The Relationship of School Leader Values and Practices to Participation of Black and

Latinx Students in Advanced Placement Courses

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A Capstone Project

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Executive Summary

Black and Latinx students in the United States are significantly underrepresented in Advanced Placement (AP) courses (Aud et al., 2010; College Board, 2008, 2018b). Historically, each group has experienced racial disproportionality between its participation in AP courses in comparison to its overall 9th – 12th grade U.S. population. Segregation and re-segregation, both forms of systemic racism, have resulted in the limitation of academic pathways and opportunities for these students. The long-term negative effects for Black and Latinx students, their families, and their communities are significant, including limited post-secondary opportunities and a reduction of long-term earning potential. Perhaps more significant is the devastating personal impact on students of color who feel "less than" their Asian and White peers (Lipps et al., 2010; Slavin, 1990). Economically speaking, both the U.S. and global economies will continue to be adversely impacted if Black and Latinx communities, the two fastest growing demographics in the United States, are under-educated or denied opportunities for advancement.

The literature presented significant evidence on the influence that school-based leaders exerted on schools and student academic achievement. While these impacts tended to be indirect, they nonetheless influenced the elements that directly affected student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Several noteworthy leadership frameworks emphasized both values and practices which demonstrate the greatest impact on schools and student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006). From these frameworks emerged

many common practices including visioning and setting directions/directions setting, cultivation of people, organizational structure, and instructional focus. Similarly, the culturally responsive school leadership framework of Khalifa et al. (2016) provided values, practices, behaviors that support leaders' responses to minority student needs.

The literature additionally offered eight promising school-based leader practices that have increased Black and Latinx enrollment in AP courses (Childress et al., 2009; Corra & Lovaglia, 2012; Daher, 2018; Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015; Theokas & Saaris, 2013; Wood, 2012). These majority of the practices focused on leaders' values such as a strength-based mindset which compels leaders to identify and remove barriers to AP classes for minority students and provide supports and scaffolding for AP teachers and first-time AP students and their families. Research also indicated that leader risk-taking was necessary as privileged students and their families are often resistant to this work (Kelly & Price, 2011; Kyburg et al., 2007; Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016).

Against this backdrop, the study identified the values and practices of one school-based leadership team who had increased minority participation in AP courses over a 24 year period. Using semi-structured interviews, AP enrollment data, and applicable artifacts, the resulting data were viewed through two selected elements from Leithwood et al. (2020), setting directions and organizational development, and the critical self-reflection strand from culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016).

The resulting analyses informed several key findings, recommendations, and action communication products that may provide insight into increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment. Findings included:

1. School-based leaders' belief in students' academic abilities and their related belief that their leadership could produce meaningful change emerged as key values.

2. The leadership practices of risk-taking, particularly around addressing race, data utilization, supports provision, and connection-making with the larger school community proved significant.

3. The organizational structures set up by school leaders provided the foundation for the long-term work of increasing AP enrollment for students of color: creating a sustainable school vision, providing organizational stability, distributing leadership and resources, and engaging in regular critical self-reflection and evaluation of the work.

Based on these themes, I proposed five recommendations, the first three for the study site and the last two for school leaders in general.

1. Record a history of the work.

2. Critically self-reflect and re-evaluate current work.

3. Engage in greater depth the families of Black and Latinx students

4. Learn from the study site while considering own context.

5. Create and consider support for and continuity in the principalship.

Keywords: school-based leadership, values, setting directions/directions setting, organizational development, culturally responsive school leadership, social justice, equity, Advanced Placement (AP), Black/African-American, Latino/a/x, minority, values, leadership practices, increase, enrollment

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APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

This capstone project, "The Relationship of School Leader Values and Practices to
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Dedication

I dedicate this work most of all to Terry Rudolph: How does any of my life work without you? You kept the home fires burning while I had my head in a book or over the computer these past four years. You have supported my wildest dreams and passionate fervor for equity for all my students. You are the perfect partner for me, a valiant co-fighter in the war on privilege and discrimination, and the promotion of love over fear. I waited a long time for you; you were well worth the wait.

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Additionally, I take this opportunity to dedicate this research to my brilliant father and brother, Morris and Michael Knupp. Together, we have loved Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit, and *The Far Side*. We believe that it is better to know something than not to know it.

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Lastly, to my Aunt Carol: I dedicate this to you because you have kept my life going forward in so many ways. Your unwavering belief in me and my work inspires me to keep going.

I am here because of you all; this is your work as well as mine.

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Finally, to all my students of color over my 23 years in education—you have taught me than I could ever have taught you with your resilience in the face of unrelenting systemic racism. May we see its elimination in all ways sooner than later.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A new assistant principal fresh out of her graduate studies hurries through the halls of her new high school ready to conduct classroom walkthroughs. Located in a suburban town outside a large city, this school has a reputation for rigorous courses, high tests scores, and a 94% graduation rate. She is pleased to have landed her first job as an administrator in one of the best high schools in the state and looks forward to learning more about the excellent instruction that this school delivers to its students.

However, it soon becomes evident that her new school might not be providing an exceptional education to all its students. As she conducts classroom walk-throughs, she observes the majority of Black and Latinx students in standard classes where instructional rigor appears poor, expectations are low, and classroom energy is non-existent. In contrast, she discovers that the school's many Advanced Placement (AP) classes are filled with White and Asian students almost exclusively. It is also notable that these classes seem innovative, have high expectations for their students, and are active places of learning. She faces a sobering reality: This high school, touted as one of the very best in the state, appears to be outstanding only for some of its students, leaving out a vast majority of students of color. She wonders how she can be an agent of change to address this racial disproportionality in her high school's AP courses.

In a different part of the same town, another new school administrator also walks through her high school's classrooms. Unlike her above-mentioned colleague, this new assistant principal observes vibrant classrooms across the building where a diverse

mixture of students is energetically engaged in its upper-level courses. Most

encouragingly, she notices the inclusion of large cohorts of Black and Latinx students

within each AP course. In fact, in her subsequent disaggregation of this school district's

data, she notices that her high school has a much higher percentage of Black and Latinx

students taking AP classes in comparison to its crosstown rival. When she asks the

members of her school administration team how this was accomplished, they explain that

increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students—both significant minority

populations in the school district—has been a major goal within their comprehensive

equity and school improvement plans. As a new school leader, she looks forward to

discovering the specific actions that led this team of school-based leaders to accomplish

what very few racially diverse, suburban high schools are able to do—creating an

increase in the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students and decreasing the egregious

racial disproportionality in these courses that plague most of the schools in the country.

Problem of Practice

In 2018, 20,461 of the estimated 25,000 high schools in the U.S. offered at least

one AP course, with 2,727,480 students taking just under five million exams (College

Board, 2018a). Unfortunately, the racial demographics of these same students mirrored

that of the first high school in the vignette above. As summarized in Table 1, when

compared to the 2018 overall percentage of high school students, students of color were

underrepresented in those taking AP exams. While Asian students accounted for 5.82%

of the U.S. high school population, they constituted 15.20% of AP exams taken, whereas

White students, 49.41% of the U.S. high population, were proportionately enrolled at

49.63% of AP test takers (College Board, 2018a; National Center for Education Statistics

[NCES], 2018). Conversely, Black students, who comprised 14.93% of U.S. high school students, accounted for only 8.66% of AP tests taken. Similarly, Latinx students representing 37% of high school students fared better but were underrepresented at 22.19% of test takers (College Board, 2018a; NCES, 2018).

Table 1

2018 Comparison by Racial Subgroup of AP Tests Taken Versus High School Population

2018	Percentage of AP Exams Taken	Percentage of U.S. High School Student Population	Disproportionality in AP Enrollment vs. U.S. High School Student Population
Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines origin)	15.20	5.82	+9.38
Black or African American	6.27	14.93	-8.66
Hispanic or Latino (including Spanish origin)	22.19	26.37	-4.18
White (including Middle Eastern origin)	49.63	49.41	+.22

These comparisons are not confined to 2018 data. Historically, the College Board's own records revealed decades-long racial disproportionality in its AP enrollments—a reality that it has admitted and proactively sought to address. Beginning in the late 1990s and continuing through the present day, the College Board has created proactive initiatives and partnerships in order to address these disparities (College Board, 2002). Examples include the AP Access and Equity Initiatives (College Board, 2002), the EXCELerator program for school districts (College Board, 2012b), and the "AP Potential" reports that identify promising students for AP classes based on their PSAT

scores (College Board, 2012a). Additionally, the College Board has partnered with California, Florida, and New York in order to increase AP enrollment for underrepresented groups (College Board, n.d.; College Board, 2017; Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016). These initiatives, along with the expansion and push for U.S. students to be "college and career ready" (U.S. Department of Education, 2019), have resulted in the College Board experiencing significant growth in its overall student enrollment in AP courses. While 13,680 schools administered 1,414,378 AP exams to 844,741 students in 2000, these numbers had soared to 22,612 schools in 2018, administering 5,090,324 exams to 2,808,990 students (College Board, 2018a).

These dramatic increases in AP participation have occurred across all racial groups. As illustrated in Table 2, the overall AP participation of Black students rose 88.30% from 2008 to 2018, while Latinx student participation rose 204.57% in the same time period (College Board, 2008; College Board, 2018b). At the same time, White participation grew 49.70% while Asian participation rose 95.44% (College Board, 2008; College Board, 2018a).

Table 2

Overall Testing Percentage Increases by Racial Subgroup/Change in Racial Disproportionality, 2008 vs 2018

Racial Subgroup	2008	2018	Net Increase	% Increase
White	1,632,141	2,443,317	811,176	49.70%
Asian	364,391	712,165	347,774	95.44%
Black	163,993	308,791	144,798	88.30%
Latinx	338,734	1,092,606	753872	204.57%

Despite being impressive, these increases have had minimal impact on the racial disproportionality of AP enrollment. Table 3 summarizes AP subgroup participation data from 2008 and 2018, clearly depicting the disproportionalities between racial subgroups. During this 11-year span, both Asian and White over-representation remained steady, averaging +9.16 and +2.32 percentage points, respectively (Aud et al., 2010; College Board, 2008; College Board 2014; College Board, 2018a; NCES, 2018). Conversely, Black and Latinx under-representation in AP courses remained high at -9.15 and -5.53 percentage points, respectively. This alarming under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses resulted in thousands of these students "missing" from these classes. Theokas and Saaris (2013) opined that if each individual high school in the U.S. focused on eliminating their site's racial disproportionalities in AP courses through the identification and enrollment of Black and Latinx students, it would lead to an additional enrollment of 89,025 and 54,623 students, respectively.

Table 3

Disproportionality in AP Enrollment vs. U.S. High School Student Population, 2008-2018

Year	Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines origin)	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (including Spanish origin)	White (including Middle Eastern origin)	Two or more races, non-Hispanic
2008	+8.65	-10.99	-6.52	+3.91	ND
2012	+9.03	-9.04	-7.14	+3.10	ND
2013	+9.74	-8.29	-5.94	+3.33	ND
2017	+9.00	-8.79	-3.87	+1.03	+3.40
2018	+9.38	-8.66	-4.18	+.22	+3.53

Year	Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines origin)	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (including Spanish origin)	White (including Middle Eastern origin)	Two or more races, non-Hispanic
Net Average	+9.16	-9.15	-5.53	+2.32	+3.47

Note. ND=no data

At the high school in central North Carolina where I serve as principal, the racial disparities in AP enrollment were similar to that of the national data as of 2018. My high school is a suburban school on the edge of two large cities, with a student population of 55.8% White, 22.7% Latinx, 8.0% Black, and 6.25% Asian. In our AP course enrollment, White and Asian students are over-represented by +10.96 and +2.46 percentage points, respectively, while Black and Latinx students are under-represented by -4.68 and -9.71 percentage points, respectively (College Board, 2018b). Like many high schools across the country, we are striving to reverse the pattern of racial disproportionality in our AP classes, to attain what Theoharis and Scanlan (2015) referred to as socially just schooling, which "is evident when educational opportunities abound for all students, ambitious academic goals are held and met by all students…[and] when students are proportionately distributed across all groupings in the school" (p. 3). Thus, at schools where socially just schooling has resulted in an increase in Black and Latinx students enrolling in AP courses, these school-based leaders may provide essential guidance to others such as me who wish to do the same.

Current research (e.g., Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Murakami et al., 2013; Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011; Weldon & Martinez, 2014) on districts and schools that have increased the enrollment of under-represented populations in AP

courses provided common actions that may be generalizable in many contexts. However, unlike the high school over which I preside, the literature on many of these successful schools highlighted predominately non-suburban, non-White majority high schools. Additionally, much of the research (e.g., Ascher & Maguire, 2007; Flores & Gomez, 2011; Kanno, & Kangas, 2014; Yonezawa et al., 2002) focused on what districts or schools have done to increase racial proportionality in AP courses as opposed to the specific role of school-based leaders in addressing these discrepancies. In this regard, Martinez and Everman (2017) contended, "Current scholarship focused on a college-going culture, and college readiness in schools often underestimates or gives little attention to the role of the school leader" (p. 242). Against this backdrop, the present study sought to address the actions of school-based leaders, such as principals, assistant principals, and other identified school-based leaders who had worked to increase the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

Tracking the Roots of Racial Disparity

In order to better comprehend this deep-rooted racial disproportionality in the nation's schools, one must begin with our racial history. The roots of racial disproportionality in AP classes can be traced to the segregation of both Black and Latinx students in U.S. public schools. With the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, the "Court ruled that racially separate facilities, if equal, did not violate the Constitution. Segregation…was not discrimination" (Smithsonian National Museum, 2019, para. 2). Thus, schools followed suit by creating separate schools for non-White children, including Black and Latinx students (Levy & Philips, 1951; Wollenberg, 1974). *Mendez v. Westminster, 1943* (Wollenberg, 1974) concluded that school segregation was

unconstitutional while *Brown v. Board of Education*, *1954* (Levy & Philips, 1951) went a step further in ruling against not just segregation, but also the notion of "separate but equal." Nonetheless, many schools and districts openly disregarded the ruling.

Others, however, adopted a different route to theoretically comply with *Brown* by practicing *de facto* segregation through the subtle yet insidious practice of academic tracking—sorting students into low, middle, and high academic tracks based on perceived academic ability (Faitar & Faitar, 2012; Mallery & Mallery, 1999). Similar to voting regulations to suppress minoritized peoples' vote, the paths to enter the upper level or "gifted" tracks favored White and later Asian students in wake of the emphasis on testing and "gifted" identification (Darity et al., 2001; Mickelson & Everett, 2008). As a result of this practice, Black and Latinx students were disproportionately assigned to lower tracks, under-identified as gifted learners, and over-identified as special education students (Ford & King, 2014; Oakes, 2008; Skiba et al., 2008). Brooks et al. (2013) defined this as "second-generation segregation...a term used to explain how school segregation continues in a post-*Brown versus Board of Education* era, as systematic forms of segregation occurring within school" (p. 5).

Tracking and Advanced Coursework: A Continuation of Segregation

Despite over 30 years of research offering little proof of tracking's success for any students (Braddock & Slavin, 1992; Modica, 2015; Slavin, 1990), the organization of high schools has largely continued along this path by upholding a systemic form of racism that drives access to courses for Black and Latinx students as well as other marginalized groups (Boaler, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Labaree, 2012; Modica, 2015; Theoharis, & Haddix, 2011; Yonezawa et

al., 2002). Academic tracking that began in elementary school often intensified in middle and high school where highly tracked students took advanced classes such as AP courses while lower-tracked students, many of color, were left languishing in less challenging standard or special education classes (Boaler, 2005; Oakes, 2008). Poignantly, Singleton (2014) referred to AP classes in particular and their lack of students of color as reinforcing "White intellectual supremacy" (p. 54).

Further reinforcing the notion that academic tracking results in racial segregation, Black and Latinx students were disproportionally tracked in lower courses, regardless of their context. In suburban and rural schools, Black and Latinx students were just as likely to be placed in the lowest academic tracks as their urban peers (Archbald & Farley-Ripple, 2012; Kotok, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Martinez & Guzman, 2013). Similarly, Black students in middle and high socioeconomic levels were placed in lower academic tracks just as much as their counterparts living in poverty (Ascher, & Maguire, 2007; Bloom & Owens, 2013; Daher, 2018; Flores & Gomez, 2011; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). In fact, students of color who were situated in middle or upper socioeconomic families were more likely than Whites and Asians to be placed in lower academic tracks even after performing in the top percentiles on standardized tests (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013; Oakes & Guiton, 1995; Steel, 1997). Oakes (2008) asserted, "For all the handwringing over the 'achievement gap,' schools continue to promote low achievement for poor children, African-Americans, Latinos and other under-served groups by placing these students disproportionally in 'low' classes" (p. 705).

Impacts of Disproportional Enrollment

With the continuation of *de facto* segregation in high school upper-level courses, its impacts are compelling. Called the "persistently unseen" by Theoharis and Scanlon (2015, p. 61), Black and Latinx students experienced low confidence in their intelligence and academic abilities, which, in turn, was associated with depression, attendance problems, and dropping out of school (Lipps et al., 2010; Slavin, 1990). Predictably, the futures of Black and Latinx students were diminished as well. Advanced courses increased the likelihood of acceptance to post-secondary educational opportunities, which was strongly linked to earning potential (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013; Campbell, 2012; Flowers, 2008; Kyburg et al., 2007; Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008).

Furthermore, the negative impacts of students of color not taking advanced courses proceed past the direct impacts they suffer. The effects on both local and international economies could also be significant. Given that people of color are the fastest growing population in the United States, they will need to be highly skilled and educated in order to survive in national and global economies alike (Braddock & Dawkins, 1993; Braddock & Slavin, 1992; National Education Association, 2004; Vespa et al., 2018; Villegas et al., 2012).

A final but important impact of the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students in upper course work was the resulting paucity of racially diverse classes. Braddock and Slavin (1992) asserted that racial disproportionality "inhibits development of interracial respect, understanding, and friendship. It undermines democratic values and contributes to a stratified society" (p. 14). Others pointed to diversity's role in the promulgation of

securing and strengthening societies through inclusion, social cohesion, and racial stability (Alexiu & Sordé, 2011; Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

Owing to the substantial impacts associated with racial disproportionality in advanced courses, school leaders played a key role in addressing the "education debt" owed to students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 5). Nearly 30 years ago, Slavin (1990) cautioned about racial disproportionality in upper-level coursework: "The fact that African-American, Hispanic, and low socioeconomic students in general wind up so often in the low tracks is repugnant on its face. Why would we want to organize our schools this way...?" (p. 69). Today, school-based leaders are still confronted with the same disconcerting reality. Thus, leaders who wish to re-organize their schools to reverse this longstanding trend need scholarship that enables and guides them in this pursuit. One plausible way to accomplish this is to study school-based leadership teams who have been successful in addressing the AP racial divide.

Context of the Research Site

Trailwood High School[1] (THS), the research site for this study, was one such school whose leadership had successfully made great strides toward bridging the AP racial divide. Located in a suburban area near a major mid-Atlantic U.S. city, the school's racial demographics among its 2100-plus students included 45% Latinx, 20% Black, 9% Asian, 4% two or more races, and 22% White (state department of education website). While the school had a student body that was majority-minority, it had significant White and Asian populations at a combined 31% that was mostly middle to upper class socioeconomically. In contrast, many of the schools in the literature which had increased

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[1] The names of both the school and its leaders have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

the AP enrollment of students of color were minority-majority schools whose population did not include a significant percentage of White and Asian students from the highest socioeconomic statuses.

Most importantly, THS was chosen for its focus on increasing minority AP enrollment for approximately 24 years. From 1996-2020, Trailwood High School put in place several programs to increase student of color enrollment in AP courses as well as initiated practices that supported THS staff, students, and families in this work which resulted in the reduction of the disproportionality of Black and Latinx students in AP courses. For example, during the period from 2005 to 2018 when quantifiable data were available, Trailwood decreased the disproportionality of Black students' participation in AP courses from -11.3% in 2005-2006 to -2% in 2017-2018; similarly, Latinx student disproportionality decreased from -28.3% in 2005-2006 to -15% in 2017-2018 as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

THS Decrease in Disproportionality in Black and Latinx Students' AP Course Enrollment, 2005-2006 and 2017-2018.

Year	Black Student Disproportionality	Latinx Student Disproportionality
2005-2006	-11.3	-28.3
2017-2018	-2.0	-15

Note. Neither Trailwood High nor the College Board had data available for all Black and Latinx student participation in AP courses from 1996-2005.

Due to its long-term success in the increase of AP enrollment and its demographics as a suburban, racially diverse high school, THS was a good candidate for this research. The data retrieved on how THS increased enrollment of underrepresented

students over a significant period of time can add to current research on this topic. Because THS was a suburban, racially diverse campus, its data could play an important role in filling the research gap on non-urban, non-racially diverse schools populating current scholarship.

Purpose of the Study

Much like the first administrator in the opening anecdote, many school leaders desire direction, insight, and research-based actions to address the second-generation segregation that they witness in AP courses. Recent literature and the College Board's own data affirmed the historicity of the significant disproportionality of Black and Latinx students in AP classes. School-based leaders knew that Black and Latinx students' post-secondary options were limited, and their long-term earning potential diminished without gaining access to upper level high school courses (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013; Campbell, 2012; Flowers, 2008; Kyburg et al., 2007). Taliaferro and DeCuir-Gunby (2008) agreed, positing that students of color being historically under-enrolled in AP courses "is indicative of a greater problem of education inequality" (p. 182).

It is this considerable educational inequality that many school-based leaders and the College Board have endeavored to address and reverse. Subsequently, current scholarship on schools that have increased the AP enrollment of its Black and Latinx students have provided insights that can help school leaders address this problem of practice (Ascher & Maguire, 2007; Daher, 2018; Kyburg et al., 2007; Murakami et al., 2013; Ovando & Cavazos, 2004; Rios, 2012; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). As stated previously, these studies were predominately situated in schools with a minority-majority student population, many in urban areas. While this

research offered much that can be generalized to other contexts, studies are needed that broaden the focus to suburban schools with a more diverse student body.

Additionally, much of the current scholarship that highlighted successful schools did not focus on the role school-based leaders play in this increase; instead, many studies focused on how states, districts, schools, or school staffs were successful in enrolling more Blacks and Latinx students in AP courses (Barnard-Brak et al., 2011; Burton et al., 2002; Darity, et al., 2001; Davis et al., 2013). While these studies offered a great deal of practical applications, they did not provide school-based leaders such as principals and assistant principals with insights into their particular roles in advancing Black and Latinx entry into rigorous AP courses. This is significant as Leithwood (2011) asserted that "leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning" (p. 3). Thus, a focus on school level leaders is necessary due to their important roles in the academic achievement of their students.

This study, therefore, sought to add to the existing literature on those school-based leader practices that have increased Black and Latinx student AP enrollment by focusing on the school-based leaders at THS over a 24 year period, 1996 to 2020, which, like the second high school in the opening vignette, had a true racial representation of students in its AP classes. Using a mixed-methods approach, I conducted an organizational historical case study to identify the values and practices of Trailwood leaders and discover what organizational processes they used. Additionally, I offered insights for school-based leaders in suburban, white majority contexts who are working to create schools with racially representative AP courses.

Basic Conceptual Framework

The foundations for this study's conceptual framework were based on core leadership practices initially articulated by Leithwood (2011) and updated in Leithwood et al. (2020), combined with the values within Khalifa et al.'s (2016) culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) framework represented in Figure 1. Leithwood's (2012) seminal study has been a foundational framework for school-based leaders which has only been strengthened in subsequent research (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020). The conceptual framework's remaining component emanated from the CRSL framework, an emerging schema arising from culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Figure 1

Selected Components of Khalifa et al. (2016) and Leithwood et al. (2020)
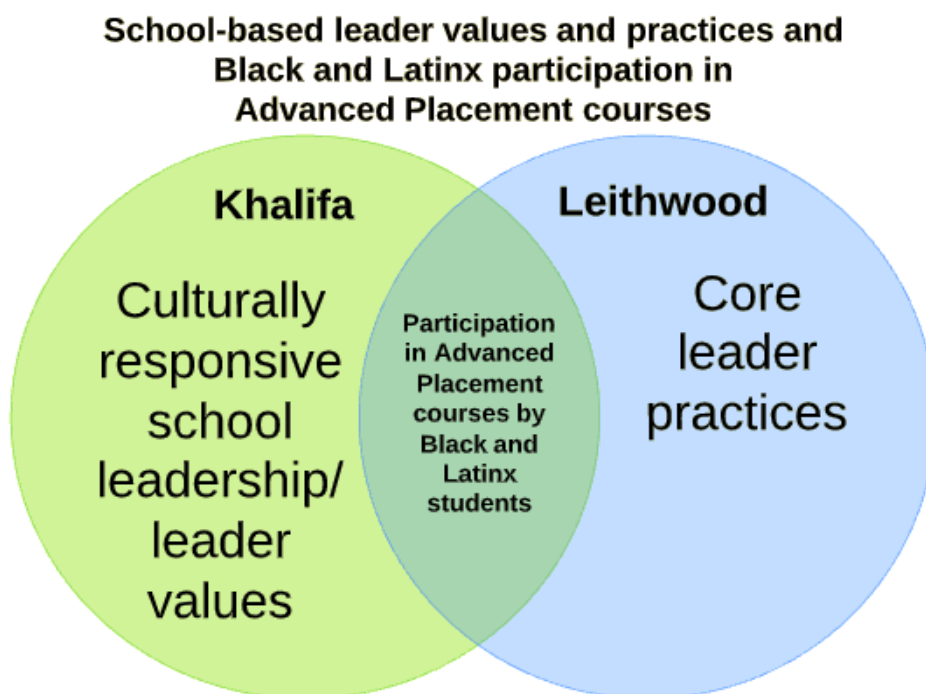
I posited that school leadership could impact the enrollment of Black and Latinx student in AP courses. More specifically, I postulated that the combination of the core practices from Leithwood et al. (2020) and the values in CRSL from Khalifa et al. (2016) were the essential actions that school-based leaders needed to increase Black and Latinx enrollment in AP courses—that leaders influenced the evolution of these processes which led to successes in their endeavors. The aspects of the study's conceptual framework will be further examined in the literature review and methods sections in Chapter Two and Three, respectively.

Research Questions and Methodology

A mixed-methods case study was conducted with the unit of analysis being the THS leadership team. In this study's overarching research question I sought to address how schools increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students and more importantly, sustain this work over a significant period of time. Toward this end, three questions guide this study which address leaders' values and beliefs, the practices leaders enacted, and the organizational structures leaders utilizes to systematize this work.

Utilizing semi-structured interviews, documents analysis, and AP enrollment data, I investigated the following primary research questions:

RQ1: What are the underlying values leaders identify which contribute to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework?

RQ2: What practices do school-based leaders identify as contributing to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework and how are they enacted?

RQ3: How are these leadership practices captured in organizational processes at the school?

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were utilized as indicated.

- *Black*—Black refers to students who self-identify as such. Due to the different usage of terms in data reporting, Black encompassed African-American students as well. This population is well-documented as part of the achievement gap/education debt/opportunity gap in the U.S. and was a significant minority at both THS and the researcher's home school and is thus isolated. This term did not include students self-identified as "mixed" or "more than two races" due to shifting identification and the historical exclusion of this group.

- *Latinx*—Latinx referred to students who self-identify as such. Due to the different usage of terms in data reporting, this term also encompassed the term "Hispanic." This population is well-documented as part of the achievement gap/education debt/opportunity gap in the U.S. and was a significant minority at both THS and the researcher's home school and is thus isolated. This term did not include students self-identified as "mixed" or "more than two races" due to shifting identification and the historical exclusion of this group.

- *Minoritized*—A term used by Khalifa et al. (2016) to identify "student individuals from racially oppressed communities that have been marginalized—both legally and discursively—because of their non-dominant race, ethnicity, religion, language, or citizenship" (p. 1275).

- *Practices*—Practices encompassed the actions, behaviors, and beliefs of school-based leaders.

- *Racially Diverse*—This term signified schools that have at least three significant racial populations represented, specifically Black, Latinx, and White.

- *Students of color*—This term was used interchangeably to encompass Black, Latinx, two or more races, minorities, as well as other students who self-identified as non-White.

- *School-based leaders*—This term denoted leaders such as principals, assistant principals, and other staff identified as leaders within schools. Because it is often the case that "leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders," (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 16), this term included academic coaches, AP coordinators, lead teachers, or other identified staff.

- *Values*—"Core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions" (https://www.ethics.org/resources/free-toolkit/definition-values/).

Background of the Researcher

As a high school principal whose school has had a significant under-enrollment of students of color in AP courses, I brought a bias to this research, hoping that this study would identify common leadership actions that increased AP enrollment as well as determine effective leadership actions (Leithwood et al., 2020) and culturally responsive behaviors (Khalifa, 2016) indicated in the literature. I did not conduct this research at my own school nor any schools in my district. My job as a high school principal facilitated my analysis and understanding of the data collected from the interviews, collected documents, and AP enrollment data.

Limitations

Case studies provide deep, thorough insights into problems of practice due to the "thick descriptions" of given contexts (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 8). However, case studies are limited in scope, particularly a single case study, and may not be generalizable across contexts. Additionally, because a majority of the data collected was self-reported by school-based leaders and not triangulated by other stakeholders such as non-leader staff, student, and parents, the scope of these data was limited to leaders' voices. As a result, these self-reported actions might not accurately reflect the reality of the changes the school has made but instead represented their own sense-making. While analyzing and coding of school documents aided with verifying the self-reported data, it could not provide additional data that other stakeholders could provide. Finally, because this is an organizational history case study that covered a 24 year span, leaders' memories might not accurately reflect what was happening at the time and instead unknowingly and unintentionally changed them. While supporting document analysis might help trigger more accurate memories, the historical threat cannot be completely eliminated.

Delimitations

This case study was conducted at one public, suburban, racially diverse high school that had experienced success in the increased enrollment of students of color in AP courses. This study was limited to AP courses due to their extensive use in U.S. high schools. The class of 2017 provided a good example with more than 1.17 million students who took 3.98 million AP Exams in more than 20,000 U.S. high schools (College Board, 2018c). In addition to pervasiveness of AP courses, I utilized this purposeful delimitation because of the College Board's focus on increasing the enrollment of students of color in

AP classes (College Board, 2002; College Board, 2012a) and the extensive research on this subject as compared to other rigorous courses. A Google Scholar search using the words "Advanced Placement courses" yielded over 907,000 articles while a search on the low enrollment of minorities in AP courses and school leadership produced over 58,000 results. Subsequently, the findings might be limited solely to AP courses and not other rigorous classes such as International Baccalaureate or honors courses.

Furthermore, because the findings were limited to one small team of non-randomized school-based leaders, past and present, the data might neither be representative of all schools with similar demographics nor inform the work at rural or urban schools. Similarly, the sole focus on identified school-based leaders was an additional delimitation; the perspectives of other staff, students, or parents were not included which could have lent credence to the findings, although the perspectives of these stakeholder groups were key in the long-range study of increasing the AP enrollment of minoritized students. Thus, further research on this problem should include these voices.

Finally, the long-term success of Black and Latinx students and their performance on AP exams was not examined. I chose to focus on enrollment as the first key step to the successful completion of AP courses by students of color; unless we as school-based leaders take clear actions to increase the enrollment of minoritized students into these classes, working on their success will be a moot point. At the same time, I recognized that stopping at Black and Latinx enrollment in AP courses would be a significant disservice to these deserving and capable students and would ignore the institutional and systemic racism that impede their successful completion of these rigorous courses. Future

research should continue to focus on the students of color experiencing success in these classes and the concomitant steps of school-based leaders to bring this about.

Summary

The underrepresentation of Black and Latinx students in AP courses has had multiple devastating consequences for students, schools, communities, and society at large (Braddock & Dawkins, 1993; Kyburg et al., 2007; Lipps et al., 2010). School leaders have been charged with eliminating any barriers that prevented their students from achieving academic success. The pervasiveness of this problem across contexts is an impetus for school leaders to invest the time, money, and effort in reversing this trend. As the main drivers and influencers in their buildings, school-based leaders must make this and other equity issues not just a part of their vision and mission, but also the lens through which they operate at all times. The CRSL (Khalifa et al., 2016) and Leithwood et al. (2020) frameworks provided the lenses through which school leaders might examine this work to positively impact the futures of our Black and Latinx students. Khalifa (2018) reminded that the marginalization of students of color "will be automatically reproduced unless there are intentional efforts to confront the oppressive structures in society and schooling" (p. 9). I hope this study contributed to the purposeful endeavors of school-based leaders who confronted the injustices of one of these "oppressive structures"—the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As outlined in Chapter One, Black and Latinx students have been underrepresented in AP courses—a problem of practice this study will address. Toward this end, I first present the literature on school-based leaders' impacts on student achievement, finding their influence to be a mediating yet significant factor. While all domains described by Leithwood et al. (2020) were related to student achievement, I explored two core leadership practices that emerged as valuable tools in addressing student achievement—"setting directions" and "organizational development to support desired practices"[2] (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 573). I chose these two practices due to the preponderance of the literature on these two and for more practical, personal reasons. In my 15 year tenure as a school administrator, I have observed that these two practices were fundamental first steps for any initiative leaders undertake—particularly those that disturb the status quo and pose risks for those leaders. Thus, I wanted to review the literature on these two to examine if school leaders and leadership teams utilized these and if so, how important they were in their processes and organizing schema.

The leadership practice of setting directions involved the establishment of building the school's overall vision, mission, goals, and expectations—key processes for impacting student achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2009). Similarly, organizational development encompassed the structures, processes, and procedures take build upon the school's vision to increase

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[2] "Developing the organization to support desired practices" will be referred to as organizational development throughout the paper.

student achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Hoy et al., 1990; Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006). Finally, critical self-reflection from the CRSL framework surfaced as a pivotal factor for school-based leaders seeking to address areas of needed growth within their schools (Khalifa et al., 2016). In order for leaders to impact their schools, they must reflect, both personally and structurally, on the biases within themselves and the systems within their schools (Brown, 2004; Capper et al., 2006; Dantley, 2005; Khalifa, 2018; Young & Laible, 2000). This research informed the overarching research question regarding the sustainability of increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment as well as each of the three research questions: (a) What are the underlying values leaders identify which contribute to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework, (b) What practices do school-based leaders identify as contributing to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework and how are they enacted, and (c) How are these leadership practices captured in organizational processes at the school?

Research on setting directions and organizational development connected to the CRSL framework, with visioning emerging as an oft-cited element of the culturally responsive, socially just leader (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Webb-Johnson, 2006). Khalifa et al. (2016) asserted that "a culturally responsive transformational leadership promotes the conditions and a school vision…that would be inclusive and validating for minoritized youth" (p. 1288). Similarly, the behavior strands of CRSL, particularly critical self-reflection, were linked to the "doing" part of a school-based leader's job, which could be understood as the development of the organization. In this regard, Khalifa et al. (2016) posited, "The principal's critical consciousness of

culture and race really serves as a foundation to establish beliefs that undergird her practice" (p. 1281). Thus, it could be argued that critical self-reflection was the first step in creating a school environment that served minoritized populations. Subsequently, as the leader, her staff, and her greater school community of students and parents identify the root causes of oppression and marginalization, the school-based leader could then utilize the core leader practices of vision/setting directions and organization development towards those goals.

In order to complete this literature review, I reviewed the scholarly work on school-based leader practices that have specifically increased Black and Latinx student AP enrollment. From this research, eight values or practices that have successfully addressed the problem of practice have been examined and compared with the values and practices identified by Trailwood High leaders, further informing the investigation of research question two: What practices do school-based leaders identify as contributing to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework and how are they enacted? The research on these eight practices and the three isolated school-based leader practices chosen for this study informed my analysis regarding organizational commonalities and provided a foundation for research question three: How are these leadership practices captured in organizational processes at the school?

The goal of the literature review and these comparisons was to add to the scholarship on the values and practices school-based leaders could employ to afford Black and Latinx students the same opportunities as their White and Asian peers. Dr. Jerry Weast, Montgomery County, Maryland's former innovative superintendent, called

this goal "twin imperatives"— doing both "the right thing and the smart thing" (Childress et al., 2009, p. 27).

Methods Used to Develop the Literature Review

In order to inform this study and for school-based leaders to accomplish increasing enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses, the literature was reviewed in the following areas:

- school-based leadership and its impact on fostering student academic success;

- school-based leadership and its impact on fostering student academic success, focusing on setting directions and organizational development;

- culturally responsive school leadership, specifically, the values it espouses and its impact on fostering academic success for students of color, focusing on critical self-reflection; and

- school-based leader values and practices that increase Black and Latinx student enrollment in AP courses.

For this literature review, I reviewed handbooks, practitioner articles, scholarly work, dissertations, as well as books relevant to the topics listed above using the EBSCO database and Google Scholar. The goal of the initial search was to find scholarly research connecting school-based leadership values and practices to general student achievement using the keywords "school-based leadership," "vision," "setting directions/directions setting," and "organizational development." In order to examine CRSL, sources cited within Khalifa et al.'s (2016) article were reviewed as well as articles discovered with the key words "culturally relevant," "social justice," "equity," and "cultural competence." Finally, the keywords "Advanced Placement," "minority," "Black," "Latino/a/x"

"values," "leadership practices," "increase," and "enrollment" were utilized to pinpoint articles that examined the values and practices of school-based leaders, which resulted in a higher enrollment of minoritized students of color.

For the review, publication dates were limited to the 1980s through 2020 for AP course information while school-based leadership articles were limited to 1990 and beyond—a period of tremendous growth for school-based leader scholarship. However, Hitt and Tucker (2016) reminded that despite almost four decades of educational leadership research, "rarely does a new finding in effective leader practice replace another, but instead the body of research tends to be additive in nature" (p. 533). Thus, to access this growing research, the first inquiry sought to highlight general research gathered and expand upon it regarding school-based leaders' impact on student academic success; the second and third analyses worked to establish any general leadership impacts on student success via the chosen elements of Leithwood et al. (2020) and Khalifa (2018). Subsequently, the findings of these literature bases were compared to the values and practices discovered within the final inquiry, leader values, and practices that increased AP enrollment for Black and Latinx students.

School-based Leadership: Practices that Foster Student Success

Since the 1980s, when the role of the principal pivoted from a mainly managerial job to instruction-based, extensive research has been conducted to assess how and whether principals and other school-based leaders impact student learning (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). In one of the more comprehensive studies, Hallinger and Heck (1998) reviewed over 40 empirically-based studies on principal impact, including the years 1980–1995, by dividing this research into three categories: direct, mediating/indirect, and

reciprocal. According to their findings, mediating/indirect results had "relatively small but statistically significant" effects on student achievement, more so than direct or reciprocal (p. 186). Using the theoretical leadership frameworks of Leithwood (1994) and Ogawa and Bossert (1995), Hallinger and Heck (1998) postulated school-based leaders' greatest avenues for influence: purposes and goals, organizational structure and social networks, people, and organizational culture—all precursors to the leadership frameworks emerging from subsequent research (see Table 5). Hallinger and Heck (1998) concluded, "while substantial progress has been made over the past 15 years in understanding the principal's contribution to school effectiveness, the most important scholarly and practical work lies ahead" (p. 157).

Among the more compelling work in the ensuing years was the scholarship of Leithwood et al., (2004) who, based on a review of the research, posited, "Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 5). In fact, they asserted that the "effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects" (p. 5). Leithwood et al. (2020) asserted the same claim in 2008. While this pronouncement about school-based leadership was considered contentious at that time, it remains one of their most quoted (Leithwood et al., 2020),including references in Hitt and Tucker (2016), Khalifa et al., (2016), and Murphy et al. (2006).

Consequently, scholars have sought to examine and analyze the influence that school-based leaders wield in addition to the practices that produce compelling effects on schools and student learning. The scholarly works of Leithwood (2011), Murphy et al. (2006), Robinson et al., (2008), and Sebring et al. (2006) have added important

contributions, each of which deepened the understanding of school leaders' impacts while also finding common, overlapping practices.

In accordance with the tradition of Hallinger and Heck (1998), Hitt and Tucker (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 56 empirically based, peer reviewed studies from 2000–2014, including the leadership frameworks of Leithwood (2011), Murphy et al. (2006), and Sebring et al. (2006). Their research yielded 28 practices grouped in five overarching domains demonstrating the common behaviors and paths that scholarship has provided dating back to Hallinger and Heck (1998). More recently, Leithwood et al. (2020) revisited an original article they authored in 2008 to view these in light of the current research. The 2008 article made seven claims about school leadership. The first claim, leadership is second only to classroom instruction, was amended in the 2019 article to reflect the viewpoint of more recent scholarship: "School leadership has a significant effect on features of the school organization which positively influences the quality of teaching and learning" (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 2). While this updated statement no longer asserted the school-based leader's runner-up position to classroom instruction, it continued to elevate the importance of such leadership.

