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The Change Process and the Implementation of High School Jostens Renaissance Programs: A Multiple Case Study

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A dissertation

presented to the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, concentration in School Leadership

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by

Gregory G. English

May 2019

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Keywords: Change Factors, School Climate, Implementation, Jostens Renaissance

ABSTRACT

The Change Process and the Implementation of High School Jostens Renaissance Programs: A Multiple Case Study

By

Greg English

Motivated by the growing body of research relating to the impact school climate has on student achievement, attendance, behavior, and mental well-being, many educators have implemented initiatives and programs aimed at school climate improvement. Jostens Renaissance is one such program and was the program of focus for this study. Though Jostens has numerous publications and media sources to facilitate the sharing of ideas, there is very little information available regarding the implementation of Renaissance.

The primary purpose of this study was to identify factors that facilitated change in the process of implementing high school Jostens Renaissance programs in order to identify any common factors that may be transferable to other schools. A multiple case study approach was utilized to explore the strategies which facilitated the implementation of Renaissance at three southeastern high schools. Data were collected via qualitative interviews with teachers and administrators who were present at their respective schools prior to, during, and after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. The three study schools selected for the study were identified by Jostens as having strong Renaissance programs.

Seven main themes related to change factors were identified: need for change, supportive administration, dedicated faculty coordinator, student leadership and participation, faculty buy-in and participation, intentionality in building teacher climate, and perceived quality of the

program. None of the schools experienced any major barriers the implementation. Participants credited the lack of implementation barriers to a perceived need for change among the school community.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my dad. Though he wasn't able to see me finish, he provided me with the tools to do so.

"Anything worth doing is worth doing right."

-George English

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None of this would have been possible were it not for the support of my amazing wife, Jenny. Her sacrifice, support, and (not always so gentle) encouragement kept me working even when it seemed I might never finish. My children, Abigail, Isabella, and Brody, have waited far too long for their dad to not have homework. The time lost, we can never get back, but I hope our hard work will create opportunities for adventures in the future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There has been growing interest in school climate reform efforts in recent years. According to Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, and Higgins-D'Alessandrio (2013), this is due to three factors: (1) a growing body of empirical research supporting the notion that context matters, (2) an increasing belief that school climate reform supports effective violence prevention and, more specifically, bullying prevention efforts, and (3) a growing interest in research-based pro-social educational efforts. Overall, school climate reform is a process that necessarily focuses on and supports students, parents, and educators in considering how effective current pro-social educational efforts are and how we can strengthen these instruction and intervention efforts.

School climate improvement efforts are grounded in ecological systems theories of child and youth development in which characteristics of the individual, family, school, and other layers of the environment impact individual learning and behavior are recognized (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972). According to Felner et al. (2001):

> Whole school change efforts, when implemented comprehensively and with appropriate intensity and fidelity, may powerfully influence the prevention of socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic difficulties, as well as promotion of the acquisition of the full range of developmental competencies necessary for life success, well-being, and resilience (p. 177).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) found evidence that schools with high relational trust, such as good social relationships among members of the school community, are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement. Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) detailed how four systems interact in ways that support or undermine school improvement

efforts: (1) professional capacity; (2) school learning climate; (3) parent-school-community ties; and (4) instructional guidance. The researchers emphasize how their research has shown relational trust is the *glue* that coordinates and supports these four processes which are essential to effective school climate improvement.

School climate matters (Thapa et al., 2013). This realization motivated Dr. Larry Biddle to create the Conway #1 Initiative, a program designed to provide positive recognition and reinforcement for students as well as reinforce support for the educational staff. Under the Conway #1 Initiative, students were rewarded for academic achievement, attendance, positive discipline and school/community service. Additionally, respect and appreciation for the faculty were encouraged as part of the program (Campbell, 2016). The initiative used the acronym P.R.I.D.E. to represent:

- P: Promote teaching and learning more than athletics
- R: Recognize, reward and respect academic achievement and improvement
- I: Improve academic images
- D: Develop visible, tangible rewards and incentives
- E: Every effort towards excellence for all

According to Nowak (2004), Dr. Biddle experienced challenges to the implementation of the program. However he was able to gather support by enlisting individuals and businesses who recognized the importance of the need and the potential of the program. In 1988, the Conway #1 Initiative was adopted by the Jostens Company and rebranded Renaissance (Janovich, 2009).

The Jostens Company approaches Renaissance as a sponsorship, providing the framework and support system to implement the program based on specific situation and needs of a school. Based on this, Jostens Renaissance will not look exactly the same from one school

to another. The program is customized to fit the demographics and characteristics of each school (Cambell, 2016). Jostens (2012) indicates that the benefits to a school implementing a Renaissance program include increased performance levels in student grades, fewer course failures, higher attendance rates, fewer dropouts, and higher graduation rates.

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that facilitated change in the process of implementing high school Jostens Renaissance programs. Implementation of educational reform is dependent on a functional understanding of the organizational change process (Osterman, 2000), the researcher utilized Fullan's (2007) interactive factors affecting implementation as a framework for organizing the data. Findings from this study will be utilized to identify implementation factors that may be universal to the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs.

Central Research Question

Central Question: How do high school educators describe their experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

Sub-Questions

1) What change factors facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?
2) What obstacles were encountered during implementation of Jostens Renaissance and how were they addressed?
3) What measurable outcomes were observed after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?
4) How did the academic, social, and organizational climate of the school change after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

Significance of the Study

Only a small number of studies have been conducted on the impact of the Jostens Renaissance program on high school climate, discipline rates, attendance rates and graduation rates. No studies exist regarding the long-term impact of Jostens Renaissance (Nowak, 2004). There is little research available to support the claims Jostens makes regarding the impact of a Jostens Renaissance program or the ability to sustain success (Campbell, 2016). However, there have been numerous studies conducted on attendance and achievement rates, attendance and graduation rates, dropout rates and the economy, and the relationship between culture, climate and achievement rates (Campbell, 2016; Kobik, 2000, Ross & Nunnery, 2005, White, 2008). Existing research related to Jostens Renaissance has focused on empirical measures of academic achievement, attendance, discipline, and graduation. Very few qualitative measures have been employed in the study of Jostens Renaissance. When qualitative measures have been used, it has typically been done in an effort to support qualitative findings.

The current study was intended to enhance the body of literature regarding Jostens Renaissance. Though implementation has been identified in research as a crucial factor to the success of Jostens Renaissance, implementation has not been studied (Coyne, 2012). Campbell (2016) found a statistically significant relationship between Jostens Renaissance and graduation rates. A qualitative component of the study resulted in themes centered on the importance of relationships, creating a sense of ownership and pride for all stakeholders, and the value of attending the Jostens Renaissance National Conference. Campbell stated recommendations for future research, which included a recommendation for a study on implementation strategies used to achieve award-winning Jostens Renaissance programs. This study provides

phenomenological insight into the implementation of Jostens Renaissance that enhances the identified research gap and may potentially lead to other studies.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation that adds focus to the study is the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to identify factors that facilitated change in the process of implementing high school Jostens Renaissance programs. In order to study this phenomenon, it was necessary to identify high schools where Renaissance had been implemented. The central research question required the sample selection to be a second delimitation. The preferred parameters for individual participants included being present before, during, and after implementation at the school being studied. The delimitations of the study, which were controlled by the researcher, narrowed the scope and focus of the study.

Limitations

Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants (Creswell, 2014). To obtain the necessary data, in-depth personal interviews were conducted at each of three high schools identified by Jostens as having exemplary Renaissance programs. Interview data are subject to possibly distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and simple lack of awareness since interviews can be greatly affected by the emotional state of the interviewee at the time of the interview. Interview data are also subject to recall error, reactivity of the interviewee to the interviewer, and self-serving responses (Patton, 2002).

Another limitation of this study was the sample. Three schools were identified by Jostens as having exemplary Renaissance programs. However, all three schools are located within 100

miles of each other and are similar in enrollment and population demographics. Though commonalities in factors that facilitated the implementation of Renaissance at the three study schools may exist, transferability to other schools cannot be guaranteed.

Definition of Terms

1. *School Climate:* The shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students and adults and set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for the school (Brookover et al., 1978; Emmons et al., 1996; Esposito, 1999; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 1997).
2. *School Culture:* Culture encompasses norms, unwritten rules, traditions, and expectations. These may influence the way people dress to the way they interact with each other (Deal & Peterson, 1999). School culture is shaped by school climate.
3. *Domains of Climate Research*
    a. *Academic:* Academic climate is defined using three dimensions: leadership, teaching and learning, and professional development.
    b. *Community:* The community domain of school climate is defined as having four dimensions: quality of interpersonal relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, and community partnerships.
    c. *Safety:* The safety domain of school climate is most commonly defined in three dimensions: physical safety, emotional safety, and order and discipline.
    d. *Institutional Environment:* The institutional environment component of school climate refers to the adequacy of the school setting, the maintenance and infrastructure of the building, and the accessibility and allocation of educational

resources. The tangible, sensory quality of an environment plays a great part in shaping the experiences people have in that environment (Wang & Degol, 2016).

4. *Jostens Renaissance:* The Jostens Renaissance program was designed to help schools develop positive cultures, decrease discipline, and increase student achievement (Jostens Renaissance Education, 2018). Renaissance is a proven educational enrichment program that seeks to improve academic achievement by motivating students to achieve at higher levels and providing excitement about their education (Janovich, 2009; Kobik, 2000; Nowak, 2004; White, 2008).
5. *Change Factors:* Nine elements which interact over time to affect change. These elements are sub-factors of three change domains:
    a. Change
        i. Need
        ii. Clarity
        iii. Complexity
        iv. Quality/Practicality
    b. Local Characteristics
        v. District
        vi. Community
        vii. Principal
        viii. Teacher
    c. External Factors
        ix. Government and other agencies (Fullan, 2007)

6. *Implementation:* an act or instance of implementing something : the process of making something active or effective (Implementation, 2018)
7. *Staffulty:* A noun formed by combining staff and faculty used by Renaissance schools to refer to all school employees.

Overview of the Study

The focus of the research effort stems from the central research question, "What are high school teachers' experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?" The participant descriptions of what they experienced should allow for theoretical insight into the phenomenon of the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs.

This study includes five chapters. Chapter 1 establishes the need and basis for this research study by including an introduction to the study, a problem statement, the research questions, definitions of relevant terms, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature that contains the emergent themes of the supporting scholarly research relating to school climate and culture, educational change, and Jostens Renaissance. Chapter 3 is a presentation of the research methodology and design. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the interpretation of the data, the coding of the descriptive data, and the findings of the study. Chapter 5 is a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

School climate has been referred to as the hidden curriculum of a school. Though many educators accept and focus on the instructional curriculum to increase student achievement, they often do not focus on the hidden curriculum (Jerald, 2006). The climate of a school can be paramount in developing personal relationships between faculty, staff and students (Jerald, 2006; Taylor, 2008; Varner, 2007). Leaders should seek methods that are grounded in research that help facilitate the *hidden curriculum* that is school climate (Jerald, 2006; Varner, 2007).

School Climate and Culture

The importance of school climate was first recognized over 100 years ago when Arthur Perry, a New York City school principal, published Management of a City School (1908). Perry acknowledged the need to provide students with a quality learning environment and encouraged fellow administrators to make it the duty of the school to provide something more than mere housing (Perry, 1908). School climate was not empirically measured until the early 1960s when Halpin and Croft (1963) developed the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire and began systematically studying the effects of school organizational climate on student learning and development. Researchers and educators have come to realize over the last several decades that the initial conceptualization of school climate was overly simplistic and now recognize it as a multidimensional construct (Wang & Degol, 2016). A lack of consensus still remains on the actual definition of school climate, resulting in the term often being used to encompass many

different aspects of the school environment (Cohen, Pickeral, & McCloskey, 2009; Johnson & Stevens, 2006; Thapa et al., 2013; Zullig, Kooperman, Patton, & Ubbes, 2010.

The terms school climate and school culture are often used synonymously. Though related, the two concepts are not the same. Organizational culture and climate have been described as overlapping concepts by theorists (Miner, 1995). As no universal definition of either term exists, researchers practice a great deal of discretion in how they characterize and describe the phenomenon (Wang & Degol, 2016). Many conceptualize school climate as the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students and adults and set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for the school (Brookover et al., 1978; Emmons, Comer, & Haynes, 1996; Esposito, 1999; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997). Freiberg and Stein (1999) referred to school climate as the heart and soul of the school, claiming it is that essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, and an administrator to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day. Culture encompasses norms, unwritten rules, traditions, and expectations. These may influence the way people dress to the way they interact with each other (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Culture is more deeply ingrained in a school, and therefore may only be altered over a longer period through systematic change in school climate. Another means of differentiating between climate and culture is by categorizing climate as the attitude or mood of the school and culture as the personality or values of the school. Climate is perception-based, while culture is grounded in shared values and beliefs (Gruenert, 2008). Therefore, if school leaders wish to affect a change in school culture, they must first focus on improving school climate (Kane, Cathcart, Palmon, & Pertersonl, 2016). Regardless of how is defined, the parameters of school climate must be solidified to better understand how it affects student development (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Wang and Degol (2016) posit that the multidimensionality of school climate is well represented in the research literature and can be categorized into four domains: (1) academic, (2) community, (3) safety, and (4) institutional environment. These four dimensions encompass the majority of school environment features that impact student cognitive, behavioral, and psychological development.

Currently, many school reform initiatives explicitly or implicitly focus on improving academic and social climate as a prelude to enhancing student academic and psychological well-being (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Wang and Degol (2016) state:

> Characterizing school climate as multidimensional and malleable improves our understanding of the complexity of student experiences in school, and informs the design of targeted and nuanced interventions. More precise interventions can pinpoint features of climate that have the most robust connection to student outcomes, establish how altering features of the climate may enhance others, and identify for which subgroups of students interventions are most effective. In order to achieve this, we need a better understanding of the theoretical justification for the selection of specific school climate indicators and their impact on student outcomes (p.317)

Theoretical Frameworks

Wang and Degol (2016) presented six theories to provide support for the inclusion of multiple domains and dimensions of school climate. These theories: (1) bio-ecological theory, (2) risk and resilience perspective, (3) attachment theory, (4) social control theory, (5) social

cognitive theory, and (6) stage-environment fit theory were compared to identify similarities and differences between them, placing focus on the dimensions of school climate and the student outcomes most relevant to each as well as the developmental period during which they have the most prominence.

Bio-Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological framework posits that human development takes place progressively through more complex reciprocal interactions between an active, bio-psychological human organism and the persons in its immediate environment. Proximal processes are the interactions between an individual and their immediate surrounding environment. One of the defining characteristics of school climate research is the way individual behaviors are shaped by the school environment. The very foundation of bio-ecological theory is the multidimensional nature of the environmental contexts in which a child is embedded (Koth, Bradshwa, & Leaf, 2008; Kuperminc et al., 1997; Wang, 2009). Shifting from outside influences, the distal layers of the school context, to the more proximal processes, bio-ecological theory asserts that everything from the conditions and structure of the facility, to the disciplinary and curriculum practices of the school, to the interpersonal relationships between students and teachers will affect student development (Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). For these reasons, bio-ecological theory is one of the theoretical pillars of school climate research. An emphasis on multicontextualism, proximal processes, and growth over time aligns with the notion that multiple domains and features of the school environment can interact to affect student development across different age periods (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Risk and Resilience Perspective

The risk and resilience model brings focus to the delineation of protective factors in a child's environment that foster adaptive adjustment and minimize negative outcomes in the presence of risk (Rutter, 2006; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). School is one of the most noticeable developmental contexts to consider risk and protective factors (Chang & Le, 2010; Hawkins & Catalano, 1990; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006). Risk refers to any influence that increases a child's probability of a negative outcome. Resilience can be thought of as the accumulation of developmental experiences which children can draw upon to mitigate the negative effects of adversity (Brooks, 2006). Given the way that risk and protective factors interact and operate within various ecological settings, positive student development varies according to the unique combination of the personal attributes of students and the school environment (Bowen, Rose, Powers, & Glennie, 2008; Hopson & Lee, 2011). Similar to bio-ecological theory, the risk and resilience model is non-specific to any particular dimension of school climate or developmental period (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory constitutes the psychological connectedness between two humans, specifically between infant and mother (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969). Children are able to become more self-reliant and feel more comfortable taking risks and exploring the world when provided with consistent emotional support and a safe environment (Pianta & Hamre, 2009). The first 18 months of life are often the major focus of attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1989). Attachment bonds, however, are present in relationships across the lifespan (Hughes & Akin-Little, 2007). Given the emphasis in attachment theory on early patterns of attachment predicting later development, the theory may be of greater relevance during the early years of a

child's education. One of the first opportunities to form attachments outside the family unit is during the transition to school, when children can bond with peers and teachers (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Early relationships with peers and teachers pave the way for later academic and behavioral performance. Because attachment theory focuses on the importance of building strong social bonds, it is most applicable to the community domain of school climate, emphasizing how the quality and frequency of relationships within the school influence child development (Wang & Degol, 2016)

Social Control Theory

According to social control theorists, delinquency results from weakened social and cultural constraints. Individuals are prevented from engaging in delinquent acts by four social bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Agnew, 1993; Hirschi, 1969). Attachment refers to the respect and connection an individual has toward significant people in his or her life. Those with high attachment are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior to avoid disappointing those they care about. Commitment refers to an individual's current or future investment in expected activities. Involvement refers to the amount of time spent doing various activities which means less time available for delinquent acts. Finally, belief refers to how committed an individual is to the moral value system of their society. Those who believe in the rules of their society will be less likely to break them (Agnew, 1993; Hirschi, 1969; Stewart, 2003). As applied to school climate research, social control theory emphasizes the importance of quality academic climates to inspire greater commitment and involvement in educational activities. It also focuses on the quality of the safety and community domains to strengthen students' attachment to the school and belief in the moral code of the school. Thus, "a strong

bond with the school community encourages conformity to conventional norms and decreases the likelihood of deviant behavior" (Wang & Degol, 2016, p. 320).

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory illuminates the generative process of meaning and behavior in relation to person and environment (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory defines motivation as a goal-directed behavior that is dependent upon context and plays an essential role in behavior (Bandura, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Environmental factors specifically influence how people think of themselves and their environments and how students view themselves as active learners within the classroom. School climate impacts student development through the quality of interactions in the academic, community, and safety domains, by instilling high academic expectations, facilitating supportive teacher-student relationships, and maintaining an environment where students feel emotionally safe and secure in taking academic risks.

Stage-Environment Fit Theory

Stage-environment fit theory suggests that human behavior, emotions, and perceptions are affected by characteristics of individuals and their environments (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Eccles, Lord, & Roeser, 1996). The fit between students' psychological needs and their school environment influences their motivation for academic success (Eccles et al., 1993; Roeser & Eccles, 1996). Stage-environment fit theory is applicable to any feature of the school climate and is most relevant during major school transitions. Students often struggle with the transition from elementary school to middle school. Middle school environments are not congruent with adolescents' increased needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Chung, Elias, & Schneider, 1998; Eccles et al., 1996; Loukas & Murphy, 2007; Osterman, 2000). This may contribute to a decline in positive achievement behaviors and motivation. Stage-environment fit

theory provides a theoretical foundation of how school climate, particularly during school transitions, may or may not support the psychological needs of adolescents, thereby influencing a variety of student outcomes (Wang & Degol, 2016).

School Climate Domains and Dimensions

According to Wang and Degol (2016), The four aforementioned domains of school climate function as broad categories to organize 13 dimensions of school climate: (1) academic (i.e., teaching and learning, leadership, professional development); (2) community (i.e., quality of relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, partnerships); (3) safety (i.e., social and emotional safety, physical safety, discipline and order); and (4) institutional environment (i.e., environmental adequacy, structural organization, availability of resources). This provides a logical framework by which to organize the school climate literature in this review.

Academic Climate

Academic climate is defined using three dimensions: leadership, teaching and learning, and professional development (Wang & Degol, 2016). Leadership refers to the role that principals and other administrators play in shaping and executing the school vision through communication and guidance (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Effective leaders articulate their vision to students and staff, inspire everyone to strive toward common goals, show respect for all members of their staff, and express concern about individual feelings and needs. Such leaders also make every effort to strengthen the school morale and encourage collaboration and participation from school staff (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The best school leaders additionally find ways to facilitate open lines of communication between teachers, administrators, and students (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004).

