Creating “Pockets of Hope”: The Impact of High School Principals’ Beliefs and Practices on the School Connectedness of Newcomer Central American Males

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By

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Executive Summary

The steady growth of the immigrant population in the United States continues to impact many classrooms. Currently, more than four million foreign-born students are enrolled in U.S. schools, comprising approximately 10% of the total student population. Of these students, recently arrived immigrant English Learners (RAIELs) constitute a diverse group with varying educational backgrounds and literacy in their first languages. In suburban school divisions in the Washington, D.C., area, many of these RAIELs are Central American males who arrive in the United States as adolescents. While these students arrive with assets connected to their life experiences, many face significant challenges due to gaps in their education and socio-emotional needs often shaped by hardships such as trauma and dislocation. RAIELs who arrive as high school students encounter additional pressures associated with meeting graduation requirements (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Because of these myriad challenges, many of these students leave high school before they graduate (Umansky et al., 2018).

With today's political debate over immigration, some may assert that these students do not merit additional attention. Despite this lack of consensus, these learners have the legal right to a public education. Moreover, as Justice Brennan argued in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), schools have a moral obligation to ensure that these youth are educated so that they do not "become permanently locked into the lowest socio-economic class" (p. 208). If educational leaders are serious about narrowing the achievement gap between English Learners and their White counterparts, increased efforts must be made to support these students and prepare them to become fully contributing members of society. This study contributes to the knowledge base of how the beliefs and practices of high school

principals can contribute to inclusive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging for these newcomers (Gerhart et al., 2011; Hos, 2016; Scanlan & López, 2012; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016) and, in turn, support their academic achievement.

Three research questions guide this capstone project. First, I examined how school leaders and students perceive the unique needs of adolescent newcomer Central American males. Second, I researched how school leaders engage in decision-making processes to address these needs, looking specifically for evidence of a distributed leadership perspective (Spillane et al., 2004), a social justice mindset (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015), and leadership practices identified in Hitt and Tucker's (2016) unified leadership framework, as presented in the conceptual framework guiding this study. Finally, I examined the practices, programs, and supports enacted to support these learners, as well as the impact of these supports on these students' sense of school connectedness.

This single, mixed-methods case study was conducted at a suburban high school with a significant Central American EL population. Data collection occurred in four phases over a four-month period between December 2019 and March 2020. Qualitative data were drawn from semi-structured interviews with six school leaders and five Central American male students preparing to graduate, as well as document analysis of varied artifacts demonstrating the school's efforts to support newcomer Central American males. Quantitative data were collected from a survey of 24 Central American male students in twelfth grade who began their high school studies in the United States as newcomers. These data were analyzed and discussed through the lens of the conceptual framework and extant literature.

Three major findings emerged from the study. First, it is critical for school leaders to recognize the unique needs of newcomer Central American males. In areas of divergent perceptions between leaders and students, trusting relationships are critical to bridging these gaps. Second, given the unique needs of these learners, distributed leadership, coupled with a social justice mindset, allows for a collective approach to support these students. Finally, in order to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, a range of practices, programs, and supports are needed, the most impactful of which are grounded in an ethic of care and directly aligned to students' wants and needs.

Based on the aforementioned findings, I recommend the following practices to high school principals striving to bolster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males: (1) Expand newcomers' awareness of resources to address their socio-emotional needs; (2) Strengthen newcomers' awareness of academic options and supports; (3) Identify and address institutional and relational barriers to newcomers' participation in extracurricular activities; (4) Create additional space for student voice; (5) Amplify opportunities for vertical articulation among staff to ensure continuity of services as newcomers progress academically; (6) Utilize a systems approach to view and connect supports and measure their impact on students.

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APPROVAL OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

This capstone project, "Creating 'Pockets of Hope': The Impact of High School Principals' Beliefs and Practices on the School Connectedness of Newcomer Central American Males," has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Sara Dexter, Ed.D., Capstone Chair

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July 30, 2020
Date of Defense

DEDICATION

I dedicate this capstone to my family for supporting me throughout this significant undertaking.

To my daughters, Caroline, Lily, and Isabella, thank you for your patience as I completed this work. May this research remind you of the importance of standing up for what is right.

To my parents, Michael and Rose, thank you for instilling in me the value of an education and the importance of hard work and perseverance. I am proud to be the first Campiglia to earn a doctorate.

To my sister, Maria, thank you for believing in me, asking the right questions, and listening when I needed a sounding board.

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I have reached this milestone in my academic and professional career because of the unwavering support of my professors, colleagues, and friends. Their guidance, insightful questions, and belief in my ability to carry out this work have made this capstone possible.

