interpreters, many of whom live within the community. Adams did not articulate nor promote distribution of political power in school decision-making; however, given the extent that the leader respects and

values multiple diverse ideas to inform decisions, Adams was characterized as *Culturally Competent*.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Adams from Puri Elementary School framed soliciting diverse point of view and the opinion of stakeholders a necessary means to solving school-wide problems. Based on this Adams's experiences, he expressed confidence in the district addressing policies and practices that create institutional barriers stating, "When the district is aware of a concern, they take action." Puri was the most diverse elementary school in the district and had the highest ELL enrollment, which likely added to flexibility in decision-making because he interacted with a community that was less polarizing. In order to further engage the community, Adams made recommendations for a full-time social worker to "work strategically and intently to collaborate with parents." In addition, Adams explained that social workers are "the key to linking services and community building." Personal goals expressed by Adams were "getting involved with the community" and "reaching out to cultural leaders." Adams felt involvement and collaboration was a method for "working towards students sharing barriers." I characterized Adams *Culturally Proficient* within the element of Managing the Dynamics of Difference, specifically because of evidence in alignment of personal and professional goals.

Adapting to Diversity. Adams from Puri Elementary empathized and saw the problems of the community through an existential lens or point of view. Adams stated, "there is growth in the ACCESS scores, but we have a lot of work to do as school." Adams felt that socioeconomic disadvantages were the most pervasive problem they face as a school. In addition, he explained his awareness and intent to help the faculty

understand that the “perception of ELs [parents] is disproportionately engaged in education [of their children] because the presumption that those opportunities were not accessible.” He continued, “People need to have an understanding of who they [English Learners] are” and “teachers that do not [have knowledge of his or her students], tend to struggle.” Adams had insight as to how the demographic shift was perceived by the faculty and that it was an organizational barrier, stating:

I would say that 70% of them [teaching faculty] have been here for fifteen years or more; so fifteen years ago 80-90% of the students were white, and now 40% are white, 40% are black and 20% are a mix of all different ethnicities, so I feel still some of that cultural change is living here and we have to kind of breakthrough that and figure out what does that stuff mean, how does that look, how is that different?

When considering what he would need in order to be more valuable to the school in support ELs, he stated:

I think it’s been awhile since we’ve done professional development around English Learners. I’ve encouraged the district to do more with everybody or at least the administrators. I would like to have some more training...it’s not necessarily training for me but it’s training for how I can help other adults around this particular child every day to make their programming better.

He continued by explaining that English learners demonstrate steady growth academically and socially once acclimated, but the adults in the school continue to need support, stating:

A lot of teacher really panic a little bit, especially when they have that non-speaker coming in, because if you haven’t had that experience before, and kind of not sure if you’re going to be able to communicate... it is really the adult anxiety around it or the fear of ‘oh my god, this student is going to be in my room and what do I do?’ I’d like help with the professional development of, how do I help them more so I can make them feel comfortable with helping that ELL student.

Lastly, Adams was the only person in the study to mention Translanguaging in their responses. Translanguaging and transcultural pedagogy is a way to not isolate children by

activating the child's knowledge of language to create new or varied contextual understandings of their world (Cummins, 2009; García, 2009). Adams explained that students are often paired with other students that speak the same language. When asked about the visibility of the practices of translanguaging, he stated, "it's seen in student created work and created content," in that students had an active role in teaching and learning. Because specific knowledge of the school's organizational behaviors in adapting, learning about, and applying new practices, such as translanguaging, in order to create equitable pedagogy, Adams demonstrated characteristics of *Culturally Competent* to *Culturally Proficient* within the element of Adapting to Diversity. The missing attribute of cultural proficiency was the challenging of legal mandates and policies; however, there was significant evidence of school behaviors that preserve student identity.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. Adams expressed frustration with state and federal policies in that, "they expect more than the resources provide." He added that he still would like more time within the school day to provide supports. For example, loss of instructional time was a factor to consider when determining the needs of the students explaining:

not only are you doing more with less, you're also trying to make-up time out of the classroom...our district provides much more [services and supports for ELs] than other districts.

Given the aforementioned examples and characteristics displayed within other elements, such as partnering with translators and community leaders, Adams exhibited attributes of *Cultural Competence* within the element of Institutionalizing Cultural. Evidence of taking political risk and assuming the role of policy actor was absent, a key attribute of cultural proficiency within this element.

Ethical Lens of Principal Adams

The Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm can be used as a tool to better understand and analyze the decision-making of educational leaders. As further discussed in the Literature Review, the ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. School leaders can use these lenses in their approach to solve complex ethical dilemmas. The framework was included as part of the framework in order to interpret perspective-driving implementation of policy or regulations that directly affects English Learners.

Mr. Adams operated through the Ethics of *Care* and *Profession*. He was limited in his ability and willingness to change how EL funding is allocated, his statements emphasized what was in the best interest of students' and community's perspectives. When asked where he would like to see more consistent or added supports, he said:

In the future, we need a full-time social worker to address concerns for parents. It'll help us in a lot of ways, especially to connect more with stakeholders.

Adams also recognized where the school needed to grow in order to better support English Learners. For example, "The home and school needs improvement" and he raised the concern that "maybe language barriers make people feel like they shouldn't be involved." These statements reflected the ethic of care in that Adams considered *the long-term effects of my decisions, who will benefit, and how can I give back to society*. During the interview, Adams took a call from a local crises center and spoke with the parents through an interpreter. After the call, he stated, "This is a 24/7 job if you want to do right by kids." He felt it important to always be accessible stating, "it's part of the job." Adams was able to articulate his personal and professional ethical codes by prioritizing "reaching-out to cultural leaders" and "getting involved in the community." He stated

that he aimed to “work towards shared student barriers,” further evidence that he operated from a position that serves the best interest of students. When asked how he structured shared decision-making or consensus building, Adams explained:

At our home and school meetings, we shared ideas that work with or affect the community, then we take feedback from the stakeholders, either the parents or teachers, and sometimes the students who are sometimes good at giving us feedback on things that we’re doing; I mean, I try to have an open concept about it, then work to making those things happen to help the community.

Lastly, Adams also shared confidence that “when the district is aware of a concern, they take action,” evidence that he aims to close the gap between district-wide organizational behaviors and his own professional ethical code.

Summary

The participant from Puri Elementary School was characterized as culturally competent. As indicated in the analysis, Adams saw his view as both a school and civic leader. He had limited knowledge of the communities he served but also recognized this limitation, making it a goal to learn more about members of the school community. He made himself available to support community members and parents with issues that were non-school related, explaining the role of principal is a 24/7 job. Adams did not identify his role as being an active participant in the political arena, nor did he function as a change agent in how funding for EL programs should be allocated. He strove to cultivate students’ love for learning and school, explaining it to be critical for long-term engagement in schooling. Adams primarily operated within the Ethic of Care in his approach to programming dilemmas by managing resources creatively while at the same time placing children at the center of the decision-making process to the best of his ability.

Grandridge Elementary School

This section of the findings provides the profile of Grandridge Elementary School and its principal, Mr. Bell. General background information about the participant is included. Additionally, demographic data about the school and a description of their TESOL program is presented in this section. This section also includes an analysis of culturally proficient practices and organizational behaviors. The Franco et al. (2011) continuum is used as a guide to characterize what was observed. Lastly, the Shapiro and Stefkovich Multiple Ethical Paradigm (2016) and a description of turbulence (Gross, 2016) are presented to gain additional insight as to the perspective of the participant.

Grandridge Elementary School’s principal, Mr. Bell, began teaching in 2005 as a Social Studies teacher and Math teacher at East Valley Area High School. Bell grew into the leadership role as first a department head, then as assistant principal, also known as *grade-level* principal, serving the sophomore cohort of nearly 1,000 students. Bell held the position at East Valley Area High School for three years. In 2016, he principal at Grandridge Elementary School. Over the past three years, Bell received professional development described as “diversity training,” which includes workshops on creating more equitable schools. Below are the demographic details about the school.

Table 9.

Grandridge Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017

Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *									
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Grandridge El.	507	3%	64%	4%	25%	7%	59%	6%	No

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Grandridge Elementary served some 500 students, grades K-5, with a satellite special education program designed specifically for Autistic Support. Inclusion was an established organizational practice at the school. More importantly, *Inclusiveness* was an evident characteristic of the school culture. The school presented authentic student work throughout the building and additional artifacts such as photos, school literature, and school communications indicated attention to relationship-building. Three percent of Grandridge's student enrollment was identified as English Learners. The EL subgroup was also categorized as an insufficient sample size or less than 20 students, thus mandatory reporting of ELL performance to the state was not required.

One aspect of context is the level of turbulence. Bell stated that school district allocated resources were in accordance with enrollment; therefore, reallocation of resources was dictated by shifts in student enrollment. Though the lack of consistency in funding can be a challenge, he was able to mitigate the level of turbulence because the trend of EL enrollment has remained Bell seemed flexible and initiative in how supports were going to be delivered regardless of the uncertainty. However, considering the comments and context of the Title designation discussion, the degree of turbulence at Grandridge Elementary was *Moderate*, in that there was awareness to the issues causing tension but no feelings of crisis or threat. In terms of positionality, Bell likely felt a lesser degree of turbulence caused by shifting ethnic enrollment and EL programming when compared to other participants. He appeared confident in meeting the academic needs of language minority students because of his understanding and experience with leading the special programs at the school; however, Bell was less focused on cultural identity than other participants in the study. The most prominent cascading effect of lack of

representation of minorities in both the demographics of the faculty and school events could heighten turbulence in the future.

Bell felt that tension was less about race and more about conflict between lower and high socio-economic status. He stated that teachers are still adjusting to the demographic shift, specifically economically disadvantaged. Bell also explained the uniqueness in social dynamics of his school:

Some would consider this to be the most political building in the district for a number of factors; because the mayor lives here, his grandson goes here, his wife works here...that has never interfered with what has gone on since I've been here, but for example, you originally thought we were a Title school; we would qualify to be a Title school. We are not a mandated Title school because we are not yet at 75% free or reduced lunch. But our percent is rising, and I worry about what happens if we become a Title school; if there would be some, I don't want to say backlash, but perception is reality and the perception is that we're not a 'poor school'. I just think that people don't realize how much we are, because again, they are thinking of us a school from ten years ago.

Bell was conflicted about becoming a Title I school for logistical reason as well. He expressed concern that programs would be created but then unable to be sustained:

Part of me thinks that we should be a Title school because that will give us additional funds. The problem with that becomes, let's say we become a Title school but we're only a Title school for X-amount of years. We have that money. How do you sustain those things that you were programming for with that Title money once that's no longer there.

Bell stated that his focus is only on his school but could see how central administration would be conflicted about Grandridge becoming a Title school. He also included that the school board and local politicians may be reluctant to pursue the designation. Bell explained:

They're not hiding from the fact [that Grandridge could seek Title designation], but I don't know if they want to point that piece out; it's not like you would get any additional funds as a school district. If you have Title schools and you add another Title school, it's not like you're getting more money; you're now just splitting it with an additional school and it

means that those schools that were [Title schools] are taking some kind of hit because you have designated another school.

These comments are noteworthy given the historical context of the district, specifically the backlash from some stakeholders when the administration promoted policies to increase equity throughout the district. Regardless, the same challenge in providing supports for English learners given the current funding methods and resource allocations mirror the Title school designation dilemma. When discussing challenges in linking EL service to enrollment, Bell stated:

It is very hard to reassess and change support, or add support [when needs are reassessed yearly or per trimester]...if you are a school where you have, for half the year, set-up supports one way [and] if you get additional support, you're thinking thank goodness but if you're on the other end of it though, because you don't have additional staff, you're now cutting time from one building. That is going to be hard on the building that is losing some of the support, because it is going to juggle around what that teacher's day looks like, what the classroom teacher's day looks like, what the kid's day looks like.

Unsecured EL supports caused minimal turbulence with regards to school operations; however, the lack of consistency in EL programming likely sustained an inverse correlation to the turbulence experienced by students.

ESL Programming at Grandridge Elementary School

When asked to describe the ESL program at Grandridge, Bell stated that the school has a push-in model with a part-time ELL teacher. He explained:

There is a small take-out [pullout] class but most of the time, the teachers here are pushing into the regular ed class and working with the student one-on-one or working off to the side while still working on what's happening in the class.

When asked if co-planning is part of service delivery, Bell stated that the classroom teacher is doing most of the planning, but the ELL teacher is aware of the activities that will be taking place. Bell explained:

There's a pacing guide and timeline; it's theoretically [like] any second-grade classroom in the district, you would pretty much know what is going on.

