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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP:
BELIEFS, ESPOUSED PRACTICES AND SUPPORTS IN
HIGH PERFORMING URBAN SCHOOLS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
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ABSTRACT

The racial academic achievement gap, identified as the underachievement of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD) students and documented by research, is visible in all education organizations (Griner & Stewart, 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009). Since the United States Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, repudiating the concept of separate but equal, laws concerning the need for equal education access have been enacted and educational policies have been created and implemented, but this achievement gap continues to exist (Williams, 2011). Culturally responsive leadership and culturally relevant pedagogy are research-based theories and practices that work towards meeting the needs of the growingly diverse population (Gay, 2018). A mixed method design utilized the explanatory sequential approach to research what culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports elementary public-school principals convey in high performing urban schools. The design included the use of surveys and interviews to collect anonymous data from principals on their experiences in these roles and the influences they convey at their urban elementary school to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. Survey data collected with the use of Qualtrics Survey Software and interview data collected through individual interviews were conducted. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and reviewed for themes. Creswell's six steps of data analysis and interpretation were utilized to analyze and interpret the data collected. Multiple reliability and validity measure occurred in this study. The results are compiled for future implications and recommendations are made.

This dissertation is dedicated to the amazing people in my life for your persistence and support. Donna Schofield, my uplifting mother; John Schofield, my encouraging father; Rob Goins, my loving partner; and Reid Goins, my shining son.

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My students, the ones I do this for—I hope that I have made a difference in your lives and that I have become a better teacher to you each and every year you have had me. I am so lucky to go to work every day doing something that I love, and it’s because of each one of you. The staff I work with. I hope I have become a more positive teacher leader as I have worked through this process. I have learned so much about myself as well as what it takes to lead, in any circumstances. I hope to continue to make waves of change to improve the teaching and learning environment.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The field of education is complex, with a nationwide mission “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (United States Department of Education, 2019). Each day, more than 50 million students walk through the front doors of more than 98,000 public schools across the nation, in hopes that when they complete their schooling, they will be able to compete at an international level to succeed in college or their career of choice and increase their earning potential. But contemporary American schools are being asked to do something that no other schools in the world do—ensure all students learn at high levels. The United States was the first nation to embrace the idea of a free and appropriate public education to all students, regardless of ability or disability. Schools need to run effectively to ensure high levels of learning for all of the diverse learners. How effective a school runs to help achieve academic success for these students influence their chances of success in the future. The public school system is the only place that opportunities can be made real and tangible: through education (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Pappano, 2010).

Equal educational opportunity is conceived as being one of the greatest assets to equipping students with the knowledge and tools needed to become productive, empowered individuals—high-quality educational opportunities for *all* students is in critical need in the United States public education system (Jones, 1978; Shields, Newman, & Satz, 2017). Yet the precedence for unequal opportunities as related to race can be documented as far back as 1896

with *Plessy v. Ferguson* where the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of “separate but equal” rail cars. The seminal court case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in 1954 began the fight for laws to diminish unequal educational opportunities. *A Nation at Risk* brought to the forefront the despairing achievement gap amongst subgroups nationwide and worldwide as well as a need for school reform and improvement. This great need for reform, highlighted in the report, fell short of having a significant effect on the still evident racial achievement gap (Gardner, 1983). Although lawmakers have worked to remedy these disparities with policies and reform such as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*—the first federal education legislation to require schools to disaggregate academic achievement data by race—the racial educational achievement gap still is seen today (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, Kewal Ramani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016; Williams, 2011). While data attempts to highlight that gaps have begun to narrow again (Reardon, Robinson-Cimpian, & Weathers, 2015), the National Center for Education and Statistics’ most recent *Condition of Education 2018* details that over the past 25 years, the black-white gap has only narrowed by six points and the Hispanic-white gap has only narrowed by four points (United States Department of Education, 2018).

The Educational Achievement gap is notable when race, English-language learner, and socio-economic status of the students is considered when reviewing the national data (United States Department of Education, 2018). The disparity among these different disaggregated groups of students can be noted in graduation rate, literacy, enrollment in advanced level classes, enrollment in post-secondary educational opportunities, and scores on national and international

assessments, (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014; McKinsey, 2009; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013b).

In the United States, the population of individuals who identify as minority continues to increase. In 2000, the Census identified 25% of the population as minority. Ten years later, the 2010 Census depicted that percentage increased to 36.3% (United States Department of Commerce, 2012). By 2023, individuals identifying as minority in the United States will outnumber those who identify as white, eight years earlier than predicted in previous censuses (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The 21st century reality of an increase in individuals identifying as minority require that schools effectively and appropriately respond to diverse groups in the school (Banks, 2008). This demographic shift that has been occurring in larger cities for decades, has now intensified and is happening more rapidly even in smaller cities and towns across the country (Clark, Zygmunt, & Hward, 2016).

Goldring, Gray, and Bitterman (2013) reported on the disproportionate makeup of teachers who represented their student population—while 18% of teachers identified as minority, the minority student enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools represented more than 51% of the population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). That percentage of elementary students identifying as minority increased to 49% in the year 2015 while the percentage of teachers identifying as minority only increased to 20% (National Cener for Education Statistics, 2018). Griner and Stewart (2013) consider that the disconnect between minority students and their teachers and/or educational institutions serve as a fundamental cause of the achievement gap. Quinn (2015) replicated previous research addressing the differential school quality that play an important role in the widening of the achievement gap. School

leaders, serving increasingly diverse student populations, must have cultural competence as a fundamental aspect of their understanding and implementation with classroom teachers in order to help to narrow this achievement gap (Owings & Kaplan, 2003). Projected percentages of public school students enrolled in prekindergarten through 12th grade will see an increase of students identifying as minority to 55% of the student enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices and supports that urban school principals convey that support the improvement in minority student achievement. Research suggests that school leadership is essential in any effort to narrow the racial achievement gap (Fullan, 2017; Hickman, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2010; Ross & Berger, 2009; Yukl, 2010). As Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, and Porter (2006) posit, in periods of significant organizational transition, leadership is the major controllable factor in explaining organizational culture. In urban schools, leaders must build capacity within their teaching staff for culturally responsive pedagogy to promote achievement for all students (Gay, 2018). The effectiveness of research-based strategies varies but one finding has remained constant; “first and foremost, administrators are key to effective implementation of new initiatives” (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, Skyles, & Barnes, 2010, p. 21).

Research Question

What are the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban elementary schools?

Research Design

A mixed methods research design with an explanatory sequential approach was used for this study. Mixed methods is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study—the rationale that neither method is sufficient on its own to capture the trends and details of the situation as related to the research question (Creswell, 2014; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick 2006). A mixed methods explanatory sequential approach was utilized for this study, out of the more than forty mixed-methods research designs that are reported about in literature to first collect and analyze the quantitative data then collect and analyze qualitative data to provide a general understanding of the research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Through the use of surveys and interviews, reviewed by experts in the field, this study looked at culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that principals in highly performing urban schools convey. The sample consisted of a group of three elementary school principals (selected at random by the school district), who possessed the specific characteristics required for participation in this study. The three schools led by the principals in this study had more than 50% of the student body as students identifying as minority. In one school, 32% of student identified as white and 68% of students identifying as minority. In addition, 100% of the students in this school qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the next school, 41% of students identified as white and 59% of students identified as minority and 58% of students at this school qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the last school, 9% of students identified as white and 91% of students identified as minority, with 100% of students qualified free and reduced lunch (Florida Department of Education, 2018). In all three school

representations (100%), the principal was supporting a high performing urban elementary school that served predominantly students who identified as minority.

Definition of Terms

Achievement gap: when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

Culturally Responsive leadership: The direct and indirect behaviors of school leaders who function in their role as public intellectuals, curriculum innovators, and social activists and affect teacher instruction that results in minority student learning (Daresh & Playko, 1995; Johnson, 2006).

Culturally Responsive pedagogy: a pedagogical approach that utilizes and builds on students' cultural knowledge and experiences to make learning relevant and consequently more effective (Nieto & Bode, 2008) using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective (Gay, 2018). Three major contributing domains are academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014)

Minority student: a student who is an Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Black (African-American), Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education, 2011; United States Census Bureau, 2018).

Principal: a person in a leadership/evaluative role on a school campus who works together for the collective good of the organization—the school (Fullan, 2018).

Professional learning community: combination of individuals with an interest in education—a grade-level teaching team, a school committee, a high school department, an entire school district, a state department of education, a national professional organization (DuFour, 2004).

Racial achievement gap: The achievement gap, disaggregated by race, when one group outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant—larger than the margin of error (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Race: Oxford Dictionary defines race as each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct physical characteristics, or; a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language, or ethnic group. There are six federal race categories: White; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and; Some Other Race (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; United States Census Bureau, 2018).

Urban school: The National Center for Education Statistics (2006) breaks urban down to four locales (with a total of twelve categories) based on size, population density, and location in relation to a city: City, Suburb, Town, and Rural. Urbanized areas are densely settled core areas with populations of 50,000 or more and urban clusters have populations between 2,500 and 50,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Three additional subcategories for schools include large urban schools (inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more), midsize urban schools (inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city

with population of 250,000 or less), and small urban schools (inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with a population less than 100,000) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

Limitations

The limitations of this research study included the following:

1. This study was limited to one large, urban school district.
2. Principals may not be representative of the district as a whole and participation was be optional.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this research study, several assumptions were made:

The principals understood culturally responsive pedagogy.

The principals had been in their current assignment for two or more years.

The principals provided leadership in urban schools.

The principals had experiences with poverty.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Persistent gaps in educational achievement have effected gross domestic product more severely than all recessions since the 1970's. The gap in educational outcomes of white students and students identifying as black or Hispanic, otherwise known as the racial achievement gap, creates more than 310 billion dollars in unrealized economic gain as a result (McKinsey, 2009).

Alberto Carvalho (2019) expressed in a keynote speech:

Opportunity gaps, if not mitigated or addressed, mature into academic achievement gaps.

And if (students) cannot read by grade 3 or compute by grade 9...the likelihood that he/she will graduate high school by 18 or on time, has significantly diminished. And those opportunity gaps that went unmitigated or often unrecognized, mature into academic gaps, then become, lifelong economic gaps. The only place in America where this crisis can be cured, is in the classroom.

In the past, good schools were defined by the quality of their inputs—expenditure, school size, library size, facilities, and resources. The idea of what defines a good school has shifted to the outputs provided by the school—quality of education, amount its students know, gains in learning, and improved digital opportunities (Hanushek, 2016).

The United States is spending more money than many countries educating its youth yet test scores for the U.S. fall below average when countries are compared by international standards. As a country, the United States is 4th highest in per full-time student expenditure, however, is 16th when rank ordered by International test score comparisons (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). The United States educates all students in contrast to competing

nations that exclude certain populations, but still has increased inputs with decreased outputs when compared internationally. In the United States, students identifying as racial minorities and students with disabilities participate in these international assessments, although these groups of students, as a whole, are over-represented as receiving low scores (McKinsey, 2009). Shealey, Lue, Brookes, and McCray (2005) reason that until structures are put in place to address contextual factors related to teaching minority students and students with disabilities as well as working effectively with their families, the achievement gap that is noted in schools, districts, states, and the nation will continue to exist. It is critical to understand how contextual variables such as race, culture, and socioeconomic status are related to provide quality educational experiences for these students overrepresented in low-scoring categories (Hilliard, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Neal, McCray, Webb-Johnson, & Bridgest, 2003; Quinn, 2015). While the minority achievement gaps have narrowed since the 1970s, students identifying as minority still have not yet reached the academic achievement that students identifying as White have demonstrated at any time in recent measured history (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Analyses of the minority achievement gap have shown that the gaps widen as students progress through elementary school and an understanding of the role that school quality plays in education is necessary to help narrow the gap (Quinn, 2015). Widespread application of best practices could help to secure a more equitable education, creating substantial economic gains (McKinsey, 2009).

Throughout history, researchers have concluded that the most vital aspect of organizational success is leadership (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Fullan, 2017; Yukl, 2010). Effective leadership in education is evaluated by multiple measures, including student and

teacher learning—setting and achieving goals of high expectations and providing teachers with systems of support and training (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Leadership matters even more in difficult times of transition (Hager, Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, & Pins, 1999). Urban school systems in the United States are experiencing more diversity with an increase in minority students, English language learners, students with disabilities, students identifying as gifted and talented, and students who are economically disadvantaged (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013a, 2014b, 2014c, 2017; United States Department of Commerce, 2012). As school districts experience significant organizational transitions, leadership is a major influential factor in maintaining organizational success (Fullan, 2017; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2006).

One of the largest transitions currently being seen in United States Public Schools is a demographic shift that in recent decades has occurred predominantly in major cities. The increase of individuals identifying as non-white, or minority, is intensifying and happening more rapidly now in smaller Midwestern and Southeastern cities across the country (Clark, Zygmunt, & Howard, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Suburban schools are becoming urban schools (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Cultural competence in leaders—having an understanding, awareness, and a degree of working knowledge of how culture plays itself out different for different people—influences how teachers and students think, how they communicate, and how they learn (Clark, Zygmunt, & Howard, 2016).

Diverse cultures have diverse assumptions, beliefs, behaviors, and norms (Owens & Valesky, 2015). With a convergence of diverse cultures brings dissonance in education, just as it does in other organizations. Leaders, as capacity builders, must recognize the changing culture

of the organization to affect the current climate to meet high expectations (Stein & Nelson, 2003). As Siepert and Likert spoke of at the American Educational Research Association National Convention in 1973, “organizational climate created by leadership behaviors significantly affects how subordinates deal with each other individually and in work groups in order to produce the end results.” Schools are still working to achieve diversity through the behaviors of leaders who are guiding their schools through this capacity building. Cultural competence, culturally relevant leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy must be promoted through leadership-level behaviors in order to help influence school quality (Quinn, 2015). Student achievement, while the ultimate goal in education, lacks sustainability by portraying an appearance of progress, rather than genuine improvements that have a long-term positive influence (Harris, 2007). The minority achievement gap has indeed narrowed over the past 25 years, but with a nearly unmeasurable narrowing of only 4-6 percentage points, minority groups still have not yet reached the academic achievement that their White peer group reached 25 years ago (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; United States Department of Education, 2018). Leaders continue to grapple with the complexities of developing and enacting a long-term plan for effective student achievement to meet the needs of all learners (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009).

The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy has developed over the past 40 years, with scholars and researchers continuously adding to the body of research (Gay, 2018). Early researchers identified that poor school achievement was related to teacher-student interactions as related to race and gender (Au & Mason, 1981; Irvine, 1985). Au (1980) and Tharp (1982) began their research on culturally appropriate instruction with Native Hawaiian islanders but

expanded their studies to include all populations identifying as racial minorities. A. Wade Boykin (1982) was one of the first researchers to move from African-American heritage, home circumstances and personality/motivational as deficiencies to a focus on the motivational and behavioral processes that demonstrate a greater variability with the African-American heritage. He also argued that students' cultural frames of reference needed to be incorporated into teacher pedagogical formats to increase reading and school achievement for minority students (Boykin, 1984). Multicultural education shifted from the low level of tolerance and acceptance to a more conceptualized ideology of respect and affirmation, solidarity, and critique—providing the most powerful learning results by understanding that culture is not fixed and is sometimes challenging—in the early 1990's (Nieto, 1994). As multicultural education transcended from tolerance to affirmation, Culturally Responsive Teaching developed from the many years of research into theory and practice (Gay, 2018). Griner and Stewart (2013) state that the use of culturally responsive pedagogy in urban schools has been researched to be effective in decreasing the minority achievement gap, yet minimal research on urban principal application of the culturally responsive framework has taken place (Johnson, 2006; Noguera, 2011). Historical claims that legacies of poverty, racism, and broken families cannot be overcome when it comes to educating the nation's most diverse population—but they are wrong. With the right leadership and guidance, poverty, racism, and broken families are no excuse for academic failure (Carter, 2001).

History of Inequalities

Throughout the history of the United States, the rights of minority groups have been violated (Supreme Court of the United States, 1896; 1954). Dating back to 1896, the Supreme Court made decisions based on racial identifiers, which have further mitigated the separation. Homer Plessy, a man that identified as 7/8 white and 1/8 black, was required to ride a separate rail car for blacks based on Louisiana law. The decision from Plessy v. Ferguson was that separate facilities were acceptable if they were equal, although the argument that separate was, by definition, not equal (Supreme Court of the United States, 1896). For the next 50 years, separate facilities for white and blacks continued to exist.

Before Brown v. Board of Education (1954), President Truman signed Executive Order 9981, providing equality and desegregation in the armed services (1948). Brown v. Board of Education (1954) reversed the decision of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) determining that separate was unconstitutional and inherently unequal and demanded equal education for all students. This was the first case guaranteeing equal protection, declaring that states could not deny students a public education due to race. Although the history of education is replete with issues related to race, this case set precedence for equal educational opportunities for all students, paving the way for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, written and enacted based on some of the Brown findings (LaNear & Frattura, 2007).

While Brown v. Board of Education promised desegregation with deliberate speed, schools struggled to effectively desegregate schools. Although the Little Rock, Arkansas school board agreed to comply with the Brown v. Board of Education ruling and submitted a plan of gradual integration to be implemented in 1957, nine black students were still blocked from

entering their neighborhood school by protestors and the governor deployed the National Guard to ensure students were not allowed access. Martin Luther King Jr. involved President Eisenhower, and reluctantly, Eisenhower ordered the Army's 101st Airborne Division out to protect the students for the entire school year (Shealey, Lue, Brooks, & McCray, 2005). Again in 1962, President Kennedy had to send 5,000 troops to deter violence and put out riots over the enrollment of James Meredith, the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi (Cohodas, 1997). Although *Brown v. Board of Education* set precedence that individuals could not be denied education based on race, prejudices continued to occur.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 extended and reiterated the civil rights to all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. Following the Civil Rights Act, in 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 89-10), a significant legislation that commanded awareness of the need to bridge the gap for educationally disadvantaged students (Eskay, Onu, Ugwuanyi, Obiyo, & Udaya, 2012). The focus of the bill was on economically disadvantaged students. With more than half of the people who identified as economically disadvantaged also identifying as a minority subgroup, this legislation brought to the forefront the need to support these economically disadvantaged, minority students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act increased funding and support for schools who served a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students as well as increased integration with white, economically stable peers, but did not address specifically what the funds should support or how supports should be put in place (O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009).

Beginning with the 1966 “Equality in Educational Opportunity” report, researchers concluded that schools had little influence on student achievement due to background and social context of the children (Coleman, Campbell, Hopson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfield, & York, 1966). Following six years later, Researchers continued to report that student’s achievement was primarily a function of background, that schools did little to lessen the achievement gap, and that there was little evidence that school reform had any impact on student achievement (Jenks, Smith, Ackland, Bane, Cohen, Grintlis, Heynes, & Michelson, 1972). Researchers soon began to establish that what happens in schools can have a major impact on student achievement and provided evidence in their research that achievement among students from similar backgrounds differed significantly based on the practices of their school (Brookover, 1979; Edmonds, 1982; Lezotte, 2004; Rutter, 1979). The results continued to show that highly effective schools could produce results that almost entirely overcome the effects of student backgrounds (Marzano, 2003). Blaming families and social class on poor academic performance was not helpful in implementing reform to narrow academic gaps (Gay, 2018).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was a reauthorization to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 107-110, 2002). President George W. Bush signed into law a new plan for improvement in education based on accountability, flexibility, research-based education, and parent options (United States Department of Education, 2009). Accountability was at the forefront of this bill, disaggregating student data based on federally mandated subgroups, and ensuring success based on each subgroup category (race, gender, language, socioeconomic status, disability). This disaggregation of data by subgroups brought the significant gap to light by demonstrating that white, economically stable students were still

achieving higher than other subgroups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013c).

Although this act outlined a plan to support the education growth of all subgroups of students, it has had little impact on minority student achievement, and many programs have been cut (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013c; United States Department of Education, 2013).

The last 30 years have had significant legislation addressing the minority achievement gap, yet the gap between white students and black students as well as white students and Hispanic students continues to be significant. While the gap between white and minority students had narrowed from an average of 39 points to an average of 22 points at its lowest, it has now increased back to 26 points in 2017, while Black and Hispanic students have presently yet to achieve the level that their white peers demonstrated forty years ago (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013c, 2017, 2018). If academic achievement gaps continue to narrow at the same rate in the future, it will be over one and a half centuries before the reading gap closes (Hanushek, 2016).

Current Legislation

Although the minority achievement gap has been researched for nearly fifty years, little has changed in what the research recommends and while what is currently being done is not working, there are not strong recommendations as to how to work to narrow this achievement gap (National Center for Education statistics, 2018; Reardon, 2013). Research related to culturally responsive leadership and culturally relevant pedagogy has brought to light the discontinuities between the school and culturally diverse students as an important factor in

academic achievement (Allen, Scott, & Lewis, 2013; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Potter, 2013; Schmeichel, 2012).

Common Core State Standards were developed out of a national need for a common set of standards across state curricula. Families in the United States are more mobile now than ever, and this extends beyond across-city; families relocate across state lines with increasing rates (United States Department of Commerce, 2018). When students and families relocate across state lines, they are faced with new curriculum, standards and assessments. Removing mobility as a barrier allows for a consistent measurement for all students in achieving high standards (Smith, 2005). Common Core State Standards, which have been adopted by 43 states and five territories, have not only worked towards aligning standards, but toward developing a deeper understanding of learning, leveraging the power of technology, and preparing students for college and career (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014; International Reading Association Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Committee, 2012).

Common Core brought a need for accountability as well as funding for modernization, renovations, repairs, educational support, data collection, standards, assessment, higher education, support to struggling schools, improvement to early childhood education, and incentives/grants. The Race to the Top Fund was written under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to provide federal funding to states choosing to apply (United States Department of Education, 2016). While Race to the Top provided some necessary funding to many districts and states in the nation, not all states applied and not all states that did apply were accepted with their first application. As an unintentional consequence to Common Core and Race to the Top, United States schools inadvertently promoted a more homogeneous

curriculum with an increasing heterogeneous student population, as academic proficiencies did not make any improvements (Wiggan & Watson, 2016).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama in 2015, was the most recent reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Public Law 114-95, 2015). Before the reauthorization, many flaws in the No Child Left Behind Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act became evident, as well as changes that need to occur. There was a lack of bipartisan cooperation when the No Child Left Behind Act was due for reauthorization in 2007. Waivers were granted for many states who were unable to demonstrate adequate yearly progress under the current legislation tied to the No Child Left Behind Act (Black, 2017).