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I would also like to extend my gratitude to the members of Cohort IV. Thank you for the laughs, tireless encouragement, and friendship. Our GroupMe and Zoom check ins, life celebrations, and memes kept me afloat on many days. Thank you also for modeling an unwavering commitment to students; you have inspired me in so many ways.

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Thank you also to the staff of Davis Springs High School for your willingness to participate in this study. Your dedication to English Learners and their families, collaborative practices, and willingness to engage in out-of-the-box thinking are inspiring, and I am honored to share your work with other educators.

Finally, I would like to thank the educators of Wilson County Public Schools who supported this endeavor. Your insightful questions, constructive feedback, and willingness to listen enriched this study in countless ways.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

The immigration debate in the United States continues to divide the nation. Some argue for the curtailment of immigration from areas such as Central America, while others favor more welcoming policies to immigrants. As the country continues to deliberate the future of immigration policies, the foreign-born population in the United States has reached record-high levels (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019). The continued growth of the immigrant population is shaping the landscape of many classrooms (Brown & Stepler, 2016). For more than a century, educational leaders have grappled with how best to address diverse learners' needs (Riehl, 2000), with assimilation often suggested as the antidote to this challenge. Over time, however, some experts have begun arguing for cultural pluralism to replace the notion that all students should adhere to a singular definition of achievement (Alim & Paris, 2017). Alim and Paris (2017) advocate for culturally sustaining pedagogy that "asks us to reimagine schools as sites where diverse, heterogeneous practices are not only valued but sustained" (p. 3). Researchers and policy advocates who support cultural pluralism argue that school leaders must foster inclusive cultures (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) that inspire educators to work collaboratively to ensure that all students experience success (Hallinger, 1992; Riehl, 2000).

Some argue that the growing numbers of English Learners (ELs) in today's public schools render the adoption of cultural pluralism and, more specifically, inclusive learning environments, a demographic imperative (García et al., 2010). Under the 2015

Every Student Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a), ELs are defined as students born outside of the United States or whose native language is a language other than English, and

> whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual – (i) the ability to meet challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

While there is extensive debate over how to identify students who are developing their proficiency in English (García & Kleifgen, 2018; Wright, 2019), the term EL is used throughout this study in accordance with terminology established under ESSA. Between 1970 and 1995, there was a 200% increase in foreign-born children in the United States in grades K-12; 40% of these students were ELs (Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000). In fall 2017, five million school-aged children between the ages of 5-17 were ELs, comprising 10.1% of the total school population in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Within the EL population, the overall growth of the Latino subgroup has been steady since 1995. In 2010, Latinos constituted the largest minority group in U.S. schools; by 2060, Latinos will comprise 30% of the school-aged population, a marked increase from 13% in 1995 (Colby & Ortman, 2015; Lucas, 2016). Consequently, the academic success of Latino students, many of whom are ELs, is critical to the country's civic and economic future (Gándara, 2010).

Despite this evidence of growth of the EL population, some scholars (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006) argue that caution must be employed in the use of statistics to frame the necessity of focusing on ELs. Gutiérrez and Orellana (2006) recognize the value in using

descriptive statistics; however, they believe that overreliance on these data can oversimplify a complex issue. They posit that focusing primarily on trend data can also lead to a deficit-oriented approach toward ELs, characterizing these students as a problem that must be addressed. Furthermore, they contend that unless these statistics are presented in a contextualized manner, they can be utilized to "foster a narrative of fear or concern about the problem these new residents pose" (p. 503). Rather than use data that allow generalizations about a complex population, researchers should strive to "capture both regularity and variance in the communities about which we hope to learn more" (p. 503).

Despite differing perspectives among scholars about the rationale for increased focus on ELs, many high schools across the United States are, in fact, experiencing increases in the number of Central American youth immigrating in their mid- to late teens (Allard, 2015; Lucas, 2016). These learners arrive with assets related to their life experiences; many have demonstrated courage, perseverance, and resilience in their journeys (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Browder, 2014). At the same time, many face challenges as they simultaneously acclimate to an unfamiliar country and school. These hurdles are particularly acute when they arrive as adolescents; many experience pressures to secure employment (Allard, 2015; Lucas, 2016), while also having to acquire English and learn the academic content required to graduate (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In some regions of the United States, these learners face negative contexts of reception because of aggressive immigration policies and anti-immigrant sentiment associated with nativism (Brezicha & Hopkins, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2019; Menjívar, 2008; Quinn et al., 2017). Steil and Vasi (2014) assert that the increased adoption of anti-immigrant