When asked to describe a typical day of an English Language Learner, Bell stated that their day would "pretty much look the same as every other student's day." He explained that EL students would have a schedule that consists of a 30-minute morning meeting/breakfast; 90-minute ELA block; 30 minute special (Art, Music, or Gym); 60-minute math; two 30-minute MTSS sessions, one for math and one for reading; 60-minute Science and Social Studies; and, recess and lunch.

Bell was asked where the school was headed in terms of meeting the needs of English Language Learners. Bell responded:

For us, it's tricky because we have a relatively small ELL population. The EL decision really doesn't get made by me. It's made at a district level, especially for elementary schools, and it's based on numbers and needs.

He further explained that the needs are reassessed by trimester, then determined how EL needs can be supported over time. Bell explained is ELL Teacher as an example:

The [ELL] teacher that I have is here roughly 25% of the time and is at another near-by elementary school (Puri Elementary) the other 75% of time, so when she's here, she's here for half of the day.

When asked to speculate how enrollment trends would affect programming and the delivery of service, Bell explained that it difficult to project. As an example, the prior year, there were multiple non-English speaking students and only one of the students remains enrolled. For this year, Grandridge did not have any non-speakers enrolled. He added that the remaining student is already demonstrating a satisfactory level of English language proficiency.

Bell was also asked what he or the school would need to better support the needs of English learners. He prefaced his response with reference to how services were linked

to the size of the subgroup, which again means that supports would be limited. Bell then added:

The best-case scenario would be that I would have a full-time EL staff member, but I don't know if that's fiscally responsible, especially for the district given the need that the district has right now.

He further explained that it is challenging to support a program when the teacher is not appointed to the school full-time, "or even the majority of the time." In terms of being able to consistently deliver supports given the resources and culture in place, Bell explained, "we are an extremely inclusive school here." There are two special education silo programs; one program is for 4th and 5th grade Autistic Support for the entire district and the other is for Multi-Disability program for K-5. Bell explained:

Because of that [silo programs], the staff is almost like, we take anyone and everyone. They are included in everything every way, so getting an ELL in a class would not be any different than getting a student in a wheelchair, and you kind of meet the needs as they arise.

Alignment of Leadership Practices and Cultural Proficiency

The following section presents the data collected and its correlation to the culturally proficient leadership continuum (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The components of the continuum are: Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Assessing Culture. In the element of Assessing Culture, the responses of Bell characteristics of *Cultural Pre-Competence* with attributes of *Cultural Competence* were evident, specifically in that as a school leader he was passionate and diligent in meeting the needs of at-risk students. Bell viewed student through an asset-based lens rather than deficit-based approach to teaching and learning. Two issues that Bell expressed as

challenges were hiring more minority teachers and the change in how programming is funded. The demographics of the faculty no longer reflected the student body, which is becoming increasingly diverse. The teachers were primarily Caucasian and part of a dominant culture. Bell stated that it was a challenge to hire more minorities because teacher turnover is low:

We are lucky from the standpoint that this seems to be a school that staff want to come to and want to stay... the way to solve the staffing with minorities issue, can only be done through new hires; that's the only way. We have on average one retiree per year, so it makes it really difficult.

In terms of funding for English learner programming, Bell did not articulate a way in which he has or would advocate for a sustainable funding allocation.

Valuing Diversity. Bell presented elements of *Cultural Incapacity* and *Cultural Competence* within the descriptors of the element Valuing Diversity. Assimilation and mainstreaming organizational behaviors were evident and Bell did not view this as a threat to preserving student-identity. However, he again expressed the moral imperative for stakeholders to recognize that “We’re all in this together.” Bell continued by explaining the importance of “kids feel[ing] safe being at school” and that “parents feel they can connect with the school...regardless of race.” Photos in the main office reinforced the intent for students to share a common identity as a Grandridge Elementary Student through posing with their class t-shirt. It is noteworthy to mention that ‘sameness’ was a recurring theme and carried both positive and negative implications; supporting the notion that building a school culture that balances camaraderie and preserves uniqueness can be a challenge. When asked what organizational behaviors would be observed that showcase student identity, Bell stated:

I don’t know if we are necessarily doing anything differently just for cultural [reasons]...there isn’t anything necessarily specific to race.

He gave several examples of events hosted by the school that engaged the community; however, they were limited in that they primarily served the benefit of dominant cultural perspectives, such as Christmas, Halloween, and Thanksgiving.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Bell was asked if he recognized any barriers to his own effectiveness across cultural lines. He first referred to the demographics of the school and how enrollment is now comprised of more minorities, explaining:

We have some community barriers. I think a lot of people still think of the school and the surrounding community of the school being at a place where it was 10 years ago. We are the ‘whitest school’ in the district when looking at School Performance Profile Data, but obviously that number has decreased over a number of years.

Bell added that adjustment to shifting demographics has been a challenge, specifically in their capacity to support students who are economically disadvantaged. He explained:

The bigger piece to me is socio-economic [not race or ethnicity]. Our homeless rate continues to climb, and comparatively, when talking to food services and central registration, they almost feel like every kid that is going into register is one of our students.

When asked, why do you think that is? He said, “I don’t know.” Bell added that this area “was once, and still is, a very blue-collar community, and forever reason there’s not as much of that.”

He also stated that there has been an increase in evictions within the community, and cited problems with parental substance abuse and exposure to domestic violence. Bell explained:

If you read the byline [for reporting] heroin overdoses, often times you will see our township. Over the past two years, we have lost 10 parents of students and I would bet that three-quarters of those were to substance abuse, specifically heroin.

Additionally, Bell stated, “political influence is the primary reason we’re are not yet a Title I school.” He explained that influence from predominately white affluent stakeholder did not want the school to be identified or labeled as a Title I school. Given the complacency or lack of agency, with respect to acknowledging criticism as a necessity when pursuing social justice and using conflict as a catalyst for change, Bell suggesting attributes of *Cultural Pre-Competence* within the element of Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Calculated risk in favor of a particular demographic rather than embracing risk and criticism impeded his effectiveness of supporting students. Given the comments about barriers linked to an influx of students designated as economically disadvantaged, the school would benefit from receiving Title I Funding.

Adapting to Diversity. Bell demonstrated *Cultural Competence* in the domain of Adapting to Diversity. His statements regarding standardized testing, in that he led a team by using and sharing multiple sources of data in order to make informed decisions in how to best take steps to close educational gaps. Specifically, Bell recognized when disparities were apparent in test-score data and assessed the school effectiveness in meeting the needs of learners from a holistic lens. Bell also acknowledged:

It is unfair to administer LEP assessments [WIDA Access Test], the Pennsylvania State Standardized Assessment (PSSA), and the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment to newly arrived foreign-born students who can’t read the directions.

Bell continued by stating, “Standardized assessments do not necessarily measure a student’s ability.” However, he believed it to be district-wide organizational behaviors that were “beyond [his] control.” “The PSSA does not define us,” he explained to me.

Bell continued:

it’s complex to assess at that level [as a non-English speaker] ...it’s more than checking-off boxes, the opposite of what we do in school.

Bell recognized that both cultural and language differences make assessments unfair and not true measures of the achievement of foreign-born non-English speaking students.

However, Bell also acknowledged that he felt the need to focus on “what is feasible and what is not,” in that he did not challenge policies and practices that correlate to disproportional outcomes. He also explained the challenges of allocating staff based on enrollment:

You start the year with how you’re going to staff a building looking at numbers that come in from over the summer and at the very beginning of the school year, but then it’s very hard to reassess three months later, and then add support or change support.

Bell demonstrated continued efforts to cultivate unity among the school community. He referenced how he greets parents in mass communications, “Good evening Grandridge Families,” adding that he is sending the message that “we are all in this together.”

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. Bell also communicated with stakeholders through board meeting presentations and newsletters to parents. He felt that he was “perceived well” by the community and known to “not just view children through an academic lens.” Bell reiterated his “focus on the well-being of kids” and the “quality of life of families.” He made meeting with parents at dismissal a priority of day-to-day operations. “It’s a people job, you got to check-in with parents and students...I’m checking in with people left and right.” When asked questions related to building a support network and closing societal gaps, Bell explained that “some see us as a family-based resource...if [outside] services drop, the families look to us.” When asked if he viewed coordinating social services as part of his role as principal, he responded, “maybe that’s not what it [the principalship] is meant to be, but it is what it’s supposed to be.” He continued, “I own it because of their vulnerability as kids.” The aforementioned examples

relate to a persistent vision of education as the vehicle for closing societal gaps and making a difference in the lives of others. During the interviews, however, Bell has not yet arrived at ‘transforming the system and service paradigm from equality to equity,’ a key indicator of *Cultural Competency* and *Cultural Proficiency*. Bell’s moral purpose and wisdom was evident; however, he did not also use his position as principal to influence state and federal policy, though he did feel the responsibility to advocate for students. Bell viewed his job to be “the intermediary between the district and teachers” and to “support students.” As a result, Bell was ultimately characterized as *Culturally Pre-Competent* within the element of Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Ethical Lens of Principal Bell

The Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm was used as a tool to better understand and analyze the decision-making of educational leaders. As further discussed in the Literature Review, the ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. School leaders can use these lenses in their approach to solve complex ethical dilemmas. The framework was included as part of the framework in order to interpret perspective-driving implementation of policy or regulations that directly affects English Learners.

Based on the comments and responses, the *Ethic of Care* was most present when solving programming dilemmas. Bell was diligent in his efforts to create a safe supportive environment for children, where student can have fun learning. He wanted “kids to feel safe being in school, regardless of differences” and was keenly aware of the vulnerability of children. Bell recognized that increased drug use and domestic abuse were increasing problems in the community he served. Furthermore, he recognized that

the schools are pillars of communities and families turn to him for support, a consistent theme among all participants. Bell included family-based supports as part of his role as principal. He also worked to cultivate strong unity and common identity as Grandridge students; however, it is possible that this was at the expense of celebrating individual cultural identities.

However, there was adherence to the hierarchal organizational dynamics of the district, indicating that the Bell also operates through the *Ethic of the Profession* when dilemmas involve controversial political issues and policies. As was the case with other participants, Bell did not feel his role was to engage central administration or others in the political arena to critique the methods and procedures of the school district.

Summary

The participant from Grandridge Elementary demonstrated elements of cultural competence and pre-competence across domains; however, there was also evidence that dominant culture prevails over most if not all school events. Bell saw himself primarily as a school leader and less of a community leader; however, he also recognized his role in connecting families to resources and social services. Bell did not view his role or position as one that would critique district methods, nor did he function in the political arena. Challenges in the programming and delivery of services to English Language Learners created Light Turbulence; however, the increase in economically disadvantaged students raised the degree of Turbulence to Moderate. Bell prioritized belonging and unity as a way to mobilize the school community around a common purpose. Bell primarily operated through the Ethic of Care in dilemmas related to school-level decision-making and from the Ethic of Profession in matters that were at a district or political level.

Montes Elementary School

This portion of the findings provides the profile of Montes Elementary School and its principal, Ms. Cooper. General background information about the participant is included. Additionally, demographic data about the school and a description of their TESOL program is presented in this section. This section also includes an analysis of culturally proficient practices and organizational behaviors. The Franco et al. (2011) continuum is used as a guide to characterize what was observed. Lastly, the Shapiro and Stefkovich Multiple Ethical Paradigm (2016) and a description of turbulence (Gross, 2016) is presented to gain additional insight as to the perspective of the participant.

Ms. Cooper joined the East Valley Area School District as a teacher with a reading specialist background 15 years ago. Cooper's experience has been mainly in EVASD. She had previously served as Lead Teacher Grandridge Elementary prior to serving as interim principal at Montes. Cooper stated that she had experience in planning intervention and budget management for the past three years as seen in Table 10.

Table 10.

Montes Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017

Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *									
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Montes El.	279	23%	83%	58%	21%	17%	2%	2%	Yes

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Montes Elementary serves nearly 280 students, grades one through five. During the study, Montes identified over 80% of their students as economically disadvantaged.

Montes Elementary receives Title I Funding designation per the Pennsylvania Department of Education's School Performance Profile. Twenty-five percent of Montes's student enrollment was identified as English Learners, with a wide range of languages spoken. After triangulating various data reports and artifacts, the approximate student count was approximately 60 English Learners. Of the English Learner subgroup, 45% of the students test proficient in the PA Measures of progress for English Learners.