Teaching and learning represents one of the primary variables of school climate research. The various methods and instructional practices that teachers employ in their classrooms can strongly impact student learning experiences (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004). According to Wang and Degol (2016), these methods and practices are typically organized as supportive instruction, curriculum, teacher expectations, and student evaluation. Instructional practices that promote student academic motivation are challenging, hands-on activities that have meaningful real-world applications (Marks 2000; Newmann & Wehlage 1993). Effective instructional practices should be modified and tailored to the unique needs and skill sets of individual students and also be aligned with curriculum goals and state standards. The learning process is also influenced by teacher beliefs, expectations, and goal structure (Deemer, 2004). Teachers demonstrate their expectations through the academic challenges they present, their endorsement of high academic rigor and performance, and their emphasis on student improvement and progress (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). The type of evaluation and feedback provided to students also matters. Using formative assessments, teachers are able to provide constructive feedback to students and can use the opportunity to improve their instructional strategies (Boston, 2002).

According to Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe (2011), high quality professional development is characterized by several key features: (1) goals aligned with the goals of the school as well as state and district standards; (2) a focus on core content and model teaching strategies to improve delivery of instructional practices; (3) opportunities for collaboration among teachers, as well as continuous feedback through formative teacher evaluation.

Community

The community domain of school climate is defined as having four dimensions: quality of interpersonal relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, and community partnerships. Quality of interpersonal relationships refers to the consistency, frequency, and nature of the relationships that take place within the school: student-teacher relationships, relationships among students, and relationships among staff members (Barth, 2006; Crosnoe, Cavanagh, & Elder, 2003; Hopson & Lee, 2011).

Positive interpersonal relationships are characterized by mutual feelings of support, trust, respect, and caring (Birch & Ladd 1997; Pianta, 1999; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010). Relations among teachers and administrators are important as well. The extent to which teachers and staff effectively communicate, collaborate, and support each other is important for establishing positive interactions and interpersonal relationships.

Connectedness is the psychological state of attachment that students experience when they feel a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and belonging in school. School connectedness takes many forms, such as students' collective views of school attachment and bonding, which reflect the ability to cultivate a sense of identification and affiliation among students and teachers in a school (Brookmeyer, Fanti, & Henrich, 2006; Freeman et al., 2009; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Wilson, 2004). Connected students consider themselves to be integral members of the school community (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Osterman, 2000; Whitlock, 2006).

Respect for diversity refers to the presence of cultural awareness, appreciation, and respect for all (Chang & Le, 2010; Esposito, 1999; Juvonen et al., 2006). A school that exemplifies respect for diversity holds all members, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual

orientation, or religious affiliation, to the same standards and principles (Mattison & Aber, 2007). Additionally, teachers who cultivate culturally sensitive classrooms are those who encourage student interests and autonomy, provide students opportunities for decision-making, and show appreciation for student opinions (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003).

Community partnership refers to the role that parents and other community members play in the school setting. A strong community partnership is usually characterized by parental involvement in school, communicating with teachers and other personnel, and attending school events (Hill & Taylor, 2004). A strong school-community partnership is inviting to parents and community members and promotes the development of mentoring programs, business partnerships, and safety patrols that can have a positive effect on student achievement and behavior (Epstein, Sanders, Sheldon, Simon, & Salinas, 1997; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

Safety

The safety domain of school climate is defined in three dimensions: physical safety, emotional safety, and order and discipline. The physical safety of a school refers to the degree to which violence, aggression, and victimization are present and what measures are taken to ensure the safety of its members (Booren, Handy, & Power, 2011; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). Strategies to eliminate physical violence include implementation of positive behavioral supports and active classroom management techniques, use of security guards, and effective disciplinary practices (Frey, Ruchkin, Martin, & Schwab-Stone, 2009; Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013; Osher et al., 2010).

Emotional safety is described as the presence of caring and supportive staff, availability of counseling services for students struggling with depression or other mood disorders, and an absence of verbal bullying or harassment (Kuperminc et al., 1997, 2001; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). Members of an emotionally safe environment are able to interact and communicate efficiently with a wide range of people. They can express their feelings and share their opinions without fear of antagonization. School-based mental health services cultivate a school climate characterized by greater psychological health by reducing a range of behavioral and emotional problems throughout the student population (Bruns, Walrath, Glass-Siegel, & Weist, 2004; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000).

Order and discipline refers to the degree to which students subscribe to school rules, the consistency and fairness of discipline practices, and the manner in which acts of incivility or disorder are handled. Gottfredson et al. (2005) characterized disorderly schools as having a high incidence of delinquent acts committed by students against their peers and teachers. The degree to which students believe in school rules and whether they feel these rules are implemented fairly and consistently indicate the degree of order and discipline present (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, & Hagan, 1998; Stewart, 2003; Way, 2011; Welsh, 2000). Active classroom management also uses proactive and systematic means to deal with student behaviors, rather than using punitive measures such as suspension and expulsion (Fenning & Rose 2007; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Institutional Environment

The institutional environment component of school climate refers to the adequacy of the school setting, the maintenance and infrastructure of the building, and the accessibility and

allocation of educational resources. The tangible, sensory quality of an environment plays a great part in shaping the experiences people have in that environment.

Environmental adequacy refers to the physical characteristics of the facility, such as temperature, lighting, sound, and maintenance. An optimal learning environment requires appropriate heating and air conditioning, ample forms of lighting, necessary acoustical control, and upkeep of maintenance (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004; Freiberg, 1998; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). The quality of physical features affects teaching effectiveness and instructional practices (Dawson & Parker, 1998), which in turn affect student achievement. Characteristics of the structural organization that have been linked to perceptions of school climate include school size (Bowen, Bowen, & Richman, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2009), class size (Finn, Achilles, & Finn, 1999), the presence of ability tracking (Lee & Smith, 1997; Mulkey, Catsambis, Steelman, & Crain, 2005; Oakes, 2008), school start and end times (Baker et al., 2001; Eccles & Roeser, 2011), and student mobility (Griffith, 2000).

Availability of resources refers to the accessibility teachers and students have to the technology, tools, and resources that augment instruction (Oakes & Saunders, 2002). Although the core of instruction comes from the interaction between teachers and students, that interaction is frequently facilitated by the equipment, materials, and supplies of teaching (Johnson, 1990). Resource inadequacy is often a reflection of impoverished communities that are less likely to have materials than more affluent schools. Resource sharing and allocation are also important. When schools restructure classrooms and programs to increase availability and access to resources, students experience more positive academic outcomes, especially among high poverty schools where materials may be limited (Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Outcomes of School Climate

School climate has a wide range of functions which impact students, teachers, and the school as a whole. Understanding these functions is vital for educational leaders (Osterman, 2006). Deal and Peterson (1999) highlighted the following as key functions of school climate: (1) climate fosters school effectiveness and productivity, (2) climate improves collegial and collaborative activities that foster better communication and problem solving, (3) climate fosters successful change and improvement efforts, (4) climate builds commitment and identification of staff, students, and administrators, (5) climate amplifies the energy, motivation, and vitality of a school staff, students, and community, and (6) climate increases the focus of daily behavior and attention on what is important and valued.

Watson (2001) found that if the climate of a school is not conducive to learning, student achievement can suffer. Onoye (2004) states that schools should be a place where its stakeholders feel safe, respected, and know that people care about them. This research gives support to the notion that too many students do not feel safe emotionally or physically at school and, therefore, get *stuck* on the safety level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

School climate has been found to affect middle school students' self-esteem (Hoge, Smith, & Hanson, 1990), mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001), and affect a wide range of emotional and mental health outcomes (Kuperminic, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997; Payton et al., 2008; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). A positive correlation between school climate and student self-concept has also been revealed (Cairns, 1987; Heal, 1978; Reynolds, Jones, Leger, & Murgatroyd, 1980; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). A positive and strong socio-emotional climate of a school is linked to lower

levels of drug use as well as less self-reports of psychiatric problems among high school students (LaRusso, Romer, & Selman, 2008). A positive school climate is predictive of better psychological well-being in early adolescents (Ruus et al., 2007; Shochet et al., 2006; Virtanen et al., 2009). A growing body of research is indicative that positive school climate is critical to effective risk prevention (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Greenberg et al., 2003) and health promotion efforts (Cohen, 2001; Najaka et al., 2002; Rand Corporation, 2004; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

According to Wang and Degol (2016), there are three primary types of student outcomes that represent important aspects of developmental functioning: academic, behavioral, and psychological. Academic outcomes have long been examined as a consequence of variation in school climate. School climate has also been extensively researched as a determinant of student behaviors within the school, including behavioral and health problems. The final subset of student outcomes appearing in the body of research investigates how school climate is related to psychological and socio-emotional functioning. In the following sections, each of the four domains identified by Wang and Degol will be explored for relationships to the three student outcomes.

Academic Climate: Academic Outcomes

The quality of an academic environment as an important predictor of student achievement has been extensively documented in samples of elementary, middle, and high school students (Lee & Smith, 1999; McEvoy & Welker, 2000). Higher achieving schools tend to emphasize the importance of commitment to high academic standards and are characterized by effective leadership from teachers and principals that believe in their ability to improve student outcomes. Schools with greater academic pressure — ones where higher standards are maintained and

students are encouraged to do their best — that have been found to experience greater growth in student math and science achievement are illustrative of this. (Hoy et al., 2006; Ma & Wilkins, 2002). Schools that maintain high academic standards and expectations are also characterized by lower student disengagement (Pellerin, 2005). Students in elementary schools where teachers set high but attainable goals, believe in students' abilities, and are committed to students' academic success, have higher standardized test scores (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000). Teacher perceptions of efficacy and effective principal leadership have also been consistently linked to standardized test scores, GPA, and grades for student populations spanning from kindergarten through twelfth grade (Lee & Shute, 2010). There is additionally empirical evidence to support that achievement goal structure may influence student achievement directly and indirectly through student motivational beliefs. Student perceptions of school mastery goal structure have been linked to greater academic achievement through positive academic self-concept (Roeser et al., 1996; Wang & Eccles, 2013). High academic rigor, organized classroom instruction, effective leadership, and teachers who believe in themselves and promote mastery learning goals, produce an academic climate conducive to learning and high student performance.

Academic Climate: Behavior Outcomes

Higher quality academic environments have been posited as important channels for directing antisocial students' focus and energy toward social skill building and academic achievement and away from deviant behaviors (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). Schools with greater student perceptions of academic pressure, in conjunction with social support, have been associated with reduced suspension rates (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011). Studies examining school climate factors and student aggression have also found that student perceptions of school-level instructional practices that emphasized student understanding over ability were associated

with less youth aggression (Reis, Trockel, & Mulhall, 2007) and less disruptive behavior (Kaplan, Green & Midgley, 2002; Wang, 2009). Schools in which teachers provided feedback on homework, assisted students in achieving their academic goals, and encouraged student commitment to academic success, experienced lower youth and teacher reported behavioral problems (Kasen, Johnson, & Cohen, 1990; Wang & Dishion, 2012). These studies lend support for the conclusion that a high-quality academic environment not only promotes academic outcomes but also reduces behavioral problems within the classroom.

The relationship between academic climate and substance abuse is more complex. While the results of one study gives support to the claim that students who reported receiving a good education were less likely to report abusing alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes (Mayberry, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009), the results of another study reveal that schools with a strong academic focus and adaptation to individual needs of students did not predict less violence or substance abuse (Weishew & Peng, 1993). These inconsistent findings could be attributed to substance abuse occurring outside of the parameters of the school, while behavioral problems are almost exclusively measured as behaviors within the classroom (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Academic Climate: Psychological and Social Outcomes

There has been limited work on how academic climate promotes psychological well-being. The authors of a study relying upon a multidimensional perspective of school climate found that four dimensions (academic support, student-teacher relationships, school connectedness, and order and discipline), each contributed unique variance in school satisfaction, with academic support emerging as the strongest predictor (Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2011). Similarly, there has been little work linking academic climate to psychopathology, although recent studies provide encouraging findings for the importance of academic climate in reducing

psychological distress. One study was indicative that schools with a stronger focus on academic learning and student autonomy predicted decreased symptoms for specific clusters of personality disorders (Kasen et al., 2009). School endorsement of a mastery goal structure was found to be related to lower levels of depression and behavioral deviancy, while school endorsement of a performance goal structure was associated with higher levels of both outcomes (Wang, 2009). The results of this study also identify social competence as a mediator between adolescent perceptions of academic climate and psychological adjustment.

Community: Academic Outcomes

Schools characterized by high-quality interpersonal relationships, communication, cohesiveness, and belongingness between students and teachers are better able to support student psychological needs and promote optimal development in academic domains (Wang & Degol, 2016). Secondary schools with higher quality community climate (assessed as collective focus on goals, communication, cohesiveness, morale, adaptation to stress, and effective problem-solving) have higher percentages of academically successful students compared to schools with lower quality community climate (Macneil et al., 2009). Positive teacher student relationships are also linked to higher standardized test scores (Esposito, 1999; Hoy & Hannum, 1997), GPA (Wang & Holcombe, 2010) and student motivation to learn (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Ryan & Patrick, 2001), while less teacher respect for students and less student belongingness are associated with school dropout (Worrell & Hale, 2001). The benefits of community school climate features extend beyond the parameters of the school environment itself. Strong parent-community-school partnerships are essential for promoting positive student achievement, although some evidence suggests that associations are stronger for elementary school children than for middle school children (Hill, 2009; Sheldon, 2003; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Student

perceptions of cultural awareness, diversity, and racial equality also affect student achievement. A large sample of high school students indicated that those who perceive greater racial fairness and experience less racial discrimination have higher GPAs (Mattison & Aber 2007; Wang & Huguley, 2012).

Community: Behavioral Outcomes

There has been a great deal of support for the connection between the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school environment and experiences of bullying, aggression, and delinquency (Wang & Degol, 2016). Student perceptions of higher school cohesion and connectedness are associated with less serious risk of bullying victimization (Zaykowski & Gunter, 2012) and less violent behavior (Brookmeyer et al., 2006). School connectedness has been found to buffer the negative effects of poor school attitudes and discipline practices on student aggression (Brookmeyer et al., 2006; Wilson, 2004) and to mediate the association between student perceptions of three indicators of school climate (student cohesion, student friction, and class satisfaction) and youth conduct problems (Loukas et al., 2007). Students are more willing to intervene or report a peer's risky activities when they perceive that the school environment has a strong sense of solidarity and belonging (Syvertsen, Flanagan, & Stout, 2009). These studies bring light to the complex relationship between school belongingness and behavioral outcomes by demonstrating direct and interactive developmental pathways. Individuals' relationships within the school are also relevant to community climate features that shape the incidence of disruptive problem behaviors (Reinke & Herman, 2002). Positive relationships among teachers, students, and administrators are consistently associated with decreased behavioral problems for adolescents (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2010; Fletcher, Bonell, & Hargreaves, 2008; LaRusso et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2010; Way et al.,

2007). Higher quality relationships with peers have been associated with reduced aggression, victimization, and behavioral problems (Elsaesser, Gorman-Smith, & Henry et al., 2013; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008). Students attending schools in which their peers are kind, helpful, accepting, and enjoy spending time together experienced more positive adjustment to school. This positive adjustment predicted greater health and fewer psychosomatic symptoms (Ravens-Sieberer, Freeman, Kokonyei, Thomas, & Erhart, 2009). These findings provide support for the platform that students are more likely to respect and conform to the classroom rules when teachers, students, and administrators value and support one another and have warm and caring relationships.

Community: Psychological and Social Outcomes

The importance of community factors in promoting positive psychosocial adjustment is well-established (Wang & Degol, 2016). Community features that emphasize school belonging, respect for student opinions, and supportive relationships are key determinants of psychological functioning. Adolescents in schools characterized by poorer social climate reported worse emotional health compared to adolescents in schools characterized by higher quality social climate (Freeman et al., 2009). A greater sense of school solidarity and belonging mediated the association between a democratic environment, and social trust among students (Flanagan & Stout, 2010). Positive interpersonal relationships have been consistently linked to more positive adjustment and less prevalence of psychopathology (Loukas & Robinson, 2004; Reddy, Rhodes, & Mulhall, 2003; Way et al., 2007; Way & Robinson, 2003). More positive interpersonal relationships both between students and between students and teachers, as well as greater parental involvement in school, have been associated with higher life satisfaction (Suldo, Thalji-raitano, Hasemeyer, Gelley, & Hoy, 2013), better coping strategies, and optimistic attitudes

toward school (Ruus et al., 2007). These findings demonstrate that the quality of interpersonal relationships within the school is one of the most robust predictors of psychological adjustment.

Safety: Academic Outcomes

A review of literature on school climate stressed the importance of student safety within the educational environment (McEvoy & Welker, 2000). However, results are inconclusive with regard to the associations between safety characteristics and student academic achievement. Ma and Wilkins' (2002) work provides evidence that the disciplinary climate does not predict individual standardized test scores after controlling for a number of academic and community climate factors and institutional structural characteristics. Ruus et al. (2007) found that school discipline and order are not related to academic success and have the weakest relation to student stress coping compared to all other school climate variables. Esposito (1999) revealed that higher quality security factors are associated with greater math achievement in first grade, but are not predictive of achievement in second grade.

Safety: Behavioral Outcomes

The general safety of the school environment is an important determinant of student experiences with aggression and bullying (Wang & Degol, 2016). These measures of school safety are often conceptualized as student perceptions of safety, teacher effectiveness to handle disciplinary infractions and bullying behaviors, and school attitudes toward bullying and violent behavior. Students who perceived greater issues of school safety were more likely to engage in relational aggression and to be victimized (Elsaesser et al., 2013), while students attending schools with greater consistency in discipline and social support experienced less bullying, victimization, and school referrals (Gottfredson et al., 2005; Shirley & Cornell, 2012). When staff and students perceived bullies as generally disliked among the school population, they

tended to report greater feelings of safety, belonging, and fewer incidents of bullying (Goldstein et al., 2008). Similar findings on youth and teacher reports of discipline and bullying norms were detected (Gregory et al., 2010; Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011), lending support for the importance of norms and attitudes regarding acceptable levels of aggression within the school. In line with research on perceived school norms of aggression, students who perceived their school climate as characterized by more peaceful, less aggressive resolutions to peer conflict also engaged in less risky behaviors (LaRusso & Selman, 2011). These findings give support to the claim that norms and values shared by the school may shape student attitudes and beliefs regarding acceptable versus unacceptable behaviors in school. Teacher attitudes may be shaped by these norms as well, impacting their efficacy at preventing behavioral incidents and the importance they ascribe to promoting a bully-free zone.

Safety: Psychological and Social Outcomes

There is some empirical support for the importance of school safety in promoting emotional well-being (Wang & Degol, 2016). Durlak et al. (2011) found social and emotional learning interventions aimed at improving school safety and reducing problem behaviors enhanced social and emotional skills, attitudes toward self and school, and positive social behaviors. Decreases in conduct problems and emotional distress were also detected when compared to controls, lending support for the importance of improved school safety in promoting psychological adjustment. Student perceptions of the fairness of classroom rules, discipline, and general school safety are negatively associated with psychological distress, including loneliness, anxiety, and depression (Graham, Bellmore, & Mize, 2006; Ozer & Weinstein, 2004). Schools with less homophobic teasing and more positive feelings and attitudes about school have buffered the association between sexual minority status and depression (Birkett, Espelage, &

Koenig, 2009; Espelage et al., 2008). Conversely, High amounts of school conflict, disorder, and friction among students have been linked to greater student and teacher reports of behavioral problems and depression (Kasen et al., 1990; Loukas & Murphy, 2007).

Institutional Environment: Academic Outcomes

Institutional features of the school environment such as size, type (private or public), location (urban, suburban, or rural), and racial and SES composition, have been attributed with creating an educational atmosphere that promotes or undermines the development of student engagement and learning (Wang & Degol, 2016). Empirical research has been inconsistent in its conclusions (Finn & Voelkl, 1993; Stewart, 2007, 2008; Weiss, Carolan, & Baker-Smith, 2010). Cotton (1996) found that some studies demonstrated no difference between small and large schools while others favored small schools over large ones. In a more recent study, school type (private vs. public) and school size explained very little variance in math test scores among elementary and middle school students (Lubienski, Lubienski, & Crane, 2008). Demographics, academic climate variables, and community climate variables may explain more variance in student achievement than institutional variables (Lubienski et al., 2008).