The Every Student Succeeds act has two primary goals: to require states to align their education programs with college and career ready standards and to extend the federal focus on equity by providing resources for students from economically disadvantage backgrounds, students identifying as minority, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. The history of school reform has been plagued with the falsehood that schools fail because the people in them don't work hard enough. The downfall of many underperforming schools is not the motivation to get people to work, it is getting people to do the 'right work.' These underserved student populations must receive additional resources and special attention in order to stimulate and support improving quality education. The act redefined the role that the federal government played in education and recognized that some federal control of education needed to be turned back over to states for accountability (Black, 2017; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017).

The importance of educational leadership as a factor in achieving national and international educational goals is highlighted in the Every Student Succeeds Act. The act provides federal funding for states and districts to support the preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality teachers, principals, and other school leaders (Public Law 114-95, 2015; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). The act recognizes that there is much research that supports the need for effective school leaders to improve student achievement in urban schools (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Public Law 114-95, 2015; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017).

Leadership in Organizations

The traditions and beliefs about leadership in schools is no different from leadership in other organizations—leadership is vital to the successful functioning of an organization. In all organizations, there is a gap between the aspiration and reality of what leadership looks like. The challenge lies in finding the right type of individuals that have leadership beliefs and practices that align with the organizational goal and continued success. Leadership helps to create the conditions for success—leaders help the people and organization solve problems and improve their current situations. Organizations foster hope, optimism, and collective self-efficacy when they put people in a position to achieve success (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010; Fullan, 2017; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Leadership in Education

The goal of all educational institutions is to improve the academic success of students. Whether a school operates effectively increases or decreases students' chances of academic

success. Operational success of a school is rooted in the leadership of the school. While it would be perceived with the importance of leadership in schools and the central role of the principal that suggestions would encompass the research field, the reality is that the history of research on school leadership is limited and provides little specific guidance as to effective practices in school leadership. Because there is no template or list of leadership characteristics for effective leaders, educational institutions struggle to prepare leaders for all learning environments (Goldberg, 2001; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

The growing body of research has consistently demonstrated that leadership is one of the most important school-level factors influencing a student's education. A meta-analysis that examined the relationship between leadership and student academic achievement generated a small body of only 69 studies spanning 23 years—only as far back as 1978. The results of the meta-analysis showed that students in effective schools have a higher expected passing rate on typical standardized tests when compared to schools that are not effective. The correlation between principals' leadership behaviors and student achievement is significant enough to be discussed and debated by researchers, but all agree—leadership impacts student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

The most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has a focus on educational leadership, acknowledging that educational leadership is an influencing factor in achieving a national educational goal—specifically providing new pathways for states and districts to use federal funds for the development of school principals and other school leaders—in schools with high percentages of poor students, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities—our

minority student population. Without prioritizing leadership and adequately supporting the development of educational leaders, current policies and programs will have a hard time meeting the core purpose of the ESSA as well as the needs of the students the policies are meant to support (Fullan, 2017; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017).

School leadership is deeply rooted in context. The principal—and how s/he relates to teachers, students, parents, and the community and to other schools within and beyond the district—has an impact on change that occur in that specific school. A change in school must begin with the culture of the school, the shared values and beliefs that are conveyed from the top down to the bottom (Fullan, 2018).

Theories on Leadership

There are many theories of leadership, some that are more influential in guiding school leaders to be change-agents for their school. Researchers discuss the ideas that leaders must not only attend to general characteristics of behavior (ie. Having a vision), but also must identify specific actions and behaviors that affect student achievement. Theories such as transactional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, facilitative leadership, adaptive leadership, and instructional leadership, as well as the work of leadership theorists including Warren Bennis, Michael Fullan, Robert Greenleaf and James Spillane, have provided a knowledge base that has allowed a broader framework of effective leadership (Boudreaux, 2017; Cotton, 2003; Earley, 2016; ; Greenleaf, 1977; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, Ozmusul, 2017).

Empirical studies of effective and successful schools throughout history have findings indicating principals had personal capacity building, were instructional leaders, and promoted safe and supportive environments (Barakat, Reames, & Kensleyr, 2019; Fullan, 2018; Coelli & Green, 2012; Ylimaki, Brunderman, Bennett & Dugan, 2014). International studies of turnaround schools added to this body of research that effective leaders in successful schools focused on securing the building and surrounding neighborhood, more democratic leadership models, focus on curriculum and instructional improvements, and culturally responsive practices (Day, 2009; Harris, 2002; Jacobson, Johnson, Ylimaki, & Giles 2009; and Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). These studies idealized successful leadership practices that contribute to gains in student outcomes yet recognized the importance of educating the whole child as a responsible, democratic citizen, using rigorous, culturally relevant curricula (Fullan, 1999; Harris, 2002; Jacobson and Ylimaki, 2011).

The most effective of the transactional leadership styles is the constructive transactional leadership style. This type of leader sets goals, clarifies desired outcomes, provides rewards and recognition for accomplishments, provides constructive feedback, suggests/consults with staff instead of demands, and gives employees praise when it is deserved. Expected performance goals are achieved by the team because all stakeholders are invited into the management process. (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

The model of transformational leadership, with a focus on change, has been refined by Kenneth Leithwood (1992) with strong influences by James McGregor Burns (1978), as well as Bass (1985), and Bass and Avolio (1994). School leaders change school culture by providing individual consideration to staff and students, intellectual stimulation through problem solving

and professional developments, inspirational motivation through high performance behaviors and communication, and idealized influence as a model of character and accomplishment (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Transformational leadership helps to create a relationship of “mutual stimulation and elevation” (p. 4) that creates more leaders and moral agents in the school as opposed to followers to one leader (Burns, 1974). Transformational leaders can increase intrinsic motivation by influencing interests and values that support the vision. Transformational leaders help support an environment of stability, trust, inspired motivation, and charisma. Transformational leaders make follows more aware of the importance and value of their work: educating children. Followers become empowered, assume more responsibility, maintain enthusiasm, and influence change (Yukl, 2010). These leaders create a climate of respect, encourage active participation, build experience, employ collaborative inquiry, learn for action and empower participates (de Lourdes Viloría, 2019).

Servant leadership, a theory grounded with Robert Greenleaf (1977), was originally a leadership style most commonly seen in business organizations, and then expanded to higher education as well. With 40 years of research, theory, and practice, servant leadership has grown to be commonly accepted in the educational system (Iyer, 2013). Servant leadership is based on principles of service and placing the needs of others first. The ten characteristics related to servant leadership include active listening, healing, awareness, empathy, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building (Spears, 2010). While there is limited empirical research related to servant leadership, literature-rich anecdotal in nature and a growing trend of practice are core attributes to increased successful leadership practices in educational organizations (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Instructional Leadership, sometimes referred to as Leadership for Learning, has returned as an effective model of leadership in schools after being overshadowed by transformational leadership during the 1990s (Hallinger, 2009). Adding to the body of research reporting that the instructional leadership role of a principal was critical to school success, the rise of accountability increased a focus on instructionally effective schools (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Instructional leadership, while often viewed as having an indirect relationship to student achievement, involves characteristics such as decision making, communicating to others, “gatekeeping” with parents and other community interests, and monitoring the core technology and work activities at the schools, ultimately having a top down effect on teachers and student achievement (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990, p. 95). These behaviors affect teaching, classroom practices, building school climate, and supervising instructional organization (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

Facilitative Leadership is another leadership style that resonates with educational organizations (Töremen, 2004). Mudi Berry (1993) introduced seven competencies for facilitative leadership: understanding context, technical competencies, rational competencies, interpersonal competencies, task process competencies, human process competencies, and personal characteristics. Ober and Underwood (1992) posit that one of the roles of the school facilitative leaders is to help the development of the teachers in their professions (p. 162). Facilitative leaders motivate, simplify, share authority, develop common visions, help others reflect, and aims to help all members of the school to develop a common vision (Rallis & Gohdring, 2002; Töremen, 2004). The people-centered aspect of facilitative leadership, supporting and aligning teams in the same directions to work towards a shared goal involves

group decision-making as opposed to leader decision making. The key benefits of facilitative leadership of commitment, alignment and innovation can be achieved through voices, group contributions, and shared voices/decisions (Nunni, 2018).

Adaptive leadership, a change-agent leadership theory expanded by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky in the 1990s, considers all factors that affect an organization and allows leaders to tackle tough challenges and thrive (Yukl, 2010). Adaptive leaders have the ability to recognize changes in the external environment and make informed considerations that have a positive influence on the organization (Khan, 2017). An important skill to adaptive leadership—diagnosis—allows a leader to diagnose themselves, the system, and see larger patterns to look for solutions that lead to actions and changes (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Adaptive leaders navigate through change by addressing a problem based on current realities, not only previous actions/experiences, and using that cohesive information when evaluating and determining solutions (Khan, 2019). Adaptive leaders have the ability to motivate their followers by understanding their values, recognizing struggles, delegating responsibility, and including all in the diagnosis and decision-making process (Yukl, 2010).

The approaches to leadership learning have changed throughout history. Early researchers believed that leadership capacity was a natural ability as opposed to a teachable skill. As leadership related research continued, theoretical models of teaching leadership began to develop and adapt to the changing organizations that these individuals led. While there is no one explicit leadership theory, style, and model that is most effective in urban schools, research shows that leadership is a teachable and has shapeable skills (Olberg & Andenoro, 2019).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

There are more than 1.9 million elementary education teachers. Of these elementary education teachers, 80% identify as white and 89% identify as female (United States Department of Education, 2018). English language learners represent up to 14% of students in city locale schools. In the year 2000, 71% of traditional public schools had more than 50% of their students identifying as white. In 2015, that percentage of schools decreased to 58% of traditional public schools identifying as predominantly white, 13 percentage points in 15 years. Teacher reform needs to continue to take place (Ladson-Billings, 1995b), but cannot move forward without guidance and leadership beginning at the school level. Research shows that cultural mismatch negatively impacts student achievement, but with a move for all adults in a school organization to be culturally responsive to meet student needs, the importance of culture and learning can intertwine (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b).

The theory, research, and practice of culturally responsive teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy has developed as a result of much research by renowned scholars and researchers Kathryn Au, James A. Banks, Carlos E. Cortes, Lisa Delpit, Mary Dilg, Geneva Gay, Gary R. Howard, Tyrone Howard, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Sonia Nieto, John Ogbu, and A. Wade Boykin, as a response to the serious academic achievement problems among low-income students and students of color (Gay, 2018). The theory postulates that “discontinuities between the school and minority students (and students who live in a low-income home) are an important factor in their low academic achievement, and that their achievement will increase if schools and teaching are changed so that they reflect and draw on their cultural and language strengths” (Gay, 2018, p. ix). Culturally relevant pedagogy, another term for culturally responsive

pedagogy, was also described by Bartolome (1994) as a “collective empowerment, not individual, and rests on three criteria: students must experience academic success, students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and students must develop critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order” (p. 173). The way students of different cultures or language backgrounds develop their academic success vary, but all students still require the same skills to be an empowered, productive participant in this democratic society, thus culturally relevant teaching requires teachers to attend to students’ academic needs, not merely to make them feel good (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Using students’ cultural orientations, background, experiences, and ethnic identities act as conduits to help facilitate their teaching and learning (Gay, 2018).

The history of the multicultural education movement emerged in the 1960s with desegregation. Black Americans protested against differential treatment, wanting the same education and curriculum available to white students. Research began to suggest that student learning opportunities were hindered when their teachers failed to consider their own and the students racial background and how it impacted classroom learning opportunities. Teachers began to adopt the ‘color-blindness’ belief of ‘not seeing color just seeing students’, but this neglected important features of culture that affected how teachers taught and how students learned. These teachers and leaders lacked the racial knowledge, sensitivity, and empathy necessary to teach culturally diverse students effectively (Johnson, 2002; Milner IV, 2012). Research continued to prevail revealing that teachers could not attend to the multi-layered identities of diverse populations and that decisions related to curriculum/instructional designs did not consider their learning styles. Students were expected to assimilate and adjust to

expectations, without the role and relevance of their race considered. The absence of culture was also the absence of learning opportunities. The next paradigm was the idea that teachers had to have the same racial background as their students to provide opportunities for connections and less room for misunderstandings in the learning environment. Today, however, research has demonstrated a need for culturally responsive education to enhance minority school learning by including minority cultures in the content of the curriculum and as a medium of the instruction. The idea that educators from any racial background can be effective with any group of students when the educators have the knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, and skills necessary to understand and be responsive to the students' social, instruction, and curriculum needs (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Marzano, 2003; Milner IV, 2012; Ogbu, 1992).

Cultural responsiveness includes creating a culture that crosses between home and school (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). For this connection to be meaningful, leaders must ensure that teachers understand the culture and background that the student population represents.

Studies show that the beliefs held by a teacher or administrator can have either a positive or negative impact on student achievement. Culturally responsive pedagogy, and the ability to confront and change personal beliefs regarding the ability of one student group over another, is essential to the evolving model of student achievement that school districts must adopt to affect change (Gay, 2018; Williams, 2011). School districts leaders need to develop a top down approach to this type change model as this model cannot remain solely at the teacher-instructional level; it must be modeled and facilitated by district administrators and leaders (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Administrators need to create an environment within their schools that increases student-teacher interactions and relationships and encourages students to work

hard and put forth their best effort. The culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports that are conveyed in a school influence student achievement, narrowing the racial achievement gap that is seen across the nation. Many existing studies explore culturally responsive pedagogy and high performing schools as isolated subtopics in education (Wiggin & Watson, 2016). This study sought to understand the intersectionality of these topics and how they help to support closing the academic achievement gap that is still so persistent in all academic institutions.

Culturally responsive leadership has been derived from the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. It involves the leadership philosophies, practices, and policies that help to create an inclusive school environment for those from racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Genao, 2016). There are many facets that frame the critical issues related to culturally responsive leadership. Leaders need to facilitate the incorporation of cultural orientations and experiences of students into teaching strategies. Modeling effective communication and interactions with diverse learners is important for building relationships and the basis for learning. Deliberately incorporating cultural diversity in the classroom, the school, and the culture will improve school achievement.

The development of teachers who exhibit culturally responsive practices begins with intentional leadership practices that encourage and support the work of culturally responsive teaching and leading (Gay, 2018). In recent studies, teacher retention rates were as high as 98% when a principal created a climate for success and promoted positive attitudes and was in the same leadership position for twelve years (de Lourdes Vilorio, 2019). In one study, leadership was focused around the importance of the teachers', students', and community's human agency—creating a school climate of hope and understanding where students came to school

because they felt safe, loved, and respected—as a facet in the school’s academic improvement (de Lourdes Vilorio, 2019).

Implications of the Achievement Gap

In society today, without a solid background in the foundations of reading and mathematics as well as many independent living skills, lifelong potential is affected. Engineering and technology are becoming more important as necessary life skills, and with significant gaps in achievement of 21st century reading comprehension skills that lead to mastery of these engineering and technology skills, career opportunities and advancement in many fields may be limited. The knowledge and skill achievement gaps between different minority groups has many contributing factors. The racial demographics of the nation continues to change. As students who identify as minority become the majority, the beliefs, practices, and supports that are conveyed and employed in the school system must be the change agent in increasing student achievement to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. In the education organization, next to teacher interactions, leadership is the second largest impact on student achievement. Culturally responsive leadership beliefs, practices and supports that are conveyed in schools are support student achievement. Strategies need to be incorporated across districts as a whole from the teacher-student relationship, to a shift in the attitudes and priorities in administrators and teachers, quality preparation of teachers and administrators, student-centered standards-based instruction (Dennis, 2016; Fullan, 2017; Gay, 2018; Williams, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A review of the literature revealed a gap in the research focusing on the principal's role in supporting culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports in high performing urban schools. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences elementary school principals in high performing schools have on the racial achievement gap. This chapter identifies the research question and describes the design, population, sampling procedures, participants chosen from sample, survey and interview instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis process for the study.

Research Design

Educational research consists of two categories—quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research seeks scientific explanation and strives for testable and confirmable theories while qualitative researchers contend that research involving the social sciences is bound by the context in which it occurs. Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret human and social behavior as it is lived by participants in a particular social setting (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019). Mixed methods, under the rationale that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient on their own, integrates both quantitative data and qualitative data in a single study to gain a better understanding and complement the methods, allowing for a more robust analysis (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

This research study utilized a mixed methods approach known as Sequential Explanatory Design. Mixed methods sequential explanatory design one of the more common of over forty mixed methods research designs. This mixed method design utilizes quantitative data as the general understanding of the research problem to then build upon the qualitative data to refine and explain participants' views more in depth. (Creswell, 2014; Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). Across multiple perspectives, mixed methods research stems from a need to obtain more complete and corroborated results, a need to explain initial results, or a need to involve participants in the study: the importance of the descriptions of their experiences, not just explanation or analysis of data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). In mixed methods research, the researcher identifies a problem that will help to better understand an organization, but examining only quantitative data is insufficient—qualitative data examines shared experiences, and develops broad philosophical assumptions that may help to develop better practices or policies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As a characteristic of sequential mixed methods design, the quantitative results were used as the basis for the design of the interview protocol. Mixed methods studies provide for quantitative data while also describing meaning for several individuals of their experiences—with a focus on what all individuals have in common throughout their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Individuals who have lived through experiences about which they claim to be experts are more believable and credible than those who have merely read and thought about such experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). The desired outcome of this research is to provide a description of the experiences of several individuals who have lived this experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Moustakas, 1994) in an effort to share those experiences for the purposes of supporting, preparing, and training principals to lead urban schools.

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods research study was to describe the common beliefs, espoused practices, and supports principals in one large urban school district convey in their high performing urban schools. Mixed methods research addresses questions about common human experiences while considering quantitative data to be used to develop better practices: in order to do this, an examination of shared experiences is necessary (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019). This study focuses on describing meaning from several individuals, to reduce individual experiences to a description of the universal essence (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This mixed methods sequential explanatory design was conducted with volunteer participation of principals who met specified criteria.

Moustakas (1994) outlined the importance of conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview as a necessary inquiry tool. Interviews focus on targeted but open-ended questions that ultimately address two broad, general questions: “What have you experienced in terms of this phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of this phenomenon?” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 60). The development of questions and topics to guide the interview process assists in a focus to the nature and purpose of the research (Moustakas, 1994). Using the Delphi technique, a panel of experts were utilized to develop the interview questions and determine reliability and validity.

Research Question

The relationship between culturally responsive pedagogy and student achievement has been discussed in research, but few studies have researched the experiences related to leadership beliefs in culturally responsive pedagogy, even with an increase in support and funding for the preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality principals. The research question for this study was:

What are the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports of principals in high performing urban schools?

Population

For the purpose of this study, the population was elementary school principals in a large urban school district in the southeastern United States. This specific mixed methods sequential explanatory study utilized purposive sampling of the population. Purposive sampling allows for the intentional select of participants from the overall population, ensuring the selection participants that have experience with cultural responsiveness (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Although purposive sampling is often used to ensure the sample is representative of the entire population—due to access, funds, time and the nature of this study—a sample of elementary school principals was set forth by the participating school district. The researcher compiled a list of all elementary schools that met the school criteria (high performing school for two years or more), and instead of the researcher contacting principals to ask for interest, the school district provided the researcher with the eligible schools and the respective principals for participation.

Procedures

Mixed methods research must still hold up to the requirements of an organized, disciplined, and systematic study (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2014) and Moustakas (1994) outline a series of methods and procedures to accomplish research orderly and disciplined, with care, rigor, and integrity. The procedures for the study are found in the procedures section.

Selection of Participating Schools

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) must review all research studies utilizing human subjects. The nature of this study required two reviews to be completed, one for the college and one for the identified school district. Approval from the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board and the large urban school district's research and evaluation department were necessary prior to conducting research, as the large urban school district is the catalyst for the sample population. Upon receipt of IRB approval from both education institutions, elementary schools at the large urban school district were reviewed to determine which elementary schools have had a state School Grade of A or B for the past two school years, a component to understand how well each school is serving its students (Florida Department of Education, 2018). This list was generated and submitted to the large urban school district as schools of interest for the research study. The large urban school district generated a Research-Notice of Approval (R-NOA) which included the eligible schools and the respective principals. There was no communication between the researcher and the targeted school district as to how these specific schools and principals were selected, but it is also important to note that the three

schools that were selected were indeed on the researcher's initial list of schools of interest based on school grades.

The principals in the study consisted of a group of three elementary school principals who possessed the specific characteristics required for participation in this study. These specific characteristics include employed at a high-performing elementary school in the targeted school district, at least 3 years of leadership experience, and a principal at their current school for at least the past two years. The researcher asked the targeted school district for permission to contact all principals in the school district who were administrators of elementary schools that were identified as A or B schools for the past two years. The targeted school district provided the names and email addresses of principals that the targeted school district approved to participate in the research study. The three schools led by the principals in this study had more than 50% of the student body as students identifying as minority. In one school, 32% of student identified as white and 68% of students identifying as minority. 6% of students identified as English Language learners. In addition, 100% of the students in this school qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the next school, 41% of students identified as white and 59% of students identified as minority and 58% of students at this school qualified for free or reduced lunch. 29% of the students identified as English Language Learners. In the last school, 9% of students identified as white and 91% of students identified as minority, with 100% of students qualified free and reduced lunch. 24% of students identified as English Language learners (Florida Department of Education, 2018). In all three schools (100%), the principal was supporting a high performing urban elementary school that served predominantly students who identified as minority.

Principal Participant Selection

Locating and selecting appropriate research participants is essential in studies: research participants must have experienced the problem in order to respond and reflect to interview questions (Moustakas, 1994). The specific characteristics principals must have had for participation in this study included: (a) employed at a high-performing elementary school in the targeted large urban school district; (b) at least 3 years of leadership experience; and (c) have been a principal at their current school for at least 2 years. Principals who possessed these characteristics and displayed an interest in participating in the study were shared with the researcher (via the school district IRB representative) and were contacted by the researcher. The interested principals received an email containing a researcher and research introduction and request for participation (Appendix D). Upon acceptance to participate in the study by the principal, further information related to the research study was provided (Appendix E). Principals participated in the study via a survey and an interview to collect demographic information as well as their culturally responsive beliefs and espoused practices in schools and culturally responsive coordinated supports.