One aspect of context analyzed was turbulence. The turbulence at Montes Elementary is described as *Light Turbulence*. There is awareness of barriers to learning and inequity; however, the barriers are not disrupting daily operations. As is the case at Puri Elementary, language minority stakeholders were distant from the decision-making at the school level. In the case of Montes they were significantly marginalized because the school did not have a formal partnership, such as a home-and-school association. Though Cooper recognized that lack of engagement does not equal lack of caring about the quality of education being provided, the school had yet to establish an appropriate forum for parents to express their concerns. Cooper did not articulate immediate action steps to create the home-and-school or at least establish an immediate committee that could be the voice of stakeholders.

Unlike other participating elementary schools such as Grandridge, Puri, Marymount, and Palermo, Montes Elementary had projected teacher allocation for their TESOL program. Given consistent EL enrollment, the school was allocated two ESL teachers for at least the past three years and for the foreseeable future. The greatest source of stress placed on the school's ability to support English learners was rooted in language diversity. The EL subgroup driving the development of TESOL programs has historically

been Hispanic and resources in other languages have yet to be prioritized as evidenced by accessibility to non-Spanish language supports. Cooper was able to leverage stakeholders in the community that speak Punjabi and Bengali in order to address the needs of students and parents, thereby reducing the turbulence on the school. However, as is the case with Palermo Elementary, Montes also needed ongoing supports for students that were economically disadvantaged. Montes differs from other schools in the district in that most if not all of their EL subgroup is also considered economically disadvantaged, further complicating the ability to support families with fidelity across agencies. Language was an additional barrier contributing to inequity.

ESL Programming at Montes Elementary School

Asian students were the most rapidly increasing student racial demographic. The Asian families whose children attended Montes Elementary were also diverse and translators were mostly needed for Punjabi (primarily Pakistani) and Hindi. Cooper also stated, “various dialects across India can be a challenge for some translators,” and “translators have become a critical resource for both communication through language and cultural understanding.”

Though 25% of enrollment was identified as Limited English Proficiency, Cooper speculated that nearly half, “a little over 50% our student population are English Language Learners.” She elaborated her response by adding that students are either non-native English speakers or children of parents who were non-native English speakers. She said, “some students are ‘checked-in’ on but don’t necessarily receive services.” Cooper stated, “the majority speak the [English] language so communication is OK.” When asked to describe the programs and services for ELs, Cooper stated:

Every student is seen by an English Language Learner teacher every day. We have two English Language Learner teachers in the building and what they do is push-in to the classrooms and support the kids during small group instruction in the classrooms, depending on the schedule allowing – they will push-in during math-time to help if needed.

Cooper continued by explaining that there is a “wide-range of ability” and sometimes students are pulled-out of class or MTSS Time is used as a support, a scheduled time for academic interventions which is a districtwide elementary school initiative. She further described the needs of ELs by explaining:

We have students who are non-speakers, who do not speak the language at all, who don’t know the letters, don’t know the sounds. Those are our more intensive students that need more support, so our two ELL Teachers will support them as much as they can to get the basic foundation down.

Cooper also stated that, “we have students who are developing and students who have exited, who are just followed-up with by the teachers.”

When asked to describe how the typical day who *feel like* for an English Learner, Cooper responded by describing the students’ day as a “struggle,” empathizing with the beginning ELs especially by explaining:

I always think to myself when we get students in here that don’t speak the language, how would I feel if I was in their country in a school and all these people around me were pushing all this information at me and I have no idea what their saying. So, I have so much empathy for them.

Cooper added that for the many years that she’s been in the district, she observed that “as soon as they start to pick-up the language, they takeoff for the most part.” She also added, in terms of what it feels like to be an English Language Learner in this building:

we usually have more than one student in each class or grade that speaks a particular language...so we do offer the opportunity for those students to meet-up and communicate in their own language.

The aforementioned example was an example of a strategy for school leaders and teachers to create learning space for student that leverage cultural capital.

When asked about the immediate future of the program, within the next 3 to 5 years, Cooper felt that the school was “moving in the right direction,” which she based on outcomes from the most recent ACCESS Test scores, stating that “the students have shown growth and progress.” Cooper speculated that the school would continue to see an increase in English Learner enrollment. In looking ahead, Cooper added that she would “like to connect more with stakeholders” but also added that:

Our English Language Learner teachers do an excellent job in reaching out to the community and reaching out to the parents.

Cooper foresees increasing EL enrollment and awareness of the data is helping in designing programming. She reiterated, “we have two full-time ELL teachers but we’re the smallest school in the district.” One resource that she advocated for from the district was a full-time social worker, explaining that:

because I feel these families could use that support, you know, of someone that is able to connect them with community resources. You worry sometimes that the parents may not completely understand what you’re saying, and I want everything I say to be very clear to them...just to have someone in the building to reach out to families more often.

Cooper added that the school does use a translation service to connect with families, but a school social worker could help support the ELL Teachers that are also regularly in contact with parents.

Alignment of Leadership Practices and Cultural Proficiency

The following section presents the data collected and its correlation to the culturally proficient leadership continuum (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The components of the continuum are: Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing the

Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Assessing Culture. Cooper demonstrated characteristics of *Cultural Blindness* and *Cultural Pre-competence* within the Assessing Culture domain of the framework. She was able to verify that some Asian students lived in deep poverty yet outperform peers. Cooper stated, “Some students just do better than others” as an explanation to the phenomenon; however, in contrast, when asked about the extent that cultural identity influences success, Cooper stated:

It has a big impact. If they have an awareness of themselves and they’re good with it, it helps their self-esteem...if they’re proud of their culture it also creates a positive climate in the building.

Cooper initially mischaracterized the Indian and Pakistani demographic as “Middle Eastern,” indicating a lack of general knowledge of the fastest growing student demographics of the school. She was possibly stereotyping students because of appearance. Though Cooper was well intentioned and cared about all families and students, it was clear that cultural awareness was limited. She valued diversity and perceived aspects of culture as assets but the lens from which she could identify or acknowledge those assets was not yet developed. Another example being that when asked to articulate how strangers would recognize the school’s value of diversity, Cooper stated, “Assimilation would be a compliment.”

Valuing Diversity. Cooper avoided making references to her own culture as a potential barrier to understanding other cultures but did express that teachers within the building were resistant to the demographic shift. The expected roles of stakeholders and students were to assimilate, which was highly valued by “identifying it [assimilation] as a complement.” Cooper also commented that:

Our ELL students are just like any other student in the building, it's just their language that they speak at home are different than here. The majority of them are able to speak our language so the communication is OK, but I need to do a better job at learning how I can better support them.

In terms of valuing diversity, the Cooper's comment suggests that she is not recognizing the cultural capital of students because the only characteristic separating ELs for native English speakers is language. Furthermore, the deep connection between language and culture seemed overlooked. However, Cooper also described class activities and school posters (by the main entrance) that showcase the diversity in language and heritage of Montes students. Another example of the promoting culture, described as a way to promote community building, was a Thanksgiving Day celebration, "Thanksgiving Feast." The intent of the event was explained as a way to expose students to the national holiday. Cooper described the event as:

We bring in everything in; we sit down and do a little craft with them; we talk to them about what the first Thanksgiving was, it's awesome...It's almost like an ELL lesson as to what we do here (in the United States).

I did not have artifacts from the Thanksgiving event; however, there is reason to believe that this event reinforces the false narrative of what occurred when the Americas were colonized. Since the 1970's, the fourth Thursday in November is also a day of mourning for the genocide of Native Americans and continued assault on Native culture. The aforementioned data suggests the Cooper and the institution reinforces the views of the dominant culture; thus, the responses within the domain of Valuing Diversity varied from *Cultural Blindness to Precompetence* with the exception of soliciting input from minority stakeholders, which could be characterized as striving towards *Cultural Competence*.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Cooper could not easily be characterized within the element of Managing the Dynamics of Difference, specifically because of the

way in which conflict-resolution was described contrasted other comments about shared decision-making. Cooper shielded dissonance between cultures and ethnicities in order to maintain the status quo. For example, she explained the process of resolving conflict as primarily involving herself and those afflicted. The prospect of diverse perspectives as way to inform or gain perspective was unlikely given that resolution and mediation was framed by the ability to avoid or mitigate conflict rather than embrace it as a catalyst for change. For example, when asked if mediation was as a tool for conflict resolution, Cooper stated, “The faculty may not always be ready or willing to take that step,” which suggested an avoidance of risk and being criticized by faculty. However, it was also the case that Cooper recognized the immediate need of having a home-and-school association to solicit stakeholder input. She explained:

One of my improvement plan goals was parent involvement; we really don't have a home-and-school right now and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that communication, because of language barriers, is something that makes families feel more like they shouldn't be involved. So I'd like to be able to provide them with something to make them more comfortable to be involved... so they can be more involved in creating the events for the kids. I want people to participate as far as planning the events.

Cooper added that she knows that the parents, despite their lack of visibility or participation, care deeply about their child's education.

Adapting to Diversity. Cooper's comments suggested that she wanted or thought she was working towards addressing the needs of all English learners; however, many of the responses were centered on the ability for the students to work towards proficiency in the language and adaptation to the culture as a pathway to success. Cooper articulated the program as preparing students for the ACCESS test, with an ultimate goal of exiting the program. She did not articulate how some students may be served better than others

because of the organizational behaviors of the school and school district. She did, however, explain a process in which the intervention team will follow in order to counter assumptions that learning problems are related to language acquisition stating:

When we think it possible that a student struggles for a reason other than language, it's such a hard thing to decipher... lots of times we'll have them read stuff in their own language; Spanish is a little easier but when it Punjabi or Bengali it's more difficult, but a lot of the parents can give us a lot of information when they were in school [prior to coming to the US].

Soliciting input from parents directly is not only important but also an example of the school taking responsibility for the reality that the organization's behaviors do not serve students equally. When asked about the ideal TESOL model for ELs to be successful, Cooper stated additional ESL teachers and common planning-time would drastically improve outcomes. She also described the flexibility needed to reach non-speakers, explaining:

because if you're in a third-grade classroom and you don't speak any English, the typical school day doesn't really involve letters and sounds, so we try to find different ways in the school to try and get them that type of practice.

When asked about the types of assessments, Cooper stated that the assessments were balanced and accurate measures. Further, Cooper took a position that, "Some students just do better than others," and culture is linked to academic success. Because of her inability to articulate recognition or cultural assumptions or ineffectiveness in organizational behaviors, Cooper demonstrated attributes of *Cultural Blindness* for the Essential Element of Adapting the Diversity.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. As part of the interview protocol, when asked if she ever felt "boxed-in" or "backed into a corner" as a principal, Cooper connected the question to allocated resources. She explained that planning supports can

be difficult, and she would like to “provide more services for English learners” and “struggling learners in general.” Cooper did not view her role as principal extending beyond the education of students; in that, involvement in local politics or creating support networks was separate from the role of principal. Evidence suggested the reinforcement of meritocratic nature of school supports, though they present disproportionate opportunity gaps. As a school leader, Cooper maintained the current educational practices without challenge, yet also made recommendations for resources and gaining stakeholder environment. In sum, Cooper’s comments and her description of organizational behaviors could be characterized as *Cultural Blindness* within the element of Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. Though some responses indicated the desire to collaborate more with parents, Cooper was not yet able to articulate her vision for creating equity and closing the societal gap for language minority stakeholders.

Ethical Lens of Principal Cooper

The Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm can be used as a tool to better understand and analyze the decision-making of educational leaders. As further discussed in the Literature Review, the ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. School leaders can use these lenses in their approach to solve complex ethical dilemmas. The framework was included as part of the framework in order to interpret perspective-driving implementation of policy or regulations that directly affects English Learners.

As a school leader, Cooper was compassionate and caring. She pursued a moral imperative for making positive changes that benefit underserved stakeholders, including those within the language minority. She operated primarily through the Ethic of *Care*.

Cooper recognized that “service time was lost because of testing [practices].” In addition, she recognized that supports were needed for language minority students even if they “may not qualify for ESL supports because they are not identified as LEP.” Though Cooper did not recognize her undermining of cultural capital by frequently operating from the dominant cultural perspective, it can be argued that her thinking of an assimilation-model of inclusion as beneficial was a way to ensure that all students were treated fairly. Cooper was reflective by recognizing a need to learn more about supporting English Learners, specifically by learning more about the cultures within the school community. Cooper considered how she could give back to the community by questioning, “How can I help adults?” For the upcoming academic year, she would like to lead professional development that emphasizes supporting parents. Cooper cited an example of “offering [referring to] programs similar to the GED and ESL classes [for parents] at the high school.” In doing so, she is considering *who will benefit*, and *how can I give back to society*; both are questions from the ethic of care paradigm.