legislation by many local and state governments have created an era of "new immigrant contestation" (p. 1105), a pattern intensified in more recent years under the Trump administration (Quinn et al., 2017). Chávez (2013) argues that Latino immigrants are portrayed in some communities as threats who are unwilling to assimilate and are undeserving of the benefits of inclusion into American society (Brown, 2013). In a similar vein, some long-term residents in new immigrant destinations view newcomers with a deficit mindset, perceiving them as problems and viewing their cultural differences as sources of stress rather than as potential resources (Dalla et al., 2004). Given this reality, high schools play a critical role in establishing a positive context of reception because they often serve as an entry point for these learners (Dabach, 2011, 2015; Hopkins et al., 2019; Marrow, 2009, 2011; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, 2014), supporting their integration into new communities (Hamann et al., 2015; Marrow, 2009, 2011). To this end, many high schools continue to seek ways to support these adolescent newcomers from Central America, many of whom are young men, through the creation of what de los Reyes (2001) defines as "pockets of hope." She explains,

> Pockets of hope are physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and political communities where participants engage in reflection and action, challenging the despair so widespread throughout our educational institutions today. In these pockets of hope, the presence and participation of all members is seen as essential to their survival, development, and future…An unyielding faith in the future describes the strength, courage, and determination that one finds in these pockets of hope. (pp. 23-24)

Problem of Practice

For more than 27 years, I have observed the challenges faced by newcomer Central American males in my role as a high school English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher, as well as in my leadership roles as an ESOL curriculum

specialist and assistant principal in two diverse high schools. Evidence of these learners' challenges is also apparent in current scholarship. Immigrants who arrive between the ages of 13 and 19 attain the lowest levels of achievement and overall education of any school-aged ELs; the highest percentage of students in this age range are Latin American (Erisman & Looney, 2007; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). According to the 2010 Census, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans have some of the lowest educational levels of all foreign-born learners, with approximately half, or 54% of Guatemalans, 53% of Salvadorans, and 50% of Hondurans, having less than a high school education (Pew Hispanic Center, 2010). Some sources report that between 40% and 70% of recently arrived immigrant English Learners (RAIELs) who come to the United States as high school students fail to graduate (Allard, 2015; Umansky et al., 2018). These trends are illustrated in Table 1, which presents a comparison of graduation rates of RAIELs, by entry grade, to those of other English proficient students (OEPs), defined by Umansky and her colleagues (2018) as "nonimmigrant, English proficient students" in two unnamed states; OEPs also include former ELs who no longer hold EL status as they attained English proficiency.

Table 1

Graduation Rates by Entry Grade Among RAIELs Compared to the Graduation Rate of Non-Immigrant English Proficient Students by State

		State 1		State 2			
RAIELs*	Entry grade	N (4-year)	4-year graduation rate	N (4-year)	4-year graduation rate	N (5-year)	5-year graduation rate
	10	335	57.59%	262	43.51%	134	50.75%
	11	369	51.04%	167	32.34%	165	45.45%
	12	308	57.47%	138	19.57%	107	28.97%
OEPs	N/A		81.71%	90,536	70.30%	85,984	76.42%

Note. From Umansky, I., Hopkins, M., Dabach, D. B., Porter, L., Thompson, K., Pompa, D. (2018). *Understanding and supporting the educational needs of recently arrived*

immigrant English learner students: Lessons for state and local education agencies. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

This high number of RAIELs who leave school before they graduate often contributes to negative economic and social consequences. Students who exit high school prematurely often encounter difficulties securing steady, well-paying jobs. In addition, they may have poorer health, an increased likelihood of reliance on social services, and a greater risk of involvement in the criminal justice system (Deussen et al., 2017; Rumberger, 1987).

Given the continued growth in the number of newcomer Central American males across the nation, many of whom are not achieving at optimal levels, it is imperative for schools to create environments that foster these learners' success. Schools must invest in these students now so that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to become part of a well-educated workforce (Heckman & Lafontaine, 2010), an argument evident in the Supreme Court decision in the 1982 case *Plyler v. Doe.* In his majority opinion, Justice William Brennan asserted that while education does not constitute a fundamental right, denying a public education to undocumented children would amount to the perpetuation of a "permanent underclass of individuals" (Gonzales et al., 2015, p. 319). In delivering the opinion of the Court, Justice Brennan (*Plyler v. Doe,* 1982) argued that without an education, these undocumented children "already disadvantaged because of poverty, lack of English-speaking ability, and undeniable racial prejudices…will become permanently locked into the lowest socio-economic class" (p. 208). This study examined how high school principals can create conditions and collaborate with school staff to undergird these learners' school connectedness, thereby impacting their overall academic

achievement (Hos, 2016; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016) and preparing them for their post-secondary pathways.