Survey Instrument

The survey, *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality* (Fielder, Chiang, Van Haren, Jorgensen, Halberg, & Boreson, 2008) consists of 31 questions with quality indicators. This tool is broken up into three parts: Section I- Culturally Responsive Beliefs and Practices of Schools and General Education Classrooms;

Section II-Culturally Responsive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (EIS), Pre-Referral Interventions, and Referral for Special Education and; Section III-Culturally Responsive IEP Team Decision Making—Evaluation and Eligibility Determination. The purpose of this survey tool is to help school principals think more deeply; identify and discuss relevant external and internal factors that influence achievement of students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (RCELD); and to serve as a catalyst for school improvement efforts (Fielder, et al., 2008). Griner and Stewart (2013) conducted research on this survey tool stressing the importance of developing, implementing, and evaluating leadership practices to encourage culturally responsive teaching practices in schools. To address the needs of this study, permission to adapt the instrument was requested and granted (Appendix A) in order to utilize Section I individually—the section designed to review the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the school-wide and general education practices, services and programs (Fielder, et al., 2008). Section II and III target individual students and early intervention and supports as related to their individual needs—for the purpose of this study individual data related to specific students in a school is unrelated. Fielder, et al., (2008) sought to examine the attitudes established by principals to understand students, the practices instilled by the principal, and differentiated interventions that demonstrated effectiveness. The tool was not created for evaluation nor to be utilized to validate participant beliefs and interview responses. This survey used a Likert-scale which was utilized for triangulation purposes in the data analysis. The new survey was renamed for identification purposes in this study as the *Principal Survey*.

The Principal survey tool was uploaded into Qualtrics Survey Software for anonymous principal participant completion. The Principal survey link was e-mailed to the principal

participants who agreed to the research study. After one and two weeks, and 20 days, a follow-up reminder was sent to the principal who did not complete the survey, as monitored by Qualtrics Survey Software. Data was recorded through Qualtrics Survey Software, downloaded, and exported for analysis. Identifying Internet Protocol (IP) addresses accompanying the survey responses were coded to protect the identity of the principals. In addition to the use of interviews in this explanatory sequential research study, surveys were used to triangulate data.

Expert Focus Group

Interviews are the primary source of qualitative data collection in this mixed methods sequential explanatory research with other forms of data to support the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2014) outlined the importance of developing a set of questions to guide the interview process towards providing an understanding of the common experiences of the participants. The Delphi method is a technique used to provide a structured tool to attain insights and perspectives from people with a specific expertise on a topic or issue (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). This method utilizes structured communication between experts in order to gather consensus perspectives about interview questions (Brady, 2016). The typical Delphi method consists of three phases of data collection: the first phase included the initial interview questions, the second phase allowed for experts to respond to the anonymous feedback of the other experts; and the third phase was developed from the consensus opinions of rounds one and two to come to a final consensus on interview questions (Brady, 2016). The interview questions were prepared based on gaining further information on the Principal Survey Tool Questions.

Interview Instrument

The researcher is the main instrument in an interview, but concrete data is essential in the recall and development of data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Interviews are an important component of many mixed methods sequential research studies because the participants can provide qualitative information relevant to the study while allowing the researcher to have control over the line of questioning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The principal interview questions were used to collect data for this mixed methods research study with an audio recording for reliability and validity. Audio recording took place to upload to an audio transcribing program (rev.com) as well as researcher notes.

Survey/Interview Procedures

There were steps involved in the processes of planning and implementing surveys and interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These detailed steps were to ensure that the appropriate procedures were taken to promote reliability and validity and were as follows:

1. Requested permission to use and modify Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality survey from second author, as first author had since passed away (Appendix A);
2. Modified the “Culturally Responsive Beliefs and Practices of Schools and General Education Classrooms: School Culture and Supports; Instructional Team Beliefs; and Instructional Team Practices” section of the Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality survey (Appendix B);

3. Developed the *Principal Survey* based on the Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality survey (Appendix C);
4. E-mailed sample survey questions to the Delphi committee members to be able to rate and establish the reliability and validity of the principal survey questions;
5. Reviewed Delphi committee members' recommendations and adjusted survey questions;
6. E-mailed adjusted sample survey questions to the Delphi committee members to be able to review adjustments and provide additional comments;
7. Reviewed Delphi committee members' recommendations and adjusted survey questions;
8. E-mailed final sample survey questions to the Delphi committee members to come to consensus;
9. E-mailed final survey questions to Delphi committee following consensus of the principal survey questions;
10. Created the *Principal Survey* (based on the Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality survey) by entering survey questions into Qualtrics Survey Software, created an automated statement to appear on Qualtrics Survey Software if a principal attempts to open the survey after day 21;
11. Submitted a request for research to the University of Central Florida's IRB for approval to conduct the research study;
12. Applied to Conduct Research to the targeted large urban school district for approval to conduct the research study;
13. Prepared written communication for principals that included e-mail introduction and invitation to participate in the survey, e-mail participant consent, reminder e-mail for

invitation to participate in the survey, and a thank you e-mail for participating in the survey;

14. Received IRB approval from the University of Central Florida and the targeted large urban school district;
15. E-mailed invitation to participate in the study to principals selected by the school district IRB at the schools meeting the criteria of a high-performing elementary school for two or more years in the targeted large urban school district
16. Notified principals of survey completion deadline (21 days) and official survey closure date;
17. Monitored survey participation rates on day 7;
18. Downloaded the survey data on day 7;
19. Closed the survey on day 21 to prevent any further participation; automated message appeared that informed possible participant that the survey had closed;
20. Created reports using Qualtrics Survey Software; the raw data from Qualtrics Survey Software was exported for further analysis;
21. Collected and examined the survey data to identify themes;
22. Contextualized the themes to create a composite summary;
23. E-mailed sample interview questions to the Delphi committee members to be able to rate and establish the reliability and validity of the principal interview questions;
24. Reviewed Delphi committee members' recommendations and adjusted interview questions;

25. E-mailed adjusted sample interview questions to the Delphi committee members to be able to review adjustments and provide additional comments;
26. Reviewed Delphi committee members' recommendations and adjusted interview questions;
27. E-mailed final sample interview questions to the Delphi committee members to come to consensus;
28. E-mailed final interview questions to Delphi committee following consensus of the principal interview questions

Data Collection

Data were collected to address the research question (Creswell & Clark, 2007). In this study, those who help influence the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports in high performing urban schools—principals—were the active participants.

Participant selection criteria was identified as elementary school principals in high performing schools for two or more years. School data was disaggregated based on state-assigned school grades of an A or B for two or more years. Principals, randomly selected by the school district, whose schools met these criteria received an e-mail with additional introduction and invitation materials (Appendix D).

A survey, The Principal Survey Tool (Appendix C), was conducted to collect information related to the principals' beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that complement a high performing school. The survey is a modified section of the research-based survey *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality* (Appendix A).

This survey tool collected data in the same categories as the interview tool—school culture and supports, instructional team beliefs, and instructional team practices—in order to connect research across tools and with the research question.

Interview questions were developed utilizing a panel of experts and the Delphi model to elicit information from the principal participants related to the research question. The panel of experts provided feedback and helped to determine the final interview questions as an anonymous but collaborative team. The interview questions, based on the survey *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality* as well as general background-related questions, captured the essence of each principal’s individual experience (Appendix I). The sample interview questions were developed and categorized as school culture and supports, instructional team beliefs, and instructional team practices.

The researcher arranged interview appointments with consenting principals via telephone and e-mail. Principal participants were informed that interviews will last between 20 and 60 minutes. A date, time, and location convenient for the principal was selected. The researcher took notes during the interview, but permission was also obtained for the researcher to record the interview using an audio recording device. Audio recording was used to ensure availability of the recordings for the purpose of data analysis. Interviews were uploaded to the researcher’s computer, transcribed and coded for common experiences.

Principal Survey Procedures

The steps involved in utilizing an online survey tool are outlined to ensure reliability and validity in all aspects of the research study.

1. Requested permission from the second author of *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality* to adjust the survey tool to meet the needs of this research study. Permission has been granted from second author because first author has since passed away.
2. With permission granted, the researcher modified the survey tool to include just section 1 of the survey. The section is titled “Culturally Responsive Beliefs and Practices of Schools and General Education Classrooms with a focus on school culture and supports; instructional team beliefs; and instructional team practices”
3. The researcher identified an expert committee of individuals to e-mail an invitation to participate on the Delphi committee (Appendix F).
4. Once the Delphi team was created, the researcher e-mailed the sample survey questions to the Delphi Committee. The committee members rated the questions and provided feedback to help to establish reliability and validity.
5. The researcher reviewed the Delphi committee members’ first phase recommendations and made changes.
6. The researcher e-mailed the second phase of adjusted survey questions to the Delphi committee. The committee reviewed the adjustments and provided additional feedback and recommendations.
7. The researcher reviewed the Delphi committee members’ second phase recommendations and made changes.

8. The researcher e-mailed the third and final phase of adjusted survey questions to the Delphi committee. The committee reviewed the adjustments and came to a consensus on the final questions.
9. The researcher e-mailed the final survey questions to the Delphi committee for approval.
10. The researcher uploaded the principal survey tool into Qualtrics Survey Software, a survey management system that can collect and analyze confidential and anonymous data, for a period of 21 days with an ending date that prevents additional data from being entered after closing.
11. The researcher notified principal participants via e-mail of the survey opening and closing date as well as their unique link to access the survey.
12. The researcher monitored survey participation rate on day 7.
13. The researcher downloaded survey data on day 7.
14. The researcher exported raw data from the Qualtrics Survey Software for further data analysis.
15. The researcher created reports using Qualtrics Survey Software

Principal Interview Procedures

To recruit qualified principal participants, the researcher first had to create a field of qualified elementary schools from which to recruit. State-assigned standardized letter grades were disaggregated to create a pool of elementary schools that had received a state assigned letter grade of A or B for the past two school years. State letter grades were based on the state's

accountability formulas and equations, with a large consideration on the state standardized test (Florida Department of Education, 2018). Once schools that met the selection criteria were identified, the school district—as part of the IRB—randomly selected 10 principals from the list. The principal at each school received an e-mail introduction and invitation to participate in the study (Appendix D). The invitation included the purpose and significance of the study. For the potential candidate that accepted the invitation, the researcher sent an additional e-mail participant consent (Appendix E). This e-mail included more specific information related to the research study including the purpose, time commitment, requirements to participate in the study, confidentiality, and location of follow-up information. Follow-up contact was made via phone and e-mail to schedule appointments to meet in-person at the principal’s location and time of choice. If the potential candidate declined the invitation or stated that s/he does not meet the criteria for participation, his/her name was removed from the list. If no response was received, a follow up e-mail was sent one week after the initial e-mail. If the second e-mail still did not elicit a response, the potential principal’s name was removed from the list.

The researcher obtained written and verbal consent from each principal prior to conducting the interview. As part of the written consent, as well as reiterated with verbal consent at the beginning of the interview, the principals consented to the use of an audio-recording transcription pen. A digital transcriptionist program transcribed all the recorded interviews electronically for analysis. Through the documentation process, the interviews were coded for confidentiality and anonymity to protect the identity of the principals. A password protected laptop, with access only granted to the researcher, was used for all data collection, storing, and analysis purposes. Audio recorded from the interview was transcribed by a digital

transcriptionist program. The researcher listened to the audio in conjunction with reading the transcription to verify accurate transcripts. Upon completion of the transcription, the audio file and transcribed data will be maintained on the password protected laptop as well in a locked file cabinet by the researcher in order to provide evidence of any questions that result from the interview data. The researcher read and listened to the transcription multiple times to begin to identify possible explications and themes as related to the research question.

The following is the procedure of detailing a summary of the specific steps taken to prepare for and conduct the principal interviews. A protocol assists in maintaining reliability across multiple interviews. The complete principal interview protocol can be found in Appendix I.

1. The researcher developed interview questions.
2. The researcher identified an expert committee to e-mail an invitation to participate on the Delphi committee (Appendix F).
3. Once the Delphi team was created, the researcher e-mailed the sample interview questions to the Delphi Committee. The committee members rated the questions, provided feedback, and helped to establish reliability and validity.
4. The researcher reviewed the Delphi committee members' first phase recommendations and made changes.
5. The researcher e-mailed the second phase of adjusted interview questions to the Delphi committee. The committee reviewed the adjustments and provided additional feedback and recommendations.

6. The researcher reviewed the Delphi committee members' second phase recommendations and made changes.
7. The researcher e-mailed the third and final phase of adjusted interview questions to the Delphi committee. The committee reviewed the adjustments and came to a consensus on the final questions.
8. The researcher e-mailed the final survey questions to the Delphi committee for approval.
9. Principals were e-mailed individually and asked if they wished to participate in the research study.
10. Principals who demonstrated an interest and met eligibility criteria were e-mailed an electronic consent to participate.
11. The researcher prepared a written consent for interview participants to sign.
12. Three selected to participate in the interview
13. The researcher contacted the selected principals to obtain written consent as well as scheduled the interview at the candidate's date and time of choice.
14. The researcher used the Principal Interview Protocol (Appendix I) to create a survey and as a script. Interview questions were asked in the same order. Notes were taken in addition to the audio recordings to account for information not recorded aurally, including but not limited to behavior, body language in response to questions, facial expressions, gestures, and posture.
15. Interviews were audio-recorded.

16. All recorded data was transcribed by an internet transcriptionist program who has no stake in the research study.
17. The researcher coded the transcriptions to account for confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis

Analyzing data of mixed methods research is complex and requires the researcher to systematically process and arrange the data to increase understanding and communicate the essence of what it reveals (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019). Data analysis followed Creswell's (2014) six steps for data analysis and interpretation.

The first step consists of organizing and preparing the data for analysis. Transcription of interview data was completed using an online transcription program, while following chain of confidentiality and anonymity of principal participants. Researcher notes were scanned and coded for confidentiality and anonymity. Survey data was downloaded from Qualtrics.

The second step was to gain a general sense of all the data collected. The researcher read through all the survey, interview, and field note data to reflect on the overall meaning. The researcher sets aside personal experience and focuses directly on the principal participant data in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Step three involved coding: the systematic process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). Coding involved reading and re-reading all survey, interview, and field notes data and bringing meaning to this data by segmenting, categorizing, and labeling parts of the data. Coding is a critical step in the analysis process. Many researchers have created detailed guidance for the

coding process. While multiple processes were considered, Tesch's (1990) eight-step process, *Steps for Developing an Organizing System for Unstructured Qualitative Data*, was followed.

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read all data carefully, while jotting down ideas about the data.
2. Pick (a copy of) one data source—survey, interview, field notes—selected at random. As the researcher read it, attention was paid to transitions between content and topic, noting topics, not content. Questions like ‘What is this about?’ but not ‘What is said?’ were considered to begin to gather substance.
3. The previous step was completed for all data sources. The researcher made a list of the topics, keeping the data specific to what document source it came from (survey, interview, field notes). This time was appropriate to utilize different pen colors to make comparisons and connections between topics and document sources. Similar topics were clustered together. Attempts were made to name these clustered topics, either using words from the clustered topics, or a summative new word/name. Then a three column list was created with column one holding major topics, column two holding unique topics that seem important to the research but may not have multiple occurrences, and column three of leftovers.
4. The researcher revisited the data, working on a copy of all of the data that was just organized in step 3. Using the topics listed in the first and second columns, the researcher created abbreviated topic codes using initials from the topic. Throughout this process, the researcher was also determining if all of the previously organized data was relevant, getting rid of some topics while discovering new topics. The

researcher continuously recorded researcher memos—notes on ideas about anything that had to do with the data (Tesch, 1990, p. 143).

5. The researcher found the most descriptive word for each topic to turn the topics into categories. Topics that occurred in all or most of the data documents were grouped in one list, and the topics that were important but not present in a significant number of documents were placed in another list. The researcher continued to adjust the lens of analysis to look at topics from different angles for closely related content and subcategories. The researcher worked to decrease the number of categories while continuing to make notes of the topics and categories.
6. The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviations for each category name and then alphabetized the final abbreviations, or codes. The researcher began a complete coding session on (copies of) all of the document data. Due to the rich nature of the data, some segments required more than one code.
7. When the coding session was complete, the researcher compiled the data belonging to each code. This allowed for a look at the collection of material in one category at a time. The researcher focused on content now, no longer topic, looking specifically for a) commonalities in content, b) uniqueness in content, c) confusions and contradictions in content, and d) missing information with regards to the research question/topic (Tesch, 1990, p. 145). The researcher made note of relevance to research question and determined that coding was appropriate and did not need to be revisited.

Step four involved the researcher additionally using the coding process to generate anonymous descriptions of the principal participants. The researcher continued to fine tune the categories into themes for analysis. The researcher worked to create five to seven key themes related to the research question.

Step five required the researcher to move towards representing the themes in a narrative, focusing on the data. Visuals, figures, charts, and tables were also used to support the narrative data.

Step six, the final step in the data analysis, is the interpretation of the data, where the researcher worked to answer the question, ‘What were the lessons learned?’ capturing the essence of the principals’ experiences. While the essence of this study may not be generalized, outcomes can be used to further future research or act as action research into continued positive efforts in the effort to narrow the racial academic achievement gap.

Reliability and Validity

Credibility, transferability, dependability and transferability are used in qualitative research with reliability and validity used in quantitative research (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These unique terms coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) help to establish the trustworthiness of mixed methods research study which also includes engagement in field work, triangulation of data sources, clear methods, and investigators to establish credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Reliability

The researcher provided sufficient rich, detail, and complete descriptions of the context and participants, known as descriptive adequacy, to allow the reader to determine if the research findings may be a “good fit” for their own context (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019). Systematic steps were delineated in the procedures in order to have a clear description of the research path. This detailed explication of steps allows for replication of the study, an important relational element to reliability, and can be supported using procedures documenting as many steps of the procedure as possible. This helps to sustain qualitative reliability, or how consistent the researcher’s approach is (Gibbs, 2007; Yin, 2003).

Several reliability procedures were employed in this research study, as suggested by Gibbs (2007). Transcript checks helped to make sure that the written transcriptions did not contain errors. Transcriptions were read and re-read while listening to the audio recording, as well as shared with principal participants as a member-check. Researcher-determined coding was consistent throughout the research study. Since there was only one researcher in the study, agreement of definition of codes and a drift in the definition of codes need not occur.

Validity

Credibility, most synonymous with internal validity, relates the truthfulness and accuracy of the findings. Methods of enhancing credibility are categorized according to five types of structural corroboration, consensus, referential or interpretive adequacy, theoretical adequacy, and control of bias (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorenson-Irvine & Walker, 2019). Although mixed methods research does not always have generalizability as a goal, research strives to provide

rich, detailed descriptions of content to assist the reader in making comparisons and judgments about similarity.

Content validity of *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality* (Fielder, et al., 2008) was determined through two years of a review of research as well as a Delphi method including seven focus groups and a modified Delphi method providing the questions, quality indicators, and rubric to the focus group participants to determine essential and nonessential items (Fielder et al., 2008).

Member checking, sometimes known as consensual validation or participant feedback, was used to help ensure validity of the study. The principal interview was audio recorded and transcribed via an online program that has no stake in the research. This transcription was shared with the principal to confirm what was transcribed was what the principal meant. This allowed for the principal to individually give feedback regarding the accuracy of the data and whether tentative findings aligned with their original statements and viewpoints.

To help encourage honest feedback, principals participated in a face-to-face interview as well as an anonymous survey. Both the survey and the interview focused on the same questions that elicit information about principals' experiences. Administering both a survey and an interview allowed the principal participant to provide additional information related to their experiences, adding to the essence of the study. The researcher determined the similar essences in the experiences of the principals

Limitations

Due to the intrusive nature of testing, this study utilized student achievement assessment measures that were already put in place in the school district (Sawilowsky et al., 1994). Due to time, funds, and access, this study was limited to a sample obtained in one large, southeastern urban school district during the 2018-2019 school year. Results may not be generalizable to other school districts or states.

There are limitations that arise when conducting research using surveys and interviews instead of observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Surveys and interviews may not provide for a true and accurate depiction of the beliefs, actual practices, and supports that principals do indeed convey in their high performing urban elementary school as observations or focus groups would. Interviews provide indirect information filtered through the interviewee. Some survey respondents may have had personal situations that have impacted their objective judgment and responses to survey and interview items. Surveys and interviews collect data in a designated place rather than the natural field setting. To allow for anonymity, confidentiality, and the nature of this study, a natural field setting is not necessary for the interview and survey to take place and may indeed hinder an accurate interview if in the natural setting. Having the researcher as a co-worker could bias responses, but multiple measures to account for confidentiality and anonymity occurred. Not all principals may have been as equally articulate and perceptive. These aspects may have impacted the validity of the results.

During the research approval phase, the researcher did not input into the true selection of the principal participants. While the school district may have selected principal participants for a specific purpose on their research side, the researcher had no control over which principals were

approved to participate in this study. When cross-checked, it was noted that all principals were indeed the leaders of schools from the initial list of high-performing schools in the targeted school district.

Summary

The methodology used in this explanatory sequential mixed methods research study was described in detail in chapter three. The researcher sought to provide a comprehensive explanation of the method used to address the research question. The researcher utilized school district data, surveys and interviews to create an explanatory sequential study that helped to uncover beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban schools. This chapter detailed the procedures and data analysis to address reliability and validity—including triangulation. The use of quantitative and qualitative research assisted in describing the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban schools.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods explanatory sequential research study was for the researcher to be able to gain insight into the experiences of principals in high performing urban elementary schools and how these experiences shape the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports the principals convey in their schools. The researcher gathered data from three different sources: (a) school grade data, (b) principal surveys, and (c) principal interviews. School grade data was used to determine elementary schools that are high performing. Principal surveys were used to gather quantitative likert-scale data related to school culture and supports, instructional team beliefs, and instructional team practices. Principal interviews were used to gather qualitative data related to their experiences, adding to the essence of the quantitative data in this research study. This chapter reports the collected data to create an essence of the experiences of principals and the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports they convey to support their high performing urban elementary school.

The first section of this chapter will include content to provide a background as well as context. The second section of this chapter reports the quantitative survey findings and qualitative interview data. The information presented will include (a) descriptive information on principal participants to assist in creating the essence of the subsequent data; (b) a summary of the analysis of the data from the principal surveys and interviews; and (c) a summary of the discoveries through narratives and themes that emerged.