Summary

The participant from Montes Elementary varied within the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Continuum. Elements of *Cultural Blindness* were apparent in her reinforcement of the dominant culture’s values and practices; however, it was arguably unintentional. Cooper was able to consistently plan programming for English Learners because of consistent trends in enrollment. Though she did not articulate a specific plan for soliciting input from minority stakeholders, Cooper’s statements reflect characteristics of *Cultural Competence* in Valuing Diversity. Based on Cooper’s statements, she primarily operated through the *Ethic of Care* because she placed students at the center of

the decision-making process and considered the long-term impacts of her decisions. As was the case with other participants, Cooper did not identify her role as being an active participant in the political arena, nor did she function as a change agent to secure the needed resource of an appointed school social worker.

Marymount Elementary School

This section of the findings provides the profile of Marymount Elementary School and its principal, Ms. Deley. The participant declined to be recorded during the interview process. The data presented was taken from notes and what could be transcribed during the interview. General background information about Ms. Deley is included.

Additionally, demographic data about the school and a description of their TESOL program is presented in this section. This section also includes an analysis of culturally proficient practices and organizational behaviors. The Franco et al. (2011) continuum is used as a guide to characterize what was observed. Lastly, the Shapiro and Stefkovich Multiple Ethical Paradigm (2016) and a description of turbulence (Gross, 2016) are presented to gain additional insight as to the perspective of Deley.

Ms. Deley has over 18 years of experience in education. Deley joined the East Valley Area School District in 2003 as a long-term substitute at Palermo Elementary School. She then became a permanent classroom teacher. In 2013, Deley became lead teacher, a position that requires a principal certification. She was then appointed interim principal of Marymount Elementary School in 2016 for 9 months, then assistant principal for 7 months, and now serving as principal in since 2017.

Table 11.

Marymount Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017

Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *									
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Marymount El.	795	10%	78%	25%	47%	15%	9%	4%	Yes

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Marymount Elementary served nearly 800 students, grades one through five and had the most linguistically diverse student body, with more than 20 languages spoken. Ten percent, about 80 students, of Marymount’s student total enrollment were identified as English Learners, of which 60% were identified as both EL and economically disadvantaged. In total, Marymount identified 80% of their students as economically disadvantaged.

One aspect of context is turbulence. Deley stated that ELL enrollment allocation-driven funding was a challenge. However, school enrollment trends indicated increasing ELL enrollment, which did in fact lead to somewhat of a consistent allocation of resources. Deley’s statements, however, suggested uncertainty of resource allocation was somewhat of a barrier despite the consistency in EL enrollment. This tension added to the turbulence of the organization and the Deley’s role in mitigating the uncertainty. She defined her role as functioning specifically at the school-level, with focus on “what is feasible and what is not.” At the conclusion of data collection, there appeared to be significant correlation between increasing fiscal constraints and sense of urgency to create partnerships for Marymount. As was the case with other participants, such as Adams and Bell, the principal needed to be creative in addressing learning needs.

Deley stated that policy actors, “primarily Republican,” are going so far as to “redraw district boundaries” because of the lack of willingness to adapt to demographic shifts. Similar to comments made by Bell from Grandridge Elementary, Deley raised the concern that the “white community wants the community to remain as it has been [ethnically] twenty years ago.” The positionality of Marymount was different in that parents were more diverse and actively participated in non-dominant cultural events. Considering the political tension involving redistricting and surrounding communities’ resistance to the demographic shift, the degree of turbulence at Marymount can best be identified as *Moderate*. There are known issues that may affect school operations and uncertainties are causing stress, but neither was affecting the daily functioning of the organization.

ESL Programming at Marymount Elementary School

Marymount ELL student enrollment dictated 2.5 full-time teacher appointments. Deley described the typical day for a beginning English speaker as, “containing sheltered-instruction for a small portion of the day and then full-immersion to support social interaction with push-in supports.” She was familiar with the SIOP model and viewed the model as a guideline for the ESL program.

Marymount was an organization centered by academic growth. Supports for all students to reach academic proficiency on standardized assessments were prioritized. Artifacts and literature about the school indicated the amount of academic assessment occurring was consistent with similar districts throughout Pennsylvania. Deley contextualized sheltered instruction as a tiered delivery.

Alignment of Leadership Practices and Cultural Proficiency

The following section presents the data collected correlated to the culturally proficient leadership continuum (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The components of the continuum are: Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Assessing Culture. The focus of Marymount Elementary was inclusion as the goal; however, supports for transitioning students were evident. Deley demonstrated skills and dispositions consistent with the *Culturally Competent* in the domain of Assessing Culture. She described a team-centered approach to be sure the students are ready for a traditional classroom setting by gathering input from ESL teachers, parents, and students along with the review of data tracking the child's progress. Sheltered instruction available at the school targeted "newcomers [to the country]" and "non-English speakers." Marymount's sheltered-instruction was described by Deley as, "small targeted instruction with a focus on acclimation." Limited evidence was found to determine the extent to which Marymount, as an organization, preserved the identity of English learners; however, the data was suggested that preserving identity and culture in the classroom was important given the way inclusive practices were applied. For example, Deley cited "flexible scheduling" with "additional hourly pay" as ways to support students. She also cited awareness as to "how Americanized the family is" when discussions took place around placement. "Knowing the family, not just the culture" was another comment indicating perception as to the value of culture and her focus on optimizing effective teaching.

Valuing Diversity. The recurring theme of *relationship-building* was evident in the maintained and continued partnerships with Marymount Elementary. Partnerships with private businesses to local agencies provided learning spaces for students. “These opportunities bring them out of their shell,” and “provide opportunities for social-emotional learning.” Evidence of fostering relationship-building within the school was also captured, one example being the description of mentorship when describing push-in ESL supports. Outside the classroom, the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS) program was used to cultivate mentorship among all students. Initiatives and off-stage planning by Deley were evidence of ownership for meeting non-academic needs of children. Deley also recognized the importance of navigating accountability and responsibility to meet the holistic needs of students and family. For example, the understanding of diverse perspectives, opinions, and ideas, was evidence used to characterize Deley in this element. Deley described the varying experiences families had with formal education explaining, “Sometimes, families don’t disclose that [experience with formal education] and as educators, we must recognize that we have at times a mindset that lack of participation means not caring.” Deley continued by stating the importance of being “compassionate” and “empathetic” towards families. In sum, Deley’s comments suggest attributes of *Culturally Competent* in the element of Valuing Diversity.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. Deley made statements that suggest that her actions are grounded in compassion and empathy when engaging communities, specifically those that are within the cultural minority. Deley described behaviors that varied along the Cultural Proficiency Continuum in the element of Managing the

Dynamics of different, from *Cultural Pre-Competency to Cultural Proficiency*. For example, as a school leader, Deley took calculated risks in favor of particular issues to avoid criticism by faculty; however, this was interpreted by the researcher as a strategy given the context of the school as an organization. In contrast, Deley did not assume that stakeholders who do not come forward to make their needs known were satisfied with the status quo. She explained that, “sometimes you have to go out into to the community” [to gather perspective and address barriers]. Family engagement resulted in “lots of participation,” specifically in Family Heritage Night and EL Parent Night. Family Heritage Night was defined as a “celebration of our diversity” and the annual event featured cultural garb, food, and performers. The English Learner Parent Night focused on building academic skills of students and providing resources to families such as access to a local food bank and information to support immigration to the US. The aforementioned examples are within the descriptors of *Culturally Proficient*. Again, Deley varied within this element; however, inaction at times was used as a strategy for not isolating an aging white faculty who experienced continued leadership change and were not ready to address inequities in the system.

Adapting to Diversity. Adapting to Diversity was another element in which Deley demonstrated varying characteristics along the continuum. She responded to legal mandates and measures of compliance in designing the plan for delivery of instruction with lesser focus on disproportionality, descriptors of *Cultural Pre-Competence*. Deley did not articulate actions taken to challenge policies and practices that correlated to disproportionate outcomes, nor for alliances to shape policy in an effort to ensure equitable access. On the other hand however, Deley’s actions were congruent with

pedagogy for educational equity and closing the achievement gap, specifically Culturally Responsive Teaching, descriptors of *Cultural Competence*. Lastly, Deley demonstrated actions of cross-organizational partnerships to foster agency and the sharing of resources to build capacity and structure society for socially just ends, a key descriptor of *Cultural Competence* within the element of Adapting to Diversity. The partnership with Big Sisters and Brothers of America were highly valued by Deley. She also maintained the partnership with a local retirement home and business mentorships as "a way for students to give back to the community" and "bring them [students] out of their shells."

Instituting Cultural Knowledge. Deley's responses suggest attributes of *Culturally Proficient* in the element of the Instituting Cultural Knowledge. Deley viewed education as a vehicle for closing societal gaps and specifically described "Immigration to the US as a way for families to get ahead and a chance for their children to have a better life." Deley viewed educational opportunities to children without formal school as necessary to break the cycle of poverty and "prepare them and shape their future... [in order for them] to contribute to society;" this is an example of leadership contributing to the common good. Deley also recognized collaboration with local organizations as a way to foster trust and understanding of minorities within the community.

Ethical Lens of Principal Deley

Deley described the role of principal as addressing "whatever is needed." Evidence of intent to supports holistic development of children was consistent in each interview, within the context of supporting students and teachers. She saw value in relationship building and recognized building partnerships with the community was an effective way to help marginalized students. Deley's approach to dilemmas related to

school programming was primarily through the Ethic of Care. Many of the participants' comments focused on *who will benefit from what I decide?* Deley identified serving the community as a priority. Specific evidence was the partnership with a local retirement facility that children visited and built relationships with residents. There was reciprocity in these relationships. Another example of reciprocity was involvement and support with a local food bank that served families and the community. Lastly, Deley was "focused-on and aware of barriers for immigrants;" however, she followed the contradictory district policies in place, characteristics of the ethics of justice and profession. The ethic of care, however, was the most prevalent because, though Deley relied on the district policies to execute decisions, she found creative ways of leveraging the tools and resources available to support the school community. For example, during the interview, Deley emphasized that during parent-nights, "information on healthcare and legal services" were available, a comment not articulated by other participants. This focus on the best interests of students and the community was the acknowledgement that her role as school leader goes beyond the school.

Palermo Elementary School

This portion of the findings provides the profile of Palermo Elementary School and its principal, Ms. Eddins. General background information about Eddins is included. Additionally, demographic data about the school and a description of their TESOL program is presented in this section. This section also includes an analysis of culturally proficient practices and organizational behaviors. The Franco et al. (2011) continuum is used as a guide to characterize what was observed. Lastly, the Shapiro and Stefkovich

Multiple Ethical Paradigm (2016) and a description of turbulence (Gross, 2016) is presented to gain additional insight as to the perspective of the participant.

Ms. Eddins had a broad range of educational experience, with experience from elementary to career and technical training in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Eddins has 24 years of experience in education, serving as classroom teacher for 12 years and serving as principal for 12 years. Eddins also has experience working in both out-of-state charter schools and public schools. She relocated to the East Valley Area School District in 2014 from the southern United States. Eddins's leadership track began when she first served as Lead Teacher and Curriculum Coordinator for 5 years, and then Assistant Principal for 1 year. Since her location to EVASD, she has served in her current role as principal for 5 years. The demographic data for Palermo Elementary School is seen below, in Table 12.

Table 12.

Palermo Elementary School Demographic Data Reported in 2017

Pennsylvania Reported Student Groups (2017) *									
	Enrolled	ELL	Economically Disadvantaged	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or more races	Title I
District-wide	12,524	8%	67%	15%	47%	8%	26%	3%	Yes
Palermo El.	550	7%	90%	5%	82%	9%	2%	3%	Yes

* Student Groups >1.0% were reported; Descriptors of groups reflect reporting by PDE (2018).

Palermo Elementary serves nearly 550 students, grades one through five. During the study, Palermo identified 90% of their students as economically disadvantaged. Palermo was a school designated as a *Title I School*, as per the participant and Pennsylvania Department of Education's School Performance Profile, suggesting

awareness between economically disadvantaged and educational outcomes. Seven percent of Palermo's student enrollment was identified as English Learners. After triangulating various data reports and artifacts the approximate student count was approximately 40 English Learners. Of the English Learner subgroup, 70% of the students test proficient in the PA Measures of progress for English Learners.