Local Context

Brisk et al. (2004) posit that to support language learners, schools must understand these learners' situational contexts. To this end, it is critical for schools to recognize the social, political, and economic aspects of students' experiences.

Within the EL population, the growth of the Latino subgroup has been steady since 1995; however, the rising numbers of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) from Central America is a more recent phenomenon. Between 2009 and 2016, there was a marked increase in the migration of Central American UAMs to the United States. Since 2016, numbers of immigrant youth from this region have fluctuated, reaching 72,593 in FY 2019 (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020a). In FY 2019, 72% of Central American UAMs were youth between the ages of 15 and 17 from the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Of these young immigrants, 66% were males (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020a). Although reasons for immigration vary by country of origin, individual and family poverty, gang-related violence, and family reunification are the primary motivating factors (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2014). Immigration rates are generally higher for adolescent males as they are often the targets of gang-related violence and recruitment efforts, particularly once they reach the age of 13. In interviews with 322 Central American minors who migrated to the United States, Kennedy (2014) found that 61% of Salvadoran adolescent males reported fear of assault or death for refusing to join gangs. Given this threat of violence, many families must weigh the risks of keeping their male children with them in Central America or

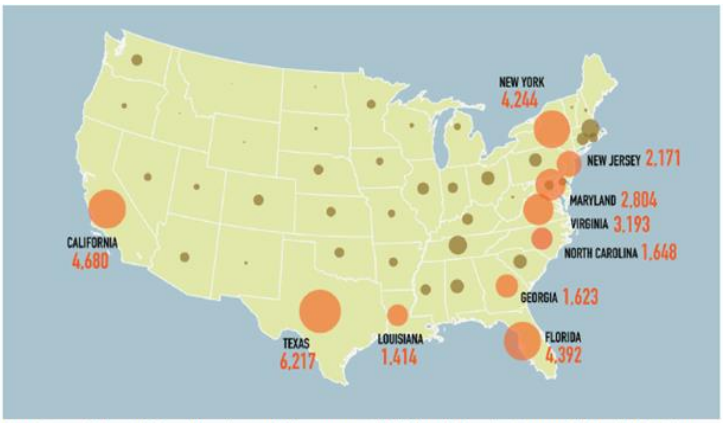
allowing them to make the perilous trek to the United States. Ultimately, many families allow their sons to attempt the journey, believing that young men are physically and emotionally capable of withstanding safety threats that they may encounter. Adolescent males and their families also see the potential for securing employment and sending remittances to their home countries (Kennedy, 2014).

While many school-aged immigrants are concentrated in urban areas (Fry, 2009; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000), the rising numbers of UAMs between 2009 and 2016 also impacted rural and suburban school districts across the nation (Marrow, 2011; Terrazas, 2011). Between 2013 and 2016, 123,000 UAMs who were apprehended at the southern border were released to live with family members or sponsors in communities across the United States (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019), impacting myriad school districts (Corona et al., 2017).

Many suburban school districts near Washington, D.C., have been particularly impacted by the increasing numbers of Central American newcomers, many of whom are UAMs. One school district in this region, henceforth referred to by the pseudonym Wilson County Public Schools (WCPS), was selected as the subject for this study because of the increased numbers of Central American youth that it is serving. Maryland and Virginia were initially two of the top six receiving states of Central American UAMs, as illustrated by the Census-generated map (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2010) in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Unaccompanied Minors Released to Sponsors by State and Northern Triangle Communities in the United States in 2010



Data Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, "Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors By State"; U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2010*, SF1 table PCT11.

Between October 2013 and August 2015, WCPS received 1,819 UAMs, making it one of the ten highest impacted districts in the nation (Pierce, 2015).

Although most suburban schools near Washington, D.C., are affluent, many had limited time to prepare for the unexpected arrival of these adolescent RAIELs. Most districts welcomed these students during the unanticipated influx; however, many faced financial challenges in meeting these learners' needs because of the limited ESSA funding provided to schools with significant foreign-born populations, including UAMs. In FY 2015, more funding was appropriated to districts in 35 states that had experienced increases in the number of UAMs; however, the additional funding equated to approximately $233 per student, leaving the local school districts to cover most of the costs to serve these learners (Pierce, 2015).