Findings for the composition of poverty or socioeconomic status (SES) at the school level have been rather consistent, indicating that students who attend schools with lower proportions of low SES children demonstrate not only higher levels of achievement but also greater growth in achievement over time (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Fantuzzo, LeBoeuf, & Rouse, 2014; Kieffer, 2012; Perry, 2012). Research on ability tracking has been mixed, with some researchers finding that ability tracking is detrimental to low ability students (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2006), has no discernible effects on low ability students (Betts & Shkolnik, 2000), or is beneficial for low achieving students (Figlio & Page, 2002). The relative difficulties in identifying what

exactly constitutes ability tracking and how parents may select schools based on whether they separate students based on ability may contribute to the complexities of studying ability tracking (Figlio & Page, 2002).

The notion that pouring more money and resources into schools will enhance student academic performance has been widely debated by economists with differing conclusions (Wang & Degol, 2016). Researchers have found consistent, small to moderately positive effect sizes relating school resources to student achievement (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). Hanushek (1997) concluded that resources are not unimportant, but rather that school districts need to learn how to use these resources more effectively to facilitate greater learning, thereby determining that economic policies for school expenditures are more complicated than simply increasing the flow of money. Other research has confirmed that school resources matter, but that translating resources to higher student academic performance is dependent on how schools and teachers are able to use those resources to improve more proximal features in the classroom, such as instructional quality (Archibald, 2006; Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2003). It is noteworthy that research is indicative that structural characteristics in and of themselves may not directly alter student achievement, but may in fact alter classroom processes, which in turn impact achievement (Wang & Degol, 2016). Smaller school sizes may increase student engagement indirectly by facilitating a greater sense of school community and more positive interactions between students and teachers (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004; Finn & Voelkl, 1993; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Weiss et al., 2010). Benner, Graham, & Mistry (2008) found that school structural characteristics (e.g., school diversity, SES, achievement, and size) predicted academic engagement through school processes, such as perceptions of the academic climate. Substandard structural features of school buildings, including building age, heating, air

conditioning, crowding, and infestation have been demonstrated to influence student performance and school attendance by impacting the quality of the learning environment (Berner, 1993; Durán-Narucki, 2008; Earthman, 2002; Simons, Hwang, Fitzgerald, Kieb, & Lin, 2010). These findings provide support to the notion that the structural features of the school may impact student achievement by shaping the more immediate or proximal processes that characterize the daily experiences of students.

Institutional Environment: Behavioral Outcomes

Studies regarding the potential impact of school institutional features on behavioral adjustment have been predominantly focused on the extent to which structural features affect bullying behaviors (Wang & Degol, 2016). Bradshaw, Sawyer, & Brennan (2009) found that student-teacher ratios, poverty concentration, suspension rates, student mobility, and school location are predictors of bullying attitudes and experiences. Gottfredson et al. (2005) found that structural variables accounted for a large proportion of the variance in teacher and student victimization, after controlling for psychosocial and safety climate and discipline management. Further analyses gave support to a mediated pathway between these structural variables, and delinquency and victimization, via psychosocial climate and discipline management (Benner et al., 2008). Institutional variables seem to indirectly influence opportunities for bullying behaviors to occur on the school grounds, by shaping how effectively the school environment is organized, monitored, and supervised.

Institutional Environment: Psychological and Social Outcomes

There does not currently appear to be any studies in the literature on school climate and psychological or social outcomes that connect institutional characteristics with psychosocial functioning. Existing research is predominantly focused on the effects of structural

characteristics on measures of learning, given that these characteristics, such as teacher qualifications, class sizes, facility maintenance, and financial expenditures are closely tied to state-mandated educational policies and budgeting (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Measuring School Climate

Classroom climate is the "perceived social and psychological environment of a classroom as reported by students and staff that are learning and teaching there" (Doll, Brehm, & Zucker, 2004, p.54). Every school has a unique climate. To ensure accurate understanding of a school environment and to foster effective change, it is necessary to regularly and individually assess school climate (Doll & Cummings, 2008; Kane et al., 2016).

It is important to measure perceptions of school climate of all individuals involved in the school (Schueler, Capotosto, Bahena, McIntyre, & Gehlbach, 2014). According to Bandura's (2001) social-cognitive theory, while teachers and students share the same school environment, they have very different roles in the school, which leads to different perceptions of the same experience. The perceptions of parents and families often dictate students' attitudes about school (Schueler et al., 2014). Gender, ethnicity, and age are also factors which affect school climate. Individual factors and diversity should be considered when measuring perceptions of school climate (Kane et al., 2016).

Schools use many scales, assessments, and inventories to measure school climate. Selecting the appropriate school climate instrument is crucial because it guides subsequent school improvement processes. Schools must determine what data needs to be collected, who to collect it from, and the current environment of the target population as well as determine if there

is an existing validated instrument that meets the needs of the school (Kohl, Recchia, & Steffgen, 2013). According to Wang and Degol (2016):

> Studies rely heavily on survey data for assessing school climate. While quantitative methods are useful in collecting information from a large sample, qualitative methods can reveal more in-depth information, including the processes, influences, and nuances of school climate. School climate consists of the collective perspective of all individuals related to the school, but studies often present school climate based exclusively on the perspectives of students. Although school climate is a dynamic construct, relatively few studies examine school climate at multiple time points across school years (p. 337).

Despite researchers endeavoring to validate and create reliable school climate measures, very few existing school climate survey measures include strong psychometric properties (Zullig et al., 2011). In a review of school climate measures by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) only 13 publicly accessible school climate surveys with solid reliability and validity were identified (Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, & Hornung, 2012). The extent of psychometric support for most school climate measures is limited; a problematic finding considering school climate is often measured as an indicator of school health that supports student learning and development (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Faster and Lopez (2013) suggested considering the following factors when looking for the appropriate school climate assessment instrument:

- a solid research-base with strong reliability and validity;
- thorough field-testing;

- recognition of all important populations or stakeholders;
- short and easy administration;
- addresses all needs of your particular community;
- suggests resource supports (p. 2)

A collection of valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate can be found at the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments web site (School Climate Measurement, 2018).

School Climate Improvement

School climate improvement efforts are theoretically grounded in ecological systems theories of child and youth development which recognize that characteristics of the individual, family, school, and other layers of the environment impact individual learning and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Felner et al. (2001) argue that whole school change efforts may have a strong influence on the prevention of socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic difficulties, as well as promotion of the acquisition of the full range of developmental competencies necessary for life success, well-being, and resilience.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) found evidence that schools with high relational trust are more likely to make changes that improve student achievement. A more recent summary of this work details how the following four systems interact in ways that support or undermine school improvement efforts: (1) professional capacity; (2) school learning climate); (3) parent school-community ties; and (4) instructional guidance. The authors underscore how their research has shown relational trust is the *glue* or the essential element that coordinates and supports these four processes which are essential to effective school climate improvement (Bryk et al., 2010).

There is an alarming gap between research and implementation of school improvement and teacher education (Cohen et al., 2009). Despite the vast research on the topic and clear importance of positive school climate, a definitive and clear-cut process of improving school climate has not been developed. Once school climate has been measured, data should guide and inform school leaders in areas in need of improvement and which evidence-based strategies would be most beneficial for the specific population needs (American Institutes for Research, Implementation, n.d.). According to Doll (2010), in order to enhance school climate, schools must work to build relationships, minimize and manage conflicts, prevent bullying and victimization, support adults, and promote autonomy. Changing the perceptions of students and school personnel will be of particular importance in promoting academic achievement, particularly for student from high-risk family structures (O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund, 2014).

The National School Climate Center (NSCC) (https://schoolclimate.org) and National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) (https://safesupportiveschools.ed.gov) have both developed general processes for school climate improvement. The NSCC improvement process is designed as a continuous and cyclical five-step process of preparation, evaluation, action planning, implementation, and re-evaluation. The process is designed to address five goals: (1) create a shared vision and plan for school climate improvement; (2) create policies that endorse aspects of positive school climate; (3) establish practices to promote learning, increase engagement, and address barriers; (4) generate a supportive, welcoming, and safe environment; and (5) develop norms and practices that emphasize social justice and civic responsibilities (NCSSLE, 2018).

The National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments recommends a similar cyclical process of implementing a school climate improvement plan which comprises of: (1) planning for school climate improvements, (2) engaging stakeholders in school climate improvements, (3) collecting and reporting school climate data, (4) choosing and implementing school climate interventions, and (5) monitoring and evaluating school climate improvements. This implementation process additionally involves programmatic interventions, which the NCSSLE defines as a program or method that:

- prevents and reduces youth crime, violence, harassment, bullying, and the illegal use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco;
- creates positive relationships between students and adults;
- promotes parent and community engagement ;
- promotes the character, social, and emotional development of students;
- provides or improves access to social services;
- enables school communities to manage student behaviors effectively while lowering suspensions and expulsions;
- provides other needed social and emotional supports (NCSSLE, 2018)

Positive School Climate Programs

In efforts to address the issues associated with negative school climate, many schools have implemented school-wide programs to support students, build relationships between teachers and students, promote student leadership, promote positive school cultures, and create a sense of student ownership and connectedness (Fraker, 2006; Kmiee, 2007; Sigler, 2008; Springer-Schwatken, 2004; Thornton, 2009). Many of these programs, such as the Fast Track

PATHS, target the social and emotional learning environments of a school (Durlak et al., 2011), while others, including Direct Instruction, the Comer School Development Program, and Success for All, demonstrate significant improvements in academic outcomes by improving the academic and community climates (Borman et al., 2003). Two programs which are gaining in popularity and often used in complement of each other are School-wide Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and the Jostens Renaissance Program. Both programs place a great deal of focus on reinforcing desired behaviors. While PBIS is more specifically geared toward student behavior and how teachers and administrators respond to negative behaviors, Jostens Renaissance is marketed as an educational enrichment program that is customized by school leaders and the school community. Jostens claims their program is capable of "boosting GPAs, increasing attendance, improving school pride and growing graduation rates" (Jostens Renaissance Education, 2018). Jostens Renaissance has been selected as the program of focus for the current study due to the researcher's familiarity with the program and a desire to maximize the potential of the program already in existence in his school.

While PBIS curricular materials are freely available online, implementation requires resource allocation that may include funding for training and coaching, personnel allocation or re-allocation, data management, and other related resources. Lindstrom, Johnson, and Bradshaw (2016) estimated an upper end school cost of $12,400 for implementation. Swain-Bradway, Lindstrom Johnson, Bradshaw, & McIntosh (2017) argue that the cost of SWPBIS is less expensive when mitigated by the longer-term costs related to suspensions and dropout.

Jostens Renaissance

The Jostens Renaissance program was designed to help schools develop positive cultures, decrease discipline, and increase student achievement (Jostens Renaissance Education, 2018).

Though limited literature research has been conducted on Jostens Renaissance since its foundation in 1998 (Campbell, 2016; Kobik, 2000; Nowak, 2004; Ross & Nunnery, 2005; White 2008), the claim that Jostens Renaissance is a proven educational enrichment program that seeks to improve academic achievement by motivating students to achieve at higher levels and providing excitement about their education is supported by research (Janovich, 2009; Kobik, 2000; Nowak, 2004; White, 2008). Researchers have also found that students of varying academic abilities are motivated by Jostens Renaissance (Kobik, 2000; Ross & Nunnery, 2005).

Coyne (2012) found a statistically significant difference in achievement test scores across five middle schools and high schools in Mississippi within three years of implementing Jostens Renaissance. Harrison (2010) concluded that there was a statistically significant reduction in discipline infractions after implementing Jostens Renaissance. Hoopes (2001) found that positive recognition, one of the principle characteristics of Jostens Renaissance, made a statistically significant impact on low achieving schools in the areas of attendance rates and dropout rates. In schools utilizing Jostens Renaissance, it has been found that discipline rates and attendance rates have improved, retention rates have seen a decline, and dropout rates have decreased (Harrison, 2010). Motivating and recognizing students has been found to have a direct correlation to student effort and grade point averages (Kobik, 2000). Waxman (1991) found that after one year of utilizing Jostens Renaissance, the percentage of students that failed one or more of their classes decreased significantly (27.4% to 19.9%). In addition, the percentage of students that achieved all As and Bs increased significantly from 20.9% to 24.8%.

While an argument exists that recognition programs are ineffective, research illustrates that organizations, including schools, that utilize recognition programs outperform similar organizations that do not utilize such programs (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Taylor, 2008). A lack

of recognition has been cited as a major reason for employees becoming dissatisfied with their jobs. Taylor (2008) found that recognition programs can prove to be a cost effective way to prevent job dissatisfaction.

Numerous studies have highlighted the use of recognizing and rewarding students as a key element in creating a positive school culture and climate (Kobik, 2000; Varner, 2007; White, 2008). The majority of the schools that have utilized Jostens Renaissance have noted a positive impact on school culture in addition to higher levels of academic performance (Nowak, 2004; Ross & Nunnery, 2005). In order to recognize and reward students, it is important to maintain a positive approach. This can be difficult for some educators, as many are accustomed to utilizing a negative approach, especially with students that are deemed to be troublesome. Learning how to adapt to a positive approach is a key factor in changing behavior (Marshall, 2001). Oswald, Safran, and Johanson (2005) found a 42% reduction in disciplinary issues at a rural middle school as a result of positive intervention techniques such as providing greater levels of hallway supervision and rewarding students that were doing the right thing in the hallways.

A growing body of research is indicative that school-wide improvement systems are effective approaches in improving school culture and climate (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006). People can be influenced to acting a certain way or accomplishing a certain task by an enduring curiosity or through the offer of an incentive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). People have been found to make decisions regarding their own behaviors based on their belief of what will be most satisfying to their own needs (Haywood, Kuespert, Madecky, & Nor, 2008). Culture can be improved through the use of reinforcement, rewards, positivity, expectations, and traditions. Jostens Renaissance utilizes these variables in an effort have a positive impact on the culture of the school (Torres, 2009). Wing (1993) studied the relationship between Jostens Renaissance

and student attendance. Though the results did not demonstrate a statistically significant change in attendance rates, it was discovered that the students in the study valued hard work and success beyond high school. Wing also found that students were aware of the relationship between Jostens Renaissance and the values associated with being successful beyond high school. In a separate study, students were found to have a neutral perception of Jostens Renaissance in their school (Sterchy, 1990). The discrepancy between the two studies may add validity to the belief that the more formal and organized the programs are, the more likely it is that they will be successful and achieve the desired results (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). In order to achieve success, schools are dependent on staff members to be willing to go above and beyond in establishing relationships and engaging students in pursuit of greater levels of academic achievement (Somech & Ifat, 2007).

Program Implementation

While much of the climate intervention work has shed light on the capability for reforms in school climate to produce meaningful change in student outcomes, Wang and Degol (2016) posit that there are still lingering questions. The researchers question how changing one feature of school climate may affect other features or domains, how features interact to shape development, how long intervention effects last, and how school or system level change is achieved.

Covey (2004) says to begin with the end in mind. School improvement is a process. Like any other process, it requires thoughtful planning and a plan of action in order to succeed. Ahtiainen (2017) states that in terms of theorizing about educational change, it is common to talk about theories of change or theories of change action. These theories aim to capture the essence of change and processes related to it and to provide advice and tools for managing it (p.18).

Fullan (2006) holds that:

> Change theory or change knowledge can be very powerful in informing education reform strategies and, in turn, getting results – but only in the hands (and minds, and hearts) of people who have a deep knowledge of the dynamics of how the factors in question operate to get particular results (p.3).

Fullan (2007) sought to find what *theories of action* truly get results in education reform and why they are not embraced more widely once identified. Three examples of flawed change theories were identified: (1) standards-based district-wide reform initiatives; (2) professional learning communities; and (3) *qualifications* frameworks that focus on the development and retention of quality leaders. Though Fullan acknowledges that all three theories have valid elements, they all fall short by either not accounting for the individuals required to make the change happen, considering school and district cultures, or failing to build capacity.

Fullan (2007) does not identify any one change theory that does work. He, instead, identifies seven core premises that underpin the use of change knowledge. These include: (1) a focus on motivation; (2) capacity building; (3) learning in context; (4) changing context, (5) a bias for reflective action; (6) tri-level engagement; and (7) persistence and flexibility in staying the course. The first premise, motivation, is key. The other six premises are all about motivation. Motivation cannot be achieved in the short run. All efforts will experience obstacles in the beginning; it is only if they do not gain on the motivation question over time that they will fail. "If one's theory of action does not motivate people to put in the effort – individually and collectively – that is necessary to get results, improvement is not possible" (p. 7). Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) state:

> The challenge is no longer just how to have a theory of action that can implement particular changes, but how to develop one that can choose between changes, prioritize them, and create coherence among all of them. This is as much a challenge for the teacher in the classroom, the principal in the office, and the policymaker in government (pg. 3)

Fullan (2007) holds that many change attempts fail due to a lack of distinction between theories of change and theories of changing. It is important to point out that policy change goes hand in hand with policy implementation. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989) define implementation as "the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions" (p.20). According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), a policy decision identifies the problem to be addressed, stipulates the objective to be pursued and structures the implementation process Cerna (2013) holds that passing policies does not guarantee success on the ground if policies are not implemented well. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) were the first ones to show that implementation dominates outcomes.

It is difficult to say which factors or conditions facilitate successful implementation since so much depends on the political, economic, and social context (McLaughlin 1987). Payne (2008) argues that only looking for general solutions and not acknowledging the particular context can lead to incoherent implementation efforts. There is no one-size–fits-all policy. This assertion has not stopped some scholars from trying to come up with the most important factors for certain policy areas. Fullan (2007) posits there are nine critical factors which affect the implementation of education policy. He does so acknowledging that educational change is a dynamic process which involves interacting variables over time. These nine elements are

actually sub-factors in the domains of (1) change, (2) local characteristics, and (3) external factors.

- change (need, clarity, complexity and quality/practicality);
- local characteristics (district, community, principal and teacher);
- external factors (government and other agencies) (p.87)

Successful implementation has been evidenced in schools where there is coherence, stability, peer support, training, and engagement (Payne, 2008). Ingram and Schneider (1990) claim that successful implementation implies that "agencies comply with the directives of the statutes; agencies are held accountable for reaching specific indicators of success, goals of the statute are achieved, and local goals are achieved or there is an improvement in the political climate around the program". Fullan (2009) holds that successful system reform means that a small number of powerful actors are interacting to produce substantial impact. McLaughlin (1987) stated that policy success is dependent on local capacity, adequate resources and clear goals. The implementation process is characterized by a *multi-staged, developmental character*.

Even if policy implementation appears to be successful, Fullan (2000) points out that there is no guarantee that success will last. In terms of the change process in schools, there has been strong adoption and implementation, but not strong institutionalization. Fullan (2000; 2007) further notes that both local school development and quality of surrounding infrastructure are essential for lasting success. Successful examples of policy change (in schools) are still in the minority (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2000) holds that changing policies is not sufficient if there is no *reculturing* of classrooms. A number of conditions need to be satisfied to enhance the change of successful and sustainable implementation, though these conditions vary across systems. This adds to the difficulty of the entire process (Cerna, 2013)

According to Fullan and Hargreaves (2009), "A viable theory-in-action of educational change must rest on the basic principles of sustainability. To sustain means not merely to maintain or endure, but also to hold up or bear the weight of something" (p. 22). Hargreaves developed a five-pillar educational change theory that he called the fourth way. The five pillars are:

(1) an inspiring and inclusive vision;

(2) public engagement;

(3) no achievement without investment;

(4) corporate educational responsibility;

(5) students as partner in change (pp. 26-27).

Leadership

Implementing any kind of change can be difficult and problematic for both the change agents implementing the change and the personnel whose life is going to be touched and impacted by the change. According to Alase (2017):

> The fact is that every organization that is properly managed has at its helm a dynamic and transformational leader. If the right leadership is not there to create the atmosphere for lasting change, no amount of organizational changes will rectify the problems that the organization is going through (Alase, 2017, p. 200-201).

Organizational change has to be done under the leadership of someone who is dynamic and innovative in order for the desired change to take root in the fabric of everyday activities of organizations (Alase, 2017). This type of leader can transform and efficiently implement any

needed organizational changes. Burnes and By (2011) discussed how for the past 30 years, leadership and change has been synonymous with organizational change in the corporate world. Early on, organizational leadership was based on the idea of someone whom the organization could see as being in control, a top-down executive with power. However, ethical issues arise with too much power. Thus, the evolution of the charismatic-transformational leader, a leader who has the charisma and self-confidence to engage their staff in decision making processes, who is ethical and willing to lead by example, a bottom-up leader.