One aspect to better understand context is turbulence. The turbulence of Palermo Elementary is categorized as *Light Turbulence*. Student enrollment is primarily African American, showing little change in demographics, including economically disadvantaged. Previous and current English learners were primarily from Africa and diversity in languages spoken was less than other elementary schools. Eddins was able to mitigate the subtle signs of stress on the school as an organization with the resources allocated, specifically Title I. The greatest barrier to student achievement was poverty, which was prevalent across all subgroups. As is the case of the other participants, though it may not be the intent of Eddins to reinforce the systemic problem of how EL programs are funded or funding in general, her lack of participation in the political arena or public advocacy for change makes her arguably complicit.

Eddins did not see herself as a political actor but did view herself as having an important responsibility as a civic leader. The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards (PILS) and Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standard VI explicitly state the responsibility of school leaders is to advocate for children and public education by influencing policy and the larger political context through engagement activities. Eddins expressed the importance of any available funding for educational resources, including parent engagement programs, to help close the

achievement gap and improve academic proficiency but did not articulate her role in advocacy at the district-level. Eddins presented herself as self-assured in her ability to design and allocate supports for English Learners appropriately. Eddins did not express any frustration or dissatisfaction in how resources were allocated. She was able to articulate parent involvement and steps taken to increase that involvement. Eddins was able to articulate a proposal for fairer-funding that is per-pupil; however, she did not feel it was her role to participate in the political arena.

ESL Programming at Palermo Elementary School

Palermo Elementary supported an inclusion model with push-in supports by the ESL teacher. The school was allocated 1.5 ESL teachers, who were also involved data meetings and planning supports for inclusion. When asked to describe the school's programming for English learners, Eddins stated:

Our school is totally inclusion-based, they are totally immersed, and they receive push-in support. We have a 1.5 person positions, so we have one full-time teacher and a teacher that comes three times a week to support the EL program and those students.

Programming emphasized inclusive practices; however, pulling students from class for intensive intervention was also considered on a case-by-case basis deemed appropriate by the teacher. Eddins explained:

The only time they're pulled-out is when there is a need for support and teacher autonomy guides... We do remediation as needed for students and we try to do that within the regularly scheduled school day.

Of the five participating elementary schools, Palermo was the least focused on assimilation to Mainstream American culture. Eddins stressed the importance of talking about culture and diverse ways of thinking when discussing parent engagement during

faculty meetings. When asked how this would be observed in the classroom Eddins stated:

We talk about culture with the students...we have different components embedded in our curriculum that allow us to talk about differences and being respectful about different cultures and different ways of thinking, different languages as such.

Moving forward as a school, Eddins stated that she would like to focus on parent-partnerships for the upcoming academic year. She also explained the importance and barriers to creating stronger partnerships with the parent of language minority students:

One of the things that we see as a goal is to meet with the parents more often during the year. Because of the language barrier, there is a tendency to not have as close of a relationship than what we have with other parents at our school. So our overall goal for next year is to increase those opportunities for them [parents of English Learners].

In addition, Eddins stated that she would like to be more hands-on with addressing the needs of English learning. She gave the example of knowing the details within the data on-hand. Eddins felt the school would benefit from having an internal survey of origin to better understand their foreign-born students or families. She explained:

I would like to be more hands-on with exactly what that population looks like. I would like to know my data on-hand... to know how many kids are from our pacific islander population, how many kids are from our Nigerian population; that, I would like to know. At present, we do not have anything to collect that data down to countries.

Alignment of Leadership Practices and Cultural Proficiency

The following section presents the data collected and its correlation to the culturally proficient leadership continuum (Franco, Ott, & Robles, 2011). The components of the continuum are: Assessing Culture, Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Assessing Culture. When asked about institutional barriers for English learners, Eddins immediately cited the need for a “liaison for intakes,” especially “when students transfer from setting without any formal education.” Eddins also acknowledged, “change in culture can be traumatizing for them [students].” In response to addressing a multitude of barriers presented as a result of trauma, she expressed diligence in making school “a safe place.” Eddins also recognized transiency as a common attribute of the English Learner student population. Eddins “changed the culture [of the school] to make school more accessible to students and families.” She also explained:

We provide translation services and a parent orientation once a year during back-to-school night to discuss what types of services they can access - from translation services to accommodations as well.

Eddins viewed cultural differences “as assets, not deficits,” to improve teaching and learning. She was identified as having *Cultural Proficiency* within the element of Assessing Culture.

Valuing Diversity. When asked, “To what extent does cultural identity influence success of students,” Eddins responded, “100 percent,” because identity is related to “who you perceive yourself and others to be.” With regards to teachers, she explained the importance of recognizing that “sometimes the system bends for you” and it is important to know if “the only people you know look like you.” Eddins explained, “Teachers should be honest about privilege” and “how socioeconomic status affects relationships.” When asked how strangers might recognize your valuing of diversity, Eddins stated “diversity among staff” and “hiring questions.” In addition to personnel goals, when asked about decision-making, she expressed, “Well, what is good for the most at-risk, is often good for everybody...and when I think of decision-making, I think of equity.” Eddins also organized paid cultural events hosted by the school and partnered

with local church. “Parents recognize that I am a community leader as well,” she explained and felt, “some of her success was owed to a former professor who focused on cultural studies.” In sum, Eddins’s statements could be characterized as *Culturally Proficient* within the element of Valuing Diversity.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference. When describing how shared decision-making or consensus building is structured, Eddins cited the selection of culturally diverse members for the leadership team. She also focused on distributive leadership, with “emphasis on being a catalyst for change.” Eddins explained that one goal of the leadership team was to “define the culture of the building” and the “systems that are working for building or improving the culture in the school.” One example cited as a shift in school culture was “shifting to a less punitive culture...which is now more of a therapeutic approach.” Eddins cited the importance of “self-reflection as a school leader” and “maintaining a growth mindset.” Lastly, Eddins stated that she has “no allegiances, just to what’s right - not the district.” She added the importance of parent engagement as part of the process for consensus building and that another safeguard to ensure equity is linked to Title I:

We are in the middle of a Title I audit, and that [TESOL] is part of that audit, to prove that we are servicing that population by providing those translation services.

Based on the responses given as they relate to the element of Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Eddins could be characterized as *Culturally Proficient*.

Adapting to Diversity. Eddins acknowledged the need to better report data on student subgroups in order to better assess the needs of specific students and their communities. She felt that this could be done at the school level with possible revisions to the home language survey. This approach was characterized as *Culturally Proficient* in

this area because Eddins was forging a more equitable approach to supports subgroups, whose achievement outcomes and needs may be obscured by aggregated data reporting. Additionally, Eddins acknowledged that she does, as the building principal, have a role in recognizing and celebrating the identity of students. Lastly, Eddins acknowledged the challenge for students transitioning to this type of educational setting from a place without formal schooling adding, “not just academically, but mostly culturally.” Eddins sees the students struggle with the adjustment. She described a “breakfast club,” a type of orientation for the transitioning EL students, where the faculty members welcome the students and specify their role and clarify that this [the school] is a safe place to talk and get support. Eddins also stated:

We need to do more of that [orientation-model] as a district because the transient population is just huge here, and children come a lot of times with such cultural differences that it is traumatizing for them to just access education. It would be great if there was some kind of orientation program for those families, to transition them. Maybe, once a month to have these meetings, so that no matter what time they come in, within 15 days, they’re meeting with someone from the district to talk about these things. I think that would do a lot for these families because they really want their children to do well.

Eddins’s description of how the school district can provide a liaison to meet the needs of transitioning students and families is an example of building capacity to create equity.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge. Eddins provided evidence of collaboration with community organizations and the use of cross-cultural communication strategies to solicit stakeholder input, specifically with the emphasis on meeting the needs of stakeholders. She stated that she wanted to modernize translation services but also explained:

We provide translation services and a parent orientation once a year during back-to-school night to discuss what types of services they can access; from translation services to accommodations as well.

Eddins spoke to the importance of creating equity within schools. She emphasized that her approach to creating equity will be influenced by the fact that she is a black female principal, which is an example of Eddins's self-awareness, explaining, "that is a part of who I am and how I see things." She added:

I am going to talk about the hard, difficult to discuss, things because: One, I think you can handle it; and two, you have to handle it; and three, you're going to like handling it, eventually.

Eddins is characterized as *Culturally Proficient* in the domain of Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge because though she was most passionate about the needs of black females, Eddins acknowledged the specific needs of multiple student subgroups and spoke to the nuances within the reported demographic groups, emphasizing that meeting the needs of the underserved contributes to the common good.

Ethical Lens of Principal Eddins

The Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) Multiple Ethical Paradigm can be used as a tool to better understand and analyze the decision-making of educational leaders. As further discussed in the Literature Review, the ethical lens of justice, care, critique, and profession compose the paradigm. School leaders can use these lenses in their approach to solve complex ethical dilemmas. The framework was included as part of the framework in order to interpret perspective-driving implementation of policy or regulations that directly affects English Learners.

Eddins primarily operated through the Ethics of *Care* and *Profession*. Statements like "we need to talk about culture" and "[different] ways of thinking" are examples of how she considered the best interests of students given cultural and ethnic differences between the staff and students. Eddins also considered the how students and adults may

interpret “phrases used in the classroom” differently and their long-term implications in relationship-building. Eddins also advocated for additional instructional time beyond the school day to support students by allocating Title VI funding which states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Eddins focused on changing the culture of the school, “to make school more accessible [to parents].” She stated that “we are the hub [of the community],” terms that reflect how the community views education and how to give back to society. When asked if she ever felt ‘boxed-in’ by the increasing demands on principals, Eddins explained:

I’ve had that feeling before. Having to do a lot with little, I think is the most important thing; first off, little time. There’s a lot that is expected to happen in a day that you just can’t accomplish... so if you’re serious about your job and you want to help students, teachers, and the community, it can be frustrating that you do not have the time to get these things done... I think that’s the core frustration of any principal.

Eddins also “thought of equity” in everything she did, from discipline to hiring practices. She “shifted to a less punitive culture...now more of a therapeutic setting. Eddins stated that she had “no allegiances to the district, only what was right for children,” further asserting her leadership practice and paradigm by placing students at the center of the decision-making process. It is noteworthy to mention, however, that though she can best be characterized as primarily operating from the ethics of care and profession, a shift to the ethic of critique was also observed during the second interview. Eddins provided an analogy when asked, “How do you perceive state-mandates?”

I’m going to give you a scenario. If I were a surgeon and someone walked into my operating room and slapped the scalpel out of my hand and told me, “Step to the side, I got this.” As a surgeon, I would be insulted, I would be fearful for the person’s life that is in my hands, and I would be fearful of the repercussions for such action. So as educators, I feel that a

lot of people have their hands in our business, and they're slapping scalpels out of our hands, and we as educators and those on the ground are not being consulted... You really have to have people on the ground come up with these ideas of what's important, and then what the implementation will look like, and what are the resources needed, and what's the appropriate timeline so we can come back and visit this thing to make sure it is happening with fidelity and then the goal has been accomplished.

Similar to other participants in the study, however, Eddins did not view her role as actively engaging in the political process of policy change or creation. Though she makes a poignant analogy of how policy has been traditionally developed in the past, Eddins indicated in her statement that we, as educational leaders, should be consulted.

Summary

The participant from Palermo Elementary School could be mostly characterized as culturally proficient. As indicated in the analysis, Eddins saw her view as both a school and civic leader. She made herself available to support community members and parents with issues that were non-school related. Eddins did not, however, see herself as an active participant in public political discussions or policy changes. She did, however, advocate for the needs of students. Eddins was able to articulate her vision for creating a more equitable school and school district by removing barriers to disenfranchised youth. She demonstrated self-awareness and where she would like to grow professionally. Eddins primarily operated within the ethics of care and the profession by balancing professional obligations while at the same time placing children at the center of the decision-making process.

Cultural Proficiency as a District Initiative and Commonalities Among Participants

All participants stated that resources allocated by the school district were in accordance with enrollment; therefore, reallocation of resources was dictated by shifts in

student enrollment. Participants also acknowledged that enrollment-driven funding was a challenge. “In terms of long-term planning, it’s a logistical nightmare,” Ms. Cooper from Montes Elementary explained. Mr. Bell from Grandridge echoed the same challenge, “It [planning services] takes partnerships with our other [elementary] schools, because a teacher may be split [between schools’] simply because of enrollment.” Bell continued by explaining efforts to allocate services based on equity, “If a kid is showing a need for more support, we collaborate with that teacher and sharing school.” An essential theme for the how to allocate supports and services transcended across participants: principals need to be creative in allocation of services for the English Learners subgroup. Eddins from Palermo suggests an equitable funding formula in which, “the dollars follow the student,” as an effort to provide “targeted resources such as trauma informed care.”