Although the national number of Central American UAMs has fluctuated since 2014 (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020a), suburban school divisions near Washington, D.C., continue to face challenges in educating these youth. The challenges in these districts with experience serving diverse populations are distinct from those faced

by urban (Hopkins et al., 2013), suburban (Brezicha & Hopkins, 2016; Lowenhaupt, 2016), and rural new immigrant destinations with little to no previous experience with immigrants (Coady et al., 2015; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Marrow, 2011; Terrazas, 2011). Often, immigrant students are concentrated in high-poverty schools in urban areas characterized by majority-minority populations, a dearth of trained teachers, and inadequate instructional materials (Orfield & Lee, 2006; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). In addition, between 2000 and 2009, the immigrant population grew by 49% or more in 14 new destination states (Terrazas, 2011). Many of the districts in these states struggled to meet newcomers' needs, particularly because of limited funding for hiring and teacher professional development (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2000).

While affluent suburban school districts near Washington, D.C., do not face these same hurdles, many still find it challenging to address these learners' needs. Table 2 demonstrates how the influxes in the number of UAMs to Wilson County Public Schools, a mid-Atlantic school district, have varied as compared to state and national trends:

Table 2

Unaccompanied Minors in WCPS, FY 14–FY 20

Total Number of Released UAMs	United States	State in Which Study Was Conducted	WCPS
FY 2014	53,515	3,887	1,373
FY 2015	27,840	1,694	560
FY 2016	52,147	3,728	1,321
FY 2017	40,471	2,888	971
FY 2018	34,815	1,650	460
FY 2019	72,593	4,210	1,311
FY 2020 (through Dec. 2019)	5,109	463	144

Note. Adapted from Unaccompanied Alien Children Released to Sponsors by County, by Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020b. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/unaccompanied-alien-children-released-to-sponsors-by-county and Unaccompanied Alien Children Released to Sponsors by State, by Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2020c, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/unaccompanied-alien-children-released-to-sponsors-by-state

Wilson County Public Schools was selected as the subject of this study primarily because of its history of serving a diverse student population. Although the increase in Central American immigrant youth is a more recent phenomenon in WCPS, the demographics in the district have been evolving over the last 35 years. In 1984, 10% of the district's students were foreign-born, and the district began an initiative aimed at serving its economically disadvantaged and minority students (Duke, 2012). Between 1990 and 2000, the district's student population became increasingly diverse; by the year 2000, minorities constituted 41% of the total student

population (WCPS, 2020h). Today, WCPS serves more than 180,000 students who speak more than 200 languages. According to the WCPS website, ELs constitute 29% of the total student population (WCPS, 2020a); within the EL subgroup, approximately 14,000 are newcomers. At the high school level, there are approximately 3,075 RAIELs, the majority of whom are from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras (WCPS 2018a). Although ELs are served in all WCPS high schools, certain high schools that are generally located in less affluent parts of the county have the largest EL populations, a pattern of clustering into ethnic enclaves common in many suburban school districts (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Fry, 2009). Furthermore, WCPS strives to maintain a balance between being responsive to the advocacy of its most affluent parents while also supporting ELs whose parents are often less vocal, a reality in other suburban districts, as well (Turner, 2015). The district prides itself on its 91% on-time graduation rate (WCPS, 2020b); however, its adolescent RAIELs, some of whom arrive as high school students with interrupted formal schooling, often find it challenging to acquire English, meet graduation requirements, and, in many cases, assist their families financially. Many of these students, especially newcomer Central American males, leave high school before graduating (Umansky et al., 2018), oftentimes in order to work (Scott et al., 2015).

At several high schools in WCPS, Latinos constitute the majority of the EL student population. As a result, the progress of these students is critical to the district's overall success. WCPS is known for its overall achievement, but it recognizes that it has achievement gaps that must be addressed (WCPS, 2018b), particularly related to on-time graduation and dropout rates for ELs. In 2018-19, 68% of the division's ELs met the

state's on-time graduation goal of completing their high school studies within four years (WCPS, 2020b); however, it is unclear from these data when these students began their studies in the United States.