Organizational change and change leadership are concepts that try to find a balance between change and the change agents (Alase, 2017). Krysinski and Reed (1994) suggest that systemic change is an unpredictable fluid rotational change that can take approximately four phases and many years in-between to accomplish. The researchers suggest building on the awareness and identification for change, a time to start training and implementing the change processes, and a time to monitor the change plan. Krysinski and Reed (1994) additionally identify three critical occurrences that can happen during the change implementations: involvement of the leader in the change project, shared meaning, and the uncertainty that comes with change. In essence, the uncertainty, anxiousness, and the ambivalence of the employees that occurs when organizational change is implemented.

Fullan (2014) points to Kirtman's (2013) seven leadership competencies as a template for effective leaders and change agents. According to Kirtman:

> A competent leader: (1) challenges the status quo, (2) builds trust through clear communications and expectations, (3) creates a commonly owned plan for success, (4) focuses on team over self, (5) has a sense of urgency for sustainable

results, (6) commits to continuous improvement for self, (7) and builds external networks and partnerships (p.128).

The seven competencies are aimed at building a leader's capacity at both the personal and the organization level. Fullan (2014) states that "Principals must understand how their leadership team, their teachers, and the culture of the school all have an impact on building professional capital" (p.134).

Professional capital is a concept coined and developed by Fullan and Hargreaves (2009) which they see as the key to diffusing change efforts from individuals to groups to schools and districts. Professional capital is a function of the interaction of three components: human capital, social capital, and decisional capital. In the case of the school principal, human capital refers to the human resource or personnel dimension of the quality of teachers in the school – their basic teaching talents. Social capital concerns the quality and quantity of interactions and relationships among people. Social capital in a school affects teachers' access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectation, obligation, and trust; and their commitment to work together for a common cause. Decisional capital is that which is required to make good decisions (Fullan, 2014).

Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu (2008) compared the effectiveness of transformational leaders and those identified as change leaders. Transformational leaders were described as more compassionate and understanding the needs of employees. Change leaders were described as ultimate change agents, leaders whose job it is to go into a dysfunctional organization and fix the problem. The researchers found that, though employees prefer to follow a transformational leader under normal circumstances, they would not hesitate to follow a change leader if they

could moderate their positions and behaviors. This research supports the position that, regardless of leadership style, organizational change requires the commitment and cooperation of those implementing the change before any meaningful change can be accomplished. For organizational change to be successful, it is imperative for leaders to moderate their positions and behaviors with consideration to employee' needs and concerns in order to receive buy-in (Alase, 2017).

Gaining Faculty Support

Singer (2005) claims that the majority of school reform efforts fail, many as a result of poor implementation. Without buy-in from teachers, administrators and parents, any reform effort is sunk. Piderit (2000) discussed the issue of employee resistance at workplaces. As humans, all have the welfare of their families as a primary responsibility. Therefore, any organizational change that is going to impact that reality is going to encounter some form of resistance if the employees are not involved in the change process.

The first step in overcoming resistance to change in schools is the ability to determine who is resisting change and why (Duke, 2004). To begin this process, principals need to take a systems perspective that recognizes teacher attitudes and behaviors within the context of the social norms of their schools (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). Attitude toward change is a variable that has been linked to employee acceptance of new procedures and policies (Calabrese, 2002; Clawson, 1999; Duke 2004; Greenberg & Baron, 2000; Robbins, 2000; Zimmerman, 2006). Failure to recognize the need for change, previous experiences with failed change efforts, fear of the unknown, and habit are all barriers to change are all common barriers (Fullan, 2001; Greenberg & Barron, 2000).

Zimmerman (2006) posits that teachers might actually feel threatened in a number of ways by the prospect of change. Their acceptance of change could be affected by perceived threats to their expertise and proven abilities, and a lack of confidence that they possess the knowledge or skills to implement the change successfully (Fullan, 2001; Greenberg & Barron, 2000). Robbins (2000) found that changes in long-established decision-making responsibilities could also affect those educators who perceive threats to their power relationships. Greenburg and Barron (2000) reported that structural changes in schools could represent threats to social relationships of teachers who have formed strong friendships with colleagues. Teachers and others who benefit from the current distribution and control of scarce resources might perceive threats to their resource allocations brought about by changes in the school (Robbins, 2000).

The concept of individual and organizational mental models is another consideration for principals who are trying to understand why some teachers do not perceive the need to change or actually resist change (Zimmerman, 2017). Mental models are the maps that individuals and organizations follow to help them not only make sense of their context or world but also to interpret their reality. Mental models can promote efficiency and alleviate anxiety during change (Calabrese, 2002). Some established mental models can prevent educators from closing the gap between the knowledge they require to be successful in new contexts and their outmoded ways of dealing with change, resulting in nonproductive behaviors (Calabrese, 2002; Duffy, 2002, Senge et al., 1999). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) warn leaders that asking people to change is, in essence, challenging how they identify themselves. Principals should guard against succumbing to their own faulty mental models (Calabrese, 2002; Senge et al., 1999).

Others have described the feelings and behaviors of individuals at the beginning of a change process as a type of denial. Denial, in some aspects, is similar to the first stage of

grieving for what is lost (Calabrese, 2002; Clawson, 1999). Principals must be adept at recognizing and dealing with denial behaviors as a possible indication of their underlying feelings of loss for what they are being asked to give up or leave behind (Zimmerman, 2017).

National school reform initiatives have placed high expectations on the potential of teacher participation in school-level decision making to affect school change, and that widespread use of participatory governance models has catapulted participation to the forefront of school reform efforts. It is now commonplace for policy makers to cite teacher participation as concrete and common-sense reform strategy. National reform initiatives and popular whole-school reform models are seen as evidence of this trend. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program requires that schools employ school-based leadership and participatory decision-making strategies. Whole-school reform models, such as Success for All (http://successforall.com) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (https://pbis.org), require that schools demonstrate high levels (80%) of staff agreement on the model prior to implementation (Turnbull, 2002)

Turnbull (2002) reported that schools often rush into participatory processes without adequate training or consideration for their capacity to use participation in a meaningful way. Turnbull further states that meaningful and effective participation is more commonly characterized by intense and heated discussions, frustration, and stress, with individuals weaving in and out of the process as time, interest, and resources permit. The demands of participation can actually detract from teacher time spent on classroom work and actually decrease commitment and motivation to take action (cf. Griffin, 1995; Weiss & Cambone, 1994; Weiss, Cambone & Wyeth, 1992).

Participatory governance is purported to utilize teacher knowledge of students to improve the quality of school-level decisions, and has been linked to an increase in job satisfaction (Imber, Neidt & Reyes, 1990; Smylie, Lazarus & Brownlee Conyers, 1996; White, 1992), goal commitment (Bacharach, Bamberger, Conley & Bauer, 1990; Turnbull, 1999; Weiss, 1993), and teacher attendance (Griffin, 1995; Hart, 1990; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994; Weiss & Cambone, 1994), as well as to decrease teacher burnout. Aspects of teacher participation have been researched under various pseudonyms such as collective responsibility (Lee & Smith, 1996), school-based professional community (Bryk, Camburn, & Seashore Louise, 1999), trust (Schneider & Bryk, 2000), and reform governance strategies such as School-Based Management (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Morhrman, 1994). This research provides insight into participatory processes in schools and is grounded in the idea that teachers who work together and share in the decision making process will have increased buy-in for decisions resulting in a greater impact on student learning and school achievement (Turnbull, 2002).

Turnbull (2002) found that teachers were most likely to *buy-in* to their school reform program when they had adequate training, adequate resources, helpful support from the model developers, school-level support, administrator buy-in, and control over the reform implementation in their classrooms. Friborg (2014) found that in addition to utilizing an organized change process, leadership that maintains a focus on transparent communication, administrative commitment and follow-through, and the establishment of sufficient faculty buy-in will create an environment conducive to successful change.

Summary

School climate has a wide range of functions which impact students, teachers, and the school as a whole. Understanding these functions is vital for educational leaders (Osterman,

2006). The body of research makes it abundantly clear that school climate matters (Thapa et al., 2013). What is not made clear by research is the process by which to improve school climate. Commonalities in key factors for successful climate improvement efforts have been discussed (Doll, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2009; NCSSLE, 2018; NSCC, 2018). However, there is no one-size-fits-all policy (Payne, 2008). Fullan (2007) reinforces the absence of a universal solution while suggesting nine critical factors which affect the implementation of education policy. These nine elements are actually sub-factors in the domains of (1) change, (2) local characteristics, and (3) external factors.

- change (need, clarity, complexity and quality/practicality);
- local characteristics (district, community, principal and teacher);
- external factors (government and other agencies) (p.87)

In efforts to address the issues associated with negative school climate, many schools have implemented school-wide programs to support students, build relationships between teachers and students, promote student leadership, promote positive school cultures, and create a sense of student ownership and connectedness (Fraker, 2006; Kmiee, 2007; Sigler, 2008; Springer-Schwatken, 2004; Thornton, 2009). One such program, Jostens Renaissance, is the focus of the current study. The body of literature on Jostens Renaissance is limited (Campbell, 2016; Kobik, 2000; Nowak, 2004; Ross & Nunnery, 2005; White 2008). What research does exist is supportive of the claim that Renaissance is a proven educational enrichment program that seeks to improve academic achievement by motivating students to achieve at higher levels and providing excitement about their education (Janovich, 2009; Kobik, 2000; Nowak, 2004; White, 2008). Researchers have found a positive relationship between Jostens Renaissance and

academic motivation (Kobik, 2000; Ross & Nunnery, 2005; Waxman, 1991), reduction in discipline infractions (Harrison, 2010), and improved graduation rate (Campbell, 2016).

The body of qualitative research on Jostens Renaissance is extremely limited. Campbell (2016) identified themes centered on the importance of relationships, creating a sense of ownership and pride for all stakeholders, and the value of attending the Jostens Renaissance National Conference. Carney-Raye (2013) conducted a qualitative case study which revealed positive feelings of the participants regarding the Jostens Renaissance Program and describing the participants' positive and negative perceptions of the various program components.

There is a paucity of research on Jostens Renaissance in the area of implementation. Campbell (2016) made a recommendation for a future qualitative study for the purpose of examining the commonalities of the strategies implemented that resulted in a school being recognized with an Educator of the Year or a Hall of Fame inductee. Other than White's (2008) Jostens Renaissance: Implementation Manual, no scholarly articles regarding the implementation of Jostens Renaissance could be located for this review.

Based on the review of the literature, the gap in the knowledge of the implementation of Jostens Renaissance programs has yet to be studied. The research historically and most recently, focuses on the quantitative variables of academic motivation, student achievement, graduation rate, attendance, and discipline infractions. A phenomenological research design using first-hand educator experiences will provide educators with an in-depth understanding of how a Jostens Renaissance Program is implemented. This research aims to add to the literature on Jostens Renaissance by exhausting all literature sources, conducting one on one interviews with three teachers and an administrator at three high schools identified by Jostens as having exemplary

Renaissance programs. With an exhaustive literature review and first-hand descriptive data from participants and triangulation with the different schools, this research will assist educators in planning and implementing a Jostens Renaissance program in their schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that facilitated change in the process of implementing high school Jostens Renaissance programs. A multiple case study was used to investigate the implementation process at three high schools. As part of the qualitative data collection for this case study, the researcher conducted interviews with administrators and teachers who experienced the implementation process.

Research Questions

Research questions should "explain specifically what your study will attempt to learn or understand" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 67). The research questions related to the researcher's goal of exploring the factors which facilitated the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs.

Central Question: How do high school educators describe their experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

Sub-Questions:

1) What change strategies facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?
2) What obstacles were encountered during implementation of Jostens Renaissance and how were they addressed?
3) What measurable outcomes were observed after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?
4) How did the academic, social, and organizational climate of the school change after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

Design of the Study

A qualitative methodology was employed to conduct research on teachers, school counselors, and administrators at three high schools identified by Jostens as having exemplary Renaissance programs. Based on the dearth of knowledge that was discovered through review of the literature, the problem statement mandated a qualitative study as the best approach for the research. Though the body of research on Jostens Renaissance is limited, the majority of existing studies have utilized a quantitative design to seek relationships between the existence of Jostens Renaissance in a school and the measurable variables of student achievement, attendance, graduation rate, and discipline. Little qualitative research exists on Jostens Renaissance, and no research, qualitative or quantitative, exists on the implementation of the program (Campbell, 2016). Use of a qualitative research design addressed the paucity of literature and the problem statement in several ways. First, the design of this study focused on the lived experiences of those who were involved in the entire process of implementation rather than the quantitative data of student grades, attendance records, survey data, GPAs, graduation rates, or discipline statistics. Secondly, the goal of the researcher was to investigate the change processes that lead to the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs. Thirdly, the research design provided flexibility through the use of semi-structured interview questions that allowed for follow-up questions if study participants make comments that need further probing to gain insight into realities and meanings. Further, the researcher served as the primary instrument for the interviews and data gathering. Finally, the findings include a rich description to assist in understanding the participating educators' journeys, their perceptions of Jostens Renaissance throughout all phases of implementation, and their perceptions of the key factors that led to implementation of the program. Three teachers, a school counselor, and an

administrator were selected from each of the three schools to enhance triangulation and to add credibility to the study (Patton, 1990). By employing a qualitative research design as the methodology, the researcher was able to address the problem statement created from the review of the literature.

Case Study

This qualitative research was conducted with a multiple case study approach. Case study research "facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Additionally, case study research "involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system" (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). This study explores the lived experiences of nine high school teachers, three high school school counselors, and three high school administrators within the bounded system of public high schools. According to Yin (2003), the case study is an "all-encompassing method - covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (p. 14). The case study approach is particularly appropriate when the goal is to "describe an intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred" (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

Stake (2005) advises that multiple cases be used when "it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (pg. 446). The focus of this study was to gain insight into the change strategies which facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance, and therefore an examination of multiple cases could lead to greater understanding of how this process might work across different schools. Yin (2003) extends this argument through *replication logic* (pg. 47). In the past, some researchers treated multiple case studies in the context of sampling, that is, multiple cases were seen in a similar way as multiple respondents to a survey. Yin argues that

a better analogy is "to consider multiple cases as one would consider multiple experiments – that is, to follow a replication logic" (pg. 47). Yin does not claim that replication serves the identical purpose in a multiple case study as it does in traditional quantitative, experimental methodology. Rather, replication logic is a better rationale for the use of multiple cases because of the researcher's intention behind the choice to use more than one case. Researchers choose multiple case study designs over single case study designs in order to check tentative conclusions based on each case. Multiple cases were used for this study in order to discover strategies common to the implementation process at multiple schools. By utilizing a wide variety of data, including documents, created artifacts, and interviews, the researcher sought to gain insight into the phenomenon of the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher functioned as the gatekeeper for the study. Gatekeeping is a necessary component within qualitative studies and consequently, can affect the research endeavor in a number of ways by limiting conditions of entry, by defining the problem area of study, by limiting access to data and respondents, by restricting the scope of analysis, and by retraining prerogatives with respect to publication (Broadhead, 1976). The investigator communicated that participation in the study is entirely optional and without negative outcomes if potential subjects decline to participate. The principal researcher exercised caution as he collected data via interviews and observations of twelve educators.

The principal investigator obtained permission to conduct research on-site and convey to gatekeepers or individuals in authority how the research provided the least disruption to the activities at the site (Creswell, 2012). The participants were not deceived about the nature of the

research, and in the process of providing data (e.g., through interviews, documents, and so forth), were appraised on the general nature of the inquiry (Creswell, 2012).

Moustakas (1994) explained that the researcher examines the phenomenon by attaining an attitudinal shift known as the phenomenological attitude called epoche, where the researcher investigates with a fresh and open viewpoint without prejudgment. This research took place in the educators' natural work setting where data collection was focused on the meaning of participants and described a process that was expressive and persuasive in language (Creswell, 1997). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as a multi-method focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter. The researcher bracketed personal experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). The teacher, school counselor, and administrator interviews elicited routine and problematic moments as well as personal meanings of their experience with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance.

Gatekeepers and participants interpret what they are asked to do in their own social context (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003). Researchers must learn the social structure of a research site to successfully negotiate entry (Feldman et al., 2003; Berg, 2004). Negotiating access is based on building relationships with gatekeepers, which has the potential to be an unpredictable, uncontrollable process (Feldman et al., 2003).

Researchers typically negotiate access with influential gatekeepers at multiple entry points to the research site (Patton, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The gatekeepers at the selected schools included the respective district school board, system Director of Schools and building level administrators. Contact was made with the selected schools and formal letters were sent requesting approval from all appropriate gatekeepers. Informal gatekeepers within the

organization often protect research settings and participants, particularly vulnerable individuals such as the students and the classroom. The informal gatekeepers at the selected schools were the teachers, office personnel, assistant principals, and the librarian (Berg, 2004). Formal gatekeepers in positions of power, such as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research at East Tennessee University have the authority to grant official permission and sponsor research for specific entry points (Berg, 2004).

Ethics

The researcher must anticipate any ethical issues that may arise during the phenomenological research process and prepare for those issues accordingly (Creswell, 2009). Ethics should be considered both for the data collection process and procedures while equally ensuring ethical practices in the writing and reporting phases of the research (Creswell, 2012). Participant consent was obtained for all teachers and administrators who voluntarily participated in the study. Before each interview with teachers and the administrator at each participating school, assent forms were collected from each participant and the purpose of the study was explained before each interview began. Participants were informed that at any time during the interview, the participant could choose to cease the interview process.

Design of the Semi-Structured Interview Procedure

The best approach for this study was a semi-structured interview protocol. In this section, discussions on the key components of the interview protocol guide as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the interview protocol guide are presented. Additionally, the parts of the interview protocol are outlined. There are several components of the semi-structured procedure. One key component of the semi-structured procedure is the interview protocol guide. The purposes of the interview protocol guide were to facilitate the interviews, keep the research

on track, and gather the data needed to answer research questions. Another key component of the interview is the actual interview questions. Merriam (2009) stated, "The key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions; asking good questions takes practice" (p. 95). The interview questions are exploratory and inductive in nature. The types of questions avoided in the interview protocol are multiple questions in one question, leading questions, and yes-or-no questions (Merriam, 2009). The interview questions are linked to specific research questions to develop a research crosswalk between the interview questions and the research questions.

Advantages of using emergent interview techniques or a semi-structured interview provide the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to collect additional data on the emerging topic. The researcher can handle probes as a follow up to the main exploratory research questions by linking the two sets of questions during the interview. Probing can also assist in asking the study participants to provide more details, clarification, or examples with regard to their answers (Merriam, 2009). A disadvantage of using an interview guide to facilitate interviews is that the researcher may become fixated on following the guide and may overlook potentially important information that might be discovered through the interview. Consequently, the researcher might not listen to key points shared by an interviewee during the interview. These key points or observations could be vital in understanding the participants' experiences explored through the study or in answering the research questions.

Interview Protocol

The motives and intentions underlying the study were to learn about the lived experiences of teachers and administrators during the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. The purpose of the interviews was to gather data which could be analyzed in order to answer the research questions. The methods of collecting and storing information during the interviews included

note taking and the use of audio equipment to record interviews. The interview materials and content collected through digital audio recording and notes are stored in an encoded external drive maintained by ETSU. Respondents were referred to only by their position in order to maintain anonymity, thereby meeting the requirement for research involving human subjects. The interviews were conducted at the time and place most convenient for each participant and each interview was scheduled for approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Sampling Method

This study included 12 total participants in the interview process. Three teachers, a school counselor, and one administrator were requested from each of the three study schools. However, none of the study schools were able to accommodate the request as stated. Three teachers and an administrator were interviewed at Study School A (SSA). Three teachers, an administrator, and the school social worker were interviewed at Study School B (SSB). Three teachers were interviewed at Study School C.

Administrators were selected by their presence at the participating school before, during, and after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. Teachers were selected at the recommendation of school administration based on their level of familiarity with the implementation of the Jostens Renaissance program in their school and being present in that school before, during, and after implementation. The Criterion based sampling for the schools in the study was necessary due to the focus on successful implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs. Criterion based sampling was necessary for selecting the educator participants in the study due to the focus on the implementation of the Jostens Renaissance program in their schools and the strategies used during that process. It was important to the

research that the educators interviewed were present and involved with the implementation during the times in question. (Patton, 2002)

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview protocols were utilized during the interviews to provide prompts for the questions and serve as a means for recording notes (Creswell, 2012). Digital audio recording was utilized during the interview process with the participants. Permissions were obtained from the interviewees to record the interview. For transcription purposes, the audio recording provided a more detailed account of the interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In non-standardized semi-structured interviews, the interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David & Sutton, 2004). The researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and an interview protocol with specific questions to be covered. The semi-structured interview questions were utilized to provide participants an opportunity to share more broadly their perceptions and interpretations on how they experienced the implementation process. The researcher utilized semi-structured interview questions based upon issues generated through the review of the literature. The participants responded to semi-structured interview questions regarding the broad issues of the implementation process which included key factors which facilitated implementation. The semi-structured interview questions allowed the researcher to probe further when responses needed to be clarified or when a unique response intrigued the researcher. Even though an interview protocol was used, additional questions were asked. Corbetta (2003) suggests that some aspects of the semi-structured interviews are left to the interviewer's discretion such as the order of the various topics and the wording of the questions. The interviewer is free to conduct the conversation and to ask the questions appropriately to

ensure clarification if the answer is not clear. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which were not initially considered (Gray, 2004). The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that the researcher can prompt and probe deeper into the given situation. In addition, the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are unclear about the questions.