Every participant in the study viewed parent engagement as a strategy for meeting the needs of ethnic and language minority students. Deley surmised the perspectives of each of the participants, with some of the language repeated verbatim, “...just because they [parents] don’t show up to back to school night or school events, doesn’t mean they don’t want to participate.” Deley continued, “We need to find strategies to meet them where they are...like having evening meetings or events.” Furthermore, Eddins, Adams, and Cooper spoke about managing parent relationships with intention and sincerity. All participants explained how the family-school relationships include or isolate parents, in that; foreign-born students and parents have varying degrees of experience with privilege and class systems. In addition, the Ms. Cooper pointed out the language and cultural diversity of his school’s parents varied greatly, explaining, “If there is one thing I would work on for next year, it would be knowing more about the cultures of the families we

serve.” Adding that, “communicating with families is sometimes difficult because of the inability to have a translator.” Lack of access to live translators was an emerging theme across participants.

Bell, Deley, and Cooper used the term “relationship-builder” to describe a key function of the school principal. The lack of accessibility to more informed demographic data and underreporting achievement of students were missing elements that impeded the agency of forging partnerships with marginalized stakeholders. “If the data was less aggregated, the school leader would build efficacy in facilitating meeting with families, especially those whose customs differ significantly to those of Americans,” stated Eddins. As another example, Adams cited an example of a home visit when he was not knowledgeable enough about the student’s culture. He felt self-conscious and less effective, overthinking every action. As stated in his interview and those of several others, participants mainly wanted to know more about cultural differences and how to connect with foreign-born families.

District-Constraints on Programming and Agency

Evidence strongly suggested an under-appreciation of cultural proficient practices and over-appreciation of diversity. For example, student demographic data has not been used to target school improvement initiatives. Additionally, the student demographic data consisted only of the mandatory categories and aggregated subgroups needed for state reporting. The district does not have system of capturing the nuances within subgroups such as English Learners that would also be considered economically disadvantaged. Another example was that ethnic groups within subgroups such as Indian and Chinese are examples of students with stark differences, culturally and socioeconomically; however,

these nuances are not being considered when planning school and district supports for their communities. Furthermore, the participants did not receive encouragement nor viewed themselves as political actors in reforming the education system as building principals, only in the sense of advocacy under the umbrella of district personnel. This finding carries significance in that lack of political engagement was the primary reason several participants were not observed as Culturally Proficient across the Cultural Proficiency Continuum. The lack of agency or engagement contrasted proficiency in the Pennsylvania PIL Standards, which requires school leaders to address the needs of students through political advocacy. The Grandridge participant measured compliance in the development and delivery of a TESOL program, but not in the reduction of disproportionality in achievement. The participants from Marymount, Puri, and Montes, used the same term to justify inaction to change policy and the district's organizational behaviors - pragmatism. Eddins believed that she should "stay in [her] lane," believing that political involvement was not her role as principal, only that which was in her immediate locus of control. All leaders were inspiring in their care and efforts to make a difference in the lives of their students. In sum, the participants were positioned to act as change agents because of specific knowledge of their students and stakeholders but felt restricted or irrelevant within the local political arena.

Turbulence of East Valley Area School District

The focus of turbulence within the context of this study was the analysis of decision-making and stability of the organization given intrinsic or extrinsic dynamics. The metaphor of a cascading effect described the outcome from positionality or actions by the school leader in relation to their school's organizational behaviors. Every

participant in this study built relationships with students and within the communities they serve; however, at times political pressure carried implications or barriers that each participant had to mitigate. There was widespread awareness of the demographic shifts within schools and communities. The specific origin was known, yet there has been little or no disruption in the normal work environments with only subtle signs of stress.

In contrast, characteristics of Severe Turbulence within the communities and districtwide were present. Several participants acknowledged that current residents fear the neighborhood is deteriorating as a result of a demographic shift. Racism and inequality within the community has created turmoil. The perception of the school from stakeholders, especially politically, has influenced funding allocations and political pressure influenced the school leader's agency. There were outspoken, primarily more affluent white stakeholders that had forced the former superintendent to resign after attempts to make the district's schools equitable. In addition, prior litigation over segregated conditions mirrored similar concerns regarding the current status of the district's schools, especially the district's two middle schools.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: *To what extent is the principal culturally proficient when defining and implementing school programming for English learners?*

Despite restrictive-language policies and inequitable organizational behaviors, the participants strove to function as catalysts for student voice and identity within their schools. In contrast, however, strong evidence of assimilation was recognized.

Assimilation was also valued and used as an indicator of growth across all participants in the study. In sum, the study concluded an over-appreciation for diversity and under-appreciation of culturally proficient practices.

Evidence of each participant's reflection as to *how* to achieve cultural proficiency was evident. For example, each participant was able to clearly identify areas of needed improvement in working with the families of English Learners and marginalized stakeholders, including strategies for the upcoming academic year. The extent to which participants were democratic, ethical, and culturally proficient was analogous. Despite statements of intent to serve students equitably, all participants hindered directly or indirectly by the current school board and external political influence of white affluent stakeholders. To serve democratically, ethically, and exercise best practices of culturally proficiency, one must engage the political system as a community leader.

Gaps in knowledge of the English Learner subgroup and TESOL best practices were evident. For example, several participants did not recognize or speak to negative outcomes of assimilation and mainstreaming English Learners. Descriptive language of school systems, programing, and organizational practices signified value of assimilation. Participants did not specifically define the extent of an assimilation-mindset; however, an evident barrier to improving programming was adherence to status-quo educational practices without agency and urgency to change such systems as political actors. In several instances, participant responses and his or her intent contrasted with organizational behaviors, suggesting that participants had an over-appreciation of diversity and under appreciation of cultural capital. Furthermore, few participants advocated for individualized needs of the district's refugee students, who made up nearly half of the district's English Learners.

Data also indicated that participants operated from a similar ethical paradigm, best defined as an overlap of the ethics of *Care* and *Profession* (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

However, unhealthy school and district organizational behaviors created tension for participants to fully operate from his or her ethical paradigm(s). Barriers to serve as a policy or political actors were evident, which hindered the participant's agency and sphere of influence to educate historically underserved and marginalized students; a key example was the removal of a prior superintendent by the school board for his intent to create more equitable schools. The *Ethic of Care* conceptualizes moral decision-making as actions of loyalty, trust, and empowerment of all students; the *Ethic of Profession* places students at the center of the decision-making process and focuses on standards, moral codes, and ethics of the community (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Both ethical lenses call for action beyond the school walls. Political action was not leveraged as a standard for leadership as reported by the participants. The hierarchal nature of the school district leadership also constrained agency, which contrasts the *ethic of care*, in that the ethic of care "challenges the patriarchal nature of organizational structure and society through empathy and compassion" (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011 p. 18). Lastly, leading through an ethic of care safeguards the value of cultural identity and diversity, which contrasted the observed practices of assimilation.

Lack of political engagement was significant in that it was the primary reason several participants were not observed as culturally proficient in certain domains of the *Cultural Proficiency Continuum*. Participants ranged from *Cultural Blindness* to *Culturally Proficient*. The most prominent attributes that negatively impacted cultural proficiency involved *Adapting to Diversity* and *Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge*, specifically (a) the extent to which the leader promoted a persistent vision of education as the vehicle for closing societal gaps, and (b) understood the sources of assumptions that

obscured the truth about the organization's effectiveness. For example, Bell, the participant from the elementary school with the highest White student enrollment, did not mention inequity throughout the district nor spoke to societal gaps between racial groups, whereas, Eddins, the participant from the school with the highest enrollment of African-Americans identified specific ways to pursue equity through a per-pupil spending formula and acknowledged the imbalance of power between White and minority stakeholders. The most prominent attributes that positively affected cultural proficiency were deliberate strategies to engage parents and recognize that silence of some parents did not equal lack of desire to engage in their child's education. Another positive attribute was emphasis on community partnerships and the use of translanguaging in the classroom.

Research Question 2: *Upon what ethical paradigms do principals rely in their work to support English Language learners?*

Participants were aware of disconnect between policy and implementation of Pennsylvania standard-aligned practices. Further, participants identified district organizational behaviors that contrasted ethics of care and the profession. Participants acknowledged, for example, that having all ELs participate in the ACCESS standardized LEP assessments despite their ability was unreasonable. One participant explained that even students who cannot read the directions were required to take the assessment. The educational benefit of the assessment was questioned by several participants specifically because of the loss of instructional time, curricular alignment of the exam, and value of holistic learning rather than test scores. Furthermore, nearly half of the district English Learners had refugee status; however, the programming to educate refugee students lacked accountability and ownership districtwide. Minimal information was available to

describe the district's plan for refugee students. Participants did not articulate or mention a refugee education program or initiative. One participant expressed concern over a lack of direction and planning given by top leadership to refugee enrollment, comments and questions primarily related to the ethic of care. Secondary sources also indicated that refugee students were not placed equitably, housing them at the district's lowest performing overcrowded schools with the highest number of economically disadvantaged students in the district.

When considering organizational behaviors and the participants' responses, I found that accountability remained the driver of day-to-day school operations. However, I also observed dissonance between each participant's desire to operate through an ethic of care and their lack of agency in addressing inequities. Significant evidence suggested that the participants did not see their role to be a participant in policy creation or change, again contrasting Cultural Proficiency and the PIL Standards. None of the participants articulated their role to encompass policy development or change. Also, the extent to which some participants were held accountable to specific stakeholders was arguably unethical. Stakeholders of one participating school were outspoken in their rejection of seeking Title I designation. This finding suggest resistance to a racial and ethnic demographic shift within communities and the district's willingness to sacrifice federal aid to appease a minority of more affluent White stakeholders concerned about the reputation of the school and his or her community. When parent voice and engagement was compared between schools districtwide, evidence from secondary sources reported school board meeting outcomes that presented White affluent stakeholders to be outspoken, within the demographic minority, and holding greater political leverage and

privilege. One key example was identifying a local political figure's personal connection to a participating school and his public advocacy against Title I designation. This finding provided evidence of a moderate/severe state of turbulence within the school district.

At the close of data collection, the organizational dynamics of the district and discussions of school catchment decisions continued within the community and among stakeholders. The district had several proposals to construct new schools as well as an application to build a charter school. Some stakeholders already voiced opposition, citing the trend of inequity in the district and the district's past practices. Some stakeholders also critiqued the decisions as to where the schools would be located. After reviewing the proposals and proposed sites for new schools, there remained a high probability that the locations would reinforce divisions between dominant and non-dominant minority student enrollment as well as socioeconomic status.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

This section begins with a brief overview of the problem, study's purpose, and findings. I next present implications for educational programming for English Language Learners; school principals, district leaders and stakeholders; and, further research. Additionally, limitations and methodological issues are presented as part of the reflection of this study.

Problem Investigated

After reviewing literature related to the field of English Language Learner education and Cultural Proficiency, with consideration to the increasing racial diversity nation-wide, there is a call for more research into the influence of school leadership and the programming for language minority students. Furthermore, much of the research in English Learner Education has focused on Hispanics in the border-states with Mexico. There was an identified need for additional research in non-border states with diverse lingual and racial demographics, specifically outside of the urban environment. The design of this study considered the aforementioned factors and took place in a suburban educational environment with a rapidly increasing lingual and racially diverse educational setting in Pennsylvania.

Implications for the School District

Creating Awareness of English Learner Subgroups

After examining the racial and linguistics demographics of the school district, it was evident that the nuances among the diverse Asian English Learner subgroup was not

captured in the district's data, specifically the data reported to the state. As language diversity increases in Pennsylvania and across the country, it is important to recognize the linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity within minority groups. For example, in contrast to the Latino and Hispanic subgroup of English Learners, Asian students share less of a common cultural identity and speak a multitude of languages, which was evident when participants described their language minority students and families. Principal Cooper was able to speak to the lingual diversity within her school ELL and LEP subgroups; however, she was limited in cultural awareness and implications. Tracking how subgroups of English Learners perform as well as their socioeconomic status may identify specific academic needs and emphasize the awareness of specific cultural groups.

On the other hand, Principal Eddins served a school with a larger African immigrant population in a predominantly African American school. She was aware of cultural nuances within the ELL subgroups at her school; however, she did state that she would benefit from "having that data on-hand." Principal Eddins recommended that the district home language survey be leveraged as a tool for identifying nuances in the ELL data and support parent engagement. The findings of this study support the need for disaggregating data.

