2018

The Effects of Academic Parent Teacher Teams on Latino Student Achievement

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2018

Abstract

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MA, University of Northern Colorado, 1994

BS, Missouri State University, 1983

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Walden University

April 2018

Abstract

Decades of research have noted the importance of parent involvement in students' academic success. Less is known about parent engagement models that aim to increase Latino students' reading achievement. This project study examined the effectiveness of a 2-year parent engagement program implemented to address poor reading achievement of Latino elementary school students in a small urban district. The purpose of this study was to determine disparities in student scores between those parents who participated in the program and those parents who did not participate. The research questions examined parent engagement levels in comparison to increased summative reading scores. Based on 3 foundational theories: cultural capital, deprivation, and social reproduction theories, concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth theories, and funds of knowledge theory, this causal-comparative study used preexisting test score data to analyze the differences between pretest and posttest reading scores. The findings from the dependent- and independent-samples *t* tests suggested that there was limited evidence to support the claim that Latino 3rd grade students whose parents participated in the parent engagement framework showed a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels than Latino 3rd grade students whose parents did not participate. The conclusions of this study can be used to inform leadership and teacher professional learning initiatives for low-performing districts planning to implement parent engagement programs intended to raise Latino elementary student reading achievement. Results from this study may positively impact social change by providing culturally relevant parent engagement strategies and thus contributes to the overall reading attainment of districts' Latino students.

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Dedication

To my partner in life and to our children. I love you all more than life itself.

Acknowledgments

To Dr. Keeley, Dr. Lampert-Shepel, and Dr. Mvududu: Thank you so much for your extensive support on this journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Some reform efforts have publicized parent-school-community partnerships as being a panacea for student achievement. These reform efforts offered promises and held out hope for improved student performance for decades. Almost ten years ago, the National Education Association (NEA) wrote that parent involvement was "vital" and called for increased emphasis on parent-community-school partnerships to better the prospects of raising student achievement for all students, regardless of ethnicity (NEA, 2008). The Parent Teacher Association, a much-respected organization in education, had long maintained that the success of every public-school student depended on healthy relationships between families, schools, and their communities (Great Schools for America, 2008). More recently, philanthropic organizations and the federal government published numerous brochures and policy papers that indicated the importance of parent involvement and increased access to resources (Scholastic, Inc., 2014). Parent involvement continued to be significantly supported in educational literature to promote positive outcomes for racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD) youth (Cepeda, 2013; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Reschly & Christenson, 2012).

While research had sustained the importance of family engagement in children's education to ensure student success, it was less known how Latino parents' involvement or engagement correlated with higher achievement, especially in reading. One longitudinal study revealed that poor, immigrant children (especially those from Mexico who compose approximately 66% of the U.S. Latino population) scored significantly

lower on reading tests than other Latino children and White children (Crosnoe, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Subsequent placement in lower level courses further increased academic gaps and drop-out rates (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Consequently, many Mexican-native, public school students started behind, rarely made a year's growth, and never catch up.

Even less distinct in educational research literature was Latino parent engagement and children's success when their children were English language learners. It was written that by 2050, the Latino community "will be the largest ethnic group that the U.S. public school system is failing" (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 112). This perceived failure to serve Latino children began in kindergarten and grew in later grades when students were not able to access the high school content necessary for college entrance and then further remain in college to graduate (Flores, 2007; Hill & Torres, 2010; Madrid, 2011). In fact, Latino students "still struggle for participation and social mobility in American society" (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012, p.84).

While these data indicated significant risks for Latino students in comparison to White students, additional critiques contended that teachers have not adequately academically prepared for Latino students. Additionally, several studies indicated that educators have not closed the achievement gap between Latino and White students (Flores, Tschann, Dimas, Pasch, & deGroat, 2010; LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Further, a large body of research reported that schools have not adequately engaged Latino families. Simply, schools have not increased the overall academic success of Latino students nor involved their parents as academic supports (Epstein, 1987; Galindo & Sheldon, 2011;

Gillanders, McKinney, & Richie, 2012; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill & Torres, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jasinski, 2012; Jeynes, 2005; Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011).

Research had long supported fostering parent teacher partnerships (both participatory and academic) to improve student academic success when controlled for ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2013). While agreement existed in the research literature regarding the need for parent involvement, less defined were Latino parent teacher partnership strategies and models that achieved this end (student achievement on state mandated assessments) while respecting the culture of the community. A growing body of literature indicated the need for "expanding notions of parent involvement and viewing parents from nondominant groups as productive and engaged participants in communities and schools" (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013, p. 150).

The Local Problem

This study site located in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States experienced identical issues among its predominantly Latino student population: low proficiency rates in reading, poor teacher effectiveness, and little academic parent engagement. Historically, this area attracted those seeking employment in the railroad, oil, and agricultural fields. Descendants of those immigrants still lived in the urban community, and new immigrant families continually moved there for job opportunities. Poor- and working-class families lived in this mixed residential and industrial

community, and as it doubled population in a decade, it was faced with the issues related to rapid growth such as drained resources.

Like most people who immigrated to the United States, the families who attended this school district wanted opportunities for greater prosperity and education, especially for their children (Hill & Torres, 2010), and they trusted in the local educators to provide these opportunities for success. The vision for attaining these opportunities was set collaboratively with the community. The school leaders proclaimed an obligation to their stakeholders to be transparent regarding poor literacy achievement and to be fiscally responsible when spending Federal Title I monies. Ultimately, according to the 2014 district strategic plan, the school district promised the families that their students would be proficient in English literacy skill attainment, while the families demanded homage to their Spanish culture and their first language.

To address increased poverty, linguistic diversity, and poor literacy achievement, district directors sought increased parent involvement initiatives meant to have positive effects on student literacy scores and to honor the families who lived there both past and present. However, this school district was placed on a priority improvement or turnaround plan as mandated by the state of Colorado because of its poor literacy attainment on state assessments. The district's 2014 unified improvement plan (a plan required by the state for all districts written to define the district's priority challenges, their root causes, and major improvement strategies) indicated that academic achievement status was not met, nor were three indicators of annual measureable achievement objectives for English language learners. It was reported in this plan that

there were low expectations for student learning and teaching (Colorado Department of Education, 2014a).

In response to this label, the district leaders implemented supports for students and families to prepare for college and career readiness as one of their major improvement strategies. The district recognized the large literature base that indicated the importance of academic parent involvement and were aware of their lack of prior success to increase parent involvement to address the district's student reading deficiencies. This research, along with local, state, and national criticism of inadequate Latino student literacy success and poor local academic Latino parent engagement, prompted school leaders at this study site to create stronger academic partnerships between teachers and parents.

These attempts to increase student reading achievement seemingly failed, as rapidly changing demographics created more urgent need for increased performance. Already high mobility rates (33%) and poverty rates (24%) continually rose, and more than 10% of students were classified as homeless. Latino students consistently demonstrated below proficient reading abilities on state and local assessments and adequate yearly progress had never been met. The district strategic plan for 2013 documented a student population of approximately 7,300 students of which 83% were Latino. Eighty-four percent of the students received free or reduced-price meals. Forty-seven percent of families who lived in this study site were monolingual Spanish speakers who struggled economically. The district leaders and teachers had repeatedly endeavored to increase achievement levels in reading for decades, but the 2014 state assessment data

indicated continuing substantial deficiencies in reading. Only 43% of the students in the district's schools demonstrated grade-level proficiency in reading while 69% of the state student population scored at grade-level proficiency (Colorado Department of Education, 2014b). The stark reality that approximately 60% of the study site's students were not meeting state reading requirements necessitated dramatically increased student achievement and parent involvement.

Rationale

While leaders at this district worked to increase Latino achievement, the state of Colorado initiated three legislative bills intended to reform school districts with low achievement. Colorado legislators required more parent-school-teacher programs and pressured districts to increase the number of proficient students on standardized literacy assessments. These legal mandates defined processes that were meant to involve parents and educators at higher levels and increase accountability to provide appropriate reading instruction for all students.

The first legislative mandate significantly impacted this school district. In the fall of 2016, the district was directed to drastically improve its classification status in the state accreditation system. The Education Accountability Act of 2009 (Senate Bill 09-163), which was updated in 2013, required the Colorado Department of Education to annually review all public schools' and districts' academic performance and rank each school based on its performance. In accordance, Colorado districts were expected to annually develop and submit school improvement plans. Each districts' school improvement plan and accreditation categories were Colorado Department of Education ranked and then

recommended to the State Board of Education. Districts with chronic low performance for more than five consecutive years faced significant actions that included the removal of accreditation, public or private management, conversion to a charter school, or school closure (Colorado Department of Education, 2016; Education Accountability Act, 2013). All study site schools received Title I funds and were in their fifth year of receiving the lowest status ranking. Therefore, increased performance on standardized tests was imperative as the district risked losing substantial funding, as well as its state accreditation status.

In addition to ensuring and securing state certification, the school district was required to act in accordance with additional legislation, House Bill 12-1238: Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act). The Colorado READ Act held all districts accountable for every child reaching reading competency no later than the end of third grade. Failure to reach such proficiency would put children at risk of not being promoted to the following grade. Research indicated that students not reading on grade level at the end of third grade were four times less likely to complete high school on time, if at all, than children who read proficiently by the end of third grade (Hernandez, 2012). Based on this literacy attainment research, the READ Act mandated all Colorado students reading below grade level by the end of kindergarten through third grade to be identified as having significant reading deficiency (SRD). In addition to identifying below grade- level students, the READ Act mandated a comprehensive collective school and parent plan. Specific goals, benchmarks for growth, and strategies for parents to assist their student in achieving grade-level reading growth were mandated

inclusions in the written plan (Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, 2013).

Along with meeting compliance with accreditation measures and literacy accountability, a third state law required observance to a newly revised educator evaluation system. Senate Bill 10-191, implemented in 2012, mandated that districts created systems for effective parent involvement because "the involvement and support of parents of children in public schools, acting as partners with teachers and public-school administrators, are key to the educational progress of their children" (Educator Effectiveness Bill, 2012, p.2). Consequently, the Educator Effectiveness Bill required districts to monitor and track the efficiency of parent-community involvement strategies (Colorado Department of Education, 2012). These annually collected data were to be disaggregated, analyzed, and the collected information was to be used to inform districts of effective parent engagement programs and initiatives.

The cumulative effects of these legislative mandates, along with the urgency of increased low literacy attainment for several years, created many initiatives that were implemented that promised change in the district. At the time efforts to raise student literacy deficiencies were initiated, elementary participatory parent involvement was high, yet academic parent engagement was limited. Parents attended activities such as student performances, special dinners, and fund-raising events. Such participatory involvement activities were known to be important for developing the working relationships between parents and teachers and were intended to foster participation in school-based events (Ferlazzo, 2011). District leaders, many parents, and teachers

believed that attending such school-based events was sufficient, and that attendance at these events led to increased student achievement (Larocque et al., 2011). In accordance with these beliefs, parents at this study site's elementary schools attended all the frequent and carefully planned social events in which their children participated. Attendance at these events produced similar results to those noted in the research by Larocque et al. (2011). Working relationships between parents and educators improved, yet student achievement in literacy did not rise (Colorado Department of Education, 2014b).

Due to the lack of increased literacy achievement, the study site implemented a parent engagement framework meant to increase reading scores. This parent engagement model, academic parent teacher teams (APPT), was disbanded prior to district directors gathering any data to indicate its effectiveness. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a Latino parent teacher partnership model targeted at increasing third grade reading achievement. Further, this doctoral project study aimed to determine disparities in student scores between those parents who participated in the program and those parents who did not participate.

Definition of Terms

Academic parent teacher teams (APTT) framework of parent engagement (2011) model: APPT originated to address the lack of literacy growth in a high-poverty immigrant Latino district in Phoenix, Arizona**.** The model, described by its developer, Paredes, was an academic family engagement framework meant to foster teacher and parent collaboration around the improvement of student achievement (Paredes, 2013). According to Paredes (2013), to create this magnitude of parent engagement it was

necessary to provide parents with research-based outcome-oriented strategies that reinforced the instruction that teachers provided at school. Moreover, teachers coached parents and taught them the skills they needed to effectively support their children's learning at home (Paredes, 2011a). Thus, the teacher became the academic team leader of families. All students received home interventions, and parents were encouraged to change home routines to support meeting academic skills requirements necessary for grade-level mastery (Paredes, 2011a, 2011b, 2013).

Founded on the model of effectual congruence (EC), the APTT parent engagement program was a way to mobilize parents to be more effective partners in the literacy education of their children. Effectual meant that parents and teachers worked together to effect change, while congruence suggested an agreement between the parents and the teachers. EC consisted of six interrelated bound components: (a) parent-teacher communication; (b) data sharing; (c) goal setting; (d) coaching of parents; (e) distribution of practice materials; and (f) parent engagement. Parent-teacher communication was a critical component throughout this model. Per Paredes (2011a, 2011b), when all six parts worked together effectively, the process of EC increased academic performance.

Paredes wrote that this model increased the participatory school-based events that were important community building activities. More profoundly, and beyond building the community, however, it was intended to involve parents at a deeper academic level. It was meant to change the traditional roles of teachers and parents. Paredes maintained that Title I schools moved toward the creation of structures that illuminated the strengths and experiences that parents inherently possessed, thus increasing their own knowledge,

and, ultimately, that of their children. Parents involved in this way increased their children's academic achievement according to Paredes (2011a, 2011b). Therefore, APTT addressed student reading deficiencies via the implementation of a culturally responsive framework.

Implementation of the framework began with a personal invitation to parents to attend an informational workshop intended to involve them in the learning process of their student. At this initial workshop, parents were taught to assist with their child's education through the examination of data. During the workshop, whole-class and individual students' data were presented and explained to the parents. The data presentation allowed parents to see where their child's performance was relative to the entire class. Paredes maintained that understanding where a child's progress was in relation to his/her class peers provided the impetus for increased academic parental involvement.

After sharing the performance data, parents set a 60-day goal for their child's progress upon the advice of the teacher. These goals provided an action plan for the parents to support school learning in the home, and the teachers and the parents practiced the intended skill strategy at the workshop. The parents took home materials matched to specific activities that they were asked to practice regularly. This plan provided a clear-cut pathway for parents to engage in student learning in a manner aligned with teacher expectations and student needs. This experience, in turn, created the parent teacher team model and allowed parents to be active confident members of their child's teaching team (Paredes, 2011b, 2013).

Additional special terms noted in this study involved important nuances in two commonly used terms. Parent engagement and parent involvement were often used synonymously in the research (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). However, this study provided definitions that were significantly different. Stated by Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009), the delineation of these terms was salient because defining parent-teacher partnerships determined the success in reducing the barriers to Latino parent-teacher partnerships (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012).

Parental involvement: As outlined by federal law, under United States Code, 20 USC §7801 (2015), parental involvement was defined as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student learning and other school activities, including and ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
- that parents [were] encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
- that parents [were] full partners in their child's education and [were] included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committee to assist in the education of their child, and
- the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 6318 [of the United Code of Law]" (U.S. Code, Title 20, Chapter 70, Subchapter IX, Part A, (39)).

Parent involvement as defined by Nieto (1996) and later by Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) presented as schools involving parents in specific school priorities and events.

Parental involvement programs were defined as school-sponsored initiatives that were designed to require or encourage parental participation in their children's education. Examples of participatory parent involvement programs included attendance at meetings such as principal breakfasts and parent teacher organization meetings (Ferlazzo, 2011, 2013). Parent involvement was also defined as participatory parent involvement or school-focused activities where parents observed their children performing or articulating their learning in a presentation (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). This study utilized Lawson and Alameda-Lawson's definition of Latino parent involvement, which was represented by volunteering at school, increasing positive relationships with teachers, and helping with homework.

Parent engagement: On the other hand, per Ferlazzo (2011, 2013), parent engagement involved developing a trusting relationship between parents and teachers, business partners, police, local political affiliates, and community members. Engagement programs were developed jointly by parents and school personnel. The role of the teacher or administrator was to organize and facilitate parent action rather than telling parents what they should do to increase their student's learning.

Academic parent engagement programs: Academic parent engagement programs were defined as reciprocal relationships where parents were involved in the decision-making regarding academic progress (Paredes, 2011a). The APTT program was defined as an academic parent engagement program.

Family engagement: Family engagement was defined as the shared responsibility of communities (inclusive of schools, school leaders, teachers, parents, and students) for

student achievement and learning. It was denoted by the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) that family engagement must be systemic, integrated, and sustained to raise student achievement (Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2010). Systemic engagement was defined as including components such as school readiness, student achievement, and school turnaround efforts. Integrated engagement included the structures and processes used to meet the goals including professional development, teaching and learning, community collaboration, and the use of data for continuous improvement and accountability. Finally, the HFRP stated that an important component of effective family engagement programs included proper funding to sustain rising student achievement.

Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act): Other terms of importance in this study included references to the Colorado legislative mandates. Instituted legislation, the Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), required students to read on grade level no later than the end of third grade. The READ Act had significant impact on how Colorado districts defined reading proficiency and created a common definition statewide. The state defined reading at a proficient level at third grade as being at or above the 26th percentile on the *STAR Reading* assessment after two consecutive tests in designated benchmarking periods (Colorado Department of Education, 2014). Therefore, academic success was defined as a third grade student scoring at or above the 26th percentile on the *STAR Reading* assessment. Proficiency levels, as defined by the *STAR Reading* assessment were assigned as (a) significant reading deficiency (any student who scored from the 1st–25th percentile), (b) on watch

(any student who scored from the 26th–60th percentile), and (c) at or above grade level (any student who scored at the 61st percentile and above).