In light of the continued significance of the leader's role from the past 40 years of research, it was imperative to highlight the practices in the frameworks referenced in this paper. Table 5 offers a selected comparison of these practices over time, demonstrating the consistency and commonality of these across the years of empirically-based scholarship. I found the following convergences in the framework:

Table 5

School-based Leadership Framework Comparison, 1998-2019

Common Practices	Leadership Frameworks 1998-2019					
	Hallinger and Heck 1998	Murphy et al., 2006	Sebring et al., 2006	Robinson et al., 2008	Hitt and Tucker 2016	Leithwood et al., 2020
Mission, Vision, Goals, & Directions	School goals	Develop a vision for learning	Leadership that shapes vision; strategic orientation	Establish goals and expectations	Establish and convey the mission	Build vison and setting directions
People as Key Assets	Social networks; people	Communities of learning	Faculty, parent, & community influence; student-centered	Promote and participate in teacher learning and development	Build professional capacity; connect to external partners	Understand and develop people
Organizational Structure	School structure	Organizational culture; resource allotment	Organizational supports	Ensure an orderly and supportive environment	Create a supportive organization for learning	Develop the organization to support desired practices
Instructional Focus	Student learning outcomes	Instructional, curricular, and assessment programs	Instructional leadership	Plan, coordinate, and evaluate teaching and curriculum	Facilitate high quality learning experience	Manage the teaching and learning program

- a focus on developing and maintaining the school's mission, vision, and goals;

- a utilization of people as key assets and stakeholders—students, staff, parents, and the community;

- a creation of organizational structures that supports learning, especially for staff and students; and

- a concentration on the instructional program.

While I have grouped the findings of these frameworks into categories that match the four core practices of Leithwood et al. (2020) for the purposes of this review, it is important to note that the authors of these frameworks listed in Table 5 added nuance and depth in their research and often posited additional leader behaviors. Nonetheless, over time, the literature continued to affirm similar school-based leader practices that moved the needle on school improvement efforts and student success, leading Leithwood et al. (2020) to posit, "Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices" (p. 3).

Influence of Leader Practices

With a consensus on common leadership practices, scholars likewise pointed to their indirect influence as mediating variables (Grissom et al., 2013; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood, 2019; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). Leithwood and Sun (2016) concurred, stating, the "effect of school leader practices on student learning has been understood as a largely mediated relationship since the 1970s" (p. 516). Mediating variables "elucidate the relation between two other variables and can describe why they are related or under what conditions they are related" (Fairchild &

McQuillin, 2010, p. 53). Grissom et al. (2013) identified these mediating factors as "a large number of school processes (e.g., curriculum coordination, how students are grouped) and intermediate outcomes, such as high teacher expectations and a school climate focused on instruction" (p. 433). In practical terms, the school-based leader was the mediating variable connecting the two other variables directly to each other such as the vison to instructional planning, professional development to teacher instruction, teacher instruction to student achievement, etc. (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Indirect Impact of the School-Based Leader

Adapted from Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *51*(6), 1173.
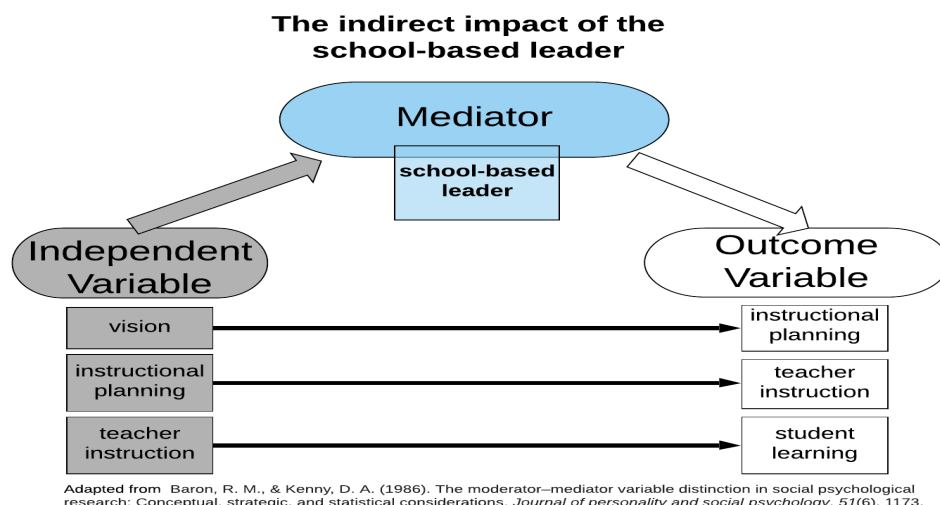
Utilizing the frameworks in Table 5, leaders can place confidence in the common, mediating practices from these scholarly studies. To this end, Hitt and Tucker (2016), on the basis of their extensive meta-analysis of the literature base, boldly postulated, *"*Almost four decades of work allow researchers to assert the importance of leadership in a well-substantiated manner, and how it relates to student achievement" (p. 531). However, with some mediating factors producing more impact than others and the time

constraints facing school-based leaders, it is essential for them to know which of these practices have the greatest impact on student achievement.

"Optimum Mediators:" Levers for High Impact Leadership Practices

Within a school-based leader's reach are many options from which she can choose to influence her students' academic success. However, these options often leave school-based leaders wondering which ones should take precedent over the others. Sun and Leithwood (2015) asserted the need for leaders to choose "optimum mediators" (p. 516): "Since most leadership practices have indirect effects on students, a key goal for leadership research is to determine the most promising mediating variables for leaders' attention" (p. 504). Similar to optimum mediators, Senge (1990) spoke to leverage— "small, well-focused actions" that "can sometimes produce significant, enduring improvements, if they are in the right place" (p. 64).

Thus, for the purposes of this research, the practices of *setting directions* and *develop the organization to support desired practices* (Leithwood et al., 2020) were examined and explained in the next section as potential "optimum mediators" for school-based leaders. The literature offered compelling scholarship on these two leadership levers and their indirect impacts on student achievement.

Core Practice One: Setting Directions

The first core practice was *setting directions* from Leithwood et al. (2020), referred to in this paper as both setting directions and direction setting. While researchers' definitions of this practice vary, the majority of them focused on the deeply-held educational values and moral purposes of leaders which can determine which practices are chosen (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Leithwood &

Duke, 1999; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Leithwood et al. (2020) defined these practices as a "combination of goal setting and communicating high expectations" (p. 516), a finding that was echoed by many scholars (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Hitt & Tucker, 2019; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006; Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

Additionally, Leithwood (2011) hypothesized that most "well-developed" models of school leadership include "responsibilities touching on vision" (p. 6) while Sun and Leithwood (2015) noted that vision is the most commonly cited transformational leadership practice. Notably, these scholars included Bolman and Deal (1991), Hitt and Tucker (2016), Hallinger and Heck (1998), Murphy et al. (2006), Robinson et al. (2008), and Sebring, et al. (2006). Summarizing the interplay of vision within setting directions, Leithwood and Duke (1999) concluded, "Setting goals, framing goals, or creating a shared vision, various terms used to label leadership practices aimed at setting directions, is a key function of leadership in most organizational sectors" (p. 500).

Each of the frameworks depicted in Table 5 offered actionable insights into how setting directions would work in a school building and what that would mean for school-based leaders to practice these. For example, Hallinger and Heck (1998) found that "in particular, the principal's role in shaping the school's direction through vision, mission and goals came through…as a primary avenue of influence" (p. 187). Correspondingly, Murphy et al. (2006) asserted that having a "vision for learning" involved articulating, implementing, developing, and stewarding vision (p. 7). Meanwhile Leithwood et al. (2020) identified four similar components: building a shared vision; identifying specific, shared, short-term goals; creating high-performance expectations; and communicating the vision and goals. In addition to the frameworks summarized in Table 5, Bolman and Deal

(1991), placed setting directions along with visioning within two of their four leadership frames—symbolic and structural. Symbolic leaders created a clear vision within the first frame, while structural leaders "set clear directions" in the second (p. 511).

The Impacts of Setting Directions

Alongside these definitions and elucidations, it was important to explore what the research said about the impact of this practice on student success. First, according to Robinson et al. (2008), setting directions has a moderate but significant effect size on student success. These researchers utilized a meta-correlation of studies to find an effect size of 0.42 for leadership goals and expectations on student outcomes and addressed the mediating aspect of this leadership practice: "Goal setting…has indirect effects on students by focusing and coordinating the work of teachers… With student background factors controlled, leadership made a difference to students through the degree of emphasis on clear academic and learning goals" (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 659).

Similarly, Sun and Leithwood (2015) used meta-analytic reviews of quantitative evidence from current research to find direct linkages between setting directions practices and schools, teachers, and students. They found that leadership impacts teachers and the school culture but had only weak connections to student achievement. Thus, the researchers offered three mediating practices for leaders to employ that could have significant impact on student learning via teachers: teacher collective efficacy, focused instruction by teachers, and a culture of academic press (p. 510)—the latter of which Sebring et al. (2006) referred to as "ambitious instruction" and "intellectual challenge" (p. 510).

Additionally, the literature offered numerous leadership impacts on school staff, which indirectly paved the way for student achievement. School-based leaders who build a school-wide vision and clearly set directions:

- fostered a nonacceptance of the status quo within their staffs (Sun & Leithwood, 2015)

- focused staff on academically high expectations from all students (Leithwood, 2011)

- uncovered and exposed staff to traditionally marginalized populations (Ford & King, 2014; Oakes, 2008; Skiba et al., 2008)

- fostered a positive working environment for staff (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Locke & Latham, 2002; Sun & Leithwood, 2015)

Setting Directions Fostered A Non-Acceptance of The Status Quo Within Their Staffs. When school-based leaders utilized the practice of setting directions, particularly goal setting, they created "constructive discontent with...present performance" (Sun & Leithwood, 2015, p. 502). Owing to the fact that traditionally marginalized student populations were often academically unsuccessful in schools, leaders had to guide their staff to see that improvement was needed—what Sun and Leithwood called a "discrepancy-creating process" based on Locke and Latham's (2002) 35 years of goal-setting research. In the creation of this discontent, school leaders as well as their staffs had a rationale for school improvement plans that focused on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). School leaders could also use setting directions to create school improvement plans, set goals, and direct steps to carry these out. Robinson et al. (2008) concurred, stating:

Goal setting is a powerful leadership tool in the quest for improving valued

student outcomes because it signals to staff that even though everything is

important, some activities and outcomes are more important than others. Without

clear goals, staff effort and initiatives can be dissipated in multiple agendas and

conflicting priorities, which, over time, can produce burnout, cynicism, and

disengagement. (p. 666)

Setting Directions Focused Staff on Academically High Expectations for All

Students. Once a school is not content with some children succeeding and others not,

school-based leaders can utilize setting directions to raise the bar academically for all

students. Leithwood (2011) identified two sets of practices connected to setting

directions: "focusing the school and its teachers on goals and focusing the school and its

teachers on expectations for student achievement" (p. 66). Sun and Leithwood (2015)

used the terms "shared school goals or shared school mission" synonymously with

"academic press"—which has been positively linked to the achievement of all students

(Goddard et al., 2000; Hoy et al., 2006). Thus, school-based leaders acted as mediators to

positively affect all student learners when they built a shared vision, gained consensus on

school goals, and focused on high academic expectations for all students.

Setting Directions Uncovered and Exposed Staff to Traditionally

Marginalized Populations. With the addition of the word "all" to "students," there was

an implied focus on traditionally marginalized populations, including students of color,

special needs students, and English language learners (ELLs). School-based leaders who

gave clear directions based on the agreed-upon school vision must specifically identify

these groups of students and press for goals to be set for them. Black and Latinx students,

who were part of the "achievement gap," or as previously noted by Ladson-Billings (2006), owed an "education debt" (p. 5), must be the focus of any school improvement plan. Candidly referring to their 2008 article, Leithwood et al. (2020) "had little to say explicitly about equity" (p. 4), and thus compared their specific leader practices in their more recent work to the 10 equity practices of Ishimaru and Galloway (2014). Within the 19 specific practices of Leithwood et al. (2020), two of the four core practices in setting directions were found to match with Ishimaru and Galloway: building a shared vision and communicating the vision and goals (p. 4).

However, by focusing on issues related to equity, school-based leaders were often defying the status quo that has enabled certain groups of students to languish in courses that lacked rigor or had low expectations for them, in direct contrast to academic press (Ford & King, 2014; Oakes, 2008; Skiba et al., 2008). Therefore, Leithwood (2011) stressed that staff members must have a belief that all students can succeed and a desire to address the achievement gap. Accordingly, this can often end up moving some staff out of their comfort zones, which can create problems for school-based leaders.

Therefore, as leaders concentrate their work around equity, some of their setting directions practices might include professional development to accelerate adult learners' growth in the midst of changing expectations. As proffered by Drago-Severson (2012), leaders can "shape growth-enhancing climates that support adult learning as they work to manage adaptive challenges" (p. 1). Part of this growth for some staff might include the creation of a personal vision and goals for their students that aligns with the stated vision of the school (Leithwood, 2011).

Setting Directions Fosters A Positive Working Environment for School Staff.

Leithwood (2011) asserted, "School leaders have an impact on student achievement primarily through their influence on teacher motivation and working conditions" (p. 11). Research indicated that leaders who created well-defined visions and set appropriate directions had an overall positive impact on school climate (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Locke & Latham, 2002; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Correspondingly, Sun and Leithwood (2015) found that when leaders created school visions with their staff, there was an effect size of .54 on "school organizational outcomes" (p. 508). Locke and Latham (2002) further posited that because people are motivated by clear goals and helpful feedback, "effective leaders…develop a vision for the organization that galvanizes employees by providing them with a distal goal which gives them a sense of purpose" (p. 240). Concurring, Hitt and Tucker (2016) noted, "Leaders should find ways for teachers to see the vision as personally compelling and engaging" (p. 546). Thus, despite the disequilibrium that can accompany change, staff were motivated by a common purpose that eased the stress of transition.

Likewise, shared decision making, or the distribution leadership, emerged as another positive working condition, garnering an effect size of .45 when school-based leaders apportioned setting directions work to their staffs (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Spillane et al. (2004) asserted that "Understanding how leaders in a school work together, as well as separately, to execute leadership functions and tasks is an important aspect of the social distribution of leadership practice" (p. 16). Similarly, Hitt and Tucker (2016) argued, "Scholars increasingly highlight this act of distributing leadership as an important component of effective leadership practice" (p. 536). In sharing the work in a genuine

manner, teachers and other school staff experienced autonomy, competence, and relatedness, the three inner psychological needs of all humans, as a posited self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Given that important tasks were distributed and entrusted to groups of staff to complete, this met another important human need—the desire to learn from others— a key tenet of social learning theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Sun and Leithwood (2015) succinctly summarized, "Such efforts foster a collaborative organizational culture, as well as contribute to productive teacher emotional states and organizational learning. These consequences, in turn, have positive impacts on student learning" (p. 502).

Finally, when teachers experienced positive working environments brought about by leaders' actions, teacher retention tended to increase: "research suggests good teachers will eventually leave schools where there are ineffective school leaders" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 12), a finding that was also echoed in the literature (Kraft et al., 2016; Ladd, 2011). As schools experienced high teacher turnover, student learning subsequently declined (Ladd, 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Thus, when school-based leaders welcomed teachers and other staff into the visioning and setting directions processes, her staff would feel an integral part of the work and experience an overall positive working environment that would encourage staff to stay.

Core Practice Two: Developing the Organization

Once a school-based leader and her staff have set directions by visioning high expectations and achievement for students, her decisions that follow are paramount. Merely enacting a vision does not suffice; of equal importance is the manner in which the leader carries out that vision (Leithwood, 2011). Hitt and Tucker (2016) pointed to the

overlapping natures of the vision aspect of setting directions and organizational development, asserting that "leaders should find ways for teachers to see the vision as personally compelling and engaging, and at the same time, connecting the vision to the broader organizational needs" (p. 546). Thus, for the purpose of this study, organizational development follows setting directions as a critical factor in student academic success.

Within leadership frameworks, different terms are used to indicate organizational development. Some denoted it as "organizational culture" (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Murphy et al., 2006). Sebring et al. (2006) used "organizational supports," while Hitt and Tucker (2016) and Hoy et al., (1990) employed "organizational climate." Similarly, some descriptions of organizational development were categorized in other core practices across the frameworks. For example, Hallinger and Heck (1998) placed "purposes and goals" as one of four aspects influencing the "organizational system" (p. 171) while Leithwood et al. (2020) placed these in setting directions. Academic press, first introduced in this paper under building vision and setting directions, was listed in the organizational development practices of Hitt and Tucker (2016) and Sebring et al. (2006).

Leithwood et al. (2020) offered the following leadership practices in definition organizational development:

- building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership

- structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration

- building productive relationships with families and communities

- connecting the school to its wider environment

- maintaining a safe and healthy school environment

- allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals (p.4)

Extant literature likewise mirrored many of Leithwood's et al. (2019) six practices of organizational development including working with the wider school community (Hallinger & Heck 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020) and allocating resources (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020).

As with setting directions, Leithwood et al. (2020) compared the six leader practices of organizational development to the 11 equity practices of Ishimaru and Galloway (2014). Whereas two of the four the leadership practices associated with setting directions match Ishimaru and Galloway's (2014) 11 equity practices, five of the six practices of organizational development aligned with these. Furthering the connection of organizational development to equity, Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) asserted:

> In addition to ensuring equitable instruction, a crucial leadership practice for equity relates to the need to develop organizational capacity to: (a) examine individual and collective practices and underlying biases and assumptions, (b) dialogue about equitable teaching and learning grounded in systemic and historical understandings of disparities, and (c) collaborate to change educational practice to provide a high-quality education for each student. (p. 113)

Accordingly, Bolman and Deal (1991) posited, "Structural leaders try to solve organizational problems with new policies and rules or through restructuring" (p. 511). When school-based leaders attempt to restructure, identifying the practices that will most greatly impact their students' academic achievement could prove to be difficult. Hitt and Tucker (2016) offered appropriate guidance in this area. They argued that school-based leaders need to consider "context to maximize organizational functioning" (p. 533) to create a supportive organization for learning. Many scholars likewise placed the context

of the school and its community as essential for the school leadership's development of the organization (Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2006). Leithwood et al. (2020) contended, "The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices—not the practices themselves— demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work" (p. 5). In the wake of a wide array of practices, descriptions, and meanings under the umbrella of organizational development, the context of each school site emerged as a decisive factor for school leaders to determine what best fit their setting.

The Impacts of Organizational Development

Leithwood (2011) succinctly captured the significance of the core leader practice of organization development: "The organizational setting in which people work shapes much of what they do" (p. 60). Leaders who practice organizational development:

- fostered organizational conditions for staff to enact student goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005), and

- created the conditions for equity-focused work (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Khalifa, 2018; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Murphy et al., 2006; Skrla et al., 2004).

Organizational Development Fostered Organizational Conditions for Staff to Enact Student Goals. Sebring et al. (2006) posited, "We observed that in schools that were actively restructuring, the principal often helped to stimulate, nurture, and guide faculty members and other staff to help actualize the vision" (p. 10). Leithwood et al. (2020) additionally asserted that the most indirect yet powerful way that leaders improve teaching and learning is by improving school and classroom conditions, a finding echoed

by Hallinger and Heck (2002) and Heck and Hallinger (2014). A common tenet in the literature was the organization of a collaborative culture along with the structures necessary to support them (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006; Sebring et al., 2006). Leaders who built a collaborative culture and then shared their instructional leadership with their teachers acted "less of an inspector of teacher practice and more of a facilitator of continual teacher growth" (Hitt & Tucker, 2016, p. 534).

Much of the research likewise supported leaders organizing work by distributing it among their stakeholders. More than any other entity, school-based leaders influence a wide range of conditions in a school building, including maintenance, budgeting, hiring, and instruction. The principal in most schools is the chief executive officer (CEO) (Dubin, 1991). Most principals would argue they are also the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Chief Operations Officer (COO), and sometimes custodian, receptionist, and data manager. In the wake of these many responsibilities, school-based leaders need to share the work in order to accomplish the schools' goals to support more academically productive students (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marzano et al., 2005). Consequently, as with setting directions, Leithwood et al. (2020) and Hitt and Tucker (2016) emphasized the distribution or sharing of leadership as a key feature of organizational development. In particular, Leithwood et al. (2020) posited that distributed leadership, such as giving appropriate instructional decision-making to teachers, builds the "organisational conditions that foster high quality teaching and generate improvements in learner outcomes" (p. 3).

Organizational Development Created the Conditions for Equity-Focused

Work. As leaders developed and restructured their school organizations, they established

inequities as not merely a side aspect of the vision but as its ever-present focus. Ishimaru

and Galloway (2014) asserted that "exemplary leadership practice is characterized by an

organizational culture of continuous, collaborative inquiry for improving and enacting

instructional practices for equity" (p. 113). In order to maintain the spotlight on

minoritized populations, the research postulated that the means of accomplishing this

included personalizing the environment to reflect students' backgrounds by providing

"mentoring and advising structures for students, creating ways for students to exercise

leadership and personal responsibility, and designing learning experiences that are

personally and individually engaging for students" (Murphy et al., 2006, pp. 557-558).

Additionally, school leaders could build into its organization regular equity audits

(Khalifa, 2018; Skrla et al., 2004) as well as equity traps—"ways of thinking that prevent

educators from believing that their students of color can be successful learners"

(McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, pp. 601-602). As school-based leaders organized their

schools to focus on equity, the achievement of all students, especially the traditionally

marginalized, could be realized.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership

While setting directions and organizational development emerged as mediating

influences on student learning, school-based leaders must also examine their core values

in order for their practices to be based in social justice and thus address the achievement

gap for traditionally marginalized student populations. Leithwood et al. (2020) contended

that while schools were charged to address many academic goals, "Equity is arguably the

most prominent in these outcomes" (p. 4). Subsequently, CRSL emerged as a framework to facilitate school-based leaders' work with minoritized populations. In that context, Khalifa et al. (2016) presented scholarship on the "unique characteristics of a culturally responsive school leader" to define what it means for school-based leaders to support their marginalized students, including Black and Latinx children.

Influences of Culturally Responsive School Leadership

The majority of the frameworks examined in Table 1 acknowledged equity as a factor. Murphy et al. (2006) spoke to "creating powerful, equitable learning opportunities for students" (p. 12) while Hallinger and Heck (1998) underscored the need for leaders to consider contextual factors within the cultural context of a school's greater community. Similarly, Sebring et al. (2006) argued for inclusive leadership that helped disadvantaged communities build social capital, while Hitt and Tucker (2016) appealed for school leaders to be "tending to and building upon diversity" (p. 544).

Towards this end, Khalifa et al. (2016) located the CRSL framework firmly in the scholarship on school-based leaders'

- impact on student learning (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006),

- transformational influence on the school environment and instruction (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Drago-Severson, 2012; Leithwood, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), and

- relationships with their students (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Khalifa, 2013).

On the basis of this core scholarship, Khalifa et al. (2016) affirmed the school-based leaders' essential role in addressing traditionally marginalized students and the education

debt they were owed: "Administrators will either resist or reproduce and reify oppression that is already present in schools" (p. 63).

In addition to the scholarship on school-based leaders' influence on students and learning, Khalifa et al. (2016) likewise drew from social justice research, particularly that of Brown (2004), Cooper (2009), Dantley and Tillman (2006), and Theoharis (2007). Additionally, Khalifa et al. (2016) referred to the literature on the anti-oppressive work of Gooden and Dantley (2012) and Kumashiro (2000), defined by the latter as "education that works against various forms of oppression" (p. 1). The specific focus of Khalifa et al.'s (2016) framework on cultural responsiveness was rooted in the culturally-responsive classroom works of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2002; 2010). Additionally, Khalifa et al. (2016) derived the leader aspects of cultural responsiveness in racially and linguistically diverse schools from Madhlangobe (2009) and Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012).

The Emergence of a Culturally Responsive School Leadership Framework

From the scholarship on leadership and social justice, CRSL rose as a framework for school-based leaders (Khalifa et al., 2016), which was defined as a "dynamic, fluid set of behaviors that regularly (re)develop the individual and the organization based on a steady stream of data from the school and community" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 60). Furthermore, CRSL is an ongoing, iterative set of values, behaviors and practices for school leaders that is not merely focused on identifying anti-oppressive aspects of education, but also on the practice of a strengths-based mindset that seeks to identify, affirm, and institutionalize "authentic cultural practices of students" (p. 1278).

While much of the research on CRSL occurred in minority-majority schools in urban areas populated by students of color (Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2013; Webb-Johnson & Carter, 2007), it became important for all school-based leaders to have a stake in the examination and utilization of culturally responsive values and practices. As referenced earlier, students of color were the fastest growing demographic in the United States. While White students have been predicted to decrease 10% between by 2026–2027, Black, Hispanic, and two-or-more-race identified students have been predicted to increase 19%, 30%, and 42%, respectively (Hussar & Bailey, 2018). Since these very students often "perform worse on nearly every educational measure valued by U.S. schools" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1276), the country's schools will require leaders who are committed to becoming culturally responsive to meet the needs of these students.

Khalifa et al. (2016) thus offered four strands of behavior in this framework for school-based leaders to be culturally responsive. These school leaders:

- critically self-reflect on leadership behaviors;

- develop culturally responsive teachers;

- promote culturally responsive/inclusive school environments; and

- engage students, parents, and indigenous contexts (p. 1283).

Within each of these strands resided eight values and practices for school leaders to implement CRSL. The first strand, critical self-reflection by the school leader, was described as having "an awareness of self and his/her values, beliefs, and/or dispositions when…serving poor children of color" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1280). This focus on one's inner motivations was not just for personal growth, but also for the purpose of transforming the school.

The subsequent two strands, developing culturally responsive teachers and promoting culturally responsive/inclusive school environments, flowed from critical self-reflection: "School leaders, in turn, are responsible for ensuring that their teachers are culturally responsive, and that the vision of the school imbues cultural responsiveness" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1287). The final strand, engaging students, parents, and indigenous contexts, likewise spoke to CRSL's focus not just merely on the leader, but also on the structures, organizations, and systems within a school and the stakeholders who interact within these. Together, these four interconnected values/behavior strands and their identified practices provided school-based leaders who aspire to be culturally responsive with substantial guidance to personally apply within their schools. Khalifa (2018), however, argued that one of the four behavior strands precedes the others: "A first and continuing act of culturally responsive school leaders is critical self-reflection" (p. 74).

The Significance of Critically Self-Reflective Leaders

For the purposes of this study, critical self-reflection emerged as an optimum mediator for a school-based leader's impact on student achievement. Also referred to in the research as critical consciousness (Brown, 2004; Dantley, 2005), "critical self-reflection is an iterative process that involves personal and structural reflections" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 63), a practice he argued can be developed. Based on the work of Capper et al. (2006), as well as Young and Laible (2000), Khalifa et al. (2016) posited that the practice of critical self-reflection engendered the personal growth of leaders as it "unearths their personal biases, assumptions, and values that stem from their cultural backgrounds" (p. 1285). This included leaders addressing their own power and privilege

while identifying the manner in which they have participated and been complicit in replicating these. Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) added, "At the exemplary level, leadership engages in personal and intellectual work to understand how privilege, power, and oppression operate—both

historically and currently—in school and society" (p. 118).

Therefore, a critically self-reflective school leader would be endowed with the "ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 61). Likewise, Brown (2004) asserted this to be "a process of experiential learning, critical self-reflection, and rational discourse that can be stimulated by people, events, or changes in contexts that challenge the learner's basic assumptions of the world. Transformative learning leads to a new way of seeing" (p. 706). As Gordon (1990) reminded us, "Critiquing your own assumptions about the world –especially if you believe the world works for you—is a formidable task" (p. 88).

For critically self-reflective leaders, this task of transformative learning must not end at the personal level. The practice of personal critical self-reflection must extend to her school and its staff to institutionalize this practice within its structures, policies, and programs. Equally importantly, she must possess the "courage to push colleagues and staff to critically self-reflect upon their own personal and professional roles in oppression and anti-oppressive works" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 61). This included challenging Whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in schools which "focuses specifically on Whiteness and its link to racism [and] centers on the ways that Whiteness influences how White educators construct beliefs about and work with children and families of color" (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011, p. 1334).

School leaders could address these beliefs by identifying both explicit and implicit inequitable practices within their schools. Explicit practices include tracking, requiring students to speak English only, and/or communicating only in English with indigenous communities. In a similar vein, implicit practices might include addressing the mindset of teachers who assume every student of color is poverty-stricken and comes from a broken home, which denotes a deficit-based mindset (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011).

To further institutionalize the practices of cultural responsiveness, school-based leaders uncovered these biased practices and structures through the use of relevant data and equity audits that underscored the unmet needs of minoritized students, their families, and the communities at large (Khalifa, 2018; Skrla et al., 2004). These data were inclusive of traditional quantitative means of measurement such as standardized testing, student grades, and discipline disproportionality data. However, qualitative data derived from minoritized stakeholder voices assumed equal, if not greater significance. When leaders invited marginalized students and communities to freely express the manner in which they experience oppression with the school walls, which Khalifa (2018) called "critique in public space" (p. 68), important steps were taken to create more trust with marginalized communities and to forge a greater sense of belonging.

Further, school-based leaders must view critical self-reflection as a continuing practice as opposed to a one-time endeavor. "Research suggests that impactful critical self-reflection is an iterative process that involves personal and structural reflections in a constant state of change, combating the ever-morphing systems of oppression that our students face" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 63). For example, in years past students who wanted to

attend college took just a handful of AP classes. However, as more students, including those of color, began to take AP classes over the decades, the number of AP courses taken by White and Asian students increased as well (Klugman, 2013). To this end, Khalifa (2018) observed:

> Racism and other types of oppression are so ubiquitous that they are often rendered invisible, or considered normal. But they are also ever-morphing, and privilege is self-protective and re-entrenching. Critical self-reflection allows leaders to see how oppression and marginalization is happening, *now*—and to catch it as it newly positions itself in organizations. (p. 62)

The Institutionalism of Critical Self-reflection

To see the "now" of oppression and to detect its pivot to something new, Khalifa (2018) offered six critical self-reflection categories (see Table 6), each with "questions to help disentangle privilege from oppression" (p. 77). These six types or spaces of critical self-reflection included the following: personal, content, structural, community-based, organizational, and sustainable. Each of these contained "critical questions" that school-based leaders could adopt to institutionalize critical self-reflection in their schools in order to tackle both existing and future forms of oppression.

Table 6

Moving Toward Institutional Critical Self-Reflection

Types/spaces of critical self-reflection (Khalifa, 2018)	Critical questions
Personal critical self-reflection	• How have I enjoyed privilege over other groups, especially those that I serve in my school? • How do I continue to benefit from systemic privileges that I did not earn? • How have I contributed to the oppression of groups I serve? • Do I share our racial background in school and other public places, and use it as an opportunity to discuss racial oppressions?

Types/spaces of critical self-reflection (Khalifa, 2018)	Critical questions
Content critical self-reflection	• Am I aligning my discussions and agenda items at staff meetings with equity? • Do I support staff in their lesson planning and CRSL curriculum development? • Are communications with parents in their native language? • Does communication reflect their epistemologies and interests? • How do I ensure that messages from the school are accountable and representative of community-based perspectives and interests? • How do I know if my teachers are using student experiences and community epistemology throughout their classroom curriculum and learning materials?
Structural critical self-reflection	• Do I leverage school resources in ways that center the needs of minoritized students? • Is my program regularly examined to identify how we are marginalizing or disadvantaging students? • Are programs—such as special education, *ELL*, and remedial tracks—disproportionately and negatively impacting minoritized students? • Do minoritized students have access to the same social capital networks as non-minoritized students?
Community-based critical self-reflection	• How am I including parents (or caregiver) voice in school governance and policy making? • Do parents feel comfortable in this school? • To what extent do the staff and the focus of school dialogue reflect the community being served?
Organizational critical self-reflection	• Am I hiring staff who are consistent with community demographics and who are willing to be self-reflective around issues of oppression? • Am I ensuring that I hire staff who have embraced (or will agree to embrace) anti-oppression and antiracism? • Am I criticizing and overlooking minoritized candidates for reasons that go unnoticed in White middle-class teacher candidates? • Do I get the necessary support from the district to do CRSL work?
Sustainable critical self-reflection	• In what ways do I routinely and systematically ask the questions in this chart (and others like them)? • How do I make my staff, my institution, and myself accountable to these (and similar) questions? • How am I tracking culturally responsive leadership and teaching consistently throughout the school year?

Note. From Khalifa (2018).

Personal critical self-reflection is as it sounds and was described previously—the leader's work to uncover her own beliefs about race. Content critical self-reflection focused on both instructional content and the content of any communication with staff, students, or community while structural self-reflection addressed programs, financial resources, and other structures within the school. Community-based critical self-reflection entailed the manner in which a school gives voice to its marginalized

stakeholders, while organizational critical self-reflection referred to practices such as hiring and support from the school system. Finally, sustainable critical self-reflection pertained to how school-based leaders make tracking the school's cultural responsiveness a regular, systematic practice. These types of critical self- reflection and their corresponding questions will be explored further in Chapter Three.

School-based Leadership: Values and Practices

With the comprehensive review of both the literature on core leader actions and culturally responsive leader behaviors concluded, the final piece of this literature review concerned those values and practices that have increased Black and Latinx participation in AP courses. Overall, school leaders who increased student of color participation in advanced courses were committed to socially just and equitable actions that then shaped their school cultures into places attaching great importance to equity and excellence for all students (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Evans, 2013; Flores & Gomez, 2011; Martinez et al., 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). Belle (2019) suggested that socially-just leaders "truly see students for who they are and where they come from and recognize them as valuable contributors to the classroom space" (p. 18). Similarly, Blankstein and Noguera (2016) defined equity as "a commitment to ensure that every student receives what he or she needs to succeed (p. 3).

With social justice at the forefront, existing scholarship identified eight values and practices of school-based leaders who have accomplished the proportional distribution of Black and Latinx students in advanced high school courses. These included believing in the abilities of Black and Latinx students, leading from cultural relevancy and responsiveness, possessing a strengths-based mindset, using data to inform decisions,

identifying and removing barriers, allocating resources, embedding scaffolding and supports, and being willing to take professional risks.

Belief in the Abilities of Black and Latinx Students

First, school leaders must value an unwavering belief in these students' abilities to succeed in rigorous classes in order to increase Black and Latinx participation in advanced courses (Heffter, 2008; Kyburg et al., 2007; Murakami et al., 2013). In studying the relationship between principals' values and their impacts on upper course work opportunities for students of color, Wood (2010) found that principals who believed that all students should be prepared for college had higher percentages of students of color taking advanced coursework. Similarly, Kyburg et al. (2007) discovered two key findings through observations and interviews with administrators, counselors, teachers, and gifted minority students at three urban, minority-majority schools that had witnessed increased students of color enrollment in AP courses. First, these successful leaders displayed "a pervasive and consistent belief that these students could succeed," and second, they expected their school staffs to have this conviction as well (Kyburg et al., 2007, p. 173). Based on this overarching belief, many leaders acted as mentors to students taking advanced course work for the first time, offered their personal support to them, and directly communicated their confidence in their ability to be academically successful (Theokas, 2013).

Cultural Relevancy and Responsiveness

According to Ladson-Billings (1995), cultural relevancy occurred when students "accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools and other institutions perpetuate" (p. 469). Khalifa et al.

(2016) further defined cultural relevancy for leaders as those who "are responsible for promoting a school climate inclusive of minoritized students, particularly those marginalized within most school contexts" (p.1274). Similarly, Weldon and Martinez (2014) offered examples of effective leaders from Texas that produced cultures with which students of color could identify. According to the authors, these culturally responsive leaders intentionally linked students' cultural identities to a college-going identity which, in turn, resulted in more students of color participating in AP classes (p. 199). For example, realizing that Latinx daughters particularly needed the support and approval of their mothers if they wanted to attend college, one culturally responsive leader organized "Con Mi Madre," a family college preparatory mother/daughter program aimed at getting Latinx girls into college (p. 214). This effective leader personalized her school's environment to match students' backgrounds, a behavior that Hitt and Tucker (2016) defined as a key leader practice.

Many school leaders who have decreased racial disparities in advanced course work utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) to inform their actions (Daher 2018; Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). Notably, CRT "begins with the notion that racism is intricately sewn into the fabric of American society and that it appears both normal and natural to people" (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011, p. 1334). Effective leaders subsequently realized that due to the disconcerting pervasiveness of racism in society, they must work through their own perceptions about race to determine how they will imbue race into their leadership (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011, p. 1336).

Similarly, in their study of six White successful urban principals, Theoharis and Haddix (2011) cited the example of "Principal Natalie," who increased the number of

students pursuing post-secondary education from 68% to 80%. Natalie identified having a CRT lens as fundamental in her decision-making actions that resulted in successful outcomes for minority students. Additionally, she underscored the importance of being able to talk openly about race with her staff and offering culturally responsive professional development for them (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). Khalifa et al. (2016) also reiterated the importance of principals like Natalie who understand connections between race and their corresponding culturally responsive behaviors; "unless promoted by the principal, implementation of cultural responsiveness can run the risk of being disjointed or short-lived in a school," (p. 1274) thus resulting in the continuation of inequitable outcomes for students of color.

Strengths-based Mindset

Culturally responsive school leaders who have increased the number of Black and Latinx students in upper courses subsequently viewed their students from a strengths-based approach instead of a deficit mindset (Murakami et al., 2013). Hitt and Tucker (2016) found that effective school-based leaders "approach their organizations from a strengths-based perspective in that they see the best in people and situations" (p. 554). This is of key importance as students of color were often viewed by school leaders as problems that needed to be "fixed." Black and Latinx students were then "faced with trying to succeed in public education systems that perpetually classify them as 'at-risk'" (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 111). In contrast, effective leaders develop their own "ideologies, skills, and commitments needed to reject deficit-based views and actions and serve children in a way that affirms them as whole social, emotional and cultural beings" (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 112).

Correspondingly, Theoharis and O'Toole (2011) asserted that effective, socially just leaders are "informed and buoyed by two sources: an asset-based orientation toward language and knowledge of the research on second language acquisition" (p. 650). In that context, Weldon and Martinez (2014) provided instances of school leaders who viewed the social capital of ELL—their cultures, families' customs, and language—as assets to be celebrated and utilized toward a college-readiness goal. These leaders took concrete actions in promoting Black and Latinx students into upper course work by creating appropriate instructional materials, teaching their staffs best practices for students of color and English learners, and building educational programs based on the strengths of Latinx students in order to ensure "they meet scholastic standards, graduate successfully from secondary and postsecondary institutions, and contribute meaningfully to society" (Murakami et al., 2013, p.1).

Use of Data

An additional key practice of school leaders who have increased the participation of Black and Latinx students in advanced coursework was the use and application of relevant school data to promote "continual improvement" (Hitt & Tucker, 2016. These leaders disaggregated student achievement data by racial subgroups to determine the degree of disproportionality existing in their upper level courses. This information was then delivered to key stakeholders and used as a lever to motivate them to address racial disproportionally (Ascher & Maguire, 2007; Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Daher, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2010; Theokas & Saaris, 2013).

In his study that encompassed 26 school leaders in Orange County (CA), Daher (2018) found that effective leaders analyzed data that addressed the deficiencies in their

schools' climate and culture first, specifically those that contributed to the widening of

the "AP access gap" (p. 30)—a finding echoed in much of the existing research

(Armstrong, 2018; Evans, 2013; Kent, 2014; Murakami et al., 2013; Martinez &

Everman, 2017; McClafferty Jarsky et al., 2009; Ovando & Cavazos, 2004; Rios, 2012).

These data included stakeholders' opinions, values, and willingness to work on upper

course racial disparity. It was also noteworthy that Flores and Gomez (2011) warned

leaders not to assume key stakeholders such as staff, parents, community, students of

color, and non-students of color are wanting or willing to address the under-enrollment of

Blacks and Latinx students in advanced course such as AP. Instead, effective school

leaders first assessed the school's readiness for change before diving headlong into

culturally responsive work (Flores & Gomez, 2011). If they found that their school was

inclined to do the work of addressing racial disparities in advanced courses, successful

school leaders then proceeded to collaborate with staff, students, parents, and community

groups so as to enact a clear mission and vision for their work. (Daher, 2018; Kent, 2014;

McClafferty Jarsky et al., 2009; Murakami et al., 2013).

     The leadership of the San José Unified School District in California (SJUSD)

serves as a poignant example. They "leveraged rich data" to determine which culture and

climate aspects inhibited students of color from taking AP courses (Theokas & Saaris,

2013). They determined that students of color who were not being challenged by standard

course work did not move to AP classes because they felt unwelcomed when they or their

friends had tried upper level courses. With these data in hand, school leaders identified

potential AP students and devised strategies with them to address the challenging

environments that they encountered in those classes. Within a seven-year time span,

2005-2012, SJUSD school leaders had doubled the participation of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

Identification and Removal of Barriers

In addition to utilizing data to address racial disparities in advanced course work, an additional practice of leaders who have decreased students of color disproportionality was identifying and removing barriers that inhibited Black and Latinx enrollment in rigorous classes (Childress et al., 2009; College Board, 2002c; Corra & Lovaglia, 2012; Theokas & Saaris, 2013; Wood, 2012). Culturally responsive leaders understood that fundamental and systematic inequities existed for Black and Latinx students and thus stayed vigilant for hidden impediments that prevented these students from pursuing advanced course work (Yonezawa et al., 2002). Effective school leaders searched for these barriers, both the obvious and understated, and subsequently worked on creative solutions for their students of color.