Improving Consistency in English Language Learner Programming

Principals Adams, Bell, Deley, and Eddins stated that the lack of consistency in budget allocation for TESOL resources was a barrier to make informed decisions when strategically planning ELL programs. For example, Adams captured the sentiments of other participants when he stated, [the ESL teacher] "is only here about two and a half days a week and we run MTSS meetings (Multi-tiered student support) four days a week,

so this year we had to be really creative with that schedule.” He continued, “when we had the EL teacher here full-time, the program was so much stronger.” The implication of having consistent building-appointed ESL teachers can serve two functions, servicing the needs of ELs and providing an additional support to teachers in differentiated instructional practices, including those aligned to cultural proficiency. To remain both pragmatic and fiscally responsible, the school district leaders and school board can reassess TESOL programs triennially based on enrollment data to ensure fidelity of programming. Furthermore, Principal Cooper recognized that supports were needed for language minority students even if they “may not qualify for ESL supports because they are not identified as LEP.” Given that English-proficient language minority students would not count in resource allocation, maintaining an ESL teacher appointment may be leveraged to provide non-instructional supports such as community engagement and supporting programming resources for parents, such as Deley’s efforts to create evening classes for parents. Lastly, considering consistent ESL teaching appointments may benefit school programming and support the district’s vision as stated in their Equity Plan.

Improving Equity Within English Learner Subgroups

In review of student demographics district-wide, it was clear that stark racial contrasts were evident, included those within the ELL subgroup. This data carries significant ethical implications consistent with literature related to race and student achievement. When comparing Middle Schools A and B, two likely correlations emerged: (1) the relationship between skin color and scholastic underperformance; and (2) the relationship between skin color and students identified as economically

disadvantaged. Strengthening ESL programming through non-instructional supports for English Learners may yield improved student achievement and well-being. Attention to this data and addressing educational disparity are critical components of cultural proficiency. The data proves that supports for English Learners are beyond instructional. For Example, principals Adams, Cooper, Deley and Eddins all cited the need for a school social worker because of non-educational needs of ELL students and families, specifically for acclimation and the fact that some ELs never had formal schooling. As discussed in the findings of the study, the district once had supports at Middle School A for refugee students, which was attached to grant money. The program no longer exists; however, that does not negate the need for non-instructional supports. The findings support the hiring of social workers trained in providing individualized supports to ELL students and their families.

Parent and Stakeholder Participation

Parent and community stakeholder participation was provided anecdotally.

Participants demonstrated varying degrees of effectiveness in increasing strategic partnerships with the families of English learning students. Several participants provided notable partnerships; however, there was no systematic way at the school level to track parent participation data and its effectiveness. Principal Eddins cited a specific initiative to leverage the parent language survey as a tool for engagement and informing decision-making. This culturally proficient practice should be incorporated district wide. For example, currently, there is limited access to school district publications for non-English speaking families. The extent that communication of educational policy is accessible should also be considered. School leaders can leverage the home language survey data to

improve accessibility to critical information for parents such as vaccination requirements, school calendar, automated messages, and newsletters. Additionally, the school board can focus through a community-lens in order to reaffirm and clarify the purpose of policies and regulation in order to cultivate reciprocity in civic engagement.

Involvement in the Political Process

Frustration with some of the policies guiding programs for English Learners was evident. Principal Bell felt it to be unfair to require ELs without the basics of the English language to take the WIDA Access Test and other standardized assessments. Bell stated, “It is unfair to administer LEP assessments [WIDA Access Test], the Pennsylvania State Standardized Assessment (PSSA), and the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment to newly-arrived foreign-born students who can’t read the directions.” As stated in the literature review, these practices also impact learner confidence and self-esteem. School principal and building-level school leaders have specific insight into how policy implementation does not serve the best interest of students, suggesting they are in a unique position to influence policy. The findings in the study also indicated other advantages for leveraging the unique perspectives of building-level school leaders in order to influence school leaders, such as Eddins’s call for a per-pupil funding formula and meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged students by assigning Bell’s school Title I designation. Creating a pragmatic method for building-level school leaders to influence policy for educating students equitably may create the autonomy and efficacy needed for educational leaders to address the unique needs of his or her school.

Recruiting Talent – Hiring Culturally Proficient School Leaders

Given the consideration of the district’s long-term equity plan and increasing ethnic diversity, the findings suggest the need to consider cultural competence in the hiring and recruiting process. As indicated in the findings of this study, school leaders do not need to be experts in the culture of every student, but leaders should embrace certain practices that support students of the non-dominant culture. Characteristics such as wanting to learn more about unfamiliar cultures, the ability to identify inequities, and desire to engage language minority parents, were all attributes of culturally proficient leaders. The framework for Culturally Proficient School Leadership can be used to guide and to assist in the articulation of a vision for equity. Ultimately, all school leaders need to identify unhealthy organizational behaviors that marginalize minority students and families.

Implications for School Leaders

Redefining School Programing for English Learners as Principal

Participants expressed the intent of meeting the needs of an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse study body yet had varying degrees of effectiveness in recognizing or addressing unhealthy organizational behaviors through a lens of cultural proficiency. If principals examine inequities in educational programming for English Learners by using the Cultural Proficiency Leadership Continuum may be an effective tool for improving leadership practices. Principals need to understand and internalize the essential elements of Cultural Proficiency in order to meet the needs for students considered as part of the non-dominant culture. Furthermore, principals need to see cultural competence as an essential part of leadership. For example, the participants of the study valued assimilation

in varying degrees. Comments made such as “assimilation would be a compliment” (Cooper) and “extremely inclusive school” (Bell) suggest an under appreciation of cultural proficient practices that puts the identity of learners in the background. The comments also suggest that cultural differences are seen as barriers. On the other hand, Principal Adams recognized the support of translanguaging in the classroom and Principal Eddins stated, “we talk about culture and different ways of thinking.” Using cultural proficiency as a framework for educational decision-making may help principals articulate best practices and create synergy when collaborating as a leadership community. Ultimately, by using a framework of cultural proficiency to assess or plan ELL programming, school principals may avoid unintentional negative consequences that manifest when good intent is undermined by executing policies that marginalize certain students.

Fostering the Agency of the School Principal

Participants were hindered by his or her lack of participation in policy development. Participants acted through the ethic of care at varying degrees; however, in order to improve programs from a social justice approach, leaders will need to advocate policy change. Though discouraged by the school district and stakeholders, political activism is infused in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards (PIL), specifically Corollary V, “Advocating for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.” With consideration of the EVASD’s Equity Plan and pursuit of culturally proficient leadership practices, principals can leverage Corollary V as a way to challenge the status quo; in that, he or she is not redefining the role as principal but rather adhering to the requirements and duties of the principal role. The

school principal needs to ensure adequate resources are provided to their schools. As in the case of this study, principals need to advocate for their entitled resources even if a community resents the shift in racial demographics. The school principals at East Valley Area School district should consider unionizing or building a coalition of supporting stakeholders that encourage a school principal's unrestricted participation in policy change and development.

Creating a Shared Vision with Community Stakeholders

Mr. Bell stated that outspoken community members were opposed to accepting Title I designation. Other participants in the study did not have a reason to believe that their communities were opposed to Title designation. The data from this study suggests that the fear of being stigmatized because of Title designation was unique to Grandridge and that Mr. Bell will have to mitigate any turbulence that may arise because of a socioeconomic demographic shift. Mr. Bell will need support from the senior administrators; however, Bell's continued emphasis on relationship-building with parents and stakeholders may be the key to unifying a common vision. The statements provided by Bell suggest leadership and school behaviors exhibit strong adherence to assimilation to dominant-cultural norms of the affluent White stakeholders. However, effective leadership practices set forth in both the PIL Standards and Cultural Proficiency support diversifying and empowering stakeholders. Bell can model advocacy for social justice as a way to close the achievement gap by forming a new coalition of stakeholders that better represents the students served. Beginning with the language and type of information used to communicate with stakeholders, Bell can speak to the needs of all cultural and socioeconomic groups. He can then leverage diverse perspectives to discuss how needs

must be attached to services. Ultimately, the data about the school and commentary by the principal suggests a need to obtain additional resources to address newer challenges the school is facing because of poverty. Bell can showcase effective supports and programs provided at designated Title schools in the district and explain his plan of action if given Title funds.

Implications for Research

Does Policy Creation at the Building-Level Yield Better Outcomes?

Further study into the correlation between the roles of policy actors and the effectiveness of their policies may create implications for how ESL policy can be improved. School districts may benefit from researching multidisciplinary approaches for policy development. As presented in the findings of this study, connecting policy to practice is challenging and the execution of policy may have unintended consequences. As presented in the findings, school principals are in a unique position to inform policy because they know the nuances of school data and recognize dissonance between policy and implementation. Furthermore, the recurring themes that school principals serve as *relationship-builders* and in a civic leadership capacity suggests that they have a deeper understanding as to the needs of the communities they serve. Examining the difference between outcomes of policies involving and not involving school principals is an area that is understudied.

Examining the Specific Needs of English Learners

The findings of this study suggest continued scholarship in how to foster strategies that are culturally proficient yet able to be leveraged in monolingual inclusive educational environments. The research should also aim to capture the success of

English learners beyond language proficiency. When considering the literature in ESL programming, the findings from the study indicate an apparent gap in the type of programming in East Valley Area School District and culturally competent programs for English Learners. Principal Adams was the only participant to advocate the use of translanguaging as a helpful strategy in the classroom. Other participants viewed the success of his or her school's ESL program through a monolingual lens, though strides towards culturally competent lenses were also apparent. Action research into the use of translanguaging as a component for ESL programming may help improve instruction in full-inclusion monolingual educational settings. School participation in the research may influence educators to see language as a cultural asset rather than a deficit.

Reflection

Limitations and Methodological Issues

In retrospect, a primary limitation of the study was interference as a result of me being a district employee. Though I did not have any authority over personal relationships with the participants I still felt that a subtle sense of distrust with some of the participants. Most notably, the participant from Marymount declining consent to be recorded, though an argument could be made that responses were more authentic because anonymity was preserved. Regardless, declining to be recorded signified a sense of fear because racial inequity was a controversial topic in the community and sources suggest the prior superintendent was forced to resign when attempting to create a more equitable school district for African American students. Another example, in the case of Grandridge Elementary, some of the responses contained education jargon that was

inauthentic and almost scripted. Furthermore, it was unclear if the participant fully understood the questions because answers were, at times, indirect or avoidant.

The study was also limited in that all elementary schools within the district did not participate for a variety of reasons, mainly principal attrition. As the scope of the study widened to include a more in-depth context of the school district, the ability to include all the elementary schools would have added to the findings. Given the nature and extent of diversity, including historical significance, determining correlations would better inform and verify conclusions.

Though the sample size was small, there was variation in the participant backgrounds. Maximum variation in sample selection is important given the topic and method of this study. Maximum variation could also consider personal experiences related to the participant's experience of inequity. In addition, the participants of the study serve the most diverse student population in PK-12 education. The data shows that even in historically all-white school districts, the demographics of elementary enrollment are changing. The awareness of elementary principals to this demographic shift carries societal implications.

Lastly, the study was limited by only conducting only two interview sessions. To improve this study, I would have provided critical self-assessment questions, context, and more time for reflection activities for the participants as part of pre- and post-interview sessions. I would have also included more interviews in order for the participants to refine prior responses. I found that two 45-minute interviews were not enough to explore the complex nature of dynamic issues and topics discussed.

Final Thoughts

I will continue focusing my career on fostering equitable outcomes for language minority students. I plan to use this study as a starting point for professional development for teachers and principals, specifically in how to leverage cultural proficiency as a way to create equity within schools and their communities. Furthermore, I will advocate for programs that address the unique needs of English learners, including the push for bilingual educational opportunities for all students.