The *STAR Reading* assessment, used to measure reading proficiency, is a computer adaptive test (CAT). As a CAT, the *STAR Reading* assessment presented students with test items that were relative to the individual student's estimated ability. When the student answered correctly, the test adapted and presented a more difficult test item; when the student incorrectly answered a question, the test automatically lowered the expectation level. The CAT constantly adjusted the difficulty and eventually narrowed the range to the student's true ability level according to Renaissance Learning (2012) the test publisher.

Culture: Culture was defined as broad understandings of similarities and differences that were mirrored in students' multiple identities (Capacity Building Series, 2013). For students to succeed a culture of high expectations is necessary, along with a welcoming and accepting atmosphere. A culture of high expectations manifested in culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) as defined by Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2009, 2011). CRP is a student-centered teaching approach where students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured, and where student achievement and cultural confidence is promoted. Three components encompass CRP: academic success, building cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Further, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) recognized the importance of including students' cultures in every dimension of their schooling. Characteristics of CRT include positive perspectives on parents and families and communicating high expectations. This pedagogy illuminated

student-centered instruction where teachers facilitated learning and where instruction is culturally mediated and reshaped according to student needs for academic achievement.

Significance of the Study

This project aimed to inform the study site of the impact on third grade reading achievement of Latino students whose parents participated in a culturally responsive parent academic engagement program named academic parent teacher teams (APTT). Even though according to the 2013 school unified improvement plan executive summary the APTT model demonstrated increased positive outcomes through improved participatory parent teacher partnerships, the quantitative data amassed from this study may indicate whether the APTT model fostered greater levels of reading proficiency as measured by the district and state mandated reading assessments. As well, the findings from this study may inform similarly impacted districts with large numbers of children not reading at proficient levels. If found effective, such districts would be able to implement this evidence-based strategy as an intervention – one that was culturally responsive and that defined rigorous expectations for their students' reading development.

Additionally, these data may to contribute to the sparse body of research in this area, address state legislative mandates for reading accountability, and provide evidence for effective teacher-parent-partnership building. Overall, this project study may help the school district and other districts in Colorado increase reading achievement via parent engagement frameworks, while providing suggestions to meet the mandates of state legislation bills that required documented parent engagement strategies and plans.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This causal-comparative project study examined the extent and manner that a parent teacher engagement model aimed to increase student reading proficiency levels among a Latino third grade student population from the beginning-of-the-year to the end-of-the-year, after 2 years. It was hypothesized that the reading achievement scores of third graders would be higher for those students whose parents participated in the academic parent teacher team program than for those third graders whose parents did not participate. Toward this end, this study addressed the following research questions via testing the corresponding null hypotheses.

RQ1: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant increase in reading proficiency levels following 2 years of program implementation?

$H_0$1: There was no statistically significant increase in the reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework following 2 years of program implementation.

H_a1**:** There was a statistically significant increase in the reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework following 2 years of program implementation.

RQ2: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels than Latino third grade students whose parents did not participate?

$H_0$2**:** There was no statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework than those parents who did not participate.

H_a2**:** There was a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework than those parents who did not participate.

Review of the Literature

Theoretical Foundation

Three theoretical frameworks were included in the foundation of this study: cultural capital and deprivation theory, as it related to social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1986); concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth theory (Lareau, 2003, 2011); and funds of knowledge theory (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). Collectively, these frameworks suggested insights into the underpinnings of why parent involvement was a critical bridge to educational achievement. The theoretical frameworks established by Bourdieu contributed to the pervasive notion that linguistically and culturally diverse families of poverty lacked worthwhile knowledge and experiences that were necessary for successful positioning in society. Lareau and Moll et al.'s approaches offered a deeper understanding of Bourdieu's proposed deficit theory, with the addition of more positive perspectives on how parenting practices and culture impact culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse families and their children's academic achievement.

Review of the Broader Problem

An overview of the literature specific to the three conceptual frameworks are presented in the next section. Cultural capital, deprivation, and social reproduction theories are discussed to denote the theorized differences between children raised in poverty and their more affluent peers. Further, concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth parenting practices are defined to describe possible differences between the parenting practices of low-income families and families of more means. Finally, an alternative asset-based framework is discussed that defined how Latino families contribute to the schooling of their children even if they have limited income and agency.

Search terms included but were not limited to: *parent involvement, parent engagement, Latino parent engagement models, culturally responsive parenting models for Latino parents, funds of knowledge, concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth, parent-teacher-partnerships,* and *parenting practices of Latinos*. These terms provided a large amount of literature to critically review the benefits of parent engagement on their children's reading proficiency. Further discussion provides historical parent engagement examples and moves toward specific research applied to Latino families.

Cultural capital, deprivation, and social reproduction theories. Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1986) cultural capital and deprivation theory was the first theoretical framework that framed this study. Bourdieu theorized that French students, who were members of the higher social class enjoyed social advantages that were needed to rise to the top of the educational system. In other words, they had cultural capital. Bourdieu

found that students who had cultural capital participated in high-status events (e.g., they involved themselves in art, literature, and music; and, they had parents who attended symphonies and art museums). Students with cultural capital also had knowledge of how to navigate school procedures. Having this knowledge affected students' appearance and elevated their attitude, language, work habits, effort in class, and completion of homework.

On the other hand, students lacking cultural capital often found it difficult, at best, to advance in school and attend college. Bourdieu stated that poor- and working-class families' children were deprived of the privileges, advantages, and social knowledge of the dominant class. For this reason, poor- and working-class students did not move out of their low social class status.

Decades later, Wildhagen (2010) supported Bourdieu's theory and stated that current American school systems honored and revered those with cultural capital. Formal schooling made it more likely that students grew into filling the same social position as their parents. According to Wildhagen, the educational system continued to reward what the privileged social classes inherently brought to schools and prolonged inequitable practices by promoting and rewarding those who came from privileged families. Along with Bourdieu and Wildhagen, Paredes (2011a), the creator of the APTT program, indicated that U. S. public schools contributed to the replication of privilege because educators supported unspoken power structures. Paredes maintained that social exclusionary practices were prevalent as middle-class educators rewarded children with

values aligned with theirs. Paredes wrote that teachers often had the erroneous belief that they held the keys to teaching children.

The core of Bourdieu's theory perpetuated the notion that cultural capital was a critical resource for academic success and was transferred from generation-to-generation (Jaeger, 2011; Roska & Potter, 2011). As well, researcher Dunlop (2013) agreed that students having cultural capital were rewarded while students without cultural capital were at a disadvantage. Educators of disenfranchised minority children questioned the ability of poor- and working-class families to support the educational process. According to Dunlop (2013) one of the greatest challenges to creating effective parent engagement programs, therefore, was helping educators alter their existing perceptions. Changing the mindsets of educators, after decades of ingrained beliefs that privileged families are best able to help educate their children, was crucial to finding a solution to increasing achievement for RCELD students.

Concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth theories. Lareau (2003, 2011) expanded on Bourdieu's French social reproduction theory (1977, 1984, 1986), by framing this in an American context: a theory named concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth. Lareau reached the conclusion that some middle-to-upper class parents adopted a methodology of parenting that capitalized on child development.

Specifically, parents who practiced concerted cultivation were determined to develop their child's talents through using specific techniques. Lareau (2011) determined that children raised by parents who practiced concerted cultivation had vast educational,

social, and professional advantages. Parents who adopted concerted cultivation routines were more likely to guide their children to become members of the top third of the income distribution. This child rearing process ensured that children had future advantages that moved them forward socially, educationally, and economically. In concerted cultivation parents talked, interacted, and consistently reasoned with their children. These thoughtful, frequent, and planned discussions between parents and children were a daily occurrence in middle-to-upper class child rearing and thus were more likely to guide their children to become members of the top third of the income distribution.

Low-income families, on the other hand, tended to practice more "natural growth" parenting methods (Lareau, 2003, 2011). Children raised in poverty or in low-income families had more free time, self-initiated play, and unstructured time. Lareau further stated that working-class and poor parents had clear boundaries between adulthood and childhood and were more authoritative. They tended to talk less, interact less and gave more directives for behavior.

Additionally, the child rearing variance of fewer interactions and less communication led to differential benefits for language development. Prior research by Hart and Risley (1995, 2003) showed the importance of using language to elaborate thinking processes with young children. Hart and Risley's initial study indicated that the average high-income non-minority 5-year-old enters kindergarten exposed to 30 million more words than his or her minority low-income peers. Fourteen years later, the National Institute for Literacy (NIL) (2009) supported Hart and Risley's research. At this time, the

NIL posited that conversations between parents and their children created larger vocabularies and faster oral language development, which was a critical component of creating success in a child's early schooling.

Paredes (2011a) confirmed Lareau's theories of educated parents "cultivating" their children's skills. College-educated parents, Paredes maintained, had an innate knowledge for supporting their children to navigate the public-school system. Low-income parents, on the other hand, did not have this innate knowledge and were denied data that were invaluable for creating increased achievement. Providing low-income parents with this same institutional knowledge was critical because they needed to know academic expectations and where to access necessary support (Dunlop, 2013; Paredes, 2011a, 2011b; U. S. Department of Education, 2014). As a result, Paredes and Dunlop insisted that it was imperative that educators become sensitive to the issues faced by Latinos living in poverty. As well, the U. S. Department of Education concurred that families living below the poverty threshold be provided with educational opportunities for their preschool children along with parenting training and support.

Funds of knowledge theory. The theories of Bourdieu and Lareau offered insights into why families of privilege had educational, social, and cultural advantages over families of lesser means. As well, these theories explained why poor- and working-class Latino families were often considered deficient in the educational process (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986, 1997; Lareau, 2003, 2011; Paredes, 2011a, 2011b; Wildhagen, 2010). However, these deficit models did not honor the overlooked and under-appreciated capital that Latino families contributed to the educational process, nor the

amount of time children spent in school (10%) when compared to the amount of time that children spent in their homes (90%) during a school year. Simply stated, this statistic indicated that parents had the larger ability to "cultivate" academic success in the home because they spent more time with their children than school personnel (Dunlop, 2013; Paredes, 2011a). In juxtaposition to this statistic, it was noted in the literature that parents were the most underutilized resource in American Title I schools (Dunlop, 2013; Tran, 2014). For this reason, a third foundational theory for this study was suggested, which offered a more positive asset-based approach.

Distinctive parenting and child reading methods indicative of Latino cultures were invaluable resources for educational change according to research. Moll et al. (1992) wrote that Latino parents brought worthwhile strategies, skills, ideas, practices, and abilities to the education of their children. These assets were termed funds of knowledge. Paredes (2011a) the founder of APTT agreed with Moll et al. (1992). Paredes stated that educators must value Latino ways of parenting and involvement in the schooling of their children. Educators should use these unique assets to raise student achievement, and more, parents should be considered a critical component to increasing student achievement. Therefore, teachers must learn how to support families so that they can, in turn, successfully support their children's academic success. This asset-based model replaced the deficit model that considered Latino immigrant students and families as problems to be fixed (Beckett, Glass, & Moreno, 2012; Tileston & Darling, 2009; Tran, 2014).

Definitions of parent involvement models. To thoroughly understand why parent involvement was a critical component of student achievement, it was important to investigate noted differences in the definitions of parent involvement and the seminal models from which these definitions grew. Literature indicated the positive dominant effects of parents' commitment on a child's academic, social, and emotional development (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Gianzero, 1999; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Tran, 2014). Understanding a definition of parent involvement, however, grew more complicated, because parents and educators of varying races and classes, defined parental involvement very differently.

Noted parent engagement researchers, Epstein and Dauber (1991) and Gianzero (1999) found that the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents mattered in defining parent participation. Low SES parents, especially those who spoke a language other than English, were viewed as being less engaged in their children's learning. Longitudinal studies indicated that middle-class and more affluent families possessed innate knowledge that helped their children succeed academically (Lareau, 2011). Thus, existing research defined middle-to-upper class parents as more involved in their children's schooling. Poor- and working-class parents, on the other hand, were perceived as less experienced, provided less academic support, and cultivated little insight for their children (Lareau, 2011; Paredes, 2013).

Therefore, researchers typically defined parental involvement based on social class. However, educators described parental involvement differently. Teachers contended that parents were involved when they attend formalized, school-based

activities, and volunteered in classrooms. Participation in teacher conferences with regular communication (initiated by the parent) was considered imperative. Helping children with homework and enforcing rules for children's home play-and-work time were other criteria for perceived parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992; Jeynes, 2011; Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013).

Consequently, teachers have generally based their definition of parent involvement on Epstein's (1991) model. Here, Epstein theorized that parents and schools working together could increase student achievement by following the contexts of child development. Epstein's model included creating active home learning activities to improve parenting skills and involvement at school. Participating in shared decision-making, communicating with the school, and being involved in the development of community partnerships between the school and home was a critical component. This widely known research paralleled current educators' definition of family involvement, and it was (and in many cases, is still) used extensively by educators to develop school-family partnerships (Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2005).

Diverse from educators' and researchers' definitions, Latino families defined parent involvement yet differently. Latino families represented commitment to schooling as monitoring homework and asking students about their school day. These actions indicated high expectations according to Vera et al. (2012). Evidence of such high expectation parenting was termed *familismo*, a Latino cultural value practiced by Mexican immigrant parents discussed by Romo, Mireles-Rios, and Lopez-Tello (2014). *Familismo* granted Latino students less social autonomy because parents enforced the

significance of family to maintain their cultural heritage (Romo et al., 2014; Stein, Gonzalez, Cupito, Kiang, & Supple, 2013). This authoritarian parenting strategy promoted a stable family group where children were usually compliant.

Such high expectations, as is the culture of many Latino parents, were found to be long lasting throughout a child's schooling. In studies where SES was controlled for, Suizzo et al. (2012) found that poor- and working-class Latino families consistently held high educational attainment and goals for their children. Froiland, Peterson, and Davison (2012) also wrote that parents with such high expectations for their children's development showed positive impacts on literacy development when there were strong home literacy components in place. This research consistently pointed to success in school as a predictor of future economic success, increased longevity, and robust mental health (Liem, Lustig, & Dillon, 2010). Additionally, the high expectations exhibited by many Latino parents maintained the integrity of the funds of knowledge theory founded by Moll et al. (1992).

More current acknowledgment of what constituted effective parental involvement and its subsequent programs were much broader and more complex than the studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s (Jeynes, 2011). Epstein's work was regarded as undeveloped (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Cepeda, 2013; Galindo & Fuller, 2010; Jeynes, 2011, 2012; McKenna & Millen, 2013). McKenna and Millen (2013) further stated that harmful practices arose from past studies about current home-to-school partnerships. The Epstein model, still referenced by educators as an effective parental engagement model, was found to be lacking when examined in high-poverty Latino schools. Furthermore,

Jeynes challenged Epstein's traditional "overt" parent engagement actions, in a meta-analysis study (2011, p. 10). Findings in Jeynes' research indicated "the most powerful aspects of parental involvement were frequently 'subtle'" (2011, p. 11). Jeynes concluded that characteristics of actual Latino parent engagement included maintaining high expectations, regularly communicating with children, and having parenting styles conducive to student achievement. Subsequent research indicated that Epstein's rubric was probably too simplistic (Jeynes, 2005, 2007, 2010).

In addition, Epstein's (1991) formerly compelling parental involvement model that invited parents and educators to be partners did not thoroughly explain the complex cultural capital dimensions involved in raising student achievement. Epstein's model and most parent involvement research largely discounted the unique voices that immigrant families naturally brought to the American school system (Cepeda, 2013; Galindo & Fuller, 2010; McKenna & Millen, 2013). Bower and Griffin (2011) wrote that Epstein's model benefitted parents by giving them a stronger voice in their children's education. However, in this model, the parent was still expected to advocate within the set parameters of the school and assimilate into the existing system. School personnel, often, did not invite differing perspectives. McKenna and Millen (2013) reiterated that this atmosphere did not create an assumption-free asset-based space that was critical to fostering parental engagement in respectful and meaningful ways. Thus, McKenna and Millen insisted that meaningful communication and reciprocal understanding between parents and educators was necessary to raise student achievement.

Additional research on Epstein's model by Patel and Stevens (2010) indicated that relationships between teachers and parents must deepen beyond just providing parents opportunities for involvement. Patel and Stevens wrote that parents were valuable assets to the educational process. They hypothesized that teacher education and professional development programs should help teachers (new and veteran) increase their skill sets to create effective communication systems that contributed to improved student skills and achievement. Radzi, Rasak, and Sukor (2010) supported this research and stated the importance of creating authentic opportunities for parents to be partners in their children's education. They suggested that "productive involvement" required conversation about their views of student abilities between parents and educators (p. 133). Later, another study by Rodriguez, Blatz, and Elbaum (2014) indicated that the most successful schools with high levels of authentic parent engagement consistently sought parent input. Collaborative discussions between parents and school personnel increased the amount of cultural capital for Latino students and parents. Discussions with all those involved about the purpose of schooling, therefore, was an important avenue that created effective parent involvement was one that raised student achievement.