IRB Process

The Institutional Review Board process for East Tennessee State University consisted of training and submitting new research and documents to obtain permission for human studies. The guidelines for the four main procedures for submissions were adhered and followed:

> (1) Obtaining voluntary informed consent from participants through a written statement, (2) Assessing the harms, risks, and benefits of the research, and minimizing any threat of harm (physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, and dignitary harm) to the participants, (3) Selecting participants equitably, so that no groups of people are unfairly included or excluded from the research, (4) Assuring confidentiality about participants identities using a pseudonym for each interview participant, including those appearing in audiotapes (National Research Council, 2003, pp. 23–28).

Data Management

All interviews of this study were digitally recorded with permissions of the participants and transcribed verbatim. Notes, documents, and digital audio recordings from the study are secured in an encoded external drive maintained by ETSU. All participants were referred to only by their position at the study school in order to protect confidentiality. All identifying information was masked in the interview transcriptions. Hard copies of interview transcriptions

with each participant were organized by school and by position (teacher or administrator). Excel spreadsheets were used to house transcriptions in a separate section for each participant.

First and foremost, the researcher needs to ensure that the rights, needs, privacy and consideration for the participants should be addressed since research is always obtrusive (Creswell, 2003). Transcriptions were analyzed with the appropriate matching participant title. In order to provide due consideration to the participants, all interview participants were given the opportunity to receive a copy of the interview transcription via electronic mail to review and insure that the transcript accurately reflected the appropriate dialogue and meaning of verbatim transcriptions (Creswell, 2003).

Measures of Rigor

Triangulation is a tool to support the researcher's construction. It is a process by which the researcher can guard against the accusation that their research findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator's biases. The function of triangulation is to locate and reveal the understanding of the object under investigation from different aspects of empirical reality (Denzin, 1978). Data triangulation can be used to compare the perspectives of people from different points of view. Interviewing teachers, and administrators at three high schools enhances the transferability and dependability of the results. Qualitative research must develop thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the context. The recognition of the inevitability of subjectivity also yields the process of triangulation that utilizes the use of multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories to ensure the credibility of the research (Creswell, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990).

Patton (1990) advises that a credible qualitative study needs to address the qualifications, experiences, and perspectives of the researcher. With twenty years of middle school and high

school educational experiences in the classroom and as an administrator, the researcher is keenly aware of the impact school climate has on the organizational health of a school as well as the well being of its inhabitants. Many students develop negative perceptions of school early on. Without support from home and without quality relationships at school, these students have little to no motivation to attend school. The most valuable lesson learned over the last twenty years as a teacher and an administrator is that the subjects we teach are primarily vehicles for teaching the life lessons that truly matter and platforms for building meaningful relationships with students.

Member checks also serve to decrease the incidence of incorrect data and the incorrect interpretation of data, with the overall goal of providing findings that are authentic and original (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The greatest benefit of conducting member checks is that it allows the researcher the opportunity to verify the accuracy and completeness of the findings, which then helps to improve the credibility of the study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Member checks were conducted with the participants at each participating high school.

Triangulation is a credibility procedure in qualitative research where multiple data sources are used to form themes in a qualitative study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation with the two types of interview participants at three different sites contribute to the dependability of the study. The data from each school were compared and patterns that emerged from the triangulation of data were utilized to develop themes across all groups. Cross-analysis coding was used to compare codes across the two types of interview participants from each of the three sites. Cross-analysis coding was employed to find common emerging themes across the two interview groups and three research sites.

Data Analysis

In qualitative data analysis, the goal is to learn from the data and to revisit the data until patterns and explanations begin to emerge (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2012; Richards, 2005). This requires thorough data records or the relevant parts of them until an understanding of the data is achieved. Extracting meaning and formulating an understanding of the data parallels "... making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said" (Patton, 2002, p. 380). Such an understanding of the patterns and explanations must be evidenced as artifacts (Richards, 2005). The researcher developed a coding protocol that evolved throughout the research process. The realized protocol was one of constant and continual comparison. This protocol for this study produced "tentative categories that were then compared to each other and to other instances" throughout the constant comparative method of data analysis (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). The researcher used the constant comparison method to extract conceptual themes, categories, and units. Coding allowed for the identification of shared themes among the following data collection protocols: Interview, semantic differential survey, and participant observation. After identifying the emergent themes, the researcher continued the iterative process by grouping commonalities and recurrent thematic units. Code mapping involved three iterations of analysis and was detailed by the principal investigator.

Data Presentation

After the data was analyzed, the findings were used to develop a master code table that indicates how codes fit into categories. The data was depicted in the form of quotations, transcripts, and other documents to support the findings, which connect with a description of emergent themes or relationships. An interpretative commentary was provided regarding the

particulars as well as general findings from the rich description. The presentation includes thematic analysis on some of the key themes that emerge. After the open coding cycle was completed, the researcher interpreted and reflected on the codes and grouped the codes based on similar meanings. After the grouping, the researcher moved inductively to construct themes. The themes are, "conceptual elements that 'cover' or span many individual examples" or bits of data (Merriam, 2009). Then, the researcher examined the relationship between the themes. The key emergent themes answered the research questions and provided an understanding of the complexity of the implementation process, including development of personal perceived beliefs and perspectives regarding the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. The information presented in the study findings represent a balance between analysis and interpretation (Patton, 2002).

Findings for the central question and each of the research sub-questions were presented in narrative form with direct quotes. A master code list was developed, representing how codes were categorized into themes. A code map was developed to show how themes fit into categories and overarching themes to answer research questions regarding implementation factors (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). A research blueprint provided a strong connection between and among the central research question, the research questions, and the interview questions for each group of participants.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study examined the implementation of Jostens Renaissance in the high school setting. A relatively small body of research exists on Jostens Renaissance which is primarily focused on measurable outcomes of the program. No studies have been exclusively conducted on the implementation process of Jostens Renaissance. The central research question was: How do high school educators describe their experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance? The central research question was supported by a subset of four research questions that are important for addressing the central research question as it relates to the implementation process and the outcomes of implementation. The subset of research questions included: (1) What change strategies facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance? (2) What obstacles were encountered during implementation of Jostens Renaissance and how were they addressed? (3) What measurable outcomes were observed after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance? (4) How did the academic, social, and organizational climate of the school change after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

To complete this research study, a qualitative research methodology was utilized as outlined in Chapter 3. The research study entailed interviewing a total of 12 participants selected from three Southeastern high schools identified by Jostens as having exemplary programs. The participants at each school were to include: one administrator, one school counselor, and three classroom teachers. All participants have been employed at their respective schools before, during, and after implementation of Jostens Renaissance. The classroom teachers were interviewed regarding their experience with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance, how the

program has affected them as educators, and how they perceived the impact of the program on the measurable outcomes of academic achievement, attendance, discipline, and graduation rate as well as the perceived outcomes in Wang and Degol's (2016) four domains of school climate research.

The principals at SSA and SSB were interviewed regarding the general process used for change, strategies for implementation, strategies used to obtain teacher buy-in, and strategies being used for maintaining the programs. No administrators at SSC were available to be interviewed. None of the study schools were able to provide a school counselor which met the participant requirement of being employed at the school before, during, and after program implementation. However, the school counselor interview protocol was employed at SSB to interview the school social worker. Participants were selected by their school principal based on the stated participant requirements and all interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview guides.

Collecting Data

Site Selection

Three Southeastern high schools were identified by Jostens as having exemplary Renaissance programs. All three schools are 9-12 high schools and have been Jostens Renaissance schools for at least five years. The three high schools will henceforth be referred to as Study School A (SSA), Study School B (SSB), and Study School C (SSC)

SSA has an enrollment of 873 students, a teaching faculty of 47 full time teachers, is classified as a rural school, and the student population is 74% white. SSB has an enrollment of 908 students, a teaching faculty of 55 full-time teachers, is classified a rural school, and the

student population is 80% white. SSC has an enrollment of 814 students, a teaching faculty of 51 full time teachers, is classified as a sub-urban school, and the student population is 93% white.

Site Visit

The visits to the three selected school sites occurred over a four week period. Each visit was scheduled at the convenience of the participants and their daily class schedule and consisted of three to five interview sessions lasting approximately 45 minutes to an hour each. Each participant signed a letter of informed consent and completed a semantic differential exercise for assessing their own thoughts on the culture at their school prior to and after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. All interviews were conducted either in a conference room, teacher classrooms, or offices. All 12 study participants were interviewed privately in person on their campus.

Participants

Participants in the study were employed at their respective schools before, during, and after implementation. Participants varied in years of experience and subject area. The study school, job title, and years at study of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Study School	Position	Number of Years at Site
SSA	Principal	6
SSA	Honors & AP English (JR Coordinator)	6
SSA	Special Populations Coordinator	12
SSA	Integrated Math	10
SSB	Principal	17
SSB	English & AP Language/Composition	33
SSB	Information Technology	7
SSB	Math Intervention	12
SSB	School Social Worker (JR Coordinator)	8
SSC	Cosmetology	16
SSC	Consumer Sciences	11
SSC	English & Yearbook (JR Coordinator)	14

Central Question and Themes

Central question: How do high school educators describe their experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?

The themes were connected to the purpose of the study to describe the processes which facilitated the implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs in the high schools identified by Jostens for this study. All 12 interview transcriptions were analyzed and coded using first round open coding and axial coding. Each school was analyzed separately and then a

comparison of the three schools was conducted. Themes were organized into categories dictated by the research questions of the study.

Data were reported in comparison charts. The charts were organized into participant responses, with three participant groups represented: principal, teachers, and counselor/social worker. The data from SSA, SSB, and SSC were organized first by main themes and then by subcategories.

Administrator Interviews

The principal at SSA and SSB were each interviewed. No administrator interviews were conducted at SSC due to a last minute schedule conflict. The interviews were recorded and transcribed; and the participant responses were coded into identified categories. The administrator interview questions are presented in Appendix A.

Teacher Interviews

Three teachers at SSA, SSB, and SSC were interviewed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the responses were coded into identified categories. The teacher interview questions are presented in Appendix B.

School Counselor/Social Worker Interview

One school social worker at SSB was interviewed at SSB. The interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded into identified categories. The school counselor/social worker interview questions are presented in Appendix C.

Semantic Differential Survey

Each participant completed a semantic differential survey to assess the perceived impact of Jostens Renaissance in regard to the four domains of school climate (academic climate, social,

safety, and institutional environment). The survey also served as a researcher created artifact to assist participants in organizing their own personal ideas on the value of the program. Each question on the survey presented polarized descriptors (ex. good to bad, biased to equitable, connected to meaningful) related to the four domains of school climate. The participants were asked to indicate on a continuum between the extremes of the polarized descriptors where they would rate the climate at their respective schools regarding the four domains prior to and after implementation of Jostens Renaissance. The semantic survey instrument is presented in Appendix D.

Qualitative Results

For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined the qualitative data for themes which emerged from the participant responses to qualitative interview prompts. Themes were organized into three primary categories relating directly to the research questions of the study. The three primary categories are: change factors, implementation barriers, and outcomes. Fullan's (2007) nine critical factors which affect the implementation of education policy, reviewed in chapter 2 of this study, were used as a framework for organizing themes related to change factors. The emerging themes from the interviews required the addition of two subcategories under change: student (2d) and program structure (2e). Themes for measurable changes were organized into subcategories: (3a) academic achievement, (3b) discipline referrals, (3c) attendance, and (3d) graduation rate. The themes related to climate and culture outcomes were organized using Wang and Degol's (2016) four domain framework for organizing research on climate and culture: (4a) academic climate, (4b) social, (4c) safety, and (4d) institutional environment.

Themes

Change: Seven main themes related to change factors identified during data processing were need for change, supportive administration, dedicated faculty coordinator, student leadership and participation, faculty buy-in and participation, intentionality in building teacher climate, and perceived quality of the program.

Implementation Barriers: No major themes regarding implementation barriers emerged during data processing. Minor themes of teacher buy-in and programs and events were identified and are discussed in conjunction with the categories throughout the chapter.

Outcomes: Themes identified as outcomes were divided into two primary categories: measurable outcomes and perceived outcomes. Four main themes related to measurable outcomes identified during data processing were improved academic achievement, fewer discipline referrals, increased attendance, and increased graduation rate. Four main themes related to perceived outcomes identified during data processing were student attitudes toward academic achievement, teacher morale, school spirit, and improved teacher student relationships. These main themes as well as minor themes are discussed in conjunction with categories throughout the chapter. The major categories and subcategories used in this research are as follow:

Change Domain 1: Change

- Subcategory 1a: Need
- Subcategory 1b: Clarity
- Subcategory 1c: Complexity
- Subcategory 1d: Quality/practicality

Change Domain II: Local characteristics

Subcategory 2a: District

Subcategory 2b: Community

Subcategory 2c: Principal and teacher

Subcategory 2d: Program structure

Subcategory 2e: Student

Change Domain III: External factors

Subcategory 3a: Government

Subcategory 3b: Other agencies

Implementation Barriers I: Buy-in

Subcategory 4a: Teachers

Subcategory 4b: Students

Subcategory 4b: Community

Implementation Barriers II: Programs and events

Subcategory 5a: Planning

Subcategory 5b: Funding

Outcomes I: Measurable outcomes

Subcategory 6a: Academic achievement

Subcategory 6b: Attendance

Subcategory 6c: Discipline referrals

Subcategory 6d: Graduation Rate

Outcomes II: Climate and culture outcomes

Subcategory 7a: Academic culture

Subcategory 7b: Social

Subcategory 7c: Safety

Subcategory 7d: Institutional environmental

Participant responses were coded and assigned to appropriate categories and subcategories. Then, subcategory results were examined individually. Charts were developed for the three major categories and all subcategories. From the results in each category, the researcher searched for common themes from the respondents.

Change Factors

Change Factors I: Change

Need (subcategory 1a) emerged from the data as a major theme of this study. Participants from SSA and SSB described the culture at their schools prior to implementation of Jostens Renaissance as toxic, isolated struggling, low achieving, and apathetic. The data for SSA supports the existence of a perceived need for change as indicated by the following statements:

> "It was rough, lots of bad behavior, cussing in the hallways. Kids didn't really care about academics. Uh, it was just hard to get them to do what they needed to do and then we were not performing the best on our, on our state tests, and probably all of that tied together" (SSA Integrated Math Teacher).

> "Prior to the implementation, culture was struggling here. Even when I first got here, culture was struggling. I'd say that, uh, there was a lot of apathy amongst faculty. There was a lot of just disinterest amongst the students. They really were not, didn't feel like that, there was just a handful of teachers probably, you know, 10-15 teachers that were really invested into the academic success and wanting to see, you know, a strong academic culture here at SSA" (SSA Principal).

"Everybody goes through their motions, come to school. Teachers come to work; kids come into their rooms; they learn. No real like authentic interaction between people. It was just a job and, I don't know. It felt like school maybe even when I was in school, kind of boring. No Fun to it and nobody really cares why anyone's here. It's just, let me get to testing and do well in testing and then move on" (SSA Coordinator)

The data for SSB supports the existence of a perceived need for change as indicated by the following statements: "It made me not want to continue my teaching career" (SSB Math Interventionist).

"Prior to renaissance, I would say those relationships often were disjointed and they were exceptions rather than rules. Students overall attitudes were rather apathetic and I think they felt rather uncared about. I think the teachers sometimes didn't feel as connected or we didn't maybe share a common goal or a common vision that we're working toward" (SSB English Teacher).

"Uh, it was a very adult centered. You know, we made a lot of decisions based on what was best for adults, not what's best for kids. Um, we had an extremely high number of discipline referrals, you know, in excess of twenty-six, twenty-seven hundred, and um, I don't think students enjoyed coming to school. I don't think the staff enjoyed coming to school. I don't think anybody enjoyed a whole lot about it. It was just something they had to do, but it was just a, it was a really toxic, just not very pleasant friendly environment place to be" (SSB Principal).

Referring to the faculty's response to the program, the SSB principal stated, "It was good. I think they were ready for change. They wanted to see something different. I think they were just tired of just being bogged down and miserable and unhappy."

SSC teachers did not use such negative descriptors; however, the participants still indicated need for change by describing the school climate prior to Jostens Renaissance as, "not as focused on academic achievement," "poor school spirit," "a need to recognize something other than [just] athletics," and "just going through the motions."

Clarity (subcategory 1b) did not emerge as a facilitating factor of implementation in regards to the clarity of the proposed change or the existence of a clearly defined plan for implementation. Neither clarity of change nor clarity of plan seemed to be of great consequence to implementation at any of the study schools. Clarity in leadership did emerge as a theme at SSA and SSB. Both principals presented Renaissance to their faculty as non-negotiables, "something they were going to do." According to the SSA coordinator,

> "[The principal] implemented it the way that we use it now, but it was more about we're going to do this kind of more of a direct command, here's how we're going to do it. And so, it was basically like a checklist. 'Here, we're doing this, here's how I want you to do it.' So that's how the faculty was told to do it."

The SSB principal stated:

> "Um, I'm not sure exactly who I heard say this at the renaissance conference, but I remember them saying not everybody's going to buy in, and that's okay. But just let them know, 'Don't get in the way.' You don't have to like it, you don't have to do it. I don't care; but just don't get in the way. And so that's, it's kind of the approach that we took. We were like, you know, we're going to do this. We're

> going to do these things. We're going to implement these things. Some of them worked; some of them didn't. Some of them were good, and some of them weren't. Some of the things stuck."

A principal directive was not indicated by the SSC data. However, the SSA coordinator stated, "Our principal does make it part of your professionalism rubric to participate in renaissance activities," indicating an expectation of compliance by administration.

Complexity (subcategory 1c) did not emerge as a theme. None of the participants expressed any positive or negative feelings regarding the complexity of the change being introduced.

Change Factors II: Local Characteristics

The themes identified in this section are supportive administration, leadership style, dedicated faculty coordinator, student leadership and participation, faculty buy-in, intentionality in building teacher climate, and building relationships. These account for the majority of the themes identified from all of the interview data.

District factors (subcategory 2a) did not emerge from the interview data as a facilitator for implementation. However, participants at SSB reported that other schools in the district had begun Renaissance implementations as a result of the apparent success of the Renaissnace program at the high school.

Community factors (subcategory 2b) which facilitated implementation presented in terms of support from community businesses. According to the SSA principal,

> "We don't fundraise for [Renaissance]. The community loves it. I'll tell anybody. Now, hopefully we have, you know, higher motives than just for P.R., but if that was the only reason you would want to do it, it would be well worth

> your time. P.R. wise, it is one of the absolute best things that a person can possibly, the school leader can do"

The Information technology teacher at SSB stated,

> "The community, our community was in a big uproar with the way our school, our test scores and stuff was going on. You know, they were in a big uproar and they made noise. And then once they saw our change, they got behind us; they started sponsoring; they started coming; they put signs up. You know, just different things there. I mean our community involvement has jumped up tremendously, um, that I feel since the school's turnaround"

While speaking of efforts to involve the community and all stakeholders, the SSC Coordinator stated,

> "We start very quickly, student of the month, community leader of the math and parent of the month to try to get, you know, all stakeholders involved and knowing what Renaissance is and posting that on social media in the local newspaper and so forth."

Principal and teacher (subcategory 2c) factors which facilitated implementation were supportive administration, faculty buy-in and participation, intentionality in building teacher climate, and building relationships. Supportive administration did not appear the same at each school. The principals at SSA and SSB had both initiated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance at their schools. The principal at SSC was appointed after Renaissance was already an established program at their school. The principal at SSA had several years of experience with Renaissance at a previous school. The principal at SSB had been introduced to Renaissance

by his Jostens representative and subsequently attended a Jostens Renaissance national conference just prior to beginning implementation at SSB. Both the SSA and SSB principals were very involved in their programs.