Purpose of the Study

Effective leadership is essential to organizational gains, especially in the field of education (Fullan, 2017; Gay, 2018; Hickman, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2010; Ross & Berger, 2009; Yukl, 2010). Research has shown the need for culturally responsive practices to narrow the academic achievement gap between white students and minority students (Boykin, 1982; Gay, 2018; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Nieto & Bode, 2008). To better prepare high-quality principals, as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), a focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of principals—to provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective principals, improving student academic achievement in schools—is necessary. The purpose of this study was to describe the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices and supports that principals in urban high-performing elementary schools convey that have supported minority student achievement. In an effort to support the policies in the Every Student Succeeds Act, this research sought to understand the experiences of principals who have led high-performing urban elementary schools and how this influences their leadership. This research study focused on a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States and may not be generalizable to other school districts or states.

Research Question

What are the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports of principals in high performing urban schools?

Participant Demographics

The descriptive data were collected from three principal participants from three high performing urban elementary schools in one large southeastern school district in the United States. Demographic data were collected both in survey and interview form. Demographic data provided information that described the principal participants in the research study. The interview data deepened the essence of understanding the experiences of the participants.

The participants included three principals from three of the eligible 57 high performing schools, from the 125 elementary schools in a large, 196-school urban school district. School ratings were derived from formulas enacted at the state level and range from A through F. For the purpose of this study, high performing schools were those identified as A or B schools for the past two (or more) years based on statewide assessment data.

The principals Demographic data are: Two principals were white female (66%), one principal was Hispanic male (33%); three principals (100%) have been in their current position for three years or more; all principals worked at the elementary school level but have served in different district level and school level positions previously; The principals all had master's degrees in educational leadership from accredited universities. None had specialist or doctoral degrees.

The three schools led by the principals in this study had more than 50% of the student body as students identifying as minority. In one school, 32% of student identified as white and 68% of students identifying as minority. In addition, 100% of the students in this school qualified for free or reduced lunch. In the next school, 41% of students identified as white and 59% of students identified as minority and 58% of students at this school qualified for free or

reduced lunch. In the last school, 9% of students identified as white and 91% of students identified as minority, with 100% of students qualified free and reduced lunch (Florida Department of Education, 2018). In all three school representations (100%), the principal was supporting a high performing urban elementary school that served predominantly students who identified as minority.

Table 1
Principal Descriptive Information (N=3)

Principal	Gender	Ethnicity	Degree Attainment	Current-School years	Total Years
P-1	Male	Hispanic	Master's	5	20
P-2	Female	White	Master's	3	15
P-3	Female	White	Master's	6	16

Analysis of Research Question

The analysis of the research question *What are the culturally responsive beliefs, espoused practices, and supports of principals in high performing urban schools?* was conducted utilizing the results from the Principal Survey (Appendix C) as well as the Principal Interview Protocol (appendix I).

Data Analysis of Research Question: Principal Survey Data

To respond to the research question, the principal participants were asked to participate in an anonymous online survey. The survey was comprised of 19 four-point likert-scale questions in three categories—school culture and supports, instructional team beliefs, and instructional team practices—as related to culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports that principals

convey in their high performing urban schools to narrow the minority achievement gap.

Principals were identified as A-1, A-2, A-3 to account for the anonymity of each principal.

Table 2
Principal Responses to Survey: School Culture and Supports

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
1	Does the school culture support and celebrate diversity and view students of RCELD as assets?	3	3	2
2	Does the school have a positive behavioral support system for ALL students?	4	3	4
3	Has the school principal established an attitude amongst staff that “all students are our students” as opposed to an attitude of “my students and your students?”	4	3	3
4	Do teachers (e.g. general education, ESL, special education) work collaboratively to support all students?	3	3	3
5	Are differentiated reading interventions (e.g., Title I, Read 180, Reading Recovery) available to students of RCELD?	4	3	3
6	Has the school adopted a problem solving approach that values assessment to drive instructional decisions?	4	3	2
7	Do the school teams receive sufficient administrative support when expressing concerns about meeting the needs of students of RCELD?	4	3	4
8	Has the school established a multi-tiered model of intervention services?	4	3	3

As shown in Table 2, principals responded to eight items that related to school culture and supports for culturally responsive espoused practices. Principals were asked to respond to questions related to school culture and environment that displayed or celebrated diversity, how the staff at the school collaboratively addressed students’ academic and behavioral needs, and how racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse materials were used in the schools.

When responding to items about school culture and environment that displayed and celebrated diversity (item 1), two principals responded that their school and classrooms acknowledge and celebrate diversity of a regular basis while one principal responded that their school “acknowledges and celebrates diversity during special times of the school year.” Principals’ responses to how staff collaboratively addressed students’ academic and behavioral needs by stating that the prevailing attitude of the school staff at all schools fostered regular collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff (items 3, 4). All principals stated that their “general education teachers received consultation and direct services utilizing numerous differentiated reading interventions from special education teachers, reading teachers, or other specialists on a regular basis,” but two principals stated there was “not enough consistency with services (item 5).” All principals concurred that their school has “implemented positive behavioral support systems for all students and that the staff have been trained in its use,” while two principals responded that their school also “regularly discussed the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavioral support interventions” (item 2). All principals reported that a “problem solving process to review the academic performance” was in place at their school (item 8). One principal stated that systematic implementation and monitoring of interventions was inconsistent, one principal responded that systematic implementation and monitoring of interventions was usual, and one principal responded that systematic implementation and monitoring of interventions was always provided with data to support intervention changes (item 6).

Racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse materials were used in the participating schools in multiple ways. All principals stated the on a regular basis, schools

received administrative, resources, and supports in the classroom to address the needs of students who were racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (item 7). The participating schools' multi-tiered model of intervention supports included numerous differentiated reading interventions for students in need (items 5, 8).

Table 3
Principal Responses to Survey: Instructional Team Beliefs

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
9	Do school teams actively consider other possible explanations (e.g., insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors) for the student of RCELD who has low achievement, rather than automatically assuming a disability?	4	3	3
10	Does the instructional team actively consider whether absence or parent/family mobility of the student of RCELD negatively impacts continuity of general education classroom instruction?	4	3	3
11	Has the instructional team made concerted efforts to reach out to the parents/family members of students of RCELD by fostering collaboration, mutual trust and respect?	4	3	2
12	Does the instructional team use peer supports in the classroom?	3	3	2
13	Does the instructional team incorporate culturally responsive materials and content in the curricula and use culturally responsive teaching practices?	3	3	2
14	Does the instructional team actively seek to identify the reason for RCELD student's behavior, learning or other difficulties?	4	3	3

As shown in Table 3, principals responded to six questions that focused on instructional team beliefs. Responses to these questions stated that team beliefs were fostered and, in some instances, barriers to the beliefs were removed at the school to ensure the growth and development, academically and behaviorally, of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. Principals at all schools agreed that school teams believed that general education classroom performance problems of students of racially, culturally, ethnically, and

linguistically diverse backgrounds may stem from multiple issues including student deficits, RCELD risk factors, learning styles, attendance, mobility, and school history; the teams regularly gathered to analyze classroom performance to identify reasons for behavior, learning, or other difficulties of racially, culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse students; and that general education classroom interventions were employed prior to special education referral (items 9, 10, 14). In one school, the school teams also implemented an extensive array of general education classroom interventions prior to special education referral (item 9). All schools addressed factors of absences, mobility and interventions. All principals shared that they believed these factors had an influence on the students' achievement. Only one school made recommendations on how to minimize the instructional impact in the future (item 10). All schools made some effort to collaborate with families of diverse students by inviting them to school meetings. Two schools also invited parents/family members to problem solving discussions, and one school sought additional family involvement and decision making input to empower families (item 11). Team beliefs to support growth and development of students, academically and behaviorally, including the use of peer supports and culturally responsive materials/curricula/practices. One school reported periodic use of these teacher-directed supports in general education classes. Culturally responsive materials, content and teaching practices incorporated into classes were rarely displayed (items 12, 13). In two schools, the instructional team regularly incorporated culturally responsive materials, content and teaching practices, and used peer supports in the general education classroom with instruction divided between whole group teacher-directed and small group student-directed (e.g., cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring) learning (items 12, 13). No principals rated their instructional team as regularly using peer supports in the general

education classroom to empower students to take a more active responsibility for their learning and support for each other (item 12).

Table 4
Principal Responses to Survey: Instructional Team Practices

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
15	Does the instructional team use culturally responsive behavior management practices by considering the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD?	3	3	2
16	Does the instructional team establish a classroom environment that accepts individual differences and is positive, structured, and well managed?	3	3	3
17	Does the instructional team set realistic, high expectations and standards for students of RCELD?	3	3	3
18	Are learning strategies explicitly taught to students of RCELD?	3	3	2
19	Does the instructional team accommodate the needs of students of RCELD through differentiated instruction that reflects the interests and experiences of students of RCELD?	3	3	2

As shown in Table 4, principals responded to five questions that related to instructional team practices pertaining to their high performing urban elementary school. These responses focused on what proactive and educative academic and behavioral strategies the schools were employing to increase their student achievement. All principals agreed that instructional teams allowed for individual differences in establishing classroom environment, with some modifications of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual student differences (item 16). As well, all principals saw their instructional teams regularly maintaining realistic and high expectations of achievement for all racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students and periodically supporting their culturally responsive

teaching practices (item 17). In two schools, Instructional teams supported racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students by regularly teaching learning strategies in general education classrooms, *sometimes* being taught in the last school (item 18). In two schools, the instructional team accommodated academics and behaviors through differentiated instruction and behavior management practices on a regular basis (items 15, 19). The last school provided differentiated instruction but without a systematic analysis of the student/culture/risk factors and its impact on student achievement (items 15, 19).

Commonalities Emerging from Principal Surveys

The analysis of the principal survey data revealed that principals rated their school cultures and supports strongest, followed by instructional team beliefs, then instructional team practices, when responding to survey items related to beliefs, practices, and supports at their high performing urban elementary school.

Table 5
Commonalities Emerging from School Culture and Supports

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
1	Does the school culture support and celebrate diversity and view students of RCELD as assets?	3	2	3
2	Does the school have a positive behavioral support system for ALL students?	4	3	4
3	Has the school principal established an attitude amongst staff that “all students are our students” as opposed to an attitude of “my students and your students?”	4	3	3
4	Do teachers (e.g general education, ESL, special education) work collaboratively to support all students?	3	3	3
5	Are differentiated reading interventions (e.g., Title I, Read 180, Reading Recovery) available to students of RCELD?	4	3	3

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
6	Has the school adopted a problem solving approach that values assessment to drive instructional decisions?	4	3	2
7	Do the school teams receive sufficient administrative support when expressing concerns about meeting the needs of students of RCELD?	4	3	4
8	Has the school established a multi-tiered model of intervention services?	4	3	3

When focused on questions that targeted school culture and supports, the theme of whole-child support at all instructional levels was conveyed by these principals in their high performing urban elementary schools. Support and resources—academically, behaviorally, and linguistically—were conveyed in these schools to facilitate the racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic needs of the diverse learners. In these schools, on a regular basis there was some administrative support and additional resources provided to address the needs of students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. These supports include principal commitment to resources for students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse; problem-solving teams sharing concerns about issues/resources influencing students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse; professional development to assist teachers in meeting the needs of students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse; and school/home connection activities. The principals responded that their schools have implemented positive behavior support systems for all students and staff have been trained in its use. Two principals responded that their school staff regularly discussed the effectiveness of the schoolwide positive behavior support plan. Principals rated their school strong in the ability to create an environment where prevailing attitudes fostered collaboration and support, between administration and instructional teams; between general education

teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff; and between teachers and students (items 2, 3, 5, 7). Differentiated support included regular collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers and other support staff; a positive behavioral school wide support system for all students and all staff had been trained in its use; general education teachers received consultation and students received direct services from special education teachers, reading teachers, other specialist regularly and numerous examples of differentiation of reading interventions in general education classrooms (items 2, 3, 5, 8).

Table 6
Commonalities Emerging from Beliefs

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
9	Do school teams actively consider other possible explanations (e.g., insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors) for the student of RCELD who has low achievement, rather than automatically assuming a disability?	4	3	3
10	Does the instructional team actively consider whether absence or parent/family mobility of the student of RCELD negatively impacts continuity of general education classroom instruction?	4	3	3
11	Has the instructional team made concerted efforts to reach out to parents/family members of students of RCELD by fostering collaboration, mutual trust, and respect?	3	2	4
12	Does the instructional team use peer supports in the classroom?	3	2	3
13	Does the instructional team incorporate culturally responsive materials and content in the curricula and use culturally responsive teaching practices?	2	3	2
14	Does the instructional team actively seek to identify the reason for RCELD student's behavior, learning or other difficulties?	4	3	3

As noted in Table 6, considering survey questions related to instructional team beliefs, when looking at how principals rated the beliefs conveyed at their high performing urban elementary school, the importance of a whole child, culturally responsive approach as related to

student difficulties with learning and/or behaviors emerged. These themes emerged as principals at these high performing urban elementary schools rated that their school teams understood that performance problems resulted from multiple issues (student deficits, risk factors, learning styles, attendance, mobility) and would seek to implement interventions to foster an environment of growth and success prior to special education referral. One principal responded further that the instructional team analyzed an extensive array of interventions and environment and made recommendations on how to minimize instructional impact in the future (items 9, 10). Principals conveyed beliefs of the importance of the whole child by considering their race, culture, ethnicity, and language as part of their learning environment. The variables of the learning environment are taken into consideration when planning for instruction and intervention to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. One principal responded that the school also furthers those beliefs by collecting and analyzing student performance data related to the learning environment (item 14). The beliefs that all aspects of a child are important in their learning and that their culturally responsive needs must be incorporated to increase academic growth are conveyed by the principals in these high performing urban elementary schools.

Table 7
Commonalities Emerging from Practices

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
15	Does the instructional team use culturally responsive behavior management practices by considering the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD?	2	3	3
16	Does the instructional team establish a classroom environment that accepts individual differences and is positive, structured, and well managed?	3	3	3
17	Does the instructional team set realistic, high expectations and standards for students of RCELD?	3	3	3

Item #	Item	A-1	A-2	A-3
18	Are learning strategies explicitly taught to students of RCELD?	3	3	2
19	Does the instructional team accommodate the needs of students of RCELD through differentiated instruction that reflects the interests and experiences of students of RCELD?	3	3	2

When analyzing survey data related to the espoused practices that principals convey in their high performing urban elementary schools, the practice of allowing for flexibility and individual accommodations to the classroom academic/behavior expectations to allow for student success were the highest areas of indicator ratings (items 16, 17). In these schools, principals responded that instructional teams allow flexibility in behavior when establishing the classroom environment with modifications to rules and expectations to accommodate individual student differences. In academics, setting and maintaining realistic and high expectations for the academic achievement of students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, and periodically supporting those culturally responsive teaching practices.

Data Analysis of Research Question: Principal Interview Data

Principal participants contributed to the essence of their experiences by responding to interview questions in a face-to-face interview. These interviews provided elaboration on survey questions to uncover the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that principals convey in their high performing urban school. A brief summary of the interviews with each of the three principals of high performing urban elementary schools in this research study follows. The summaries contain professional and personal demographic information related to each principal participant. Important focuses in these summaries are the key points stressed by the principals in

their individual interviews as related to the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports they convey in their high performing urban elementary school.

Principal 1 (P-1)

P-1 was a Hispanic male principal of a high performing urban elementary school in a large southeastern school district. He was born and raised in a poor community in Puerto Rico but came stateside at a young age—all of his schooling took place in Florida. As an elementary school student, he went to school poor, with limited English knowledge and no academic background. He had to acquire the language alongside the academics as he grew up. His undergraduate degree was in business and his master's degree was in Educational Leadership. He did not use his business degree out of college but became a teacher. He was certified and taught elementary and middle school, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Exceptional Student Education (ESE). He has been a principal at his current elementary school for five years and has a history of 20 years in education.

Principal 1 made key points during his interview related to beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that he conveyed in his high performing urban elementary school. He discussed his belief that the whole child needed to be educated—especially linguistically alongside academically, including any challenges in one or both areas—as this was his experience. When students had challenges, he involved the entire team to problem-solve student needs including the school guidance counselor, district psychologist, district social worker, special education teacher, and classroom teacher. Related to his personal beliefs, his philosophy on culturally responsive leadership addressed the importance of distributive and transformative leaders to

foster a culturally responsive environment, where all stakeholders work together to support student needs. He also ensured that every grade level had a bilingual teacher and all paraprofessionals are bilingual to help support student language acquisition.

During the interview, Principal 1 spoke about the practices that occurred in his high performing urban elementary school. As related to what practices the instructional teams were utilizing in the classrooms to help meet student needs, he explained how districtwide literacy initiatives helped to support the 21st century reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as well as the conative skills that students need to be successful with complex tasks. The instructional teams set realistic attainable goals for each student utilizing multiple measures of student academic data, with growth monitoring measures and celebrations throughout the year. The instructional teams also ensured that students had necessary individual accommodations in place whether a Section 504 Individual Accommodation plan, an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or multi-tiered system of supports accommodations and interventions in place.

He further explained the importance of supports in all general education classrooms to address student academic and behavior needs. He discussed the problem-solving team, multi-tiered system of supports that provided interventions to students related to the general education academic curriculum and general behaviors. Differentiated, targeted, research-based interventions were utilized for all students, whether below grade level, on grade level, or above grade level (enrichment) to problem-solve and close academic gaps. Due to the Title I status of the school, his school was also able to provide morning and afterschool tutoring to students in need, to help to accommodate for parent schedules as well. Differentiated behavior supports were in place for students of need as well. All classrooms had a cool off area for students to take

a break, to support social emotional learning. He discussed the importance of the need to support student social emotional needs as related to increasing their academic achievement.

Principal 2 (P-2)

P-2 was a White female principal of a high performing urban elementary school in a large southeastern school district. She had an undergraduate degree in Special Education and a master's degree in Educational Leadership, with certifications in Educational Leadership, Elementary Education, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). All of her professional educational history had taken place in elementary schools within her current large urban school district. She has been in the public school system for 15 years, an elementary principal for the past five years, and a principal at her current high performing urban elementary school for the past three years.

When responding to questions related to principal beliefs, Principal 2 expressed that everyone at the school needs to know what is going on—including her, the principal. She often visited classrooms to understand the student needs to help aide in problem-solving, instead of just as an authority figure or adult who comes in to conduct observations. As a school that was receiving additional federal funding to support social and emotional needs, she believed that all environments needed to be conducive for learning both social/emotionally and academically.

The social and emotional practices were just as important as the academic practices as explained by Principal 2. In order for all classrooms to be conducive for learning social/emotionally and academically, tier 1 academic and behavior multi-tiered system of supports needed to be in place. Part of the federal grant created peace corners in all classrooms

that has rugs to provide physical comfort, timers for visual support, manipulatives to de-escalate, and strategies for self-regulation taught weekly school wide. To increase positive behaviors, difference-maker phone calls were made on Fridays to call parents and increase parent and school positive interactions. Specific behavioral and academic learning strategies were explicitly taught at this high performing urban elementary school. Professional developments occurred monthly to ensure that close reading, annotating, chunking, vocabulary, critical information, and conative strategies are being explicitly taught and utilized across all classrooms. Realistic and high expectations were set for all students. All students were held to their respective grade level expectations while receiving accommodations or tier 2, 3, or Exceptional Student Education (ESE) interventions needed to see individual growth at their individual instructional level through data points like i-ready, Accelerated Reader, or targeted interventions.

Principal 2 also discussed the supports utilized in her high performing urban elementary school. All grade levels received administrative support bi-weekly by means of grade level Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings in English/Language arts and mathematics to help support the achievement of all students across academic domains. The school was also a model school for dual language which allowed for multiple mode of support for all levels of second language learners. Differentiated intervention support was provided to each grade level through the school wide multi-tiered system of supports as well as online programs like imagine learning to help bridge English language acquisition alongside academics. Positive behavior supports were in place across the entire campus.

Principal 3 (P-3)

P-3 was a white female principal of a high performing urban elementary school in a large urban school district. She had an undergraduate degree in Business Administration with a specialization in marketing and a master's degree in Educational Leadership. She switched careers to education 16 years ago and has worked in both Title I and non-title I elementary schools, certified in Elementary Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and gifted endorsed. Prior to being an elementary principal for the past six years, she served as a coach and curriculum resource teacher.

When discussing questions related to principal beliefs in her high performing urban elementary school, Principal 3 expressed the importance of understanding the whole child and taking culture into account. She shared that her staff was encompassing and accepting of all students and their differing needs, whether linguistically, academically, or behaviorally. She shared the importance of building relationships with students in understanding the whole child and providing support at school that will also carry over to support the home. She described how teachers had posters sharing diversity and student cultures in the classroom in order to recognize and understand student differences, as well as teachers accessing materials related to various cultures.

There were culturally responsive practices that the principal described that occurred in her high performing urban elementary school. Scaffolded interventions took place for all students in all grade levels based on multiple diagnostic measures for baseline data. Students would receive different scaffolded instruction in center groups, in small groups, in intervention/enrichment groups, with tutoring, and with multiple computer-based programs. All

students had their own unique track of learning to ensure they were working on their instructional level to work to close learning gaps as well as their grade level curriculum to work towards grade level standards. The school also had multicultural events that were led by staff, students, and families to celebrate the school's culture including food, decorations, clothing, and important history.

Principal 3 explained that the school supported the belief that all children could learn by incorporating tutoring, interventions, paraprofessional support, coaching support, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) support, bilingual teacher support, circle time in all grade levels, language dictionaries, collaborative planning, coaching collaborative planning, common grade level assessments, leveled resources, language resources, and scaffolded instruction. There was collaboration between teachers, coaches, and administration in order to ensure all students across grade levels were receiving high quality instruction to increase individual academic achievement and support and maintain a high performing school

Commonalities Emerging from Principal Interviews

The principals interviewed as a part of this study conveyed beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that help to narrow the achievement gap that is evident in high performing urban elementary schools. Principal responses generated multiple themes related to the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that they conveyed in their high performing urban elementary school. The principals came from different backgrounds demographically, personally and professionally yet still all provided comments and responses that demonstrated commonalities in their beliefs, espoused practices, and supports.