More research revealed that cultural differences between mainly White teachers and Latino families contributed to increased negative perceptions of Latino families (Hill & Torres, 2010; Kumasi, 2011). Teachers often favored students in a similar class to their own (Gripsrud, Hovden, & Moe, 2011), and educators held lower expectations for Latino students than for Euro-American students (Guyll, Madon, Prieto, & Scherr, 2010). Simply, educators disregarded nondominant cultures thus preventing parental

involvement (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Taliaferro, Decuir-Gunby, & Allen-Eckard, 2009). Unfortunately, teachers felt the need to "educate" poor- and working-class parents, which created further division in relationships according to McKenna & Millen (2013).

More findings suggested the possibility that some forms of parent participation were perhaps harmful to academic achievement, and parental engagement should not be considered essential to reducing achievement gaps. Further research by Jeynes indicated that "social scientists can really offer no genuine consensus about the effectiveness of school-based parental programs, and without this knowledge it was not clear whether schools should attempt to enhance parental engagement or whether such activities should be left up to the parents" (2012, p. 707-708). Jeynes maintained that it was possible that school programs meant to increase parent involvement might be "quite ineffective" (2012, p.708). Finally, Jeynes wrote that there was "no real consensus or agreement" regarding what school-based parent involvement programs work best (2012, p. 708).

Robinson and Harris' (2014) extensive longitudinal research did not support the assumption that increasing parental involvement and close school parent partnerships improved student performance. Current parent teacher partnerships, founded on educating parents about how to be best involved, were insensitive to the realities of diverse ethnic parenting styles and family constructs. They were simply not productive, per Robinson and Harris. Additionally, Paredes (2011a) indicated that a lack of cultural insight can be detrimental to improvement efforts aimed to address academic deficiencies via parent involvement. In fact, Robinson and Harris wrote that whole-scale parent involvement initiatives were a waste of time and energy. These findings, consequently

did not suggest a clear and definite connection between parental involvement and academic achievement.

A recent empirical study provided evidence regarding about these conflicting studies of parent involvement. Park and Holloway (2017) examined the long-term impact on three kinds of parent involvement linked to economic literature theory. Park and Holloway confirmed that parent involvement at the school level overall bolstered student academic achievement (in reading and mathematics), when controlled for confounding family and school variables. They delineated parent involvement to three categories: involvement in activities for their own child (private-good); involvement in activities for the good of the overall school (public-good); and parent networking (relational private groups meant to benefit the students whose parents belonged to the network). Park and Holloway wrote that most parents became engaged in schools for their own children (private-good involvement). For example, it was noted that 80% of elementary school parents attend parent teacher conferences, but only 43% belonged to parent teacher associations or similar school-based organizations.

Park and Holloway concluded that public-good and private-good parent involvement were more strongly associated with mathematic achievement for high income students; that all three types of parent involvement were associated with mathematics achievement; and finally, that only private-good parent involvement was associated with reading achievement. Private-good involvement was more strongly related to school level achievement in low-socioeconomic schools. Data from this study suggested that this may be due to strong leadership in low-resource schools where leaders

continually worked to create trusting relationships between parents and teachers. They also engaged their parents in their homes and at the school through private-good interactions. Therefore, according to Park and Holloway, public-good parent involvement may build skills and garner information to parents but may not lend itself to building the relationships that were necessary for low-income parents to feel comfortable in schools. Park and Holloway wrote that the size of the parent network is a strong predictor of overall school achievement status. In summary, Park and Holloway noted that policies aimed at increasing parent involvement "are likely to boost the achievement" of elementary students, however, "additional attention should be devoted to improving schools' ability to leverage the considerable social and cultural capital of low-income families" (2017, p. 13).

As stated, research findings on effective school-to-home parent engagement practices were mixed. Even less understood were effective Latino parent outreach and engagement program practices. Of the sparse research in this arena, it was noted that Latino parents were deeply vested in their children's education, yet this effort frequently went unnoticed by educators (Greenberg, 2012). Specifically, Greenberg opined that because Latino parents may not participate in their child's schooling in traditional ways scholars have not been able to determine what constituted successful Latino parent engagement strategies.

Few studies found addressed the sparse research on Latino parent engagement programs meant to raise student achievement. Perkins (2015) warned that school and community partnerships are promoted as the cure of societal ills, yet community

partnerships are “a term that can be used to label, classify, include, and exclude without being called into question” (2015, p. 325). Auerbach and Collier (2012) found that a program that trained parents in reading skills to improve student test scores did not consider the needs of Latino parents, and while well-intended, it did not increase student achievement. Such programs benefitted the relationships between parents and school personnel, however, were ineffective when the pressures of high-stakes testing were imposed on parents. Therefore, according to Perkins, it was fruitless to ask them to intervene at home with school-based agendas. Partnerships with parents intended to increase student achievement were “grossly affected” by local demographics, culture, socioeconomic status, and access to resources (2015, p. 327). Perkins further warned that school leaders must challenge their perceptions of their school’s community.

In summary, research indicated that the success of pupils who attended low-SES schools depended on active collaboration, communication, coaching, and the development of partnerships between parents and teachers. These successful collaborative systems diminished deficits, formed strong social networks, and allowed students to quickly access support and resources (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Mapp, Henderson, & Hill, 2014; McCoach et al., 2010, Paredes, 2011a, 2011b; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Suizzo, Pahlke, Yarnell, Chen, & Romero, 2014). Teaching parents how to contribute significantly to their children’s educational growth mitigated the cultural deprivation associated with poor-and working-class families (Paredes, 2011a). Since teachers unknowingly created systems where Latino parents felt unwelcome, this shift was necessary to eradicate the behaviors, attitudes, and thinking of long-held societal,

school, and teacher norms (Griffin, 2011; Huber-Smith & Williford, 2014; Tran 2014). Ultimately, it was repeatedly stated in the research that educators must move from deficit-based pedagogy to more culturally linguistically diverse models of teaching. Adams (2013) found that collective trust was a strong beginning for changed and positive beliefs and increased achievement. Based on these research data, to close the literacy gaps between Latino and White students, educators needed to redefine traditional parental involvement programs and create unique culturally responsive frameworks with Latino parents' guidance, input, and support.

Implications

Implications for project directions based on the findings of the data collection and analysis included policy recommendations for future parent engagement programs specific to Latino parents. In addition to the variances of perceptions of what constituted effective academic parent engagement programs, the efficacy of culturally responsive parent engagement models that aimed to raise student achievement for poor Latino immigrant families was unknown. These varying perceptions were difficult barriers to overcome and remove as numbers of RCELD families increased and reading proficiency decreased significantly from grade-to-grade within this Colorado school district as well as in districts nationwide. Findings from this study have direct implications for intervention efforts meant to increase student achievement through parent engagement programs in this study site and in similar urban districts with majority Latino populations. Knowing these variances may also have direct impact on the development of culturally

responsive parent engagement programs that are known to be effective in raising student reading achievement.

The implications for the project were based on the anticipated findings of this study. An appropriate deliverable of this project's results was a position paper. This was the most efficient way to disseminate the information due to the urgency of the local problem. A position paper offered district and school leaders with a description of the study, and its results, and contributed to recommendations for further parent program implementation known to raise student reading achievement.

Summary

This study sought to determine whether parents who participated in the academic parent teacher team model raised third grade student reading scores when compared to third grade students whose parents did not participate. As well, this study aimed to contribute to the sparse existing quantitative research findings on improving reading proficiencies among Latino children through effective parent intervention programs. In Section 1, I presented key points in the research literature that offered insights into the vast amount of research that was available regarding parent involvement and its necessary components that were proposed to increase student achievement.

The literature review described the disagreements that existed in the scholarly research on the definitions, differences, and effectiveness between parent involvement and parent engagement programs. Parent engagement and involvement were defined contrarily and were portrayed as deeper disagreements between parents, teachers, school leaders, and parent engagement researchers. Involvement was defined as a parent or

guardian attending school sponsored events. Conversely, parent academic engagement was defined as the parent taking an active part in disaggregating his/her child's achievement data, determining strengths and limitations and being a collaborative partner with an educator to determine next steps for increased achievement. Further from these definitions, Latino parents considered that they were involved if they had high expectations for their child. Teachers and school leaders (who are mostly White) felt parents were involved if they attended functions, helped their children with homework and were in regular contact with their child's teacher. In a completely different realm, researchers of parent engagement determined that engagement was dependent on social class, socioeconomic status, and education of the parent (especially the mother).

Further cultural divides and perceptions were said to occur when educators mandated school-based parental involvement programs or even encouraged attendance by Latino families. These differences were noted to create more divisions between home and school cultures and were thought to increase the achievement gap between Latino students and White students. Thus, cultural capital, deprivation, and social reproduction theories were examined. Each of these theories purported, respectively, that an individual's academic achievement was impacted by social status, parenting practices, and innate cultural assets. Concerted cultivation and accomplishment of natural growth parenting theories provided acumen into generalized White and Latino parenting strategies, respectively. Research differed on how much social prominence, parenting styles, or social traits handed down from parent-to-child impacted student achievement.

While varying theories of parent involvement were linked to student achievement, the funds of knowledge theory were a common theme throughout all the researched literature. When studies were controlled for parent's education, parenting style, social status, and economic well-being it was continually noted that Latino families and their contributions to American schools should be celebrated. Latino families had high expectations for their children's academic growth and status. The seminal and subsequent research indicated that Latino parents' culture and parenting practices inherently created the foundation, conditions, and environment that were necessary for their children to thrive. Due to this, it was suggested that educators recognize the need to illuminate Latino parent strengths and create stronger bonds for collaboration between parents and teachers. Research indicated that culturally responsive parent engagement programs tailored specifically to Latino families have the potential to provide guidance and hope for those desiring to see school outcomes improve for all Latino children. Ultimately, research recommended that educators and Latino parents guide each other to collaboratively create the most effective culturally relevant frameworks for student achievement.

The impact of the APTT framework on third grade reading achievement is discussed in the next section along with details and information regarding the rationale for using a causal-comparative study design. Descriptions of participants and sampling methods are examined. In addition, the reliability and validity of the *STAR Reading* assessment used to assess the effectiveness of the program are examined in the remaining

sections. Detailed data analyses are presented as well as assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations.

Section 2: The Methodology

Quantitative Research Design and Approach

This study utilized an ex post facto causal-comparative design to assess the extent and manner in which the APTT parent engagement model met its intended goal of raising student proficiency levels in reading. Toward this end, this study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant increase in reading proficiency levels following 2 years of program implementation?

RQ2: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels than Latino third grade students whose parents did not participate?

In accordance with the research questions that guided this study, this research design was used to reveal if any differences in reading achievement level and gain could be attributed to the implementation of the APTT intervention model.

The single continuous dependent variable (DV) for this study was the reading achievement level/gain as measured on *STAR Reading* assessment (2010). This variable was measured by analyzing pretest and posttest beginning-of-the-year scores and end-of-the-year scores. The *STAR Reading* assessment, administered by third grade teachers, reflected scores of third grade Latino students from two groups in the district. These *STAR Reading* data points ranged in scores along a continuum considered to be grade-

level foundational skills to higher-level comprehension skills in literature and informational texts.

The APTT parent engagement model was the one categorical independent variable (IV) that could not be manipulated since the two comparison groups (Group 1 and School A) were already intact. These participant data consisted of two groups of third grade Latino students, those whose parents had participated in the APTT framework in a period of two years, and those students from a comparable school whose parents had not been exposed to the implementation of the APTT parent engagement framework in as many years.

A causal-comparative design was chosen as this design involves comparing groups to determine whether an IV caused a change in a DV. Further, causal-comparative research is a design that aims to determine the cause or consequences of differences that have already occurred between two comparison groups. Consequently, this research design permitted the study of the effects of the variables that were impossible or ethically difficult to manipulate (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Setting and Sample

The target population for this study included third grade Latino students from seven study site elementary schools. A convenience sampling method was used. Archival reading data were retrieved from the total 898 third grade Latino students in the 2013-2015 school years. These students' data were selected because they were from a cohort of students who were labeled as having a SRD based on Colorado State READ Act legislation. The entire target population were 63% English language learners; 89%

received free or reduced-price meals; and 13% were identified as receiving special education services (Colorado Department of Education, 2014). Random assignment of the participants was not an option as this study utilized preexisting archival data from predetermined groups of third grade students per designated enrollments at each elementary school (Creswell, 2008, 2012).

This study examined two Latino student groups: two third grade groups ($N = 61$) whose parents received the APTT intervention in as many years (Group 1); and a second group (School A) that consisted of another schools' third grade classes ($N = 124$) in the same district over the same 2 years. The parents in Group 1 participated in the APTT model for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years for the same amount of time and under the same conditions each year. The Latino students in Group 1 whose parents were exposed to the APTT parent engagement program were 77% English language learners; 88% received free or reduced-price meals; and 16% received special education services. Students from Group 2 received no additional formalized parent support at home. According to the district strategic plan, this elementary school served students who were demographically similar to the two combined third grade groups who received the APTT intervention.

Instrumentation and Materials

The *STAR Reading* assessment was used as the measurement instrument to determine the effectiveness of the APTT parent engagement framework. The *STAR Reading* assessment published by the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) at American Institutes for Research (2016) was used as a screening, progress monitoring,

and benchmarking tool at the study site. NCII maintained that teaching students who may be marginalized began with a reliable and validated system that provided personalized data for all individual students.

The *STAR Reading* assessment is a research-based norm-referenced test deemed to meet the highest standards of reliability and validity as established via 30 predictive validity studies of approximately 201,000 third grade students (Renaissance Learning, 2014b). As well, the *STAR Reading* test is a computer adaptive test that continuously adjusted the difficulty of each student's test based on the student's previously correct or incorrect answers. The Renaissance Learning website indicated that computer adaptive tests were more efficient than paper and pencil tests as they did not frustrate or bore struggling or advanced students.

Renaissance Learning defined the *STAR Reading* assessment as a "challenging and interactive" 34 question test that evaluated a broad range of reading skills appropriate for grades K-12 (Renaissance Learning, 2014b, p. 3). The item bank size consisted of over 5,000 selections and took approximately 15 minutes to administer. Students who consistently demonstrated proficiency with 100-sight-word vocabularies or those who had reached the *probable* r*eader* stage of literacy development (as determined on the *STAR Early Literacy* test) took the *STAR Reading* test.

This assessment, given to third through fifth graders three or more times per year, provided teachers with reading achievement and growth data. *STAR Reading* also measured a wide range of other reading skills aligned with the Common Core State Standards (2014). The *STAR Reading* test assessed the foundational reading skills of

print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognitions, and fluency. The language realm of the test assessed vocabulary acquisition and usage. Additionally, key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and the level of text complexity were assessed in both literature and informational text, which were combined to create overall comprehension assessment.

Data Collection and Analysis

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Walden University was required for the study site official to collect, de-identify and retrieve the *STAR Reading* data requested for this study. I agreed to the guidelines for submitting research proposals stated in the *Guide to Conducting Research* (Appendix B). In addition to agreeing to all seven guidelines, all research application procedures requested by the chair of the research review committee in the school district were followed. Included were the Walden University IRB approval (via copied e-mail) and a research permission letter from Renaissance Learning (Appendix C). This study site's requirements are provided in the appendices as evidence of protocol attainment for the district's research proposals.

After receiving approval from the Walden University IRB (Approval # 05-10-16-032578) to conduct the research, a letter of cooperation and a data use agreement-1 (Appendices D and E) were contracted between the district manager of strategy and accountability and myself. Raw *STAR Reading* test data from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years were initially requested from the district assessment department via a personal meeting with the district manager of strategy and accountability. This request was reviewed and approved by the district manager of strategy and accountability.

The manager of strategy and accountability determined that data for the school year 2012-2013 were not available because this was the first year that the district had used the Renaissance Learning *STAR Reading* assessment. The data were not archived as *STAR Reading* was only used in select elementary schools as a pilot assessment. Hence, a request for change in procedures form (Appendix F) was initiated and approval for change in procedure was granted by Walden University IRB under the same approval number (IRB approval # 05-10-16-0325781). An additional data use agreement -2 (Appendix G) was received to retrieve another data set that incorporated the next two school years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015).

After these procedural changes, both beginning-of-year and end-of-year *STAR Reading* data for Latino third graders whose parents participated in the APTT program were obtained for these 2 years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). I received the data set as a password protected spreadsheet format file via e-mail after all written agreements had been approved. Only data from Latino (Hispanic) students were retrieved. Along with the collection of pretest and posttest *STAR Reading* data for the implementation group, pretest and posttest *STAR Reading* data were obtained for the Latino third grade student populations within the nonparticipating APTT elementary schools for the same years.

Archival pretest and posttest reading data were inputted in the *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0,* 2016 (SPSS) statistical program. Data collected from the study participants were divided into two sets: Group 1 and School A. Group 1 encompassed two sets of third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT parent engagement program; one set (both beginning-of-year and end-of-year) in the

2013-2014 school year ($N = 30$) who experienced one year in the APTT program, and one set in the 2014-2015 ($N = 31$) school year who experienced one year of the program. Both third grade classes were administered the *STAR Reading* pretest and posttest.

The comparable comparison school, School A ($N = 124$), involved one set of third grade students (both beginning-of-year and end-of-year in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015) who experienced 1 year each of the regular school reading curricula with no parent engagement APTT support in each of these school years. These classes were also administered the *STAR Reading* pretest and posttests each year. These interval data measured student reading achievement along a percentage scale and were deemed sufficient to address both research hypotheses (RQ1 and RQ2) in this project study.