The following interview excerpts illustrate the varying levels of adminstrator participation at the three study schools. The SSA special populations teacher, describing her principal's leadership stated,

> "We started off with our first ceremony one Sunday afternoon. The principal said 'it's not like graduation. This is a celebration, so clapping, air horns, cow bells, ringing, all of those kind of things.' So that really got everybody excited and involved."

The SSB Information technology teacher described active participation by the SSB principal by saying,

> "It started on the first day of school. Um, when we started, the principal had a theme. They went to the conference that summer. He came back and we all walked through the doors and there was a theme, and he was in a go cart running around the first day of school around the gym floor. You know, wearing a green cap and gown. You know, and that started, you know, every, all the staff was wearing shirts, you know, and that started tumbling with that energy in that theme all year. And it just kept building."

The principal at SSC was identified as supportive though not active by SSC teacher participant. The SSC coordinator indicated the need for administrative support in saying,

> "You got to have administrative support in order for it to go well. I was having problems getting all departments to participate and so I had to get kind of,

administration, they had to take over there because I'm just a peer. I'm not their boss"

The teacher participants at SSC identified an assistant principal that was highly supportive of the program as well as highly participative.

> "[Our assistant principal] really buys into the program. She's gone to the conference I want to say two or three times. [Our principal] loves it. She's just; being the head principal. It's, I think a little harder for her to get to do as much. [Our assistant principal] has flexibility of being an assistant principal a little more. And when [she] buys in, um, I think it helped other teachers see that it was supported by our administration and it's a great thing. And she goes with us sometimes when we're doing some of the simpler tasks to let, you know, the teacher see, okay, we're behind you" (SSC informational technology teacher)

The principals at SSA and SSB were very similar in their approach to the implementation of Renaissance. Participants at both schools stated that their principals had made it clear that Renaissance was "something they were going to do." Both principals took an "all in" approach to implementation with no well developed plan for implementation. The SSB principal described his implementation plan saying,

> "When you go to the renaissance conference, you'll hear people say to find one thing and go back and implement that, and I heard Darren Peppered say, 'I don't agree with that. Find as many [ideas] as you can and throw them all against the wall. The ones that stick, keep doing. The ones that fall off, let them go and find something else.' So we came back with the mindset [that] we're going to do as

> much as we possibly can to just try to start helping develop the kind of student centered culture that we want"

The principal at SSA had a similar response, saying "I threw everything on it. You know, if we're going to do it let's just get on in and do it. You know? Not feel the waters out."

The implementation at SSC was led by the Renaissance coordinator at that school. Participants indicated approval and support was given by the sitting principal at the time of implementation and the current principal supports the program as well, going so far as to require the inclusion of Renaissance incentives in teacher classrooms and include doing so in their professionalism evaluation rubric. The implementation plan at SSC was more gradual than the approach taken at the other two schools. The SSC coordinator stated, "Our first few years we just focused on a few things."

Teacher buy-in and participation were identified by participants as facilitators to success. When asked about efforts which facilitated gaining teacher support for implementation, the SSA coordinator stated,

> "So we, um, we had discussed it because [teachers], if you don't have a lot in, that's pretty much for not, because they're going to be the ones convincing the kids also to do these things".

When asked what she thought it was about the changes that were implemented that actually affected a change in the school climate, the SSB coordinator responded,

> "Well, I think ultimately the people are an important piece of the puzzle, but the program helped, helps drive what you do as a group. And so the things that were outlined, those ideas that we picked up through the renaissance program allowed our people to be a catalyst for that change."

In responding to a question regarding changes to the school climate, the SSA special populations teacher indicated the importance of school faculty and staff being present and involved, saying,

> "Our school climate has definitely changed since we started the renaissance program just because of the positive aspects of our behavior is just the presence of the faculty and staff being on board and involved and showing up at the ceremony and those things."

Though faculty negativity was not a significant factor at any of the three study schools, intentional efforts were made at each school in order to build faculty culture. This emerged as a major theme in this study. At SSA they called it "Teacher Renaissance." Every school had some version of "Teacher Renaissance" where they applied the four Rs of Renaissance (respect, recognize, reward, reinforce) to the school faculty. Strategies included: recognition for perfect attendance, professional achievements, going above and beyond; rewarding teachers with gift cards, special meals, notes of thanks and praise; treating teachers as professionals; and giving them a voice in the operation of the school and autonomy over their classes.

The instructional technology teacher at SSB indicated the importance of building faculty culture in saying, "we try to build our faculty culture just as much as our student culture because, if the faculty's close knit, then you know, it tends to be everybody's on the same page. The Renaissance coordinator at SSA stated,

> "Our principal implemented teacher Renaissance, which includes recognizing teachers at our faculty meetings for perfect attendance. He [the principal] reads off everyone who's had perfect attendance and then does a drawing and they get, I think there's like three or four winners. They get a $15 gift card. Um, we recognize our achievements for test scores through just being told in our

meetings, 'Hey, these people did this.' We have breakfasts that are specific for people meeting goals. We have a steak lunch for people meeting goals. Um, getting to wear jeans at some point in time, which is a huge one for teachers. So he's kinda like, just like the kids we have things we can earn and we get recognized for it at different points throughout the year."

The principal at SSB stated,

"You know, just recognizing those teachers that did good things and you know, we, we try to do that when we meet as a department, I try to recognize people. In my weekly email, I usually try to recognize some staff member that's done something above and beyond. You know, and people, they, they notice that and see that like, oh [that's cool]. But you know, I can't think of a specific example right now, but like if we've got a teacher that had a big project or something going on. They've spent basically four days up here getting it going and got it working, I might recognize them in a weekly email or something about wanting to thank so and so for their hard work.

The SSC Renaissance coordinator said,

"You go in any, probably any classroom in this building and you're going to see those inspire cards because teachers love them. That is one thing we have done that just, they're just very appreciative and thankful for. So that is how we recognize teachers and we'll do fun stuff like staffulty, like we're having a cookout before the homecoming game, uh, we'll do a Halloween, like a pumpkin decorating contest for staffulty. You know, we do mailbox motivators and all that good stuff. And then two years ago we started a Renaissance teacher of the year.

Which again, I'm like, if I'm going to do something, it's going to be good and it's going to be big. So like every student had the opportunity to nominate a teacher. It is a Renaissance reward, so some of the questions are related to the theme of the year. And like last year our theme was 'good to great, to awesome.' So one of the questions was 'what is this teacher doing to help move SSC from good to great, to awesome?' And um, we'll have a group of adults about four or five, they select the winner, and then it's hush -hush. We make a video like five to eight minutes long of like administrator, students, community leaders, a couple of teachers just saying good things about that teacher and they're all different, which is really cool. And then near the end of the rally, we play that video. That teacher comes on stage, everybody's crying, boohooing. It's just wonderful! And we have a plaque. If it's a female teacher, we've had one, you know, we gave her a dozen roses and it's just been really good."

Building relationships emerged from the interview data as a theme. This is a key element of the Jostens Renaissance philosophy and was reinforced as such by the participant responses. The principal at SSB stated,

"We got every device. We got it. There is nothing. They've got document cameras. They all got iPads. All the teachers got laptops, they've got document cameras, they got smart boards, got everything they need. There's nothing that they don't have to teach school, but you can throw all that out the door if you don't have a relationship with the people that walked through the door because we're humans are still humans walked through the door every single day, and if you don't have that, then all the other stuff doesn't matter."

A teacher participant at the same school stated, “It's honestly helped me become a better teacher as well in [building] more relationships with my kids.”

A program structure (subcategory 2d) factor which emerged as a major factor for facilitating implementation was the existence of a dedicated faculty Renaissance coordinator. At all three schools, the student council provided student leadership for their Renaissance program. The faculty coordinator provided support and guidance for the student council/Renaissance team. Though many teachers at each school assisted with their Renaissance programs, the presence of a dedicated coordinator was indicated as significant to the success of each respective program.

The SSA special populations teacher gave support for the importance of a dedicated faculty coordinator at SSA saying, “You do have to have someone like [our Renaissance coordinator] in your building that takes the leadership, goes above and beyond, and has the student council/Renaissance.” Renaissance at SSB is not referred to as Renaissance but as student council. Though the one student organization serves a dual role, the school has a dedicated Renaissance coordinator as well as a student council sponsor. The two work “hand in hand” and support the students in the planning and execution of projects and events. The Renaissance coordinator at SSC was mentioned numerous times during the interview process, creating a perception for the researcher that the SSC coordinator may individually be a critical factor in the sustainability of the SSC Renaissance program. When asked how crucial the SSC coordinator’s presence at the school was to the continuation of the Renaissance program, the SSC consumer sciences teacher responded,

> “Very crucial. Her attitude, her dedication. I think your coordinator has to believe in it. A coordinator needs to go to a Renaissance conference before they

do anything. Then they can have that buy in, because her buy-in was so great. Her and her personality, it just kind of spilled onto us."

A student factor (subcategory 2e) that emerged as a theme from the interview data at all three study school was student leadership and participation. SSA and SSB afforded their student leaders a great amount of autonomy over Renaissance. The faculty coordinators primarily served as facilitators in regard to the planning and execution of events. The SSA coordinator spoke about the positives of handing over decision making responsibilities to the students, saying,

> "Once I started giving them ownership in it, [It was like] okay, yes, we have to do this, but how do you [the students] want to do it? It became kind of a passion project for a lot of them. They enjoyed it more."

The SSB social worker, when speaking of how the school climate has improved, indicated the importance of student autonomy, saying,

> "I felt like the school belonged to them [the faculty] and it didn't actually belong to the kids. And I feel like that in order for the culture and climate to be effective, kids have to feel like they have a part and that there's ownership and in this place, not only as the building but as the curriculum and the things that happen, the events and extracurricular activities."

When asked to discuss the importance of student leadership and autonomy to Renaissance at his school, the SSB principal stated,

> "We have failed at some things that we do, but we allow our kids to do [things]. If they come to us with a project or whatever, we'll say, 'Sure! I'm not going to do it for you. I got too much to do as a principal. You do it. I'll support you. I'll tell you when you can do it. Go do it.' And then when it flops, it's not on the

principal is not on the teachers is on the kids. So they take the ownership in it, and every year's different. I mean, some years your leaders are a lot better than others and some years, you know, they're more go getters and some or not. And so some things kind of come and go and, and not. But, but, but the kids know that it's on them. You know, it's their responsibility. I tell them, 'Guys, I don't go to high school anymore, I've already done it. This is your high school. So I'm, I just have to be the one that leads to ship, but it's your school because it's made up of you guys and what you do and how you do things.' So, um, so we, we really try to push our kids out of their comfort zone and, and really, you know, we're there to catch them. Sometimes we're probably there to catch them more than we should, and we should let them fail, and we should probably let them fail miserably. But to me that's a learning process for them and it's about them learning for when they leave here, in my opinion. You know, we're just here to teach them the leadership skills and those types of things. We want them to do really good here, but the main thing is I want them to be able to carry that with them when they leave here."

Though the student leaders at SSC were not afforded the same autonomy over the execution of programs and events, they did play an active role in the planning of events, projects, and rallies. The consumer sciences teacher at SSC stated,

"I think the conference with the students and Ms. Dickman doing the brainstorming for the year. That is, I think the most crucial point for planning and implementing because the students on the Rat Pack have to buy into the idea.

> Because I could sit here all day and say it's going to be really cool if we do X,Y, and Z, but if the kids don't think it's cool, it's not going to go over."

The contrasting levels of student leadership and autonomy between the three study school coupled with the aforementioned perception by the researcher regarding the SSC coordinator's importance to the sustainability of the SSC Renaissance program led the researcher to wonder what outcomes the lack of student leadership may have on the longevity of a Renaissance program. When asked if the implementation at SSC would have gone as well if their Renaissance coordinator had not been involved, the SSC cosmetology teacher responded:

> "I don't really know. I can't really answer that 100 percent, but I don't know who else here would have been that passionate about it to be honest and work as hard She's very organized, very structured, and she just was the perfect one for the position. She just really was the perfect one to pick it up and run with it. And um, she's got it structured. She's got it down to a science. I mean, you know, so I just, I think it's just who your leader is. You're only as strong as your leadership pretty much. And you're only as strong as your team"

When asked what would happen to the Renaissance program at SSC if she left, the SSC coordinator replied:

> "I think it will still be here. It will not be as much, but I think they will still do some things because I've got about five or six teachers who helped me out a lot. Um, the rally would probably happen this year. I don't know if it would continue and it may be, and maybe so, yeah. The teachers who help me love it, but they all sponsor their own organizations. They've got their own things going on. So it's, it's hard."

Change Factors III: External Factors

No themes were identified in this section.

Change Factors Summary

The first main theme that emerged from the data was need. It was expected by the researcher that all of the schools would experience some implementation hurdles related to teacher or student buy-in. However, participants at both SSA and SSB reported an immense need for and readiness to change due to conditions prior to the implementation of Renaissance. Though SSC participants did not indicate a major need for change prior to implementation, there were still need factors reported that may have facilitated the seamless implementation of Renaissance at SSC.

The majority of themes that emerged from the interview data were primarily related to the local characteristics of principal and teacher, student, and program structure. Participants at all three schools reported at least some degree of supportive leadership with administrators who were active in their respective programs. None of the three schools were led with exactly the same leadership style. However, all three school administrators made it clear to their school faculty either by directive or by accountability measures that Renaissance was "something they were going to do."

All three schools had dedicated faculty coordinators who provided leadership and guidance to the student leaders of Renaissance at their schools, which fell under the umbrella of student council at all three schools. Student leadership and participation emerged as a major theme from the data and, though the level of student responsibility and ownership varied, participants at all three schools acknowledged student leadership and participation as key components of their programs. A relationship between student autonomy and the longevity of a

program in the event of a turnover in faculty coordinators was pondered by the researcher. SSA and SSB both allow the students autonomy over their Renaissance programs. At SSC, the students are involved and actively participate in the program. However, the primary responsibility for the success or failure of Renaissance programs and events falls upon the SSC Renaissance coordinator. The question arose as to whether the SSC program would be able to continue at the current level of success should the SSC Renaissance coordinator leave.

Faculty buy-in was identified as a requirement for implementation. Participants at all three schools acknowledged the importance of faculty participation in relation to the implementation and maintenance of their Renaissance programs. However, obtaining buy-in did not appear to be a significant challenge at any of the study schools. This is likely due to the perceived need for change that was indicated at least on a small scale at all three schools.

All three schools made efforts to build teacher climate, not just student climate. The same types of strategies being used to transform student attitudes and behaviors were applied to the faculty, resulting in higher job satisfaction, happier teachers, better participation, and better teacher student relationships. The implementation leaders were essentially modeling the strategies they wanted the teachers to use on the students. Intentionality in building faculty climate emerged as a major theme from the data.

Finally, building relationships was a key theme that emerged from the data. Not surprisingly, relationships are at the center of the Renaissance philosophy. Participants shared stories of how their mindsets changed as a result of adopting the Renaissance philosophy, and how focusing on making connections with students made them better teachers.

Implementation Barriers

Implementation Barriers I: Buy-in

Though it was expected by the researcher that the lack of teacher buy-in (subcategory 4a) would be identified as a significant barrier to implementation, it was not identified as such. Obtaining buy-in from teachers, students (subcategory 4b), and the community (subcategory 4b) only emerged as a minor theme. Participants did indicate that buy-in from all stakeholders was necessary for success; however, obtaining it did not pose a significant challenge at any of the three schools.

When responding to the interview question, "Describe your perception of the faculty's response to the program," common negative descriptors used were: "skeptical," "naysayers," and "resistant." When asked how he responded to negative faculty attitudes, the SSB principal responded:

> "I wasn't disrespectful to them. I wasn't ugly to them. I didn't talk bad about them. I didn't try to convince them. I just let our actions speak for what we were doing and I think any naysayers we had were like, 'I want to be on that boat. That boat is sailing pretty smooth,' and so it kind of took care of itself."

When asked if he had to do anything special to gain faculty buy-in for the program, the SSA principal responded:

> "I never really had to. I just told them the 'why' and they were like, 'that really makes sense.' Because everything that I did, whenever I came here, I said 'guys, I know you've never been anything but a 'one', and I know you've kind of taken that on the chin, but we can be really, really good."

All of the participants reported a general perception of positive responses to the program by their faculty peers.

Implementation Barriers II: Programs and Events

The most common theme related to implementation barriers were related to programs and events. As with buy-in, challenges with programs and events never posed any significant threat to the ultimate success of Renaissance at the individual study schools. Event planning (subcategory 5a) was discussed as an issue at all three schools. Problems were addressed by "learning from mistakes" and making adjustments to future events or by discontinuing events that were problematic by nature.

Event and program funding did not emerge as themes of implementation barriers so much as fundamental requirements for implementing and maintaining a Jostens Renaissance program. SSA was well funded by community donors. The SSA principal spoke in regards to why the community was so supportive of the program, saying:

> "I'll tell you who likes it more than anybody, and that's our economic development board and realtors, because when businesses are looking to locate, first thing they ask about is the schools, because when people are going to move with their company… What's the first thing whenever you come to a community" How are the schools? So they absolutely lap it up. They love it."

Due to SSB being identified as a target school prior to the implementation of Renaissance, the school qualified for a federal grant. The SSB principal applied for the maximum amount and it was fully awarded for three years. The SSB principal acknowledged that funding would certainly become a challenge in the future. Due to the substantial improvement in performance on state assessments, SSB will not qualify for the grant again.

SSC relies on several sources to fund their Renaissance program. The SSC Renaissance coordinator described how the funding for the program at her school had evolved with the needs of the program, saying:

> "[Our] funding, it has varied over the last 14 years. The first four or five years, part of the picture money. I'm the yearbook advisor, and so when I came here, that principal took that money away, was using it for the school, which I was fine, I had enough money. And uh, when the new principal, when he took over, he was like, what do you need? He goes, I'm taking it, but what do you need for Renaissance and yearbook? So I would tell them what I needed. And when we first started we weren't doing a rally or a people's choice [event]. I didn't need, you know, maybe $1,500, $2,000 a year. And then we did that for a few years. And then our chamber of commerce had a foundation, an education initiative. And so we got like $5 to $6 per student. And so [from] that, I got about $5,000, which is great. [We] started doing the rallies [and] other things. That happened for four or five years and then they ran out of funding. And they're in the process of redoing that organization, but they're really focusing a lot on act. Um, our county gets $2,000 and then I'm just really good at kind of saving money every year because I don't know when that money's gonna stop coming in. And um, the Color Run. So the color run will bring in between 4,000 to 5,400. So it's a great, it's just, it's been really good the last four years."

Implementation Barriers Summary

Implementation barriers were expected by the researcher. Specifically, teacher buy-in was expected to emerge as a significant barrier. However, none of the participants reported any

significant barriers to implementation. Participants were specifically asked about teacher responses to the program and strategies used to gain teacher buy-in. Overwhelmingly, they reported a very small number of negative teacher responses and no need for any significant efforts to win teachers over. The SSB principal relied on the outcomes of the program to convince doubters, telling them "You don't have to like it, you don't have to do it. I don't care, but just don't get in the way."

A minor barrier reported was the planning and execution of programs and events. However, events that did not work were either discontinued or adjusted based on lessons learned. Funding was mentioned several times, but did not emerge as a barrier so much as a necessary concern. SSA was well funded by community businesses. SSB, due to being identified as a target school the year before implementation began, was eligible for a large federal grant which currently funds their program but will not provide ongoing funding in the future. The data indicated that the SSC Renaissance program was the least funded of the three schools. Still, the SSC coordinator reported that they had enough to operate on. One means of funding for the SSC Renaissance program is a color run race they host each year which yields approximately $5,000 for the program.

Outcomes

Outcomes I: Measurable Outcomes

Common themes of measurable outcomes at all schools were higher test scores, higher ACT composite, a decrease in discipline referrals, increased attendance, and increased graduation rate. Both SSA and SSB were performing at extremely low levels of academic success before the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. Participants at SSA and SSB reported significant growth in student performance on state tests as well as improvements in

GPA and ACT composite. Though participants at SSC had not observed notably poor academic performance prior to the implementation of Renaissance, improvement was still perceived. Both SSA and SSC are ranked as bronze medal schools by U.S. News. SSB was recently upgraded to a silver medal school by US News for their performance on state tests. US News ranks schools based on their performance on state required tests and how well they prepare students for college (US News, 2018).