For example, Childress et al. (2009) noted that after initiating an open enrollment policy to remove "institutional barriers and sorting mechanisms," (p. 123), Montgomery County Public Schools (MD) experienced significant growth in student of color participation in advanced classes. In a thorough review of their system's achievement data, policies, and culture, MCPS school leaders identified two main barriers to Black and Latinx student enrollment –academic tracking and educators' belief that AP classes were not suitable for all students. As a result of de-tracking classes throughout the system and supporting principals in their work to change faculty mindsets, Black and Latinx participation in honors and AP courses increased. In 1999, 54 percent of the district's high school students took at least one honors or AP course; within that 54 percent, 34

percent of Black and Latinx students took at least one honors or AP course. By 2008, 74 percent of all students, including 59 percent of Black students and 56 percent of Latinx students, were enrolled in at least one honors or AP course. MCPS leaders were committed to uncovering and addressing the existing barriers by conducting a thorough assessment of its system.

In contrast, Rowland and Shircliffe (2016) studied a Florida high school whose leaders initiated open enrollment AP classes, believing limited access was the main barrier for students of color; thus, they assumed open access would erase the racial disparities on its own. The data, however, revealed otherwise. While Black student AP participation increased by 1% and Latinx by 3%, Asian (3.9%) and White (11.6%) students experienced greater gains (Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016). Through interviews with principals and key teachers and reviews of relevant documents, Rowland and Shircliffe (2016) uncovered the main barrier to the enrollment of minority students. Similar to the belief encountered by leaders in MCPS, the researchers found that administrators, teachers, and support staff alike exhibited a "gatekeeper mentality" that "only a certain type of student 'belongs' in AP classes" (p. 413). This example indicated that while an open enrollment policy is a necessary first step toward increasing Black and Latinx enrollment in advanced classes, it was also important to identify and address less obvious but significant gatekeeping barriers that essentially tracked students out of AP courses and back into standard, less rigorous courses.

A significant practice that effective school leaders were known to utilize in order to address institutional gatekeeping barriers was the removal of academic tracking (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Burris et al., 2008; Corra et al., 2011; Kanno & Kangas,

2014). In this regard, Taliaferro and DeCuir-Gunby (2008) asserted that "educational trajectory" or "early tracking" almost singlehandedly accounted for the disproportionality of Black students in AP courses (p. 175). In order to address this problem, some successful leaders removed traditional tracking schemes of low/middle/high and required all students to take at least one AP course to meet graduation requirements (Duncheon & DeMatthews, 2018). Other effective leaders implemented "opt out' policies in which all students were initially and automatically enrolled in AP courses and only moved to honors by parental request—with no low pathway offered (Theokas & Saaris, 2013).

Combining standard and advanced/honors classes in one classroom is a similar practice employed by schools who have increased upper course minority enrollment. By allowing students in the same course and period to pursue differentiated standard or honors work, all students were exposed to rigorous honors coursework for one quarter, which allowed them to choose either the honors or standard pathway based on their experiences (Rudolph, 2018). Because either choice allowed students to stay in the same racially and academically diverse classroom where they began the year, more students of color felt comfortable choosing the honors pathway (Rudolph, 2018). At one high school that practiced placing standard and honors students in the same class, a two-year disaggregation of the data indicated that all races and levels of students, including academically gifted, were demonstrating better academic growth than tracked classes from previous years (Rogers, 2019). This "blending" of standard and honors classes eliminated potential barriers that were sometimes experienced by Black and Latinx students, including being accused of "acting white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Tyson et al., 2005) and being the only student of color in the class (Yonezawa et al., 2002).

Through these barrier-removing measures, effective school leaders demonstrated the value of exposing Black and Latinx students to rigorous coursework by including safe opportunities for them to experience it (Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016).

Finally, once open enrollment policies were enacted and barriers removed, successful school leaders could identify Black and Latinx students who either were prepared to take rigorous courses, or who with support, had the potential to do so (Theokas & Saaris, 2013). The San José Unified School District, for example, actively recruited students of color for advanced courses through group meetings and one on one conversations (Theokas & Saaris, 2013). Other effective leaders used the College Board's AP Potential Report, which recommended students for specific AP courses based on their PSAT scores (College Board, 2012a). Effective leaders additionally moved beyond the AP Potential report and found students by using other measures— student classwork, tests, and writing samples; teacher recommendations; and specific outreach to families of color in order to invite their children to enroll in upper level courses (Armstrong, 2018).

Allocation of Resources

With the removal of obvious and hidden barriers, coupled with the subsequent influx of Black and Latinx students into advanced courses, effective school leaders leveraged resources to support this work. Oakes and Guiton (1995) asserted that the equitable distribution of resources was key to the elimination of the racial disparities. At the district level, effective school leaders were cognizant of the fact that addressing systematic racial disparities required a long-range K-12 plan which aligned resources toward a common goal. In MCPS, the district backwards mapped their long-range plan to eliminate educational gaps and provided quality education for all students that included

advanced high school courses (Childress et al., 2009). Likewise, the district invested in

diagnostic testing to pinpoint students' academic needs, made differentiation a major

focus of all teaching, and increased literacy supports. The creative usage of time in

equitable ways was another key avenue for effective leaders to reduce racial disparities in

advanced classes. Successful leaders created a daily bell schedule that included time for

additional instruction and skill practice, as well as interventions for new honors and AP

students (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016). Swanson and Nagy (2014) urged leaders to

create systems and structures for first-time students in advanced course work in order to

provide them with more time to develop the academic talent, skills, and confidence.

The allocation of human resources toward the goal of ending racial disparity in

upper level courses was another practice of effective school leaders; these leaders

assigned their best teachers—those who offered scaffolding support joined to high

expectations—to classes where students of color were experiencing advanced course

work for the first time (Bavis et al., 2015; Duncheon & DeMatthews, 2018; Swanson &

Nagy, 2014). Leaders supported these teachers and their classes with additional personnel

such as teacher assistants, academic coaches, and AP coordinators whose sole

responsibility was to support new student enrollment (Swanson & Nagy, 2014).

Finally, the appropriation of financial resources by school leaders was key to

increasing minority participation in course work. The expansion of advanced classes

necessitated additional purchases such as course books, diagnostic tests, and pre-testing

materials, as well as the provision of test fees for needy students, professional

development for staff, hiring new teachers, and unanticipated expenditures (Bavis et al.,

2015; Duncheon & DeMatthews, 2018; Kyburg et al., 2007; McKillip et al., 2013; Swanson & Nagy, 2014; Theokas & Saaris, 2013).

Supports for Key Stakeholders

The vast majority of educational leaders described in the literature who increased Black and Latinx students' access and enrollment into advanced coursework provided significant supports for their stakeholders which included instructional leadership. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) posited that changing a school's culture requires "instructional leadership, in which administrators take responsibility for shaping improvements at the classroom level" (p. 52). Effective leaders recognized the fact that teachers and support personnel would need professional development in academic skill building and differentiation, as well as in the utilization of culturally responsive, strength-based actions (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Childress et al., 2009; Kyburg et al., 2007; McKillip et al., 2013). Additionally, many leaders set up formal collaborative units such as professional learning communities (PLCs) to align planning and instruction while also increasing accountability (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Childress, et al., 2009; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; McKillip et al., 2013).

Effective leaders were also aware that school faculties were not the only groups in need of significant supports; leaders who enrolled more students of color into advanced courses also worked with students, families, and communities to understand and address their needs—a key leader practice that increased student achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Three categories of supports needed to promote the enrollment of students of color in upper course work emerged from the literature: academic, guidance, and social/emotional supports (Swanson & Nagy, 2014; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). Effective

leaders offered creative academic support for students experiencing advanced course work for the first time, including supplemental support programs such as the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) that were imbedded within the school year and academic "boot camps" in the summer. By offering supports both during and after the school year, first-time students in upper classes could catch up on needed skills and also be pre-taught curriculum, which gave them an advantage over their peers (Armstrong, 2018; Ascher & Maguire, 2007; Daher, 2018; Weldon & Martinez, 2014).

For ELLs who were entering advanced courses for the first time, school leaders who successfully integrated these students first let go of "their assumption that English proficiency must be fully in place before ELLs are ready to take high level courses" and then offered "linguistic support within the context of a rigorous academic curriculum" (Kanno & Kangas, 2014, p. 874). In their qualitative case study of ELLs at a large public high school in Pennsylvania, Kango and Kanna (2014) found that effective school leaders provided ELLs with high-level academic curriculum while also supplying language scaffolds to make such learning possible. Other effective supports used by school leaders for ELLs included dual language classes, curricular support in students' first language, as well as reduced class sizes (Flores & Gomez, 2011; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

In addition to academic supports, students of color and their families also needed guidance supports. Parents of Black and Latinx students often had limited access to key information and were unsure how to navigate the educational system (Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008). Current research indicated that students of color were less likely to have the cultural capital to understand the importance of upper level courses. They were also unlikely to know how to navigate that world (Murakami et al., 2013; Wilson et

al., 2013). In response, successful school-based leaders tasked their student services personnel to deliver advanced course information specifically to the under-enrolled and their families to provide them with the same information as their peers (Armstrong, 2018; Duncheon & DeMatthews, 2016; Wakelyn, 2009).

Finally, school leaders who have increased Black and Latinx participation in advanced course work provided social-emotional supports for these students as well as their families (McKillip et al., 2013; Swanson & Nagy, 2014). When students of color discovered they were the only one or one of a few students of color in advanced classes, some of them experienced stereotype threat and social isolation, both of which made it difficult to make the transition to upper course work (Corra & Lovaglia, 2012; Steele, 1997). If needed, successful school-based leaders planned for these supports and trained the appropriate staff to be in place. McKillip et al. (2013) studied a small public 6-12 school that served traditionally marginalized students who were identified as college-bound. Using a case study format supported by observations, focus groups, and interviews to gain information through multiple realities of a situation, McKillip et al. discovered the school's college-ready culture was contingent on both mental and emotional support for their first-time advanced course work takers in order to ensure their success.

Risk-taking

Throughout the literature, a concluding practice observed on increasing student of color participation in advanced course work was the willingness of school leaders to take risks. Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) offered:

this includes defining core values around democracy, social justice, and equity; having the will to act; taking risks to put themselves on the line; and modeling continuous learning and inquiry in pursuit of equity. Leadership at this level continually asks: Who are we serving/not serving and why? Who is being included/excluded and how? (p. 118)

As leaders have taken risks by reallocating resources such as funds, teachers, supplies, time, and other assets for additional under-served students, these actions might not be welcomed by other students and their families who use "opportunity hoarding" in order to retain their advantage (Kelly & Price, 2011; Kyburg, et al., 2007; Rowland & Shircliffe, 2016). The potential for lower test scores due to open enrollment was another risk taken by school leaders when opening advanced course enrollment to everyone. According to Wood (2010), principals who believed that all students should take advanced courses to be college-ready were not concerned about overall scores decreasing and addressed those concerns directly. For example, when district parents in the Federal Way Public School (WA) system expressed their apprehension about AP courses being "watered down" due to open enrollment, high school principals held community meetings to address their concerns and laid out their plans in order to ensure a rigorous curriculum for all students (Theokas & Saaris, 2013). Thus, effective school leaders who increased Black and Latinx participation in advanced course work were willing to take the risks to decrease racial disparities in advanced courses and viewed this work as their moral obligation (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Evans, 2013; Khalifa et al., 2016; Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015).

Thus, from this literature base, eight values and practices emerged that school-based leaders employed to increase minority participation in AP courses. These practices ranged from deeply-held values and beliefs as well as actions that put leaders' values to work, with use of data, removal of barriers, and supports for key stakeholders.

Forging a Conceptual Framework

Based on this research, the current study asked whether the values and practices described by the participants in the study reflected the three chosen leadership elements for increasing AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. To distinguish between the larger categories of leadership practices and the connecting, more specific, practices associated with minority enrollment in AP, the values and leadership practices as identified by Khalifa (2018) and Leithwood (2019)—critical self-reflection, setting directions, and organizational development—will be referred to as domains as shown in Table 7. Subsequently, critical self-reflection operationalized as a domain helped to inform school-based leaders' choices within the other two domains. In this regard, Brown (2004) posited:

> Self-reflection adds the dimension of deep examination of personal assumptions, values, and beliefs. Critical reflection merges the two terms and involves the examination of personal and professional belief systems, as well as the deliberate consideration of the ethical implications and impact of practices. (p. 720)

Thus, critical self-reflection as the first domain influenced how the second, setting directions, was enacted during vision building, the creation of high performance expectations, and school-wide acceptance of these. This work then informed how the final domain, organizational development, would build a more culturally responsive

environment for minoritized students and families. As a school-based leader both

personalized and institutionalized regular critical self-reflection within her school through

setting directions and organization development, she would be able to respond to

inequities and forms of oppression that existed for her minoritized population.

Table 7

Three Chosen Domains with Corresponding Research

Setting directions: Build a shared vision	Organizational development	Critical self-reflection
Believe that all students can learn; high expectations (Leithwood, 2011)	Responds to contexts (Leithwood, et al. 2019)	Infuses a critical consciousness in schools (Brown, 2004; Dantley, 2005)
Sets specific, shared, and short-term goals (Leithwood et al., 2020)	Makes data-informed decisions toward collaboration, sharing of instructional knowledge sharing instructional Knowledge Sharing (Sun & Leithwood, 2015)	Critiques own assumptions about world (Gordon, 1990)
Creates a vision of the that school imbues cultural responsiveness and inclusivity, validating minority students (Khalifa et al., 2016,)	Encourages creation, and experimentation" to change classroom instruction (Sun & Leithwood, 2015)	Analyzes "whiteness" within the educational system (Theoharis & Haddix, 2011)
Uncovers and brings to light marginalized student populations (Leithwood et al., 2020; Ishimaru & Galloway 2014)	Solve organizational problems with new policies and rules or through restructuring (Sun & Leithwood, 2015)	Works toward strengths-based mindset (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011)
Fosters the acceptance of group goals (Leithwood, et al., 2019)	Allocates resources in support of the school's vision and goals (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020)	Uncovers personal biases, assumptions, and values that stem from their cultural background (Capper et al., 2006; Khalifa et al., 2016; Young & Laible, 2000)
Creates high performance expectations for all students (Leithwood et al., 2020; Sun & Leithwood, 2015)		Allows for "authentic cultural practices of students" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1278)
Impacts staff in positive ways (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Locke & Latham, 2002; Sun & Leithwood, 2015)	Structures the organization to facilitate collaboration (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2006 Sebring et al., 2006)	Incorporates data from the school and community (Khalifa, 2018)
		Conducts equity audits (Khalifa, 2018; Skrla, et al.,2004)
	Builds productive relationships with families and communities	

Setting directions: Build a shared vision	Organizational development	Critical self-reflection
Supports adult learners through changes (Drago-Severson, 2012)	Connect the school to its wider environment (Hallinger & Heck 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2020)	Is vigilant in monitoring how oppression and marginalization is happening and how it has morphed *(*Khalifa, 2018)
Creates a sense of purpose for staff (Lock & Latham, 2002; Hitt & Tucker, 2016)	Designs experiences for their teachers that by meeting the needs of their faculty (Hitt & Tucker, 2016)	Resists oppression that is already present in their schools (Khalifa, 2018)
Shares decision making (Deci & Ryan, 2008) Lower teacher turnover (Kraft et al., 2016; Ladd, 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013)		Push colleagues and staff "to critically self-reflect upon their own personal and professional roles in oppression and anti-oppressive works" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 61).
Uses vision to "challenge common patterns of inequities that lead to the disenfranchised poor urban youth" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p 1281).		

Summary

While this literature review provided important connections between the study's three actions and their impact on student achievement, school-based leaders continue to be unsure of how to proceed to support their minoritized populations, particularly because many values and practices have served as mediating variables. Sun and Leithwood (2015) thus arrived at this rather sobering conclusion:

Most leadership effects research guided by mediated models selects promising mediators but offers little or no justification for the selection in comparison with other potential choices. This is an important gap in our efforts to both understand leadership effects and to offer useful advice to practicing school leaders. Suboptimal choices of mediators by researchers potentially distort our understanding of both the nature and size of leadership effects; by implication, such choices also steer practitioners, looking to research for advice on their own practices, in directions likely to waste their time. (p. 516)

Many school-based leaders, including me, spend their days concerned that their work to educate all students to their highest potential, particularly their minoritized children, is off the mark. We have wondered if the levers we have chosen were the best ones to effect the desired changes. In addition, we have been burdened by the research that affirmed that "the principal and other administrators are not only the best positioned, but also the most responsible for ensuring that both school policy and practice are non-exclusionary (i.e., anti-oppressive) for minoritized students" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1274). Ishimaru and Galloway (2014) affirmed the need for additional study of school leadership practices and their impacts of issues of equity: "Future research might examine

how the development of equitable practices unfolds with school leadership teams on the

ground and what understandings, shared meanings, and behaviors emerge as

organizational leaders…improve their practice towards equity" (p. 121). This

underpinned the need for further research that might provide school-based leaders with

optimum mediators and levers, in connection with each other or on their own, that would

be anti-oppressive and that benefit students of color cannot be overstated.

Because the underrepresentation of Black and Latinx students enrolled in AP courses has

been a prevalent problem in U.S. high schools and has significant, enduring impacts for

students of color, their families, and the nation at large, this study sought to add to the

existing body of literature on the ways school leaders could serve minoritized students.

Critical self-reflection from CRSL (Khalifa, 2018) emerged as a possible complement to

the core practices of setting directions and organizational development (Leithwood et al.,

2020) by providing key values and behaviors that leaders might possess in order to

combat the oppressive systems that keep minoritized student populations from excelling,

including having the opportunity to enroll in AP courses.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study examined school-based leader values and practices that helped increase AP course enrollment of Black and Latinx students. The corresponding literature on school-based leadership practices, CRSL, and leader practices and values that increased minority AP participation collectively supported a conceptual framework based on the core leader domains of setting directions, organizational development (Leithwood et al., 2020), and critical self-reflection (Khalifa, 2018). This chapter describes the study's conceptual framework and its research design, which includes research questions, site, participants, and instruments. Finally, the chapter concludes with data analysis methods and addresses efforts to mitigate researcher bias and study trustworthiness.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study began with the idea that a relationship existed between the values and practices of school leaders and the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework. To analyze how school leaders' values and practices influenced the enrollment of these students, I drew upon the work of Khalifa et al. (2016) and Leithwood et al. (2020). This framework rested on the assumption that leaders must first be grounded in the core leadership value of critical self-reflection in order to enact practices, such as setting directions and organizational development, to enhance enrollment in advanced courses for minoritized students.

The frameworks of Khalifa et al. (2016) and Leithwood et al. (2020) provided several specific practices for school-based leaders to apply in their work. While the

former focused on both the values and the practices that impact the achievement of

minoritized students, the latter offered essential core practices to influence overall student

achievement. Taken together, these frameworks strengthened and enhanced the other,

potentially providing school-based leaders with practices that address all students,

including the traditionally marginalized—a combination that Leithwood et al. (2020) and

Khalifa et al. (2016) seemed to endorse. While Leithwood et al. situated their core leader

practices and subpoints in the equity leadership practices of Ishimaru and Galloway

(2014), they encouraged readers "to see Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016)" for further

discussions about equitable behaviors (p. 13). Additionally, Khalifa et al. (2016) squarely

placed CRSL in Leithwood's body of work on school leadership (Hallinger &

Leithwood, 1998; Leithwood, 1995; Leithwood et al., 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990;

2000; 2006; Leithwood et al., 2004). It was in this light that this study's conceptual

framework was designed, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework
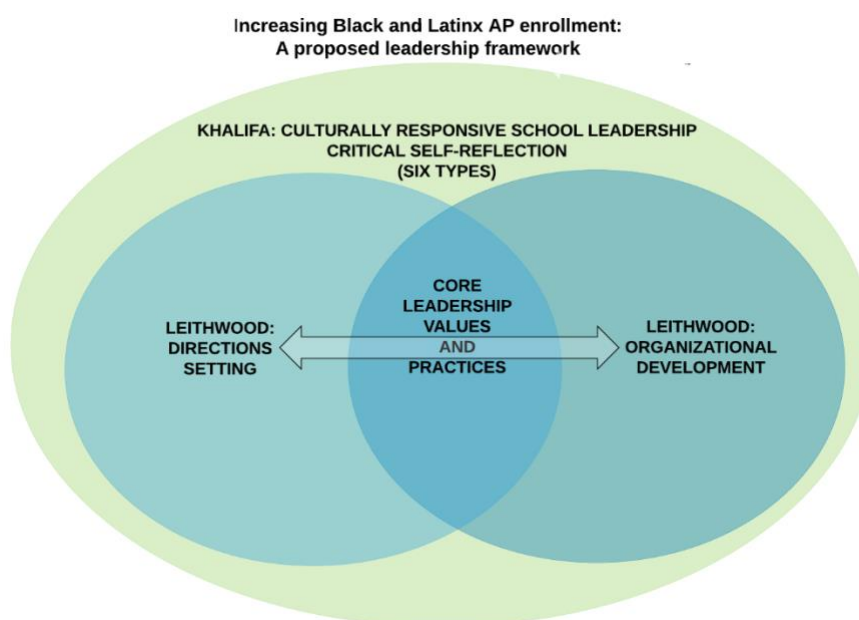
Khalifa (2018) asserted that critical self-reflection was a "first and continuing act of culturally responsive school leaders…because it is a process through which school leaders recognize and discover how their institutions and practices have been oppressive to minoritized students" (p. 74). Analogously, Dantley (2005) argued a point with which most school-based leaders are likely to agree:

> Much of the work of educational leaders is done on the run. Decisions are made in hallways, lunchrooms, and the school parking lot. Often these decisions are made from a utilitarian or strictly functionalist perspective rather than from a time of reflection and critical deliberation. (p. 664)

In the wake of the often chaotic, fast-paced world in which school-base leaders operate, critical self-reflection emerged as a significant initial and ongoing process in order for leaders to approach the domains of setting directions and organization development with their values and beliefs as the driving forces.

Consequently, the conceptual framework for this study commenced with critical self-reflection for a school-based leader's decision-making process and the overall practice. As noted previously (Table 6), Khalifa (2018) offered six categories of critical self-reflection which were "locations within and around the school where issues of oppression seem to persist" (Khalifa, 2018, pp. 76-77). While each category assumed significance, the school-based leader had to value the practice of personal critical self-reflection to build her own foundation in order to support the institutionalization of the other five. Dantley (2005) asserted that school leaders "who ground their work in

prophetic pragmatism[3] understand the essential work of self-critique. This is actualized through time devoted to critical reflection and coming to grips with the essential elements of one's sacred self" (Dantley, 2005, p. 664).

In this process, the school-based leader courageously encountered their beliefs around race and oppression and thus could assess their own systemic privilege along with its resulting influence on practices and decisions that further oppressed minoritized students. As leaders practiced the necessary initial practice of personal critical self-reflection, they eventually became better equipped to institutionalize this practice in their school by asking the questions from the remaining five categories of critical self-reflection. Through the utilization of these questions school leaders and their stakeholders could critique the full gamut of systemic structures, polices, practices, and procedures that were impacting minoritized students, their families, and their communities.

As indicated by the over-arching "bubble" of critical self-reflection, school-based leaders must practice critical self-reflection in all its forms before, during, and after utilizing the setting directions and organizational development domains. For example, as a school-based leadership team employs the setting directions practices of building and communicating a vision toward their equitable goals, they would do well to reflect critically upon these decisions before proceeding to initiate organizational development steps. Through institutionalized critical self-reflection, they could then more confidently take appropriate organizational steps for their context which might include supporting stakeholders and allocating funds toward increasing minoritized student AP enrollment.

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[3] A term coined by Cornel West: "Prophetic pragmatism is a form of thinking and seeing the world centered on democratic practices. It is an intellectual process built on the premise of existential democracy and requires one to be self-critical and self-corrective as well" (Dantley, 2005, p. 662).

Notably, the iterative nature of critical self-reflection extended beyond tangible successes such as increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment. Even if a school erased racial disproportionality in these courses, there would always be additional inequities to tackle. Toward that end, Khalifa (2018) reminded leaders why critical self-reflection should be constant, reflexive, and responsive: "impactful critical self-reflection is an iterative process that involves personal and structural reflections in a constant state of change, combating the ever-morphing systems of oppression that our students face" (p. 63).

A school that values and practices all forms of critical self-reflection on a regular basis becomes enmeshed in the ethos of school culture. Consequently, the chosen practices from the setting directions and organizational development domains would be deeply rooted in thoughtful, anti-oppressive, school-wide, critical self-reflection. Akin to the water in a fishbowl, it would be the environment through which the school moves to ensure the vitality, health, and growth of those who live within it.

Research Design

The intent of this study was to describe values and practices that facilitated leaders' understanding of actions which might contribute to increased Black and Latinx participation in AP courses and to the literature on this problem of practice. Toward this end, I conducted an organizational history case study at one racially diverse mid-Atlantic high school that over a 24 year period has focused on and increased the AP enrollment of traditionally marginalized populations, including Black and Latinx students. While a case study limits the generalizability of its findings, its strength lies in its "thick description" whose purpose "is to provide enough interpretive depth and detail that the reader can generalize findings to a narrowed context or can replicate the study in another setting"

(Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 8). Additionally, the study utilized both qualitative and quantitative means in order to answer its research questions.

Research Questions

To address this study's problem of practice, I sought to answer the following questions, beginning with the encompassing query: How can schools increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students and more importantly, sustain this work over a significant period of time? To address this question, the following three research questions emerged:

1. What are the underlying values leaders identify which contribute to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework?

2. What practices do school-based leaders identify as contributing to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework and how are they enacted?

3. How are these leadership practices captured in organizational processes at the school?

The first research question, *What are the underlying values leaders identify which contribute to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework?* addressed the leaders' "why." What foundational beliefs prompted their work to increase the enrollment of minoritized students over other competing priorities for their limited time? In other words, question one was about what drove leaders to make the choices they did.

The second research question, *What practices do school-based leaders identify which contributed to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in Advanced*

Placement courses? was the heart of this study and described the practices that leaders from the research site viewed as the levers that increased Black and Latinx enrollment. Research question three, *How are these leadership practices captured in organizational processes at the school?* sought to discover how Trailwood leadership practices were operationalized and what contextual processes brought them to fruition. Was there a particular order? How did these processes evolve throughout the 20 plus-year period?

Research Site

As detailed in Chapter One, this research was conducted at Trailwood, a Mid-Atlantic suburban high school chosen both for its demographic makeup and its success in increasing the AP enrollment of traditionally marginalized student populations, including Black and Latinx students. The school's total minority enrollment at the time of the study was 75.9% which consisted of 43.8% Hispanic, 24.9% Black, 8.1% Asian, and 5.8% mixed race. Overall, 43% of students were economically disadvantaged, with the majority of these being students of color. While its White population was 24.9%, these students came from predominately upper middle- and high-income families who were highly educated and had traditionally taken AP courses.

From 1996 to present day, three principals at Trailwood High School along with other supportive THS leaders have worked together to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. Their belief was that these students, if adequately prepared and supported, could successfully complete AP courses. As a result, THS has decreased both its Black and Latinx student AP course disproportionality rate and garnered several awards—among these, the College Board's Inspiration Award for its "exemplary work in improving the academic environment and helping students achieve the promise of higher

education…despite the social, cultural, and economic barriers that stand in the way of their students" (Trailwood website). Trailwood was one of three high schools in the nation to win this award in 2006.

Participants

In preparation for this study, I interviewed Dr. Yelton, current principal at THS. He identified nine leaders involved in the AP work at THS during these 24 years, 1996-2020 (see Appendix A). One additional leader was identified during data collection from several participants, bringing the total to 10 (see Table 8). In the first group, Initiating

Table 8

Interview Participant Information, 1987-2020

Participant	Leader Category	Years at Trailwood High	Position(s) at Trailwood High
Opal Evans	Initiating Leader	1987-2002	principal
Cate Causby	Initiating Leader	1994-2012	resource teacher for the gifted
David Parkdale	Initiating Leader	1995-2005 2005-2019	school social worker minority achievement coordinator
Clarisse Knowles	Initiating Leader	1990-1998 1998-2002 2002-2010	lead counselor assistant principal principal
Zach Stevenson	Sustaining Leader	2000-present	school counselor
Bryan Yelton	Sustaining Leader	2002-2010 2010-present	assistant principal principal
Harlan Badger	Sustaining Leader	2000-present	community supporter
Val Newsome	Second Phase Leader	2006-2010 2014-present	instructional technology teacher

Participant	Leader Category	Years at Trailwood High	Position(s) at Trailwood High
			resource teacher for the gifted Minority Women Together (MWT) & Men's Cohort sponsor
Steve Dailey	Second Phase Leader	2019-present	equity & excellence coordinator[4] MWT & Men's Cohort sponsor
Cole Ingram	Second Phase Leader	2005-present	Science teacher and Advanced Placement coordinator

Leaders (1987-2019), I located four leaders who had been instrumental in beginning the

work of increasing the AP enrollment for students of color but who had since retired from

Trailwood. This group included principals Opal Evans and Clarisse Knoll who retired in

2002 and 2010, respectively, as well as resource teacher for the gifted Cate Causby and

minority achievement coordinator David Parkdale who retired in 2014 and 2019,

respectively (see Appendix B). In the second group, Second Phase Leaders (2005-

present), I identified three leaders who had joined THS's AP Initiative for students of

color after its inception but who were currently employed at THS and integral to its

continuance: Cole Ingram, science teacher and AP coordinator; Val Newsome, the

resource teacher for the gifted after Cate Causby retired; and Steve Dailey, equity and

excellent coordinator, who had worked in the same position at a district sister high school

from 1996-2019 and had replaced David Parkdale when he retired (see Appendix C).

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[4] formerly called minority achievement coordinator

The third group, Sustaining Leaders (2000-present), was comprised of three current school leaders who had been with THS near the beginning of the AP work and who continued this work through 2020: Dr. Bryan Yelton, Ms. Knoll's then-assistant principal (2002-2010) who became THS's principal following Ms. Knoll's retirement; Zach Stevenson, counselor at Trailwood for 20 years; and Harlan Badger, a private citizen who has funded the work since 2000 (See Appendix D). With all 10 participants consenting to participate by April 2020 (Appendices E, F, & G), interviews commenced in May 2020 and were completed by the end of July 2020.

By including leaders who over a 24 year period were key in Trailwood's work to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students, this study offered a historical insight into the sustainability of Trailwood's AP Initiatives as well as the program's iterations through the years. Since this study focused on Trailwood's key school-based leaders, the participant sample excluded teachers, additional staff, students, and families.

Instrument

From this leadership sample, I conducted semi-structured interviews, the instrument having been reviewed by school-based leaders in the field and an educational scholar prior to its use with participants. These surveys provided pertinent data from each school-based leader regarding the history of Trailwood's work to increase the AP enrollment of minoritized students as well as data on the values that drove their work and the steps taken to accomplish their goal. Additionally, key written communications such as agendas, plans, national articles, and other artifacts that spoke to leaders' values, practices, and organizational processes were coded to triangulate leaders' responses in the interviews.

Semi-structured Interviews. As stated above, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with each participant (Appendices H, I, & J). The interview questions were taken from four sources: a survey of 22 questions which Leithwood (2019) graciously shared with me; Daher's (2018) dissertation; Khalifa's (2018) critical self-reflection questions; and the literature found in Chapter Two of this study on leadership practices that increased Black and Latinx AP course enrollment. To further ensure the credibility of the interviews, member-checking was employed by sharing the transcripts of each interview to its corresponding participant and making corrections, as needed.

Artifacts and Documents. In order to triangulate the data received from the interviews, I coded relevant artifacts shared by the study's participants. These included but were not limited to meeting agendas, planning documents, the school website, other forms of communications, and publications. According to Bowen (2009):

> Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. (p. 27)

These types of artifacts offered further insight into the work and demonstrated the priority that their AP work has assumed over the years.

Advanced Placement Course Enrollment Data. Table 4 in Chapter One gave quantifiable AP enrollment increases from 2006-2018; similar data for 1996 through 2005 were not retrievable from Trailwood or the College Board which holds AP data for

five years. However, general but limited AP enrollment information and responses to that

information during the period from 1996 through 2005 were revealed in the interviews

with the Initiating and Sustaining Leaders and in news articles, education periodicals,

internal THS documents, and one podcast. The 2006-2015 THS Black and Latinx AP

participation data were derived from internal Trailwood documents while 2016-2020

enrollment rates were available from the College Board's website. I was granted access to

the data with the permission of Dr. Bryan Yelton, current principal of the school. Taken

together these data illustrate the two decades increase in the AP course participation of

Black and Latinx students at Trailwood (see Appendices K & L).

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed. There were several

advantages to adopting a mixed-methods approach. According to Hays and Singh (2011),

mixed-methods provide a more "comprehensive picture" of the findings as it serves to

"triangulate data from one method to another" (p. 133). For this study, quantitative data

regarding student of color AP enrollment over the 24 year period from THS were

examined as well as data from the College Board from 2016-2020 which provided yearly

detailed statistics for each participating school. The semi-structured individual interviews

provided complementary qualitative data for this study as did key artifacts.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data from THS's demographic data and College Board

reports, I used descriptive statistics to identify multi-year averages of racial

disproportionalities. First, analyzing both THS's demographic and course participant data

were necessary to validate the school's claim of increasing Black and Latinx students in

AP courses over a 24 year period[5]. Additionally, examining the school's data sets and reports from the College Board added accuracy and depth in verifying and examining historical data of the school. These findings deepened the understanding of who was enrolling in AP courses and identified any patterns that existed including variations in the data.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Using coding and memoing, I identified *"insights, patterns, and connections"* within participant structured interviews and collected artifacts (Benaquisto, 2008, p. 2). Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) "Phases of thematic analysis," (p.87), I generated codes premised on the literature review in Chapter Two to use for analysis with both the interviews and artifacts (Appendix M). While these codes guided the beginning stages of analysis, I kept an open mind for emerging patterns and themes that demanded new codes – what Birks et al. (2008) referred to as a reflexive stance towards the data, participants, and the underlying context.

A second key piece of my qualitative analysis was the use of memoing in which "An intense relationship is established with the data, enabling the researcher to feel a heightened sensitivity to the meanings contained therein" (Birk et al., 2008, p. 69). Memoing enabled me to clarify my thinking, work through connections and confusion about the data present, and work out assumptions and initial analyses, etc. The practice of memoing facilitated my thought process before, during, and after my reviews of not only the participant interviews, but also the school artifacts. Specifically, I scheduled semi-structured interviews no more than two days apart to have a singular focus on that

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[5] The College Board only keeps schools' AP data for five years, thus this study has only the Trailwood's official AP data from the years 2016-2020.

participant. I employed memoing directly after an interview to gather initial thoughts from the data and reflexive journaling throughout the 10 observations to find possible connects, patterns, and differences. For artifacts, I again employed memoing and reflexive journaling as these were reviewed. Additionally, field notes, "written records developed within an observational period…and continually expanded and revised" were used in conjunction with memoing and reflexive journaling of both the interviews and the artifacts for the purpose of enhancing the study's trustworthiness (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 205).

Mixed-method Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was facilitated by MAXQDA 2020 software, a cross-platform application that securely managed qualitative coding and analysis, while also integrating quantitative data such as demographics and enrollment. As a result, the "thick" descriptions from leaders' interviews and relevant artifacts at THS in conjunction with school AP enrollment data and College Board reporting were able to provide actionable insights into this study's research questions and offered school-based leaders a deeper understanding of the values from which key practices emerged that have increased the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students.

Researcher Bias

As a high school principal, I brought a clear bias to this study. In the formation of my conceptual framework (*Figure 3*), I showed my hand, so to speak, as to how I thought school-based leaders should focus their attention, not just for the worthy endeavor of increasing AP enrollment of minoritized students: a leader must first critically self-reflect, particularly about social justice anti-oppressive issues before she proceeds to act.

However, the fact that I had been a principal for 10 years taught me a great deal of humility with the awareness of my limited understandings. Thus my own school-based leader experience of enacting solutions to solve wicked problems were "possibly wrong, definitely incomplete" as I was continuously in search of finding new ideas and different ways of looking at my practice with the humble acceptance of being both right and wrong in this search.

Additionally, as a White woman, I had to likewise own my racial bias and white privilege as I analyzed the data. As Khalifa et al. (2016) asserted, in critical self-reflection "an individual leader is recognizing that she or he is a cultural being influenced by multidimensional aspects of cultural identity, even as she or he attempts to do the work of leadership" (p. 1285). The six spaces/types of critical self-refection served as guides in my work as did conversations with administrative peers within my professional and personal circles.

Finally, an additional bias I had to be vigilant of was my earnest and unwavering desire to see more students of color enrolled in AP courses in general but specifically at the school I oversaw as principal. Far too often, leaders have rushed head-long into seemingly novel ideas that promise to solve the problem at hand, particularly the most pressing ones such as the inequitable treatment of Black and Latinx students in schools. As I studied THS's successes, I sought to minimize these biases by embracing a stance of curiosity, objectivity, and authentic openness to this academic exploration.

Researcher Ethics and Trustworthiness

I designed this study in a well-calibrated manner to reduce researcher bias and other threats to the study's reliability. Triangulation of the data was of prime importance

which a mixed-methods approach supports. Subsequently, descriptive statistical analyses of THS data and College Board reports were compared with interview responses and artifact reviews to test the validity of these findings. According to Hays and Singh's (2011) research, triangulation meets the criteria of credibility, transferability, confirmability, authenticity, sampling adequacy, and substantive validation. Furthermore, the use of reflexive journaling, field notes, and memoing satisfy the criteria of credibility, confirmability, authenticity, and ethical validation.

Additionally, Patton's (2011) use of reflexive questions, an examination of "what I know and how I know it," (p.55) akin to Khalifa's (2018) critical self-reflection questions, served throughout the research phase to very concretely operationalize how to be "attentive to…the cultural, political, social, economic, linguistic, and ideological origins of one's own perspective as well as the perspective and voice of those you gather data from and those to whom you present your findings" (p. 55).

Additionally, I employed member-checking by having participants look over the transcripts from the interviews and shared findings with the participants from Trailwood—former leaders, the current principal, and his chosen school-based leaders, as well as anyone Principal Yelton designated. This consultation tested the goodness of fit regarding the study's findings and analyses (Hays & Singh, 2011).

Summary

This study sought to identify school-based leader values and practices that were successful in the enrollment of Black and Latinx students into AP classes, particularly in high schools where White and Asian students have dominated these courses. Because the literature indicated that school-based leaders had indirect but significant influences on

student academics, it was important to conduct an examination of such leaders who had successfully impacted enrollment of students of color AP. Similarly, the literature indicated the domains of critical self-reflection, direction setting, and organizational development as compelling "optimum mediators" that school-based leaders could utilize in order to facilitate the much-needed change in matters of social justice.

By examining the leadership values and practices at THS through the lens of a conceptual framework formed by these three domains, this study will add to the existing body of research and inform school-based leaders' efforts to increase the AP enrollment of minoritized students by creating anti-oppressive, culturally responsive atmospheres for their minoritized students. As Hitt and Tucker (2016) aptly summarized, **"**Although high-quality teachers remain our best resource for promoting student learning, it is talented leaders who will take student success to scale" (p. 563).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Black and Latinx students in high schools across the U.S. are underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses, resulting in significant inequities for these students and limiting their post-secondary options. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the values, practices, and organizational processes of school-based leaders who have experienced success in increasing the AP class enrollment of traditionally marginalized students of color. Trailwood High School was chosen as this study's research site due to its focused work on increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students for over 24 years and its subsequent successes.

This capstone project used semi-structured interviews as well as artifact analyses and THS AP enrollment data to understand the values that undergirded the work of Trailwood's leaders as well as the specific practices of school-based leaders and their organizational processes that possibly contributed to their success. I requested interviews with 10 identified leaders in Trailwood's AP enrollment work, with 100% of the THS leaders agreeing to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted with three leader-groups at who had worked at THS between 1987 and 2020: Initiating Leaders who started the AP work and have since retired from THS (1987-2019); Second Phase Leaders who currently were leading the work at THS (2005-present); and Sustaining Leaders who worked with the Initiating Leaders and remained at THS (2000-present) as presented in Table 8 in Chapter Three.

Because Trailwood had a proud history of increasing student of color AP enrollment and had been nationally recognized for its successes, each of the 10 interviews

went well over the 30 minute allotted time as every participant was eager to talk about this work. Additionally, five years of THS AP College Board data and 65 artifacts informed this research including 38 internal THS documents, eight THS photos, six national news articles, two educational practitioner articles, and eleven THS website pages.

This chapter begins with a concise historical summary of the 24 years Trailwood focused on increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students as reported by both participant interviews and artifacts. This journey addresses the heart of the overarching research question about how Trailwood was able to sustain their success. Following this summary of the Trailwood journey are the study's findings organized by the singular overarching research question and the three research questions that focus on the leaders' values, practices, and organizational processes. Additionally, the findings for each question will be presented through the lens of the three participant leader groups: Initiating Leaders, Second Phase Leaders, and Sustaining Leaders.