Beliefs

Commonalities emerged when principals responded to questions related to the beliefs they conveyed in their high performing urban elementary school. These beliefs encompassed the whole student, and how the student's race, culture, ethnicity, and language played a role in their academic success. Principal 1 stated:

I had to learn the language along with learning the academics as well. So, understanding how English language acquisition takes into play has really helped me to lead a school that is a high level of Spanish speaking students and additional bilingual learners to be successful in both acquiring the language as well as acquiring the academic skills needed to be successful.

He continued describing how “for the last two years have had a full time guidance counselor...and a district social worker that works with our school two days a week and supports families (P-1).” Supports embodied the whole student, academically as well as socially and emotionally. Principal 2 spoke of the importance of all individuals working together for the needs of the students:

I'm in the classroom, I'm hands on, I'm down and dirty, I'm not always carrying my laptop around because it's not always about observations. It's about getting in the classroom, understanding what the students need, and how we can make those needs met.

She also shared the importance of incorporating social emotional learning into academic learning to promote the overall growth of students in high performing urban elementary schools:

We establish and support accepting classroom environments by making sure that all environments are set up conducive for learning. All of the classrooms at our school have a peace corner in them. We are actually piloting a federally funded grant program to make sure that social emotional learning is going on in all classrooms including strategies for self-regulation to de-escalate yourself when you're worked up as well as manipulatives to de-escalate yourself. (P-2)

Principal 3 discussed the importance of bringing a student's home culture to school and incorporating the two cultures:

We really focus our help on providing supports to help students with different needs and different social and emotional backgrounds. We are celebrating our school's cultures and the cultures of all of our students by having a multicultural night where all their different countries are represented between different classroom presentations, parents participating, some are bringing food, some are bringing clothing, different types of decorations to support the different cultures that our students come from.

The three principals of high performing urban elementary schools who participated in this study all communicated the importance of understanding the whole student and how race, culture, ethnicity, and language all played a part into understanding their unique differences in order to work towards problem-solving and academic success.

Espoused Practices

Principals in this study expressed their beliefs of understanding the whole child as related to learning and modeled these practices in their high performing urban elementary schools.

Throughout their interviews, commonalities depicted explicit, school wide initiatives that highlighted student differences, allowed for flexibility and individual accommodations, and helped to set realistic yet high expectations for all students. Principal 1 described some practices that occurred in his high performing urban elementary school:

This is the third year of our districtwide initiative to support literacy skills and we're also tying social emotional learning into that this year as well, that those literacy skills are teaching lots of strategies that teachers have already been using, just putting a name to it. Things like close reading and digging deeper reading a text, providing students prompting and responding frames for when they are talking and writing. Teaching academic discourse to students to understand the language and how to communicate when you are talking academia, and support all of the social emotional aspects that go into learning, because as we know when we talk about those influential and risk factors that lots of our students come with, if we're not supporting their social and emotional needs, we're not going to get their academic needs met as well.

He also went on to describe how realistic and attainable goals were set and achieved:

Set a goal of being able to meet your grade level expectations, but we also need to put benchmarks in place of how individual students will reach those goals, whether based on their IEP, using their iready, or based on AR...to set individuals levels and demonstrate comprehension on their own...it all takes into play motivation and perseverance as well. (P-1)

Principal 2 described similar practices that took place at her high performing urban elementary school. She reiterated the importance of considering the whole child and their individual needs as well as social emotional aspects as related to their success:

Every Friday we call parents with Difference-Makers, students that have shown some sort of improvement, whether it's behaviors, academics or social emotional learning, and we call their families to give them a positive report on Friday as well as letting those students sign their name on our Difference Maker wall. This helps to create positive relationships between parents and family.

She continued to reiterate the importance of all students working towards grade level standards by making independent growth:

Realistic high expectations are set for all students. Every student is being taught towards grade level standards during their tier 2, tier 3, or ESE interventions...and every student gets their own goal set from where you test at the beginning of the year to where you test at the end of the year (P-2).

Principal 3 extended similar practices at her high performing urban elementary school. Her school provided multiple interventions—academically, socially, behaviorally, and linguistically—to help to improve the student performance at her school:

We have students that have had some insufficient instruction in the past, so we provide tutoring, different interventions inside the classroom and with paraprofessional support, teacher support, coach support for our students. We also have our ESE teacher push in for support facilitation to help provide some of those supports to those students in the classroom. For limited English, we try to have at least one teacher on grade level that

speaks Spanish, which is where most of our ELL student population is to help those students in the classroom as well...We really focus on doing some different circle time for our students where our teachers are really building those relationships with the students to help support everybody working in those environments.

Students set and achieved high expectations by working towards their individual goals in the classroom, during intervention, and on computer programs:

Inner diagnostic tools to get a baseline of where our students are at, then depending on the baseline, we provide different scaffolded instruction in center groups, small groups, with tutoring. We also provide different scaffolded with some computer-based programs so that they're hitting their areas of need in many different ways to close some of those gaps as well as still getting that on-grade level curriculum (P-3).

The three principals of high performing elementary schools who participated in this study all discussed practices that set realistic yet high expectations for all students and incorporated flexibility and individuality into those goals. Schools' RCELD practices helped to establish accepting classroom and school environments of students, parents, and families.

Supports

Commonalities also emerged surrounding the supports that were in place at these high performing urban elementary schools. The schools had administrative support and differentiated supports for students to help sustain their high performing school.

Principal 1 explained the multiple grade-level, school-level, and district-level supports in his high performing urban elementary school:

We provide interventions for all students. Even students that are above grade level, we provide them enrichment activities for them to continue to soar. Our students that may be struggling in reading or math or even areas for behavior that we have a team that meets to problem-solve. Sometimes it will include our school psychologist, social worker, a guidance counselor or special education teachers and of course classroom teachers as well, and we put a plan in place, collect data on that plan, and if it's not working we meet and put more interventions in place.

He also discussed how leadership and administrative support is important to sustain a high performing urban elementary school, "You want to be that person that you teachers look up to and want to achieve, because they want the good for all, not because they want to make themselves look good or their students look food. They want to make everyone look good and show how everyone works as a team."

Principal 2 continued to discuss what support looked like in her high performing urban elementary school. Administrative support included professional learning communities as well as district model school support and differentiated student supports across academics, behavior, and language:

All of our paraprofessionals here are bilingual, so they support our English speakers as well as our English language learners. We have two special education paraprofessionals that not only support the needs of our students with IEPs, but all of the students in those classes...Teachers have planning time together every single day as well as grade level PLCs with ELA and math coaches every other week...also a model school for the dual

language program so there are some classes that are taught entirely in Spanish so that our English speakers can also learn a new language as well.

Differentiated support occurred in all classrooms throughout the school campus.

Principal 3 continued to discuss how both administrative and intervention supports at her high performing urban elementary school reinforced the belief that all children could learn:

All of our teams meet once a week with one of their coaches for collaborative planning focused on assessment creation, data, planning common assessment, planning for lessons, working on different centers, different resources with our paraprofessionals...tutoring, paraprofessional support, teacher support, coach support, sending different newsletters, different night events based on curriculum and building family relationships.

The common themes that emerged when related to the supports provided at these high performing elementary schools were that there was administrative support when needed that helped to create a positive atmosphere for all and the differentiated intervention supports for all students helped to support realistic and attainable goals.

Summary

The analysis of the principal survey results and the principal interview results were described in detail in chapter four. The demographic information of the principals was presented in order to deepen the essence of the experiences of those who participated. The data from the three principal surveys and three principal interviews were analyzed, compared, and a summary of the findings with commonalities and themes was created to provide a thorough analysis of the experiences of the principal participants. The validity of claims that principals made, although

not verified, were believed to be true and accurate measures of their beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that they convey in their high performing urban elementary school. They provided concrete examples and thought about specific children and families as they shared events and interventions that have taken place at their high performing urban elementary school.

The themes that emerged related to beliefs in a high performing urban elementary school were the understanding of the whole child in problem-solving and understanding student differences in making academic or behavioral decisions. When recognizing practices that occurred in high performing urban elementary schools, flexibility and allowing for individual accommodations, by establishing socially/emotionally welcoming environments and setting realistic yet high expectations for all students. The supports in place that helped to sustain these high performing urban elementary schools included administrative support for academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs and support for all students regardless of their individual needs.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports of principals at high performing urban elementary schools. In this chapter, the research findings are summarized and discussed, the implications for policy and practice as related to supporting principals in urban elementary schools, and recommendations for future research.

Current policies in the Every Student Succeeds Act provide federal funding for states and districts to support the preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality teachers, principals, and other school leaders (Public Law 114-95, 2015; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). Research surrounding high-quality teachers, principals, and school leaders is necessary in order to recruit, prepare, and train these individuals. This study added to the limited body of research on beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that are conveyed by principals in high performing urban elementary schools, to help narrow the racial academic achievement gap. The principal participants gave the researcher background into their experiences as well as meaningful insight to create themes surrounding the research question, what beliefs, espoused practices, and supports do principals convey in high performing urban elementary schools.

Summary of the Study

This study was conducted to research the experiences of three elementary school principals, in an effort to find themes related to the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that

they conveyed in their high performing urban school. These principals were in their positions for two or more years to indicate a perception that their leadership had on the school culture beliefs, practices, and supports.

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

The principals' responses to the survey questions and interview questions served as indicators of the beliefs, espoused practices and supports that they conveyed in their high performing urban elementary schools.

Beliefs

Rooted in leadership is the operational success of all organizations. The goal of educational organizations is to improve the academic achievement of all students, and research has shown that one of the most important school-level factors in influencing a student's academic success is leadership (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2019; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The beliefs of principals influence the growth and academic success of the students in the high performing urban schools that they lead (Brion, 2019). Considering the whole child, understanding student differences, and utilizing culturally responsive approaches are beliefs that emerged in principals' response to survey questions.

Of the three principals completing the survey and the interviews, all three principals responded that their school teams considered all factors related to student achievement—including, but not limited to—racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse factors and provided interventions prior to special education referral. One principal responded that the

school also thoroughly analyzed the instructional environment in addition to targeted interventions to increase student achievement. This finding was seen in a study by Nganga, Kambutu & Han (2019) where establishing a nurturing and inclusive learning environment was discussed as an intention act, and that classroom environment matters in schools. In interviews, principals described how problem-solving teams include social-emotional, behavioral, cultural, linguistic, and racial needs in addition to traditional academic needs. Researchers discuss the importance of integrating issues of diversity and cultural competence in schools to positively influence student achievement and organizational change (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2019; Black & Murtadha, 2007; Chan, 2006).

The principals responded favorably to items related to beliefs about whole-child learning. The three principals responded that their instructional teams regularly gather and analyze student data and identify reasons for behavior, learning or other difficulties, while considering racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. In addition, one principal responded that the instructional team regularly uses data analysis to yield hypotheses as to variable that influence behavior, learning or other difficulties, and continue to collect data to verify these hypotheses. Seeking to identify reasons for behavior, learning, or other difficulties is an important implication to improving academic success of minority students in order to work to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. In principal interviews, beliefs about the importance of whole-child learning emerged again. The importance of culturally responsiveness in teaching the whole child was highlighted in a 2016 study by Wiggan and Watson as a process that mediates failure and creates success at a high performing minority school. Principals discussed the importance social emotional learning as well as academic learning of the students. Studies

have targeted the integration of culturally responsive practices and social emotional learning framework to support the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (Sciuchetti, 2017). School-based guidance counselors provide social skills and positive behavior support and district social workers provide support for families in schools that previously have not had this type of social emotional support. Researchers have begun to examine the theme of educating the whole child as a primary leadership behavior that demonstrated in high poverty, high achieving elementary schools (Woods & Martin, 2016).

The beliefs that are conveyed by leaders of urban elementary schools contribute to the growth of student achievement and help narrow the racial academic achievement gap. Leaders who are able to show belief in teachers and students in understanding individual student differences and taking those differences into culturally responsive approaches can influence student achievement (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2019).

Practices

Proactive and positive supports put in place in an organization help to promote and sustain the efficacy of those supports (Wolf, 2012). In an educational organization, the practices conveyed by the principal of a school are factors that can influence the academic achievement gap (Au & Mason, 1981; de Lourdes Vilorio, 2019; Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006).

The three principals all agreed that at their high-performing urban elementary schools, the instructional teams allowed for individual student differences in establishing their classroom environment. The classroom environments were primarily positive and well managed with some modifications of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual

student differences. In interviews, principals discussed experiences where the school culture embraced culture and student diversity, but a missing component was culture and diversity embedded within classroom environment. The importance of race and culture at both the school and classroom level matters in supporting the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (Gay, 2018). Principals described schoolwide positive behavior initiatives that have influenced student behavior and achievement by fostering relationships between the school and parents/family. Research has shown that support positive behaviors and classroom environments helps to sustain and improve schools where race, culture, ethnicity, and language all encompass student diversity factors (Clark, Zygmunt, & Howard, 2016).

Of the three principals completing the survey, all three of the principals responded that their instructional teams regularly maintained realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. In addition, those realistic and high expectations were periodically supported by culturally responsive teaching practices. In interviews, principals described understanding racial, cultural, ethnical, and linguistic diversity amongst their students. They believe this understanding, shared with their teacher, can facilitate teacher knowledge and application of best practices. Principals described how their high performing urban elementary schools provided professional development related to academic as well as social/emotional needs. They reiterated the importance of exposing all students to grade level academic standards while also providing academic supports and interventions at their instructional level and considering their level of English language acquisition or exceptionalities. Support was provided in the least restrictive environment for students to the maximum extent, while providing schoolwide and class-wide academic and behavioral multi-tiered interventions to

meet individual student needs. Incorporating meaningful practices that allowed for realistic yet high expectations for all students while incorporating flexibility and individuality into goals are factors that contribute to increasing student achievement in high performing urban elementary schools. Researchers discuss the need for meaningful professional developments that target the needs of the student population and take into consideration race, culture, ethnicity, and language (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009; Dufound, 2004; Gay, 2018; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Research has also shown the importance of providing culturally relevant academic interventions and support to narrow the academic achievement gap (Griner & Stewart, 2013).

Supports

Supporting the needs of all students is critical in improving the academic achievement of minority students to narrow the racial academic achievement gap that is evident across the United States (Brion, 2019). Of the three principals completing the survey, two principals responded that on a regular basis, there was effective administrative support and additional resources provided to address the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. One principal responded that on a regular basis there is *some* support and additional resources provided to address the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. In interviews, principals described that multiple grade level, school level, and district level supports were in place across classrooms to meet individual learner needs. These supports were provided to all leveled learners and in all domains (reading, math, behavior). Researchers have suggested that when schools provide additional targeted supports to all students—taking into consideration their racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic

needs—that academic growth is impacted (Griner & Stewart, 2013; Nadelson, Albritton, Couture, Green, Loyless, & Shaw, 2019).

Behavioral and social/emotional support is as essential as academic support in promoting the growth of the whole child. All three principals that completed the survey responded that the school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students and two principals responded that staff have been trained on its use and school staff regularly discuss the effectiveness of the school-wide positive behavioral support interventions.

In principal interviews, the principals stated that their schools provided differentiated interventions and supports—both behavioral and academic—to create a positive learning atmosphere to help all students set and reach realistic, attainable goals. Principals described these supports to include school-level and district-level staff include instructional support, paraprofessionals, exceptional student education teachers, administration, guidance counselor, social worker, district mental health counselors, district behavior coaches, and district behavior analysts. Principals extended this idea of support beyond just the students but providing support to teachers as well—providing professional development in areas of need for students and school improvement, best practices in teaching, explicit and systematic instruction, and collaborative planning time with instructional support. Studies conducted by de Lourdes Vilorio (2019) and Woods & Martin (2016) have shown that schools benefit from having extra adult intensive support on campus to work to narrow all academic achievement gaps, including the minority achievement gap.

In high performing urban elementary schools, supports for whole child learning created a positive atmosphere for all. Differentiated levels of support for all students helped to set and

reach realistic yet attainable goals. Supports in education, taking into consideration the whole child, are essential in working to narrow the academic achievement gap (Nganga, Kamutu, & Han, 2019).

Leadership

Although research has recognized multiple leadership theories, styles, and models that are effective in education, some characteristics of effective leaders are common across many models and some models are more effective in urban schools (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2019; Fullan, 2018). Leaders in effective schools demonstrate environmental readiness and the ability to handle complex situations, which are important qualities in leading an urban school (Khan, 2019). While this research study did not utilize observations or focus groups, participant implicit leadership theories can be interpreted using survey and interview responses.

Adaptive leaders in education address the deep cultural value-laden constraints in urban schools' need to adapt to changes and thrive over time, especially in uncertain times. The ability to mobilize teachers and staff to handle the challenge of educating the everchanging urban school population and emerge triumphant in the end, affecting student achievement is emanated in adaptive leaders (Khan, 2017). Qualities of adaptive leadership are impactful on urban schools as a need for narrowing the minority achievement gap that continues to persist. The principals in this study demonstrate beliefs and espoused practices that align with adaptive leadership. The principals responded to survey questions that focused on school beliefs that their school teams considered students' race, culture, ethnicity, and language diverse backgrounds and risk factors associated with those considerations when gathering and analyzing student performance. The

considerations for all external factors related to student achievement is important when working to meet the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students to narrow the minority achievement gap. Adaptive leaders and teams that recognize those external environmental factors related to student achievement and have the ability to make informed considerations to affect change—student achievement (Khan, 2017). In interviews, principals responded that they consider how race, culture, ethnicity, and language played a role in their personal academic success as well as considering those needs for students in their education. Principals in high performing urban schools address social/emotional needs of students in addition to academic needs, as a growth and shift for this need has occurred in the school system.

Principals in this study also demonstrated beliefs and espoused practices that aligned with Servant leadership, with a basis of community, teamwork, and involving others in decision-making (Greenleaf, 1977). Principals responded to survey items stating that teams collected and analyzed student performance and utilized all school administrative and resource staff to provide academic and behavioral supports. The importance of leaders involving others in the growth and development of students both academically and social/emotionally helps to increase teacher leadership and student success (Crippen & Willows, 2019). A missing component is continuing to foster parent involvement as part of the school community. Principals responded to survey items stating that they sometimes involved parents as stakeholders.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study provide implications for educational policy aimed at supporting the preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality principals, as outlined in the Every

Student Succeeds Act (2015). Based on research, preparation programs have attempted to integrate issues of diversity and cultural competence into their programs, but there is a continued need for understanding their effectiveness in changing leadership behaviors that inform organizational change and improve student achievement, narrowing the racial academic achievement gap (Barakat, Reames, & Kensler, 2019; Pounder, 2012).

The beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that leaders convey in urban elementary schools are important. The experiences of the principals in this study are conveyed through their beliefs, espoused practices, and supports, recorded through survey and interviews. Principals support the practices at their high performing urban elementary schools by utilizing culturally relevant academic interventions, considering the whole child, and setting realistic and attainable goals. “True responsiveness requires ongoing preparation for the current workforce in culturally relevant/responsive/sustaining pedagogies while at the same time creating a more diverse workforce and improving training” (p. 40). A lens for cultural relevance should be applied during stages of recruitment, and culturally relevant practices are integral to support the needs of racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students (Johnston, Montalbano, & Kirkland, 2017). Although preparation of educational leaders and the racial academic achievement gap remain national issues, this study has identified beliefs, practices, and supports conveyed by high performing urban elementary schools in order to narrow the racial academic achievement gap.

Principals, as the leader of the educational institution, are fundamental in the organizational success of a school (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Principals in this study stated they believed in and supported additional preparation, such as the support for preparation,

training and recruitment of educational leadership personnel found in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015).

Culturally Responsive pedagogy is theory, research and practice that supports and sustains the teaching and learning in urban schools. When schools are changed to reflect and draw on racial, cultural, ethnical, and linguistic strengths, achievement increases (Gay, 2018). The principals in this study conveyed beliefs, espoused practices, and supports that align with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. They perceive promotion, development, and support of racial, cultural, ethnical, and linguistic needs begins with the principal as a change agent at the school level. Professional Developments and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) related to Culturally Responsive pedagogy and Culturally responsive instruction can help to support and sustain school wide beliefs, practices and supports to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. Continued support to policies and programs that prepare, train, and recruit high-quality principals must include Culturally Responsive pedagogy to increase student achievement with the changing population of students in public schools. State legislatures are passing laws to ensure teachers and leaders are highly qualified in their subject field, have background in teaching and accommodating students with exceptionalities and have competencies in the use of explicit and systematic and sequential approaches to reading instruction (Florida Department of Education, 2019). It is of importance for teachers and leaders to also have competencies in the instruction of students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (Hernandez & Kose, 2012; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

Principals who consider the whole child and understand the impact race, culture, ethnicity, and language have on academic achievement are vital contributors to the

organizational success in high performing urban elementary schools. Principals can use tools such as the survey used in this study, “Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality,” to evaluate the beliefs, practices and supports conveyed at their respective school to create a plan of improvement. Evaluating current beliefs, practices, and supports that are conveyed in a school and determining a plan for school reform allows stakeholders to critically reflect and set real and attainable academic and social goals (Johnston, Montalbano, & Kirkland, 2017).

Principals responded to survey questions stating that they made some efforts to collaborate with families of students of diverse backgrounds. A greater consideration for external environmental factors and the ability to affect change on the external environment by increasing collaborating with families could provide for increased organizational success in the future (Khan, 2017).

While the history of leadership research is ever evolving, the research still demonstrates a need for continued support for leaders in unstable organizations (Khan, 2017). Research has shown that while effective leadership is a multitude of characteristics, beliefs and practices in schools, that leadership is indeed teachable and has shapeable skills (Olberg & Andenoro, 2019). Additional focus needs to be placed on utilizing these research based leadership theory in professional preparation of leaders; a need for applied approaches to leadership education is necessary in addition to a theoretical foundation (Diallo & Gerhardt, 2017). Crippen and Willows (2019) recommend that Servant leadership be included in leadership programs as a valuable component to develop leaders and provide strategies and supports to develop teacher leaders who develop student leaders and student success.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research study has added to the body of research focused on leadership characteristics that contribute to narrowing the achievement gap in urban elementary schools by surveying, interviewing and analyzing the experiences of three principals in high performing urban elementary schools in one large southeastern school district. Additionally, the principals participated in an online survey that was used to further identify characteristics they conveyed in their high performing urban elementary schools related to beliefs, espoused practices, and supports. The following recommendations for future research address areas of leadership support:

1. This study was limited to elementary school principals. Examining the experiences of principals in high performing urban middle schools and high schools would provide insight into the beliefs, practices and supports that are conveyed across elementary and secondary settings.
2. This study was limited to one school district. Examining the experiences of high performing principals in additional school districts would provide insight into the beliefs, practices, and supports that are conveyed across school districts.
3. This study was limited to the use of surveys and interviews. While it is not known how frequently, consistently, or effectively these principals may do what they say they do, future studies may include observations or focus groups to move from espoused practices to actual practices.
4. The principals in this study were selected at the school district's discretion: the researcher had no input on which principals were offered participation. While

difficult to ensure, a future researcher may further this study with a larger population open to all principals that meet criteria. This larger study would provide for more experiences to create targeted, specific themes of beliefs, practice, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban schools.