These data were screened for outliers and anomalies, which were deleted when necessary. These data included students who were not consistently in attendance in the program for 2 years as well as those who did not have a pretest and a posttest score. Preliminary screening of these data and testing assumptions of the variance were conducted via Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances (Brown & Forsythe, 1974).

After screening and testing the data for statistical assumptions, descriptive analyses were conducted to provide a descriptive overview of the study samples. Analysis procedures were then used to test each null hypothesis. Specifically, a dependent-samples *t* test was conducted to compare the effect of reading proficiency levels (DV) of third grade Latino students whose parents participated in the APTT parent engagement program (IV). An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to compare the

effect of the APTT framework (IV) on reading proficiency level gains (DV) in third grade Latino students whose parents participated in the APTT engagement program.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

Assumptions

Several assumptions were important considerations for this study. The first assumption that was made included subassumptions regarding the APTT program and its implementation. It was assumed that the champion (school facilitator) of the APTT program at the implementation school initiated the program with fidelity as suggested by the founder (Paredes, 2011a). An additional assumption was that all parents attended each of three mandatory literacy learning partner nights and practiced the suggested home activities with their children regularly. As well, it was assumed that the parents who participated in the APTT partnership program created a home environment where their children benefitted. Finally, it was supposed that all parents understood the information that was given to them at the learning meetings and that they practiced the literacy activities regularly with their child at home.

A final overall assumption included the *STAR Reading* assessment and its administration. Not being present during the administration of these assessments, it was assumed that these tests were administered to the third grade children with fidelity and the integrity that is necessary for administering standardized tests. It was assumed that this was true as teachers had received yearly training on administering the test and appropriate proctoring since the inception of *STAR Reading* assessment.

Limitations

This study used a causal-comparative research design—a design that seeks to find the relationship(s) between events that have already occurred (Brewer & Kuhn, 2010). Since causal-comparative research occurs ex post facto it was impossible to control for or manipulate the variables in this study, thus, internal validity was likely compromised in this study. The variables studied (the APTT program and student reading achievement) could not be manipulated as the program had already been implemented and the third grade students had already been assessed on the *STAR Reading* assessment. This was the first limitation to this study.

Causal-comparative research simply compares, and therefore it must be cautiously reviewed. For that reason, this was another limitation in this study (Suter, 2011). To be clear, the APTT program (the independent variable) could not be inferred to be the sole cause of changed reading assessment scores (the dependent variable). Hence, the likelihood that there was an alternative explanation or confounding variable was a valid concern and possibility in this research study.

As well, random sampling was not possible in this causal-comparative research study. Convenience sampling was used. Without random sampling, the results of this study cannot be generalized to larger Latino populations and are limited to the third grade population in the study site district (Brewer & Kuhn, 2010; Lodico et al., 2010).

Additionally, interval data were analyzed in this study. The standardized reading scores of the *STAR Reading* assessment had the limitations of not having a true zero point nor an arbitrary maximum point according to Lodico et al. (2010). Thus, both internal

and external validity were threatened in this study. These limitations will be expanded upon in the discussion of the study findings.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study focused on the reading assessment scores of third grade students whose parents participated in a parent engagement program over the course of 2 years. This parent engagement framework was intended to increase reading achievement. The total number of participants in this study was 185. Sixty-one students comprised Group 1 and were students whose parents participated in the APTT program. The second set of third grade students ($N = 124$) were enrolled in one of the other six elementary schools in the study site. The parents in the implementation group participated in the APTT model for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, for the same amount of time and under the same conditions each year.

Students from the one comparable control group elementary school received no additional formalized parent support at home. According to the district strategic plan, this elementary school served students that were demographically similar to the two third grade implementation groups who received the APTT intervention. School A was chosen as the most comparable school to Group 1 (it was geographically nearest to the experimental school; its population was most similar in number and characteristics; the mean scores, standard deviations, and variances were similar; and finally, it offered related before-and-after school program supports, parent involvement functions, music and arts programs, preschool and kindergarten jumpstart programs, health and wellness

programs, family education activities, and free breakfast and lunch programs) (Colorado Association of School Boards, 2016).

The scope of the study was bounded to Latino parents and their children who were the sole participants in this study. These delimitations excluded the remaining small percentage of White parents. Thus, this study included only Latino third grade students as it was deemed critical to seek solutions to potential retention of hundreds of second language learners who were reading significantly below grade level as the implementation of Colorado's READ Act was enacted.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Obtaining ethical approval from Walden University's IRB occurred prior to data retrieval and after the proposal was defended and approved by the full committee. As stated, this study focused specifically on Latino third grade children. Walden's IRB suggested that because ethnicity is not public information it was imperative to ensure discretion (2017). Hence, meticulous measures were implemented to ensure that the participants in this study were safeguarded. Anonymity of the pretest and posttest data scores were ensured as each participant was assigned a confidential number which allowed for linkage between pretest and posttest data (Lodico et al., 2010).

Data were not collected from a personal worksite and no participants were personally known. No data were collected through interviews, focus groups, or surveys. Disruption to the learning environment never occurred as research was not conducted on site at the elementary schools. Thus, my data collection measures conformed to the standards of offering and generating new knowledge to the educational field, were

deemed to be valuable, and ultimately offset any ethical concerns. Collected data were stored in a password-protected computer and are available by request. All suggested rules for avoiding ethical issues were followed according to Walden's documents entitled *Advising and Avoiding Ethical Problems* and *Guidance for Archival Researchers* (Walden University IRB, 2015, 2016). Therefore, in this study, I:

- used anonymous methods (to include anonymity for any leaders or community members potentially impacted by the study);
- attended to the alignment of research questions, analyses, and components of data collection;
- used existing data (to include test scores generated under the organization's auspice);
- utilized existing measures; and
- ensured that all IRB materials reflected research questions and procedures.

My role, as researcher in this study, did not affect the data collections and I had no biases that were related to parent engagement programs. I was employed in the district as an instructional coach. I had no personal relationship with the participants (parents or students) as I entered the district after the APTT program was officially disbanded and I did not work at the school that implemented the parent engagement program. My professional relationship was manifested in a keen interest to determine how to close the achievement and opportunity gaps between Latino children and their more affluent peers.

Data Analysis Results

Preliminary Tests and Descriptive Analyses

A limited data set was received that included all 7 elementary schools of third grade *STAR Reading* pre- and posttests. First, preliminary data screening of the implementation school (Group 1) was completed. These data included two sets of third grade students' *STAR Reading* beginning-of-the-year pretests and end-of-the-year posttest scores for two years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). These data encompassed 30 third grade Latino students from the school year 2013-2014, and 31 Latino third grade students from the school year 2014-2015 school year, totaling 61 third grade students. There were no deletions necessary as the data was matched, and each student had a beginning-of-the-year score and an end-of-the-year score for each year. These data were entered into SPSS (2016).

Next, Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances was used to assess variances within Group 1 (those two sets of students who had been assessed on the *STAR Reading* pretests for the 2013-2015 school years, and those same students who had been assessed on the *STAR Reading* posttest for the school years 2013-2015). These data are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.95	1	120	.33

Note. Group 1 pretest and posttest scores from 2013-2015.

As indicated via a nonsignificant Levene's statistic, the assumption of the homogeneity of the variances was met.

After the variances were tested and assumption of equality of variances were met, the pretest and posttest *STAR Reading* scores for the implementation group were screened for central tendencies. Both the pretest and posttest groups consisted of 61 students. The pretest yielded these data from the *STAR Reading* pretest ($M = 280.59$, $SD = 98.14$). The posttest data indicated these data from the *STAR Reading* posttest ($M = 354.95$, $SD = 78.33$). Table 2 presents the pretest and posttest means and standard deviations.

Table 2

STAR Reading Pretest/Posttest Scores

Source	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Group 1 Pretest	61	280.59	98.14
Group 1 Posttest	61	354.95	78.33
Total	122	317.77	95.98

Note. Pretest: School Year 2013-2014; Posttest: School Year 2014-2015.

Pretest reading achievement scores for the implementation group ($N = 61$) and control group ($N = 124$) were then entered in SPSS (2016). The pretest data were analyzed and screened for outliers and anomalies to determine differences between the comparison groups (Best & Kahn, 2006). Anomalous and outlier data were deleted in SPSS. These deleted data included the highest and lowest three scores, scores without a pretest and posttest, and student scores who were not in full attendance for the 2 years.

Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances was conducted to determine homogeneity of variances between the comparison school and the implementation school

pretest scores. These results are shown in Table 3. As indicated via a nonsignificant Levene's statistic, the assumption of the homogeneity of the variances was met.

Table 3

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.14	1	183	.71

Note. Group 1 and School A pretest scores from 2013-2015.

After the variances were tested and the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, the pretest scores between Group 1 and School A were screened for central tendencies. School A yielded a mean pretest score of 226.73 (compared to 280.59 for the implementation group) and a standard deviation of 91.53 (compared to 98.14 for the implementation group). These data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Pretest Scores Between Group 1 and School A

Source	*N*	Pretest Mean	Std. Deviation
Group 1	61	280.59	98.14
School A	124	226.73	91.53
Total	185	244.49	96.87

Note. Group 1 (Implementation School) and School A (Comparison School).

Next, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to compare the differences in gain between the APTT school and the comparison school. The comparison school yielded a mean gain score of 103.07 (compared to 74.36 for the implementation group)

and a standard deviation of 140.63 (compared to 123.15 for the implementation group). These data are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Scores Between Group 1 and School A

Source	*N*	Mean Gain	Std. Deviation
Group 1	61	74.36	123.15
School A	124	103.07	140.63
Total	185	93.61	135.46

Note. Group 1 (Implementation School) and School A (Comparison School).

Inferential Analyses

Hypothesis 1 results. A dependent-samples *t* test was conducted to test the first hypothesis (RQ1: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant increase in reading proficiency levels following 2 years of program implementation?). A dependent-samples *t* test was conducted to ascertain the effect of reading proficiency levels (DV) of the students whose parents participated in the APTT parent engagement program (IV). The null hypothesis was tested ($H_0$1: There was no statistically significant increase in the reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework following two years of program implementation.).

The results of the dependent-samples *t* test suggested that there was a statistically significant increase in reading proficiency levels (DV) among students whose parents participated in the APTT program (IV) as indicated in Table 6. Specifically, the dependent-samples *t* test indicated [t (60) = -5.96, $p < .001$]. These results suggested that

the APTT family engagement program did have an effect on Latino students' reading proficiency levels. Accordingly, the null hypothesis for RQ1 was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was supported.

Table 6

Dependent-Samples t *Test for Pretest and Posttest Implementation School (Group 1)*

	df	*t*	Sig.
Pretest/Posttest Difference	60	-5.96	.00

Note. Group 1 (Implementation School).

Hypothesis 2 results. An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to test hypothesis 2 (RQ2: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels than Latino third grade students whose parents did not participate?). An independent-samples *t* test was conducted to compare the effect of the APTT framework (IV) on reading proficiency level gains (DV) in third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT engagement program. The null hypothesis was tested ($H_0$2**:** There was no statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework than those parents who did not participate.).

The results of the independent-samples *t* test suggested that reading level proficiency gains of students whose parents participated in the APTT intervention did not statistically significantly differ from students in the comparison school, at the $p < .05$ level for the parents who participated in the program [t (183) = -1.36, p =.18].

Accordingly, the null hypothesis for RQ2 was not rejected in favor of the alternative. These data are exhibited in Table 7.

Table 7

Independent-Samples t *Test Between Comparison Schools (Group 1 and School A)*

	df	*t*	Sig.
Equality of Means	183	-1.36	.18

Note. Group 1 (Implementation School) and School A (Comparison School).

Summary

A causal-comparative study was conducted in this project study to determine the impact of a Latino parent teacher partnership model aimed at increasing third grade reading achievement. Further, this doctoral project study endeavored to determine any disparities in student scores between those Latino parents who participated in the program and those Latino parents who did not participate. I hypothesized that the reading achievement scores of third graders would be higher for those students whose parents participated in the APTT program than for those third grade students whose parents did not participate in the parent engagement program. Toward this end, this study addressed these research questions via testing the corresponding null hypotheses:

RQ1: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant increase in reading proficiency levels following 2 years of program implementation?

$H_0$1: There was no statistically significant increase in the reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework following 2 years of program implementation.

H_a1: There was a statistically significant increase in the reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework following 2 years of program implementation.

RQ2: Did Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework show a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels than Latino third grade students whose parents did not participate?

$H_0 2$: There was no statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework than those parents who did not participate.

$H_a 2$: There was a statistically significant greater gain in reading proficiency levels of Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the APTT framework than those parents who did not participate.

The results of the data analysis of Hypothesis 1 was of statistical significance. For that reason, this finding indicated that there was a significant improvement in the reading performance among those students whose parents had participated in the APTT program. It must be noted that due to the limitations of causal-comparative research the cause of the improvement of reading scores may not have been due to the APTT parent engagement program. Therefore, this finding cannot be assumed.

The results of the data analysis of Hypothesis 2 was not of statistical significance. Accordingly, analysis of the data indicated little evidence to warrant that those students whose parents participated in the APTT program had a significantly greater gain than those students' parents who did not participate.

Section 3 describes the project that stemmed from the study findings and conclusions. The policy recommendation paper that resulted was the culmination of research that was conducted on the APTT parent engagement program and its impact on raising student reading achievement. This policy paper includes background of the existing problem (both local and in a broader context). To ensure that the study site's policy readers clearly understood the urgency of the situation and why it needed to be corrected, it was necessary to investigate innovative policy recommendation papers. I sought strategies that produced college and career ready students detailed in federal and state policy recommendations from innovative Latino family engagement programs. A literature review on policy papers is presented in Section 3 in addition to a description of the project, a rationale, and an evaluation plan.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

It was widely known to educators employed at the study site that there was an urgent need to increase the success for their Latino language learners and to be more effective in closing the reading achievement, opportunity, and information gaps that existed. This created sustained urgency toward increasing family engagement programs and strategies known to improve student reading achievement noted in the research literature.

A continued push from the national and state levels created the impetus for the study site to continue its work to create more effective parent engagement programs. In addition to these local adjustments to ensure literacy achievement, the Colorado Department of Education continued to stress the importance of family, school, and community partnering. For example, a resource brochure on family school partnerships was published explaining the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships along with suggestions for families and educators to effectively collaborate. This publication, a collaboration between the Colorado Department of Education and the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education, stated that this resource was "a focus on active partnering, which stems from knowing what works to improve student learning and coordinating in- and out-of-school opportunities." (SACPIE, p. 2).

Consequently, in this section I discuss the position paper that emerged from this study's findings as well as from local, state and national advisory councils. As noted, the purpose of this research study was to examine the impact a parent engagement

framework had on third grade students' reading achievement. The findings of this study project provided the basis for writing a position paper that addressed the local problem and the most current research based on the brain development of language learners and children living in low-income communities. Section 3 includes a discussion of the project's goals, rationale, a review of literature, the project description, and the project evaluation plan. This section concludes with a summary of the implications for social change. Appendix A includes the project deliverable.

Rationale

After the analysis of this study, I intended to write a policy paper solely to provide school leaders, parents, and all stakeholders with background information regarding the extent to which the APTT framework achieved its goal of increasing student third grade reading proficiency. However, due to (a) the rapidly increased population of Latino families in the study site (many of whom were newcomers to the United States), (b) the increased deterioration of relationships between families and district personnel, and (c) the trends in decreased literacy growth, more detailed measures were needed to attempt quick yet substantive cultural changes of significant magnitude. Specifically, results of the analysis of this study's data suggested the need for the district's elementary schools to examine the effects of parent engagement programs on student reading achievement and to further implement engagement programs that were known to be culturally responsive toward Latino parents. It was critical to restore trust between the community and the school district. Consequently, this project noted that while parent engagement was not a

new idea, current literature deemed that an approach that was systemic and integrated *was* innovative (Jeynes, 2016).

Since the district leaders knew that strong parent engagement programs were necessary to raise student achievement, it was important to notify stakeholders of the effects of their decision to implement the APTT parent engagement framework. It was also critical to inform district decision-makers of systemic, integrated, data-driven Latino parent engagement programs and strategies that would significantly raise student literacy achievement at the elementary level. District leaders and parents who had the authority to make policy decisions needed additional research-based recommendations to increase reading growth in the study site elementary schools so that they could make further informed districtwide decisions. These district leaders and parents had the greatest opportunity to create substantive systemic change that could repair relationships, increase trust, and guide crucial academic decisions that would affect all the children in the community.

For these reasons, the primary goal of this policy recommendation paper was to educate and inform the study site's leaders and Latino parents about the characteristics of systemic integrated programs that were grounded in innovation science that supported reading growth when aligned with the challenges of Latino children and families in the local community (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2016; Center on the Developing Child, 2017; Jeynes, 2016). As well, the policy position paper that resulted from this study was intended to provide school leaders with information regarding their current situation's urgency and suggestions toward improvement in hopes of deterring impending state

accreditation sanctions. It aimed to provide a vehicle to incorporate theory into practice and inform the study site's stakeholders (specifically, district leaders, and parents) of:

- the extent to which the APTT framework achieved the goal of increasing student third grade reading proficiency (Bench, 2018);
- suggested pathways for teachers, Latino parents, and administrators to work collectively to establish trust and effective culturally responsive parent strategies (Alameda-Lawson, 2014; Jimenez-Castellanos, Ochoa, & Olivos, 2016; Santana, Rothstein & Bain, 2016; Watson, 2014); and
- a systemic and integrated methodology to include Latino parents in culturally responsive decision-making processes in their children's education (Jeynes, 2016).