Rigor for All Students: Trailwood High School's Journey

When Dr. Opal Evans became principal of Trailwood in 1987, she inherited a high school that had been designated as failing academically and was unsafe for its students due to violent incidents. In her participant interview, Dr. Evans stated:

> Trailwood did not have a good reputation at all at…I knew that I had to change, turn that around, turn our reputation around real fast…and the board, the parents…and the superintendent wanted to see it happen. They wanted Trailwood to become outstanding.

Evan's early work included making the school physically safe, firing staff who stood in the way of progress, hiring ones who were ready for the work ahead, and improving the curriculum. Evans stated that before she and others could focus on things like increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment, "I had to straighten things out and set the groundwork."

Subsequently, Trailwood High School began to experience both a safer school environment and improved student outcomes. Dr. Evans, however, knew much more work needed to be done to create success for all its students. With the data showing that ninth graders in particular were falling through the cracks, in 1996 she created the "Foundation Program for Academic Excellence" which placed all ninth graders into "small learning communities, called houses," as described in a 1999 national newspaper story. These freshman houses concentrated on building academic skills to prepare the students for THS's more challenging honors and AP courses. Thus, for the purposes of this study, 1996 was chosen as the starting point of Trailwood's AP enrollment work due to the initiation of its freshman cohorts and its focus on increasing the overall student AP enrollment.

Four years later after the freshmen cohorts began, then superintendent of the Grandview School District Dr. Noah Stuckey initiated a school-based summer retreat in 2000 which included key staff of Dr. Evans's choosing. School counselor Zach Stevenson was among the participants:

> At that retreat, we began to have conversations about what we wanted the school to look like in the future and what our concerns were…privilege and lack of equity were some of the things that came up, even at that point, way back then.

Inspired by the retreat, Stevenson, Cate Causby, minority achievement coordinator Kathryn Dorsey, and a few other THS staff collected data on their underserved populations and sought solutions for Trailwood's inequities. Significantly, they discovered that while their many minority females were taking challenging classes, including AP courses, their Black and Latinx males were almost non-existent in these classes. In a 2013 educational journal article written by fellow Initiating Leaders Parkdale and Causby, they recounted what drove their decision to choose increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment: "research had indicated the correlation between taking AP courses and college success."

Thus, based on the early successes of the freshmen houses THS began in 1996, the Men's Cohort Program was begun in June 2000 by recruiting promising ninth grade Black and Latinx male students to join the group whose purpose was to increase the "number of Black and Latinx males into…AP classes in preparation for college and graduate school" (Trailwood Cohort internal document, 2018). Among its early leaders were Clarisse Knowles, David Parkdale, and Zach Stevenson. Additionally, a local businessman named Harlan Badger became involved in this cohort program. His interest had been sparked by his introduction to one Latinx student, Fernando, who was on his son's travel sports team. He had learned that Fernando and his family had fled to the U.S. in Fernando's eighth grade year from a Central American country experiencing civil war. Despite all the hardships he faced, including poverty and being an English language learner, Fernando was flourishing in the Men's Cohort. Subsequently, Mr. Harland began providing substantial financial support for the cohort—something that he and his wife have continued to do since then while also increasing that support yearly.

In addition to the Men's Cohort, THS also enacted other supports for students which included a 2001 double math initiative; the intent was to accelerate math completion among the traditionally marginalized students to enable them to "catch up" in math with their White and Asian peers by taking two math courses in a year. Soon thereafter, Dr. Evans began Project Millennium, a two-year self-study of Trailwood High from 2001-2003 made up of subcommittees to assess where the school was and where it wanted to go. One such subgroup was the AP Concerns Subcommittee, of which Cate Causby was a member. This group researched best practices and programs while also doing a site visit to a successful high school in a neighboring state. While this initiative was in progress, Dr. Evans retired from THS in 2002 and handed off her principal role to former head counselor and then assistant principal Clarisse Knowles. Upon completion of their work and research, the AP Concerns Subcommittee made several recommendations to Knowles which she acted on, building upon the groundwork Dr. Evans had laid for fifteen years.

First, in the 2002-03 school year, Principal Knowles allocated funds to create a part-time AP coordinator position for a current AP teacher who would focus one period per day on supporting the AP program. By 2003-20004, this had expanded to two periods. Over the years, it expanded further with two to four AP teachers having one period to provide for the needs of the programs. Cole Ingram, THS science teacher since 2005 and a current AP coordinator, described with the details of their work: running the "Jaguar Period[6]"—a period dedicated to supporting struggling AP students; data

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[6]Jaguar is the pseudonym for the mascot of the research site

collection and disaggregation of student data; and AP teacher support, among other duties.

Second, in 2004 Knowles commenced the "Trailwood Advanced Placement Network," a system of supports for all current and would-be AP students. In an internal document from that year, its goals and objectives were laid out:

With the support of the Trailwood Advanced Placement Network greater numbers of students, representing the cultural and gender diversity of the school, will participate and succeed in Advanced Placement courses. To achieve this goal of student success, the Trailwood AP Network will provide professional development opportunities for teachers in AP strategies and content and in understanding the cultural and gender aspects of student achievement. Communication with parents will be increased and parents will be active participants in their children's success. The students will be provided social/emotional and academic support as they take on these challenging courses.

Specifically, Knowles and THS began two supports for new and continuing AP students: an AP Summer Bridge Program – a 4-day series of workshops and class sessions for new AP students and students entering tough AP courses to attend in August to better prepare them for AP courses they will be taking in the coming school year—and the AP Consult – a daily class to provide students with access to AP content teachers and time to complete their AP assignments. Additionally, the new AP Network also collaborated with the Men's Cohort to address the achievement gap between white and non-white students. Also under the AP Network was the Spanish Immersion Program which was under the direction of then assistant principal Bryan Yelton; this program provided community

internships for the students as well as opportunities for to spend summers abroad. Finally, faculty participation in AP vertical team training and AP content course training at College Board-sponsored events provided key supports for THS staff.

The Minority Women Together (MWT) was also begun by Knowles in 2008 as a counterpart to the Men's Cohort begun eight years previously. While many Black and Latinx girls were already taking honors and AP courses, these young women began to ask for the same supports their male counterparts had as well as advocate for their friends who were not yet in rigorous courses but could be with help. Both Cate Causby and David Parkdale were key figures in starting MWT as well as Harlan Badger who added his financial support to this group. This work continued under the tutelage of Clarisse Knowles until her retirement in 2010, at which time assistant principal Bryan Yelton was promoted to principal of Trailwood.

During Dr. Yelton's 10 year tenure, he and the remaining school leaders sought to refine and deepen the minority AP enrollment work that came before them. In particular, Dr. Yelton increased the utilization of data by "looking at the patterns of successful minority kids in the AP classes and then applying those same patterns to other kids while also actively encouraging teachers of color to do the AP training so that they are teaching the classes." Yelton's current Men's Cohort and MWT sponsors Val Newsome and Steve Dailey, who began their roles in 2014 and 2019 respectively, offered insight into their jobs as they stood at the time of our interviews:

> I would say the program now, not only are we focused on AP level courses, but
> we also are focusing heavily on external programs that will help inform them of
> what their interest areas are. And then the focus is the same…encouraging them to

take these more rigorous courses and providing any kind of support that they will

need during the year. (Val Newsome, interview)

Additionally, Dailey offered:

The students support one another that they belong in those (AP) classes, which is

important. They struggle together; they celebrate each other, and we encourage

them to celebrate each other's successes and be very supportive. And I think that's

one of the things that makes the program a success.

Taken together, these leaders' 24 plus years of work produced encouraging

results: THS has gone from a low of 10% Black student AP enrollment in 2007 to a high

of 26% in 2014 for a 15-year average of 17.8% (see Appendix K). Similarly, Latinx AP

enrollment increased from a low of 17% in 2006 to a high of 37.5% in 2020 for a 15-year

average of 26.2% (see Appendix L)[7]. Additionally, in 2006 it was one of three national

winners of the College Board Inspiration Award given to "celebrate the extraordinary

commitment of educators and communities to their students' futures" (The School

Superintendent, 2021). Additionally, six of the 10 participants spoke to the impact in the

entire school culture at Trailwood – minority students in advanced courses is the norm,

with most students and staff viewing diverse AP classes as part of "The Trailwood Way,"

defined by Principal Yelton on THS's website: "the Trailwood Way"—frequently

referred to as the '5 R's' (Rigor, Relationships, Resiliency, Responsibility, and Results)."

Accordingly, during this 24 plus year focus on engaging Black and Latinx

students rigorous course work, with a particular focus on a number of AP classes,

Trailwood leaders have built a program that has been nationally recognized and perhaps

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[7] The data on AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students available to the research began in 2005 and
ended in 2020.

more importantly, changed the trajectory of many traditionally marginalized students toward a future with the same options often only afforded to their White and Asian peers.

Leaders' Guiding Values (RQ1)

Research Question One—What are the underlying values that school-based leaders contribute to the increased AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students? –sought to describe the *why* of school-based leaders' actions—what caused them to make the choices they did with limited time, resources, and competing priorities. Leaders' values were defined as "core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions."[8] To ascertain leaders' underlying values, all 10 interview participants were asked why they entered the field of education and specifically why they joined the THS effort to increase student of color AP participation. The responses related to Research Question One reveal how these core beliefs lay the foundation for the leaders' work with students. Specifically, I hoped to connect leaders' core values and beliefs with the practices (RQ2) and organizing structures (RQ3) they enacted to increase the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

From an analysis of the 10 interviews, national publications, available THS artifacts, and THS AP enrollment data, two core values emerged: a resolute belief in Black and Latinx students' academic capabilities to do rigorous academic work required in AP courses, and the subsequent belief that school-based leaders' can have a direct impact on helping these marginalized students realize their potential. These findings will be presented in terms of the three leader groups:

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[8] As note in chapter one, this definition is from https://www.ethics.org/resources/free-toolkit/definition-values/.

- Initiating Leaders (1987-2019) who served as leaders at THS at the onset of the effort to increase enrollment of students of color in AP. This group of leaders are no longer at THS;

- Second Phase Leaders (2005-present) who followed many of the Initiating Leaders in their roles when they retired and who currently worked at THS at the time of this study; and

- Sustaining Leaders, (2000-present) who were a part of the early efforts to increase enrollment of students of color in AP and who remained at THS at the time of this study.

In addition to the interview data, data collected from THS and documents from outside sources will be included within these findings to augment and add content to the interview data.

Value One: A Belief in Students' Academic Potential

In each of the 10 interviews, participants were asked questions to elicit their core beliefs around THS's work with Black and Latinx students and AP courses. The following questions were asked:

- What motivated you to start/join the AP Initiative at Trailwood?

- How did the AP Initiative get started?

- What do you think were key factors that made this AP Initiative successful at THS?

Findings revealed that all 10 participants held strong beliefs about Black and Latinx students' abilities to do the rigorous course work associated with AP courses. Additionally, while all participants were dedicated to these values, Initiating Leaders

spoke to this belief more times than the other two leader groups and discussed its link to students' belief in themselves.

   Initiating Leaders. All four Initiating Leaders indicated the value of believing in Black and Latinx students and their ability to do the work in AP courses. A search of the words "belief(s)," "believe(s)/ing," "potential," and "can do" in their combined four interviews, which spanned six hours and 20 minutes, showed that the four initiators mentioned these words a combined total of 51 times. Dr. Opal Evans, the THS principal who began this work, stated that she would tell THS students who were concerned they could not succeed in AP classes, "'We're the teachers. And you can do it. And we want you,' which was important for everybody to hear." An interview with Evans in a national newspaper article (2002) extended this belief; she recalled how in 1997 she had charged the THS school counselors to search "for students with overlooked academic potential and to get them into more challenging courses." Similarly, David Parkdale and Cate Causby, along with Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson, communicated this same belief in a national article in 2004 they wrote for a school leader practitioner magazine: "We believe in their abilities…We see their potential and push them to do the same." Clarisse Knowles, successor to Dr. Evans, most directly emphasized this belief among the four Initiating Leaders, citing the word "belief" 20 times in relation to Black and Latinx students' academic abilities in her interview. In her interview she posited the necessity of school leaders believing in Black and Latinx students' ability to do rigorous work. This emphasis was supported in a June 1999 national newspaper article when Knowles was a THS assistant principal: "We just continue to say to them, 'You can do it.'"

Second Phase Leaders (2005-Present). Similar to the Initiating Leaders, Second Phase Leaders also professed the value of believing in the academic abilities of their Black and Latinx students. The same search of the words "belief(s), "believe(s)/ing," "potential," and "can do," appeared 17 times in their interviews which together lasted three hours and 45 minutes. While Second Phase leaders mentioned these words less than Initiating Leaders, each of these three leaders expressed the importance of having this belief. For example, Val Newsome, THS resource teacher for the gifted and Minority Women Together (MWT) and Men's Cohort sponsor, tied her own beliefs back to David Parkdale with whom she worked for five years: "I hear it all the time, just like David did when he was working, that our belief in them was enough for them to keep pushing and try something they didn't try before." Similarly, Newsome's counterpart, Steve Dailey, who had just completed his first year at THS at the time of the interview, expressed this belief in terms of specifically telling Black and Latinx students they have the potential to go to college, while Cole Ingram, the sole teacher-leader among this study's three leader groups, spoke succinctly to his belief in students' capacity, positing, "Everyone has a higher capacity to learn."

Sustaining Leaders (2000-Present). Of the three leader groups, Sustaining Leaders use of "belief(s), "believe(s)/ing," "potential," and "can do" in their interviews was scant with 11 mentions in three hours and two minutes of interview time. Yet, the belief in Black and Latinx students' academic abilities came through in various ways. Dr. Bryan Yelton, current principal of Trailwood, spoke of the necessity that a school believe in Black and Latinx students: "The staff have to believe in the kids. If you put them in front of them, teachers who don't believe that they can do it, it will be a self-fulfilling

prophecy." Similarly, while Mr. Stevenson did not directly speak to having a belief in Black and Latinx students' academic abilities, he spoke in his interview of Black and Latinx students who were still not "pushed or encouraged" academically, leading to Trailwood's offering of double Math. This belief is supported by the national education publication that Stevenson co-authored with Parkdale and Causby, offering, "We see their [Black and Latinx students'] potential and push them to do the same." The last of the Sustaining Leaders, Harlan Badger, offered his belief in the students through a story. As he was first learning about the Men's Cohort from Causby and Stevenson in 2000, they told him about Felix, a Latinx student who was excelling in math but had not gone into Advanced Placement courses:

> This is just ridiculous that these kids cannot get into advanced placement courses, and we know there are kids like Felix who could do well in an AP course. That was fervently believed. Of course I had to believe that, too.

Badger concluded with, "Now I just tell these kids that anything is possible."

Value Two: A Belief in the Power of Leadership

Aligned with the belief in the academic abilities of Black and Latinx students was the core belief that school-based leaders could make a difference in these students' lives, especially traditionally marginalized populations of Black and Latinx students. Dr. Evans summarily addressed the opportunity to impact students during a radio interview with a national news organization in 2010:

> I guess my philosophy has always been – and this philosophy I articulated to my faculty when I first came to Trailwood – my philosophy is that we take our youngsters where they are. We don't look to family background. We don't look to

socioeconomic, socio-cultural influences, and background. We have them for, what, seven hours a day? We do everything we can right there in those walls during that time to engender success and to teach and promote excellence. And my experience has been that it happens.

Among the remaining eight Trailwood school-based leaders, this same core value in education's potential impact was evident from interviews, internal documents, and national publications. To further explore these values, especially in relation to this study's problem of practice, all nine THS educators and community supporter Harlan Badger were asked, "What are the most important actions, beliefs, and values that you believe led to the increase of Black and Latinx AP enrollment at THS?" The two key beliefs that surfaced were a belief in the ability for educators to change students' lives and in doing so, to address the systemic racism inherent in society and public education.

Belief in Educators' Ability to Impact Students. Much like Dr. Evans's assertion that educators have seven hours within the school walls to impact change, THS leaders from each group expressed similar values and aspirations for their potential to effect students' lives for the better.

Initiating Leaders. Clarisse Knowles's belief in the power of individuals to effect change began when she listened in person to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech" in 1963. When asked why she went into education, she stated, "We sat, and we heard, and he so affected me that I felt that I needed to find a way to make a difference in the world and to give back." This was reflected in her response to what her values were: "I believe that every child deserves an opportunity and an environment to be able to become their best self." Both Cate Causby and David Parkdale expressed this same belief

throughout their interviews. Parkdale, upon the realization of the inequities of AP enrollment for Black and Latinx students stated, "We have to do something that changes that." Causby additionally believed in the impact of educators due to her own childhood experiences; teachers had seen potential in her that her parents couldn't see and made they made her "feel that things were possible, and I will be forever grateful for those teachers." Thus, she endeavored to be one of those educators at Trailwood. Capturing this belief is an article Parkdale and Causby co-wrote with Zach Stevenson for a national principal practitioner publication. Using the metaphor of a sports team, they imagined educators as coaches who set the plays and changed them as needed to affect the outcome of the game—in this case students' futures.

    Second Phase Leaders. Second Phase Leaders expressed this belief in impact as well. Val Newsome stated,

> I'm a person that's always trying to help others. And so my background in being open and welcoming really worked well with the kids. And so it's been a successful match, I guess you could say. My values are my work with the program, helping the kids attain what it is to make them successful and move on to college and do well in the harder classes.

Steve Dailey clearly articulated his belief in the power of education as well: "I just feel like that the more education you have, the more choices you have or options you have in life." Cole Ingram expressed this belief in a statement that described how he leads THS's science department and stays true to his role as AP coordinator and as a champion of students' potential: "We expect every single student to pass…Why not? We should have that expectation."

Sustaining Leaders. Between the two Sustaining Leaders employed by Trailwood, Zach Stevenson and Bryan Yelton have worked at THS for a total of 38 years with the bulk of their work focused on the traditionally marginalized. Stevenson as a school counselor focused first on Black and Latinx students and more recently on students who receive special education services. Yelton, as assistant principal, was first charged with creating a dual language program that would benefit English as Second Language Learners, most of whom were Latinx students. In their interviews, each similarly spoke to their values as educators, both with a strong emphasis on the power of education. Stevenson asserted:

> Every kid should be given the opportunity to develop and identify and develop skills and competencies across the board, but then find their passion and to be equipped to go wherever it is they want to go in life and be who they want to be.

Similarly, Brian Yelton posited:

> My core values are to empower each student to achieve their own path and have the options to change that path at any given time. I just want to provide you with the key to the door and then it's up to you to insert the key and, you know, I think the education gives you the power to change. You can change your mind and go and do something else.

While not an employed educator, Harlan Badger, Trailwood's community benefactor, nonetheless had a determination from early on in his life to "help the down and out." He stated in his interviews that, while not an educator, he still believed in the impact people like him can have. He related the experience of playing on a community football team:

All my friends were on the football team were black. And, I, you know, I knew

that they had to go to a different school than I had to go to, and I was treated

better than they were. All those things fell together and together. So I have an

inclination toward that.

Belief that Educators Must Address Systemic Racism. In addition to believing

in the academic potential of Black and Latinx students, all 10 leaders addressed their own

potential to effect changes among students in terms of an ancillary belief about the

pervasive nature of racism and the barriers that racism creates in their efforts to increase

AP enrollment of minoritized students. Throughout the 10 participant interviews,

unfairness, inequities, systemic racism, and a need to work on behalf of Black and Latinx

students at Trailwood were common themes.

Initiating Leaders. A similar theme among the initiators was the chance to serve

the underserved; they spoke of being "an advocate for the underdog," of a passion to

work for societal inclusivity, and a commitment to fight for social justice. Opal Evans

related that she left a career at the university level and became an English as a Second

Language (ESL) teacher because she recognized disparities and wanted to affect change.

To do so, she realized education was the avenue she needed in order "to work with

people who are going to positively impact kids." Similarly, Clarisse Knowles, whom

Evans credited with Trailwood's AP enrollment successes, observed the inequities at

THS in the early stages of the AP work: "It was very obvious that we were failing

children of color. We looked at our AP. We had students from all over the world. But

when you looked at those AP classes, they were 99% white."

Cate Causby expressed a similar desire for societal social justice which in turn drove her work at THS: "I just really have a firm belief…that we have got to be inclusive if we are going to be strong." As an example, she related a story of a young man named Oscar who motivated this work because she saw in a stark way the barriers that faced students like him. Because Oscar had been enrolled in honors classes in ninth grade and been successful, she stated:

> I had assumed that he was going to go on to the next, the level of higher classes. Right? And when I met with him, like in October, I said, "Let me see what your schedule is." And I was shocked because he had been taken out of that track and put in all the regular classes. And I'm like, could this happen? I said, this is so wrong... I started looking and it was like, well, there's something wrong with this picture.

Five other times in her interview Causby used the word "wrong" to indicate her feelings about the absence of Black and Latinx students in higher level courses.

David Parkdale likewise spoke passionately about the barriers they encountered early in their work that THS leaders needed to address:

> In the beginning this happened to many of the guys. They had worked with [counselor] Zach Stevenson and gotten their schedule set up for some AP classes. And when they walked into the class, the teacher would say, "I'm sorry, who are you? Why are you in this class?" I mean, it's institutional racism basically.

This value among Initiating Leaders, that the work of educators was to address systemic racism, was supported by several artifacts including two national news articles, two practitioner publications, and an internal THS document from 2003-2004 entitled

"Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal," which identified the problem their proposal sought to address: "Minority males are underrepresented in many AP courses. For example, in 2002-2003 in AP English 12, there were only two Hispanic males and two Black males of the 38 enrolled students."

Second Phase Leaders. The three leaders in this category were succinct but direct in their belief about students of color in AP courses and the racism Black and Latinx students continued to face into the second decade of the 2000s, though AP enrollment among traditionally marginalized students had improved considerably at THS since the work began in 2000. Cole Ingram, THS science teacher and part-time AP coordinator, related how his values around race had evolved over the years, from merely seeing a problem that needed to be fixed to the realization that implicit bias was the root cause of the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students. Val Newsome and Steve Dailey, who oversaw the Men's Cohort and the Minority Women Together group both directly addressed systemic racism in their interviews. Dailey in particular spoke about how he saw his role at THS—helping young men realize that while they were now mostly accepted at Trailwood, they needed to consider life beyond THS school walls:

> We're about, you know, social justice, Black Lives Matter, people being killed. And what I said to them as a Black man, I was like, "You know, I want you to be safe. I know you, but there are people who are going to look at you as young men of color, and they're going to have a lot of negative ideas about who you are. And I don't want you to get in a situation where you're harmed or anything happens because yeah, because you're not aware that's out there."

Artifacts supported this belief that social justice and impacting institutional racism were important among Second Phase Leaders, including internal THS documents about Men's Cohort and the MWT. THS documents from 2015-2020 continued to state that the mission of these groups, despite their "unprecedented" successes, remained the increase of Black and Latinx students in AP courses. Additionally, these internal documents demonstrated that the same supports offered in 2000 to the first cohorts continued and had been expanded to meet the needs of Black and Latinx students taking rigorous classes like AP courses.

Sustaining Leaders. Zach Stevenson spoke about realizing in the early stages of Trailwood's work that the root of the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students was race but that no one identified it as such. Nonetheless, through his conversations with Cate Causby and other THS staff around 2000, together they made a commitment to address the clear systemic racism at Trailwood. Stevenson stated:

We started talking about, you know, we need to do something with this…We continued to have the conversation and we did another retreat. And we started talking about, what could this look like? What could we do to address this inequality or this inequity?

Stevenson also indicated in his interview that his work to fight inequities at THS had shifted in recent years to students receiving special education services, including addressing the overrepresentation of Black males in this area.

Current principal Bryan Yelton, who has been at Trailwood for 18 years—eight as assistant principal and 10 in his current role—had observed all but two years of THS's official work to increase the AP enrollment for Black and Latinx students. In sync with

his two principal predecessors, Dr. Yelton understood a key part of his job in addressing

systemic racism: ensuring THS AP teachers believed in these students' academic ability

to take these classes. Yelton stated that he needed his teachers to be willing to say, "You

know, I don't know how to teach it, but I have got to teach it in a way that these kids can

be successful. They can do it. It's my job to find out how."

Finally, Harlan Badger, the local businessman who serves as a leader in

Trailwood's work, chose to become involved with educators to support their work with

students of color. One specific event affected this. Because he and his wife had given

scholarship money for high achieving students at THS's rival and less diverse high

school, they were watching its academic awards ceremony. While there, Badger had an

epiphany:

> And in the center of the gym were these White and Asian kids. And they're all
>
> great kids. Don't get me wrong. I'm not mad at the kids. But they got every award.
>
> And up in the rows up there, there were all these dark faces having to sit through
>
> this entire thing and watch it. So what we decided, you know, that's the wrong
>
> kind of money.

Subsequently, Badger changed his contributions to create scholarships for Black and

Latinx students to attend the local community college. Not long after this, Badger found

his way to Trailwood's Men's Cohort which he joined not just as a donor but as a mentor

to the young men.

Summary of Research Question One

Through Research Question One, I sought to discover the underlying values that

guided the actions of the 10 Trailwood school-based leaders in their work to increase the

AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. As indicated in their interviews and available artifacts, all 10 leaders shared the basic value of believing in Black and Latinx students' ability to do AP course work, and that they as leaders could impact this work. Within the three leader groups, Initiating Leaders had to most to say about belief in the academic abilities of Black and Latinx students. While the number of mentions of "belief, believes, potential, and can do" leaned toward initiating leaders, the common thread of a core belief in traditionally marginalized students' academic abilities was evident throughout the 24 year period. In doing so, belief in the academic potential of Black and Latinx students was the norm and expectation at THS.

Additionally, each of the 10 THS leaders recognized that belief in these students' academic abilities alone would not get the work done. They also believed in their own role in the work to address systemic inequities and that in doing so, they had the potential to effect change that would lead to a more proportionate AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students.

School-based Leader Practices (RQ2)

The purpose of Research Question Two was to identify those practices that school-based leaders indicated were key to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses at Trailwood High School. As defined in the study's semi-structured interview questions, practices were specific actions that directly affected the increased AP enrollment of under-enrolled minority populations. The following interview questions were designed to reveal these practices:

- How did the AP Initiative get started? How did you begin?
- What did you do next? What were the important next steps after you had begun?

- How did you (and your school-based leader team) get people involved in this?

- What do you think were key factors that made this AP Initiative successful at THS?

Four overall school-based leader practices emerged which led to an increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses at Trailwood High School: taking risks, using data to grow and build the work, providing supports for all stakeholder groups, and making connections to the larger THS community. These four findings will be presented through the lens of the three THS leader groups—Initiating Leaders, Second Phase Leaders, and Sustaining Leaders. Additionally, corresponding artifacts will provide insight and confirmation of findings throughout this section.

Practice One: Risk Taking

A common theme among all 10 interview participants was the importance of taking risks in order to address and affect the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP classes. In participant interviews, all three leader groups spoke to the risks school-based leaders faced when challenging the Trailwood staff to change their thinking and practices around the Advanced Placement Program. However, Initiating and Sustaining Leaders who began the work experienced the greatest pushback from staff.

The primary ways school-based leaders approached the prevailing AP culture, especially in the nascent years, were by exposing the inequities in Trailwood's AP enrollment, addressing the inherent racism, and removing the many barriers that hindered Black and Latinx AP participation—in spite of the risks associated with each and subsequent stakeholder pushback.

Risk One: Exposing the Inequities. When Initiating Leader Dr. Evans began the principalship at Trailwood, she first focused on making it safe, as noted in the historical section in the beginning of this chapter. Once initial goals like this one had been met, she and key school leaders including Sustaining Leader and school counselor Zach Stevenson focused their work on improving academic outlooks for students of color, which included increasing Black and Latinx enrollment in AP courses. In his interview, Stevenson succinctly summarized what all participants alluded to at some point in their interviews about this 24 year work: "It really had nothing to do with AP. It had more to do with equity…any time you can look at standardized test scores and it predicts race, it doesn't predict what it's supposed to predict." Initiating Leader David Parkdale remembered Stevenson challenging his White colleagues to look deeper at THS classrooms from his point of view as a Black man: "Zach said, 'I go into these AP classes and I proctor AP exams, but why don't I see anybody that looks like me in those classrooms?' I wouldn't have asked that question, but Zach did and that was pivotal."

Similarly, while this effort was welcomed by some stakeholders, a 2002 national newspaper's article on Evans and Trailwood highlighted the risk: "Although many school districts seemed content with the status quo at their low-achieving schools – letting low-income students slide academically – Evans was not going to settle for such peaceful mediocrity. But her aggressive approach was a risk." The same article from 2013 by Causby and Parkdale recalled that in exposing Trailwood's AP problem, their work "had more than its share of challenges" including "skeptical faculty members, limited funding, and concerns of the [Black and Latinx] students themselves about their own abilities." While Evans and other early leaders experienced significant staff pushback, Evans was

quick to point out how they weathered those challenges. "We had a very risk-taking superintendent at the time, Noah Stuckey... And he was looking for innovation and people dedicated to making a difference for kids."

Nonetheless, Sustaining Leader and current Trailwood principal Bryan Yelton recalled the skepticism that they met early on:

> There was the skepticism at first that these kids aren't able to do the work, that this is all a numbers game, or that all you're doing is putting kids in there just to get higher enrollment – so you look better.

Initiating Leader Parkdale captured the difficulty of moving their AP work forward, especially in these early stages: "That [risk-taking] was huge; I mean it's foundational in terms of trying to upend and disrupt an existing system. If you can't change the paradigm somehow, you're not going to disrupt the system. And [the early leaders] did." Subsequently, in school-based leaders' efforts to expose the problem of the under-enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses, they simultaneously had to address the underlying cause—the systemic racism that had created and was still enabling it.

Risk Two: Addressing Racism. At the start of the initiative to increase Black and Latinx AP participation, both Initiating and Sustaining Leaders knew that the role of systemic racism must be addressed with their stakeholder groups. This particularly became the case after Superintendent Stuckey's departure. Concerns and objections from three particular THS groups had to be addressed: parents, staff, and Black and Latinx students.

Parent Pushback. As THS leaders diverted some funds and personnel to support the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment, some parents for whom the current system was working began to object. Cate Causby remembered a significant one for her:

There was at least one time…the superintendent's office called me and said, "We just want you to know that some people—parents—are saying this isn't fair to other kids and therefore, they are seeking an attorney." And I had the attitude of "Go right ahead. Let's have it come right out. Let's deal with it publicly. And let's see what people think, but I'm not gonna decide to stop a program that is being successful because some people don't think it's fair to White kids."

Similarly, Sustaining Leader and community supporter Harlan Badger expressed his frustration over the "constant pushback from the bureaucracy," using as example the pressure for Trailwood teachers like Causby who served gifted students to spend more time with those already identified as gifted—White and Asian students—instead of the potentially gifted: "It's gotta be different at Trailwood. Fortunately we've been successful enough and can tell the politicians and the school board, 'We want to show that we can help Black and Latino students as well.'"

Another undercurrent of racism was parents' concern that Trailwood's overall AP passing rate would fall due to more students taking the exams, particularly those seen by some as unqualified for AP, which they feared would subsequently diminish Trailwood's reputation as a good school. Opal Evans and Clarisse Knowles both addressed this risk in their interviews. Evans was clear on her own and key staff's thoughts on testing: "We didn't care. At the beginning we didn't even care if they took the test, but we certainly didn't care what their scores were. What we cared about is they would take a step into

challenging coursework." Knowles, Evan's school counselor at the time, expressed in her interview, "We were waiting for the backlash" from low test scores. Current principal Bryan Yelton who followed both Evans and Knowles likewise spoke to this particular risk:

> If our [AP] pass rates had dropped right to the twenties or thirties [percentiles], yeah, they would've blamed it on that [increasing minority participation]…And it would have been a reinforcing message that minority kids can't perform at high levels. And to me that was the biggest risk.

> *Staff Resistance.* From their research and planning, Trailwood leaders understood that to change the Advanced Placement status quo from courses only for the few to courses open for all, they were taking significant risks in how their staff would react to the work. Initiating leader Cate Causby noted that

> there were some teachers who were really hesitant…or counselors would say "this kid can't do the work…" [They were] fitting in with the systemic racism we already had. They were keeping kids back. I don't know how else to say it.

> In facing some staff's lack of belief in THS students of color, school-based leaders took various risks to push the work forward. For Evans, the answer was to work with both resistant staff and those who were ready to do the work. She recalled, "I had one department who was very difficult, very difficult. But the others were willing to take on the challenge of increasing AP enrollment." Evans also expressed that she was glad to work with staff who were at least open to change no matter how much work it took to get them there. However, her response to those who would not "get on board" with the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment was direct; she referred to the "staffing

changes" that were necessary to keep the work moving forward—getting of rid of THS staff who were unwilling to change, including assistant principals.

David Parkdale likewise recalled teacher reactions in the beginning when more Black and Latinx students were enrolled in AP courses:

> In the beginning this happened to many of the guys; when they walked into a class that they had worked with Zach Stevenson or somebody else to get their schedule, and the teacher would say, "Uh, I'm sorry, who are you? Why again are you in this class?" I mean it was, institutional racism basically. So, there they were, and they were told, "I [AP teacher] think you need to check this out." [And the student would say] "No I have this class!" So there were a lot of conversations in the first few years that Cate and Zack had to have with the teachers to support them and to encourage this initiative. Hugely important and hard conversations.

Similarly, Cate Causby recalled having direct conversations with teachers and counselors who were advocating for a Black or Latinx student's removal from an AP class:

> I would go meet with the teacher and say…this kid—let's take a look at his grades. But the reality is…I knew which teachers who wanted really to have these kids moved out [of AP courses], and they had a tremendous impact. I had to spend a lot of time, not just with the students, but with the teachers, with the counselors, figuring out who my allies were.

To address the issues associated with this work, Trailwood leaders provided professional development to its staff to increase its racial awareness as well as skills to prepare and support their new AP students. Parkdale recalled the difficulty they encountered among some staff:

Teachers who are White wrestle with their own questions related to race and

students of color and their own racial prejudices…That's a huge issue. But I was

part of a program[9] that my boss initiated in Arlington, and they did it in all of the

schools. And there was always this push back when we were facilitating these,

you know, six sessions over the course of a year. "Well, just tell me what I need

to do." No, it's not about giving you resources. It's about making you ask some

hard questions.

Cate Causby also spoke to how early leaders approached the staff, both in these sessions

and in one-on-one encounters, challenging staff to face the issues underlying low

minority AP course enrollment:

Sometimes it's very important to kind of force people into thinking about why,

and that was important. And sometimes it had to be said to get people to really

start questioning "What is this?" We think we are a really good school. We think

we're providing kids opportunities, but we aren't. Either there's systemic racism

here that's keeping them out of these classes. Or you're saying they're not smart

enough to be in there right now. One of the other—you gotta fall into one of

those. There's gotta be some reason that they're being kept out of them and we

need to look at why, or you don't think they're smart enough.

While Second Phase Leaders spoke less about risks than the other two leader

groups, they likewise continued to address the ever-evolving nature of systemic racism.

Val Newsome, THS resource teacher for the gifted and sponsor of both the Men's

Cohorts and the MWT, addressed the assumptions of some THS teachers regarding the

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[9] Courageous Conversations

Black and Latinx students in their classes: "They don't realize that the minority

population, though, they have the ability [to do the work], they haven't processed it or

nurtured it in the same way as our typical White students." She explained that while the

teachers now generally welcome Black and Latinx students into their AP classes, they

often do not realize these students lack the cultural capital their White and Asian peers

enjoy that makes rigorous courses more accessible. Similarly, Cole Ingram, current THS

science teacher and one of four current AP coordinators, related an issue that he

experienced in 2019 with some THS teachers. While many teachers were always working

to improve their support of their AP students, there was, according to Ingram, those who

did not want to adjust practices to support a diverse student AP population but: "Just one

problem. There are a number of teachers that are status quo. 'Hey, I just want to do what

I did last year.'" When asked how he addressed this, he responded, "For those status quo?

Yes. It's your job to try to convince them otherwise, or it may be isn't your job, and you

do it anyway." As Ingram implied, "status quo" in this context refers to doing what has

been done previously, without seeing a need for change.

Steve Dailey, the newest THS leader who joined the work in 2019, summed up

the continual need to address the racism that continues to exist and morph not just at

Trailwood but in society: "You can still have a culture where students feel like there are

spaces that are not for them. That can still happen."

Practice Two: Using Data to Grow and Build Capacity

In the identification of Black and Latinx students who had the potential to

participate in AP courses, THS Initiating Leaders realized that their faculty had to support

the work and that data must be used in order to identify students who were being

overlooked for rigorous courses. In her interview, Dr. Evans was quick to recognize the importance of student support staff, first mentioning school counselors—"the magic was the counseling staff"—then expanding this to include the school social worker, psychologist, and resource teacher for the gifted. This was corroborated in a 2002 national newspaper: "Her 'magical' counselors—she applies that adjective to many on her staff—screened every ninth-grader, searching for students with overlooked academic potential and getting them into more challenging courses." Similarly, Causby, THS resource teacher for the gifted, commented on the importance of having counselors be part of the data-based identification process since they also helped students choose courses each year: "We realized how critical core selection was and that counselors could just put a kibosh on anything you wanted to happen."

In addition to the counseling staff, Evans had to work with the teaching staff who at times were not on board due to concerns about the identified Black and Latinx students not being the "right" students for AP courses since many did not have the prerequisite classes nor, in their minds, were prepared for rigorous courses. Nonetheless, Evans recognized the value of finding "the excellent teachers that were there" at Trailwood already and empowered them in the data-based identification and preparation of these students. The extent of this work was captured in a 1999 national news article which stated, "Her staff is accustomed to coaxing, prodding, and sometimes just shoving students into some of the most difficult courses."

Her successor, Clarisse Knowles, was initially hired as head counselor by Evans to replace another who had been a barrier to the work of enrolling students in AP and other more rigorous courses; Evans stated:

I hired Knowles to be the director and the counselors would go to their children [students on their caseload], every child, and say, "Hey, the teacher [of AP English] has said that you should be in AP English. So here's the deal. We're going to register you in AP English. And if you have a problem, I'm going to be checking up on you. And we'll just see how you do during the first quarter."

When Knowles subsequently replaced the retiring Evans to become Trailwood's next principal, she took up the mantle of increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students through identification. A 2007 national news article on Knowles supported this finding; Evans had "insisted that challenging courses like AP were not just for middle-class students. Knowles, then the head counselor, took over when her friend [Evans] retired and helped an aggressive team of teachers and counselors raise standards even higher." The final piece of the identification culminated with an invitation for the students to be join the AP classes and often one of the two cohorts for additional support.

An internal THS document entitled "Trailwood AP Network Exemplary Project" from 2003-04 during Knowles's tenure emphasized that this identification was expected not just of school leaders but of the entire staff: "Faculty will identify students who have the potential to succeed in advanced, intensified, and AP level courses prior to scheduling" in order for the counselors like Zach Stevenson to correctly set the schedules for Black, Latinx, and other marginalized students. The utilization of data as a substantial part of this identification was significant. Evans stated that her entire school was very data-driven:

Every faculty always knew the first faculty meeting of the year was going to be the review of the data and where we'd like it to go and what our goal is. And

[there was] then the assignment for them and their department chairs: "Now, you

know what the goal is for this year. You now go and figure out how you're going

to get it." And then we routinely reviewed data.

Knowles operated similarly as her predecessor regarding data and the identification of

students for AP classes, and in doing so finding more missing students of color:

That's how we kept it growing by continuing to look at the data, looking at who

we are missing and why we are missing them…as I said, it turned out to be our

Hispanic and Black girls. I said, "Come on you guys can do this, we believe in

you," and the girls stepped up.

Cate Causby, who worked with all three high school Trailwood principals in this study,

understood the importance of data and its role in change:

If you go to a principal or anybody trying to get something changed, if you can

say, "Well, out of this many kids, this many kids aren't doing well with this"…If

you can't say that, it's okay. It's anecdotal. And it's not that that doesn't

count…but you have to have data.

For Second Phase Leaders, while Black and Latinx students taking AP courses is

seen as the norm at THS to some degree, they nonetheless viewed part of their role to be

the identification of more minoritized students who have the potential to be in the classes.

Val Newsome spoke to this:

When I came to Trailwood, to fill her [Causby's] role, we continued on with

identifying Black and Hispanic boys and girls [through the use of data] and then

each spring as they selected their courses for the following year, encouraged them

to look at these more challenging courses.

Additionally, Cole Ingram indicated that working with data is a major part of his role as AP Coordinator: "So that's what I do a lot of in the school is putting together documents through data analysis. I would spend a lot of time…getting the data and giving it to them" [school leaders]. This was corroborated in the THS internal document, "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal" from 2003-04 which stated, "The AP Coordinator analyzes data (grades, scores on AP placement tests, numbers of minorities enrolled in gifted, advanced, intensified, and AP level courses, etc.) to inform program development." Fellow Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey, who at the time of his interview had just finished his first year at Trailwood, marveled at the data collection that had been occurring for over 20 years, especially the number of Black and Latino students in AP classes throughout those years and the colleges and universities attended by these students—information which was shared liberally throughout the artifacts I reviewed. While the increasing percentages and Black and Latinx students in AP courses appeared in national articles and journals and internal THS documents, the list of universities to which these students go was both shared and celebrated in cohort group meetings to encourage underclassmen to aspire to the same.