SSA was identified as a level one school in 2013 by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), posted a school ACT composite of 18.2, a daily attendance rate of 92.6, and achieved a graduation rate of 82.8%. The principal additionally indicated a high number of fights and incidents of teacher disrespect. There were 55 student suspensions reported for the 2012-2013 school year. Renaissance implementation began fall of 2013. In 2017, SSA was identified as a level five school by TVASS, posted a school ACT composite of 20.4, a daily attendance rate of 91.3, and achieved a graduation rate of 95.2%. Though the number of reported student suspensions increased to 81 during the 2016-2017 school year, the SSA principal indicated that fights and incidents of teacher disrespect almost never occur. It should be noted that upon his appointment to SSA, the principal implemented a behavior rubric for responding to specific disciplinary issues. By the terms of that rubric, any student conflict that requires teacher or administrative intervention is treated as a fight and results in suspension. Student disrespect of a teacher also receives swift and severe consequences by the terms of the behavior rubric.

SSB failed to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the sixth consecutive year in 2011. Restructuring was required under NCLB and a new principal was hired. The school posted an ACT composite of 17.70, a daily attendance rate of 93.3%, and a graduation rate of

75.3% in 2011. State data reporting for discipline could not be found for the 2010-2011 school year. However, the SSB principal reported in excess of 2000 discipline referrals that year. Jostens Renaissance was implemented fall of 2011 by the new principal. In 2014, SSB was identified by U.S. News as a bronze medal school and upgraded to a silver medal school in 2015. In 2017, SSB posted an ACT composite of 20.2, a daily attendance rate of 94%, and a graduation rate of 93.8. State report card data for SSB reported 545 discipline referrals for the 2016-2017 school year, 57 of those resulting in student suspensions.

In 2006, SSC reported a composite ACT score of 20.4, a daily attendance rate of 94%, and a graduation rate of 89.5%. One-hundred and five student suspensions were reported for the 2006 school year. Implementation of Jostens Renaissance began in the fall of 2005-2006. In 2017, SSC reported a composite ACT score of 21, a daily attendance rate of 95.4%, and a graduation rate of 98%. Forty-one student suspensions were reported for the 2016-2017 school year.

All three study schools observed improvements in the measurable outcomes of academic performance, attendance, graduation rate, and discipline referrals. Most notable to the researcher was the improvement in the graduation rate at all three study schools. SSA posted a 12.4% increase between 2013 and 2017. SSB posted an 18.7% increase between 2011 and 2017. SSC posted an 8.5% increase between 2006 and 2017.

Outcomes II: Climate and Culture Outcomes

The common themes of perceived outcomes in terms of the four domains of school climate research (academic culture, social, safety, and institutional environment) were student work ethic (6a), teacher effectiveness (6a), student attitudes (6b), student behavior (6c), teacher attitudes (6b), and community perception (6b). None of the themes were directly related to

institutional environment (subcategory 6d). Data from participant interviews at all study schools indicate perceived positive outcomes for all of the identified themes. Additionally, the outcomes appear to be related in a cyclical cause and effect relationship. Better student attitudes affect student behavior and student work ethic. Improved student behavior and work ethic affect teacher attitudes. Teacher attitudes affect teacher effectiveness. Improved teacher and student variables affect outcomes that matter to the community. Improved community perception affects community support and involvement which facilitates ongoing support for Renaissance.

Figure 1. Related School Climate Outcomes

The data from participant interviews at each of the study schools support the findings related to perceived outcomes. The SSA Renaissance coordinator stated,

> "We have the PLCs now, so we have the professional learning communities where we're talking about what we're doing in our classes. Prior to renaissance, we weren't talking about what we were doing in our classes. It was you went in your room [and] close your door; you taught your class; you went throughout your day; you left. Um, I think with us talking about it, it's improving what we're doing"

She went on to say, "I'm seeing less of your traditional high school clicks. Football players only hang out with football players and you're smart kids only hang out with each other. No, it's just intertwined. Like, everybody's together". The SSA integrated math teacher said,

> "So yes, the visual of the school has improved. Academics, I think there's a little bit more concern there from the students in that they want to do better at, 'Hey, we're a good school. We're getting good scores. I want to do my part to help keep that up.' So I think that has improved".

The SSA special populations teacher claimed,

> "Our school climate has definitely changed since we started the renaissance program just because of the positive aspects of our behavior, just the presence of the faculty and staff being on board and involved."

The SSB principal stated,

> "I mean, I could tell you story after story after story about kids that have done nice things for other kids. Do we have some, some issues? Yes, but they're fewer and far between than we have. We have a lot more kids doing things for other kids or other people are just treating people the right way in the way we wanted to treat each other."

The SSB information technology teacher said, “I mean our community involvement has jumped up tremendously, I feel, since the school's turnaround.” She later added,

> “I think making school a place where kids want to be has improved drastically because kids want to be here so they feel safe. You know, they have someone at school. You know, we do a survey, ‘do you have someone at school you can talk to that you feel safe with?’ and, you know, that's gone up. You know, it's building those relationships and fostering those relationships, you know, that [our principal] focuses on. You know, the academic success has gone up because, you know, he has held the teachers accountable and by putting the Renaissance program and the Rs in there and saying, ‘this is, this is what we stand for, this is what we're going to do. This is a nonnegotiable.’ He's made all the teachers better teachers.”

The consumer sciences teacher at SSC said,

> “There is more of a comeradery; I guess you would call it. Um, the students getting an award, like at the People's choice award, not because of academic reason. Those kids who never get an award, they are happier even if the award was because ‘I made a teacher smile.’ And so, the kids seem happier; they seem more engaged. It's just a, it's a warmer environment, just a warm, friendly environment.”

In terms of growth in the academic climate at SSC, the same teacher said, “I would think that the kids are trying harder because they know they're going to be loved on and they're cared for.”

Outcomes Summary

There were no unexpected findings in the reported measurable outcomes or perceived outcomes credited to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance by the interview participants. Each school reported academic improvements in the areas of GPA, ACT composite, and state testing. Each school additionally reported improved attendance, fewer discipline referrals, and higher graduation rates. The participants attributed the increased measures to improvements in student attitudes towards school and their education, improved teacher student relationships, and school becoming a place where students wanted to be due to feeling safe, loved, and happy.

Participants at all three schools reported perceived improvements to school climate as well. The improvements were primarily in the academic climate and community domains. Participants reported improvements in student attitudes towards school, student work ethic, student behavior, teacher attitudes, teacher effectiveness, community perception, and community support.

Semantic Differential Survey Findings

The data from the semantic differential survey were organized by domain then broken out into participant responses. Individual participant pre-implementation and post-implementation responses for each domain were averaged and analyzed for change. School pre-implementation and post-implementation averages for each domain were then calculated and analyzed for change. Finally, domain pre-implementation and post-implementation averages were calculated and analyzed for change.

A non-statistical analysis of the data from the semantic differential survey suggested that all participants perceived at least some improvement in all four domains of school climate from

pre-implementation to post-implementation. Pre-implementation data and post-implementation data for each school are presented in figures 2-7.

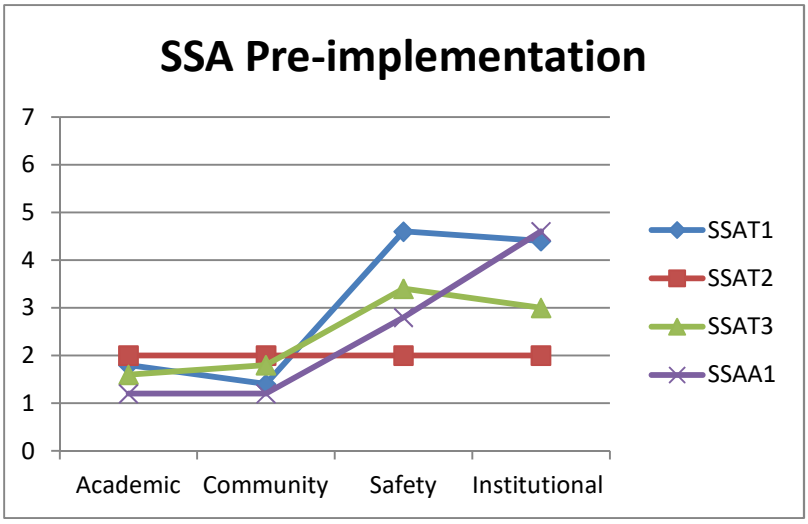

Figure 2. SSA Pre-Implementation

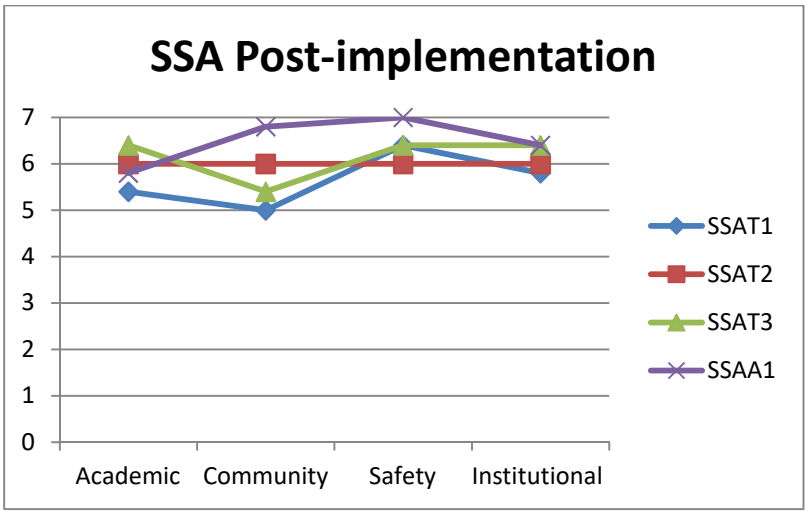

Figure 3. SSA Post-Implementation

SSA participants indicated growth in every domain. However, the greatest change was observed in the academic and community domains. This result is consistent with the interview data. Participants expressed a general perception of need for change prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance, describing extremely low academic standards and negative community

factors. Participants described marked improvement in both of these domains after the implementation of Renaissance.

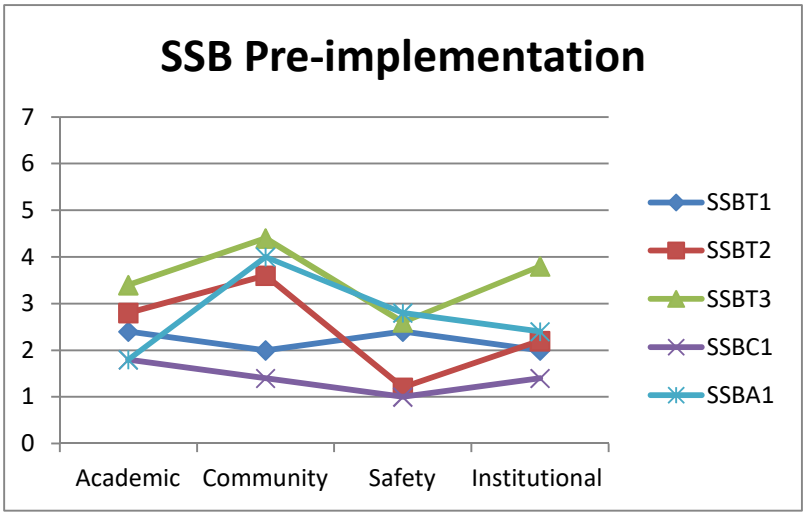

Figure 4. SSB Pre-Implementation

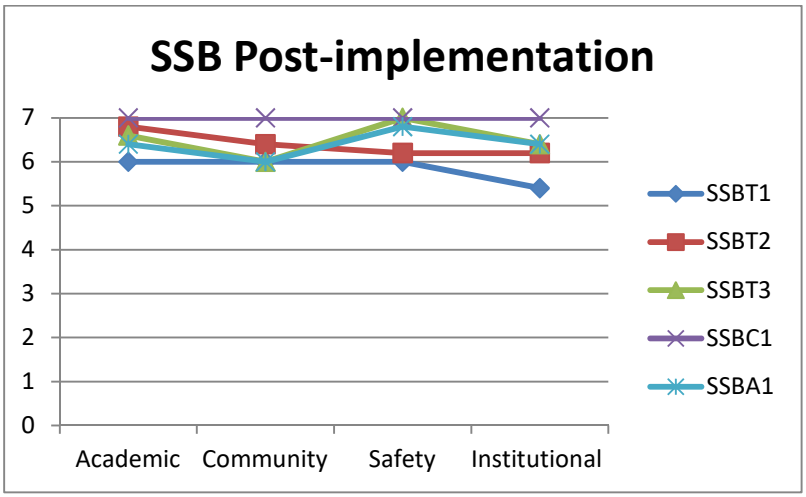

Figure 5. SSB Post-Implementation

SSB participants exhibited a small amount of disparity regarding pre-implementation conditions. However, the post implementation responses were more aligned with one another. SSB showed growth in every domain with perceptions of safety appearing to improve the most. Interestingly, none of the interview responses from SSB indicated negative safety perceptions

prior to implementation. Here again, the growth indicated by the survey responses is consistent with the finding that need for change is a key factor for implementation.

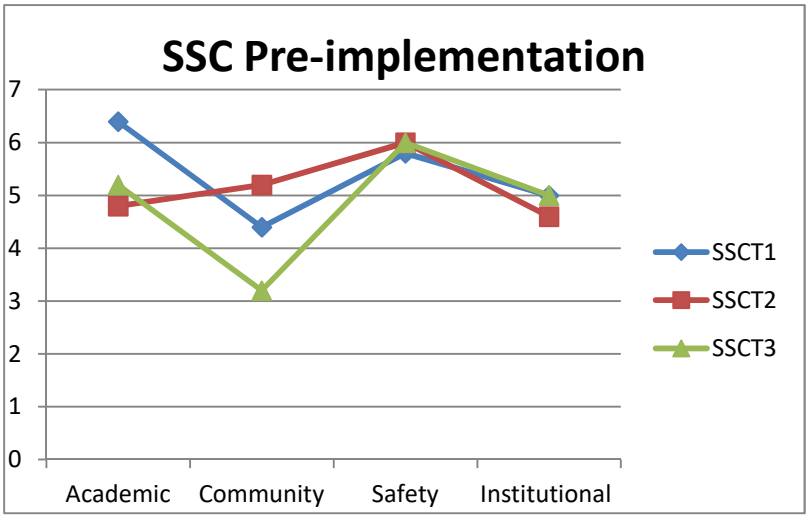

Figure 6. SSC Pre-Implementation

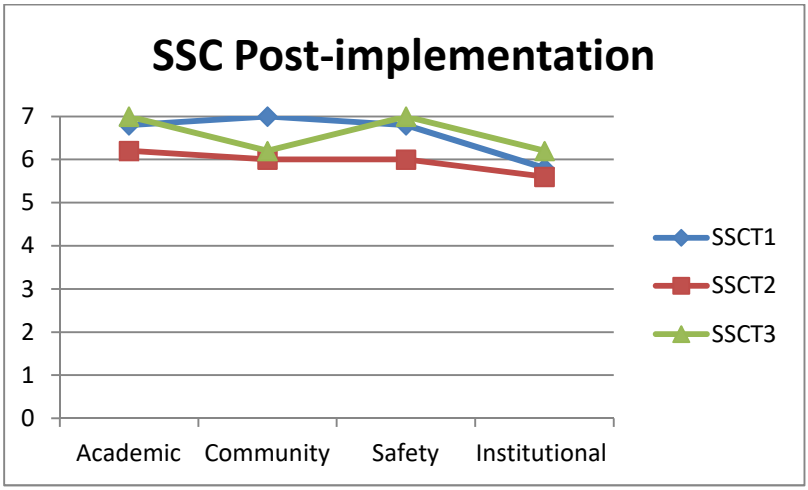

Figure 7. SSC Post-Implementation

SSC survey responses indicated some improvement in all domains, with community climate showing the greatest amount of change. This is consistent with the interview participant perception that conditions at SSC were acceptable prior to the implementation of Renaissance. The SSC pre-implementation responses for every domain were higher than the other two schools.

Semantic Differential Summary

Participants at SSB appear to have experienced the most overall improvement, while SSC participants experienced the least amount of improvement. SSA and SSB participants perceived the most growth in the academic climate domain, while SSC participants perceived the most growth in the community domain. Consistent with the data from the interview responses, the participants at all three schools indicated the greatest amount of growth in the domains of academic climate and community by their survey responses. Additionally, the survey results support a key theme from the analysis that need for change is a strong factor in facilitating implementation.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This multiple case study was conducted to identify what factors and strategies facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance at three southeastern high schools. Common facilitating factors that emerged from the interview data include: need for change, supportive administration, dedicated faculty coordinator, student leadership and participation, faculty buy-in and participation, intentionality in building teacher climate, and building relationships. A secondary aim of the study was to identify common challenges to implementation and how the challenges were addressed. None of the participants identified any significant challenges to implementation.

SSA and SSB participants described extremely poor conditions prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance and indicated that most of their colleagues were ready for the changes that Renaissance offered. SSC participants did not describe such poor conditions but still indicated a perception that change was needed. Finally, in order to validate the outcomes of Renaissance claimed by Jostens and supported by research, participants were asked to identify measurable and perceived outcomes that they perceived were results of their Renaissance programs. The participants at all three schools indicated improvements in the measurable variables of academic achievement, attendance, discipline, and graduation rate as well as the perceived climate domains of academic, social, safety, and institutional environment.

Three secondary schools were used in this multiple case study. Jostens Renaissance was the common initiative among the three study schools. The schools used were similar in all demographic areas, which provided an added element of intrigue when looking at the data. Data

were collected by semi-structured interviews and semantic differential surveys. Interviews were conducted with the principal of SSA and SSB. The principal and assistant principal at SSC were unavailable due to last minute schedule conflicts. Three teachers were interviewed at all three study schools. At SSA and SSB, one of the three teachers interviewed also served as their school's Renaissance coordinator. The school social worker was additionally interviewed at SSB who served as her school's Renaissance coordinator. Semantic differential surveys were given to each survey participant. Qualitative data for this study were coded, organized into categories, and analyzed for common themes by the researcher.

Implications for Future Practice

The results of this research study indicate that the implementation of a high school Jostens Renaissance program has a great deal to do with a perceived need for change. That isn't to say that schools where conditions are currently perceived as acceptable could not implement a Renaissance program. Administrative support is a necessity, but perhaps more important is the existence of a dedicated faculty coordinator who provides consistent persistent leadership for the program. In this study, persistence proved to be more of a change agent than a well thought out plan of implementation. Success can be attained by an *all in* approach as easily as it can be attained by a more gradual approach providing there is constant movement forward. Faculty buy-in and participation have been well established by research as important to the success of any educational change initiative (Duke, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Greenberg & Barron, 2000; Piderit, 2000; Singer, 2005). This phenomenon could not be tested by the current study due to faculty buy-in and participation not presenting a significant challenge to the implementation of Renaissance at any of the three schools studied. Student buy-in and participation are essential. Though not required for implementation, handing over control and responsibility to the student

leaders may contribute to the longevity of a program in the event of coordinator turnover as well as positively affect the student climate of the school.

The results of this study indicate that, beyond the implementation of a school initiative, affecting positive change in school climate requires an intentional change in the mindset of administrators and teachers. When administrators treat teachers with respect, provide consistent support, and recognize and reward their efforts and accomplishments, teacher attitudes improve. When students are treated with respect, cared for, recognized and rewarded for achievements of every kind, their attitudes about school and learning improve. Organizing these strategies into a program and calling it Renaissance is not required.

These results have potentially important implications not only for educators who wish to implement Jostens Renaissance in their schools but for educational reform in our nation. Though all three schools in this study achieved growth in the qualitative variables our society tends to measure a schools value by, the growth occurred in parallel to the intentional improvements being made to school climate. Districts and schools wishing to affect positive change in achievement are advised to first evaluate and address their school climate as an integral part of any educational reform initiative.

Research Question 1

The first research question for this study asked: *What change factors and strategies facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?*

The primary factors and strategies which facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance at the three study schools were: need for change, leadership (principal, teacher, and student), attending Jostens Renaissance National Conference, and building teacher climate.

Though other commonalities were identified, these four themes were most prevalent throughout the data.