Review of the Literature

Project Genre Review

Several databases were searched to locate information regarding policy papers and effective family engagement programs including ERIC, ProQuest Central, EBSCO Host, online publications, Google Scholar, and specific educational journals from the Walden Library. Terms that were searched included *white papers, policy papers, policy change in education, organizational changes* and *data driven policy decisions, parental involvement, family, achievement, education, meta-analysis, school programs, parental involvement program, parent engagement programs, student literacy achievement, collective parent engagement, culturally responsive parent engagement programs, parent leadership and capacity building, training and professional development,* and *innovation.*

Per researchers, policy papers are concise and well-researched as they are intended to provide decision makers with an overview of a real-world problem, a targeted analysis of data, summarization of findings, a theory of change, and recommendations for action (Herman, 2013; Scotten, 2011; Simon Fraser University, n.d.; Young & Quinn, 2002). In addition to providing decision makers with research with actionable outcomes, public policy position papers had several core elements. Policy papers:

- were organized in a formal manner where all sides of the issue were presented from well-informed, valid, and defensible resources that argued for a specific clear course of action for policymakers;
- involved authoritative action by a body that had the authority to change the issue or problem;
- described a needed reaction to a specific authentic problem, in detail, that was directly linked to research;
- sought concrete, goal-oriented, solutions, and applications as well as presented the advantages and disadvantages of options based on similar approaches;
- outlined a justification and reasoning for action that had a direct impact on a diverse community that was practical, cost effective, could be easily implemented, and had a comprehensive outcome;
- guided communities to be collaborative, interactive, and avoided repetitive options;
- provided quantified, realistic, social, and fiscal costs that detailed the proposed benefits of the change implementation;

- were generally expected to involve all stakeholders in a community or organization, educated participants on an important topic, and increased democratic involvement in a collective effort; and
- supported a comprehensible research-based position meant to have a larger impact when the anticipated strategy fit into an existing structure.

A wealth of literature insisted that there was a duty to demand change through policy recommendations in various fields of study (Bertot, Gorham, Jaeger, Sarin, & Choi, 2014; Bower, 2016; Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland, 2012; Cohen & Eimicke, 2013; Cornell & Limber, 2015; de Lange, Woodhouse, & Millner-Gulland, 2015; Du, 2012; Herman, 2013; Mathis, 2016; McGinty et al., 2014; Musandu, 2013; O'Connell, 2013; Olivos & Mendoza, 2010; Scotten, 2011; Shanahan, 2014; Shiffman, 2013; Shore, Bernstein, & Lazer, 2015; Simon Fraser University, n.d.; Sprague & Hu, 2015; Triplett, 2014; Voogt, Knezek, Cox, Knezek, & ten Brummelhuis, 2013; Young & Quinn, 2002). It was noted that policy papers should not include academic and technical language in order to be easily understood by any audience. Ultimately, it was critical that my policy recommendation paper provided evidence as to how the recommendation benefited the Latino student population in this community.

Policy Information on Effective Family Engagement Programs and Supports

After investigating policy paper recommendation literature, I sought research that informed federal and state policies on parent partnerships that increased student achievement. Irvine and Price (2014) posited that data-driven policy decisions have had impact that resulted in significant student achievement. One such organization that

informed policy on parent engagement was the HFRP. As noted on their website, this organization "work[ed] to advance family engagement policies and programs that [were] systemic, equitable, and respectful across the setting where children learn[ed] – at home, at school, and in the community (HFRP, 2016). The HRFP maintained that educators must move from seemingly disconnected strategies for family engagement, to beginning the process of setting a habit of continuous collaboration and improvement.

A subsidiary of the HFRP, the National Policy Forum for Family, School, & Community Engagement (FSCE, 2010), confirmed that family, school, and community engagement was essential for college-and-career-ready students. I examined this framework that supported national policy for family, school, and community engagement programs. This family engagement policy recommendation included three assumptions:

1. The first assumption to understanding and reframing family engagement manifested in understanding that engagement was a shared responsibility which required a shift in thinking and elimination of blame from both sides (parents and teachers).
2. The second assumption maintained that family engagement must be a part of a child's life from birth to adulthood. It must be known that families should support their child's educational success by increasing engagement in a child's play, shared book reading, establishing high expectations, and holding conversations about a child's future goals in education and careers. It was also critical that parents attend parent teacher conferences, communicate regularly with teachers, and volunteer at the child's school. As well, parents

should collectively organize and mobilize to increase positive school climates, augment student achievement, and expand positive behaviors throughout their child's educational experience, continuing through high school and college.

3. And finally, the third assumption necessary to change current beliefs about family involvement supported the belief that learning must occur within multiple settings outside of school. Families must advocate for strategies that would bridge their community to schools and create opportunities for students for participation and expansion of their network to access supportive services and human resources (FSCE, 2016; HRFP, 2016).

Inclusive of these assumptions by the FSCE, five supports were defined as essential to transforming low-performing schools and sustaining change:

- leadership;
- instructional guidance;
- teacher professional capacity;
- school climate; and
- parent, school, and community ties.

It was important to note that the FSCE policy recommendation mandated that these five components worked in tandem, although these essential strategies and supports were "rarely" implemented (Weiss et al., 2010, p. 1).

After an investigation of actual education policy papers and family engagement parent partnership policy papers, I deemed the most effective timely way to disseminate this critical information was to provide a policy paper to the study site stakeholders who

made policy decisions in the community. Suggesting new policy was a means to disseminate research-based information that could establish directives and mandates for change. A policy paper would quickly publicize current research and generate comments and suggestions for quick yet substantial change. As well, a policy paper was the most appropriate genre to start the immediate process of developing a strong foundation for the teachers, school leaders and parents to partner academically (Hagans & Good, 2013; Klebansky & Fraser, 2013; McKie, Manswell-Butty, & Green, 2012).

Project Description

The project that resulted from this study involved writing a policy or position paper based on the study findings. The project included the most current existing research on the effectiveness of Latino family engagement projects that increased student literacy. It also offered information beyond traditional approaches and best practices for working with Latino parents resulting in culturally responsive literacy strategies and methodologies that effectively involved parents in their children's literacy achievement.

Needed Resources and Existing Supports

This project required minimal resources beyond additional time to research effective parent engagement programs that respected Latino parenting practices tied to their children's educational goals. Existing supports for this project included the following: abundant, up-to-date research that defined effective Latino family engagement programs known to increase student achievement; and the identification of successful strategies and methodologies that when implemented would respect the community and create self-initiated literacy progress.

White paper literature was sparse, especially in education. Most of the white paper information pinpointed marketing strategies for business use and therefore seemed to have a clear agenda for sales.

Aside from additional research regarding policy papers, a request was made to be placed on the board of education meeting agenda to present the findings and future suggestions of this policy recommendation was needed. In addition, an application to present this policy recommendation to the principals, directors, and teacher leaders at monthly meetings was requested.

As well, existing supports included the newly implemented curricula adoption that proclaimed its effectiveness in concurrently teaching English language learners the Common Core State Standards and the English Language Development (ELD) Standards, in tandem. Adoption of this literacy-based ELD curricula, when implemented with integrity, would lend significant support to the district's current plan to create programming for literacy attainment in Spanish and English.

Potential Barriers

While existing supports and resources were plentiful, potential barriers included conflicting interests in policy maker agendas and resistance to change. The study site's leaders needed to define and break down real and presumed barriers that were preventing successful home and school partnerships (Calzada, et al., 2015; Santana et al., 2016; Suleiman, 2014; Tran, 2014). Policy decision makers may reject this policy recommendation even though careful consideration was taken to choose strategies and methodologies that were at no cost or cost prohibitive. As well, a potential barrier may

include district leaders' perception that the incorporation of this project with the existing district initiative of the adoption of a literacy based ELD curricula was conflicting.

Potential Solutions to Barriers

While the study site has had little success in increasing their literacy scores district wide over several decades now, potential solutions this barrier, as well as others, would be to indicate that it is imperative that everyone in the district, including parents and students, collectively address the concerns of dismal literacy attainment. Encouraging stakeholders to host meetings to address trust issues and concerns could be a potential solution in this change initiative (Watson, 2014). This strategy was discussed in detail in the policy recommendation paper in Appendix A.

Along with stakeholders conducting and hosting critical meetings, another potential solution could be sharing the statistics of the district's third grade students' literacy status. All the stakeholders needed to know how each school was performing and the critical state accreditation sanctions that were likely to occur. This information was stressed in the policy recommendation and would likely be a point of departure for conversation that would create potential solutions to this community issue.

Likely budgetary concerns could arise. The study site had recently spent over $1million on a new literacy-based ELD curricula. For this reason, the policy recommendation paper included relatively cost-free low-cost research-based alternatives so that any potential fears about money could be addressed.

Proposal for Implementation

A proposal for implementation would include garnering a spot on the board of education agenda. These meetings were held monthly, and it was necessary to procure an appointment on the agenda two months in advance. Speakers were only allowed a three-minute presentation at this point in board meetings, however, due to the importance of this policy recommendation an allowance for more presentation time would be requested.

Key Stakeholders Roles and Responsibilities

The effectiveness and efficacy of this policy paper will be decided upon the stakeholders' responses and roles played. Therefore, it was important to note systems that would change stakeholder's mindsets from implementing sporadic family engagement practices to systemic and integrated family engagement practices (Jeynes, 2016). Policy recommendations included the implementation of four elements to successful family school partnerships. These four elements included: leadership, capacity building, training and professional development, and innovation (HFRP, 2016; Jimènez-Castellanos et al., 2016; York University, n.d.; Young & Quinn, 2002). These elements needed to be clearly defined and implemented as roles and responsibilities for district leaders, parents, teachers, and myself.

The superintendent and board of education's role would be to hold discussions with all other stakeholders (parents and teachers) and encourage subsequent meetings for discussion and problem solving. A commitment to "democratic schooling" was also imperative (Olivos, 2012, p. 105). The leaders needed to increase their knowledge of families' capacities and sever perceived negative beliefs about that Latino parents and

their attitudes toward American schooling practices. Public acknowledgement of the diverse experiences that RCELD students brought to the classroom should be celebrated.

Specifically, this required school leadership to critically scrutinize trust issues that existed between district, school personnel, and the community. It was vital to rebuild stronger democratic and diverse bonds between all stakeholders so that a more positive culture would inherently improve literacy attainment at this study site. Changes in practices and beliefs could be examined and discussed for substantive future change in policies.

While changing existing leadership beliefs and practices, the community would need to build capacity so that every parent could comfortably support, monitor and advocate for their child's education (Santana et al., 2016). The community and parents needed to be engaged from initiation and informed of the issues. This would require teachers, parents, and leaders to "engage sensibly in authentic dialogue" and work together to make explicit linkages between home and school (Tran, 2014, p. 7). They should create their own initiatives so that student achievement would rise quickly, organically, and dramatically. Community members and parents would conduct problem solving sessions so that all voices (parents, teachers, and community members) could be heard. Ideas for developing effective school climates that increased parent and community ties could be collectively implemented (HFRP, 2016).

Educators and parents needed to collaboratively and critically examine all institutional policies and practices that *decreased* the odds of academic success for their students. In addition, the educators and parents needed to critically examine institutional

policies and practices that *increased* academic success for their students. Therefore, to enhance change, it was necessary that parents and school leaders, at all levels, fostered collective "solidarity, camaraderie, reflection, and action" (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012, p. 83). These culturally responsive parent teacher connections should be seamlessly embedded in the everyday life of the school and needed to be "precise, coherent, and continuous" per Tran (2014, p. 11).

As well, this study site's educators needed to examine their existing beliefs, policies, and pedagogies toward Latino families to rid inherent biases and decrease distrustful relationships (Auerbach, 2011; Christianakis, 2011, Olivos, 2012; Olivos, Jimènez-Castellanos, & Ochoa, 2011; Shirley, 1997; Suleiman, 2014; Tran, 2014). Teachers would need to learn the necessary conditions that promoted positive environments and trust between teachers and students, school personnel, and all parents. Creating trusting relationships at the classroom level was deemed to be critical. It was also vital that teachers listened to the varied perspectives, unique voices, and the high expectations that were expressed from each Latino family. Any negative feelings toward Latino families had to be negated to create the deep commitments necessary to build trust and ultimately form exceptional partnerships between parents and educators (Olivos, 2012). Consequently, this district's educators needed to create the conditions where mutual respect and trust were developed and where meaningful change could occur, while understanding that it was their responsibility to increase their *own* knowledge, skills, and attitudes about Latino families. In the end, these actions would require higher levels of teacher collective efficacy (Bal et al., 2015; Donohoo, 2016; Hattie, 2012;

McKinnon, 2012) and would need to be embedded in professional development and training,

While roles for district leadership, parents, and teachers were established as creating partnerships my role was to create the conditions necessary for true innovation as discussed by Jeynes (2016). Specifically, my role as researcher was to provide innovative strategies that would offer parents a respectful avenue to membership within a successful partnership with their child's teacher. My job was to provide the impetus and scaffold for significant change so that parents could be the strongest supporters of multicultural community-based reforms. As well, my responsibility was to ensure that every parent could comfortably support, monitor and advocate for their child's education; and that all teachers and leaders would reframe existing beliefs and create and sustain trusting partnerships with every parent (Tran, 2014). This creation of trust would open the door for further collaboration and collective efficacy (Hattie, 2016) for all teachers, parents, and district leaders.

Project Evaluation Plan

Per Preskill and Brookfield (2009) the true test of social justice leadership was whether people were activated for action and everyone could assume a leadership role. These authors focused on "how leaders learn, how [leaders] support other's learning, and how all of this deepens [leaders'] social impact" (p. ix). This body of literature and research defined nine quintessential "learning tasks" that were necessary to drive socially just leadership and were practiced in developing community organizations. My

evaluation for this project was goal-based, therefore, and would include observation of the nine behaviors based on the leadership goals by Preskill and Brookfield (2009).

The shift in thinking that should be noted in this literature maintained that leadership was not restricted to certain leaders. The authors suggested that everyone *can and should* take leadership roles. For example, one key learning task defined in this theoretical framework was *openness*. "Openness is the willingness to entertain a variety of alternative perspectives, be receptive to the contributions from everyone regardless of previous attainments or status and create dialogic open spaces – multiple opportunities for diverse voices and opinions to be heard" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 21). This key learning task was defined in the policy recommendation paper (Appendix A) as the point of departure for the development of change that was to be created by the parents of the study site community.

In addition to the assumption that social justice pedagogy was a collective endeavor that supported and facilitated everyone's learning and opportunity to lead, Preskill and Brookfield wrote about 52 leaders that practiced the tenets of social justice and led social transformations via these nine learning tasks. Along with *openness* as the initial learning task deemed important to social justice reform, eight more tasks included:

- *collective leadership*: where individuals in a group let go of their own agendas and work jointly to accomplish the group's goal and interests; where everyone is accountable;
- *questioning:* where new ideas are tried, and the status quo is challenged;

- *critical reflection*: where the vision, mission, purpose, and service to the cause are clarified and known by all;
- *supporting the growth of others*: where members help others reach their full potential;
- *democracy*: where avenues are found to ensure inclusion in decision making; where all voices are heard; and, that ethical and empowering structures are created for these avenues;
- *hope*: where all members have a deep commitment to positive change, despite past dismal happenings;
- *analyzing experience*: where collective experiences are closely examined to create an action plan, while looking for lessons that may have prevented success; and
- *building community*: where everyone in the community is part of the narrative regarding the communities' growth and development.

My evaluation of this project ultimately hinged on how the community activated for action and integrated these nine learning tasks for developing social justice into their meetings. The work of Preskill and Brookfield (2009) was written in the policy recommendation paper and the nine key learning tasks were included as norms for every meeting.

In addition to Preskill and Brookfield's nine learning tasks a more formal outcomes-based evaluation was utilized. This planning tool was provided as part of the extensive resources written by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) (Boots, Romano,

& Hayes, 2016). The tool, entitled "Engaging Parents, Developing Leaders: A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Nonprofits and Schools" was based on the following five key principles.

- "We believe in engaging families based on their strengths.
- We believe in the primacy of parent, family, and community voice.
- We believe in and foster co-creation and co-ownership of solutions.
- We acknowledge that there are institutional, systemic, and structural barriers that perpetuate inequity.
- We commit to transparency and to sharing accountability for the results we seek" (Boots et al., 2016, p. 5).

A link to this assessment and planning tool is attached in Appendix I. This tool was shared in its entirety at presentation. It should be noted that publications by the Annie E. Casey Foundation "may be shared, downloaded, reproduced or reprinted free of charge provided that the materials are not modified in any way and that they contain the original Casey Foundation copyright information" (The AECF Webpage, 2017).