5. Further research also needs to be conducted with teachers to learn more about the beliefs, practices and supports they convey in their classroom. Examining the experiences of teachers in high performing urban elementary schools will provide insight into the beliefs, practices and supports that are conveyed at the classroom level that influence students and narrow the racial academic achievement gap.

Summary

The findings in this study further added to the body of literature surrounding leadership perceptions of beliefs, espoused practices and support that may contribute to narrowing the achievement gap in urban elementary schools. The themes identified in this study (whole child learning/culturally responsive approaches, flexibility and acceptance of individual needs/accommodations, and culturally responsive interventions and supports) are emanated through leadership at the school level to influence and narrow the racial academic achievement gap. All principals who were interviewed spoke positively of their school and environments and their roles as school level leaders. The principals viewed themselves as equal stakeholders in the academic success of the students at their school and described the beliefs, espoused practices, and supports they conveyed in narrowing the racial academic achievement gap.

All of the principal participants responded (via survey and spoke via interview) about the importance of culturally responsive approaches when problem-solving student needs in urban elementary schools. The role of the principal as the facilitator of culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports conveyed at the school level to influence academic achievement at the student level. This role is growing ever more important as the racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of schools increase in urban, suburban, and rural schools.

The results of this research study can be used to make informed decisions about how to improve the quality and effectiveness of principals in urban elementary schools. Through the findings of this research, support from the current literature on principal characteristics conveyed in high performing urban schools, and the researcher's personal experience, the connections can be seen between effective leadership and student achievement. Dedicated principals who have understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy and display culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports in their urban elementary school help to narrow the racial academic achievement gap. Experiences, personal and professional beliefs, understanding of culturally responsive instructional practices, use of resources and supports can influence the culture of the school to effect the educational environment and student achievement. Organizations must prepare, train and recruit high-quality principals to influence the academic achievement of urban schools. When considering urban principals, school districts must consider how to support, prepare, and train principals utilizing best practices for students who are racially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse.

APPENDIX A:
PERMISSION TO USE AND MODIFY CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS: THE CHECKLIST TO ADDRESS
DISPROPORTIONALITY

From: "Van Haren, Barbara" <vanharenb@uwosh.edu>
Subject: Re: Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality, permission to modify tool for use in a Survey
January 6, 2016 at 2:16:38 PM EST
To: Jessica Schofield <jschofield@Knights.ucf.edu>
Cc: "Chiang, Bert" <chiangb@uwosh.edu>, "Jorgensen, Jack" <jorgensenj@uwosh.edu>, "Boreson, Lynn" <boresonl@uwosh.edu>

Dear Jessica,

Thank you for demonstrating an interest in the use of the survey *Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality*. We welcome researchers and educators to use our tool to meet their individual needs. Please be sure to include a caveat that this tool was not created as an intention for evaluation.

You may use the survey and make adjustments as needed. Please share your use of the tool and include the original survey tool as well as the modifications you made so that we can better understand how the tool is improving education.

Best regards,

Barbara Van Haren
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APPENDIX B:
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS: THE CHECKLIST
TO ADDRESS DISPROPORTIONALITY

Culturally Responsive Practices in Schools: The Checklist to Address Disproportionality

I. Culturally Responsive Beliefs and Practices of Schools and General Education Classrooms

Respondents: The school can determine the respondents that are best suited to complete the section of the checklist. The individuals completing this section of the checklist should have knowledge about school wide policies and practices.

Quality Indicators: Examples of best practices are offered to illustrate appropriate responses to the critical questions. The list may be edited to reflect options available locally.

Rubrics: A rubric is provided for each critical question to assess to what degree the school has addressed each item.

Note: To be as inclusive as possible, references to families within this checklist may refer to biological parents, step-parents, adoptive or foster parents, legal guardians, other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. and to “social family members.” Social family members are not biologically related members of the student’s family, but, nevertheless, play an important part in the student’s family life and upbringing.

Critical Questions	Respondent	Quality Indicators	Rubric (Circle the # most applicable)
School Culture and Supports			
<p>1. Does the school culture support and celebrate diversity and view students of RCELD (racial, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity) as assets?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School environment contains evidence of contributions/work from individuals with diverse backgrounds on a regular basis, not just during a special week or month • Classrooms contain evidence of contributions/work from individuals with diverse backgrounds 	<p>1. The school makes little or no attempt to acknowledge and celebrate diversity. 2. The school acknowledges and celebrates diversity during a special time of the school year. 3. The school and classrooms acknowledge and celebrate diversity on a regular basis. 4. Acknowledgement and celebration of diversity permeates the school and classrooms with frequent and varied examples.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students of RCELD are regularly recognized and honored for their work • Bilingual programming • Materials translated for non-English speaking families 	
2. Does the school have a positive behavioral support system for ALL students?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School has established procedures that emphasize positive behaviors and regularly recognizes students for displaying appropriate behaviors • School staff have been trained in the implementation of a positive behavioral support system • Classroom incentive plans for positive behavior 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school does not have a positive behavioral support system in place. 2. The school has begun to implement a positive behavioral support system for all students. 3. The school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students and staff have been trained in its use. 4. The school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students, staff have been trained in its use, and school staff regularly discuss the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavioral support interventions.
3. Has the school principal established an attitude amongst staff that “all		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous examples of regular collaboration between general 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters isolation and little or no collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education

<p>students are our students” as opposed to an attitude of “my students and your students?”</p>		<p>and special education teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEPs of students of RCELD in inclusive classes are regularly shared with general education teachers and include numerous examples of classroom accommodation s/modifications • Master schedules allow maximum time for shared planning and teaching 	<p>teachers, and other support staff (e.g., related services, ESL).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters minimal collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff. 3. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters regular collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff. 4. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters extensive and effective collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.
<p>4. Do teachers (e.g. general education, ESL, special education) work collaboratively to support all students?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom time in general education settings is devoted to social skills instruction and problem solving skills • When necessary, students of RCELD in general education classrooms have behavioral management systems that 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is little or no collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff (e.g., related services, ESL). 2. There is minimal collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff. 3. There is regular collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff. 4. There is extensive and effective collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.

		<p>address individual cultural differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support mentors are provided • Co-teaching observed • Co-planning observed 	
<p>5. Are differentiated reading interventions (e.g., Title I, Read 180, Reading Recovery) available to students of RCELD?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading teachers or specialists are providing services to students of RCELD in inclusive environments • Reading teachers/specialists are regularly consulting with general education teachers on reading interventions and the effects of the interventions • Multiple reading levels and instructional groupings are used by general education teachers • ESL, Special 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no differentiated reading interventions provided to students of RCELD in general education classrooms. All students in general education receive the same type and intensity of reading instruction. 2. General education teachers receive consultation services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists periodically. There is some differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms. 3. General education teachers receive consultation and direct services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists regularly. There are numerous examples of differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms. 4. General education teachers receive consultation and direct services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists on a regular and consistent basis. There are numerous examples of differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms.

		<p>Ed and General Ed staff receive common professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When necessary, 1-to-1 reading support is provided daily 	
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<p>6. Has the school adopted a problem solving approach that values assessment to drive instructional decisions?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving teams are active and engaged in problem solving discussions on a regular basis • Examples of problem-solving teams implemented interventions with data on targeted behavior(s) of a student of RCELD for a reasonable amount of time. • Problem-solving teams provided follow-up support and monitoring of planned interventions • Families encouraged to participate in 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school has not implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. 2. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is inconsistent. 3. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is usually provided. 4. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is always provided and there is ample evidence of revisions to interventions based upon analyzed performance data.
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		<p>problem solving discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from general education classroom interventions designed to provide academic and/or behavioral support to a student of RCELD 	
<p>7. Do school teams receive sufficient administrative support when expressing concerns about meeting the needs of students of RCELD?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal regularly commits additional resources to address the needs of a student of RCELD • Problem-solving teams regularly shares concerns with the administration about issues/resources impacting a students of RCELD • Professional development support is provided to assist general education teachers in meeting the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is little or no administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD. 2. On an infrequent basis there is some administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD. 3. On a regular basis there is some administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD. 4. On a regular basis there is effective administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD. School teams can count on administrative advocacy and creative problem solving in attempts to address the needs of students of RCELD.

		needs of students of RCELD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/home connection activities 	
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8. Has the school established a multi-tiered model of intervention services?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School examples of services available to all students (e.g., school-wide positive behavioral support system, instructional strategies in reading and math, differentiated curriculum, test taking strategies) • School examples of time limited specialized services for students of RCELD (e.g., extra support in the classroom, small group or 1:1 instruction, home support, tutors, after school programs) • School examples of long term intensive 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school has not implemented a multi-tiered (e.g., prevention, intervention, and specialized support) model of intervention services. 2. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services but differentiated interventions for students of RCELD in need are inconsistent. 3. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services and there are numerous examples of differentiated interventions for students of RCELD in need. 4. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services and the extent of differentiated interventions for students of students is significant.
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		<p>specialized support services for students of RCELD (e.g., collaboration with community programs, crisis response plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear guidelines and criteria have been established to move students from one tier to another 	
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Instructional Team Beliefs

<p>9. Do school teams actively consider other possible explanations (e.g., insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors) for the student of RCELD who has low achievement, rather than automatically assuming a disability?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and classroom environmental assessment is conducted to determine possible explanations for the problems experienced by the student of RCELD • Systematic use of curriculum-based assessment and error analyses data • Problem-solving teams recommendations focus on positive behavioral 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD primarily stem from student deficits and special education referral is the preferred option. 2. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD may not always stem from student deficits but special education referral tends to be the preferred option. 3. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD may stem from multiple issues (e.g., student deficits, cultural/linguistic/family risk factors, and mismatch between instructional and learning styles) and numerous general education classroom interventions are employed prior to special education referral. 4. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students with RCELD may stem from multiple issues. Based upon a
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		interventions & student strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delineated and comprehensive referral process 	thorough analysis of the instructional environment, an extensive array of general education classroom interventions are implemented prior to special education referral.
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10. Does the Instructional Team actively consider whether absence or parent/family mobility of the student of RCELD negatively impacts continuity of general education classroom instruction?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applicable, the instructional team discusses a student of RCELD and his/her excessive school absence or past history of mobility. • Strategies to increase attendance have been documented • Student and family support from school staff for attendance issues • Home visits 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of excessive absences or family mobility were not considered by the Instructional Team. 2. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team, but there was no detailed analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student of RCELD. 3. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team with detailed analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student of RCELD. 4. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team with detailed and incisive analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student with RCELD, and recommendations on how to minimize the instructional impact in the future.
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11. Has the Instructional Team made concerted efforts to reach out to parents/family members of students of RCELD by fostering collaboration, mutual trust, and respect?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School hosts events for parents/families of students of RCELD on a regular basis (e.g., potluck meals, parent groups) • School provides opportunities for 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school has made little or no effort to collaborate with families of students of RCELD. 2. The school has made some effort to collaborate with families of students of RCELD by inviting them to school meetings. 3. The school regularly reaches out to families of students of RCELD by actively involving them in school meetings and problem solving discussions.
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		<p>parents/family members of students of RCELD to participate in regularly scheduled meetings outside the school setting (e.g, at community centers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administration promotes staff knowledge of diverse cultures • Problem-solving teams include parents/family members of students of RCELD in meeting discussions to formulate instructional and behavioral recommendations • Staff members offer to meet with parents outside the school setting (e.g., home visits or community sites) 	<p>4. The school actively seeks the involvement and decision making input of families of students of RCELD and is committed to learning about the culture of those families and empowering them.</p>
12. Does the			1. The Instructional Team does not use peer supports in general education

<p>Instructional Team use peer supports in the classroom?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom instructional groupings promote heterogeneous groups of students working together • Implement flexible groupings of students for different purposes • Reading buddies • Cooperative learning groups • Cross age peer tutoring 	<p>classrooms.</p> <p>2. The Instructional Team sometimes uses peer supports in general education classrooms but instruction is usually whole class and teacher directed.</p> <p>3. The Instructional Team regularly uses peer supports in general education classrooms and instruction is divided between whole group teacher directed and small group student directed (e.g., cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring) learning.</p> <p>4. The Instructional Team regularly uses peer supports in general education classrooms and continuously seeks to empower students to take a more active responsibility for their learning and supporting each other.</p>
<p>13. Does the Instructional Team incorporate culturally responsive materials and content in the curricula and use culturally responsive teaching practices?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom materials include stories and perspectives from diverse cultures • General education classroom instruction is varied (e.g., small group, cooperative learning high teacher-student interaction) 	<p>1. The Instructional Team rarely incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices.</p> <p>2. The Instructional Team periodically incorporates culturally responsive materials and content but culturally responsive teaching practices are rarely displayed.</p> <p>3. The Instructional Team regularly incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices.</p> <p>4. The Instructional Team regularly incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices and school staff. School staff constantly seek to add to their knowledge of culturally responsive practices and the academic performance data of students of</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High energy and animation in the classroom, real world relevant learning activities, increased teacher-student interactions • Culturally responsive instruction including: acknowledging students' differences as well as their commonalities, validating students' cultural identities in classroom practices, educating students about diversity, promoting equity and mutual respect among students, assessing students' ability and achievement validly, motivating students to become active participants in their learning, encouraging students to 	<p>RCELD in general education classrooms is regularly reviewed and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of staff practices.</p>
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		<p>think critically, challenging students to strive for excellence, assisting students in becoming socially and politically conscious</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional use of multiple intelligences & various learning styles 	
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<p>14. Does the Instructional Team actively seek to identify the reason for a RCELD student's behavior, learning or other difficulties?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses of problem behaviors are regularly conducted to assess students of RCELD • General education classroom examples of informal, curriculum-based, authentic assessments on academic performance of students of RCELD • General education classroom examples of error analyses conducted on 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Instructional Team does not systematically gather and analyze classroom performance data to identify the reasons for behavior, learning or other difficulties of a student of RCELD. 2. The Instructional Team periodically gathers classroom performance data but no attempt to systematically analyze that information to identify the reasons for behavior, learning, or other difficulties of students with RCELD is made. 3. The Instructional Team regularly gathers and analyzes classroom performance data to identify the reasons for behavior, learning or other difficulties of the student of RCELD. 4. The Instructional Team regularly gathers and analyzes classroom performance data to identify the source(s) of behavior, learning, or other difficulties for the student of RCELD. This analysis of classroom performance data yields tentative hypotheses as to possible instructional environment variables that may be impact behavior, learning or other difficulties. The Instructional Team seeks to verify these tentative hypotheses by
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		academic work of students of RCELD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are consulted to gain a better understanding of parent expectations for the student 	collecting student performance data.
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Instructional Team Practices			
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15. Does the Instructional Team use culturally responsive behavior management practices by considering the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom examples of understanding behavioral differences of students of RCELD (e.g., expressed preference for working individually or in groups, listening and responding style, peer interaction patterns, responses to authority, verbal and nonverbal communication, turn taking behaviors) • General education classroom rules and procedures are 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Instructional Team does not consider the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD. 2. The Instructional Team discussed the student’s culture but no systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student with RCELD was conducted. 3. The Instructional Team discussed the student’s culture and conducted a systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student of RCELD. 4. The Instructional Team discussed the student’s culture and conducted a systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student of RCELD. The systematic analysis of the student’s culture and potential impact on behavior included staff discussions with the family about home expectations and behavior management practices and staff self-assessments of their own cultural expectations and practices.
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		<p>accommodating to diverse student behavioral styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff confer with family about home expectations and behavior management practices • Staff engage in self-assessments of their own cultural expectations and practices 	
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<p>16. Does the Instructional Team establish a classroom environment that accepts individual student differences and is positive, structured, and well managed?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom examples of understanding differences of students of RCELD • General education classroom rules and procedures are accommodating to diverse student learning styles • General education classroom procedures and routines are 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Instructional Team does not establish a classroom environment accepting of student differences. The classroom environment is managed poorly and is not conducive to student learning. 2. The Instructional Team does not establish a classroom environment accepting of student differences. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed will all students having the same behavioral expectations. 3. The Instructional Team does allow for individual student differences in establishing its classroom environment. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed with some modification of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual student differences. 4. The Instructional Team does allow for individual student differences in establishing its classroom environment. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed with extensive
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		<p>actively taught to students with periodic reminders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom transitions are short and smooth • General education teacher-student interactions are positive 	<p>modification of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual student differences. The classroom environment establishes a climate that celebrates student differences.</p>
<p>17. Does the Instructional Team set realistic, high expectations and standards for students of RCELD?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education teacher's expectations for achievement for students of RCELD are realistic • General education teachers set high expectations for students of RCELD • Standards-based curriculum for all students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Instructional Team quite often does not maintain realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD. 2. The Instructional Team usually maintains high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD but quite often those high expectations are unrealistic because the Instructional Team does not regularly engage in culturally responsive teaching practices. 3. Instructional Team regularly maintains realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD. Realistic and high expectations for students of RCELD are periodically supported by culturally responsive teaching practices. 4. Instructional Team regularly maintains realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD. Realistic and high expectations for students of RCELD are regularly supported by culturally responsive teaching practices.
<p>18. Are learning strategies explicitly taught to students of</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are specifically taught thinking skills, specific 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematic instruction in learning strategies is rarely, if ever, provided to students of RCELD. 2. Learning strategies are sometimes

RCELD?		<p>learning strategies, cognitive behavioral skills (e.g., stop-and-think) and those skills are modeled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers regularly explain how/why student's responses are correct and incorrect • Balanced literacy instruction with thinking skills taught 	<p>explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms.</p> <p>3. Learning strategies are regularly explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms.</p> <p>4. Learning strategies are regularly explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms. Thinking skills used in completing and evaluating assignments are regularly clearly communicated to the students.</p>
19. Does the Instructional Team accommodate the needs of students of RCELD through differentiated instruction that reflects the interests and experiences of students of RCELD?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education teacher employs a variety of teaching methods and materials • Students of RCELD receive additional review and practice in difficulty areas in the general education classroom • General education classroom teacher engages in direct, frequent, and 	<p>1. The Instructional Team does little or no differentiated instruction for students of RCELD.</p> <p>2. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in at least one of the five factors of instruction: (1) content = what is taught, (2) process = how content is taught, (3) product = how students demonstrate content mastery, (4) affect = how students connect their thinking and feelings, and (5) learning environment = how the classroom is designed and students are grouped.</p> <p>3. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in 2 or 3 of the five factors of instruction (see #2 above).</p> <p>4. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in 4 or 5</p>

		<p>continuous monitoring of instruction and student progress performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education classroom examples of differentiated instruction to address the needs of students of RCELD • General education classroom examples of individualized behavioral supports to address the needs of students of RCELD • Instruction builds upon existing student knowledge and experiences 	<p>of the five factors of instruction (see #2 above).</p>
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II. Culturally Responsive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (EIS) and Referral

Respondents: The school can determine the respondents that are best suited to complete the section of the checklist. The individuals completing this section of the checklist should have knowledge about school wide policies and practices.

Quality Indicators: Examples of best practices are offered to illustrate appropriate responses to the critical questions. The list may be edited to reflect options available locally.

Rubrics: A rubric is provided for each critical question to assess to what degree the school has addressed each item.

Note: To be as inclusive as possible, references to families within this checklist may refer to biological parents, step-parents, adoptive or foster parents, legal guardians, other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. and to “social family members.” Social family members are not biologically related members of the student’s family, but, nevertheless, play an important part in the student’s family life and upbringing.

Critical Questions	Respondent	Quality Indicators	Rubric (Circle the # most applicable)
1. Were early intervening or pre-referral services provided in a timely manner, for a reasonable duration, and with an intensive enough approach?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building team meets as quickly as possible after a teacher identifies a need for EIS • Clear plan for student interventions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student did not make progress. The duration, frequency and intensity of intervention were below the level suggested. 2. Student did not make progress. The duration, frequency and intensity were consistent with recommendations. 3. Student did not make progress. The duration, frequency and intensity of intervention exceeded the recommendations. 4. Student making progress with prevention/early intervention supports.
2. Did the student receive a variety of services to address individual needs?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous year’s teachers are routinely invited to initial building team meetings to ensure a smoother transition • Counseling sessions are scheduled with students of RCELD to review expectations • A time/place for students of RCELD to receive individualized assistance with homework 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One intervention has been tried. 2. At least two intervention have been tried. 3. Multiple, different strategies have been tried. 4. The team has implemented the appropriate interventions.

Critical Questions	Respondent	Quality Indicators	Rubric (Circle the # most applicable)
		assignment has been established	
3. Did the student's classroom teacher initiate and receive support to select and implement appropriate interventions?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular collaborative discussions to consider (a) specific accommodations for individual students, (b) teacher and staff roles and responsibilities are specified, and (c) plans for monitoring, adjusting, and providing feedback are drafted and implemented cooperatively 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The classroom teacher works in isolation and selected interventions to improve student progress independently. The classroom teacher consulted with at least one other staff member about strategies to meet the student's needs. The classroom teacher consulted with other members of problem-solving teams. The classroom teacher and his/her Instructional Team differentiated instruction for this student and planned strategies to minimize learning barriers during regular co-planning sessions.
4. Did systematic follow-up occur to ensure that interventions were implemented as designed and student progress was monitored?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team member is designated to be responsible for systematic follow-up 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up did not occur. Follow-up and progress monitoring occurred only at the end of the implementation period. Implementation lacked consistency and systematic approaches. Follow-up and monitoring usually occurred. Systematic implementation and consistency may occasionally be lacking. Systematic follow-up occurred and adjustments were made as needed to ensure fidelity of implementation and progress monitoring occurred regularly.
5. Were the student's parents/family involved as an equal partner in the problem-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear guidelines are established for staff to use various communication 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The student's parents/family were not involved. The student's parents/ family were informed of concerns about the student. The student's parents/family were invited to

<p>solving process?</p>		<p>methods to report student progress to parents/family members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meets with parents/families to prepare them to participate in problem solving discussions before those meetings take place. 	<p>participate in problem-solving but no accommodations were made for the family. 4. The student's parents/family had an equal voice in problem-solving and decision-making.</p>
<p>6. Were community-based services for the student and his/her family considered and offered, if appropriate?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/family members are referred to appropriate community agencies and programs • Parents can have easy access to program brochure or flyers about community based services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community-based services were not considered. 2. Community-based services were discussed, but follow-up with the family to connect them to services did not occur. 3. Appropriate community-based services were considered and suggested. 4. Community-based services were considered. The student's family was able to select from several appropriate options and were assisted in accessing the desired service(s).
<p>7. Based on review of existing data, was cultural difference considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building team records document discussion about cultural differences (e.g. interaction with authority figures, varied expectations of school 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural difference was not considered. 2. Cultural difference was discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 3. Cultural difference was discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 4. Cultural difference was discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.