Sustaining Leaders who had been part of THS AP initiatives for 18-20 years each exercised varying degrees of data usage to make changes. Zach Stevenson, school counselor at Trailwood since 2000, was one of both Opal Evans's and Clarisse Knowles's "magical counselors" who worked hard to identity Black and Latinx students by using data. Of that time period Stevenson said, "A lot of the data we saw was failure data, and we used that failure data to design how we move forward. And our initial design was very comprehensive."

More recently, Principal Yelton and AP Coordinator Cole Ingram extended THS data disaggregation to identify patterns in the data to determine not just the under-represented students who should take AP courses but what courses they should take:

> Who were the kids in AP Econ? What were their math and social studies scores? For the kids who were successful, and we saw a pattern, then we went and looked at all of our students who met that pattern. So a lot of the students were minority students, and no one had ever said, take an AP class. So we've gone from like one, maybe two sections of AP Econ to six. We did the same for AP world—what were the characteristics and the math scores, state testing scores, and reading levels of successful student in that class, and how many kids fit that descriptor, but were not invited or encouraged? So then we went and looked at all of our students who met that pattern. A lot of the students were minority students, and no one had ever said, "Take an AP class." [We are] looking at the patterns of successful kids in the AP [classes] and then applying those same patterns to other kids.

A 2013-14 internal THS document entitled "Advanced Course Enrollment Plan Template" supported this data-driven identification work. Each school administrator was assigned a grade level and had to answer three questions:

- Describe how students are being identified (also include the number of students targeted for interventions):

- What is the plan/progression to move students from where they are now to enrollment in at least one AP or DE course by their senior year?

- What supports (staffing, funding, scheduling, technology) are needed to
  implement the plan?

These Sustaining Leaders, as witnesses of the 24 year effort to increase Black and Latin
AP enrollment, continued to improve upon ways to use data to support their efforts in this
work.

Practice Three: Providing Supports for Staff and Students

From Trailwood High School's early work to increase underserved student
populations in AP courses and in its work in the two decades since, its leaders have
continued in their commitment to doing what was necessary in order to increase the AP
enrollment of Black and Latinx students and to wrap supports around them.
Subsequently, school leaders recognized that Trailwood staff needed significant supports
as the school's AP culture was shifting. Additionally, this work involved removing any
barriers that prevented students of color from enrolling in AP classes while
simultaneously providing helps to support them. In their pursuit to support both students
and staff, school-based leaders reiterated, both in the interviews and corresponding
artifacts, that building relationships was at the core of barrier removal and providing
supports for these key stakeholder groups.

Supports for Staff. As mentioned previously, staff pushback presented a
significant barrier to school leaders' work to increase minority AP enrollment, especially
early on. While several leaders, especially the principals, spoke of firing staff who did not
share the vision—or to at least encouraging them to find employment elsewhere – all
three leader groups talked about three areas of supports provided to staff as expectations
shifted and/or staff experienced difficulty: building and strengthening relationships with

staff to support their work with new AP students, providing time for staff collaboration, and conducting professional development for all staff.

Building and Strengthening Relationships with Staff. The six school-based support staff leaders all emphasized the importance of relationship building with THS staff who were being asked to make changes in both beliefs and practices in order to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. Throughout participant interviews, the word "relationship" surfaced 40 times but was found only among the six support staff leaders—Parkdale, Causby, Stevenson, Newsome, Ingram, and Dailey. Initiating Leader David Parkdale offered insight into the importance of the practice of relationship building with staff:

> They [early leaders] worked hard at developing relationships with the teachers as well as developing relationships with the [students]. There were a lot of teachers who were scratching their heads, cause now all of a sudden they have these ninth grade boys in these classes that are like, you know, they're a little bit more rambunctious or a little bit more active. And we [the leaders] were like, "What are we going to do about this?"

Fellow Initiating Leader Cate Causby offered the primary practices early leaders employed in order to work with both reluctant and willing staff:

> I had realized early on that I had to develop really good relationships and listen to them, be willing to listen to what they were saying, even when I didn't agree, and try to figure out how to solve some of the issues they were coming up with.

Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson offered an example of the good results that often came from strong relationships with the staff and their comfort in coming to the support staff leaders:

> In your dialogue and your interactions with them, teachers come to me all the time and say, "You know what, so-and-so could probably move up and take advanced classes if you would kind of focus on this student." I hear that all the time.

Second Phase Leaders also stressed the importance of the practice of leaders building a relationship with the teachers of AP classes. Val Newsome speaking to the importance of staff knowing that they were willing to listen, commented that "they can come and speak to us at any point in time if there's a concern." Newsome particularly mentioned the partnership she emphasized to teachers who approached her about a student was not doing well in their AP class: "Let's figure out what we can do to help them." Similarly, fellow Second Phase Leader Cole Ingram related that in building relationships with AP teachers, they were paving the way for those same teachers to cultivate relationships with students in their AP courses, noting the practice of modeling behaviors one would like to see in the classroom:

> You [the leader] can talk to the…AP teacher and this is in turn facilitates that whole relationship thing with the students, because even getting a kid in the class – it's a relationship. A lot of what I did [as AP coordinator] was kind of behind the scene and talking to teachers one on one and being an advocate for the program.

Steve Dailey, the final Second Phase Leader, talked about the reciprocal effect of their relationship building:

> There are folks who support the program; they'll come in and sit in on some meetings. They go on to college tours with us – they'll know any type of support that we need…So it's great that there are times when Val and I've been with other staff groups and said, "Hey, you know, we need somebody to run the meeting today." And then that's when someone will just jump right in.

This same sentiment had been expressed in a Fall Semester 2004 PowerPoint presentation to the faculty entitled "Trailwood Cohort Program." In the fifth slide of the presentation, titled "Research-based Approach," it stated, "Research showing the significance of group membership on adolescence and how interpersonal relationships with teachers affect learning: 'If I don't know that you care, I don't care what you know.'" Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson likewise alluded to this: "You know, I hear that all the time, the teachers are passionate; they develop relationships with kids and, you know, really good teachers can teach anybody."

Providing Time for Staff Collaboration. In addition to building and deepening relationships with staff, the three THS principals in particular talked about the practice of providing the time their staffs needed to do the work necessary to increase the AP participation of Black and Latinx students. During her tenure at THS, Dr. Evans created time for her teacher leadership team to meet during the first two weeks of July and then again for a weekend in August to prepare for the start of the new school year. Additionally, she brought the entire faculty and staff back for three days before the official start day for THS staff where the leadership team presented their work, including "next year's management plan and the presentation that they would make to the faculty about where we wanted to go for this academic year." For her leadership team's time

working during the summer and then all staff returning to work three days early, she allocated school funds to pay support staff and teachers for their work since it was outside of their contracts. Evans offered, "All of that tells our teachers and staff we highly respect them as professionals."

Clarisse Knowles continued her predecessor's lead in providing time for staff to do the work. Regarding staff collaboration, she stated:

We built into the school calendar two days per quarter when kids were not in school. And so we would set the agenda of the staff development based on what we were working on at that time. And we wouldn't all necessarily be doing the same thing. Some departments needed to do a little more work on curriculum while all of the AP teachers might be together working on innovations for the AP network.

Also like Evans, Knowles was passionate about making sure her staff received remuneration for their work outside of school hours:

I had a budget that allowed me to pay an hourly wage for the teachers for special projects...So I would say, "You tell me how many extra hours a week; I'm going to pay you for it. I know you didn't come about money! I know you didn't, but I value your time. I'm going to pay you to do that. What else did do you need?" And that made teachers feel, "Wow, my time is worth something. My ideas are worth something." And they put even more time in—I couldn't begin to pay them for what they did. So it grew.

Subsequently, after succeeding Knowles, Sustaining Leader Dr. Yelton continued the practice of creating time for staff collaboration initiated by his principal predecessors

and added his own take on it. During his time as principal, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were strengthened, formalizing the content-specific teacher groups that already had been meeting. Yelton noted, however, that after Trailwood staff had completed the mandatory district PLC training, the GPS provided no time for PLCs to do the work. Therefore, Yelton created time for this work while also providing the funds to support the work. For example, he eliminated the majority of faculty meetings—"I'll have maybe three a year"—in order to provide those times solely for PLC meetings. Additionally, he paid for substitute teachers for PLC members so that they could meet for an extended period of time during the school day. While THS PLCs were not exclusively focused on the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students, they nonetheless became a key vehicle to do this work. An internal THS document stated that one of the AP Coordinator's 12 job responsibilities is to "participate in at least one PLC team that feeds into AP Courses (to improve Vertical Teaming)." Similarly, the AP Network Meeting Minutes from November 30, 2016 supported the work of PLCs to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students, with the charge "to unify rigor of AP courses with multiple sections" so that potential AP students in those classes knew what to expect regardless of which teacher taught the section they were in. Second Phase Leader and AP Coordinator Cole Ingram offered an example of this work of the PLCs:

> There was a disconnect between some teachers with the grades that they gave and how students performed on the AP test. We were very transparent in those meetings and we talked to successful teachers. And everyone acknowledged, "Hey, we're not trying to throw someone under the bus or anything. We're just trying to put the data out there so we can have higher success with students." And

most of the people believed in increasing the percentage of minority participation. But yeah, the intrinsic bias and stuff like that, (PLCs) helped flush some of that out and that was really successful. We would put the data out there…that was one thing we did that was successful and helped move the needle.

Supporting Through Professional Development. By committing to building relationships with staff and providing time and money to do the work, school-based leaders were able to help Trailwood staff become key players in increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. In addition to these practices of support, providing relevant professional development was another practice highlighted by THS leaders and likewise found in corresponding artifacts. Since all three THS principals provided both time and pay for staff collaboration, needed professional development was also offered to staff. Specifically, professional development opportunities related to AP course work for all students at Trailwood increased under Principal Knowles, who her predecessor Dr. Evans credited with the lions' share of the AP work on behalf of Black and Latinx students. As stated previously by Initiating Leader David Parkdale, one such offering was the "Courageous Conversations" training which addressed personal and systemic racism.

THS internal documents, in particular its "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal" from 2004 to the Grandview School District, goes into the great detail on Knowles's and her leaders' plans for staff professional development. This artifact stated that THS will increase "opportunities for faculty to take part in professional development about cultural and gender issues and student achievement" with this specific charge:

To achieve this goal of student success, the Trailwood AP Network will provide professional development opportunities for teachers in AP strategies and content and in understanding the cultural and gender aspects of student achievement. Additionally, this document highlighted the following trainings for THS staff: AP vertical team training, AP content training, Vertical Team Curriculum Development in the English Department as a pilot program for all THS departments, Trailwood Faculty AP Network Group monthly meetings, and whole staff training on the AP Network and the cultural and gender aspects of student achievement.

Similarly, under current principal Dr. Bryan Yelton, professional development continued to be of importance. The minutes from a February 2017 AP Network meeting continued to address the need for AP teacher training, particularly the need to train "many teachers in the methodology of AP Research as a way to unify our AP program." Additionally, the current THS website lists that faculty will participate in "AP vertical team training and AP content course training at College Board sponsored events." For Trailwood High School, under the leadership of Evans to Knowles to Yelton, school-based leaders continued the practice of using professional development to improve staff's ability to teach all students AP course content and skills.

Supports for Students. Just as school-based leaders had implemented supports for school staff, student supports figured even more significantly in Trailwood leaders' work to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students and change the culture at THS. Not only did supports need to be put into place for students but barriers to their enrollment and success likewise had to be removed. In their 2013 educational journal article summarizing Trailwood's AP work, Initiating Leaders Parkdale and Causby

summed up Trailwood's approach to helping their students: "The plan was to meet with those students regularly, give them academic and social-emotional support, and build culture within that cohort and the school where…AP classes were more representative of the entire student body." Similarly, the 2004 "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal" document stated that Black and Latinx students taking AP courses "will be provided social/emotional and academic support as they take on these challenging courses." Thus, from leader interviews and corresponding artifacts, two categories of student supports emerged: relationship building anchored by social-emotional support and academic scaffolding.

Relationship Building and Social-Emotional Support. As with the practice of relationship building with staff, the Trailwood leaders emphasized the need to do the same with the Black and Latinx AP students with whom they were working. Initiating Leader Parkdale stated that a "key value that is important to this program.... has always been a relational based approach." As Zach [Stevenson] used to say in regard to boys of color, "If they don't know that you care, they don't care what you know. It takes time to develop that trust." Subsequently, both participant interviews and relevant artifacts revealed that relationship building, and social emotional supports were addressed through four practices: having consistent meetings, building students' confidence, empowering students toward self-efficacy strategies, focusing on student representation, and providing academic supports.

Meeting Consistently. When a cohort was first formed of Black and Latinx males with academic potential, Initiating Leaders Causby and Parkdale, Sustaining Leader Stevenson, and a few key teachers began meeting with these students every few weeks

after school to connect with and encourage the students. Parkdale, who has served often as a historian for the entirety of the 24 year period, recalled that leaders soon had to:

transition from meeting every couple of weeks after school to starting to meet on a weekly basis, on a specific day, and a specific location so that they could establish a connection and develop trust relationships and have conversations that matter, not just about academics, but about social emotional issues as well.

This change to weekly meetings was reiterated in the 2004 national publication penned by Parkdale, Causby, and Stevenson: "A major change was made to meet during lunch on a specific day once each week and provide pizza for the boys. Building relationships and trust takes a lot of time and frequent face-to-face, encounters." Second Phase Leader Val Newsome likewise stressed that "relationships and consistency seeing them every week" were key practices in their work with the students.

Interestingly, a significant feature of these meetings that figured into eight of the 10 participant interviews was the pizza provided for every single meeting. In fact, "pizza" was mentioned a combined 34 times within interviews and artifacts. In each case, the pizza lunch for the students was first said with laughter that was followed by a serious, role-capturing statement such as this one by Sustaining Leader and current principal Bryan Yelton: "They joke a lot about the pizza, but that pizza is very important." Not surprisingly, the students agreed. In the an internal THS document entitled, "What does the cohort do or mean to me?" document, several responses echoed this. On 10th grade student quote perhaps summed up the draw of the pizza which in turn led to other things of importance: "free pizza once a week, talking about life situations, [having] a place

where you can open up and hear your peers' opinions about things, [and] sponsors who

can really be trusted."

Another practice employed by Trailwood leaders that led to consistent time with

Black and Latinx students pursuing AP coursework was placing them on the caseload of

the counselor involved directly in the work, the first of which was Sustaining Leader

Zach Stevenson who related how he approached relationship building:

> I come from a coaching background, so they became like my team. So I was able
>
> to employ a lot of the same strategies I use as a coach by translating it into the
>
> academic area. And I think that in terms of the relationships that were built and
>
> the strategies that we used, that was just huge having them on my case load,
>
> meaning that I had contact with them ongoing all the time.

Similarly, Second Phase Leader and boys' and girls' cohort sponsor Steve Dailey

agreed about importance of having a dedicated counselor. In regard to a student who was

conflicted about enrolling in a particular AP course, the student's

> counselor called me [Dailey] down and we had a conversation and you could tell
>
> he [the student] was really struggling with it. But we told him, "Try it and we'll
>
> see if you have an issue; we'll see how we can support you."

This important practice of relationship building borne out of meeting consistently

with Black and Latinx students who were pursuing AP courses was summed up by

Initiating Leader Parkdale:

> That [relationship-building] was part of the foundation. And, I think that was
>
> pivotal. And then the other thing is a consistency of people, the adults, that you're
>
> going to see every week in that circle. You can't have a program like this and have

a lot of fluctuation in terms of who's going to be sitting in that circle week by week, year by year. It just doesn't; it's not going to work.

Building Confidence. Students' inexperience with the AP system and their own confidence in doing rigorous work were additional barriers that had to be addressed through supportive measures. The 2004 THS internal document "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal" highlighted two concerns: "Students who have the ability to complete AP level courses may not enroll, due to lack of understanding of the advantages of taking an AP course." Similarly this document expressed leaders' concerns that "students who do not have previous experience in advanced level courses drop out of AP classes at a higher rate than those students who have been enrolled in gifted or intensified classes." Not surprisingly, these same students often lacked the confidence in their own ability to do AP coursework. As stated by many of the Initiating Leaders in response to Research Question One, they as leaders had to demonstrate to the students their confident belief in the student's ability to do the work so they would believe it themselves. Parkdale summed this up when he stated, "In the beginning, the challenge was to convince them that they were capable." Similarly, Clarisse Knowles encouraged staff to build students' confidence by telling them, "You can do it. I believe you can do it. I just need you to believe you."

In contrast to Initial Leaders' experience, Second Phase Leaders did not express major concerns about their Black and Latinx students' confidence in themselves, though Newsome did see the importance of instilling the confidence in the students. However, Steve Daley was concerned about sustaining students' confidence outside the school

walls; he thus led these students in conversations about issues of social justice while telling them:

> I want you to know, I know you, but there are people who are going to look at you as young men of color, and they're going to have a lot of negative ideas about who you are. And I don't want you to get in a situation where you are harmed, or anything happens because you're not aware that's out there.

As a complement to this challenge, Dailey likewise bolstered these same students' confidence by using a strengths-based mindset:

> I remember telling kids, "You know we have these programs, services and initiatives—not because there's something wrong with you, right? Or that you're deficit in some way. But we're looking at how the system can better support you and meets your needs. It's not you."

Self-Efficacy: Giving Students a Voice. Interview participants additionally noted the importance of allowing their Black and Latinx students to be honest about their concerns as students of color as well as their day to day lives. Thus, while common teenager issues arose such as romantic relationships and hobbies, the students shared deeper concerns because they trusted the relationships school-based leaders had built with them. In the THS internal document "Cohort Welcome," the leaders promised to "make ourselves available for conversations about your classes, your teachers, your future."

Consequently, racism was an on-going conversation brought up by Black and Latinx students throughout Trailwood's work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment. Initiating Leader Parkdale noted that in Men's Cohort meetings the leaders

would often ask, "What is it like to be a young man of color in 2015? Do you want to tell

me about what it's really like for you as a young man of color?" The 2004 national article

penned by Parkdale, Causby, and Stevenson likewise affirmed this:

> The emotional and political issues we also regularly tackle provide a forum that
>
> the guys have said happens nowhere else in their lives with this level of honesty.
>
> We talk about racism, about the cultural differences between Latinos and Blacks
>
> and the differences within those broader racial categories. We have discussed
>
> affirmative action, equity issues of standardized testing, sexual responsibility as
>
> young adults…We seek to light a fire within them that builds their self-esteem,
>
> deepens their character, and funnels them for the challenges of being talented
>
> minority young men in a White majority culture.

Sixteen years later, Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey commented on the real

conversations that continued in 2020, this time including the both the Men's Cohort

members as well the Minority Girls Together group:

> You're navigating this world as gentlemen of color and as young women of color;
>
> there are a lot of negative stereotypes about you and, just the energy it takes to
>
> deal with that can be a lot. I think that the students understand that we try to create
>
> this bond with one another. I think cohorts work well because they feel respected
>
> and valued and affirmed. They feel that from the way we interact with them, the
>
> way that we encourage them to interact with each other.

> ***Representation Factors: Lack of Peers in AP Classes***. In conjunction with

discussions on racism, an additional Black and Latinx student concern about going into

AP courses was the related concern of often being the only student of color in AP classes.

Initiating Leader Dr. Opal Evans recognized this early on: "All we've got is white students; this needs to turn around." Sustaining Leader Stevenson, who began the work with Evans, summarized the problem:

> If you've never been in a class where you are a minority, the only one or one of a few, and then you go into that situation, it's going to cause you some angst, let's put it like that. It causes you some angst in terms of being able to navigate that and survive in that type of manner in that environment.

To address this for Trailwood's Black and Latinx students, Stevenson summarized his work:

> I formed relationships with students…I talked to some [Black] students who were doing really well and seemed to be fairly well-adjusted and getting fine grades. I said, "Listen, why don't you consider taking this course or that course?" And you know, they would kind of shrug their shoulders and go, "I don't know, I'm getting good grades." And finally, as we continued to have the conversation, they said, "Look, why would I want to be in a class when none of my friends are?" It really hit me right there at that point, why they were being resistant; because there wasn't a peer group there, that they were caught and they didn't feel like they would be accepted.

Leader and principal Clarisse Knowles expressed this as well: "When you looked at those AP classes, they were 99% white." The 2004 AP Network Proposal initiated by Knowles also identified as one of its key concerns "the low number of students, especially minority males, in gifted, advanced, intensified, and Advanced Placement classes."

To combat the lack of peers in AP classes, Initiating Leaders Evans, Knowles, Causby, Parkdale, and Sustaining Leader Stevenson formed the Men's Cohort in 2000, which led to an increase in Black and Latinx male AP participation. Eight years later when Knowles was principal, Black and Latinx young women expressed the same issue. While more minoritized females than males were enrolled in AP courses overall, Bryan Yelton, who was Knowles's assistant principal at the time, recalled the concerns: "You're continuing to hear that they don't see kids like themselves [in AP courses]." Thus, due to Black and Latinx female students expressing their concerns, the Minority Women Together (MWT) was created in 2008.

While Black and Latinx AP enrollment at Trailwood had steadily gained over the years at the time of this study, Second Phase Leader Steve Daily commented on the continued importance of students having peers who look like them, signaling its continued prioritization at THS:

> That's one thing—being with a group of people who look like you, Black and Latinx; it is also important because they are like-minded, and they're going for the same goal. They deal with some of the same issues of being young men of color, young women of color.

Academic Supports. With an emphasis of relationship building embedded with social-emotional supports, practices that provided academic scaffolding to support students in AP courses were also essential for Black and Latinx students' success. The first practice of support was the elimination of AP course enrollment requirements followed by the communication of high expectations and the implementation of parallel supports.

Eliminating AP Eligibility Requirements. Based on leaders' own educational research, Initiating and Sustaining Leaders knew they first had to address how students qualified for AP courses, recognizing the gatekeeping practices that determined eligibility for AP enrollment. In his interview, Initiating leader Parkdale noted that previous performance in certain classes dictated whether a student could advance into AP courses, stating, "They had to earn it before they could get it (AP courses)," referring to the grades students had earned in previous classes. Fellow Initiating Leader Cate Causby described an additional hoop THS students had to jump through:

> We had a gatekeeper for AP; you had to take a little mini test, which was based partly on grades, but also, everybody in the AP class had to come to this meeting and take this little test before they could get into it. And we realized we can't do that. "That's the way it's always been done," teachers said. We said, "I know that's the way it's always been done, but you're keeping kids out who might be willing to take on this challenge."

Sustaining leader Harlan Badger vividly recalled one such situation around 2000 regarding a young Latinx man he was mentoring that involved gatekeeping practices of the counselors and the teachers:

> At Trailwood at that time, the counseling was so bad…nobody got into Advanced Placement courses who were Black or Latino –they were all White or Asian. And so we pushed really hard to get Roberto in AP Bio. There was one teacher in particular who tried to talk him out of being in advanced biology. She said, "I don't think you can really make it."

While Roberto did "make it" in this class, tutored other students in the class, and received an apology from the teacher, Badger in his interview still stressed his frustration about the difficulty minority students had getting into AP courses at the time.

Principal Clarisse Knowles also confirmed the presence of gatekeeping practices: "We wouldn't really have anybody in those classes because they (the staff) wanted it the conventional way that White kids got into the classes." Her predecessor Dr. Evans had sought to address gatekeeping practices by hiring Knowles as Trailwood's head counselor. In doing so, Knowles was able to limit other counselors' ability to keep Black and Latinx students out of AP courses who often regarded these students as not ready, not prepared, or not having earned good grades in previous classes. One significant practice previously mentioned in this chapter was the assignment all cohort students to counselor Stevenson who could ensure his Black and Latinx students were enrolled in AP courses. Stevenson recalled that school leaders worked to "eliminate the middleman"—counselors who were either resistant to enrolling Black and Latinx students in AP courses or who were trying to get them moved out. Stevenson summed up their actions: by assigning all Black and Latinx students to his caseload who were pursuing challenging courses, "we eliminated people who may not have had the vision."

To support this work, Initiating and Sustaining Leaders made the choice to remove both performance measures and entrance exams and enact open enrollment for all AP courses, meaning any student could enroll in any AP courses. Parkdale reflected, "Going from a performance based approach to potential based approach—it [was] a complete change of paradigm that was in a sense a kind of an act of resistance against the status quo."

For Second Phase and Sustaining Leaders, while they did not have to contend with these former gatekeeping practices removed previously, they did speak to the vigilance needed to identify future barriers against open enrollment. The November 30, 2017 minutes of an AP leadership meeting addressed a new practice that could be a gatekeeping practice while reaffirming open enrollment. Under the heading "Recruitment and Enrollment in AP," there was a discussion about including students' grades on a teacher recommendation form for AP classes.

> Would precise grades be included on the forms? No – probably list of skills and willingness to work. Not creating a gatekeeper but could create conversation among the counselor and student. (For example, a student who is getting a D in a prerequisite course because of lack of work completion might still take an AP course because they like the rich conversation in the course and are okay with getting a D).

In keeping with this thinking, Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey posited that Trailwood staff shouldn't focus on why the students shouldn't be in AP courses but think "instead of the reasons why they should be in there." Towards that end, the THS website currently states that there is "faculty identification and recruitment of students, Grades 8 through 12, who have the potential to succeed in advanced, intensified, and AP level courses" as well as this celebration of its history:

> As one of the first public high schools in the United States to open enrollment in AP courses to all students, Trailwood recognized the need to support students as they took on the academic and personal challenges that these courses present.

Setting High Expectations. A significant part of building relationships with students highlighted in Research Question One was the school-based leaders' belief in Black and Latinx students' abilities to do AP coursework. Practices that made these high expectations real were often mentioned as the complement to or an expression of that belief. Initiating Leader Opal Evans set the tone of having high academic expectations, a thread which ran throughout the 24 year period of Trailwood's AP work on behalf of minoritized student communities. When interviewed by a national radio program in April 2010, eight years after her retirement, Evans was asked by the reporter the "secret" to her turnaround of Trailwood High; she replied, "The secret is most importantly high expectations, number one." A national newspaper article from 2004 likewise underscored this emphasis: "Among her immediate priorities was academic achievement for all students through high expectations and achievement of children thought to be incapable of learning much." As stated in Research Question One, Dr. Evans often referred to the practice of believing in students' abilities to meet the high expectations set for them. Fellow Initiating Leader Parkdale, who served under all three THS principals in this study, conveyed this same importance: "It's laying up high expectations…that's another value—having and maintaining high expectations, of their ability in classes, but also their character." Similarly, during her tenure as principal, Clarisse Knowles sought to increase her faculty's expectation of Black and Latinx students through professional development tied directly to AP courses. According to an internal THS document, they used a specific training which "has shown that if teachers expect more, students achieve higher."

Second Phase Leaders likewise expressed the importance of the practice of having high expectations of Black and Latinx students as a way of conveying their belief in their

academic abilities. Equity and excellence coordinator Steve Dailey talked about a cohort

ritual where a cohort sponsor invites a Black or Latinx ninth grade student to her office in

order to ask them to join and the impact on those students: "I think that you have the

potential to go to college and we want to invite you to this opportunity." Dailey reflected:

> That seemed to be a real turning point for some. Whereas I would like to think
> that educators have those expectations that students can do whatever they want to
> do, but the reality is that's not always the case. Hearing several [students] mention
> that it was like a switch was flipped— "Oh you think I'm college material? Let's
> see what this[cohort] is about."

His colleague Val Newsome also voiced the impact on teacher expectations of

students who were in THS cohorts.

> As we know, there's a lot of times teachers across the country who have lower
> expectations for students of color, and they don't even realize they do. So I love
> that [teachers] see [students in cohort] and think, "I expect more of you."

Fellow Second Phase Leader Cole Ingram related a personal story from his past teaching

experience as a new teacher without any training. He thought he had been given the

gifted class and thus had very high expectations of the students. When they were

struggling, he thought it had to be his fault as a new teacher, so he worked even harder so

that his students would be successful. Later, when his students had made incredible gains,

he learned that he was teaching students receiving special education services, not those

labeled "gifted."

> That experience…I always come back to that and think about that. It was just that
> I had these expectations and they met the expectations I had of them, even though

had I known otherwise, I would have just written them off. And that was one thing that really had me. That bleeds over to today.

The high expectations of Trailwood staff are likewise communicated to Black and Latinx students who enroll in rigorous courses such as AP courses through internal documents that are shared with them. The "Welcome to New Cohort Members" document stated, "We will provide you with opportunities to stretch yourself, expand your thinking, and broaden your perspective." In this same document, Trailwood's practice of expecting much of their cohort students is concisely summarized. Under the heading "Our Expectations of You," are these words: "Raise your expectations of yourself and other people with raise their expectations of you."

Parallel Supports for Students. While school-based leaders believed in the academic abilities of Black and Latinx students and thus had high expectations of them, leaders also understood the need to provide specific scaffolding to academically support these students. Initiating Leader Principal Evans provided after school tutoring done by compensated AP teachers. Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson and Initiating Leaders additionally realized how far behind academically many Black and Latinx students were despite their tremendous potential: "We noticed that, because these kids hadn't been pushed or encouraged, many of them were still a year behind," particularly in math. Together, these leaders found a solution: "Why don't we have them double up with a math, dropping an elective and do a double math, and when they can come back they'll be right on track and get the Precalc or whatever by their senior year."

When assistant principal Clarisse Knowles succeeded Dr. Evans as principal, she began to expand the AP work to increase Black and Latinx enrollment – one being the

creation of the AP Network in 2004—a major program that is still in place at Trailwood.

First proposed to the GPS district in the "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal"

document, leaders included a conceptual framework for the proposed AP Network that

illustrated the interconnected of supports (see Figure 4). Trailwood's current website

summed up these early leaders' work:

> Stemming from Trailwood's commitment to the notion that AP courses are
>
> designed for prepared students and not just "gifted" students, the Trailwood AP
>
> Network began as an Exemplary Project approved by the Grandview Public
>
> Schools in the spring of 2004.

Fellow Initiating Leaders Parkdale and Causby worked with Knowles on the creation of

the AP Network. In the same document in which the conceptual framework appears,

supports and opportunities for new AP students—the majority of whom were Black and

Latinx—were listed, including:

- AP Summer Institute for students not previously enrolled in AP level courses

- Academic counseling support by AP Coordinator

- Lunch time and after school network groups modeled from the Cohort
  Program

- Presentations by THS faculty members, the AP Coordinator, and Resource
  Teacher for the Gifted for 9th grade students to learn about the options for
  gifted, advanced, intensified and AP courses

Figure 4

Conceptual Framework of the Trailwood AP Network System of Support.
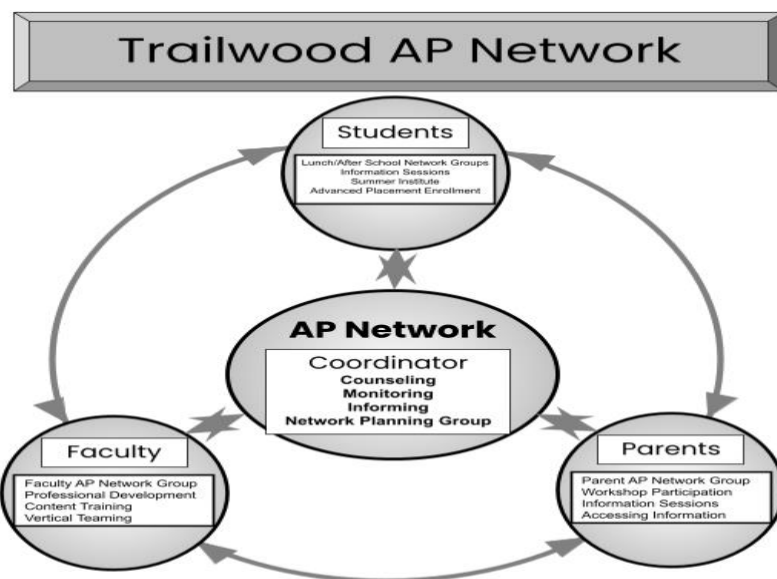
Additional presentations were offered to staff and 6th-8th grades students at Trailwood's feeder middle schools regarding "the options for gifted, advanced, intensified, and advanced placement courses at Trailwood" in order to prepare incoming students ahead of time for AP classes. Thus, both Initiating and applicable Sustaining school-based leaders worked to build a support system which built key skills needed for AP courses while also providing the supports needed to succeed in them—making it more likely that these students would take additional AP classes in their future. Stevenson, in summarizing leaders' early work to support students, said, "There were no holes; there was no way you could fall through in our initial design. It was daily homework checks, teachers checking in…so we really kind of loaded the table when we did this for their success."

Stevenson, along with Second Phase Leaders and Sustaining Leader Dr. Bryan Yelton have continued these same supportive practices by keeping many of programs and supports begun by Initiating Leaders and building upon them. The AP Summer program morphed into the Trailwood AP Summer Bridge Program, "a 4-day series of workshops and class sessions for AP students to attend in August to better prepare them for AP courses they will be taking in the coming school year" according to the school's current website. The website also formally connects the AP Network with the both the male and female Black and Latinx cohorts which "address the achievement gap between white and non-white students." Additionally, Second Phase Leader Dan Ingram confirmed that THS staff have continued to go to feeder middle schools to "talk about the AP program we've built."

Second Phase and Sustaining Leaders also added additional enrichments and supports for Black and Latinx students, one being the AP Seminar class for THS sophomores or juniors. The THS 2020-21 Guide to the AP Program stated that "AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives." Additionally, this course is one of two AP class requirements for a new AP program begun by Sustaining Leader and principal Dr. Yelton, a College Board initiative called the AP Capstone Diploma Program. In order to gain this diploma, THS students must take the other specific AP course, AP Research, "and at least four other AP courses, and earn an exam score of 3 or higher for all six courses." While the AP Capstone Diploma is available to all THS students, because many Black and Latinx AP students begin their AP coursework with AP Seminar, as suggested in the AP Network

minutes from February 2017, each were afforded a head start for this honor. Second

Phase Leader and AP coordinator Dan Ingram described this class:

> We started it because we're pushing and pushing and encouraging them to take it
>
> more rigorous classes, and their workload is substantial. So it's a period where
>
> they can just focus on doing their work. And at the same time, we have several
>
> AP teachers that either have that planning [period] or are teaching that seminar
>
> period. So the kids can go and spend time with their AP teacher during that time.
>
> And that has been really successful because if you're trying to get more kids in
>
> AP, you also give the support factor because seminar will allow you time if you
>
> need to go meet your teacher and do your work during that time. That's helped
>
> quite a bit to encourage students to enroll.

Additionally, Second Phase and Sustaining Leaders found additional ways to

create more time to offer support for all students, which was particularly helpful for

Black and Latinx AP students. One such example was the creation of a daily support

class called AP Consult—"a class that meets every day during 3rd period to provide

students with access to AP content teachers and time to complete their AP assignments"

according to the THS website. Second Phase Leader Cole Ingram explained an additional

support, Trailwood's "Jaguar Period"—a daily thirty minute study hall period for staff

help remediate students who are behind in their studies. According to Ingram:

> A lot of kids use it for homework or studying for a test later in the day. It is used
>
> as a tier one intervention, going under the premise all kids can succeed. If they're
>
> not succeeding, then give them the extra resources and time.

Overall, the cumulative effect of Trailwood's 24 year practice of providing supports and scaffolding for its students—particularly its Black and Latinx AP students—was summarized by Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey who linked it back to the first practice in this section—relationship building:

> The program is not really about the program. It's about the relationships; it's those early relationships that make a difference…So, I think that they understand that their value, that there are people who are invested in them because they know they can do it and they want to see them successful.

Practice Four: Connecting with the Larger THS Community

In order increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students at THS, school-based leaders reached out beyond the school walls to find additional supports for this work. The most significant outside resources included the families of the students, THS alumni, and one particular individual who supported the program. By connecting with each of these three groups, Trailwood's AP work on behalf of under-represented students was strengthened.

Engagement of Student Families. To bolster Black and Latinx students' endeavors in AP courses, Trailwood school-based leaders sought to involve student families. As noted in the 2004 proposal "Trailwood AP Network Exemplary Project," "Parents who have not attended college or who are from another country may not understand the value of these courses and may not encourage their children to take these more challenging courses." To address this, Initiating Leaders devised different practices to engage the families of Black and Latinx students whom they were identifying to take AP courses. For example, Dr. Evans initiated parent conference days which at the time

were only used in the district's elementary schools. Evans commented that practices like this, in conjunction with Trailwood's focus on the success of Black and Latinx students, was met with support by all parents: "All parents loved where Trailwood was going. They felt very good…especially our African American [parents], only because they had been on the losing end for so long."

Clarisse Knowles once again was able to build upon her predecessor's work in this area. Her belief was that "schools who have parents as partners are successful." Toward this, Knowles also provided parents with regular meetings to aid their understanding: "We met with our parents as frequently as we could, not just for AP, but in general; we really needed parents." Cate Causby, who worked with Knowles on parent connections, added,

> We all called all of the parents. That was part of our responsibility to increase parent connection. And so that's something we did from the very, very beginning. We had meetings with the parents in their homes, talking with them [by phone] if they weren't willing to have us come. And so that had a lot to do with how we then were able to get cohort started.

This focus on meeting with parents was a significant part of their AP Network Proposal in 2004, including one of its main goals: "Communication with parents will be increased and parents will be active participants in their children's success." To accomplish this, the proposal listed the following action items to offer parents:

- Informational workshops about gifted, advanced, intensified, and AP courses to Hispanic parent groups, PTA meetings (high school and middle school), and other parent groups;

- Trailwood Advanced Placement Network information sent home with first-day PTA packet; and

- Trailwood Parent AP Network Group meetings (quarterly).

Following in the footsteps of Initiating Leaders, Second Phase Leaders likewise emphasized the importance of engaging Black and Latinx parents. Steve Dailey in particular spoke about his focus on this: "It's important for me that the parents understand how to navigate the system to best meet their needs. I think having the community connection with school and home is very powerful." Fellow Second Phase Leader Val Newsome commented on leaders' availability for parents when their child is not doing well; "Some parents might email us and say, 'Hey is there some program that you can find for him?' Or 'I know he's not doing well; can you provide additional assistance or just, can you talk to him?'" Teacher and AP Coordinator Cole Ingram commented on a GPS district program, the Black Parent Alliance, which Trailwood staff support, such as offering a course entitled, "Preparing for AP Classes: Behaviors, Attitudes, and Expectations."

For Sustaining Leader and current principal Bryan Yelton, however, his advice to all THS parents had shifted regarding AP courses in general: "The past few years I have told parents in orientations 'Do not push your kid to take multiple APs; encourage them to find their passion,'" which aligned with Yelton's self-identified value as an educational leader:

I think every kid should be given the opportunity to identify and develop skills and competencies across the board, but then find their passion and be equipped to go wherever it is they want to go in life and be who they want to be.

Engagement of THS Alumni. In the 24 year period that THS has worked to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students, the alumni who benefitted from this effort represent a cohort of their own. School-based leaders, having already established strong relationships with these students, were able to keep in touch with them and invite them back to speak to a new generation. In a 2013 nationally published article written by Initiating Leaders David Parkdale and Cate Causby along with former students Nate Broadus and Josue Canelo, Trailwood's work to impact traditionally marginalized students was highlighted. Of particular focus in this article was the practice of inviting alumni back to speak to current students: "Once they graduate they are not gone. They contact us when they come back home from college or graduate from school and ask if they can…share their experiences."

Broadus and Canelo, the two THS graduates who penned the article with Parkdale and Causby, spoke about the importance of returning to Trailwood to address the current cohort students who remind them of themselves. Broadus, a Black man who graduated from THS in 2004 and employed as nuclear physicist stated:

My experiences…impacted me so much that I also make the time to come back every school year…I have spoken to every cohort class since I graduated. I give back to the family that help me get where I am today.

2006 THS graduate Josue Canelo, who at the time of the 2013 article was employed as a school counselor at another GPS district high school, is now working for Trailwood in that same position, influencing young men and women of color each day, bringing full-circle the work of THS school-based leaders.

The importance of Black and Latinx Trailwood alumni re-connecting with current students was likewise highlighted in an October 2017 AP Network Meeting attended by Second Phase Leader Cole Ingram, in which the minutes noted, "Recommend former students and provide a student blurb with their perspective regarding the [AP] course." Fellow Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey particularly talked about further involving former graduates to support current work.

> There now are alumni committees for both the boys' and girls' cohort. The students who are in the work force—they are coming back to support the kids…the networking potential is really what I think the real asset is, because you have people in who went to your same high school, who've been in cohort, and are in so many different fields… I would love to see a program where the juniors and seniors can…go shadow someone in a career you're interested in, who has been in cohort, who is a Trailwood alum, who is now working in the workforce. I think that'd be really powerful. So I would just like to see that done in a way where alumni know we want them to come back, and they know about the opportunities that are there.