Project Implications

Social Change Implications for the Local Community

This project was completed because this school district, after years of work and even after the implementation of the APTT parent engagement framework was lacking culturally responsive Latino parent engagement strategies known to create the kind of parent, teacher, and leadership capacity-building necessary to increase substantive student literacy achievement. While it was important to inform stakeholders of the

effectiveness of the APTT program and celebrate the growth that occurred, it was imperative to find parent engagement frameworks that were parent initiated. Therefore, community school-based reforms that were deemed authentic, democratic, and culturally responsive to the needs of Latino parents and their children's literacy growth (Rowland, 2016a, 2016b; Santana et al., 2016) were described. It was critical to note that the policy recommendation project that resulted from the APTT data analysis informed this study site's stakeholders of parent engagement programs that allowed Latino parents to create their own literacy parent engagement systems *with* teachers and leadership. It was imperative that they implemented a program that was one that they *knew* would help their children learn. It was hoped that the leaders who made decisions regarding literacy curricula and assessment would ascertain that for literacy growth to occur parents must be an integral part of the decision making and planning for their child's schooling.

Finally, the policy paper that resulted from the findings of this study provided encouragement for school leaders, teachers, and parents to continue their quest to increasing meaningful parent engagement programs that would make a difference in the quality of literacy attainment for their elementary children. Olivos and Mendoza (2010) argued that for social change to occur educators' perceptions of Latinos must change to include efforts that revered their diversity and cultural capital. The suggested policy change recommendations have the potential to honor families' cultures and create relationships where teachers, students, and parents learn from one another. Gathering cultural input, holding frequent discussions, and treating all with respect were all strategies that promoted trust. Thus, trust and hope would occur in the community after

parents, teachers, and leaders worked together to attain quality programming for their children that would raise student literacy achievement.

Social Change Implications for the Larger Educational Community

Statistics indicated that Latino students were the largest group on U.S. college campuses and numbered approximately 25% of all public elementary school students. These statistics, noted by Fry and Lopez (2012) were unlike any other in the history of public education. While these statistics indicated increasing numbers of Latino families in the United States, research indicated that culture, socioeconomic status, education of parents, and teachers' perspectives about diverse families all led to whether parents were involved in their child's education.

This study contributed to the existing research regarding the effects of parent involvement projects on Latino student literacy achievement. Decades of research indicated that involving parents and families in their child's education process resulted in better literacy achievement. Yet, there existed little research that investigated parent engagement programs that improved scholastic achievement particularly in schools that had large numbers of low-income Latino families. Specific policy recommendations and family organizations that were effective culturally responsive parent engagement programs that raised student literacy achievement for Latino elementary students were provided in this project.

Conclusion

Section 3 described this project study which synthesized three successful culturally responsive parent engagement frameworks into one, intended to be utilized

within a district that had experienced low achievement even though administrators and teachers worked hard to ensure that parents and community were involved. The policy recommendation paper that resulted from this study may provide guidance for other predominantly Latino school districts who have experienced the same challenges.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

In this section I discuss conclusions regarding this causal-comparative ex post facto study. The project that was delivered included a summary of the research that was conducted to determine whether the APTT parent engagement framework was successful in raising third grade student literacy scores. I discuss the project's strengths and limitations along with recommendations for alternative approaches. I also review my personal scholarly development, reflections on my growth, and the changes I experienced as a practitioner. Section 4 concludes with a reflection on the significance of this study and my overall learning.

Project Strengths and Limitations

For further work to occur that could significantly affect student literacy growth, it was imperative that this project study policy paper provide the district and families with an understanding of the importance of implementing a student-and-parent-centered approach to raising student reading achievement. The most significant strength of this policy paper was that it imparted an innovative and novel avenue to solve a complex social issue that occurred in the district. Specifically, it provided the study site leaders, teachers, and community members with Latino culturally responsive outreach strategies aimed at increasing reading proficiency. It shared a systemic and integrated approach to increasing trusting relationships between parents and school personnel. Furthermore, this policy paper informed district personnel of a methodology that allows Latino parents to lead the work of authentic and sustainable literacy growth.

Possible limitations included the general nature of the community in which this project was conducted. This investigation was accomplished from analyzing archived Latino students' reading data whose parents participated in an academic parent engagement strategy meant to increase the literacy scores of their third grade children. Because this community experienced high mobility it was likely that these children no longer attended this school district. Follow up with these families to determine the strengths of the APTT program would be difficult at best. As well, because of this transient condition, families were often at a disadvantage for attending community events, and it was likely that participation in social justice transformations was difficult. Consequently, building a strong core group of parents and getting more involvement would continue to be a challenge.

A third limitation that would be worthy of investigation included the assumption that parent engagement was critical to increased literacy growth. It should be noted, again, that there was some evidence that indicated that the existence of effective parent engagement programs was questionable. Long thought to be a prerequisite for scholastic achievement, some research indicated that school parent programs might be ineffective. Researchers specified that creating effective parent engagement programs that raised student achievement were difficult to produce and sustain, especially with Latino parents (Jeynes, 2012, 2016).

A fourth possible limitation could be that the local superintendent and board of education may not agree nor accept the premise of this policy recommendation. While this policy recommendation paper was well-researched and supported by current

literature, the existing lack of trust issues in the community between some stakeholders might be irreparable. This policy recommendation paper might be viewed as inconsequential to the district's existing state accreditation issues. Additionally, while this policy recommendation paper was intended to provide research for the implementation of effective parent engagement programs and strategies, the outcomes cannot be predicted, nor can all stakeholders be expected to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

A final assumption encompasses democracy. As noted, Preskill and Brookfield (2009) wrote that democracy was about ensuring that all people were included in decision making; that all voices were heard, and that ethical and empowering structures were created so this could happen. These social justice researchers described that democracy was practiced by leaders who worked for the rights of all people and believed that communities could readily implement democratic practices in daily life. That said, it was assumed that to increase student literacy achievement, all stakeholders believed in the democratic process and were willing to practice the elements described by Preskill and Brookfield.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

A causal-comparative approach was used in this study. While this was the most appropriate approach to employ based on the use of archival data, a case study could have been utilized as an alternate approach. A case study would have included qualitative data and would have provided perception data representing an attempt to provide an in-depth understanding of the situation (Lodico et al., 2010).

As well as utilizing a qualitative approach, a professional development project genre could have been implemented for the project. This was not chosen, however, because the district's teachers at the time of this study were in their first year of implementing an extensive literacy-based English language development curriculum. Implementation of this curriculum required large amounts of professional development. It was felt that another professional development year-long program would be too intensive.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

Over the course of the last 6 years as I have worked to complete this study and its prescribed coursework, I have deepened my understanding of social justice. I have read a large amount of literature to better understand the tenets of social justice. Preskill and Brookfield's (2009) definition of social justice and its assumptions became central to my scholarship. I reflected on Preskill and Brookfield's work frequently throughout the development of this project study. Their book *Learning as a Way of Leading: Lessons from the Struggle for Social Justice* became the foundation of my thinking as I researched the theoretical underpinnings of parent engagement related to student achievement. As I synthesized the research and created a model that was more culturally responsive to this study site's Latino parents, my passion grew for working in a district that was labeled as underperforming. I became driven to understand the community's needs and to find a way to ensure that they would be empowered to apply their own skills for participation in their children's education.

In addition to increasing my skills of analysis, synthesis, and social activism, I would be remiss not to mention the huge impact that conducting this work has had on my receptive and productive skills. I now listen and read with a researcher's ears and eyes and work to apply only evidence-based practices to my profession. I have also learned that research, any research, can be called "research-based." That said, long hours of critical reading and thinking resulted in improvement in my reading and writing skills, which is a lifelong endeavor for everyone.

Project Development and Evaluation

Scotten relayed a description by a Senate staffer that "writing a policy paper is like figuring out how to convey the full experience of a Thanksgiving meal in a single bite" (2011, slide 16). Per Scotten, after reading a policy paper the reader must be able to answer two simple questions:

- Why is the current situation untenable?
- How can it be fixed?

As I developed the policy recommendation I kept these two questions in the forefront of my thinking. The policy paper was the most efficient way to quickly disseminate information that could be utilized immediately and would alert stakeholders of the urgency of the issues as well as provide solutions based on the available research (Herman, 2013). I learned that it was critical to follow the core elements of policy recommendation papers because this study and subsequent policy papers have the ability to change ingrained thinking more quickly. Quick change was imperative for this study site. Along with the potential for quick change, perhaps, the most salient point regarding

policy recommendations was the fact that policy recommendations guide diverse communities to new options that can have a direct impact on people's beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, it was my aim to ensure that I developed a policy recommendation that would be received openly by all stakeholders.

Leadership and Change

Preskill and Brookfield (2009) maintained that leaders must read widely, listen intently over adequate lengths of time, and be prepared to change their minds. As well, it is essential for leaders to ask questions. Effective questions clarify, make connections, and synthesize information (Santana et al., 2016). Hence, throughout the course of my project study work it became evident to me that I must practice daily scholarship (reading, writing, thinking, changing my thinking, and creating something new based on what was already known) and ask the questions that would empower this community to act. I learned that this process was reiterative; and I learned quickly that this would not be a swift progression. Indeed, after 6 years, I came to a point where I needed to admit that this project was only a start to changing teachers, leaders, and perhaps some of my own long held beliefs about our Latino families. It was time to admit that change could only be created collectively. It was also time to share this knowledge.

I learned from creating this project that leadership required an emphasis on the collective group's power and potential. It demanded me to be one vehicle for the needed, positive social change. For example, I asked these leadership questions throughout this project study,

- How should schools serving large numbers of low-income Latino parents best engage them?
- How can schools work with parents and communities to repair trust and create collective efficacy?
- What are school-family-community partnerships that included parents in their design and implementation?

When questions are posed thoughtfully, the needed boost to go on leading and learning can be actualized. This quest for collective leadership required humility and faith that the group would rise to the occasion and demolish any need for individual recognition. I learned that to be the best leader of social justice I needed to find a way to provide hope for the students, families, teachers, and leaders at this study site. I grew as a leader as I listened more intently to multiple viewpoints and built the relationships necessary to create the conditions for ongoing leadership and learning between all stakeholders.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

Upon reflection of the importance of this study, it became clear that building an effective partnership with parents was the primary goal as this proved that culturally responsive teaching practices were evident. It was written that people cannot grow unless three conditions are present: (a) voice and decision-making authority, (b) a reasonable standard of living, and (c) inclusivity and equality (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). These conditions became my moral imperative for this study (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) as these were critical to the development of culturally responsive teaching in a

framework that was reactive to the needs of the district's Latino parents and fit in a pedagogy that was receptive to the needs of the district's emerging bilingual children. A key criterion for CRT and CRP noted by Ladson-Billings (1994,1995a, 1995b, 2009, 2011) was nurturing and supporting competence in both home and school cultures. Since parents were their child's first teachers they were critically important partners to students and teachers.

To ensure parents become aware of how they can be effective partners in the educational process, and that they have all the skills necessary to apply their knowledge, teachers should engage in dialogue with parents as early as possible about parents hopes and aspirations for their child, their sense of what their child needs, and suggestions about ways teachers can help them. Teachers should be transparent and explain their own limitations and invite parents to participate in their child's education in specific ways. A compilation of all these components of CRT would lead to improved relationships, democratic involvement, and ultimately increased student achievement for the district's marginalized Latino population. Knowing this, it was critical for me to implement the tenets of social justice and culturally responsive pedagogy described by Preskill and Brookhart and Ladson-Billings.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Findings from this project study may have direct implications for intervention efforts to increase student achievement through the creation of parent engagement programs. The negative effects of poverty may be alleviated when parent engagement programs are carefully implemented (Huber-Smith & Williford, 2014; Tran, 2014).

Future research should explore additional variables that would contribute further nuance to the understanding of how Latino families living in poverty feel about the literacy instruction of their emerging bilingual children. As well, it would be worthwhile to conduct qualitative inquiries to determine what families thought about the APTT framework and whether they felt it was meaningful for their children's literacy growth and its contribution to their parental support for their children's reading proficiency level. These data may offer more insight as to why the study site community, specifically, had experienced ineffective parent engagement programming.

Additional factors to investigate in future studies include Latino parent efficacy, health services provided in the community and the impact thereof, quality of the curricula used to teach second language learners, and any testing biases that may have existed. In addition to investigating these factors, it would be a worthwhile endeavor to conduct additional studies on the efficacy and expertise of teachers and administrators in both groups of third grade children at each school. As well, these suggested recommendations may offer insight into why the APTT program showed increase in the reading scores of third graders in the experimental school, and at the same time, the control school showed just as much gain or more without the systemic support of a parental involvement strategy.

Conclusion

It was imperative that the leaders of this study site raised student achievement so that the district could best meet the state mandates of the READ Act and the Educator Effectiveness parent engagement requirements. Results of the analysis of these archival

data suggested the need for this study site and its elementary schools to continue to examine the effects of parent academic teams on student reading achievement and further implement engagement programs that were more culturally responsive toward Latino parents.

It was known that involving parents and families in their child's education process resulted in better scholastic achievement. When families shared their funds of knowledge with the school community, teachers formulate an idea of their students' background knowledge, abilities, and how they learn best. Soliciting input from families, taking their concerns seriously, and treating them with respect would develop the trust necessary to repair this disunited community. Teachers, leaders, and parents of this community needed guidance to augment years of prior work to gain literacy achievement for all its students.

The policy recommendation paper written for school leaders, teachers, and parents in this study site was founded primarily on three models: (a) transformative parent engagement in Latino school communities - gives Latino parents the skills, tools, and advocacy to collectively make decisions to create democratic school practices (Jiménez-Castellanos, Ochoa, & Olivas, 2016); (b) partnering with parents to ask the right questions - a strategy for strengthening school family partnerships (Santana et al., 2016); and (c) collective parent engagement - a relational approach to parent engagement and support that allowed for capacity building and multilevel systems of support (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2016). These three models were synthesized into one template that aimed to meet the unique needs of this study site community. As well, the

research from all these models indicated that when school-to-home relationships were strong, children's learning was enhanced (Alameda-Lawson, 2014; Hopson, 2014; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). This policy paper also made clear the idea that parent involvement may not be enough to increase student achievement. It may very well depend on powerful, collective engagement of everyone in the community (Ishimaru, 2014; Ishimaru & Lott, 2014).

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Appendix A: The Project

Introduction

The primary purpose of this policy recommendation paper is to present school leaders with the findings of a doctoral project study conducted on the academic parent teacher team (APTT) parent engagement program. The goal of this study was to determine the extent to which the APTT framework, implemented from 2013-2015, achieved its goal of increasing student third grade reading proficiency as demonstrated by *STAR Reading* assessments. The district searched for solutions to the problem that large numbers of students were not reading on grade level and that mandated sanctions were a possibility as designated by Colorado legislators. Significant support was needed, especially for third grade children, who if not reading on grade level at the end of the year, were labeled as having a significant reading deficiency. This designation meant that almost all children in the third grade would need to have a written reading plan (named READ plan) that documented specific skill interventions from school personnel and delineated parent support that was to be provided at home. There was also the possibility that children not reading on grade level would be retained. This legislation, implemented by the state of Colorado, was cause for consternation as approximately three fourths of students were not reading on grade level in the third grade in this district.

District leaders implemented the APTT parent engagement strategy in an elementary school, with anticipation to increased reading achievement scores, and with the goal to decrease the numbers of children who needed reading plans as mandated by

the state. However, the program dissipated without a measure of this framework's effectiveness. To determine the impact of this program, this study collected data from the school that implemented APTT and from a similar school in the district. The goal was to ascertain if the reading scores prior to implementation and after implementation were statistically significantly different.

In addition to presenting school leaders and teachers with the impact of the APTT parent engagement framework, this policy paper is intended to note that the literature about teaching reading to second language learners strongly suggested that emerging bilingual children should be taught reading differently than native English speakers. While past and current research suggested the importance for parents to be engaged in the literacy development of their children, it is also imperative that the quality of teaching be at the highest level possible. Teaching second language learners to read English is a complex process that requires skilled teachers to directly teach a set of ordered skills.

This policy recommendation is meant to provide the district teachers and leaders a vehicle to move from what we currently know about teaching all children to read, to what we need to do to teach English language learners how to read. As well, moving from theory to practical methods that support teachers and parents is deemed useful to the district's leaders as they plan innovation in literacy assessment. Changes in assessment practices will decrease the number of children on READ plans written for second language learners mandated by state legislation and clear up confusion regarding children who, based on tests alone, are labeled with an SRD. Therefore, this policy paper not only suggests the creation of comprehensive and systemic parent engagement programs, it also

recommends that teachers be provided with current quality professional learning and development that will precisely fit the needs of all this district's native Spanish speaking students who struggle to reach grade level reading proficiency in English.

This policy paper and subsequent recommendations for parent engagement policy, therefore, reviews the Latino national and local reading data that are documented within research studies and statistical data. This paper describes the study of the APTT framework and the results of the data analysis and continues with researched information that pertains to effective family engagement programs that resulted in increased reading achievement. It informs of current reading research aligned to English language learners' literacy needs. Overall, this policy paper intends to inform the school district's leaders and Latino parents about the characteristics of systemic and integrated parent engagement programs that support literacy growth when aligned with the challenges of Latino children learning how to read English as their second language at school (August & Shanahan, 2006; Jeynes, 2016; Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2016). Specifically, this paper aims to inform all stakeholders:

- of Latino family engagement projects that have supported teachers' research-based quality reading instruction; suggestions for working together to establish trust and effective culturally responsive parent literacy strategies; and a methodology to include Latino parents in culturally responsive, collaborative decision-making processes in their children's education, and

- of recommendations for the prevention of reading difficulties in emerging bilinguals; and of assessments that differentiate a struggling reader and an emerging bilingual.