Additional achievement data around ELs is complex. Data sources do not always clearly define who comprises the EL subgroup, and EL data are counted in varying ways for different purposes (Abedi, 2008; F. Younger, personal communication, June 24, 2020). According to the Department of Education that monitors student achievement in WCPS, the EL subgroup is comprised of the following: (a) students identified as EL and who are receiving EL services; (b) students identified as EL but who have refused services; and (c) students identified as formerly EL for each of the four years after exiting EL services (E. Zither, personal communication, July 7, 2020). Despite this complexity, it is important to note that WCPS' EL graduation rate, as measured by the Federal Graduation Indicator, was 53% in 2015-16. In accordance with ESSA, WCPS has established an annual target of 65% and a long-term goal of an 84% graduation rate for all subgroups, including ELs, by the 2023-24 school year ([State] Department of Education, 2019). Finally, according to the [State] Department of Education (2020), the district's dropout rate for ELs in SY 2018-19 was 30.3%, compared to a 7.3% dropout rate for all students, thereby constituting an achievement gap that the district is working to address.

To narrow its achievement gaps, the WCPS Strategic Plan includes as one of its four goals a focus on student success, declaring a district-wide commitment "to reach, challenge, and prepare every student for success in school and life" (WCPS, 2018c). To address its achievement disparities, WCPS has included a Closing the Achievement Gap

framework in its Strategic Plan. Several of the objectives include adopting strategies for increasing the achievement of the Hispanic subgroup; however, one goal focusing on relationships is particularly applicable to newcomer Latino ELs. The Strategic Plan states that WCPS seeks to "ensure that all students experience a supportive classroom culture and positive relationships with their teachers" (WCPS, 2018d). This goal, according to the Strategic Plan, was pursued through a district-wide focus on professional learning opportunities in the following areas: (a) positive student-teacher relationships; (b) equity, cultural proficiency, and culturally responsive teaching practices; and (c) the use of data-informed practices to identify students in need of additional, personalized supports (WCPS, 2018d). Furthermore, to support students 18 and older who may require alternate pathways to graduation, the division recently revamped its Adult High School. Students unable to complete their studies in a traditional high school, many of whom are older ELs, can complete their coursework and earn their high school diploma through morning, afternoon, and evening courses offered at two sites in the district (WCPS, 2019b). According to the [State] Department of Education (2020), students who graduate as part of the Adult High School are counted within WCPS' graduates and completers.

Purpose and Significance of Study

Khalifa et al. (2016) assert that as demographics shift, leadership practices and school contexts must also evolve to address students' needs. The purpose of this study is to examine how high school principals foster inclusive school cultures that bolster the school connectedness of students represented by these changing demographics.

This study addresses several lacunae in the literature on high school RAIELs. First, it focuses on a unique subgroup within the EL population: Central American

newcomer males who immigrate to the United States in their mid- to late teens. Extant literature provides evidence of the impact of individual-level factors on school performance, particularly age upon arrival in the United States, immigration status, and country of origin (Glick & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007; Glick & White, 2003;). However, in examining current achievement gaps, many scholars focus on Latinos in general rather than examining generational status or country of origin. In contrast, this study directs its attention to first-generation adolescent immigrants from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador who began their studies in the United States as high school students. Furthermore, much of the extant scholarship on undocumented immigrant youth focuses on the so-called "1.5 generation" (Allard, 2015) of DREAMers who were brought to the United States by their families as children without documentation (Santiago, 2018). While many DREAMers are Latino, their experience of immigrating to the United States as young, accompanied children differs markedly from that of Central American males who journey to the United States, often unaccompanied, as adolescents; this latter, overlooked subgroup is sometimes referred to as the 1.25 generation (Allard, 2015). Given the rise of nativism in some areas of the United States (Estep, 2016; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017) and, more specifically, anti-immigrant sentiment regarding Central American immigration (Gándara & Ee; 2018; Menjívar, 2008), some might question why this subgroup merits further study. This study rejects these xenophobic critiques, arguing instead that given the growing numbers of Central American RAIELs and their less-than-optimal levels of achievement, these students' success is critical to the nation's future; consequently, more research is needed on how school leaders can remove barriers to ensure these learners' achievement.

Second, the context for the current study addresses gaps in the literature. The current literature base on RAIELs often focuses on urban contexts (Hopkins et al., 2013) or suburban (Brezicha & Hopkins, 2016; Hopkins et al., 2019; Lowenhaupt, 2016) and rural new immigrant destinations (Coady et al., 2015; Karabenick & Noda, 2004) that have recently experienced influxes. Much of the literature on suburban contexts examines areas in the Southeast and Midwest recently impacted by Mexican and Central American immigrants (Marrow, 2011), often referred to as the New Latino Diaspora (Hamann et al., 2015; Lowenhaupt, 2016; Marrow, 2011). Oftentimes, these suburban areas have not yet developed the necessary resources and expertise to serve immigrant newcomers effectively (Brezicha & Hopkins, 2016). Furthermore, these new immigrant destinations tend to be what Lowenhaupt (2016) describes as "primarily white, fairly homogeneous communities" (p. 349). In these areas, long-term residents sometimes perceive the presence of newcomers as a problem rather than a resource (Millard et al., 2004). The school district for this study is situated in an affluent, well-educated suburban setting; however, it differs from the aforementioned contexts given its history of serving a diverse population. While this district has ample resources to address RAIELs' needs, this subgroup continues to demonstrate what some scholars (Allard, 2015) refer to as "depressed educational outcomes" (p. 481) as measured by performance on end-of-course assessments required for graduation and lower-than-average graduation rates.