Engagement of Businessman Harlan Badger. The final but most mentioned community connection was Harlan Badger, the local businessmen whose involvement with the AP enrollment focus dates back to 2000. As disclosed in the historical section of Chapter Four, Sustaining Leader Badger became involved with Trailwood High School due to his personal encounter with Fernando, a THS student whose academic potential was being overlooked. Initiating Leader Clarisse Knowles who was an assistant principal at the time, recalled how Badger got involved:

So he comes to school and wants to know more about the cohort. "I worked with a student over the summer, and I have never met a boy that wants to know more about cohort," so we take him to the AP coordinators. To this day, Harlan finances the cohort.

Fellow Initiating Leaders Causby and Parkdale likewise had much to say about Mr. Badger's commitment, each estimating his giving to be just short of one million dollars over 21 years. Causby additionally remarked, "Harlan says, 'here,' and he pulls out his wallet; 'Just take some money out and you just let me know when you need more'…I couldn't believe it. Harlan was a game changer."

Badger himself remarked on this long-term association with Trailwood: "I was involved really from the very beginning because I provided whatever funding they needed, first boys' then girls' cohort. It wasn't that much at the beginning…but it built up to being more." In the 2004 practitioner's article written by Parkdale, Causby, and Stevenson, it mentioned that their work had "received generous financial support from private donors," the foremost being the unmentioned Badger. However, money was not all Badger provided; he additionally mentored students over the years, and each student in the cohorts know who he is. In the beginning, Badger recalled feeling discouraged by the racism that he saw Francisco and other students of color enduring and Principal Opal Evan's response:

I remember [she] came up to me; "I hear you're discouraged," she said. "Buck up and face it. If you can't do it and you quit, how are they going to do it?" She really chewed me out. I thought it was amazing.

In additional to the success of Black and Latinx students over the years, Harlan's main reason for his continued support were the Trailwood leaders in this work:

Cate Causby, Zach Stevenson, Opal Evans, Steve Dailey, Val Newsome. All of these people have this ability to reach kids and say, "What do you want?" And these kids love these advisors, and they can motivate these kids; they relate to the lives of these kids and love them, and the kids respond in kind. They don't want to disappoint these people.

Second Phase Leaders, such as Dailey and Newsome mentioned above, continued to appreciate Badger's support. Dailey particularly commented, "The support from Harlan and his wife is great; they financially support the college tours and the summer programs and the pizza every week." Speaking specifically in terms of the college visits, Dailey said these enabled students, so they are "a step closer" to seeing themselves on the college campus. Similarly Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson spoke of Badger's unexpected contribution to the work:

Harlan was a resource that we didn't see coming, but when it came it proved to be instrumental; he actually ended up arranging for us to do our first college trip down to Markson College to spend overnight on a campus and go to class so they could see themselves on a college campus. And…he brought a lot to it. He bought a to the initial data and missional root work we did.

Finally, when current Principal Bryan Yelton was asked about the key factors in the success of Trailwood's work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment, he replied that in addition to THS staff, it was "Harlan's financial support. Not just for the Men's cohort and MWT, but through donations to the Trailwood's education foundation and its

alumni organization, even though he's not an alum. He gives them $20,000, 30,000, 40,000 a year." Badger summed up his role this way:

> All of these people had a positive impact in their own way. Everyone added
>
> something to it, is what I'm trying to say. And I mean it…we all believed in the
>
> same thing. So we all had our role to do this.

Summary of Research Question Two

The intent of Research Question Two was to describe the primary practices THS leaders believed played key roles in increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. Findings from the 10 participant interviews and relevant artifacts revealed four noteworthy practices: taking risks, using data to grow and build capacity, providing supports for staff and students, and connecting with the larger THS community. Within these four, a myriad of practices were discussed as supported by participant interviews and artifacts. Of particular interest is the consistency of practices that have been sustained across a 24 year period and three school principals. While differences existed among the three leader groups presented in this study, Second Phase and Sustaining Leaders were able to continue most of the practices begun by Initiating Leaders while also expanding upon and adding to these practices. The three Sustaining Leaders, Stevenson, Yelton, and Badger, remained as connections from the past to the present. Overall, the practices presented in this section represent the vast amount of support for Trailwood's stakeholder groups, especially its students. Dr. Opal Evans, THS's first principal who began this work, summed up the goal of these practices in her interview, stating, that due to the varied supports for students "it was really hard to not do well." Initiating Leader Parkdale

added his take on their practices to support the increased AP course enrollment of Black

and Latinx students:

> it was a very unique combination of individuals inside of the school, support from
>
> the school, and support outside of the school that has contributed to the ongoing
>
> success … allowing us to do things with these kids that otherwise we wouldn't
>
> have been able to do.

Organizational Processes (RQ3)

The goal of Research Question Three was to identify how the practices featured in

Research Question Two were captured in organizational processes and structures by

Trailwood leaders to increase the AP course enrollment of Black and Latinx students. As

defined in the study's semi-structured interview questions, organization processes

focused on planning, polices, structures, and any standard operating procedures

surrounding this work. The following interview questions were designed to reveal these

organizational processes:

- How did the AP Initiative get started? How did you begin?

- What did you do next? What were the important next steps after you had

  begun?

- Why did you start this/these way/ways?

- What were the resources?

- With such a big undertaking as this, how did you organize it all? What

  processes did you use to get it all together? Which ones worked best? Which

  ones not so well?

Participant interviews as well as THS artifacts revealed four organizing processes: the creation of a sustainable vision often referred to as the "Trailwood Way," the focus on organizational stability, the distribution of both leadership and resources, and the sustained protocol of regular reflection and evaluation – both individual and corporate. These four organizational processes will be presented through the lens of the three THS leader groups—Initiating Leaders, Second Phase Leaders, and Sustaining Leaders as well corresponding artifacts to provide insight and confirmation of these throughout this section.

Organizing Process One: A Sustainable Vision – "The Trailwood Way"

Throughout the 10 participant interviews as well as numerous artifacts, several references were made to the "Trailwood Way," a shared understanding of how the school, its staff, and its students operated. The robust work ethic and belief in diversity of the staff were common areas mentioned in participant interviews and artifacts. At some point, however, the "Trailwood Way" began to be defined more specifically. On the current Trailwood website, Bryan Yelton's "principal's corner" states the following:

> As a school community, we place a great deal of importance on 'the Trailwood Way'- frequently referred to as the "5 Rs" – Rigor, Relationships, Resiliency, Responsibility, and Results. We believe that focusing on these areas helps us graduate students who are prepared to succeed in college, career, and life.

During the 24 years covered by this study, the vision that became "the Trailwood Way" had first to be created, then organized, expanded, and sustained.

Creating the Vision. As stated earlier in this study, Initiating Leader and Principal Dr. Opal Evans, called a "visionary in education" in a 2010 national radio

interview, asserted in this same interview that the first order of business at Trailwood was for the school to become a physically safe learning environment for her staff and students. Once this daunting task had been achieved, she felt that THS could then proceed to become a better school academically. In her participant interview Evans stated that to her staff,

> the message was that, you gotta do it. Your job is to teach every child as you want your child to be taught. And if you yourself don't have children, then think about nieces, nephews, any young people you care about and what kind of education they want to have – that's your job in the classroom every day.

In the aforementioned radio interview transcript, Evans outlined the steps toward accomplishing better academic outcomes for students—the first being the staff's belief in students' abilities to do the work paired with having high expectations for them—perhaps precursors to two of the five R's, rigor, and responsibility. Later in this same interview, she stated the second step to building a strong academic program that benefits all students, especially those minoritized:

> Number two, finding a way with your faculty, with your teachers – finding a way to give every single individual student a taste of success, because I believe that once any child tastes success, once they've gotten their arms around what it feels like to be successful in school, that that will begin a self-motivation process with youngsters. And, indeed, I think that we did find that at Trailwood, and I see that now.

These successes could perhaps be viewed as the genesis of emphasizing that actual data-driven "results" – part of the five R's of "the Trailwood Way"—must be part of any

vision to increase academic rigor. As mentioned in the historical section early in this chapter, in her ninth year as principal, Evans created the "Foundation Program for Academic Excellence" which placed all ninth graders into smaller cohorts to create a stable, nurturing environment for these students by having one team of teachers who focused on building relationships, according to fellow Initiating Leader Cate Causby. Accordingly, relationships, one of the five R's of "the Trailwood Way," was a main feature of Evan's vision for THS from the beginning.

Organizing the Vision. In 2000, four years after initiating ninth grade learning houses, more of the THS vision for its students came into focus through a summer retreat led by then superintendent of GPS Dr. Noah Stuckey and attended by principal Evans, THS school counselor Zach Stevenson, resource teacher for the gifted Cate Causby, and a few other key Trailwood staff. It was during this retreat that Stevenson, Causby, and minority achievement coordinator Kathryn Dorsey began to envision more Black and Latinx students enrolled in AP courses. Stevenson particularly spoke to the planning aspect of this vision:

> It did take a lot of planning, right? So, you got [an idea]. So, in terms of how we organized it, we had to look at the schedule, and what we're going to have as its components—the academic component or social, emotional component, and extra-curricular kind of components to go with it. And so figuring out how to have contact with the kids and the frequency and duration of that.

Stevenson went on the explain that this planning lead to the creation

> of sections in which our students would be in particular classes together with particular teachers...that we knew had the same passion for bringing about change

and working with different populations. So we really kind of loaded the table

when we picked them for success.

From this planning and organization of the vision, Men's Cohort was created two years

later in 2000.

While Evans was able to initiate many academic improvements in her time at

THS, including overseeing the start of Men's Cohort, she credited her successor,

Initiating Leader Clarisse Knowles, with the main work of increasing Black and Latinx

AP enrollment. She was able to give herself some credit in her participant interview,

however, stating "the ground was fertile, the seeds had been sown, and she (Knowles)

could move ahead." While Initiating Leader David Parkdale, who joined this work in

2005, was not a part of the early planning stages with Evans, its importance was not lost

on him:

> I'm not sure that I would have seen it [the problem of low minority AP
>
> enrollment], and I was happy to be a part of it. And there's a difference…I respect
>
> their vision, to get it started. I had a commitment to see it, to see it keep going.
>
> And so I saw the value in continuing it because it was viable for the kids and it
>
> was viable for me.

Further Organization and Expansion of the Vision. When Dr. Evan's 15-year

tenure as principal at THS came to an end in 2002, Clarisse Knowles continued the work

by both organizing the vision more deeply to increase the academic successes of Black

and Latinx students and expanding on the revised iteration. One of her most significant

contributions was a 2004 major proposal to the district, Grandview Public Schools (GPS),

for an AP Network that she and key THS staff, including Stevenson and Causby, had

created. The beginnings of the AP Network were detailed in this proposal including its

purpose which was derived from the GPS Strategic Plan: "The gap in achievement

between African American students and white students and between Hispanic students

and white students will be eliminated." Specifically, Knowles and her THS leaders

defined in greater detail how they planned to meet this goal in this same proposal:

> With the support of the Trailwood Advanced Placement Network greater numbers
>
> of students, representing the cultural and gender diversity of the school, will
>
> participate and succeed in Advanced Placement courses. To achieve this goal of
>
> student success, the Trailwood AP Network will provide professional
>
> development opportunities for teachers in AP strategies and content and in
>
> understanding the cultural and gender aspects of student achievement.
>
> Communication with parents will be increased and parents will be active
>
> participants in their children's success. The students will be provided
>
> social/emotional and academic support as they take on these challenging courses.

Within this proposal document, a history of Trailwood's work to create more diverse AP

classes was detailed followed by the desired results and how they would be evaluated.

Additionally, the document presented the research the proposal was based on and detailed

strategies to implement the plan which included a conceptual framework (see Figure 4).

In addition to their proposal submission to district leaders, these school leaders

presented the AP Network to the Trailwood faculty that same year. Knowles stated:

> I presented to them the AP Network; we opened the year with a presentation of all
>
> of our scores across the board – AP scores, SATs scores, etc.; 'Here is where we
>
> are and here's where we hope to go. And we need your help.

Also during that year, Knowles and her leaders shared a PowerPoint presentation

highlighting the Men's Cohort, which was shared with me. It highlighted the Cohort's

mission and vision, defining these as "academic achievement, leadership development,

group dynamics, empowerment/role of sponsors, values education, positive male identity,

and counseling relationship." In addition to its mission and vision, the presentation

included its goal to "Prepare selected group of Black and Latino male students for AP

level work through enrollment in gifted, intensified and advanced level courses beginning

in 9th grade." According to Knowles, the work to sustain the vision was ongoing and

continual:

> We just kept building. The first year that we built up the class we had expected
>
> that the more kids that take the test, the lower your scores going to be; [before] we
>
> had all these "stars" [taking the tests], but now we've got about a third of kids who
>
> had never taken an AP course before. But that first year our scores remained the
>
> same. We didn't climb, but we didn't take that big dip we were expecting. So we
>
> said, "What we're doing is making sense. We're there for those kids. We've given
>
> them the support they need; we're asking them, 'What do you need? What can we
>
> do to make you successful?'"

A further element of the continual building of the "Trailwood Way" was the

expansion in 2008 of the counterpart to the Men's Cohort —the Minority Women

Together (MWT) cohort. Knowles related how the MWT came to be:

> That's how we kept it growing by continuing to look at the data, to look and see
>
> who we are missing, and why we are missing them. [Regarding] our Hispanic and
>
> Black girls, I said, "Come on you guys can do this; we believe in you," and the

girls stepped up. After about the third year they said, "Why do the boys get to go

on a bus and visit three or four colleges and we don't? Why do they get to talk

about their feelings? And why do the boys get men in businesses to come out and

meet with them and mentor them and give them jobs and we don't?" And we said,

"Good question." And immediately the girls' cohort formed.

Knowles went on to mention that efforts were made to support Black and Latinx students

who were not part of the two cohorts: "Outside of the cohort and of the AP

Network…were individual kinds of issues that we were supporting" including supporting

undocumented students alone in the U.S without their parents, refugee populations,

students impacted by poverty, and any students struggling with social/emotional issues.

Additionally, Knowles offered the next piece of implementing the AP Network vision in

her participant interview:

It kind of evolved naturally because every teacher in AP was, became part of the

AP Network committee. They met regularly as a group with the AP coordinator

and the administrators to talk about what we were doing in classes, what they

were seeing, what the results were, planning the AP seminar.

Knowles also noted how she made sure those teaching AP courses also had the vision to

support those students who had not traditionally been enrolled them:

[Teachers would ask] "Can I get an AP?" In saying yes, that is what you were

agreeing to be part of the AP Network, that you were going to be supportive and

meet on a regular basis to decide whatever direction the program goes in. So that

was like a natural selection pretty much. Do you even want to do that? Then you

teach an AP class. You don't want to be available to tutor when a student has study hall? Then you don't want to teach an AP class.

Finally, one of the best indications that Knowles had taken Evans's initial vision for more Black and Latinx students to take more AP courses and expanded on it was the response from the students themselves. In the 2004 educational journal article written by Parkdale, Stevenson, and Causby which compared their roles as educators to coaches, they stated:

> The greatest thrill coaches receive is when their players catch the vision themselves. One of our sophomore members admitted early in this past year that his academic strategy was to do very well the first quarter and then simply do "good enough" the remainder of the year. However, some significant changes occurred within him during his year in the program and early in the fourth quarter, he confessed learning that as a member of the Cohort he could choose to "simply ride along or run with it." He told the group he had made his choice to switch from being an observer along the sidelines to risk putting himself fully into the game. It was a pivotal moment for this young man and a deeply satisfying one for his coaches.

This student's affirmation statement perhaps exemplifies the final "R" of the "Trailwood Way," resilience, gained through the hard work of students like this one and their school leaders who guided them. Similarly, in the 2013 article in the same education journal, this time penned by Parkdale, Causby, and former students Broadus and Canelo, the latter stated, "Men's Cohort truly embodies the 'Trailwood Way:' instilling in every member

the values of rigor, relationships, resilience, responsibility, and results. Results that, to me, are immeasurable."

Expanding and Sustaining the Vision. With the vision created and organized by THS Initiating Leaders, Sustaining and Second Phase Leaders were thus tasked with the continuation of the vision to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. As previously detailed, current principal Dr. Bryan Yelton's use of data to determine patterns of AP courses taken among Black and Latinx students was yielding needed information to further expand minoritized students' participation in AP courses. Yelton likewise expressed continued support of the AP Network set up by Initiating Leader Knowles: "The term AP network is an umbrella. And then [we asked], 'What are the things under the umbrella that support the work of increasing access for minority students?'" Additionally, Second Phase Leader, Cole Ingram, a THS science teacher and AP coordinator, shared that the need to believe in the academic ability of Black and Latinx students was something that continued to be monitored. He stated that Trailwood staff still had to "have to have that belief that [AP classes] should have the same proportion in those classes regardless of their economic [status], social [class], race, etc."

Further cementing the vision of the "Trailwood Way" and the continuance and expansion of the Sustaining Leader Knowles's AP Network were four "AP Network Meeting Minutes" agendas supplied to me, all from 2017. In particular, the meeting minutes from October 25, 2017, specifically referenced the "Trailwood Way" by advocating for staff to "informally mentor by offering extra hours through lunch and after school help," noting that "teachers want to help their own students in regard to their own subjects."

Second Phase Leader Steve Dailey summed up the creation, organization, expansion, and sustainability of the "Trailwood Way" and its vision of academic excellence for Black and Latinx students stating,

> You know, it was 20 years of it – this program was established. I commend the folks that started it because you're really going against the grain and so many ways, and you have to convince teachers who may not be used to having, you know, certain numbers of Black and Latino males and the fact you have to convince the students themselves.

Similarly, on the current Trailwood High School website, a recent graduate reiterated the values ascribed to the vision first created by Dr. Opal Evans, the initiator of the vision to increase the academic success of traditionally marginalized student populations:

> One thing that has really stuck with me since coming to Trailwood my freshman year is our five pillars: Rigor, Relationships, Resilience, Responsibility, and Results. I feel as though Trailwood and the way our community stands by our five pillars has positively and successfully contributed to the man I've grown into. The five pillars have been exemplified by most of the teachers I've had here. They've shown me that with the right support system, a student's personal expectation automatically rises. With the confidence, humility, and ability to stay composed, all skills I've gained from attending Trailwood and following the five pillars, I am certain that I will be a successful college student, and will venture into a career path that greatly benefits me and the people around me.

Organizing Process Two: Organizational Stability

With the proliferation of Trailwood's vision for its Black and Latinx students through the 24 year period covered by this study, organizational stability was noted through participant interviews and corresponding artifacts. Findings indicated that school-leader longevity, succession planning, and hiring practices contributed the consistent vision for Black and Latinx students to be proportionally enrolled in AP classes at Trailwood.

School-Leader Longevity. A simple calculation of the number of principals Trailwood has had since 1996 indicated the singularity of this phenomenon as compared to other U.S. public schools. According to the Learning Policy Institute, the "national average tenure of principals in their schools was four years as of 2016–17." Other studies indicated that high school principals' tenure at their schools is less than that of their middle and elementary school peers, including one by Fuller and Young (2009) which found the rate of elementary principal turnover was 4.96 years, middle 4.48, and high school 3.38. Using the simple four-year turnover rate for high schools, if Trailwood were in line with national trends, six principals would have been at the helm as opposed three.

Furthermore, this longevity did not only apply to Trailwood's principals but also to other key school-leader positions, as indicated in Table 9, including the assistant principal, resource teacher for the gifted, school counseling, and equity coordinator positions. Furthermore, both the roles of AP coordinator and Trailwood's benefactor have remained stable over a 15 to 20-year period as well.

Table 9

THS Longevity in Key Leader Positions

Position	Participants	Years in Role
Principal	Opal Evans Clarisse Knowles Bryan Yelton	15 years (1987-2002) 8 years (2002-2010) 11 years (2010-present)
Assistant Principal	Clarisse Knowles Bryan Yelton	4 years (1998-2002) 8 years (2002-2010)
Resource Teacher for the Gifted and AP Cohort co-sponsor (and eventually the United Minority Girls)	Cate Causby Val Newsome	18 years (1994-2012) 7 years (2014-present)
School counselor assigned to work with Cohort and UMG	Clarisse Knowles Zach Stevenson	8 years (1990-1998) 21 years (2000-present)
School social work	David Parkdale	10 years (1995-2005)
Equity & Excellence Coordinator (formerly called minority achievement coordinator)	David Parkdale Steve Dailey	14 years (2005-2019) 2 years (2019-present)
AP Coordinator/teacher	Cole Ingram	15 years (2005-2020)
Community Supporter	Harlan Badger	21 years (2000-present)

These long periods of employment at Trailwood High School, whether the leader stayed in one position or several, resulted in 118 years cumulatively served by the 10 participants in this study, providing substantial organizational stability that defied national data on both principal, teacher, and general staff turnover rates.

Succession planning. Trailwood's stability in key leadership roles, however, was not gained by happenstance but rather through careful succession planning by THS

leaders. Seven of the nine THS employees either chose their successors, were chosen by their predecessors to replace them, or both – including all four Initiating Leaders who spoke of grooming their replacement. Principal Evans, for example, who hired Clarisse Knowles first as head counselor then as assistant principal, viewed her as the best person to replace her, working to:

> straighten things out and set the groundwork; then Clarisse could take it where I left it and moved it to where it should've gone. And that's always what we want to do as principals—have fantastic goals, ideally meet them, and prepare the way for the next magnificent step.

> This work to prepare her for each of her jobs was not lost on Knowles who commented, "You know, I was at Trailwood for 20 years in all of my jobs kind of responsibility, one kind of rolled into the other." Subsequently, when it was her time to retire, Knowles looked to one of her assistant principals, Bryan Yelton, to take over for her. After two years under her tutelage in which Trailwood had won a national award for its AP work with minoritized students, she was named principal of the year for her district and President Barack Obama visited her school due to its successes. She reflected upon her thoughts at that time:

> Where am I going to go from here? I reached my pinnacle, and I had wonderful Bryan who was ready for his opportunity and I didn't want Trailwood to lose him...that was a lot of why I decided to retire.

Yelton likewise spoke of Knowles's work to make him her successor: "When she was appointed principal, I filled her [assistant principal] vacancy, and then she kind of groomed me to replace her."

The principal role, however, was not the only one in which Initiating Leaders primed others to follow them. Resource teacher for the gifted Cate Causby also worked on her replacement in the hope that the gifted program could continue to have a strong equity and Advanced Placement focus. She thus began to reach out to Val Newsome whose position of technology instruction job at Trailwood had been cut four years earlier and was now at another GPS school. Causby had kept in touch with Newsome because she viewed her as the best person to replace her stating in her interview, "she was the only person I felt should have my position." For her part, Newsome was aware of Causby's efforts:

> So when she was ready to retire, she called me and said, "I'm going to be retiring in a year. I think you should really consider this position." And so I did, and I took some gifted resources or certification courses and then applied for her position when she vacated it.

Thus, in Newsome's hiring as the next THS gifted specialist, the consistency of purpose and process that Causby had hoped for occurred. Newsome added:

> And so when I came back to Trailwood to fill the role, we continued on with identifying Black and Hispanic students and then encouraging them each spring as they started to group courses for the following year, encouraging them to look at these more challenging courses.

> Similarly, Initiating Leader David Parkdale indicated he wanted someone he

trusted to continue to his work with Trailwood's cohorts after he retired to continue the work of increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment. His focus was on Steve Dailey, a colleague at another school with a similar job to Parkdale's job as equity and excellence

coordinator. Dailey offered insight into Parkdale's approach, which he only recently concluded had occurred: "I hadn't realized…that David had planted the seed for me to think about going to Trailwood." He continued by talking about a THS celebration he had attended in which students from the cohorts talked about the impacts David had had on them, particularly how he encouraged them to think differently – to expand what it is "you think you want to do with your life." It was then that he realized that Parkdale had been gently pressing him to consider the equity and excellence position upon his retirement: "He did the same thing to me. And it just happened that I got the position." Dailey additionally indicated that the way he approached his job is based on living up to how Parkdale did it:

> He really poured into the students in a way that built them up. He has a gift, and watching him I was like, "Okay, I need to learn from this." I feel like I have a good rapport with the students. But watching him, the way he really poured into them is the best way I can describe him. He really builds them up. And I feel like, "When do I not, when do I not do that?" But for me, he's a different level than I am.

Finally, while not completely in line with leader succession planning, it is worth noting that the remaining two THS school leaders in this study, teacher and AP coordinator Cole Ingram and community supporter Harlan Badger, have both retained their leadership position despite changes at the principal level, which led to greater organizational stability. Similarly, all nine of the Trailwood school-based who came during or after Evans's initiating leadership were retained by the principal that followed and continued to work on behalf of Black and Latinx students. This significant lack of leader turnover at

various levels thus provided the organizational stability for Trailwood's AP Network and its focus on the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students over this study's 24 year period.

Hiring Processes. Also contributing to Trailwood's organizational stability was its focus on using key hiring processes to acquire staff who were a good fit for the "Trailwood Way." All three Trailwood principals indicated the necessity of good staff hires. Opal Evans firmly stated that the basis for a great school "is a good, strong principal, and then that strong principal hiring strong staff." This was corroborated in a national news article which stated that in her turnaround of THS, "Evans also worked hard to put together a staff that believed in her approach." This article particularly noted Evans's hiring of Knowles as the head guidance counselor as a calculated move toward changing beliefs about the academic potential of Black and Latinx students.

Knowles likewise viewed hiring as critical to the principal role positing:

I think hiring is the most important thing a principal does because you want to make sure they believe in the values and the goals that your staff has set; probably the most important thing I did was hiring and asking the good questions and doing some homework.

Her fellow Initiating Leader Cate Causby also expressed this belief: "If you do not have the right people who have the kind of passion to do the work, it's really not going to be successful because it really does require a lot of time."

Trailwood's Sustaining Leaders were likewise in agreement about the necessity of the right hires for Trailwood, even today. In response this interview question, "what were the resources that made the AP Network's initiative work, current principal Dr. Yelton

cited "personnel – committed personnel." Similarly, community support leader Harlan

Badger expressed several times how it was paramount to

> pick the right people, got to have the right administrator, the right principal and
>
> then give it [the AP work] to the right people and let them do it and make it work.
>
> The important thing for this program – the most important thing – is getting the
>
> superstar teachers you find those teachers that can relate to kids and move kids
>
> and you give them any resources they could possibly need.

To accomplish the hiring of the "right" people to continue the work of

Trailwood's AP initiatives, several of the study's school-based leaders indicated the

importance of communicating to potential employees the Trailwood vision for its

students. Sustaining Leader Zach Stevenson noted, "One of the reasons people will tell

you they come to Trailwood is that they want to be a part of diversity. If you're not into

diversity, it is not a school to come to." Of particular importance was communicating this

during the hiring processes. Initiating Leader Parkdale indicated that he would

communicate the following in interviews:

> What I care about is can you relate to kids and can you relate to the kids that show
>
> up at our school. If you're a person who comes in saying, "Well, I'm a part of the
>
> union, so I'm there at 7:30 in the morning and I leave at 3:30" well, okay, that's
>
> fine; I got nothing against unions. But this isn't a school for you. That's not the
>
> Trailwood way. The Trailwood way is that you make yourself available before
>
> school or after school to work extra with kids or you participate in some kind of
>
> extracurricular sponsorship of something.

Sustaining Leader Yelton and Second Phase Leader Ingram both noted the importance of specific interview questions in the interviews themselves. Yelton offered,

> My biggest question in interviewing is 'Why Trailwood?" I'll start out with, "Tell me a little about yourself and why you're interested in this job and why you would like to be at THS." And if I don't like your answer to "Why Trailwood," if it's like "I live in the neighborhood," I tune out for the rest of the interview.

The interviews related to the hiring processes revealed a laser-like focus on this particular organizational process. This process combined with the focus on succession planning and the leaders' commitment to THS provided a formidable foundation for growth in the AP program. This will be elaborated on in Chapter 5.

Organizing Process Three: Leadership and Resource Distribution

An additional significant finding that stretched across the 24 years of this study was the distribution of both leadership and resources toward the goal of increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment. All three Trailwood principals not only shared leadership with the other leaders in this study but empowered them to do the work. They also offered critical resources such as financial, staffing, and time toward increasing the academic possibilities of Black and Latinx students at Trailwood.

Leadership Distribution. Initiating Leader principal Opal Evans recognized that to accomplish the things she wished for Trailwood, she would not be able to do this alone especially due the school's current administration team: "When I first got there, I inherited all the assistant principals, and it wasn't a good scene…so I worked with teachers. I mean, it was really maybe me needing them." Towards this end, Evans set up a teacher leadership team to guide the work. She recalled:

It was the teachers who felt committed and wanted to step up who developed the

organizing structure, if you will, in terms of school restructuring school change.

My teacher leadership committee was led by two particular teachers who…

managed the team.

Yet Evans was quick to point out that this was not an abdication of her role as principal.

She offered that while "the flow of change was led by the teacher leadership committee; I

never missed a one [meeting]. I was always there working with them." As Evans recalled

during her participant interview how she built her leadership team, she was still able to

name five specific AP teachers who were part of this process, calling them "brilliant,

fantastic...there were all of these stars."

Three additional THS staff that Evans trusted to lead the work were Zach

Stevenson, Cate Causby, and Clarisse Knowles—all three were Evan's hires. As

mentioned in the historical section of this chapter, Stevenson was tasked with choosing

the teachers who would attend the retreat "about planning for the future of the school" —

a significant assignment early in his career at THS. Stevenson further recalled Evan's

confidence in his leadership:

Dr. Evans says, "You know what? I don't know what I don't know. And I'm going

to trust you to go for it and I'm going to support you"…She gave us a lot of

support, I mean, a lot of support. I mean, even to the fact that all the kids who

were in the program were on my case load.

Causby likewise recalled that after this retreat, "We decided what we wanted to do. And

luckily the principal [Evans] – I would say she respected all of us. So I think that that

helped. She was like, "If you want to, go for it." Causby further commented that because

she had the time in her job, she was able to do most of the organizational work for the new AP push to enroll more students of color in AP courses:

> I mainly felt that we had was the principal's permission to move along. We tried to meet with Opal probably once or so a week to go through what we were doing...And there was very, very little administrative supervision or interaction at all. I would say almost none. It was just that they were supportive—it was working.

> Upon hiring Knowles, Evans similarly tasked her with transforming the entire THS school counseling department: "We expanded our counseling departments majorly…I hired Doris to be the director" recalling one of her main task was for Knowles and her counselors "to go to their children, every child and say, 'Hey, [this teacher] has said that you should be in AP English.'" Evans then summed up how the AP initiative came about and who was responsible for the changes:

> Teachers and counselors – they were the magic and they did all of the planning, all of the development. And I made sure they got extra pay whenever I could get it. Then to further empower them, they became the presenters; they "sold it," if you will. They publicized programs to the school board and Capitol Hill…they presented to Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. But they also brought all the faculty and staff back for three days before the official start for teachers and those teacher leaders did all, did most of the presenting, then I was always there…As a result over time, we developed, I would say generally outstanding teachers…so there was a huge team spirit eventually in the whole faculty.

Summing up her view of leadership, Evans offered with this word of advice: "If you, as a principal, tried to do it on your own, you will be dead in the water."

Similarly, when Knowles took over as principal from Evans, she not only wanted to continue building teacher leadership but to increase it:

> My feeling is, who am I to say that I am smarter or know better than the teachers sitting here together? I can't know best on everything. I should listen to all of these resources I have and see what they bring up. It was amazing…That's one reason I went on to the principalship because I knew I get them to be teacher leaders. They were having some opportunities to do that but not as much opportunity as I thought they were capable of. So then there were a bunch of opportunities. They would come to me and say, "You need to do this. You've got to do this." And I would say that, "If I do this, you have to do it with me. You need to step up and do thus and such." And they were like, "Okay, we're on board." So we all kind of became principals.

Knowles additionally was the first THS principal to create the AP Coordinator role as indicated in the "Trailwood Exemplary Project Proposal" from 2003-04 which stated, "Trailwood provided additional support for these initiatives in school year 2002-03 by funding an AP Coordinator position for one period and during this current school year (2003-04) for two periods." In the creation of this position, Knowles which gave significant control and responsibility of the AP Network to the AP coordinators. Cate Causby stated that Knowles would often check in with her leaders from time to time to check in on how things were going

but also giving room for people to come up with solutions. But you know, that's part of it – trying to get the people who are involved with it to come up with the things that they think might be helpful.

Summing up her view of leadership distribution, Knowles recommended the following:

If you really expect and believe that you yourself are responsible for it all –one, I don't think you're going to be very successful, and two, I think you're setting yourself up for a disappointment, if you think that you can be everything to everybody.

Similar to his two principal predecessors, Sustaining Leader (principal) Bryan Yelton followed suit in his distribution of leadership. He first recalled how as Knowles's assistant principal she had tasked him with overseeing a significant part of the AP Network—its Spanish Dual Language component for both native and non-native speakers. Once he was principal, Yelton extended and broadened the AP coordinator role while also distributing it not just to one staff person but to as many as four. When asked about his role in the AP Network, Dr. Yelton indicated his trust in the AP coordinators and shared their current job description with me. Additionally, Yelton shared the four quarterly AP Network meeting minutes from 2017, with two indicating his attendance.

Subsequently, the three Second Phase leaders who served under him affirmed his support of their leadership. According to resource teacher for the gifted Val Newsome, Yelton "has a supporting role, so he's encouraging; he is happy with whatever it is we're doing. If we need support, he'll support us, but pretty much he lets us run the program." Similarly, equity and excellent coordinator Steve Dailey stated, "The support of the

administration is there. He [Yelton] knows it can grow more. He understands the value of the program, of what what's going on there." Science teacher and AP coordinator Cole Ingram offered his view on the potential that is offered to Trailwood staff who want to lead: "If you're passionate about something, you just go and do it."

Resource Distribution. The practices which emerged from Research Question Two revealed that Trailwood's school-based leaders committed a compelling amount of resources toward the success of their endeavors. In addition to the sheer amount of resources directed toward the goal to increase Black and Latinx AP participation, the trajectory of the resource distribution over time has trended from ones which produced wide, foundational outcomes to more specific ones that further addressed some of the more unseen systemic issues with low AP minority enrollment. Because school funds, staffing decisions, and how time is spent are most commonly distributed through the role of the principal in K-12 public schools, participant interviews and corresponding artifacts featured Evans, Knowles, and Yelton being the main decision makers regarding THS resources. Nonetheless, all school-based leaders who participated in this study addressed the consistent, consecutive distribution of the resources that flowed from Initiating and Sustaining Leaders and out to Second Phase Leaders.

Evans's Resource Distribution: First Things First. In her interview, Dr. Opal Evans mentioned several "first things" that had to be done to get Trailwood to a better place, including making the school physically safe, hiring excellent staff, empowering all THS staff, and organizing the ninth graders in learning houses, the latter of which lead to the forming of the Men's Cohort. Toward this end, Principal Evans utilized resources from her own school budget and from district resources that she had sought out.

> I threw money their [THS staff's] way, meaning that I would ask the [school] board and the superintendent for dollars to pay teachers and staff to develop curriculum, to develop plans for the future and to lead the plans' implementation, *and* to pay at a higher rate than Arlington paid teachers at the time for doing that kind of work – and they gave it to me for crying out loud. So…what was it, the work that we laid for the AP program? Our goal was, to begin with, to improve participation in AP as well as the SAT and ACT scores.

Evans further noted that various ways that the GPS district supported her: "The resources, monetary and nonmonetary, that our central office [provided]…were absolutely fantastic for us." She proceeded to outline how they provided the extra pay for teachers to write new curriculum, for the entire staff to be paid for three days before their official start date, and any subsequent professional development. Yet Evans was quick to point out the non-monetary support from GPS central office. "What I'm saying is yes, we had lots of extra money that we got, but more importantly was the support of all those gifted people in the central office." Calling them "hidden gems," she described the curriculum expertise they provided as well as other support such as observing THS teachers to improve their pedagogy.

Additionally, Evans transformed certain staff roles to have an increased focus on the academic successes on Black and Latinx students, which has been documented throughout this study: Zach Stevenson's school counselor caseload consisting of the entire men's cohort, the hiring of Knowles as lead counselor to focus the work on minority achievement, and perhaps most risky the utilization of the gifted special position to focus on under-identified Black and Latinx gifted populations.

Finally, one of Evans's other significant resources was from community supporter Harlan Badger. Each of the THS leaders who were in the beginning stages of the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment—Evans, Knowles, Stevenson, Parkdale, and Causby—emphasized the importance of Badger's financial support, which was estimated to be an average of at least $40,000 a year for 20 years. Summing up the admiration these five early leaders had for Badger, Cate Causby offered,

> I just have a profound respect for Harlan Badger because he was willing to do what I can't imagine anybody would be willing to do, which is just to give and never ask us for an accounting. Never, ever asked. He always said, "This is yours to do as you want, because I totally trust how you are spending this." That's great. Can you imagine someone would give that money? Would I give $10,000 and tell you year after year, "You can do what you want" – that I totally trust that you're going to do the right thing?

Subsequently, by utilizing her own school budget, district resources, and Harlan Badger's contribution, Dr. Evans was able to utilize resources to set in motion a foundation that her successors, Knowles and Yelton, could build upon to further the growth of students of color into THS AP courses.

Knowles's Resource Distribution: Taking the Next Steps. Like her successor, principal Knowles continued to focus resources on the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment while also expanding those resources. Interestingly, Knowles did not end anything that her mentor Dr. Evans had begun but instead was able to add several key layers to the AP program that continues today at Trailwood High School. Because Evans had initiated AP curriculum planning, Knowles was able to focus resources on the next

steps of that process such as AP vertical teaming, AP content training, and expansion of the both cohort sponsors' and the gifted specialist's roles.

Perhaps most significantly was Knowles's comprehensive proposal to the GPS district in 2004 to begin the Trailwood AP Network. One key addition was the beginning of the AP coordinator position. Knowles recalled:

> Eventually, we had just one full time AP coordinator, and he was magnificent. And then the program got bigger. We would give him an assistant, another AP teacher who had a couple of periods. He also had full access to the secretarial staff.

Another key addition that required additional resources was the expansion of parent nights.

> We also did parent nights for AP students. "How do you cope? How do you advise your children? What are your fears?" And we had quarterly meetings with parents that were very well attended. We talked about what was available, how to decide if your child should take a prep course. And we offered prep courses at the school taught by professionals from local AP prep places. We built these in the evenings to our children. And we paid for it.

With the additional use of resources Knowles's expanded the AP Network to include the Summer AP Bridge Program, staff development on cultural and gender identity, teacher attendance at the College Board's AP Summer Institute, expansion of the Men's Cohort, and the beginning of the Minority Women Together cohort.

Yelton's Resource Distribution: Expanding and Sustaining the Work. Similar to his predecessors, current THS principal Bryan Yelton continued the use of resources to

increase the AP enrollment of minoritized students. A review of both participant interviews and artifacts revealed a further expansion and continued use of significant resources toward this goal. One particular example was the addition of a personal room for the cohorts mentioned both by Harlan Badger—"in the new building they were designed to have their own cohort (room) because it was successful"—and Steve Dailey—"there's a space in the school for cohort." Further, Yelton's continued inclusion of both Harlan Badger and his monetary resources was highlighted in his participant interview, mentioning "Harlan and his financial support" second only to "committed personnel" as the reason for the growth in Black and Latinx AP enrollment. Yelton continued, "Not just for cohort and WMT, but through donations to the Trailwood education foundation and its alumni organization, even though he's not an alum."

As further indication of Yelton's resource distribution, the meeting minutes from the March 29, 2017 AP Network meeting indicated a "Budget Update" section that included expenditures of $8000 on AP course review books for students and $4300 towards the growing AP Summer Bridge program. While monetary distribution continued to be an important resource, Yelton's personal time spent working through AP racial enrollment patterns and in attending AP Network meetings demonstrated his continued commitment the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students at Trailwood High School.

For all three of these principals, the commitment to and distribution on monetary resources and THS personnel was essential to the success of its AP enrollment work with students of color. However, it was perhaps more so the commitment of the limited resource of time that was the impetus for the growth in minority AP enrollment—the

permission to focus on the academic success and growth of Black and Latinx students as opposed to something else, and the continued location, expansion, and distribution of the resources that were available to them. From Evans's initial focusing of resources toward establishing a safe school and the improvement of academic expectations for Black and Latinx students, Knowles was able to focus funds and resources to initiate the AP Network and focus more specifically on minoritized student AP enrollment. With Knowles's establishment of the AP Network, Yelton has been able to more narrowly focus his resources on data patterns and deeper implementation, including this deep dive of curriculum work from the minutes of the November 30, 2016 meeting regarding "a conversation between AP Environmental science, AP English, AP History courses because these topics are covered in AP French and AP Spanish since the world languages are not masters of teaching all this content."

Organizing Process Four: Systemic Reflection and Evaluation

As defined within this study's literature review, "Critical self-reflection is an iterative process that involves personal and structural reflections" (Khalifa, 2018, p. 63). At Trailwood High School, participant interviews and study artifacts revealed a focus on both the personal reflections of staff as well as corporate reflection and evaluation of the school itself, especially in the area of increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. The iterative nature of personal and corporate critical self-reflection—one leading to the other and back again—will be presented through the lens of the three leader groups and in chronological order to capture the influence of both forms of critical self-reflection on Trailwood's work with AP enrollment and Black and Latinx students.