National Latino Literacy Growth Trends

For more than a decade, Latino/a statistics have indicated the following:

- Of the Latino population, 66% are of Mexican origin and comprise 10% of the U.S. general population (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011).
- Poor, immigrant children (especially those from Mexico) score significantly lower on reading tests than other Latino children and White children (Crosnoe, 2010).
- Academic gaps begin in kindergarten and widen in later grades when Latino students are not always able to access the high school content necessary for college entrance (Flores, 2007; Madrid, 2011).
- Latinos are placed in lower level courses further increase academic gaps and drop-out rates (Flores, Tschann, Dimas, Pasch & deGroat, 2010; Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Snyder & Dillow, 2010).
- Latino students "still struggle for participation and social mobility in American society" (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012, p.84).
- Teachers have not adequately prepared Latino students to compete internationally, nor have they improved their literacy skills (Baquedano-Lòpez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

- Educators have not closed the achievement gap between Latino and White students (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012).
- Often, the work of teaching reading to second language learners is the "sole responsibility" of bilingual or language teachers because general educators may assume that English learners cannot learn academic English until they are proficient in English (Lee, 2012).
- Schools have not increased the overall academic success of Latino students nor involved their parents as academic supports (Durand & Perez, 2013; Epstein, 1987; Galindo & Sheldon, 2011; Gillanders, McKinney, & Richie, 2012; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill & Torres; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Jasinski, 2012; Jeynes, 2016; Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011).

Background on Reading Research for English Language Learners

To understand the magnitude of these statements and statistics about schools and their relationships with Latino students and families, it is important to have background information as to why educators (nationally and locally) do not meet the developing reading needs of our racially, culturally, economically, and linguistically diverse children.

Teaching children English as a second language continues to be an urgent matter as English is essential to a child's academic success in every academic subject and because children who are nonproficient in reading will not attain the opportunities that are required in our competitive workforce and society (August & Shanahan, 2006). It has long been known, based on the National Reading Panel (NRP) report that there are

elements in reading that should be taught to all students, regardless of language proficiency (NICHD, 2000). The NRP identified five critical elements needed to read proficiently: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additionally, the NRP determined that these elements, when taught directly, had definite advantages for language learners just as they did for native English speakers. However, subsequent research suggested that there were needed adjustments to these approaches as determined by August and Shanahan.

Another panel was formulated, this time, to specifically investigate the literacy attainment of language learners in 2006. This panel, the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth (NLP), deemed that learning to read and write in a second language was an extremely complex process. The panel determined that developing literacy proficiency in a second language (particularly in English) heavily depended on:

- The quality of instruction (appropriate teacher preparation and planning, content coverage, strengths-based approaches used to support language learners, and effective progress monitoring) the student received.
- The quality of teacher professional development (presenting innovative instruction with many opportunities to practice and discuss methods with colleagues in house and with outside experts) the teacher received (August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009).

In addition to discussing the development of "early, ongoing, and intensive" efforts to develop literacy in a second language (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 5), the

panel was clear to point out that children who are literate in their native language more quickly learn higher order skills in English. These individual differences in children's proficiency in their first language transfer to learning a second language. First-language literacy was, therefore, found to be instrumental to a child developing English as a second language. This transferability is amply noted in the research.

While the NLP found that biliteracy is a definite asset, they also determined that the kind of assessments used are imperative to determine whether a child is on track to learning to read in English. The NLP found that adequate assessments are needed to determine assets and deficits of second language learners. They stated that assessments are inadequate, on many levels, due to their inability to predict the reading proficiency or progress of English language learners' performance over time or on content area assessments in English.

The NLP "systematically and vigorously" researched second language acquisition and they also provided clarity about the home-school connection. The NLP determined that, overall, a student's literacy performance was "more likely to be a result of home (and school) language and literacy learning opportunities" (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 7). In fact, they stated that connecting home and school can illuminate a child's engagement and motivation in the classroom. Further, they wrote that their research supported these two points:

1. Although parents of English language learners are supportive and often qualified, they are underutilized and underestimated by school personnel.

2. Measures of parent and family literacy (such as: domestic workload, parent educational attainment (mostly the mother), religious activities and these influences, and the value placed on literacy attainment, and the child's self-concept of him/herself as a reader) are strong predictors of literacy attainment.

They acknowledged and further recommended that educators needed to focus on specific gaps in teaching to increase language proficiency and therefore increase reading proficiency for our English language learners. In other words, this reading research conducted in 2000 and later in 2006 indicated that skilled teachers should be teaching children how to read and that parents should be involved in the process so that a child is motivated to engage in learning to read.

The Academic Parent Teacher Team Engagement Model

Likely, in response to these statistics and the district's lack of success in reading proficiency for its English language learners, this district implemented the APTT framework to provide parents with research-based outcome-oriented strategies that reinforced the literacy instruction that the teachers provided at school. The APTT model, described by its developer, Paredes, was an academic family engagement framework meant to foster teacher and parent collaboration around the improvement of student achievement (Dunlop, 2012). Teachers coached parents and presented to them the skills they needed to effectively support their children's learning at home (Paredes, 2011a). All students received home interventions, and parents were encouraged to incorporate home routines to support meeting academic skills requirements necessary for grade level mastery (Paredes, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Bench, 2018).

This district adopted this program after reviewing research conducted with similar student demographics and family contexts. One elementary school, started the implementation of the APTT model in 2011. The APTT parent engagement program was a way to mobilize parents to be more effective partners in the literacy education of their children as parents and teachers worked together to effect change in students' literacy growth. This program consisted of six components: (a) parent-teacher communication; (b) data sharing; (c) goal setting; (d) coaching of parents; (e) distribution of practice materials; and (f) parent engagement.

Implementation of the framework began with a personal invitation to parents to attend an informational workshop intended to involve them in the learning process of their student. At this initial workshop, the parents were taught to assist with their child's education through the examination of data. During the workshop, whole-class and individual students' data were presented and explained to participating parents. The data presentation allowed parents to see where their child's performance was relative to the entire class. Paredes maintained that understanding where a child's progress was, in relation to his/her class peers, provided the impetus for increased academic parental involvement.

After sharing the performance data, parents set a 60-day goal for their child's progress upon the advice of the teacher. These goals provided an action plan for the parent to support school learning in the home, and the teachers and the parents practiced the intended skill strategy at the workshop. The parents took home materials matched to specific activities that they were asked to practice regularly. This model provided a

clear-cut pathway for parents to engage in student learning in a manner aligned with teacher expectations and student needs. This experience, in turn, created the parent teacher team model and allowed parents to be active, confident members of their child's teaching team (Paredes, 2011b, 2013; Bench, 2018).

Paredes wrote that this model increased the participatory school-based events that were important community building activities. Beyond building the community, however, it was meant to involve parents at a deeper academic level. It intended to change the traditional roles of teachers and parents. Paredes maintained that Title I schools, such as this district, move toward the creation of structures that enhanced the strengths and experiences that parents inherently possessed, to increase their own knowledge, and ultimately that of their children. Parents involved in this way increased academic achievement per Paredes.

The Effects of APTT on Literacy Growth

From the analysis of data of this research study:

1. It was apparent that the district had implemented a framework that had some impact on increasing student reading attainment. Analysis of archival data revealed that the implementation of the APTT parent engagement model resulted in a statistically significant improvement in reading performance among the students whose parents participated in the APTT program at the implementation school.
2. However, when the implementation school's third grade students were compared to a similar school, there was not a statistically significant greater

gain in reading scores between the students whose parents participated in the APTT program and the students whose parents who did not participate in the APTT program.

Due to the nature of this causal-comparative study, analysis of the data could not specify that the APTT framework caused the increase in literacy scores in the participating school. To conclude, analysis of the APTT data indicated little evidence to warrant that those students whose parents participated in the APTT program had a significantly greater gain than those students' parents who did not participate (Bench, 2018).

While the APTT parent engagement program may have been helpful, along with other interventions attempted over the last decade, students in this district continue to underperform in literacy. The latest district literacy scores based on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success are depicted in Figure 1. These figures are disconcerting for the state and especially for the district which is in turnaround status as noted by the Colorado Department of Education (2017). Of note are the percentage of fourth grade students who did not meet grade level reading expectations in 2016. Meeting grade level reading expectations is a crucial marker in a child's educational development and a strong predictor of future academic success. By fourth grade, children must use reading skills to learn other subjects. Mastery of reading is critical to their ability to keep up academically as vocabulary and cognitive demands increase in later grades. This drop is indicated in these Figure 1 data as fifth grade reading is lower than fourth grade reading. Consequently, lack of strong foundational reading skills by the end of third grade indicate

that are four times more likely to drop out of high school than children who are reading proficiently (Education Alliance at Brown University, n.d.; Hernandez, 2012).

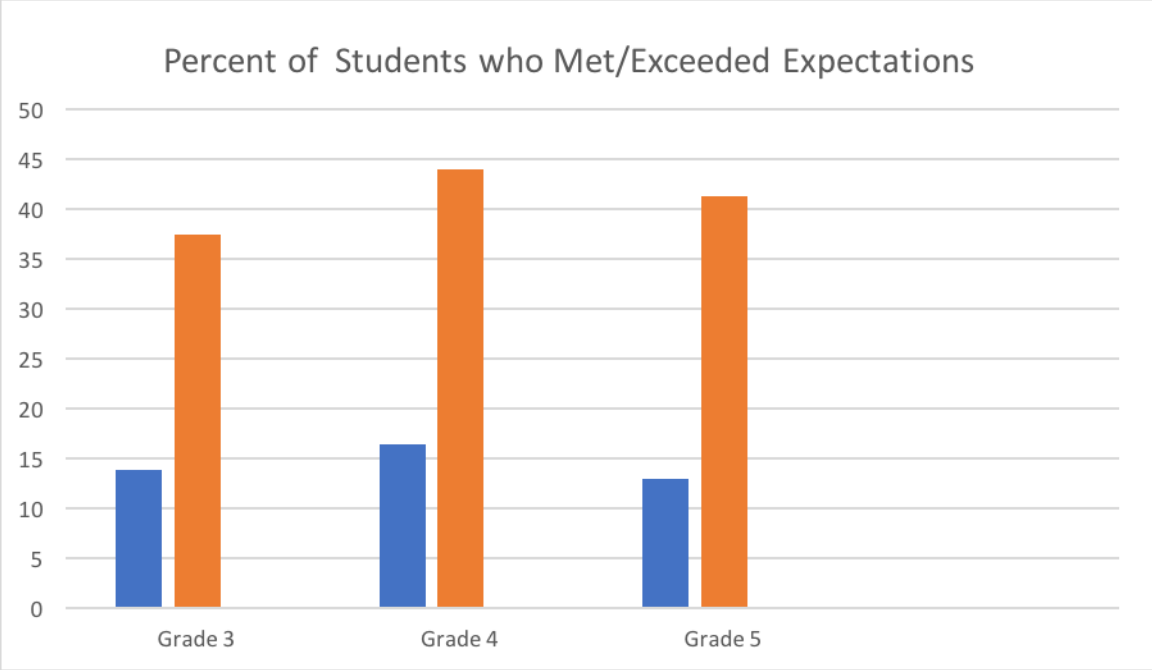

Figure 1. CMAS scores for grades 3-5 in 2016 for District (Blue) and State (Red)

However, "if we do nothing differently, we are sure to see the achievement gap widen drastically, leading to more closed doors for this growing population of students" (Knight, 2014). Consequently, as this district continues to attempt reading remediation, (both within-school instruction and within-parent support programs) with little gains in increased reading scores, it is recommended in this policy paper that the district:

- Create a coherent and comprehensive parent engagement framework that will *suppor*t literacy attainment from the home and *complement* teachers' skillful, research-based quality teaching with second language learners at school.

- Provide quality professional development in teaching reading to emerging bilinguals.
- Administer reading assessments for students that indicate differences in a reading deficiency and normal bilingual and biliteracy skill development.

Creating a Comprehensive District Parent Engagement Framework

Effective Family Engagement and Programs Defined

Parental engagement is defined by federal law as "the participation of parents in regular two-way meaningful communication involving student learning and other school activities" (United Code of Law (USCS 7801(39)). Effective family engagement programs are defined in the literature as programs:

- where family engagement is the shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement;
- that are continuous from birth the school-age years;
- that must have a trusting collaborative culture for data to be shared and received with open minds;
- based on relational trust as the foundation between families and schools;
- where relationships are built with families that support family well-being, strong parent child relationships, and ongoing learning development of parents and children alike;
- that target parents' motivations, beliefs, and knowledge of the many ways they can and should be involved (from providing academic support to their children and setting up their children for school success);

- that reflect families' cultures and embrace their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and activities;
- where family engagement happens in the home, early childhood settings, school, and community – in other words, everywhere; and
- that are sustainable and operate with adequate resources, including public private partnerships to ensure meaningful and effective strategies that have the power to impact student learning and achievement (Alameda-Lawson & Lawson, 2016; Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2016; Driskell, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harvard Family Research Project, 2010; Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017; Huber-Smith & Williford, 2014; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009).

A Vision of Effective Parent Engagement Programming

To create an effective parent engagement program that is culturally responsive to the needs of Latino second language learners, we must:

1. Build Capacity by Involving Everyone to Create Stronger Parent, School, and Community Relationships
    a. Reframe the family engagement policy so that all understand that this is a shared responsibility, and that this is not about placing blame on either families, teachers, or district personnel.
    b. Put families first and make a personal connection every day by promoting family strengths based on family-centered practices.

c. Ensure that all principals understand and implement required and effective parental involvement practices at their schools.

d. Ensure all staff and families access to training in effective school, family, and community partnerships.

e. Train staff, with the assistance of parents, in how to reach out to and work with parents as equal partners in their children's education.

f. Ensure that teachers and families have knowledge and tools to help students with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

g. Involve everyone in learning strategies that will shift behaviors, attitudes, and thinking so that establishing quality family partnerships is priority.

h. Increase teachers' knowledge, skills, and attributes about our Latino/a families so that our parents are empowered to advocate for their children's literacy and become their own agents of change.

2. Expect Leadership by Everyone

a. Ensure that all schools have parent family involvement programs.

b. Meet requirements of state and federal law regarding family involvement.

c. Ensure that parents know that their child's educational success depends on their engagement from birth to adulthood.

d. Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

3. Provide Instructional Guidance for Everyone

a. Allocate resources and assign principals and staff to implement school improvement plans for increasing effective parent engagement programs that are systemic and sustainable.
b. Provide parents the information to successfully participate in curricular and budgetary decision making.
c. Conscientiously provide training for teachers to recognize parents as crucial to the educational process of their children.

4. Monitor Progress
    a. Ensure all schools integrate parental involvement programs into the school's unified improvement plan and that the plan is linked to student achievement in literacy per SB 12-1238.
    b. Provide oversight, support, and coordination of parent involvement activities among district schools and programs.
    c. Document progress of each school's implementation of its parent involvement program.
    d. Assess every principal's effectiveness in establishing and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships at his or her school through the Educator Effectiveness SB10-191.
5. Ensure Access and Equity for Everyone to Create Strong, Trusting School Climates Across the District
    a. Ensure that critical parent information is readily available in accessible formats and languages spoken by families in the district.

b. Guarantee that parent representation on committees reflects the composition of the student body.
c. Warrant that every school have a system in place with multiple strategies to facilitate two-way communication with parents and community members on a regular basis.
d. Establish family-friendly volunteer policies to recruit and organize help and support from parents.
e. Start a social movement that engages parents for higher student achievement both in and out of the classroom (Alameda-Lawson &Lawson, 2016; Asmar, 2016; California Department of Education, 2014; Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2016; Harvard Family Research Project, 2016; Ishimaru & Lott, 2014; Jeynes, 2016; Jiménez-Castellanos, Ochoa, & Olivos, 2016; McWilliams, 2016; National Center for Families Learning, 2016; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Santana, Rothstein, & Bain, 2016; Tran, 2014).

Invest in Parent Engagement: Implement a Collaborative Decision-Making Protocol

Effective parent engagement programs thus defined, and a vision set forth for the district, this policy paper proposes implementing an opportunity for parents to collaborate and effectively partner with schools that will meet the requirements of implementing a strong parent framework and increase student literacy achievement (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). To collaborate successfully and accomplish the tasks of teaching children to read

together, parents and educators must be educated about the issues and feel comfortable working together to find solutions.

The Right Questions School-Family Partnership Strategy is a very simple, cost free strategy to help educators and parents build effective partnerships. The book *Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions* described the work of three educators (Santana, Rothstein, and Bain) who worked for decades perfecting a process whereby parents could learn to support their children's academic achievement. Parents learn to ask pertinent questions and participate effectively in key decisions. These two fundamental skills can be used to support the education of their children, monitor their progress, and advocate for their future academic attainment. Implementing this simple strategy may:

- Increase parents' awareness of the importance of asking questions to explore complex issues that pertain to their child's education.
- Allow each parent to reach out to educators confidently, comfortably, and to become 21st century advocates for their children.
- Send the strong message that educators cannot do this work alone and it is imperative that we work together to raise student literacy.
- Empower parents to act and hold every community member accountable for the education of their children.
- Allow the creation of a district resource that can be coupled with already strong outside agencies that support the district to create a holistic approach.
- Be a resource for all district programs working with parents.

- Create a strong sense of our community moving to action, and one where "people help people to help themselves" (Santana, et al., p. 170).
- Help everyone in the district to overcome our feelings of helplessness to the challenges we all face when raising student achievement.
- Teach parents three roles they can play in their child's education:
    - Support, Monitor, and Advocate
- Be put into practice immediately because it only requires teaching two invaluable skills to parents:
    - How to formulate questions, improve those questions, and strategize on how to use them, and;
    - How to effectively participate in decisions that affect their child's education.