		<p>personnel) and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties</p>	
<p>8. Based on review of existing data, were excessive absences considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building team records document discussion about the number of excused/unexcused absences, truancies, and tardiness and the effects on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excessive absences were not considered. 2. Excessive absences were discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 3. Excessive absences were discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 4. Excessive absences were discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.

<p>9. Based on review of existing data, were family risk factors and/or family mobility considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building team records document discussion about stressors in home situation such as exposure to toxic substances or violence/abuse and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties • Building team 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family risk factors and/or family mobility were not considered. 2. Family risk factors and/or family mobility were discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 3. Family risk factors and/or family mobility were discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 4. Family risk factors and/or family mobility were discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.
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		<p>records document discussion about the number of schools attended both within and outside of the district and its effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties</p>	
<p>10. Based on review of existing data, were life stressors considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building team records document discussion about stressors (e.g. death of parent/family member, witness to violence, immigration trauma) and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties • Building team records document discussion about various environments and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life stressors were not considered. 2. Life stressors were discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 3. Life stressors were discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 4. Life stressors were discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.

		other difficulties	
11. Based on review of existing data, was mismatch between instructional and learning styles in reading and/or math considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building team records document discussion about curriculum changes, differentiated instruction, and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mismatch between instructional and learning styles was not considered. Mismatch between instructional and learning styles was discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. Mismatch between instructional and learning styles was discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. Mismatch between instructional and learning styles was discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.

12. Based on review of existing data, was environmental or socioeconomic status considered a factor contributing to the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building team records document discussion about environmental or socioeconomic status and the effect on student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental and socioeconomic status were not considered. Environmental and socioeconomic status were discussed, but no detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. Environmental and socioeconomic status were discussed with detailed analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties. Environmental and socioeconomic status were discussed with detailed and incisive analysis of its effect on the student's learning, behavior, or other difficulties.
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APPENDIX C:
THE PRINCIPAL SURVEY TOOL

ADAPTED FROM *CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS:
THE CHECKLIST TO ADDRESS DISPROPORTIONALITY*
School Culture and Supports

1. Does the school culture support and celebrate diversity and view students of RCELD (racial, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity) as assets?

1. The school makes little or no attempt to acknowledge and celebrate diversity.
2. The school acknowledges and celebrates diversity during a special time of the school year.
3. The school and classrooms acknowledge and celebrate diversity on a regular basis.
4. Acknowledgement and celebration of diversity permeates the school and classrooms with frequent and varied examples.

2. Does the school have a positive behavioral support system for ALL students?

1. The school does not have a positive behavioral support system in place.
2. The school has begun to implement a positive behavioral support system for all students.
3. The school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students and staff have been trained in its use.
4. The school has implemented a positive behavioral support system for all students, staff have been trained in its use, and school staff regularly discuss the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavioral support interventions.

3. Has the school principal established an attitude amongst staff that “all students are our students” as opposed to an attitude of “my students and your students?”

1. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters isolation and little or no collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff (e.g., related services, ESL).
2. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters minimal collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.
3. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters regular collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.
4. The prevailing attitude of school staff fosters extensive and effective collaborative interaction between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.

4. Do teachers (e.g. general education, ESL, special education) work collaboratively to support all students?

1. There is little or no collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff (e.g., related services, ESL).
2. There is minimal collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.
3. There is regular collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.
4. There is extensive and effective collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other support staff.

5. Are differentiated reading interventions (e.g., Title I, Read 180, Reading Recovery) available to students of RCELD?

1. There are no differentiated reading interventions provided to students of RCELD in general education classrooms. All students in general education receive the same type and intensity of reading instruction.
2. General education teachers receive consultation services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists periodically. There is some differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms.
3. General education teachers receive consultation and direct services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists regularly. There are numerous examples of differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms.

4. General education teachers receive consultation and direct services from special education teachers, reading teachers or other specialists on a regular and consistent basis. There are numerous examples of differentiation of reading interventions for students of RCELD in general education classrooms.

6. Has the school adopted a problem solving approach that values assessment to drive instructional decisions?

1. The school has not implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD.
2. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is inconsistent.
3. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is usually provided.
4. The school has implemented a problem solving process to review the academic performance of students of RCELD. Systematic implementation and monitoring of recommended interventions is always provided and there is ample evidence of revisions to interventions based upon analyzed performance data.

7. Do school teams receive sufficient administrative support when expressing concerns about meeting the needs of students of RCELD?

1. There is little or no administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD.
2. On an infrequent basis there is some administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD.
3. On a regular basis there is some administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD.
4. On a regular basis there is effective administrative support/additional resources provided to address the needs of students of RCELD. School teams can count on administrative advocacy and creative problem solving in attempts to address the needs of students of RCELD.

8. Has the school established a multi-tiered model of intervention services?

1. The school has not implemented a multi-tiered (e.g., prevention, intervention, and specialized support) model of intervention services.
2. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services but differentiated interventions for students of RCELD in need are inconsistent.
3. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services and there are numerous examples of differentiated interventions for students of RCELD in need.
4. The school has implemented a multi-tiered model of intervention services and the extent of differentiated interventions for students of students is significant.

Instructional Team Beliefs

9. Do school teams actively consider other possible explanations (e.g., insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors) for the student of RCELD who has low achievement, rather than automatically assuming a disability?

1. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD primarily stem from student deficits and special education referral is the preferred option.
2. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD may not always stem from student deficits but special education referral tends to be the preferred option.

3. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students of RCELD may stem from multiple issues (e.g., student deficits, cultural/linguistic/family risk factors, and mismatch between instructional and learning styles) and numerous general education classroom interventions are employed prior to special education referral.
4. School teams believe that general education classroom performance problems of students with RCELD may stem from multiple issues. Based upon a thorough analysis of the instructional environment, an extensive array of general education classroom interventions are implemented prior to special education referral.

10. Does the Instructional Team actively consider whether absence or parent/family mobility of the student of RCELD negatively impacts continuity of general education classroom instruction?

1. The impact of excessive absences or family mobility were not considered by the Instructional Team.
2. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team, but there was no detailed analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student of RCELD.
3. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team with detailed analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student of RCELD.
4. Excessive absences or family mobility were discussed by the Instructional Team with detailed and incisive analysis of the impact on the continuity of general education classroom instruction for the student with RCELD, and recommendations on how to minimize the instructional impact in the future.

11. Has the Instructional Team made concerted efforts to reach out to parents/family members of students of RCELD by fostering collaboration, mutual trust, and respect?

1. The school has made little or no effort to collaborate with families of students of RCELD.
2. The school has made some effort to collaborate with families of students of RCELD by inviting them to school meetings.
3. The school regularly reaches out to families of students of RCELD by actively involving them in school meetings and problem solving discussions.
4. The school actively seeks the involvement and decision making input of families of students of RCELD and is committed to learning about the culture of those families and empowering them.

12. Does the Instructional Team use peer supports in the classroom?

1. The Instructional Team does not use peer supports in general education classrooms.
2. The Instructional Team sometimes uses peer supports in general education classrooms but instruction is usually whole class and teacher directed.
3. The Instructional Team regularly uses peer supports in general education classrooms and instruction is divided between whole group teacher directed and small group student directed (e.g., cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring) learning.
4. The Instructional Team regularly uses peer supports in general education classrooms and continuously seeks to empower students to take a more active responsibility for their learning and supporting each other.

13. Does the Instructional Team incorporate culturally responsive materials and content in the curricula and use culturally responsive teaching practices?

1. The Instructional Team rarely incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices.
2. The Instructional Team periodically incorporates culturally responsive materials and content but culturally responsive teaching practices are rarely displayed.
3. The Instructional Team regularly incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices.
4. The Instructional Team regularly incorporates culturally responsive materials, content, and teaching practices and school staff. School staff constantly seek to add to their knowledge of culturally responsive practices and the academic performance data of students of RCELD in general education classrooms is regularly reviewed and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of staff practices.

14. Does the Instructional Team actively seek to identify the reason for a RCELD student's behavior, learning or other difficulties?

1. The Instructional Team does not systematically gather and analyze classroom performance data to identify the reasons for behavior, learning or other difficulties of a student of RCELD.
2. The Instructional Team periodically gathers classroom performance data but no attempt to systematically analyze that information to identify the reasons for behavior, learning, or other difficulties of students with RCELD is made.
3. The Instructional Team regularly gathers and analyzes classroom performance data to identify the reasons for behavior, learning or other difficulties of the student of RCELD.
4. The Instructional Team regularly gathers and analyzes classroom performance data to identify the source(s) of behavior, learning, or other difficulties for the student of RCELD. This analysis of classroom performance data yields tentative hypotheses as to possible instructional environment variables that may be impact behavior, learning or other difficulties. The Instructional Team seeks to verify these tentative hypotheses by collecting student performance data.

Instructional Team Practices

15. Does the Instructional Team use culturally responsive behavior management practices by considering the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD?

1. The Instructional Team does not consider the impact of culture on school performance of a student of RCELD.
2. The Instructional Team discussed the student's culture but no systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student with RCELD was conducted.
3. The Instructional Team discussed the student's culture and conducted a systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student of RCELD.
4. The Instructional Team discussed the student's culture and conducted a systematic analysis of its impact on school performance of a student of RCELD. The systematic analysis of the student's culture and potential impact on behavior included staff discussions with the family about home expectations and behavior management practices and staff self-assessments of their own cultural expectations and practices.

16. Does the Instructional Team establish a classroom environment that accepts individual student differences and is positive, structured, and well managed?

1. The Instructional Team does not establish a classroom environment accepting of student differences. The classroom environment is managed poorly and is not conducive to student learning.
2. The Instructional Team does not establish a classroom environment accepting of student differences. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed will all students having the same behavioral expectations.
3. The Instructional Team does allow for individual student differences in establishing its classroom environment. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed with some modification of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual student differences.
4. The Instructional Team does allow for individual student differences in establishing its classroom environment. The classroom environment is primarily positive and well managed with extensive modification of classroom rules and behavioral expectations to accommodate for individual student differences. The classroom environment establishes a climate that celebrates student differences.

17. Does the Instructional Team set realistic, high expectations and standards for students of RCELD?

1. The Instructional Team quite often does not maintain realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD.
2. The Instructional Team usually maintains high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD but quite often those high expectations are unrealistic because the Instructional Team does not regularly engage in culturally responsive teaching practices.

3. Instructional Team regularly maintains realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD. Realistic and high expectations for students of RCELD are periodically supported by culturally responsive teaching practices.

4. Instructional Team regularly maintains realistic and high expectations for the achievement of students of RCELD. Realistic and high expectations for students of RCELD are regularly supported by culturally responsive teaching practices.

18. Are learning strategies explicitly taught to students of RCELD?

1. Systematic instruction in learning strategies is rarely, if ever, provided to students of RCELD.

2. Learning strategies are sometimes explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms.

3. Learning strategies are regularly explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms.

4. Learning strategies are regularly explicitly taught to students of RCELD in general education classrooms. Thinking skills used in completing and evaluating assignments are regularly clearly communicated to the students.

19. Does the Instructional Team accommodate the needs of students of RCELD through differentiated instruction that reflects the interests and experiences of students of RCELD?

1. The Instructional Team does little or no differentiated instruction for students of RCELD.

2. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in at least one of the five factors of instruction:

(1) content = what is taught,

(2) process = how content is taught,

(3) product = how students demonstrate content mastery,

(4) affect = how students connect their thinking and feelings, and

(5) learning environment = how the classroom is designed and students are grouped.

3. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in 2 or 3 of the five factors of instruction (see #2 above).

4. The Instructional Team regularly provides differentiated instruction in 4 or 5 of the five factors of instruction (see #2 above).

APPENDIX D:
E-MAIL INTRODUCTION AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
STUDY

Dear School Principal:

I am a doctoral candidate enrolled in the College of Education and Human Performance, and a member of the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative at the University of Central Florida.

I am working on my dissertation titled: *Culturally Responsive Leadership: Beliefs, Practices, and Supports in High Performing Urban Schools*.

This research study will provide educational leaders insight to better understand some of the common beliefs, practices, and supports that principal's employee in high-performing urban schools.

The research will also examine principal perspectives in regards to beliefs, practices and supports relating to culturally responsive instruction. Your school has been chosen based on specific requirements, which include:

1. Elementary school in the targeted large urban school district
2. High-performing for two or more years based on state grade

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in this study if you demonstrate the following participant characteristics:

1. A minimum of 2 years in the principal position at your current school

If you agree to participate in this study, I will send you (via email) an anonymous survey. This survey will be followed up with an in-person interview lasting approximately 20 minutes at a location of your choice.

If you demonstrate the above listed characteristics and wish to participate, please contact me via email. If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me at 617-290-9518, or via email at jschofield@knights.ucf.edu.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to assist with this study.

Sincerely,

Jessica Schofield

Doctoral Candidate

University of Central Florida

jschofield@knights.ucf.edu

617-290-9518

APPENDIX E:
E-MAIL PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Title of Project: *Culturally Responsive Leadership: Beliefs, Practices, and Supports in High Performing Urban Schools*

Principal Investigator: Jessica Schofield

Faculty Supervisor: Suzanne Martin, PhD

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

- The purpose of this study is to investigate what common beliefs, practices and supports (if any) highly effective principals convey in high performing urban elementary schools. This study will research the lived experiences of these principals as they use culturally responsive leadership to work to narrow the student academic achievement gap.
- You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are an elementary school principal at a high-performing urban school with two or more years in your current role.
- Prior to the interview, the researcher will distribute an online anonymous survey to you.
- You will be asked to participate in a face-to-face, semi-structured interview. The interview is expected to take approximately twenty minutes, and will be scheduled at your convenience at an agreed upon location.
- The principal investigator, Jessica Schofield, will conduct the interview using open-ended guiding questions.
- The interview will be audio recorded to ensure that your contributions are adequately captured. (Confidential audiotapes and transcriptions will be kept in a locked, safe location, only accessible by the researcher, for a period of three years. After three years, the tape and transcription will be destroyed.) A summary of the interview will be shared with you at a later

date to check for agreement and allow you to contribute additional information if needed. The interview will be kept confidential and coded for anonymity.

- You will be audio taped during this study. If you do not wish to be audio taped, you will not be able to participate in the study. Discuss this with the researcher.

You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints: Jessica Schofield, Graduate Student, College of Education and Human Performance, (617) 290-9518 or Dr. Suzanne Martin, Faculty Supervisor, Department of Child, Family, and Community Sciences, by email at suzanne.martin@ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

APPENDIX F:
DELPHI PANEL E-MAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear (Expert Panel Member Name),

I am a doctoral candidate with the National Urban Special Education Leadership Initiative (NUSELI) at the University of Central Florida. I am writing to request your assistance to participate as part of a panel of experts in using the Delphi method to evaluate interview questions as I enter the dissertation phase of my doctoral program. My study will focus on how culturally responsive principals in urban elementary schools support their high-performing schools. I hope you will consider providing your expertise and assistance.

I will be using the Delphi method to modify a set of survey questions and develop a set of interview questions for principals who have helped to support high-performing urban elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to investigate what common beliefs, practices and supports (if any) highly effective principals convey in high performing urban elementary schools. This study will research the lived experiences of these principals as they use culturally responsive leadership to work to narrow the student academic achievement gap.

The Delphi method is a three-phase process to collect and gather judgment and input from a panel of experts using a series of questionnaires and analysis techniques combined with feedback. The expert panel will consist of 4-6 members, whose identities will be kept anonymous. Panel experts will participate in three phases of survey and interview questions where they will be offering feedback and input on the types of questions I should include in my survey and interview questions.

In the first phase the expert panel will receive the overarching research question and a list of sample survey questions and interview questions for the study. The expert panel will be asked to provide feedback on the questions.

During the second phase, the expert panel will receive the results from the first phase and will be asked to rate questions on a Likert-scale that will be provided by the researcher. The expert panel will be reviewing question for relevance, validity, and importance.

In the third and final phase, the expert panel will review the questions and ratings from phase two and will be asked to revise any of their ratings or provide rationale on their decisions.

I hope you are able to be a part of the expert panel. Your expertise is of great value to the study. Please respond to the email if you are willing and able to participate. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jessica M. Schofield

Doctoral Candidate

University of Central Florida

jschofield@knights.ucf.edu

617-290-9518

APPENDIX G:
REMINDER EMAIL: DELPHI

Dear (Expert Panel Member Name),

I hope this follow-up e-mail finds you well. I am excited to begin my study and hope to have you as a part of my expert panel. My study will focus on how culturally responsive principals in urban elementary schools support their high-performing schools.

You are recognized as someone who is familiar with the phenomena of culturally responsive instruction, leadership, urban schools, achievement gaps, and have come highly recommended based on one or more of the following characteristics:

- professional educator (professor, supervisor, and/or researcher)
- knowledgeable and practiced in the phenomena of culturally responsive instruction, leadership, urban schools, and achievement gaps
- vested interest in the topic of teacher retention in education
- highly credentialed expert in the field of education (M.Ed., Ed.S. Ed.D. or Ph.D.)
- principal, administrator/executive administrator, who may be interested in the findings of this study

Your participation will involve evaluating two sets of questions that will be used in this research study:

- principal survey questions
- principal interview questions

The process I will utilize for evaluating the survey questions and interview questions in the protocols is known as the Delphi method.

In the first phase, you will be sent sample questions electronically, and will be asked to review questions for errors in syntax, bias, ambiguity, vagueness, etc. Responses will be collected via electronic submission. Responses from phase one will be coded and analyzed, including for anonymity and confidentiality.

In the second phase, the process from phase one will be repeated. Based on the level of consensus from phase one, the number of rounds may vary from two to three. The expert panel will receive the results of the first phase and will be asked to rate questions on a Likert-rating scale provided by the researcher. The expert panel will be reviewing questions for relevance, validity, and importance.

In phase three (if necessary), the expert panel will review the questions and ratings from phase two and will be asked to revise any of their ratings or provide rationale on their decisions.

It is estimated that your time and investment in this entire process, from start to finish, should be 2 to 4 hours. It is expected that the entire process will take approximately 2-3 weeks, and when complete, you will receive a report of the results.

I hope you are able to be a part of the expert panel. Your expertise is of great value to the study.

Please let me know if you will be willing to participate. You may simply hit reply and type YES or NO.

Once I receive your affirmative reply, I will send a letter with further explanation of the study, the instruments, and instructions.

Please email or call me if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to help impact student achievement.

Sincerely,

Jessica M. Schofield

Doctoral Candidate

University of Central Florida

jchofield@knights.ucf.edu

617-290-9518

APPENDIX H:
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARTICIPATION: DELPHI

Dear Expert Panel Member of the Delphi Committee,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study: Culturally Responsive Leadership: Beliefs, Practices, and Supports in High Performing Urban Schools. You are one of XXX individuals being asked to help rate and improve the reliability and validity of the survey questions and interview questions.

You will receive approximately three to six separate communications from me that focus on the central question: What are the culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban schools?

Once I receive all participants' responses it should take no more than 48 hours to return the results. By the third questionnaire I hope to reach consensus on the survey questions and interview questions that will be used for the study.

The below sample questionnaires are attached for your review, feedback, and input:

1. Principal Survey Questions
2. Principal Interview Questions

Your volunteer commitment to this expert panel will add to the body of research on principal impact on student achievement in urban elementary schools.

Again, thank you for agreeing to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Jessica M. Schofield

Doctoral Candidate

University of Central Florida

jschofield@knights.ucf.edu

617-290-9518

APPENDIX I:
PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Script

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Jessica Schofield and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Central Florida. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight into your beliefs, practices, and supports as the principal of a high performing urban elementary school.

This interview should take approximately twenty minutes. Our discussion will be kept confidential and your participation in this research study will remain anonymous.

I appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to me about your experiences regarding characteristics of highly effective principals that support high-performing urban elementary schools.

This research study may help identify culturally responsive leadership beliefs, organizational practices, and school supports that impact a culture of increased student achievement in urban schools. Information from this interview will be combined with other data and used in compiling my dissertation.

My questions will focus on your lived experiences as an urban elementary school principal, concerning your culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports that have impacted the student achievement at your high-performing urban elementary school.

There is no right or wrong way to answer. Measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

The anticipated risks associated with participating in this interview include questions that may address uncomfortable/difficult topics as well as an extended period of time remaining seated.

With your permission, I will be audio recording this interview and taking notes to ensure that I don't miss anything. The interview will be transcribed, and a summary will be shared with you to check for your agreement and allow you to contribute additional information if needed.

There is no compensation or direct benefit for participating in this research. You may decline to participate in this interview without any consequences. You may also choose not to respond to any question without explanation. You will also be provided with an electronic copy of the final dissertation.

If you have any questions regarding participant's rights, you may contact the UCF-IRB Office. I have provided the contact information electronically in a previous e-mail titled "E-mail Participant Consent" but will provide it again upon request.

Do I have your permission to record the interview?

If the participant agrees, the researcher will turn on the audio recorder and continue as follows:

Again my name is Jessica Schofield. Today is _____, and I am speaking with _____.

This interview is being audio-recorded electronically. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

Do you have any questions before I begin our conversation?