Need

Need for change appeared to be the most significant implementation facilitator for the schools in this study. Need is, coincidentally, the first factor of Fullen's (2007) nine critical factors which affect the implementation of education policy. The faculty and administration at SSA and SSB repeatedly made reference to the poor conditions of their school climate prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance. Need for change was credited above all other factors for the lack of teacher resistance for the new program. Though SSC participants did not indicate a level of need comparable to SSA and SSB, a desire for changes in the criteria and process for student recognition was identified.

Leadership

Principal. As with any educational initiative, leadership is a key factor to success. It may be assumed that the required leadership must originate from the top. However, that was not the case in this study. SSA and SSB both have strong principal leadership. Both principals were directly involved with the decision to implement Renaissance in their schools and were active in the programs at their schools. SSC did not share the same level of top level leadership involvement. The principal at SSC strongly supported the Jostens Renaissance program at her school, but implementation and primary leadership for the direction of the program was provided by the school's Renaissance coordinator. Nonetheless, the outcomes were similar at all three schools, successful implementation of high school Jostens Renaissance programs. Each school followed a similar implementation process: introduction to teachers at a faculty meeting,

identified by administration as a non-negotiable and given support introduction to students by way of a Renaissance style event such as a rally, and given consistent persistent attention by a dedicated faculty coordinator.

Teacher. Removing top level leadership as the key leadership variable shifted focus to the importance of the dedicated Renaissance coordinator. Each study school had a Renaissance coordinator who provided consistent persistent leadership and guidance for the programs at their respective schools. It was indicated by the teacher participants that principal schedules and daily time requirements are too unpredictable. Therefore, it is not advisable for principals to assign themselves as Renaissance coordinators.

Student. Student leadership and autonomy facilitates student buy-in and participation. The level of student buy-in may correspond to the amount of autonomy students are given over their Renaissance programs. At the lowest level of student autonomy, student leaders are given voice in the planning process and expected to assist in the execution of programs and events. At the highest level of student autonomy, students are only guided by their school Renaissance coordinator. The planning and execution of programs and events are completely left up to the student leaders. As the principal of SSB stated, "Students own their successes and their failures. We just support them."

Jostens Renaissance National Convention

Attending the Jostens Renaissance National Convention (JRNC) was repeatedly identified as a critical piece of the implementation puzzle. Interview participants indicated that attending JRNC was inspiring and opened their eyes to a different possibility of what school could look and feel like. Attending JRNC was credited with generating buy-in from

administrators, teachers, and students. JRNC is also where all three schools collected ideas for new programs and events. As a matter of process, all three schools sent faculty to JRNC first. This facilitated teacher buy-in and excitement. The next step was to send students as well. The participants from all three study schools reported sending as many faculty and students as possible each summer.

Building Faculty Climate

Being intentional about building faculty climate has two positive outcomes. First, interview participants reported feeling respected, supported, and valued. They described the faculty at their schools as a family and a team. They enjoyed working there which they believed made them more effective teachers. Second, by employing Renaissance strategies on teachers, school administrators are demonstrating how they expect teachers to treat their students.

Research Question 2

The second research question for this study was: What obstacles were encountered during implementation of Jostens Renaissance and how were they addressed?

None of the schools in this study encountered any significant obstacles to implementation. Faculty buy-in was identified as an important factor required for implementation. However, obtaining it did not pose a challenge. Problems with programs and events were identified as a general challenge at each school but not an obstacle to implementation. Problems with programs and events were addressed either by making adjustments to future programs and events based on lessons learned or by discontinuing the problematic program or event.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked: *What measurable outcomes were observed after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?*

The measurable outcomes reported by the interview participants at all three study schools were consistent with the findings found in the existing body of research on Jostens Renaissance. Participants reported measurable growth in the areas of academic achievement (state tests, GPA, ACT), attendance, discipline referrals, and graduation rate.

All three schools are nationally ranked by U.S. News for exceeding expectations on state assessments, minority subgroup performance above the state average, graduation rate, and college readiness (usnews.com, 2018). SSA and SSB report complete turnarounds in academic performance. Here again, SSC differed from the other two study schools. SSC was not categorized as struggling, but still reported academic gains after implementing Jostens Renaissance.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked: *How did the academic, social, and organizational climate of the school change after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?*

The perceived climate outcomes reported by the participants at all three study schools included improved student attitudes towards school and learning, improved teacher attitudes, improved student behavior, healthier teacher-student relationships, an overall improved sense of community within the school, and improved community perception. Due to the lack of qualitative studies in the body of research on Jostens Renaissance, these reported climate outcomes cannot be compared to any scientific findings. However, the reported outcomes from

this study are consistent with the existing research regarding the outcomes of school climate discussed in chapter 2.

Limitations

While this research study was highly informative, there are certain limitations that must be discussed. To begin with, this multiple case study involved three southeastern secondary schools of similar demographics. Due to the similarity of participant schools involved in this study, the results cannot be generalized to every school wishing to implement Jostens Renaissance.

Another limitation of this study is inconsistency of interview type between schools. SSA and SSC were unable to provide school counselors who met the participant requirement of being employed at the school before, during, and after implementation. Though the school counselor interview protocol was used at SSB, it was with the school social worker, not a school counselor. Additionally, an administrator was not interviewed. This inconsistency is a limitation in that there may have been pertinent data that was not collected and analyzed due to the absent interviews.

Finally, data was collected at each study school over the course of one day. More time at each school would have allowed the researcher to collect more pertinent data and become more immersed in the culture of each school.

Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the number of Renaissance schools nation-wide and the innate uniqueness of each school, this topic warrants further research. The recommendations for future research are based on the limitations as well as emerging themes of this study.

Future Research Recommendation 1

- Conduct a study that focuses on schools of contrasting urban-rural classifications and associated demographics.

One recommendation for future research is to replicate this study but include schools of contrasting urban-rural classifications and associated demographics. Because the identified variables may present unique challenges which may affect the outcomes associated with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance, such a study may add to the collection of implementation strategies which can be generalized to all schools.

Future Research Recommendation 2

- Conduct a study on the outcomes of student autonomy on school climate.

Based on the emergence of student autonomy as a theme related to but independent of student leadership and participation in this study, a study focused on the outcomes of allowing students to exercise autonomous leadership and decision making in schools is recommended.

Future Research Recommendation 3

- Conduct an ethnographic study of a Renaissance school identified as exemplary by Jostens.

A final recommendation for future study is to conduct an ethnographic study of an school with an exemplary Renaissance program. Such a study would allow a researcher to become intimately familiar with the administration, faculty, and students of a school, gaining a true understanding of how Renaissance has impacted the school climate and culture. An ethnographic study would allow the researcher to get a feeling for the community and external influences of school climate and culture as well.

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

According to Fullan (2017), Change is a dynamic process which involves interacting factors over time. The purpose of this study was to identify any such factors that may have facilitated change in the process of implementing high school Jostens Renaissance programs. Ultimately, four change factors were identified: need, leadership, teacher climate, and Jostens Renaissance National Conference (JRNC).

The perception of need for change is powerful. The reported pre-implementation conditions and apparent ease of implementation that was experienced by all three schools places need for change at the top of critical factors for implementation. This is not to say that a school where conditions are considered acceptable cannot implement Jostens Renaissance. SSC participants did not indicate a strong need for change, yet implementation was achieved. Where a seamless implementation was perceived to be the result of a great need for change at SSA and SSB, SSC participants credited their similar implementation experience to the consistent persistent attention and effort of their school Renaissance coordinator.

As expected, leadership is also critical. An unexpected discovery of this study was that the most important leadership does not come from the school principal. Administrative support is a requirement, but primarily serves as a foundation for teacher leadership. Due to the unpredictable nature of a school administrator's position, a principal is unable to provide the consistent persistent attention required to move a Renaissance program forward. It is unlikely that any of the schools in this study would have achieved the same level of success in the absence of their dedicated faculty Renaissance coordinators.

Including student leaders in the planning and execution of Renaissance programs and events is critical to gaining student buy-in. A theme that emerged from the interview data and

interested the researcher was the level of student autonomy allowed at each of the study schools. It is suspected by the researcher that trusting student leaders with the planning and execution of programs and events may be crucial to the longevity of a high school Renaissance program. In the absence of student ownership and responsibility, the majority of the work falls on the school Renaissance coordinator which may be a difficult position to fill in the event of a staffing turnover. Beyond the benefit of facilitating a potential change of coordinator, student ownership affects the mindset of the student leaders. Where student autonomy is allowed, student leaders understand that failure is a possibility but not in terms of a grade. At SSA and SSB, a student leader not doing their job can result in a program or event not happening. The result is student leadership positions that are more than titles that look good on a college application. The student council becomes a legitimate leadership body with real responsibilities that matter to the success of programs and events the students care about.

It is important to remember who will actually be implementing the changes that affect the ultimate success of any educational initiative, the teachers. Being intentional about treating teachers with respect as well as recognizing and rewarding them for their hard work and accomplishments only seems logical, but it is critical to the implementation and maintenance of a Renaissance program. Teachers need to experience firsthand how Renaissance feels. Their experiences will have a direct impact on how well they employee Renaissance strategies in the classroom.

Jostens Renaissance National Conference (JRNC) is held each July. At the conference sessions are presented by student leadership groups, program coordinators, administrators, and Jostens ambassadors. Attendees have the opportunity to learn about the programs, events, and strategies being used at other schools. Additionally, Jostens schedules several key note speakers

who reinforce the principles of Renaissance with their stories and expertise. Finally, Jostens produces a high energy rally with giant team competitions intertwined with humorous skits. Attending the Jostens Renaissance National Conference is not required for learning about the program or for making a decision to implement Renaissance. JRNC is a powerful experience where educators and students get inspired and become motivated to make their schools a better place. Many of the interview participants referred to JRNC as the primary means of educating teachers about Renaissance as well as facilitating teacher buy-in for the initiative in their school.

It should be acknowledged that identifying as a Jostens Renaissance school is not required to implement the strategies that the schools in this study have used to achieve their reported outcomes of success. Only the student leaders are aware of what Renaissance is at SSB. The majority of students at SSB only know of student council. The SSB principal explains the practice by saying, "Renaissance is just what we do. It's how we choose to operate. It doesn't need a title." Therefore, whether a school's leaders choose to implement Jostens Renaissance, another school climate improvement program, or simply desire to make improvements to their school's climate and culture, positive change can be affected by placing a priority on relationships, creating opportunities for school to be a fun place for everyone, and recognizing and rewarding student and teacher achievements of every kind.

Ultimately, Renaissance is a mindset which serves as an effective vehicle for affecting positive change in school climate and culture. The value of Renaissance as a Jostens product is the collaborative community of educators the company has cultivated coupled with the free support provided by Jostens school representatives. Educators looking to affect a positive change in the climate and culture of a school are highly encouraged to investigate and consider implementing Jostens Renaissance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Administrator Interview Protocol

AQ1. Describe the climate and culture of your school prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance.

AQ2. What factors led administration to a decision to implement Renaissance?

AQ3. Describe how change is approached in your school.

AQ4. Describe how administration introduced Renaissance to the school faculty. What was your perception of their response?

AQ5. How long after introducing Jostens Renaissance did implementation begin?

AQ6. Describe the implementation plan that was used. Were any changes made after beginning?

AQ7. Describe any implementation challenges administration expected.

AQ8. Describe any unexpected challenges that were encountered.

AQ9. How did administration address the challenges to implementation?

AQ10. What strategies did administration use to gain faculty support for the program?

AQ11. How long after implementation began was it before you perceived your school's Renaissance program as being successful?

AQ12. What indicators were used to assess the success of the implementation?

AQ13. Describe how the implementation process affected you as an administrator.

AQ14. Describe the strategies administration used to facilitate ongoing support for and growth of the program.

AQ15. Describe any measurable changes in attendance, grades, behavior, and graduation rate you have observed since the implementation of Renaissance?

AQ16. Describe any changes you have observed in terms of school climate since the implementation of Renaissance. (Academic, Community, Safety, Institutional Environment)

AQ17. Describe any part of the implementation you would do differently if given the opportunity.

APPENDIX B

Teacher Interview Protocol

TQ1. Describe the climate and culture of the school prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance.

TQ 2. How was Renaissance introduced to the faculty at the school?

TQ 3. Describe your initial thoughts about the Renaissance program.

TQ 4. Describe your perception of the faculty's response to the program.

TQ 5. How was Renaissance introduced to the students?

TQ 6. Describe your perception of the students' response to the program.

TQ 7. Describe any role you played in the implementation of Renaissance.

TQ 8. Describe any training or other preparation that was provided to teachers to facilitate implementation?

TQ 9. Describe the implementation plan.

TQ10. How long after implementation began was it before you perceived your school's Renaissance program as being successful? What did you observe that led to that perception?

TQ11. Describe any administrative efforts which facilitated gaining teacher support for the implementation?

TQ 12. Describe any other events or actions which facilitated the implementation or Renaissance.

TQ 13. How did the implementation process affect you as a teacher?

TQ 14. Describe any challenges encountered during implementation. How were the challenges addressed?

TQ 15. Describe any measurable changes in attendance, grades, behavior, and graduation rate you have observed since the implementation of Renaissance?

TQ16. Describe any changes you have observed in terms of school climate since the implementation of Renaissance. (Academic, Community, Safety, Institutional Environment)

TQ17. Describe any part of the process you would think should have been differently.

APPENDIX C

Counselor Interview Protocol

CQ1. Describe the climate and culture of the school prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance.

CQ2. How was Renaissance introduced to the faculty at the school?

CQ3. Describe your initial thoughts about the Renaissance program.

CQ4. Describe your perception of the faculty's response to the program.

CQ5. How was Renaissance introduced to the students?

CQ6. Describe your perception of the students' response to the program.

CQ7. Describe any role you played in the implementation of Renaissance.

CQ8. Describe how the implementation process affected you as a school counselor.

CQ9. Describe any unique characteristics of the school or the school schedule that may have facilitated the implementation of Renaissance.

CQ10. Describe any student changes you have observed since implementation of Renaissance that may be specific to your role as a school counselor.

APPENDIX D

Semantic Differential Survey

Instructions: Using the ranges given below, assess the quality of each school climate domain as you perceived it before implementation, then after implementation. (ex. _____:_____:__X__:_____:_____)

Academic climate: leadership, teaching and learning, and professional development

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BAD
WEAK	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	STRONG
EQUITABLE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BIASED
UNPRODUCTIVE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	PRODUCTIVE
ENGAGING	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	APATHETIC

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BAD
WEAK	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	STRONG
EQUITABLE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BIASED
UNPRODUCTIVE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	PRODUCTIVE
ENGAGING	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	APATHETIC

Community: quality of interpersonal relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, and community partnerships

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BAD
STRONG	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	WEAK
INSIGNIFICANT	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	MEANINGFUL
CONNECTED	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	DISCONNECTED
INCLUSIVE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	EXCLUSIVE

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	BAD
STRONG	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	WEAK
INSIGNIFICANT	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	MEANINGFUL
CONNECTED	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	DISCONNECTED
INCLUSIVE	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	EXCLUSIVE

Safety: physical safety, emotional safety, and order and discipline

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BAD
VULNERABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	SAFE
CONSIDERATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INCONSIDERATE
DISORDERLY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ORDERLY
EQUITABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BIASED

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BAD
VULNERABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	SAFE
CONSIDERATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INCONSIDERATE
DISORDERLY	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ORDERLY
EQUITABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BIASED

Institutional Environment: adequacy of the school setting, the maintenance and infrastructure of the building, and the accessibility and allocation of educational resources

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BAD
ADEQUATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INADEQUATE
NEGLECTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	MAINTAINED
COMFORTABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNINVITING
RESTRICTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ACESSIBLE

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

GOOD	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	BAD
ADEQUATE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	INADEQUATE
NEGLECTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	MAINTAINED
COMFORTABLE	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	UNINVITING
RESTRICTED	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	ACESSIBLE

APPENDIX E

Research Blueprint

Title: The Change Process and the Implementation of High School Jostens Renaissance Programs: A Multiple Case Study			
Purpose Statement: The purpose of this multiple case study was to identified factors which facilitated change in the process of implementing Jostens Renaissance programs at three southeastern high schools. At this stage in the research, the participants' perceptions regarding their experiences with the implementation of Jostens Renaissance will be broadly organized in the following categorical framework: change factors, Implementation barriers, and outcomes.			
Research Questions	Data Source(s) & Coding Schemata	Type(s) of Data	Analysis
1) What change strategies facilitated the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?	TQ2, TQ5, TQ7, TQ8, TQ9, TQ10, TQ11, TQ12, TQ15, TQ17, AQ2, AQ3, AQ4, AQ5, AQ6, AQ9, AQ10, AQ14, AQ17, CQ2,CQ5, CQ7, CQ9,	Interview Transcriptions (Teacher, Administrator, Counselor)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding
2) What obstacles were encountered during implementation of Jostens Renaissance and how were they addressed?	TQ3, TQ4, TQ13, TQ14, TQ15, TQ17, AQ4, AQ7, AQ8, AQ9, AQ10, AQ13, AQ14, AQ17, CQ3, CQ4, CQ6, CQ8,	Interview Transcriptions (Teacher, Administrator, Counselor)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding
3) What measurable outcomes were observed after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?	TQ1, TQ10, TQ13, TQ15, AQ1, AQ11, AQ12, AQ13, AQ15, CQ1, CQ10	Interview Transcriptions (Teacher, Administrator, Counselor)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding
4) How did the academic, social, and organizational climate of the school change after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance?	TQ1, TQ10. TQ13, TQ16, AQ1, AQ11, AQ12, AQ13, AQ16, CQ1, CQ8, CQ10	Interview Transcriptions (Teacher, Administrator, Counselor)	1st, 2nd, 3rd, Round Coding, Thematic Analysis, Axial Coding, Cross Comparative Coding

APPENDIX F

Themes and Descriptive Support for Themes

Themes	Support and Explanation of Themes
Need for Change	Participants expressed perceptions of either toxic, isolated, apathetic, or stagnant school climates prior to the implementation of Jostens Renaissance, and indicated at least an amount of readiness for change, which they believed facilitated implementation
Dedicated faculty coordinator	All three schools have dedicated faculty coordinators in charge of their Renaissance programs. Having one primary source for Renaissance information provided clarity for the changes to be implemented.
Persistent/consistent Leadership	The dedicated faculty coordinators at each school made Renaissance a part of their daily routine, giving their programs the ongoing attention needed to keep them moving forward.
Supportive administration	Participants indicated administrative support is a key factor to success. Though many administrators are highly involved, the level of administrator participation does not appear to be a deciding factor to the success of the program.
Student leadership and participation	Student leadership and participation was a common factor at all three schools. Two of the schools additionally practiced a high level of student autonomy over the various events and programs that took place under the Renaissance umbrella.
Faculty buy-in and participation	None of the participants indicated that obtaining faculty buy-in was a great challenge. Though temporary skepticism by colleagues was a common theme, participants indicated strong faculty support for their programs as well as high levels of participation
Intentionality in building teacher climate	Though faculty negativity was low, employing the three Rs of Renaissance (Respect, Recognize, and Reward) on the teachers helped build teacher climate which in turn demonstrated to the teachers how to treat the students.
Building Relationships	Building quality teacher-student relationships was identified by participants as a key factor to affecting positive changes in school climate. Being intentional about every student in the school having a meaningful connection with a teacher was perceived as having an impact on daily student attendance, student achievement, and graduation potential.
Programs and Events	Problems with programs and events were the only reoccurring potential implementation barriers. The problems experienced either led to adjustments being made to the problematic event in the future or discontinuing the event all together.
Academic Achievement	All three study schools observed growth in academic achievement measures after implementing Jostens Renaissance.
Attendance	All three study schools observed at least a small improvement in daily student attendance after implementing Jostens Renaissance.

Discipline Referrals	All three study schools observed a decrease in discipline referrals after implementing Jostens Renaissance.
Graduation Rate	Graduation rate was the most notable improvement at all three study schools after implementing Jostens Renaissance. SSA saw an increase of 12.4 %. SSB saw an increase of 18.7%, and SSC saw an increase of 8.5%.
Student Attitudes	Participants reported students having an improved attitude towards school and being more engaged.
Student Behavior and Work Ethic	Participants reported student behavior improving and students taking more responsibility for their own success.
Teacher Attitudes	Teacher participants reported being happier in their jobs after the implementation of Jostens Renaissance.
Teacher Effectiveness	Teacher participants reported being more effective in the classroom as a result of their own job satisfaction and making more meaningful connections with their students.
Community	According to the interview participants, community leaders perceived that the schools' Jostens Renaissance programs added immense value to their community resulting in community support for Renaissance.

VITA

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