This accessible and proven strategy, if implemented districtwide, may create the needed collective community investment, leading to *action*; leading to effective partnerships; and ultimately leading to increased student achievement.

In addition to creating a collective endeavor that supports everyone's learning and opportunity to lead, it is recommended that this district practice nine leadership strategies written by Preskill and Brookfield (2009). These social justice activists wrote about 52 leaders that led social transformations via nine learning tasks. They began with the tenet of *openness* as the initial learning task that was deemed important to social justice reform. They suggested the creation of spaces where conversation can flow without fear of retribution. For example, they wrote, "To be open is to create possibility, fuel hope,

behave as if the options for the future are virtually unlimited" (p. 25). Eight more tasks included:

- *Collective leadership*: where individuals in a group let go of their own agendas and worked jointly to accomplish the group's goal and interests; where everyone was accountable.
- *Questioning:* where new ideas were tried, and the status quo was challenged.
- *Critical reflection*: where the vision, mission, purpose, and service to the cause were clarified and known by all.
- *Supporting the growth of others*: where members helped others reach their full potential.
- *Democracy*: where avenues were found to ensure inclusion in decision making; that all voices were heard; and, that ethical and empowering structures were created for these avenues.
- *Hope*: where all members had a deep commitment to positive change, despite past dismal happenings.
- *Analyzing experience*: where collective experiences were closely examined to create an action plan, while looking for lessons that may have prevented success.
- *Building community*: where everyone in the community was part of the narrative regarding the communities' growth and development.

It is recommended that the community activates for action and integrates these nine learning tasks into all gatherings and conversations.

In addition to Preskill and Brookfield's nine learning tasks a more formal outcomes-based evaluation should be utilized. This planning tool provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), entitled "Engaging Parents, Developing Leaders: A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Nonprofits and Schools" is based on five key principles:

- "We believe in engaging families based on their strengths.
- We believe in the primacy of parent, family and community voice.
- We believe in and foster co-creation and co-ownership of solutions.
- We acknowledge that there are institutional, systemic and structural barriers that perpetuate inequity.
- We commit to transparency and to sharing accountability for the results we seek" (Boots, Romano, & Hayes, 2016, p. 5).

Invest in Teachers: Professional Learning and Quality Assessments

The quality of teaching and professional development for all learners is critical, and even more critical for our second language learners are diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. This information garnered from these assessments is important for teachers of emerging bilinguals to know because they must know the language level attainment of their students. To accurately assess a student's home language, it is obvious that student's must be assessed in his/her native language. In fact, our existing monolingual data system (*STAR Reading*) provides erroneous and inadequate information to determine whether a child has a reading deficiency in English or whether the child is an emerging biliterate (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014).

An important finding of this work indicated that teaching the key components of reading are necessary, however, not sufficient for our students who are learning English as a second language. Overall, teachers must emphasize word-level skills in primary reading development with emphasis on comprehension later; vocabulary and background knowledge should be targeted intensely throughout instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006). They recommended the following:

- More specific instruction and practice with English phonemes (sounds) and combinations of phonemes that do not exist in the student's native language.
- The development of strong oral language in English for the transfer of vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, syntactic skills (the structure of the English language), and meta-language skills (the awareness of how to use language, summaries, using cognate words in Spanish as synonyms for English words).

While this information is important, perhaps the most important recommendation reported by the NLP was that for children to reach proficiency in reading it is imperative that certain skills are learned in a certain order. For example, for children to develop automatic word recognition skills, they must have strong decoding (recognizing words) and orthographic (spelling) skills in English. The panel stated: "without fast and accurate word recognition skills, they cannot achieve satisfactory levels or reading comprehension" (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 5). Additionally, the NLP posited that reading deficiencies among English language learners "may be more a function of individual differences than of language minority status" (p. 6). In other words, poor

readers (whether ELLs or monolingual English speakers) are similar – they have underlying phonological awareness and working memory challenges. The Panel stated that this suggests that it is not language development (or lack of) that is the issue, rather it is likely a processing deficit.

Conclusion

This project noted that while parent engagement is not a new idea, current literature deemed that an approach that was systemic and integrated *was* innovative (Jeynes, 2016). It was evident that after many attempts at creating a parent program that raised reading achievement at this study site that the APTT academic parent engagement framework raised reading achievement for the Latino third grade students whose parents participated in the program. At the same time, students whose parents did not participate in the APTT program achieved just as well or better at some nonparticipating schools. A large body of research maintained, unquestionably, that parent involvement was and continued to be, a ubiquitous part of the recipe for student achievement (Epstein, 2009; Garcia & Jessen, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey & Whitaker, 2010; Jeynes, 2016; Lam, 1997; Ordoñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004, 2012). At the same time, up-to-date literature on parent engagement programs continued to reveal that [effective parent engagement programs] had remained an "elusive endeavor, particularly in schools in which low-income Latino families are the majority" because educators' had persistently held deficit mindsets toward Latino families (Jiménez-Castellanos et al., 2016, p. 94). This issue exists in this district, and consequently increasing parent engagement programs to increase reading achievement had remained difficult after decades of trying.

Thus, the culminating suggestions toward parent engagement programs may provide school leaders with information to comply with the passage of *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA, 2015). This document subtitled, "A New Day in Public Education" mandates fair accountability for English language learners and greater integration of this accountability into the spirit of the law. While this law is an important step into our progress toward equity for emerging bilinguals we must invest in quality programming for parents *and* teachers so that our children read in their native language and their second language. We must foster stronger relationships between parents, teachers, and community members so that we can ensure that students read on grade level no later than the end of third grade.

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Appendix B: Guide to Conducting Research

Guide to Conducting Research in [redacted]

This document is intended to serve as a guide for individuals and organizations who wish to conduct research in [redacted]. All individuals and organizations interested in conducting research in Adams 14 must complete and submit a research proposal form. Proposals are reviewed by the District's Research Review Committee, which is composed of an interdisciplinary group of district leadership professionals. Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision after a thorough review of the research proposal. Decisions to approve or deny research proposals are based primarily on the value of the proposed research on district processes and practices, and the protection of the safety of research participants. Researchers must receive written approval to conduct any research related activities within the district, regardless of their district affiliation.

Section 1:

Guidelines for Submitting Research Proposals in [redacted]

All research conducted in [redacted] must adhere to the 7 guidelines outlined below:

1. All research must be conducted in compliance with state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). For more information on the protection of human subjects in research, please visit the United States Department of Education's website below.
http://www2.ed.gov/print/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html

2. Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is required for all research involving human subjects. Documentation may come from either an independent or university based IRB. Additionally, researchers must obtain active, informed consent from all participants or their guardians for all research studies. Consent forms must be included with the research proposal form.

3. Research in [redacted] must be aligned with one or more of the Board of Education Strategic Imperatives:

1. To dramatically improve academic performance and move the District from Priority Improvement to Accredited with Distinction by the year 2020.

2. To significantly empower all families and community members to become engaged partners in their child's education, by creating welcoming environments District-wide that reflect and support a culturally diverse population.
3. To intentionally increase and improve communication District-wide, both internally and externally, as well as enhance the resources offered to our current clients and community members.

For more information on the strategic imperatives please visit the website below:
[redacted]

4. Research cannot excessively disrupt student instructional time or district/administrator operations.

5. [redacted] promotes school-level autonomy and site-based decision making. Research activities therefore cannot be conducted in any school without prior written approval of the school's principal. Once the Research Review Committee has approved the study, it will contact the school principal(s) for final approval. Upon principal approval, subject participation must be voluntary, except as required by federal/state mandate or required evaluations related to district-held grants or contracts.

6. Once the research has been approved, no changes in project scope, including procedures, protocols, instruments, or analyses, can be made without prior written approval of the Research Review Committee.

7. Any written report or article based on the research conducted within the district must be submitted to the chair of the Research Review Committee. If the researcher intends to submit the results of the research for publication or conference presentation, the Research Review Committee must be notified prior to starting the project. Upon publication, the district must be provided with an electronic copy of the publication.

Section 2:

Research Application Procedures

As [redacted] receives numerous research proposals, it is advised that the researcher submit the completed research proposal form well in advance of the project's projected start date (typically 3-6 months in advance).

1. All applicants who wish to conduct research in [redacted] must complete the research proposal form. Please include well-written and thorough responses to all questions on the form. If you are requesting district held data (e.g., student attendance, behavior, assessment, etc.) you must also complete the data request form. All research

instruments (consent forms, surveys, scoring rubrics, etc.) must be included in your completed packet. If, for example, you intend to collect primary data through focus groups or interviews, you must include all interview and observation protocols.

2. Email a copy of your completed application to [redacted], Chair of the [redacted], at the email address below. Applications typically take 6-8 weeks from the date of submission to review.

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
DArchuleta@adams14.org
[redacted]

Section 3:

Application Review Process

Once the application is received it will proceed through the steps below:

1. All research projects are reviewed in the order in which they are received.

2. The Research Review Committee will review the proposal to ensure that it meets all of the criteria outlined in the previously defined guidelines for submitting research proposals. If there are missing elements in the proposal, the committee will contact the primary researcher and request additional information.

3. If the research proposal is approved by the Research Review Committee, the committee will send the completed proposal to the school principal(s) for final approval. If final approval is granted, an official correspondence will be sent to the primary researcher. The researcher is then free to contact the school principal(s) to organize his/her research activities. If the research request is denied, the Research Review Committee will provide the researcher with a detailed explanation of their reasons for not approving the research.

4. While there are multiple factors that can affect the time it takes to process a research proposal, the process typically takes six weeks.

Appendix C: Research Permission from Renaissance Learning

901 Deming Way, Suite 301
Madison, WI 53717
Phone: 608-664-3880
Fax: 608-664-3882
www.renaissance.com

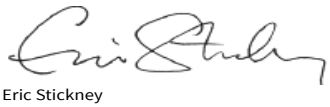
April 14, 2016

Dear Barbara Bench:

The purpose of this letter is to grant you permission to use Renaissance Learning's materials, including STAR Reading, in your research project.

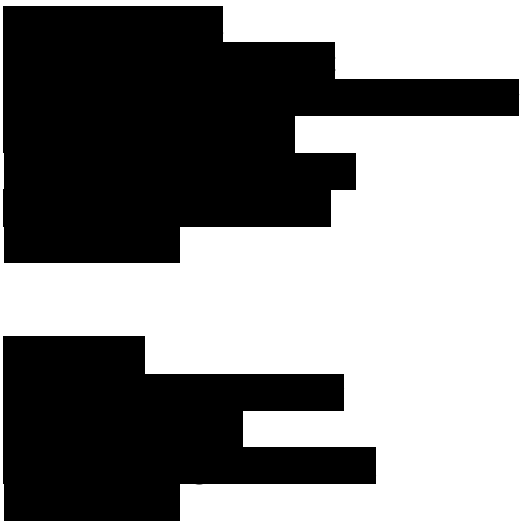
If you have any questions about the research base for any of our products, please do not hesitate to contact the Research Department, email research@renaissance.com.

Best regards,



Eric Stickney
Director of Educational Research
Renaissance Learning, Inc.
901 Deming Way, Suite 301
Madison, WI 53717-1979
eric.stickney@renaissance.com
(608) 664-3880, ext. 2009
Fax: (608) 664-3882

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation



March 27, 2016

Dear Ms.Bench,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled The Effects of Academic Parent Teacher Teams on Student Achievement within the [redacted] As part of this study, I authorize you to access archived *STAR Reading* data.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Providing STAR Reading Assessment data to include:

- Beginning of the year and end of the year STAR Reading data,
- for all third grade students in the years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014,
- who attended all 7 elementary schools ([redacted])
- These data are to be inclusive of:
    - Scale scores
    - Percentile scores
    -
    - Insert a description of all personnel, rooms, resources, and supervision that the partner will provide. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

Include the following statement only if the Partner Site has its own IRB or other ethics/research approval process: The student will be responsible for complying with our site's research policies and requirements, including Describe requirements.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix E: Data Use Agreement-1

DATA USE AGREEMENT

This Data Use Agreement ("Agreement"), effective as of March, 2016 ("Effective Date"), is entered into by and between **Barbara Bench** ("Data Recipient") and [redacted] ("Data Provider"). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in research **in accord with laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.** In the case of a discrepancy among laws, the agreement shall follow whichever law is more strict.

1. Definitions. Due to the study's affiliation with Laureate, a USA-based company, unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the USA "HIPAA Regulations" and/or "FERPA Regulations" codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

2. Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with any applicable laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.

3. Data Fields in the LDS. **No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS).** In preparing the LDS, Data Provider shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the research:

    - *STAR Reading* data for every student (**assigned a confidential number**) in the **third grade** in Adams 14 School District in the following named elementary schools from the years 2012- 2013 and 2013-2014:

      [redacted]

[redacted]

- These data are to include the beginning of the year initial STAR Reading assessment data and the end of the year data, for each year, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

- These following requested data are to include the minimum necessary to accomplish this research:

    - Scale score
    - Student Growth Percentiles (SGP)
    - percentile rank
    - class rank
    - gender
    - ethnicity
    - Lexile level

4. Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

    a. Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

    b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

    c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

    d. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

    e. Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

5. Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS **for its Research activities only.**

6. Term and Termination.

   a. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

   b. Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.

   c. Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

   d. For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.

   e. Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.

7. Miscellaneous.

   a. Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

   b. Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

   c. No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

d. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

e. Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

[redacted]

[redacted] _____

[redacted] _____ Print Name: _____

Print Title: _____ Print Title:

Appendix F: Request for Change in Procedures Form

Request for Change in Procedures Form

Please email this change request form to irb@waldenu.edu.

1. Clearly describe the requested change and indicate what prompted the request (i.e. sponsor-requested changes, researcher's assessment of need, etc.) as well as whether the change necessitates revision of the consent documents.

I am filling out a request for change in procedures form because I received an email (attached in this larger email) on June 14, 2016 from [redacted], my school contact who has been working with me on completion of the Data Use Agreement. As noted in [redacted], STAR Reading data is not available in the 2012-2013 school year as this was a pilot year in the district.

I originally had requested data from the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. [redacted] is able to gather the data for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years only. These data will also be appropriate and meet the qualifications of my study because these data are also within the timeframe for the implementation of the Academic Parent Teacher Team parent engagement program in [redacted]

Thank you for your consideration in this request for a change in procedures.
Sincerely,
Barbara Bench

2. Please send irb@waldenu.edu a copy of all documents revised or added as a result of the proposed change (i.e. consent/assent forms, recruitment letters or ads, revised protocols, questionnaires, etc.) with changes clearly highlighted. If the change involves a request for additional subjects, indicate the number of additional subjects for which approval is requested.

This document is attached in this email:

- Updated Data Use Agreement

3. If your request involves a change in research staff, please provide contact information for all new personnel, as well as any relevant degrees and qualifications.

This request does not involve a change in research staff.

Your request to change study procedures/staff will be reviewed by the same method in which the study was first reviewed, either by the full-committee or through the expedited review process, unless the change is minor and can be managed through expedited review. The IRB staff will route changes for review through the most rapid means possible and will provide an update as to the status of this request when confirming receipt of the form.

Appendix G: Data Use Agreement-2

DATA USE AGREEMENT

This Data Use Agreement ("Agreement"), effective as of May 20, 2016 ("Effective Date"), is entered into by and between Barbara Bench ("Data Recipient") and [redacted] ("Data Provider"). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in scholarship/research **in accord with laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.** In the case of a discrepancy among laws, the agreement shall follow whichever law is more strict.

1. Definitions. Due to the project's affiliation with Laureate, a USA-based company, unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the USA "HIPAA Regulations" and/or "FERPA Regulations" codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

2. Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient a LDS in accord with any applicable laws and regulations of the governing bodies associated with the Data Provider, Data Recipient, and Data Recipient's educational program.

3. Data Fields in the LDS. **No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS).** In preparing the LDS, Data Provider shall include the **data fields specified as follows**, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the project:

☐ STAR *Reading* Assessments beginning-of-the-year and end-of-the-year **scale scores, national percentile ranks, and student growth percentiles** data for all **Latino (Hispanic) third grade students** in school years **2013- 2014** and **2014-2015**; from seven elementary schools ([redacted]).

☐ Gender

4. Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

a. Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

d. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

e. Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

5. Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may use and/or disclose the LDS **for the present project's activities only.**

6. Term and Termination.

a. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

b. Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.

c. Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

d. For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall afford Data Recipient an opportunity to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable

terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by Data Provider.

e. Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e) and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any termination of this Agreement under subsections c or d.

7. Miscellaneous.

a. Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable amendment(s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

_____ _____ ___ _____
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

b. Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

c. No Third Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns, any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

d. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

e. Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

b. _____ _____ _____

DATA PROVIDER

DATA RECIPIENT

b. BD Bench
Signed: Print Name: [redacted] Print Title: Manager of Strategy and Accountability

Signed: Print Name: Print Title:

Barbara Dee Bench: Walden Student

Appendix H: Engaging Parents, Developing Leaders: A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Nonprofits and Schools

Boots, S.W., Romano G., & Hayes, G. (2016, August). Engaging parents, developing leaders: A self-assessment and planning tool for nonprofits and schools. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/AECF-EngagingParentsDevelopingLeaders-2016.pdf