Initial Reflections: Why Are Students of Color Not Experiencing Success?

The beginnings of the THS work to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students were based on times of retreat and reflection. As described in the practices section of this chapter, addressing race was a significant part of this. In 2000, 13 years into Initiating Leader Principal Evans's work toward supporting the academic success of Black and Latinx students, Sustaining Leader and counselor Zach Stevenson was beginning his tenure at THS. As he traveled in and out of THS classes, he noticed almost totally White and Asian AP courses and mostly Black and Latinx standard courses. He recalled,

> What became apparent to me is that AP and intensified [Honors] classes became the answer to white flight at Trailwood. You could almost be assured that if your kids were in a AP class or intensified class, it wasn't going to be diverse. And the bigger issue was that the rigor in our general education classes weren't at the level that would be sufficiently challenging…So taking an intensified or AP class would kind of ensure you have a couple things: one, you wouldn't be in a class with kids who had an IEP, and two, it wouldn't be very diverse. It took me a couple of weeks to kind of sort through this. The people [THS Staff] weren't trying to give me this kind of information. I had to extrapolate this on my own.

That summer, his personal reflections of the dearth of Black and Latinx students in AP courses found voice in the summer weekend retreat led by GPS superintendent Dr. Noah Stuckey. As referenced in this chapter's historical section, this retreat was the impetus toward their AP work on behalf of Black and Latinx students, leading to

additional retreats that would include Evans, Knowles, Causby, and Stevenson, the latter

of which spoke to their next reflective steps:

> So like every six months we will do kind of a retreat and we would just get away
>
> from the school and go and sit down and talk about what we felt was working and
>
> what we felt wasn't working, and obstacles and opportunities for change things.
>
> We wanted to expand on things…so we tried to have kind of a retreat at least
>
> twice a year where we would kind of take time to look back.

> While planned and organized regular reflection and evaluation was part of their

practices, Stevenson was quick to point out how the majority of the reflection was

accomplished: "As an educator, you know the speed at which we move –you're in a

school; you know. A lot of it is on the fly." Similarly, Initiating Leader Cate Causby, who

often spent time with Stevenson thinking about how to improve the academic outcomes

for Trailwood's Black and Latinx students, noted that their support staff jobs afforded

them the luxury of reflection versus classroom teachers:

> Obviously I had time because I'm collecting the data and keeping track of what's
>
> going on. I had some time to reflect. I'm really glad you brought that question up
>
> because…people don't realize what schools are like. It's like stepping into a
>
> tornado when you walk through that door. And then you're flipped out at the end
>
> of the day.

While these "on the fly" reflections and the planned retreats every 6 months were part of

Trailwood leaders' early organizing structures, Dr. Evans extended this evaluative work

by commencing a THS two-year self-study in 2001 called "Project Millennium," whose

significant work toward increasing Black and Latinx student enrollment was addressed in the historical section at the beginning of this chapter.

Continued Reflection and Evaluation: How Do We Change Things? At the halfway point of this two-year study, Dr. Evans retired, and Clarisse Knowles assumed the principalship and was principal for the completion of the study. In a 2004 presentation to the THS faculty, Knowles reviewed the purpose of the two-year study that Evan's had begun: "Trailwood Achievement Study Team (TAST)—faculty members and administrators committed to a self-study of the achievement gap of Trailwood's minority population who met monthly." Additionally, the presentation expressed that "Three members of TAST noted particularly low enrollment of Black and Latino males in Advanced Placement classes in 2000 and met to develop a plan to address this problem." Those three members were Stevenson, Causby, and the minority achievement coordinator at the time, Kathryn Dorsey. When asked about this work and the reflection and evaluation need to address the problem, Knowles's related,

> When you looked at those AP classes, they were 99% white. You might have an African American girl and you have a couple of Asian kids. And staff were the first ones to say, "You know, this wasn't making sense. My AP classes are almost all white, especially the sciences and maths….why is [this student] with excellent skills…not taking AP? What's going on?" And so we would have these kinds of workshops where we would [ask] "Where do we go from here?"

> Similarly, Cate Causby stated the importance of the two-year study and how it caused her personally to reflect as a White woman, especially since she spent most of her work on this committee with Stevenson and Dorsey, both of whom are Black.

> We started talking about white privilege and what it meant and opportunities for
>
> kids –all the real issues…I realized that even though I could have gone by and
>
> looked at all those classes and realize there were few minority males, I didn't. But
>
> really until he [Zach]showed me that, I hadn't, I really hadn't. And so…I started
>
> looking I was like, "Well, there's something wrong with this picture."

Causby's own reflection that flowed from her conversations with two Black colleagues mirrored that of fellow Initiating Leader David Parkdale who as previously noted in the "practices" section of this chapter would also have not seen the problem of low Black and Latinx AP enrollment had it not been for Stevenson. Parkdale also explained that in addition to his personal reflections gained from learning from Stevenson as well as other THS leaders:

> We would do ad hoc kind of conversations in one of our offices. And then in the
>
> summertime frequently we would devote a day…looking at "What do we want to
>
> do this next year; what are going to add this next year that we think would be
>
> helpful."

One additional important type of reflection involved listening to the students of color in the cohorts. Parkdale related one such experience where a student named Mac took exception to a particular cohort policy regarding grades: "Mac said, 'My question is why do you put people out when they're doing bad academically? We don't need this group when we're doing well; we need it most when we're not doing well." Upon hearing this question, Parkdale said,

> Zach and Cate and I just kind of looked at each other and we realized, "He's
>
> right." That very day we made a major change. We went away from the idea that

you had to, in order to keep your seat, sustain your grades. What we did was we said, "If your grades drop, we want to continue to try and help you to get your grades back up to where we know you can. You're capable of doing better and we want to try and help you. You know, we're not gonna put you out for getting bad grades. We're going to dig deeper, try and help you could do better." That was a huge thing.

Cate Causby also remembered the leaders' reflections regarding the topics they brought up for the cohorts to discuss during the pizza lunches.

David would ask, "Cate you think that topic went over?" We sometimes said, "Well, that was a bust. But we got a lot of reaction with that [another topic]!" We would ask each other, "What kinds of things need to come up [in cohort]?"

One thing that the leaders settled on was modeling for the cohort students their own need to be reflective. Parkdale told of one particular story of helping members of the Men's Cohort prepare speeches for their end of the year celebration. Parkdale said,

They would prepare it, but then they would practice with a microphone to see what their voice sounded like and that kind of thing. And there were always really profound things shared. But I told them, "What you risk by being unprepared is leaving out what's most profound. So there's value in preparation; there's value in you thinking a little, reflecting a little bit, 'What did this [cohort]really mean to me?' You can say whatever you want, but I want you to come up and share something meaningful." And that's what happened. Before we started making them write stuff down, boys would end up kind of saying the same thing down the line. Too repetitive. So that was another practice that developed over time.

Sustaining Reflection and Evaluation Over Time: How Can We Do This Better? As with his predecessors, current THS principal Bryan Yelton continued to seek the improvement with the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. While Evans and Knowles focused on retreats and years-long studies as the means of regular and intentional reflection and evaluation of their work, Yelton noted that he more so focused on "formal and informal structured and unstructured conversations" with students of color who were still not participating in AP coursework: "Why are you not taking intensified classes? Why are you not enrolled in AP classes?" From these conversations, the leaders of the AP Network would reflect on these answers and then address them:

> We heard from kids that they are they're working long hours and they don't have resources at home. So that's why we proposed…an AP study seminar, basically a study hall so we could tell kids, "This time during the school day is where you get work done."

Several artifacts additionally supported the organization reflection that Yelton and his THS leaders have taken part in during the past several years, particularly the quarterly AP Network Meeting Minutes from 2016-2017. In these meetings the topics included were AP recruitment and enrollment, and initiation of the AP Capstone. More particularly, these leaders addressed the following questions:

- Evaluation of summer bridge program with suggestions of improvement, how can AP Coordinators support our program?

- Senior project: How do we make it meaningful for students? and

- What is the plan/progression to move students from where they are now to enrollment in at least one AP or DE course by their senior?

Accordingly, Second Phase Leader Cole Ingram related how current leaders practiced reflection and evaluation –by focusing less on formal meetings and more on the "ad hoc" kind earlier mentioned by David Parkdale:

> You have a meeting once a month, you know? There's really no reason for it because before the next month you're talking. There are more of a formality. Often in meeting after school you just want to get out of there and you're thinking about other things. So probably the least reflective part is in official meetings and the most work is done in socializing after work or in small, impromptu meetings.

Whether done formally or informally, Ingram suggested the continued importance of helping his colleagues' continued reflection by looking at own intrinsic biases through practical means in PLC meeting over grades and grading, for example: "Sometimes I still find they have this bias that they don't even realize they have, you know?"

Summary of Research Question Three

In Research Question Three, I sought to determine how the school-based leader practices in Research Question Two were captured in organizing structures and processes which impacted the increased AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. As indicated in interviews and corresponding artifacts, four organizing structures emerged including the creation of a sustaining vision known as the "Trailwood Way;" the presence of organizational stability; the distribution of both leadership and resources, and the continuation of both formal and informal corporate reflection and evaluation. Within the three leader groups, Initiating Leaders set into motion most of the organizing structures that are still in existence today, with Second Phase and Sustaining Leaders both continuing those processes and adding to them.

Summary of the Findings

The research questions of this study attempted to describe the leadership values, practices, and organizational processes present over a 24-year period in a high school that had succeeded in increasing the enrollment of minoritized students in Advanced Placement coursework. Data collected from interviews of 10 leaders at Trailwood High School who served from 1987 – 2020 and document reviews covering that same period combined to suggest several findings outlined in this chapter. Those findings included leadership values of a belief in Black and Latinx students' ability to do challenging coursework and in school-based leadership's power for change (RQ1); successful leadership practices including risk-taking, data usage, support provision, and community connection (RQ2); and significant organizational structures of vision sustainment, organizational stability, resource and leader distribution, and reflection protocols. In the next chapter, these findings will be further discussed through four themes along with relevant research on leaders who increased the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students as well as principal longevity. These themes will be followed by five recommendations drawn from this study's data and extant literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore school-based leader practices that have

contributed to increases in Black and Latinx student AP enrollment. Toward this end, this

study reviewed a 24-year period of Trailwood High School's success in increasing and

sustaining its Black and Latinx AP participation. Based on the findings discussed in the

previous chapter, I discuss four themes that emerged from the data in Chapter Four which

represent factors that appear to have impacted the increase in AP enrollment at THS:

- leader longevity in sustaining transformative school vision

- deliberate organizational processes and supports

- leader commitment to critical self -reflection

- development of minoritized student self-efficacy

I explore these themes in consideration of the literature presented in Chapter Two and the

conceptual framework in Chapter Three. From these four themes, I propose three

recommendations that may strengthen Trailwood's work to increase minoritized students'

AP enrollment and offer two additional recommendations, one for high school principals

and another for school district superintendents. This chapter concludes with a summary

that discusses the study's limitations and implications for high school leaders.

Discussion of Themes

Theme One: Leader Longevity in Sustaining Transformative School Vision

This study suggests that principals and other school leaders who stay at one

school for an extended period of time are more likely to create a long-term vision for

their schools that will survive as leadership changes. This theme emerges from the decades-plus tenure of Trailwood's leaders and the school's 24 year commitment to the "Trailwood Way." Further, this study indicates that the tenure of these principals and other school leaders enabled them to utilize setting directions/directions setting toward the creation of a sustained school-wide vision and subsequently transform their schools into more equitable places for minoritized students.

Leader Longevity and Enduring Vision

While the literature in Chapter Two does not address principal tenure in general nor its connection to the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students, data from Chapter Four indicate a possible link between leader longevity in the role and the long-term success of leaders' vision. In support of this premise, Mascall and Leithwood (2010) offered what occurred when schools did not have consistency of leadership: "Schools experiencing exceptionally rapid principal turnover…are often reported to suffer from lack of shared purpose, cynicism among staff about principal commitment, and an inability to maintain a school-improvement focus long enough to actually accomplish any meaningful change" (p. 367). Several studies also addressed frequent principal turnover, with Fuller and Young (2009) finding that 30.5% of high school principals remained at one school for five years while only 9.2% stayed 10 years; a decade later, Levin and Bradley (2019) found the ten-year longevity rate remained relatively constant at 11%.

By contrast, the tenure of Trailwood's three principals in this study spanned 34 years, from 1987 to 2020. Additionally, both Knowles and Yelton, whose principal tenures were eight and 11 years respectively, were employed at THS even longer— Knowles for 20 years and Yelton for 18 years. In addition to exceptional principal tenure,

the seven remaining school-based leaders in this study averaged 15.4 years at Trailwood.

With the data in Chapter Four also revealing a continual, consistent, and collective vision

articulated and acted upon from principal to principal and from Initiating Leaders to

Second Phase Leaders, with Sustaining Leaders the constant throughout, this consistency

in leadership potentially contributed to a sustained vision for Black and Latinx students'

AP course enrollment over a 24 year period and may be the most significant finding

toward the study's overarching research question regarding the sustainability of

increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students over time.

Vision Creation and Setting Directions as a Transformational Process

The literature base presented in Chapter Two spoke to leader utilization of setting

directions (or directions setting) in the creation and expansion of a unified school vision.

Defined in Chapter Two as deeply-held educational beliefs from school leaders' moral

compasses, directions setting takes leaders' beliefs and values and forms these into a

comprehensive vision that drives their decision making (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 2003;

Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). For the 24

years covered by this study, THS leaders' belief in the academic abilities of their Black

and Latinx students, as well as their conviction of the moral atrocity of the under-

enrollment of these students in Trailwood's AP classes, drove each to communicate this

vision to Trailwood's staff throughout their respective tenures. Both individually and

corporately, THS leaders regularly employed several of the following research-supported

directions setting practices.

Trailwood leaders were first able to create "constructive discontent" within the

school by focusing on the vast under-enrollment of its Black and Latinx students in AP

courses (Sun & Leithwood, 2015, p. 502). With leaders' unrelenting focus on race and systemic inequalities, THS staff members were initially and then continually challenged to acknowledge the problem of low minoritized student enrollment in AP courses (Ford & King, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Oakes, 2008; Skiba et al., 2008) and to work towards a proportionate distribution in these classes (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015). After exposing staff to this problem, THS leaders began to work collaboratively with staff on shared beliefs around the academic abilities of Black and Latinx students to do challenging work (Heffter, 2008; Kyburg et al., 2007; Murakami et al., 2013).

Finally, while much of Trailwood's early work on behalf of Black and Latinx students was done by Initiating and Sustaining Leaders, through the years both of these leader groups along with Second Phase Leaders have continued utilizing these setting directions practices, offering them to new staff, students, and other stakeholders by referring "frequently to the school's goals when engaged in decision making about school programs and directions" (OLF, 2013, p. 12). In the process, THS school-based leaders throughout this 24 year period helped moved Trailwood from having a "culture of nice" to a "culture of brave" spoken about by Benson and Fiarman (2020, p. 73) –not afraid to bring up the uncomfortable work of dismantling systemic racism in their AP classes at THS.

Theme Two: Deliberate Organizational Processes and Supports

The second theme of this study emerged from the data that indicated that school-based leaders demonstrate their commitment to the school vision by "the use of the school's vision and goals in day-to-day actions and decision making" (OLF, 2013, p. 12). To take a school-wide vision from the abstract to the concrete, school-based leaders must

carefully, with focused intention, consider what organizational processes they will employ towards making the vision a reality. At THS, school leaders were deliberate in their utilization of distributed leadership, leader succession, and the allocation of resources to support the vision to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment.

Distributing and Sharing Leadership

All three Trailwood principals in this study indicated the necessity of sharing their leadership with the staff, in line with Spillane's (2004) idea of leadership being distributed to both formal and informal leaders. Evans, Knowles, and Yelton empowered formal positions of leadership such as assistant principals but also informal leaders such as counselors and teachers of gifted students. Furthermore, all three principals created and/or continued utilizing positions of leadership to further their vision, including the AP coordinators and sponsors for the Men's Cohort and the Minority Women Together (MWT) group. While each stayed involved with the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment, they were more so facilitators who gave direction and supplied their leaders with the resources they needed to support both teachers and students (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Swanson & Nagy, 2014; Weldon & Martinez, 2014).

For the distribution of leadership beyond formal roles to be affective, Trailwood's principals harnessed the leadership potential of their staff in several ways. First, these leaders expressed their belief in their staff's ability to lead. This was especially important in light of the shifts in expectations they were demanding. As supported by Drago-Severson (2012), they were able to "shape growth-enhancing climates that support adult learning as they work to manage adaptive challenges" (p. 1). Additionally, this distribution was accomplished through relationship-building rather than top-down

directives through multiple avenues of collaboration including retreats, individual meetings, and professional learning communities in which staff was encouraged to lead (Bloom & Owens, 2013; Childress, et al., 2009; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; McKillip et al., 2013). Professional development offerings led by THS teachers and support staff were likewise particularly essential for the successful implementation of this initiative (Duncheon & DeMatthews, 2018; Kyburg et al., 2007; McKillip et al., 2013; Swanson & Nagy, 2014; Theoharis & Saaris, 2013).

As a result of extensive distributed leadership by the three THS principals in this study, the other seven leaders in this study also empowered other THS staff to be leaders—particularly the teachers. In giving decision-making to THS staff, Trailwood leaders genuinely shared the work to increase Black and Latinx AP participation, resulting in staff autonomy, competence, and relatedness—three key basic human psychological human needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Similar to that work was the empowerment of PLCs in which Trailwood leaders created social conditions where staff could learn from others (Bandura & Walters, 1977), which was also key to addressing matters of systemic racism, both personally and corporately. Subsequently, Trailwood leaders' sharing their power and entrusting their staff to partner with them in the work to improve the AP participation rates of Black and Latinx students resulted not only in more minoritized students taking these classes but in overall school improvement (Harris et al., 2003).

Succession Planning

While there is no literature from Chapter Two specifically related to succession planning in general or its relation to AP enrollment of minoritized students, it nonetheless

stood out as a deliberate process employed by Trailwood's school-based leaders work to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. The findings in chapter four suggest that the leaders who sought out and groomed the person that would follow them did so in the hope that their vision and work to enroll more Black and Latinx students in AP classes, especially the cohorts, would be continued and expanded. A review of the 10 interviews of former and current THS leaders revealed a remarkable congruity in vision, themes, and goals, with them often using the same words to describe their practices. This is particularly remarkable in that some of these 10 leaders had never met each other – perhaps indicative of the succession planning THS leaders employed.

Intentional Use of Resources

A final intentional organizing process employed consistently by THS leaders was their use of resources to support the work of proportional Black and Latinx AP course enrollment. Oakes and Guiton (1995) posited that in order to combat racist systems in schools, there must equitable distribution of resources. At THS, however, it could be argued that school leaders went past equal and focused more time, personnel, and money on dismantling the school's systemic racism than on using resources to maintain the status quo. All three principals and the other school-based leaders in this study viewed the increased AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students as paramount and among their top priorities to achieve their main goal—furthering the academic successes and future prospects of minoritized THS students. Furthermore, the positions of the six school-based, non-administrator participants were almost solely focused on equity and the cohorts—Parkdale and Dailey as equity specialists and cohort sponsors, Causby and Newsome as coordinators, Stevenson's counselor position, and Ingram in his role as AP

coordinator. This focus on personnel toward the goal of proportional AP enrollment is found in Bavis et al. (2015), Duncheon and DeMatthews (2018), and Swanson and Nagy (2014).

In terms of support for students, critical resources were allocated toward scaffolding new AP students' learning and giving extra time and resources, all significantly supported in the literature (Ascher & Maguire, 2007; Blankstein & Noguera 2016; Kango & Kanna, 2014; Swanson & Nagy, 2014; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). Additionally, the focus on cohorts for students of color required extensive financial, personnel, and time resources to offer a safe place for Black and Latinx students toward combating students' sense of social isolation and experience of stereotype threat (Corra & Lovaglia, 2012; Steel, 1997). Additionally, resources toward the creation of a college-going culture helped students and their families navigate a world with which many were not familiar (Martinez & Everman, 2017; Murakami et al., 2013).

Finally, another important resource that Principal Evans initially indicated was essential in the beginning of this work was Grandview Public Schools' support of her and Trailwood's initiatives on behalf of traditionally marginalized students. In addition to monetary support, Superintendent Dr. Stuckey also provided central office support and perhaps more importantly, political cover for Evans as some THS resources were reallocated for those students not experiencing academic success, a finding supported by Childress et al. (2009). Unfortunately, over the years Trailwood has not had the same amount of district support, making Harlan Badger's considerable financial support even more crucial to the continuation of increasing Black and Latinx enrollment.

Theme Three: Leader Commitment to Critical Self-Reflection

   The third theme suggested by this study is that regular critical self-reflection and evaluation by school-based leaders are necessary to both initiate and sustain their vision of addressing systemic racism in school settings. Trailwood leaders began the journey of supporting Black and Latinx entry into challenging courses at a district retreat where the focus was on students who were not experiencing academic success, a practice supported by Ishimaru and Galloway (2014): "Who are we serving/not serving and why? Who is being included/excluded and how? (p. 118). Once the vision had been set to increase the AP enrollment of minoritized students, Trailwood leaders regularly and throughout the 24 year period spent time evaluating their work, seeking to improve and strengthen their work on behalf of these students, while realizing the iterative nature of racism (Khalifa, 2018). In comparing Trailwood's self-evaluation with Khalifa's (2018) construct of critical self-reflection, leaders practiced personal, content, structural, and organizational critical self-reflection (see Table 6). Brown (2004) called this "transformative learning that leads to a new way of seeing" (p. 706) while Gordon (1990) spoke to the need to analyze one's "assumptions about the world" in order for personal changes regarding one's own racism (p. 88). By way of comparison, Rowland and Shircliffe (2016) noted that merely putting practices into place such as open AP course enrollment without the work of personal and school-wide critical self-reflection did not result in changes to minoritized student AP participation. Accordingly, Trailwood leaders' commitment to the arduous work of initial and periodical critical self-reflection uncovered the systemic and complicated issues that impacted Black and Latinx students AP enrollment and thus were able to address these.

Theme Four: Development of Minoritized Student Self-Efficacy

The final theme for this study focuses attention on the students who were most impacted by the work of THS leaders to increase student of color enrollment. From the literature cited in Chapter Two, the eight practices that school-based leaders enacted to increase the AP enrollment of students of color were essentially all directed at empowering students and supporting their foray into these classes. From having an unshakable belief in their academic abilities to viewing them through a strengths-based lens to the risks taken on their behalf, Trailwood leaders were essentially acknowledging Black and Latinx students' worth as well as the recognition that the playing field they were on was uneven.

Subsequently, THS sought to build Black and Latinx students' self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (1995) as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations"—the prospective situation in this case being AP course enrollment (p.2). Perhaps a simpler definition of self-efficacy is the personal belief that one can succeed in something. Toward this goal, Trailwood offered multiple academic supports to build the skills and confidence of these new AP students while also pairing these with social-emotional helps to create a safe environment for growth (Corra & Lovaglia, 2012; Steel, 1997).

Through the use of cohorts, THS leaders built community and confidence by placing Black and Latinx students in the same AP courses. By doing so, THS leaders also addressed a critical and common barrier to minoritized students' participation in challenging courses—no one who looks like them will be in the class –(Yonezawa et al., 2002) while also combating stereotype threat, often a considerable challenge to

students' self-efficacy (Steel, 1997). Trailwood school-based leaders also addressed the effects of systemic racism on Black and Latinx students in the cohort settings, creating a "culture of brave" where open discussions of race among was the norm (Benson & Fiarman, 2020, p. 73). Because THS leaders, especially the cohort sponsors, built meaningful relationships with students that included "ongoing, two-way communication" to understand how they were experiencing racism in their lives, (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014, p. 134), students were able to gain the confidence they needed to believe they could be successful in AP classes dominated by their White and Asian peers.

To further build students' self-efficacy, THS leaders also built a college-going culture for Black and Latinx students, which has been shown to result in more students of color taking AP courses (Weldon & Martinez, 2014). In addition to the continuation of college visits that started with the first cohorts, more recently THS Black and Latinx alumni have returned to tell their stories of success in AP courses at Trailwood and their post-high school lives, which for most included college. By seeing themselves represented not only in AP courses but also in the successes of those who have come before, Black and Latinx THS students have realized they are part of decades-long larger story of students who succeeded in the most challenging courses Trailwood High School had to offer. Accordingly, their own self-efficacy has grown, imbuing them with the confidence to continue enrolling in Trailwood's Advanced Placement courses.

Implications for Conceptual Framework

As discussed in Chapter Three, this study's conceptual framework suggested that in order for school-based leaders to successfully address racially systemic issues in the

buildings, they must first practice critical self-reflection as put forth by Khalifa (2018). The six types of critical self-reflection begin with a leaders' own personal reflections but does not stop there; leaders must evaluate their schools in structural, organizational, content based, community focused, and sustainable ways. As leaders practice these, their personal values and those for their schools emerge and come into focus, moving them toward making decisions that will achieve their vision for their students. This framework proposes, however, that leaders, even with clear values and vision, cannot make capricious decisions that are not based in two core leadership practices—directions setting and organizational development (Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2020). Through careful work to build a shared vision through the creation of specific goals, high expectations, and the communication of this vision, stakeholder buy-in is more likely. Accordingly, armed with a clear, agreed-upon vision among key stakeholder, school leaders can then organize the work through collaboration, the sharing of leadership, and the allocation of resources toward equitable outcomes. This is, however, an iterative process, with all three core leader practices—critical self-reflection, setting directions, and organizational development –extending to and from each other, creating a feedback loop for school leaders who continually look to improve outcomes for all their students, particularly the traditionally marginalized.

Findings from this study about Trailwood leaders' work reflect many aspects of its conceptual framework especially its iterative, circular nature. Trailwood leaders employed cycles of critical self-reflection through planned retreats, studies, and meetings where the questions of how they could improve the work to increase minoritized AP enrollment and whom they were still not serving were always asked. This critical self-

reflection in turn both strengthened their already-held values and more deeply informed them, especially as they learned from each other. By utilizing many of the predicators of setting directions/directions setting (Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2020), they were able to build a school-wide shared vision and set high expectations for their staff and students through the creation of "constructive discontent" as they exposed the disproportionately low number of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

As a clear vision began to emerge on behalf of these students, THS leaders practiced several forms of Khalifa's (2018) critical self-reflection as they carefully considered the best decisions and practices before moving forward with their vision. Through the utilization many of descriptors of organizational development found in Leithwood, et al. (2019) and Sun and Leithwood (2015), THS leaders were able to build collaborative structures such as PLCs, offer critical professional development for their staff, develop mentoring relationships with and for students, offer students leadership opportunities, and perhaps above all, "allocate resources in support of the school's vision and…equity focused goals" (Leithwood et al., 2020, p. 573).

Reflecting the non-linear, iterative nature of this study's conceptual framework, Trailwood leaders used critical self-reflection to evaluate their decisions around Black and Latinx AP enrollment and returned to it regularly as they set directions and organized their work. As a result, they were able to see their values and vision come to fruition by choosing the practices, structures, and procedures that have endured for than two decades.

Recommendations

These themes suggest three recommendations for current Trailwood High School leaders and two additional recommendations—one for high school principals and a final one for superintendents and school districts. These recommendations emanate from the study's over-arching research question and the three questions that inform it, the literature in Chapter Two, THS leader interviews and corresponding artifacts in Chapter Four, and the subsequent themes related to this study's conceptual framework in Chapter Five. The first three recommendations offer suggestions for Trailwood leaders as they continue the work of attaining proportional AP course enrollment for students of color while the fourth recommendation is for other high school principals intent on doing likewise. The fifth and final recommendation is for school districts and superintendents regarding principal succession and meaningful, long-term change in schools.

Recommendation One for THS: Record a History of the Work

Extant literature regarding school leaders' impact on minoritized students' enrollment in AP/challenging courses is scant. Of those studies that did address school-based leaders' role in the AP enrollment of minoritized populations, none thus far had chronicled how this work was sustained over an extended period of time. Because Trailwood has a history of publishing in educator journals, a paper or article that reviews its past and current work could add to the literature base and perhaps generate other studies or articles of similarly successful schools. This in turn could benefit educators in their own work to increase student of color AP participation as this study has informed my own work as a high school principal. Principals in particular seek out examples of schools that are experiencing successes in areas they wish to grow, especially when it

comes to the opportunity gap and better serving their traditionally marginalized populations. While each school context is a culture unto itself, Trailwood's approach, which stemmed from leaders' values and visions, supported by its organizational structures and supports, could be a model for principals and other school leaders.

An additional benefit of creating a record of their work would be for Trailwood itself. While THS leaders have successfully transferred their institutional knowledge from leader to the next, there is no guarantee that this will occur in the future. One participant in this study pointed to this need: "We really should sit down and make some manuals or procedures…to capture what stuff is being done that only that person knows…There's a lot of that undocumented institutional procedures." Thus, in the writing down of both Trailwood's history and work toward increasing the academic successes of Black and Latinx students through AP enrollment, THS can celebrate its successes, pass along key institutional knowledge to future leaders, and use it toward evaluating its current program.

Recommendation Two for THS: Critically Self-reflect and Re-evaluate Current Work

With any work or program that has not only lasted a significant amount of time but is also a key part of the culture, reflection and re-evaluation are needed to ensure that something meant to disrupt the status quo has not become it, echoing Ishimaru and Galloway's (2014) exhortation to keep asking which students are not being served and Khalifa's (2018) reminder that systemic racism is continually transforming itself in the search of new privileges. Several study participants likewise mentioned the need for re-evaluation of the AP Network, the focus on AP courses in general, and the cohorts. While an AP reboot was mentioned by participants, another participant commented that while

the program might have gotten too big, it is good that "it still continues. It's still going on and like everything has to evolve."

As previously stated, THS leaders made regular critical self-reflection and program evaluation a priority, leading to a strong underpinning for the work as well as improvements on behalf of its students. Perhaps it is time to further institutionalize and expand this work by returning to Evan's two-year school study or through planned retreats. This might be particularly important as GPS district money and position allocation for this work is never a given. One such means of doing so, presented in this study, is Khalifa's (2018) six types/spaces of critical self-reflection and the questions under each. As noted earlier, THS has utilized four types consistently through the time covered by this study –personal, structural, organizational, and content. I suggest using Khalifa's (2018) questions more formally and to include community-based and sustainable critical self-reflections as a possible way to evaluate Trailwood's needs. Adding a review of current research—also a staple of THS work historically—would likewise be beneficial to help direct future plans. However, it is possible that THS leaders have recently conducted evaluations of its programs, including the AP Network and students' cohorts, and that the questions I posed in interviews nor available artifacts did not uncover this.

Recommendation Three for THS: Engage in Greater Depth the Families of Black and Latinx Students

Throughout the 24 year period covered by this study, THS has involved the families of its Black and Latinx students in varying degrees. As indicated in the literature, utilizing students' cultural capital and viewing them and their families from a strengths,

not deficit, mindset bolsters both the work to increase their academic successes as well as affirms their cultures and self-identities (Armstrong, 2018; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008; Weldon & Martinez, 2014). McKillip et al. (2013) and Swanson and Nagy (2014) specifically found the need for leaders to provide social-emotional supports for students taking advanced course work as well as their families.

Trailwood leaders have had end of year celebrations with cohort students and their families since the groups' inceptions. Additionally, leaders mentioned ways that THS had involved student families, including parent group meetings for new AP students and FAFSA support meetings as well as being available for families anytime they had questions about courses, college-going, and any other concerns. From this study's review, however, it appears parent/family outreach and involvement has been uneven though the years. It is possible that this study's interview questions and artifacts did not accurately portray Trailwood's work with Black and Latinx AP student families. If, however, current leaders agree improvement is needed, the following questions from Khalifa's (2018) community-based critical self-reflection questions could be of benefit:

- How am I including parents (or caregiver) voice in school governance and policy making?

- Do parents feel comfortable in this school?

- To what extent do the staff and the focus of school dialogue reflect the community being served?

No matter Trailwood's current level of engagement with Black and Latinx students who take the school's most challenging coursework, these three questions can strengthen any current work and inspire additional focus.

Recommendation for School Principals: Learn from THS while Considering Own

Context

With the decades-proven successes of THS leaders and their significant impact toward having proportional AP enrollment of its Black and Latinx students, high school principals who wish to increase Black and Latinx enrollment in AP courses can benefit from considering Trailwood's work of including its vision, values, practices, and organizational structures highlighted in this study. Nonetheless, every school must be viewed within its own context, including its school culture, student populations, staffs, communities, and central office supports. While this is a case study of just one school and its successes in improving the AP participation of its Black and Latinx students, some of this study's findings may be more interesting to school-based leaders than others due to their support in the literature. Additionally, principals who find themselves in schools where, like Opal Evans, they must address school safety before extensive academic improvements, might be encouraged to see that was the foundation upon which other leaders were able to build.

Some of the practices supported in the literature and utilized by THS that school principals may find useful include:

- fostering a belief among staff that Black and Latinx students are capable of challenging coursework;
- allocating significant resources toward the vision;
- providing extensive supports for all stakeholders; and
- distributing leadership to capable staff to accelerate the work, thus empowering them while also making the principal job more manageable.

Recommendation for School Districts and Superintendents: Create and Consider

Support for and Continuity in the Principalship

School districts and the schools within them face formidable tasks often without the resources to meet the many needs that exist, including improving the academic outcomes for those populations of traditionally marginalized students characterized as being part of the nationwide "achievement gap"—more accurately referred to as "the education debt" (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p.5). At the same time, districts and schools struggle to keep principals in one building for more than the national average of four years (Levin & Bradley, 2019). Subsequently, with research asserting the significance of the principal position and its impact on everything from student achievement (Grissom et al., 2013; Hitt and Tucker, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood et al., 2020) to school working conditions, (Ladd, 2011; Leithwood, 2011; Sun & Leithwood, 2015), school districts and superintendents have a vested interest in principal tenure.

While the literature review in Chapter Two did not cover this research, the findings in Chapter Four around the long tenures of Trailwood principals and other key leaders is intriguing in light of Trailwood's common vision over a 24 year period and its continued, clear focus on the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. Perhaps longevity in the principal position is a possible optimum mediating variable (Fairchild & McQuillin, 2010; Grissom et al., 2013; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Sun and Leithwood (2015) posited that since "most leadership practices have indirect effects on students, a key goal for leadership research is to determine the most promising mediating variables for leaders' attention" (p. 504). This study, while limited to one school's journey for over

two decades, might suggest that a potent area for further research is the area of principal sustainability and its potential as an optimum mediator.

With this in mind, school districts and their superintendents might consider ways to keep principals in their positions longer by devising plans that support schools' ongoing work when principal turnover occurs. To retain principals in their buildings longer than the four year average, districts could search the literature for the kinds of supports shown to increase principal tenure while also working with individual principals regarding their needs—for as Dr. Opal Evans stated in her interview, "The few educators willing to become principals these days need a great deal of help." In terms of principal turnover, schools and their staffs, as noted previously in this chapter, find it difficult to maintain a school-improvement focus long enough for significant changes to occur (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010), leading to cynicism about real change ever occurring for their students. To ameliorate this during a principal change, superintendents could evaluate the outgoing principal's vision, practices, and organizational structures to determine what should stay, what should go, and what needs to be improved. In doing so, staff may be encouraged about sustaining any gains the school has made while also being optimistic about their continuation. Additionally, superintendents and school staffs could use this information in the hiring of a new principal to maintain the school's vision and build upon the foundation already laid, and in doing so, perhaps enable the new principal and her school leaders to move the further toward the goal of meeting the needs of every student, including and especially the traditionally marginalized.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed four major themes which emerged from the literature and data from a 24 year case study of Trailwood's work to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. From these four themes, I presented three recommendations for Trailwood High School that could extend this work on behalf of their minoritized students. Additionally, I offered one recommendation for high school principals seeking to increase the AP course enrollment for its students of color and an additional recommendation for districts and superintendents regarding principal longevity and succession.

While these findings, themes, and recommendations emanate from just one specific school over a 24 year period and cannot be generalized to all school settings, they do offer potential ideas and options for schools and their leaders who wish to increase the AP participation of their traditionally marginalized populations while also providing a compelling story about principal tenure and succession. For me, this study about Trailwood High School's values, vision, practices, and organizational structures around minoritized student AP enrollment greatly influenced and informed my work as principal at Carrboro High School—a place, like Trailwood—whose staff and leaders have an ever-present discontent with the status quo and a vision to do whatever it takes to create the conditions necessary for our traditionally marginalized students who are owed a great educational debt.

ACTION COMMUNICATIONS

In this section are four documents designed for communication of this study's themes and recommendations. The first two are intended for Trailwood's current principal, Dr. Bryan Yelton, who from the onset of this study welcomed a deep dive into their work toward increasing the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. The first communication is a memo which could be shared with staff summarizing the study's major findings, themes, and recommendations. The second is the presentation form of the same information which Dr. Yelton could present to THS or which I, if given the opportunity, could present to Dr. Yelton and chosen school personnel, so that I could continue to learn from Trailwood and receive feedback regarding this study. The third action communication is for high school principals who wish to learn about Trailwood's success in increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment. The final communication is for school districts and superintendents interested in principal tenure and succession, a major theme from this study based on Trailwood's principals. While these recommendations were generated from the work of only one school, it is my hope that school leaders and school staffs might still find them informative and useful, with students becoming the ultimate beneficiaries. A recent Men's Cohort graduate of Trailwood summed up the 24-year work of THS leaders: "Taking AP classes through high school taught me how to academically challenge myself and produce quality work under a deadline. This skill will help me through college."

Action Communication One: Email to Dr. Bryan Yelton, Current THS Principal, Regarding Study's Themes and Recommendations

Dear Dr. Yelton,

First of all, thank you allowing me to do my research at Trailwood High School. From my first contact you were gracious, inviting, and perhaps most telling invited me to find what was working and what needed improvement. Additionally, you shared the names and contact information of folks I should include in my interviews as well as many artifacts that greatly informed my study. It is that kind of transparent, student-focused leadership that schools need to truly make a difference. As a fellow high school principal, I know the time you took out to make all this happen. Thank you.

As you know, my problem of practice focused on discovering what values, practices, and organizational structures school-based leaders like yourself had utilized toward increasing your Black and Latinx AP participation rates.

From the ten interviews I conducted, a review of your AP enrollment data, the extensive artifacts you and other leaders shared, and articles about THS, several themes emerged that I would like to briefly share here, along with a few recommendations. I will also share a PowerPoint with this same information that you can use at your discretion.

<u>The Themes</u>
Theme One: The lengthy tenures of Trailwood leaders, both in the principalship and other key leader positions, resulted in a sustained school vision to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students. I also found it compelling that several THS leaders in this study prepared and seemed to choose their successors upon their retirement who would carry out the vision they had worked so hard to being about.

Theme Two: Trailwood leaders utilized deliberate organizational processes and supports. THS principals in particular were very comfortable distributing their leadership to other THS staff, thus empowering them to further the vision. THS leaders were also very deliberate in addressing racism and allocating resources in support of its staff and students in the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment.

Theme Three: Trailwood leaders had a clear commitment to critical self-reflection. Throughout the 24-year period I studied, THS leaders regularly practiced both personal and corporate critical self-reflection as well as evaluation of their work, leading to better outcomes for students and staff.

Theme Four: Trailwood leaders were committed to the development of minoritized student self-efficacy. THS leaders made empowering their students and increasing their belief in themselves to do the work priorities during this 24 year period. The creation of two minoritized student cohorts, the Men's Cohort and the Minority Women Together cohort, were the major vehicles toward building student self-efficacy.

The Recommendations: From these themes, I offer three recommendations to further strengthen your work of Black and Latinx AP enrollment:

1. **Compose a record of this work at THS.** While the proliferation of the vision, practices, and organizational structures to increase minoritized students' AP participation has carried through the 24 year period, THS needs to record its history both to celebrate it and create widespread institutional knowledge. In doing so, other high schools might also benefit from this work.

2. **Critically self-reflect and re-evaluate current work.** With any school initiative, especially one lasting for over two decades, periodical critical self-reflection and evaluation are necessary to ensure what was created as a status quo buster is now not the status quo. While THS has included this over the years, several participants, including yourself, wonders how this work can improve, include more minoritized students, and perhaps extend beyond AP courses. Muhammad Khalifa's (2018) six types of critical self-reflection along with the corresponding questions of each may help THS evaluate in a culturally responsive way. (These are posted in the PowerPoint).