REFERENCES CITED

- Agirdag, A. (2014). The literal cost of language assimilation for the children of immigration: The effects of bilingualism on labor market outcomes. In R. M. Callahan & P. C. Gándara (Eds.), *The bilingual advantage: Language, literacy, and the US labor market* (pp. 160–181). Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters. 2014
- Beck, L. G. (1994). *Reclaiming Educational Administration as a Caring Profession* (pp. 78–105). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Begley, P. T. (2000). Values and leadership: Theory development, new research, and an agenda for the future. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 46(3), 233-249.
- Begley, P. T. (2006). Self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity: Prerequisites to authentic leadership by school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(6), 570-589.
- Bellah, R. (2000). The Good Society: We live through our institutions. In D. Eberly (Ed.), *The essential civil society: Classic essays in the American civil society debate* (pp. 69–91). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bernhardt, V. (2013). *Data analysis for continual school improvement*. New York: Routledge
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (241–258). New York, NY: Greenwood

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In T. Husen, & T. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed.). (pp. 1643–1647). New York, NY: Elsevier Sciences.
- Callahan, R. M., Gándara, P. C. (2014). Contextualizing bilingualism in the labor market: New destinations, established enclaves and the information age. In R. M. Callahan & P. C. Gándara (Eds.), *The bilingual advantage: Language, literacy, and the US labor market* (pp. 3–15). Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters. 2014
- Callahan, R., Wilkinson, L., & Muller, C. (2010). Academic achievement and course taking among language minority youth in U.S. schools: Effects of ESL placement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 32(1), 84–117. doi: 0.3102/0162373709359805
- Callahan, R., Wilkinson, L. Muller, C., & Frisco, M. (2009). ESL Placement and Schools: Effects on immigrant achievement. *Educational Policy*, 23(2), 355–384. doi: 0.1177/0895904807310034
- Casellas, J., & Shelly, B. (2012). No Latino Left Behind? Determinants of Support for Education Reform in the US Congress. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 11(4), 260-270. doi: 10.1080/15348431.2012.715505
- Cole, M. W. (2013). Rompiendo el silencio: Meta-analysis of the effectiveness of peer-mediated learning at improving language outcomes for ELLs. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 36(2), 146-166. doi: 10.1080/15235882.2013.814609
- Corcoran, T. & Goertz, M. (2005). The governance of public education. In S. Fuhrman & M. Lazerson (Eds.), *Institutions of American democracy: The public schools* (pp. 25–56). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Council of chief state school officers. (2008). Educational leadership policy standards: ISLLC. Washington, DC: Authors. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsso.org>
- Cucchiara, M. (2013). "Are we doing damage?": Choosing an urban public school in an era of parental anxiety. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 44 (1), 75-93. doi: 10.1111/aeq.12004
- Cross, T., Bazron, B., & Isaacs, M. (1989). *Toward a culturally competent system of care*.(1). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Program, Child Adolescent Service System Program.
- Cummins, J. (2009). Pedagogies of choice: Challenging coercive relations of power in classrooms and communities. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 12(3), 261–271. doi: 10.1080/13670050903003751
- Cummins, J. (1997). Cultural and linguistic diversity in education: A mainstream issue? *Educational Review*, 49(2), 105–114. doi: 10.1080/0013191970490202
- Cummins, J. & Swain, M. (1986). *Bilingualism in education: Aspects of theory, research and practice*. New York, NY: Longman, Inc.
- DaSilva Iddings, A. C., Combs, M. C., & Moll, L. (2012). In the arid zone: Drying out educational resources for English language learners through policy and practice. *Urban Education*, 47(2), 495–514. doi: 10.1177/0042085911430713
- De Jong, E. (2011). *Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon, Inc.
- Devillar, R. A. & Jiang, B. (2011). *Transforming America*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- DiPaola, M. & Hoy, W. (2008). *Principals improving instruction: Supervision, evaluation, and professional development*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

- Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- English, B. & Varghese, M. M. (2014). Enacting language policy through the facilitator model in a monolingual policy context in the United States. In K. Menken & O. García (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 107–123). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. (93-380), 88 Stat. 514 (1974).
- Flores, N., Kleyen, T., & Menken, K. (2015). Looking holistically in a climate of partiality: identities of students labeled long-term English language learners. *Journal of Language, Identity, & Education*, 14(2), 113–132. doi: 10.1080/15348458.2015.1019787
- Franco, C. S., Ott, M. G., & Robles, D. (2011). *A culturally proficient society begins in school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Franco, C. S., Ott, M. G., & Robles, D. (2013). *Lessons Learned*. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 93–110). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 2011)
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2013). Introduction: Have theory, will travel. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 207–219). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 2008)
- Fullan, M. (2014). *The Principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Gándara, P. & Hopkins, M. (2010). The changing linguistic landscape of the United States. In P. Gándara & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden language: English learners and restrictive language policies* (pp. 7–19). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gándara, P., Losen, D., August, D., Uriarte, M., Gómez, M. C., & Hopkins, M. (2010). *Forbidden languages: A brief history of U.S. language policy*. In P. Gándara & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden language: English learners and restrictive language policies* (pp. 20–36). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- García, O. & Flores, N. (2013). *Multilingualism and Common Core State Standards in the United States*. In S. May (Ed.), *The Multilingual Turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and Bilingual Education*, (pp. 147-166). New York: Routledge.
- García, O., Kleifgen, J. A., & Falchi, L. (2008). *From English language learner to emergent bilinguals [E-Book]*. Available at http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/6468_Ofelia_ELL_Final.pdf
- García, O. & Menken, K. (2010). *Stirring the onion: Educators and the dynamics of language education policies (looking ahead)*. In K. Menken & O. García (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 249–261). New York, NY: Routledge.
- García, O. & Menken, K. (2010). *Moving forward: Ten principles for teaching*. In K. Menken & O. García (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 262–269). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Giampapa, F. (2012). Authenticity, legitimacy, and power: Critical ethnography and identity politics. In S. Gardner and M. Martin-Jones (Eds.) *Multilingualism, discourse and ethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Grenfeld, M. (1998). Language and the classroom. In M. Grenfeld & D. James (Eds.) *Bourdieu and education: Acts of practical theory* (pp. 72–88). Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.
- Gross, S. J. & Shapiro, J. P. (2013). The New DEEL (Democratic Ethical educational Leadership) and the work of reclaiming a progressive alternative in educational administration from PreK–20. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 9(3), 1–21. ISSN: 15545210.
- Gottlieb, M., Cranley, E., M., & Cammilleri, A. (2007). Understanding the WIDA English language proficiency standards: A resource guide. Retrieved June 4, 2009 from www.wida.us/standards/Resource_Guide_web.pdf
- Gutmann, A. (2005). *The Authority and Responsibility to Educate: A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*. Curren, Randall (Ed). Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2002). Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy*, 1(10), 27–51.
- Issa v. Sch. Dist. of Lancaster*, 847 F.3d 121 (3d Cir. 2017) (unpublished)
- Johnson, D. C. & Freeman, R. (2014). Appropriate language policy on the local level. In K. Menken & O. García (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 13–31). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Karlin, S. (2007). The invisible class. *American School Board Journal*, 194(11), 24–27.

- Kezar, A. (2000). Pluralistic leadership: Incorporating diverse voices. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 71. 722-743. doi:10.2307/2649160
- Labaree, D. F. (1997). Public goods, private goods: e American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Association*, 34(1), 39–81.
- Lindsey, R. B., Graham, S. M., Westphal, R. C., & Jew, C. L. (2008). Culturally proficient inquiry: A lens for identifying and examining educational gaps. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Llosa, L. (2011). Standards-based classroom assessments of English proficiency: A review of issues, current developments, and future directions for research. *Language Testing*. 28(3). 367-382. doi:10.1177/0265532211404188
- Losen, D. (2010). Challenging limitations: The growing potential for overturning restrictive language policies and ensuring equal educational opportunity. In P. Gándara & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden language: English learners and restrictive language policy*. (pp. 195–215). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lynch School of Education (Producer) & Noguera, P. (Speaker). (2012, October 5). What community provides: The role of partnerships in the transformation of schools [Video File]..Education and its role in democratic societies: Keynote Address. Boston, MA: Boston College. Available at:
<http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/about/events/Anniversarylectureseries/WhatCommunityProvides.html>
- Maslow, A. (1998). *Maslow on management*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (Original work published 1961)

- Marzano, R. J. (2008). *The art and science of teaching*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McDonnell, L. M. (2009). Repositioning politics in education's circle of knowledge. *Educational Researcher*, 38(6), 417–427.
- Menken, K & García, O. (2010). *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Menken, K. & Solorza, C. (2014). No child left bilingual: Accountability and the elimination of bilingual education programs in New York City school. *Educational Policy*, 28(1), 96–125. doi:10.1177/0895904812468228
- Mehta, J. (2013). How paradigms create politics: The transformation of American educational policy, 1980-2001. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(2), 285-324. doi:10.3102/0002831212471417
- Mehta, J. (2014). When professions shape politics: The case of accountability in K-12 and higher education. *Educational Policy*, 28(6), 881-915. doi: 10.1177/0895904813492380
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2015, May). http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115, Stat. 1425 (2002).
- O'Conner, R., Abedi, J., & Tung, S. (2012). *A descriptive analysis of enrollment and achievement among English language learner students in Pennsylvania*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance

- Orr, J. & Rogers, M. (2010). Voice: The need for public engagement for public education. In M. Orr & J. Rogers (Eds.). *Public engagement for public education: Joining forces to revitalize democracy and equalize schools* (pp. 1–24). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2015). ESL program updates (PDF document). Available at: <http://www.eslportalpa.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/08/ESLProgramAreaUpdates15.pdf>
- Puriefoy, W. (2005). The education of democratic citizens: Citizen mobilization and public education. In S. Fuhrman & M. Lazerson (Eds.), *Institutions of American democracy: The public schools* (pp. 235–251). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Race to the Top Act of 2011, S. 844, 112th Cong. (2011).
- Ready, D. & Wright, D. (2011). Accuracy and inaccuracy in teachers' perception of young children's cognitive abilities: The role of child background and classroom context. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2), 335–360. doi: 10.3102/0002831210374874
- Reese, W. (2000). Public schools and the elusive search for the common good. In L. Cuban & D. Shipp (Eds.), *Reconstructing the common good in education: Coping with intractable American dilemmas* (pp. 13–31). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
- Rodríguez, D., Carrasquillo, A., & Sool Lee, K. (2014). *The bilingual advantage: Promoting academic development, biliteracy, and native language in the classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Rodriguez, G. (1993). Power and agency in education: exploring the pedagogical dimensions of funds of knowledge. *Review of Research in Education*, 37, 87–120. doi: 10.3102/0091732X12462686
- Ruíz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 8(2), 15–34.
- Rumberger, R. W. & Tran, L. (2010). State language policies, school language practices, and the English learner achievement gap. In P. Gándara & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden language: English learners and restrictive language policies* (pp. 86–101). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (2013). Leadership as stewardship: “Who’s serving who?” In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 372–389). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 1989)
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Shapiro, J. P. & Gross, S. J. (2013). *Ethical education leadership in turbulent times: (Re)Solving moral dilemmas*, (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shapiro, J. P. & Stefkovich, J. A. (2016). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge
- Shapiro, J. P., Sewell, T. E., & DuCette, J. P. (1995). *Reframing diversity in education*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

- Spencer-Rodgers, J. & McGovern, T. (2002). Attitudes toward the culturally different: The role of intercultural communication barriers, affective responses, consensual stereotypes, and perceived threat. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 26, 609–631.
- Stefkovich, J. & Begley, P. T. (2007). Ethical school leadership: Defining the best interest of students. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 35(2), 205–224. doi: 10.1177/1741143207075389.
- Terrell, R. R. & Lindsey, R. B. (2009). *Culturally proficient leadership: The personal journey begins within*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press
- Thomas, W. P. & Collier, V. P. (2000). Accelerated schooling for all students: Research findings on education in multilingual communities. In S. Shaw (Ed.), *Intercultural education in European Classrooms: Intercultural education partnership* (pp. 15–35). Oakhill, VA: Trentham Books Limited.
- Unger, J., Schwartz, S., Huh, J., Soto, D., & Baezconde-Garbanati, L. (2014). Acculturation and perceived discrimination: Predictors of substance use trajectories from adolescence to emerging adulthood among Hispanics. *Addictive Behaviors*, 39(9), 1293–1296. doi: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2014.04.014
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). Methodology, assumptions, and inputs for the 2014 national projections. Retrieved April 5, 2015, from <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2014.html>

- Warren, M. R. (2011). Community organizing for education reform. In M. Orr & J. Rogers (Eds.). *Public engagement for public education: Joining forces to revitalize democracy and equalize schools* (pp. 139–171). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
- Wentworth, L. Pellegrin, N., Thompson, K. & Hakuta, K. (2010). Proposition 227 in California: A long-term appraisal of its impact on English learner student achievement. In P. Gándara & M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Forbidden language: English learners and restrictive language policies* (pp. 37–49). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- WIDA. (2012). Amplification of the English language development standards, Kindergarten- Grade 12. WIDA Consortium. Retrieved from: <https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx#2012>
- Wiley, T. & Wright, W. (2004). Against the undertow: Language-minority education policy and politics in the “Age of accountability.” *Educational Policy*, 18(1), 142–168. doi: 10.1177/0895904803260030
- Zhao, Y. (2013). U-Turn to prosperity: Saving creativity. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (3rd ed., pp. 441–449). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (Original work published 2013)