Guiding Principal Background Interview Questions

1. Please tell me a bit about your educational and professional history leading up to the current school year? (name, gender, degree(s), work experience, certifications held)
2. Please tell me a bit (as much as you feel comfortable sharing) about your personal history as you feel it relates to your current role as a highly effective principal at a high-performing urban elementary school?

Guiding Principal Research-related Questions:

Research Question: What are the culturally responsive beliefs, practices, and supports that principals convey in high performing urban schools?

1. Describe your school culture. Can you think of an example representing the school's culture that represents support for diversity? How does your school culture support and celebrate diversity? If you could describe a great school culture in terms of supporting culturally responsive leadership, what would it look like? Include?
2. How does the school foster collaboration, mutual trust, and respect between the school and parents/family? Be prepared to give examples

3. Would you describe some of the supports you provide for teachers that they use/work well as they work with many diverse students? (resources, paraprofessionals, programs, MTSS, processes, ESOL, peer, collaboration/common planning time/vertical planning
4. How does the school support students who have influential factors (insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors, attendance) Would you tell me how you and your teachers support students of ELL? Ask the factors individually
5. How is culturally responsive content, culturally responsive materials, and culturally responsive instruction used in school?
6. How do you establish and support accepting classroom environments?
7. How are realistic, high expectations and standards set for the students?
8. How/what learning strategies are taught?
9. Tell me about your philosophy on culturally responsive leadership

APPENDIX J:
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA IRB EXEMPTION
DETERMINATION



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

April 1, 2019

Dear Jessica Schofield:

On 4/1/2019, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category
Title:	Culturally Responsive Leadership: Beliefs, Practices, and Supports in High Performing Urban Schools
Investigator:	Jessica Schofield
IRB ID:	STUDY00000239
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX K:
SCHOOL DISTRICT IRB APPROVAL

Research and Evaluation

Schools

Application to Conduct Research Research Notice of Approval

Approval Date: 7/2/2019

Study ID Number: 242

Expiration Date: 7/1/2020

Project Title: *Culturally Responsive Leadership: Beliefs, Practices, and Supports in High Performing Urban Schools*

Requester: Jessica Schofield

Sponsoring Agency/Organization/Institutional Affiliation:

Thank you for your request to conduct research in . We have reviewed and approved your application. This *Research Notice of Approval (R-NOA)* expires one year after issue date, 7/1/2020.

Additionally, we have received principal approval from the following school to participate in your study:

- Principal
- Principal

If you are interacting with S staff or students, you may email the school-based or district-based administrators who have indicated interest in participating, including this notice as an attachment. After initial contact with applicable administrators, you may email any necessary staff included in your application. This approval notice does not obligate administrators, teachers, students, or families of students to participate in your research study/project; participation is entirely voluntary.

Badges are required to enter any campus or building. Additionally, you are required to bring a copy of the R-NOA with you during research activities.

You are responsible for submitting a Change/Renewal Request Form to this department prior to implementing any changes to the currently approved protocol. If any problems or unexpected adverse reactions occur as a result of this study, you must notify this department immediately. Allow 45 days prior to the expiration date, if you intend to submit a Change/Renewal Request Form to extend your R-NOA date. Otherwise, submit the Executive Summary (along with the provided Cover Page) to conclude your research with and within 45 calendar days of the R-NOA expiration. Email the form/summary to research@. All forms may be found at this [link](#).

Should you have questions, need assistance or wish to report an adverse event, please contact us at research@ or by phone at

Best wishes for your continued success.

Xiaogeng Sun, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Evaluation

2018 08 17

APPENDIX L: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:
PARTICIPANT NUMBER ONE

researcher: Good morning. My name is Jessica Schofield. Today is August 18th, 2019 and I'm speaking with speaker1. This interview is being audio recorded electronically. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

speaker1: Yes.

researcher: Do you have any questions before I begin our conversation?

speaker1: No.

researcher: Okay. Please tell me a bit about your educational and professional history leading up to current year. Things like your name, your gender, your degrees, your work experience, and any certifications that you have.

speaker1: My name is speaker1. I am a Hispanic male. I have an undergrad in business and a master's in ed leadership. I have been a teacher and principal for the past 20 years and I have been in the principal's role for the past five years. I am certified K through six, middle school social studies, ESOL and exceptional student education.

researcher: Thanks. Please tell me a bit, as much as you feel comfortable about sharing about your personal history as you feel it relates to your current role as a highly effective principal at a high performing elementary school.

speaker1: Well, I grew up very poor coming from Puerto Rico, but getting all of my schooling here in Florida. It was very hard at first because I didn't know the language and I had to learn my language along with learning the academics as well. So understanding how English language acquisition takes into play has really helped me to lead a school that is a high level of Spanish speaking students and additional bilingual learners to be successful in both acquiring the language as well as acquiring the academic skills needed to be successful.

researcher: Thanks for that. Could you describe your school culture?

speaker1: Our school culture is very opening and accepting. We are a Title One school. 100% of the students at our school receive free and reduced lunch by state statutes, as well as breakfast and any afterschool programs receive a separate meal as well. We accept any students that we get. We have multiple supports around this school that will help any students that are unsuccessful utilizing the general education curriculum.

researcher: Can you think of an example representing the school's culture that supports or presents support for diversity? And how does your school culture support and celebrate diversity?

speaker1: We celebrate all of the cultures that are embedded in our school. The most abundant culture is the Hispanic culture, although we have so many students that speak Spanish, they come from different countries and areas across the country. It could be Spain, Venezuela, Portugal, and of course Puerto Rico. And we celebrate diversity through all areas of academics. We actually just had an art and music festival, which included all the different grade levels did artwork from Egypt, Africa, China. We did family portraits where they wrote about someone from their family and described the culture that they grew up in and how that is has impacted them so that the students can also understand their cultures and celebrate their own diversity.

researcher: Thank you for that. How does the school foster collaboration, mutual trust and respect between the school and parents and family?

speaker1: Well, I feel like in all areas we demonstrate mutual respect. We respect the families and the families show respect to us. We make much accommodations to ensure that parents can attend all meetings pertaining to their children. We try to schedule events both in the

morning before school, like mom's mornings and dads with donuts as well as events that both happen right at the end of the school day, like afterschool tutoring and things that happen later on in the evening, like open house math night, literacy night, STEM night, all of the different activities like that. We also encourage our families to participate in these activities. When we do have things like our multicultural night, we have lots of families that set up booths with their students. It's not just put on by our teachers and our staff.

researcher: Would you describe some of the supports you provide for teachers that they use or that work well is they work with many diverse students?

speaker1: Well, we have lots of resources in our school because we are a Title One school, so we get extra money. The students can participate in morning tutoring or after school tutoring. We do have paraprofessionals that are funded by Title One and we make sure that all of our power professionals are bilingual. So that they're supporting all of the diverse language needs of our students. We have lots of targeted intervention systems that are research based, so it's not like we're just creating things on our own. We are using things that have been proven to be effective and we also use our district's MTSS problem solving processes so that we see that a student is struggling with the general curriculum or even general behaviors we problem solve. We talk about additional interventions we can put in place. We collect data on those interventions to see how they're working and then we meet to evaluate or reevaluate what things have worked or have not worked.

speaker1: Every grade level has at least one teacher that is ESL endorsed. Then we also try to have at least one teacher that is Spanish speaking on every grade level and we currently do teachers work together during their planning time every day. It's not every person for themselves.

We try to encourage vertical planning on our teacher professional work days, as well as when we have literacy professional developments in the afternoons. We encourage our teachers to sit cross teams, not with their grade level teams.

researcher: How does this school support students who have influential factors? For example, insufficient instruction.

speaker1: Well, like I talked about a little while ago, we use our multi tiered system of supports and we provide interventions for all students. Even students that are above grade level, we provide them enrichment activities for them to continue to soar. Our students that may be struggling in reading or math or even areas of behavior that we have a team that meets to problem solve. Sometimes it will include our school psychologist, social worker, a guidance counselor or special education teachers and of course classroom teachers as well, and we put a plan in place, collect data on that plan, and if it's not working we meet and put more interventions in place.

researcher: How does the school support students who have family risk factors for attendance concerns?

speaker1: We for the last two years have had a full time guidance counselor on staff, so she provides social skills to students both based off of their IEP or 504 needs, as well as students that just demonstrate risk factors. We also have a district social worker that works with our school two days a week and supports families that may have attendance issues. If it is related to transportation, access, anything like that she helps to support those needs. We also problem solve as teams. We have threat assessment meetings once a month to discuss any students whose behavior may demonstrate concerns in the school setting and how we can work with them.

researcher: Would you tell me how you and your teacher support students of ELL?

speaker1: Well, like I said, I come from a Hispanic background as well as the majority of our students and we have teachers on every grade level that are Hispanic as well. The language acquisition and having so many bilingual speakers around them helps to support those language needs. Our teachers obviously teach in English, but then students that need that reassurance in Spanish, they'll be able to translate and help support that. We also try to teach the skills of using their bilingual dictionary and since we are working towards digital tools to also work on using translation apps on tablets and other types of technology.

researcher: How is culturally responsive content, culturally responsive materials and culturally responsive instruction used at your school?

speaker1: Well, most of our teachers teach from district CRMs and then add their own twist into it. The district has done a good job of using lots of science and social studies based texts and texts that are cross cultural and cross curricular. So there are texts that we've been read in multiple areas both in reading, we might use it in language arts to write an opinion piece, and then we might also use that same piece of text in science, because it might be an inquiry based or research-based text. We also try to ensure that we are supporting the cultures that we see in our school. So if we're reading about things that are unfamiliar to them, we provide lots of background knowledge, vocabulary rich experiences, lots of visuals to support any of their needs.

researcher: How do you establish and support accepting classroom environments?

speaker1: All of our classrooms have students with disabilities and English language learners. There's not just one classroom where all of those students go and they are kept away

from their general education peers. There are supports of special education teachers that go into the classroom and support students, paraprofessionals, both special education, ESL, as well as Title One paraprofessionals that go in and support the students for language acquisition, academic difficulties, behavior difficulties. And all of our classes have supports in place for students to take a break if they need it and a cool off area if they need a little extra time before they're ready to get back on task.

researcher: How are realistic high expectations and standards set for all students?

speaker1: So of course by third, fourth and fifth grade, we want all students to be either a level three, four or five on FSA, and it is realistic to set a goal of being able to meet your grade level expectations. But we also need to put benchmarks in place of how individual students will reach those benchmarks, whether that be based on their IEP and goals that they're working towards on their IEP, using their iReady initial tests to gauge where they're going and what types of interventions they need to be successful, or based on their AR and setting them points to read books at individual levels and demonstrate comprehension on reading assessments on their own. It all takes into play motivation and perseverance as well.

researcher: How and what learning strategies are top?

speaker1: Well this is the third year of our district wide initiative to support literacy skills and we're also tying social emotional learning into that this year as well, that those literacy skills are teaching us lots of strategies that teachers have already been using, just putting a name to it. Things like closed reading and digging deeper to reading a text, providing students prompting and responding frames when they are talking and writing. Teaching academic discourse students to understand the language and how to communicate when you are talking in academic language,

and supporting all of the social emotional aspects that go into learning, because as we know when we talk about those influential and risk factors that lots of our students come with, if we're not supporting their social and emotional needs, we're not going to get their academic needs met as well.

researcher: Tell me about your philosophy on culturally responsive leadership.

speaker1: Cultural responsive leadership relates a lot to being a transformative leader. You want to be that person that your teachers look up to and want to achieve, because they want the good for all, not because they want to make themselves look good or their students look good. They want to make everyone look good and show how everyone works as a team. I don't hold all of the leadership to myself. Distributive leadership is very important to make sure that everyone knows that we are a team and there's no one person that is better or stronger or smarter than anyone else. And that we need to accept all cultures and somehow work on making connections. So a lot of times when we talk about our students, our attention seeking, well, it's more that they are connection seeking, so we have to work on making those connections in any way that we can.

researcher: Thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate it.

APPENDIX M: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:
PARTICIPANT NUMBER TWO

researcher: Again. My name is Jessica Schofield. Today is August 23rd, and I am speaking with interviewee2. This interview is being audio recorded electronically. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

interviewee2: Yes.

researcher: Do you have any questions before I begin our conversation?

interviewee2: No.

researcher: Could you please tell me a bit about your educational and professional history leading up to the current school year? Things like your name, gender, degrees, work experience, certifications held?

interviewee2: My name is interviewee2. I'm a female. I have my undergrad in special education. My master's in educational leadership. I've been working in XX public schools for the past 15 years. I have certifications in ed leadership, elementary education, special education and ESOL.

researcher: Please tell me as much as you feel comfortable sharing about your personal history as you feel it relates to your current role as a highly effective principal at a high-performing urban elementary school?

interviewee2: I've been working at urban elementary schools my entire career, so for the past 15 years. I have been a principal in those urban elementary schools for the past five years being at the school that I'm at for the past three years. All of my background has been in urban elementary education, so I feel like I'm very prepared to be in the role that I'm in.

researcher: Could you describe your school culture and examples of how your school represents and supports diversity?

interviewee2: Our school culture represents and supports diversity. We have Multicultural Night once a year as well as highlighting some of our different cultures that we have in our school every few months. In the month of September, we celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, and in the month of October we had our Multicultural Night. We will continue to celebrate cultures throughout the school year, including Black History Month in February as well.

researcher: How does your school foster collaboration, mutual trust, and respect between the school and parents and family?

interviewee2: We foster collaboration, mutual trust and respect by having interactions with our parents and family on positive occasions as well as for areas of discussion. Every Friday we call parents with difference-makers, students that have shown some sort of improvement, whether it's behaviors, academics or social emotional learning, and we call their families to give them a positive report on Friday as well as letting those students sign their name on our difference maker wall. This helps to create positive relationships between parents and family because for the most part they're used to always receiving those phone calls about kids that have done things wrong.

researcher: Would you describe some of the supports you provide your teachers that they use and that work well with your diverse students? Things like resource, paraprofessionals, program, MTSS process, planning time?

interviewee2: We have lots of supports at our school because we are a Title 1 school. We have additional paraprofessionals, and all of our paraprofessionals here are bilingual, so they support our English speakers as well as our English language learners. We have two special education paraprofessionals that not only support the needs of our students with IEP, but also all of the

students in those classes. Our MTSS process is a fluid intervention process where we look at where students are, where they should be, and the interventions that we need to put in place to help them be successful. Teachers have planning time together every single day as well as grade level PLCs with ELA and math coaches every other week. So one week it's ELA, the next week it's math.

researcher: How does your school support students who have influential factors like insufficient instruction, family risk factors, attendance concerns, and English Language Learners?

interviewee2: School's supports help some of our influential factors, and supporting our ELL students by providing them additional interventions and strategies to be successful. They have an online computer program called Imagine Learning that helps to bridge their Spanish to English language acquisition. We also have ESOL paraprofessionals that work in the classrooms to help address student needs. This school is also a model school for the dual language program, so there are some classes that are taught entirely in Spanish, so that our English language learners also can understand what it's like to learn a new language as well.

researcher: How is culturally responsive content, materials, and instruction used in your school?

interviewee2: Culturally responsive instruction is supported throughout all areas of our school. Like I said, we have Multicultural Night. We represent lots of different heritages and celebrate those every month. Our teachers come from lots of different nations and nationalities, and they speak lots of different languages. We make sure that we pull materials that are relevant to our students in their environment, for example, last week they were reading a passage that was all

about Fall, and how leaves change and the weather gets colder, so we also compared it to another passage about what Fall is like in Florida so that they can truly understand that it's different where they live compared to where other people live.

researcher: How do you establish and support accepting classroom environments?

interviewee2: We establish and support accepting classroom environments by making sure that all environments are set up for conducive learning. All of the classrooms at our school have a peace corners in them. We are actually piloting a federally funded grant program to make sure that their social, emotional learning going on in all of the classrooms. Every classroom's piece corner has strategies for self regulation, and to be able to de-escalate yourself when you're worked up as well as manipulatives to help to de-escalate yourself.

researcher: How are realistic and high expectations and standards set for all of the students?

interviewee2: Realistic high expectations are set for all students. Every student is in the grade level that they should be, and is being taught grade level standards during their Tier 2, Tier 3 or ESC interventions. That's where we're targeting some of their instruction on lower level learning. All students are still held to grade level expectations, and every student gets their own standards set, whether it be AR, Accelerated Reader for reading or iReady, where you get a goal set from where you test at the beginning of the year to where you test at the end of the year.

researcher: How and what learning strategies are taught in your school?

interviewee2: Learning strategies are taught all throughout the school day as well as professional developments every month led by the leadership and admin team to ensure that we have the same strategies going on across all learning environments. We're using lots of close reading strategies, annotation, chunking, making sure that we're identifying vocabulary that's

pertinent, critical information, extraneous information, as well as all kinds of districts supported literacy strategies that are being rolled out.

researcher: And last, tell me about your philosophy on culturally responsive leadership.

interviewee2: My philosophy on culturally responsive leadership is if I am not the role model that I want all of my staff to be, then I cannot be the role model of what culturally responsive leadership should look like. I'm in the classroom, I'm hands on, I'm down and dirty, I'm not always carrying my laptop around because it's not always about observations. It's about getting in the classroom, understanding what the students need, and how we can make those needs met. We have more of a problem solving than a problem making on a model going on, and to be a culturally responsive leader, you have to be able to support and facilitate the leadership that you want your staff to emit.

researcher: Thank you for all of your help today.

APPENDIX N: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:
PARTICIPANT NUMBER THREE

researcher: Okay. My name is Jessica Schofield. Today is October 23rd, 2019 and I'm speaking with interviewee3. This interview is being audio recorded electronically. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

Interviewee3: Yes.

researcher: Do you have any questions before I begin our conversation?

Interviewee3: No.

researcher: Could you please tell me a bit about your educational and professional history leading up to your current school year? Some things like maybe your name, gender, your degrees, your work experience, and any certifications you hold.

Interviewee3: So, my name is interviewee3. I am a female. I have a bachelor's of science in business administration with a specialization in marketing and I have a master's degree in education leadership. I've worked in title 1 schools and non-title 1 schools for the past 16 years, and I'm certified K to six elementary ESOL endorsed and gifted endorsed.

researcher: Thank you. Please tell me a bit, as much as you feel comfortable sharing, about your personal history as you feel it relates to your current role as a highly-effective principal at a high-performing urban elementary school.

Interviewee3: In the past several years, I've worked one on one with teachers coaching them to help them be better prepared with teaching the standards, with providing resources so that we can achieve student growth and have more students proficient in the FSA testing.

researcher: Awesome. Thank you. Could you describe your school culture? Can you think of any examples representing the school's culture that represents support for diversity? How does

your school culture support and celebrate diversity? If you could describe a great school culture in terms of supporting culturally responsive leadership, what would it look like and include?

Interviewee3: To start off with, our school culture is very encompassing of all students. We accept every student and we really focus on help providing supports to help students with different needs and different social and emotional backgrounds. We are celebrating our school's cultures and the cultures of all of our students by having a multicultural night where all their different countries are represented between different classroom presentations, parents participating, some are bringing food, some are bringing clothing, different types of decorations to support the different cultures that our students come from.

researcher: Awesome. That sounds fantastic. How does the school foster collaboration, mutual trust, and respect between the school and parents or family? Could you give some examples if you have any?

Interviewee3: We collaborate a lot with our parents, between sending different newsletters, home parent, teacher conferences, open houses, and then once a month we either have a morning event where we invite either our moms and dads to come have breakfast with the kids and participate in some activities, or we do different night events based on curriculum where they can come learn about the things that their students are doing and provide some hands on activities for them.

researcher: Those all sound like lots of fun. Would you describe some of the supports you provide for your teachers that they use and that work well as with many of their diverse students? This might include resources, paraprofessionals, programs, interventions, processes, ESOL, collaboration, planning time.

Interviewee3: All of our teams meet once a week with one of their coaches for collaborative planning. The collaborative planning is focused on assessment creation, data, planning a common assessment, for planning their lessons, working on different centers, so our teams all work very collaborative during that common planning time. We have different resources with using some of our paraprofessionals to help support our students that are not English speaking. We also have different dictionaries for them with our younger kids having a picture dictionary to match the picture with both the English and the Spanish word. And we have different tiered resource interventions that our students participate in.

researcher: That all sounds like some great stuff that's going on at your school. My next question is how does the school support students who have influential factors? Some of these factors might be things like insufficient instruction, limited English proficiency, family risk factors, or even attendance. Would you tell me how you and your teachers support students of English language learners?

Interviewee3: At our school, we have students that have had some insufficient instruction in the past, so we provide tutoring, we provide different interventions inside the classroom with paraprofessional support, with teacher support, with coach support for our students. We also have our ESE teacher pushes in for support facilitation to help provide some of those supports to those students in the classroom. For the limited English, we try to have at least one teacher on grade level that speaks Spanish, which is where most of our ELL student population is to help those students in the classroom, as well.

researcher: How is culturally responsive content, culturally responsive materials, and culturally responsive instruction used in your school?

Interviewee3: So being very culturally responsive, we have acceptance into everything, so our teachers have different posters in the classroom to help with that, they choose different materials for literature based on different cultures to help make sure that they're ingraining the other cultures into the student's classroom materials and having that conversations with the kids.

researcher: How do you establish and support accepting classroom environments of all diverse students?

Interviewee3: In our classrooms, we really focus on doing some different circle time or students where our teachers are really building those relationships with the students to help establish and support everybody working in those environments.

researcher: How are realistic high expectations and standards set for the students?

Interviewee3: We use a lot of different inner diagnostic tools to kind of get a baseline of where our students are at, and then depending on the baseline, we provide different scaffolded instruction in center groups, in small groups, with tutoring. We also provide different scaffold with some computer-based programs so that they're hitting their areas of need in many different ways as close some of those gaps as well as still getting that on grade level curriculum.

researcher: Awesome. How and what learning strategies are taught?

Interviewee3: There's lots of different learning strategies that are taught. Some teachers use different manipulatives, they use drawings, they use peer teaching, so they use a lot of different types depending on what kind of students they have in their classroom.

researcher: And can you tell me a little bit about your philosophy on culturally responsive leadership?

Interviewee3: It's really important as a leader to make sure that the staff understands exactly what culturally responsive is and how to use it in the classroom. To be a good leader, you have to make sure you're modeling that with all of your teachers as well.

researcher: Awesome. Thank you very much for your time.

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