Finally, this study is unique in its efforts to elicit the voices of newcomer Central American males in order to inform leadership practices (Goodman, 2004; Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). Although these learners are often viewed through a deficit lens (Brezicha & Hopkins, 2016; Browder, 2014), many overcome significant challenges and

graduate from high school. By operating through an assets-based paradigm and inviting these students to share how schools may or may not have supported their success, high school principals can build an inclusive school culture (Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) that bolsters newcomers' sense of school connectedness and, in turn, their academic achievement.

Research Questions

To identify how high school principals foster inclusive school cultures for students represented by these changing demographics, this study explored the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What are the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness?
- Research Question 2: How do school leaders determine what practices, programs, and supports are necessary to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?
- Research Question 3: What practices, programs, and supports are being employed to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?

Conceptual Framework

Three leadership paradigms inform this conceptual framework: (a) the social justice leadership framework (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015), (b) the distributed perspective on school leadership (Spillane et al., 2004), and (c) Hitt and Tucker's (2016) unified framework. The underlying hypothesis of this study is that leaders can impact the school

connectedness of newcomer Central American males through their beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices.

To gain a deeper understanding of the proposed conceptual framework, it is necessary to examine the three leadership frameworks in which it is rooted. Given the evolving demographics in public schools across the nation, a shift in leadership practices is imperative (Khalifa et al., 2016). This study examined how social justice-driven leaders work to create an inclusive learning environment for all students. According to Theoharis and O'Toole (2011), social justice-driven leaders hold beliefs grounded in equity, viewing ELs through an assets-based paradigm. These leaders seek socially just schooling for all students, defined by Scanlan and Theoharis (2015) in the following way:

> Socially just schooling is evident when educational opportunities abound for all students, when ambitious academic goals are held and met by all students, when all students and families are made to feel welcome in the school community, when students are proportionately distributed across all groupings in the school, and when one dimension of identity…does not directly correlate with undesirable aspects of schooling. (p. 3)

While leaders' beliefs are critical to ensuring the success of all students, effective principals of ELs must also be knowledgeable about best practices for supporting these students (Baecher et al., 2013; Suttmiller & González, 2006). In light of the research suggesting that high-quality learning environments (Calderón et al., 2011) and high expectations (Delpit, 2012) are essential to students' academic success, the principal's role as an instructional leader is crucial (Reyes, 2006; Walquí, 2000). Despite the need for principals who are strong instructional leaders, there is a dearth of professional development to prepare administrators for this role (Baecher et al., 2013). As a result, many principals lack background knowledge about ELs and therefore utilize a distributed leadership perspective (Spillane et al., 2004) to involve internal experts in decision-