3. **Engage in greater depth the families of Black and Latinx students.** Throughout Trailwood's work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment, students' families have been engaged in varying formats but appeared to be uneven throughout the 24 year period covered by this study. Evaluating this key aspect can possibly strengthen this work. One of Khalifa's (2018) types of critical self-reflection addresses this as well and may aid in this effort.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to study Trailwood's incredible work on behalf of its Black and Latinx students. I have learned much from you that I am already using to inform my role as principal at Carrboro High School in North Carolina. My study of your school's work has tremendously impacted me. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Best wishes to you as you enter a summer of needed rest and as you prepare for what I hope is a mostly normal fall.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph
brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us

Action Communication Two: Presentation of Study's Themes and Recommendations for Trailwood High School

A 24-Year Study of Trailwood High School's Work to Increase Black and Latinx Student AP Enrollment: Findings and Recommendations

Beverly Rudolph, Student Researcher
The University of Virginia
Principal, Carrboro High School, NC
Fall 2021

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Background: Why did I choose Trailwood as my study site?

- THS has significantly increased its Black and Latinx AP course enrollment over a 24-year period.
- Dr. Wilmore was receptive and welcomed a review of the work. Other school leaders--both past and present--also wanted to tell the THS story.

- THS has similar demographics to my school in North Carolina.
- I was intrigued by a school that has been honored by so many (President Obama, WAPO), but still is "locally ignored."

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THE PROBLEM--A NATIONAL ISSUE:
Comparison Over Time by Racial Subgroup of AP Tests Taken Versus High School Population

Year	Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines origin)	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (including Spanish origin)	White (including Middle Eastern origin)	Two or more races, non-Hispanic
2008	+8.65	-10.99	-.6.52	+3.91	ND
2012	+9.03	-9.04	-7.14	+3.10	ND
2013	+9.74	-8.29	-5.94	+3.33	ND
2017	+9.00	-8.79	-3.87	+1.03	+3.40
2018	+9.38	-8.66	-4.18	+.22	+3.53
Net Average	+9.16	-9.15	-5.53	+2.32	+3.47

Note: ND=no data

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Oakes (2008): "For all the handwringing over the 'achievement gap,' schools continue to promote low achievement for poor children, African-Americans, Latinos and other under-served groups by placing these students disproportionately in 'low' classes" (p. 705).

Oakes, J. (2008). Keeping track: Structuring equality and inequality in an era of accountability. *The Teachers College Record*. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1167/iovs.04-0860

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Yet at Trailwood High School...

Click HERE for THS Black Student Percentages of Overall AP Course Enrollment, 2005–2020

Click HERE for THS Latinx Student Percentages of Overall AP Course Enrollment, 2005–2020

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Overall:

- THS has gone from a low of 10% Black student AP enrollment in 2007 to a high of 26% in 2014 for a 15-year average of 17.8%.
- Similarly, Latinx AP enrollment increased from a low of 17% in 2006 to a high of 37.5% in 2020 for a 15-year average of 26.2%.
- Additionally, in 2006 it was one of three national winners of the College Board Inspiration Award given to "celebrate the extraordinary commitment of educators and communities their students and futures."

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Research Questions--What I wanted to learn from THS:

- What are the underlying **values** leaders identify which contribute to increasing the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework?
- What **practices** do school-based leaders identify as contributing to the increased enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP coursework and how are they enacted?
- How are these leadership practices captured in **organizational processes** at the school?

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What did I find? Themes from the Study and Recommendations for the Future

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Theme One

The lengthy tenures of Trailwood leaders, both in the principalship and other key leader positions, resulted in a sustained school vision to increase the AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students.

I also found it compelling that several THS leaders in this study prepared and seemed to choose their successors upon their retirement who would carry out the vision they had worked so hard to bring about.

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Theme Two

Trailwood leaders utilized deliberate organizational processes and supports.

HS principals in particular were very comfortable distributing their leadership to other THS staff, thus empowering them to further the vision.

THS leaders were also very deliberate in addressing racism and allocating resources in support of its staff and students in the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment.

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Theme Three

Trailwood leaders had a clear commitment to critical self-reflection.

Throughout the 24-year period I studied, THS leaders regularly practiced both personal and corporate critical self-reflection as well as evaluation of their work, leading to better outcomes for students and staff.

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Theme Four

Development of minoritized student self-efficacy.

THS leaders made empowering their students and increasing their belief in themselves to do the work priorities during this 24-year period.

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Recommendation One

Compose a Record of THS Work--WRITE IT DOWN!

While the proliferation of the vision, practices, and organizational structures to increase minoritized students' AP participation has carried through the 24-year period, THS needs to record its history to celebrate it and create widespread institutional knowledge. In doing so, other high schools might also benefit from this work.

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Recommendation Two

Critically Self-reflect and Re-evaluate Current Work.

With any school imitative, especially one lasting for over two decades, periodical critical self-reflection and evaluation are necessary to ensure what was created as a status quo buster is now not the status quo.
Muhammad Khalifa's (2018) six types of critical self-reflection along with the corresponding questions of each may help THS evaluate in a culturally responsive way.

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Recommendation Three

Engage in Greater Depth the Families of Black and Latinx Students.

Throughout Trailwood's work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment, students' families have been engaged in varying formats but appeared uneven throughout the 24-year period covered by this study. Evaluating this key aspect can possibly strengthen this work.

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Thank you for this opportunity to study the incredible work that Trailwood leaders and its staff have done on behalf of its Black and Latinx students.

This study has informed my own work in my role as principal at Carrboro High School in North Carolina.

Please feel free to contact me at brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us

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Addendum:
What current research tells us about high school school leaders who have increased Black and Latinx student enrollment in AP courses

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From my literature review, four critical ideas emerged:

1. **School-based leadership matters—indirectly but meaningfully** (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Leithwood, 2011; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2019 ; Murphy, et al., 2006; Robinson et al., 2008; Sebring et al., 2009).

2. **Setting directions and developing the organization emerge as domains that indirectly impact student achievement** (Leithwood et al., 2019).

3. **Critical self-reflection from culturally responsive school leadership emerges as a domain that indirectly impacts student achievement, particularly that of marginalized populations** (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016).

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4. Eight key practices that specifically impact the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in AP courses.

- **Belief in the abilities of Black and Latinx students**
- **Cultural relevance and responsiveness**
- **Strengths-based mindset**
- **Use of Data**
- **Identification and Removal of Barriers**
- **Allocation of Resources**
- **Supports for Key Stakeholders**
- **Risk-taking**

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Convergence of the Literature and THS Practices

- **Belief in the abilities of Black and Latinx students**
- **Cultural relevance and responsiveness**
- **Use of Data**
- **Identification and Removal of Barriers**
- **Allocation of Resources**
- **Supports for Key Stakeholders**
- **Risk-taking**

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Divergence of the Literature and THS Practices

- Consistency of leadership
- Community monetary support
- Community Advocates (for AP program)
- Celebration of Successes
- Utilization of Cohorts
- Legacy of former students

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Reference List from Study

Click HERE for the entire reference list.

Thank you again!
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Action Communication Three: Memo of Study's Themes and Recommendations for High School Principals

To: Interested High School Principals
From: Beverly Rudolph, doctoral candidate, University of Virginia and principal of
         Carrboro High School, Chapel Hill-Carrboro (NC) City Schools
Re: Data from "The Relationship of School Leader Values and Practices to
         Participation of Black and Latinx Students in Advanced Placement Courses"
Date: July 1, 2021

Problem of Practice: Minoritized students are historically disproportionately enrolled in Advanced Placement courses compared to their White and Asian peers. School-based leaders including principals need to understand the values, practices, and organizational structures that can reverse this problem and lead to more students of color enrolled in these classes, which are common steppingstones for college enrollment and thus long-term earning potential.

Context: Trailwood High School, a Mid-Atlantic, ethnically diverse high school that has been successful in increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment over a 24 year period.

Major Themes: The following themes emerged from 10 interviews with past and present Trailwood High School leaders and from 65 artifacts including internal THS documents, articles, pictures, and the school website.

Theme One: Leader longevity and succession toward a sustainable school vision. The longevity of Trailwood's principals and other key leaders over the 24 year period covered in this study allowed these leaders and its staff to sustain the transformative school vision of increasing its Black and Latinx AP enrollment for 24 years and counting. Adding to this sustainability were several leaders preparing their successors to carry out the vision.

Theme Two: Utilization of deliberate organizational processes and supports. THS leaders focused on specific processes such as distributed leadership, addressing racism, and focused allocation of resources to support its staff and students in the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment.

Theme Three: Leader commitment to critical self-reflection. THS leaders practiced both personal and corporate critical self-reflection as well as evaluated their work leading to better outcomes for students and staff.

Theme Four: Development of minoritized student self-efficacy. THS leaders made empowering their students and increasing their belief in themselves to do the work priorities during this 24 year period.

Recommendations: While each school has its own context, given Trailwood High School's successful work to increase the AP enrollment of minoritized students, high school principals can consider the following:

- Addressing issues within their building regarding systems that impede the academic success of students of color;
- Forging relationships with staff that acknowledges their strengths while also appropriately challenging areas of needed growth to build their capacity to support traditionally marginalized students;
- Creating cohorts of students for minoritized students so that they can have community while also building relationships with each other, their families, and their communities to listen and learn from them, building on their strengths; and
- Distributing leadership to capable staff to accelerate the work, thus empowering them while also making the principal job more manageable.

For more information, contact Beverly Rudolph @ brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us

Action Communication Four: Memo of Study's Themes and Recommendations for School Districts and Superintendents

To: Interested School Districts and Superintendents
From: Beverly Rudolph, doctoral candidate, University of Virginia and principal of
          Carrboro High School, Chapel Hill-Carrboro (NC) City Schools
Re: Data regarding principal longevity and succession from "The Relationship of
          School Leader Values and Practices to Participation of Black and Latinx Students
          in Advanced Placement Courses"
Date: July 1, 2021

Problem of Practice: Minoritized students are historically disproportionately enrolled in Advanced Placement courses compared to their White and Asian peers. School-based leaders including principals need to understand the values, practices, and organizational structures that can reverse this problem and lead to more students of color enrolled in these classes which are common steppingstones for college enrollment and thus long-term earning potential.

Context: Trailwood High School, a Mid-Atlantic, ethnically diverse high school that has been successful in increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment over a 24 year period.

Major Themes: The following themes emerged from 10 interviews with past and present Trailwood High School leaders and from 65 artifacts including internal THS documents, articles, pictures, and the school website.

Theme One: Leader longevity and succession toward a sustainable school vision. The longevity of Trailwood's principals and other key leaders over the 24 year period covered in this study allowed these leaders and its staff to sustain the transformative school vision of increasing its Black and Latinx AP enrollment for 24 years and counting. Adding to this sustainability were several leaders preparing their successors to carry out the vision.

Theme Two: Utilization of deliberate organizational processes and supports. THS leaders focused on specific processes such as distributed leadership, addressing racism, and focused allocation of resources to support its staff and students in the work to increase Black and Latinx AP enrollment.

Theme Three: Leader commitment to critical self-reflection. THS leaders practiced both personal and corporate critical self-reflection as well as evaluated their work leading to better outcomes for students and staff.

Theme Four: Development of minoritized student self-efficacy. THS leaders made empowering their students and increasing their belief in themselves to do the work priorities during this 24 year period.

Recommendations: While each school district has its own context, nationwide principal tenure at one school averages four years, impeding consistent school improvement initiatives. As highlighted in Theme One, this study suggests that one possible reason for Trailwood High's 24 plus years of success in increasing Black and Latinx AP enrollment was the unusual longevity of its three principals since 1987 whose tenures were 15, eight, and 11 and counting.

Similarly, five other key leaders during this time period had tenures between 10 and 24 years. Additionally, each principal groomed and prepared one of their assistant principals for the job, each of whom became the next principal, ensuring that the vision to increase student of color AP enrollment remained and was furthered.

This suggests that school districts and superintendents might attend more to creating better working conditions for the principals they wish to keep long-term while also making succession plans when principal turnover occurs outlining the previous work the incoming principal should keep and improve upon as well as the things they should scuttle.

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APPENDIX A

Electronic Correspondence with School Principal

Good Afternoon, Dr. Yelton:

I am Beverly Rudolph, a high school principal in Chapel Hill/Carrboro, NC, and a UVA doctoral student. A few months ago, my dear friend Katie Oppenheimer reached out to you about my plan to carry out research at Trailwood High School (THS) for my Capstone project that focuses on school-based leader practices which have successfully increased the Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment of Black and Latinx students. She told me you would welcome such a study and for me to contact you.

Since then, the Grandview School District has approved the IRB. Therefore, in the event you are still willing, I can begin my study with you at a time of your convenience this Spring.

Once everything is approved, please let me know via email or phone call and I will send you the appropriate forms for you to fill out. Subsequently, the first step will be your choosing the leaders at Trailwood who have had key parts in the AP work—assistant principals, academic coaches, deans of students, AP coordinators—anyone you choose, and provide me with their emails. I would appreciate if you would let them know that I will be in touch soon via email to ask for their participation in an interview, which they can certainly refuse.

I appreciate your willing to take this on. Finding a more suburban, racially diverse high school that has successfully increased the AP enrollment of students of color is no easy task. At the school I serve as principal, Carrboro High School in Carrboro, NC, my leadership team and I are working on this as well and looking toward successful schools in order to help us get there.

I look forward to working with you and your team. I have designed the data collection so that it won't require much time from you or your administrative team, could provide a really fine example for others, and may even be enjoyable in the end.

I appreciate your time.
Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX B

Email to Initiating Leaders, 1996-2019

Dear _____,

My name is Beverly Rudolph and I am conducting a research study through the University of Virginia Curry School of Education. I am the principal of Carrboro High School, just outside of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. My chosen topic for my final Capstone project is one that is close to my heart and yours: increasing the Advanced Placement (AP) participation of traditionally marginalized populations, namely, for my project, Black and Latinx students.

My research project seeks to interview the Trailwood school-based leaders who have taken part in this work over a twenty-four year period. In doing so, I hope to determine the values and practices Trailwood has utilized in order to increase minority AP participation. I sought Trailwood out because of its proven track record of increasing student of color AP enrollment—an endeavor that you began over 20 years ago!

Current THS principal, Bryan Yelton, has graciously agreed to allow my research to be conducted at Trailwood and has indicated that you were a key school-based leader in beginning the aforementioned work.

To this end, I would like to invite you to participate in this study which involves an individual interview and a sharing of any documents which could illuminate the values and organization processes that drove this work.

If you agree to participate, the interview would take no more than 30 minutes and would be conducted on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or by phone at a date and time of your convenience. I had hoped to meet you in person but with the current Coronavirus limitations, that is not a possibility.

If you are willing to participate, please acknowledge this with a return email to me. Once you do so, you may withdraw your consent at any time, including the interview itself, or opt not to answer/skip any questions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at bkr3hg@virginia.edu or brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us or call at 919-883-7017. I appreciate the time that this will take and so appreciate your willingness to consider and hopefully participate in this study

I hope you are well in this very strange time we find ourselves in. What a time to be a school leader! I know you understand that.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX C

Email to Second Phase Leaders, 2005-Present

Dear (name):   Date:

My name is Beverly Rudolph and I am conducting a research study through the University of Virginia Curry School of Education. I am the principal of Carrboro High School outside of Chapel Hill, North Carolina and my chosen topic for my final Capstone project is one that is close to my heart and yours: increasing the Advanced Placement (AP) participation of traditionally marginalized populations, namely, for my project, Black and Latinx students.

My research project seeks to interview the Trailwood school-based leaders who have taken part in this work over a twenty-four year period. In doing so, I hope to determine the values and practices Trailwood has utilized in order to increase AP participation. I sought out Trailwood out because of its proven track record of increasing student of color AP enrollment—an endeavor that the school began over 20 years ago.

Your principal, Dr. Bryan Yelton, has graciously agreed to allow my research to be conducted here at Trailwood and has indicated that you are a key school-based leader in this aforementioned work. To this end, I would like to invite you to participate in this study which involves an individual interview and a sharing of any documents which could illuminate the values and organizational processes that drove this work.

If you agree to participate, the interview would take no more than 30 minutes and would be conducted on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or by phone at a date and time of your convenience. I had hoped to meet you in person but with the current Coronavirus limitations, that is not a possibility.

If you are willing to participate, please acknowledge this with a return email to me. Once you do so, you may withdraw your consent at any time, including the interview itself, or opt not to answer/skip any questions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at bkr3hg@virginia.edu or brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us or call at 919-883-7017. I appreciate the time that this will take and so appreciate your willing to consider and hopefully participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX D

Email to Sustaining Leaders, 2000-Present

Dear (name):   Date:

My name is Beverly Rudolph and I am conducting a research study through the University of Virginia Curry School of Education. I am the principal of Carrboro High School outside of Chapel Hill, North Carolina and my chosen topic for my final Capstone project is one that is close to my heart and yours: increasing the Advanced Placement (AP) participation of traditionally marginalized populations, namely, for my project, Black and Latinx students.

My research project seeks to interview the Trailwood school-based leaders who have taken part in this work over a twenty-four year period. In doing so, I hope to determine the values and practices Trailwood has utilized in order to increase AP participation. I sought out Trailwood out because of its proven track record of increasing student of color AP enrollment—an endeavor that you have been a vital part of for over 20 years.

(This would go only to the non-principal participant):
Principal Yelton has graciously agreed to allow my research to be conducted at Trailwood and has indicated that you have been a key school-based leader in beginning the aforementioned work. To this end, I would like to invite you to participate in this study which involves an individual interview and a sharing of any documents which could illuminate the values and organizational processes that drove this work.

If you agree to participate, the interview would take no more than 30 minutes and would be conducted on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or by phone at a date and time of your convenience. I had hoped to meet you in person but with the current Coronavirus limitations, that is not a possibility.

If you are willing to participate please acknowledge this with a return email. Once you do so, you may withdraw your consent at any time, including the interview itself, or opt not to answer/skip any questions.

For the other Sustaining Leaders:
If you agree to participate, the interview will take no more than 30 minutes and would be conducted on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or by phone at a date and time of your convenience. I had hoped to meet you in person but with the current Coronavirus limitations, that is not a possibility.

If you agree to participate please acknowledge this with a return email. Once you do so, you may withdraw your consent at any time, including the interview itself, or opt not to answer/skip any questions.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at bkr3hg@virginia.edu or brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us or call at 919-883-7017. I appreciate the time that this will take and so appreciate your willing to consider and hopefully participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX E

Electronic Follow-up Correspondence to All Participant Groups

Yes, agreed to participate

Date:

Dear

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my research study on school-based leader practices that increase the Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment of Black and Latinx students and for indicating so in the Google form I sent.

Please let me know what date and times work best with your schedule. I will then reach out by email to confirm a date and time or to find other possibilities as well as your preferred mode of communication –Zoom, Google Hangouts or by phone.

Again, I am deeply appreciative of the time you are taking to participate in this study; I hope that the findings will be helpful in your continued efforts on behalf of your students.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

No, do not wish to participate

Date

Dear (person's name):
Thank you for letting me know you do not wish to participate in my research at this time. I wish you the best during this unconventional season of sheltering in place.

Thank you again,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX F

Electronic Correspondence to Interview Participants

Date:

Dear (person's name):

Thank you for responding sending dates and times that would work for your interview. Based on this, (date and time) works for both of us, so let's set date and time); I will send you a Google invitation along with the (Google Meet/Zoom) link (or phone call information).

We will meet for no more than 30 minutes. If our scheduled time ends up not working for you, please email me at bkr3hg@virginia.edu or brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us or call at 919-883-7007.

Before we meet for the interview, I would like you to think of and locate any documents about the AP Initiative that would provide insight particularly into your and/or the school's vision and values in this work and anything that speaks to organizational processes. This could include but not be limited to planning documents, agenda and notes from a planning/visioning meeting, School Improvement Plans, communications to parents and students, or website communications.

As you locate these, please send these to Dr. Yelton, current Trailwood principal, for his approval of their release as I want to honor his position as current THS principal. And if you don't have or know of any documents that would support the data collection, that is absolutely fine. I still want to interview you for your valuable perspective.

I am excited to learn from you the values and practices that increased Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment of Black and Latinx students as well as the reasons why they were chosen and how they were organized.

I look forward to meeting you soon online and as always, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Beverly Rudolph

APPENDIX G

Informed Consent Agreement for Interviews

Please read this form carefully before agreeing to participate in the study.
NOTE*: this form will have been sent to participants after their agreement to participate. Due to COVID-19, I will ask them to print it out and sign in from of me via Zoom or Google Hangouts or scan/email it to me ahead of our interview.. If by phone, I will ask them to scan or mail the copy to me and reaffirm their consent verbally before the interview begins and that they can withdraw it any time.*

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to learn from school-based leaders what values and practices they have utilized towards the increase in enrollment of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, as well as the organizational processes involved. Because Trailwood High School (THS) has experienced success in this area, I hope to use the information and data to add to the existing literature base on this topic in order to inform leadership practices for leaders who wish to experience the same success for their students.

What you will do in the study: In this study, you will be asked questions about the values and practices THS has employed to increase AP enrollment of minoritized students. You will also be asked questions about anything that influenced the decision to choose these practices in the first place as well as how the work was organized throughout. You can skip any question that makes you uncomfortable and stop the interview at any time that you deem fit.

- **Time required:** The study will require about 30 minutes of your time.
- **Risks:** There are no anticipated risks in this study.
- **Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. Your participation will add to the add to leaders' understanding of best practices to increase minority AP enrollment and potentially assist THS in its future work to strengthen and grow its own AP work.
- **Confidentiality:** Because this study will positively highlight THS, real names will be used throughout if you and all the participants agree. Otherwise, pseudonyms will be used in the research paper and he information you share with me will be kept confidential.

- I would like to record this interview so that I can use it for reference while proceeding with this study. I will not record this interview without your permission. If you do grant permission for this conversation to be recorded, you have the right to revoke recording permission and/or end the interview at any time.

- This project will be completed by May 31, 2021. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure workspace until (1 year) after that date. The files will be destroyed after that date.

- **Voluntary participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.

- **Right to withdraw from the study:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

- **How to withdraw from the study:** If you want to withdraw from the study, please inform the interviewer to stop the interview at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

- **Payment:** You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study, please contact:
Beverly Rudolph
Principal, Carrboro High School
Carrboro, North Carolina
Bkr3hg@virginia.edu or brudolph@chccs.k12.nc.us
919-883-7017

Dr. Sandra Mitchell
Department of Administration and Supervision
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.
Telephone: 703-303-7660
spm7b@virginia.edu

To obtain more information about the study, ask questions about the research procedures, express concerns about your participation, or report illness, injury or other problems, please contact:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
One Morton Dr. Suite 500
University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 9 24 5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs
Website for Research Participants: http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/participants/

Agreement:
I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

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APPENDIX H

Semi-Structured Interview Script, Questions, And Protocol for Group One, Initiating Leaders, 1996-2019

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Interview Protocol

May 2020

Trailwood High School

Problem of Practice:

- What school-based leader values and practices have increased the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement classes?

Interview Guide

Date of Interview:	Location:
Interviewee role:	Start Time: TBD
Interviewed by: Beverly Rudolph	End Time: TBD
Audio file name:	Transcript file name:

Script
Introduction and informed consent:
Thank you for agreeing to do my study. Before we start, I'd like for you to read the consent form for this interview. Please read this form carefully before agreeing to participate in the study.

Do you have any questions about the consent form?
- Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview.
- Or thank you for letting me know you won't be participating in this interview. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Purpose - The Study: As the consent form indicated, this study is looking at the values and practices of school-based leaders identify as increasing participation of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement courses. At Trailwood, you (have)experienced success in this area, so I will be asking questions around that.

Purpose - This Interview: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. At any time you wish to end the interview or refrain from answering a question, please let me know and we will stop or move to the next question.

Time required: It is anticipated that this interview should take no more than 30 minutes.
Risks: There are no anticipated risks.
Benefits: While there are no direct benefits, it is my hope that the findings overall will support Trailwood's work to increase minority AP enrollment.

Logistics - Audio Recording, Note taking, Confidentiality

I want to catch your exact wording and would like to record this interview as well as take some notes. These notes and the recording will be kept confidential and will be viewed by me and my UVA advisor, Dr. Sandra Mitchell.

Is it all right if I
    record this interview? Yes or no (mark)
    take notes during the interview? Yes or no (mark)
You are able to say no anytime or request to look at the notes.

Additionally, I will be using a pseudonym for you –a name so you can't be identified –in my recordings and reporting. If you desire, you can pick your own pseudonym.

Pseudonym: _____

Are you ready? As a reminder, you can decide at any time you don't want to participate or decline a question, okay? That is your right. Just let me know. There is no penalty for withdrawing from this interview or refraining from any questions. If you are ready, then let's begin.

NOTE: The Zoom platform will be used and the interview audio portion recorded; if participants do not wish for an online interview, a phone interview will be conducted and recorded by the REV application.

Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

PRIMARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS	PROBES
Introduction 1. Tell me about your background as an educator. Why did you get into education?	• What were roles in education before you arrived at THS? • How long were you in education and at THS? Different levels? • What subjects did you teach? (if applicable) • What was your role was at Trailwood?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else?
Values, Purpose, Vision 2. (RQ 1) What motivated you to start the AP Initiative at Trailwood?	• Were there influences in your life that lead you to go this way? • Do you believe your motivation align with your own beliefs and values?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data?
Practices/Organizational Processes Since I will be asking about practices and processes, I want to define these. Practices are specific actions that directly affect the problem at hand (AP SOC). Organizational processes are how the AP Initiative has been set up—the big picture processes that made the practices work. 3. (RQ 2, 3) How did the AP Initiative get started? How did you begin?	• Why did you start this/these way/ways? • What were the most important first steps/actions?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?

4. (RQ 2, 3) What did you do next? What were the important next steps after you had begun?	• Why did you start this/these way/ways? • What were the most important first steps/actions?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
5. (RQ 3) How did you (and your school-based leader team) get people involved in this?	• Who were they? • What did you do? • How did you get them involved?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
6. (RQ3) With such a big undertaking as this, how did you organize it all? What processes did you use to get it all together? Which ones worked best? Which ones not so well?	• What processes did you use to get it all together? • Which ones worked best? • Which ones not so well?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
Outcomes 7. (RQ 1, 2, 3) How did you know you had made some successes?	• Was it a goal you set in your vision? • Was it the kind of data collection you did?	• How did you use data? • What were the results
8. (RQ2 & 3) What do you think were key factors that made this AP Initiative successful at THS? 9. (RQ3) Did you and your colleagues take time to talk through or reflect on actions you had taken? Did you have a method? Did you use/look at feedback?	• What did you define as "success?" • Did everyone agree with the results? • Were there any negative outcomes?	• What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?

10. (RQ 1, 2, 3) Is there anything else you want to tell me about the AP Initiative program that you began at THS?		

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

Soon, I'll share with you the transcript of our interview so that, if you choose, you can check it for accuracy and let me know if you remember anything differently than how I have transcribed it. Thank you so much for your generous giving of your time. I really appreciate your support of this research.

General Sub probes

- How did you feel about that?
- Could you tell me more about that?
- What was that like?
- What are your memories of that?
- Can you tell me a story that illustrates what you mean by that?
- What do you most remember about that experience?

APPENDIX I

Semi-Structured Interview Script, Questions, And Protocol for Group Two, Second Phase Leaders, 2005-Present

Interview Protocol

May 2020

Trailwood High School

Problem of Practice:

- What school-based leader values and practices have increased the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement classes?

Interview Guide

Date of Interview:	Location:
Interviewee role:	Start Time: TBD
Interviewed by: Beverly Rudolph	End Time: TBD
Audio file name:	Transcript file name:

Script
Introduction and informed consent:
Thank you for agreeing to do my study. Before we start, I'd like for you to read the consent form for this interview. Please read this form carefully before agreeing to participate in the study.

Do you have any questions about the consent form?
- Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview.
- Or thank you for letting me know you won't be participating in this interview. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Purpose - The Study: As the consent form indicated, this study is looking at the relationship between the values and practices of school-based leaders and the participation of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement courses. At Trailwood, you (have)worked on the participation of students of color in AP , so ... I will be asking questions around that.

Purpose - This Interview: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. At any time you wish to end the interview or refrain from answering a question, please let me know and we will stop or move to the next question.

Time required: It is anticipated that this interview should take no more than 30 minutes.
Risks: There are no anticipated risks.
Benefits: While there are no direct benefits, it is my hope that the findings overall will support Trailwood's work to increase minority AP enrollment.

Logistics - Audio Recording, Note taking, Confidentiality

I want to catch your exact wording and would like to record this interview as well as take some notes. These notes and the recording will be kept confidential and will be viewed by me and my UVA advisor, Dr. Sandra Mitchell.

Is it all right if I
  record this interview? Yes or no (mark)
  take notes during the interview? Yes or no (mark)
You are able to say no anytime or request to look at the notes.

Additionally, I will be using a pseudonym for you –a name so you can't be identified –in my recordings and reporting. If you desire, you can pick your own pseudonym.

Pseudonym: _____

Are you ready? As a reminder, you can decide at any time you don't want to participate or decline a question, okay? That is your right. Just let me know. There is no penalty for withdrawing from this interview or refraining from any questions. If you are ready, then let's begin.

NOTE: The Zoom platform will be used and the interview audio portion recorded; if participants do not wish for an online interview, a phone interview will be conducted and recorded by the REV application.

Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

PRIMARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS	PROBES
Introduction 1. (RQ1)Tell me about your background as an educator. Why did you get into education?	• What were your roles in education before you arrived at THS? • How long have you been in education and at THS? Different levels? • What subjects do/did you teach (if applicable) • What is your role was at Trailwood?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else?
Values, Purpose, Vision 2. (RQ 1) What motivated you to join the AP Initiative at Trailwood?	• Were there influences in your life that lead you to go this way? • Do you believe your motivation aligns with your own beliefs and values?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data?
Practices/Organizational Processes Since I will be asking about practices and processes, I want to define these. Practices are specific actions that directly affect the problem at hand (AP SOC). Organizational processes are how the AP Initiative has been set up— the big picture processes that made the practices work.	• Why did you start this/these way/ways? • What were the most important first steps/actions?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?

3. (RQ 2, 3) What have you done since joining the AP Initiative? How did you begin?		
4. (RQ 2, 3) What did you do next? What were the important next steps after you had begun?	• Why did you start this/these way/ways? • What were the most important first steps/actions?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
PRIMARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	**FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS**	**PROBES**
5. (RQ2, 3) How do you (and your school-based leader team) get people involved in this?	• Who are they? • What did you do? • How did you get them involved?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
6. (RQ3) With such a big undertaking as this, how do you organize it all? What processes do you use to get it all together? Which ones work best? Which ones not so well?	• What processes did you use to get it all together? • Which ones worked best? • Which ones not so well?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
Outcomes 7. (RQ 1, 2, 3) How do you know you had made some successes?	a. Was it a goal you set in your vision? b. Was it the kind of data collection you did?	• How did you use data? • What were the results
8. (RQ2 & 3) What do you think were key factors that made this AP Initiative successful at THS? 9. (RQ3) Did you and your colleagues take time to talk through or reflect on actions	• How do you define as "success?" • Does everyone agree with the results?? • Have there been any negative outcomes? • What do you think needs to happen going forward?	• Why is this the right thing to do –why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?

you had taken? Did you have a method? Did you use/look at feedback?		
10. (RQ 1, 2, 3) Is there anything else you want to tell me about the AP Initiative program at THS?		

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

Soon, I'll share with you the transcript of our interview so that, if you choose, you can check it for accuracy and let me know if you remember anything differently than how I have transcribed it. Thank you so much for your generous giving of your time. I really appreciate your support of this research.

General Sub probes
- How did you feel about that?
- Could you tell me more about that?
- What was that like?
- What are your memories of that?
- Can you tell me a story that illustrates what you mean by that?
- What do you most remember about that experience?

APPENDIX J

Semi-Structured Interview Script, Questions, And Protocol for Group Three, Sustaining Leaders, 2000-Present

Interview Protocol

May 2020

Trailwood High School

Problem of Practice:

- What school-based leader values and practices have increased the enrollment of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement classes?

Interview Guide

Date of Interview:	Location:
Interviewee role:	Start Time: TBD
Interviewed by: Beverly Rudolph	End Time: TBD
Audio file name:	Transcript file name:

Script
Introduction and informed consent:
Thank you for agreeing to do my study. Before we start, I'd like for you to read the consent form for this interview. Please read this form carefully before agreeing to participate in the study.

Do you have any questions about the consent form?
- Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview.
- Or thank you for letting me know you won't be participating in this interview. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Purpose - The Study: As the consent form indicated, this study is looking at the values and practices of school-based leaders identify as increasing participation of Black and Latinx students in Advanced Placement courses. At Trailwood, you (have)experienced success in this area, so I will be asking questions around that.

Purpose - This Interview: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. At any time you wish to end the interview or refrain from answering a question, please let me know and we will stop or move to the next question.

Time required: It is anticipated that this interview should take no more than 30 minutes.
Risks: There are no anticipated risks.
Benefits: While there are no direct benefits, it is my hope that the findings overall will support Trailwood's work to increase minority AP enrollment.

Logistics - Audio Recording, Note taking, Confidentiality

I want to catch your exact wording and would like to record this interview as well as take some notes. These notes and the recording will be kept confidential and will be viewed by me and my UVA advisor, Dr. Sandra Mitchell.

Is it all right if I
    record this interview? Yes or no (mark)
    take notes during the interview? Yes or no (mark)
You are able to say no anytime or request to look at the notes.

Additionally, I will be using a pseudonym for you –a name so you can't be identified –in my recordings and reporting. If you desire, you can pick your own pseudonym.

Pseudonym: _____

Are you ready? As a reminder, you can decide at any time you don't want to participate or decline a question, okay? That is your right. Just let me know. There is no penalty for withdrawing from this interview or refraining from any questions. If you are ready, then let's begin.

NOTE: The Zoom platform will be used and the interview audio portion recorded; if participants do not wish for an online interview, a phone interview will be conducted and recorded by the REV application.

Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

PRIMARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS	PROBES
Introduction 1. Tell me about your background as an educator. Why did you get into education?	• What were roles in education before you arrived at THS? • How long were you in education and at THS? Different levels? • What subjects did you teach (if applicable)? • What was your role was at Trailwood?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else?
Values, Purpose, Vision 2. (RQ 1) What motivated you to start the AP Initiative at Trailwood?	• Were there influences in your life that lead you to go this way? • Do you believe your motivation align with your own beliefs and values?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data?
Practices/Organizational Processes Since I will be asking about practices and processes, I want to define these. Practices are specific actions that directly affect the problem (AP SOC) Organizational Processes are how the whole thing was set up—the big picture processes that made the practices work. 3. (RQ 2, 3) How did the AP Initiative get started? How did you begin?	• Why did you start this/these way/ways? • What were the most important first steps/actions?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
4. (RQ 2, 3) What did you do next? What were the important next steps after you had begun?	• Why did you start this/these way/ways?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources?

	• What were the most important first steps/actions?	• How did you use data? • What were the results?
5. (RQ2, 3) How did you (and your school-based leader team) get people involved in this?	• Who were they? • What did you do? • How did you get them involved?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
6. (RQ3) With such a big undertaking as this, how did you organize it all? What processes did you use to get it all together? Which ones worked best? Which ones not so well?	• What processes did you use to get it all together? • Which ones worked best? • Which ones not so well?	• Why was this the right thing to do – why this and not something else? • What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
Outcomes 7. (RQ 1, 2, 3) How did you know you had made some successes?	• Was it a goal you set in your vision? • Was it the kind of data collection you did?	• How did you use data? • What were the results
8. (RQ2 & 3) What do you think were and are key factors that made this AP Initiative successful at THS? 9. (RQ1) Do you and your colleagues take time to talk through or reflect on actions you had taken? Did you have a method? Did you use/look at feedback?	• What did you define as "success?" • Did everyone agree with the results?? • Were there any negative outcomes?	• What were the resources? • How did you use data? • What were the results?
10. What are the most important actions beliefs, and values from you 20 year experience that has increased …?		

11. (RQ 1, 2, 3) Is there anything else you want to tell me about the AP Initiative program that you began at THS?		

Thank you for taking the time for this interview today. Your answers provide the data for my research study which I hope will add to all our understandings on how to increase minority enrollment in AP courses.

Soon, I'll share with you the transcript of our interview so that, if you choose, you can check it for accuracy and let me know if you remember anything differently than how I have transcribed it. Thank you so much for your generous giving of your time. I really appreciate your support of this research.

General Sub probes

- How did you feel about that?
- Could you tell me more about that?
- What was that like?
- What are your memories of that?
- Can you tell me a story that illustrates what you mean by that?
- What do you most remember about that experience?

APPENDIX K

THS Black Student Percentages of Overall AP Course Enrollment, 2005-2020

Year	Black Student Percentage of Overall AP Course Enrollment	Black Students Percentage of Overall THS Population	Black Student Disproportionality
2005-06	15	26.3	-11.3
2006-07	10	26.1	-16.1
2007-08	17	26.7	-9.7
2008-09	14	25.1	-11.1
2009-10	19	26.4	-7.4
2010-11	20	23.8	-3.8
2011-12	21	23.4	-2.4
2012-13	19	23.0	-4.0
2013-14	26	23.0	+3.0
2014-15	20	21.9	-1.9
2015-16	19.5	21.2	-1.7
2016-17	16.7	21.2	-4.5
2017-18	16.2	19.0	-2.8
2018-19	17.3	19.3	-2.0
2019-20	15.7	18.2	-2.5
Fifteen Year Averages	**17.8**	**23.0**	**-5.2**

Note: 2006-2015 AP data is from THS internal documents and its population data from its state department of education. 2016-2020 AP data is from the College Board and its population data from its state department of education.

APPENDIX L

THS Latinx Student Percentages of Overall AP Course Enrollment, 2005-2020

Year	Latinx Student Percentage of Overall AP Course Enrollment	Latinx Student Percentage of Overall THS Population	Latinx Student Disproportionality
2005-06	17	45.3	-28.3
2006-07	22	44.5	-22.5
2007-08	23	45.1	-22.1
2008-09	25	47.3	-22.3
2009-10	27	45.8	-18.8
2010-11	29	48.3	-19.3
2011-12	26	45.8	-19.8
2012-13	27	44.6	-17.6
2013-14	21	42.9	-21.9
2014-15	28	44.2	-16.2
2015-16	37.5	43.4	-5.9
2016-17	33.9	44.8	-10.9
2017-18	30.9	44.8	-13.9
2018-19	28.9	43.9	-15.0
2019-20	22.1	43.8	-21.7
Fifteen Year Averages	**26.6**	**45.0**	**-18.4**

Note: 2006-2015 AP data is from THS internal documents and its population data from its state department of education.2016-2020 AP data is from the College Board and its population data from its state department of education.

APPENDIX M

Code List for Survey Instrument, Interviews, and Documents/Artifacts

Note: the same coding scheme is used for semi-structured interviews, and artifact triangulation.

Code	Code Abbreviations	Color	Code Definition
SBL practices that increase AP enrollment of Black and Latinx students	THSP plus #	red	**THS school-based leader practices not identified in the literature base:** #1 Consistency of leadership #2 Community monetary support #3 Community Advocates (for AP program) #4 Celebration of Successes #5 Cohorts #6 Legacy of former students

	LITP plus #	green	**These practices align with the study's literature base:**
			#1 belief in ability
			#2 culturally responsive practices
			    a. affirm identity and culture
			    b. critical perspectives about inequities
			    c. inclusive school environment
			    d. cultural identities linked to college
			    e. Critical Race Theory: recognition that racism is sown into society
			    f. Critical Race Theory: recognition that racism must be worked on in self
			    g. open discussions about race
			#3strengths-based mindset
			#4 data usage
			#5 barrier removal
			#6 allocation of resources
			#7 supports for stakeholders
			    7a teachers

			7b support staff
Code	Code Abbreviations	Color	Code Definition

	LITP plus #	green	7c students
			  7c1 academic
			   7c2 SE:
			   7c3 guidance
			   7d families
			#8 risk taking

SBL influencers of practices/values RQ1	V plus #	yellow	#1 experiential
			  a. childhood/upbringing
			  b. encounter with SOC
			  c. other social justice work
			#2 books/research
			#3 religious beliefs
			#4 values of the program
			#5
			
			This will be an emerging category during the selective coding phase.

Critical self-reflection –6 types per Khalifa, pp. 77-78, 2018. Domain #1 (D1) RQ2	CSR plus #	pink	 #1 personal #2 content #3 structural #4 community-based #5 organizational #6 sustainability
Setting directions/directions setting per Leithwood et al., p. 4 (2017). Domain #2 (D2) RQ2	SD plus #	blue	#1 build a shared vision #2 identify specific, short-term goals #3 create high-performance expectations #4 create "constructive discontent through vision and goals #5 staff exposure to marginalized populations #6 positive working environment
Organizational development per Leithwood	OD plus #	orange	#1 build collaborative culture and distribute leadership #2 structure the organization to facilitate collaboration

Code	Code Abbreviations	Color	Code Definition
et al., p. 4 (2017)			2a culture of peers in each other's classrooms
Code	Code Abbreviations	Color	Code Definition
Domain #3 (D3) RQ 2 and 3	OD plus #	orange	#3 build productive relationships with families and communities 3a. engaging learning opportunities for students of color 3b. advising 3c leaders' opportunities for SOC 3d mentoring provided #4 connect the school to its wider environment #5 maintain a safe and healthy school environment #6 allocate resources in support of the school's vision and goals #7 equity focused goals