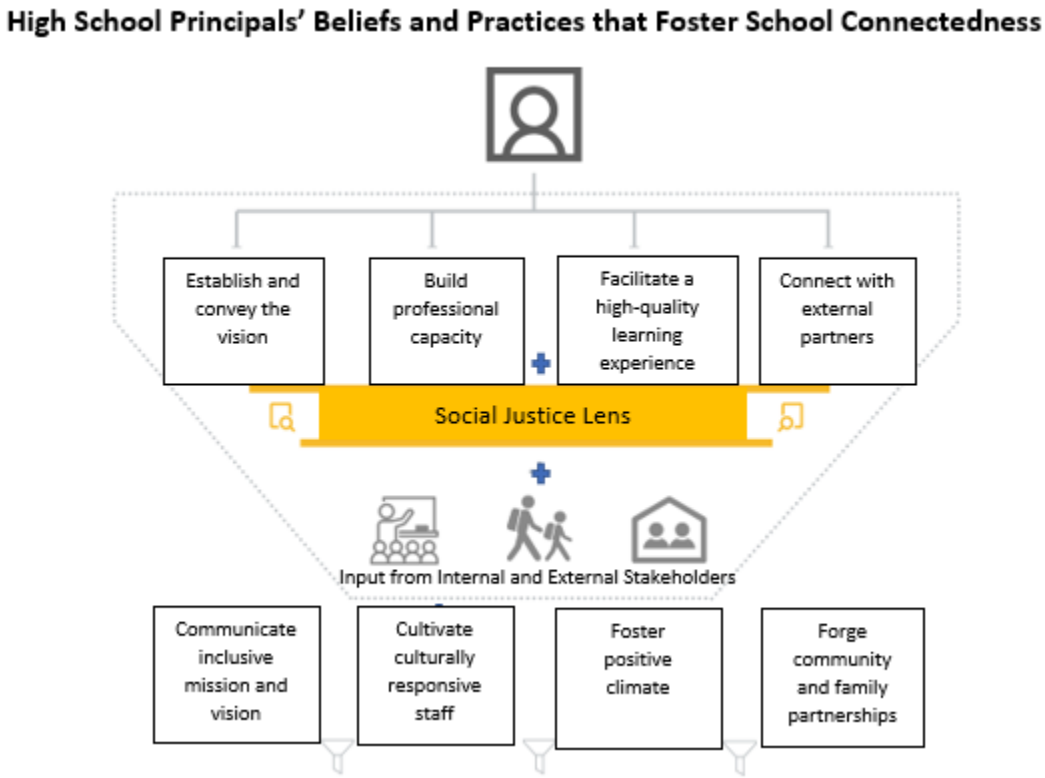
making processes. In addition to eliciting input from adult stakeholders with expertise about ELs, social justice-driven leaders believe in the importance of eliciting students' voices in reform efforts to ensure that resources are directed toward the areas of greatest need. According to Mitra (2007), "Student voice initiatives push schools to reevaluate who gets to define the problems of a school and who gets to try to improve them" (p. 727).

Leaders adopting a social justice mindset translate their beliefs into evidenced-based, informed practices grounded in equity. Social justice-driven leaders begin by crafting a shared vision of collective responsibility for all students; this vision focuses on eliminating marginalization and affording all students educational opportunities. This study examines how these leaders interpret Hitt and Tucker's (2016) leadership paradigm, which is general in nature, in order to effectively meet the needs of RAIELs. Hitt and Tucker (2016) assert that school-based leaders play a critical role in designing inclusive school cultures that foster student achievement. This conceptual framework identifies four practices from the leadership domains found by Hitt and Tucker (2016) to impact student achievement and makes them more specific to supporting newcomer Central American males. Hitt and Tucker (2016) contend that by establishing and conveying a shared vision, building professional capacity, facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, and connecting with external partners, principals help construct learning environments in which school staff can support all students' success. By interpreting Hitt and Tucker's work through a social justice mindset and incorporating background knowledge about ELs gained through distributed leadership, these general practices are transformed into culturally responsive school leadership practices.

According to Khalifa and his colleagues (2016), these practices refer to "the ability of school leaders to create contexts and curriculum that responds effectively to the educational, social, political, and cultural needs of students" (p. 7). The amalgamation of these leadership frameworks is depicted in Figure 2, an abbreviated version of the conceptual framework.

Figure 2

Abbreviated Model of Conceptual Framework



Given the components of the aforementioned leadership frameworks, this study proposed a theory of action (Nordengren, 2016) regarding the impact of leaders' beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices on the outcomes of newcomer Central American males at the high school level. More specifically, the study examined how leadership that incorporates elements of the social justice leadership framework (Scanlan

& Theoharis, 2015), the distributed leadership perspective (Spillane et al., 2004), and Hitt and Tucker's (2016) unified leadership framework can positively impact newcomer Central Americans' school connectedness. This melding of the three frameworks informed the research questions guiding the study, as well as the coding and analysis of the data collected.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was utilized to carry out an individual case study to examine the research questions proposed for this study. Data were collected in the following four ways: (a) semi-structured interviews with a principal and five other school leaders from one WCPS high school, (b) document analysis, (c) a student survey, and (d) semi-structured interviews with five students. Questions for the semi-structured interviews and survey were formulated based on the research questions and conceptual framework guiding the study. Data collected were coded and analyzed according to themes drawn from the literature as well as from the conceptual framework.

Delimitations

This study examined the impact of the beliefs and practices of high school principals on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. In measuring a sense of school connectedness, specific achievement data such as scores on state-mandated standardized tests were not included. However, all student participants were seniors preparing to graduate, suggesting a certain level of academic achievement. Data collected focused on students' perceptions of school connectedness expressed through a survey and semi-structured interview and corroborated as needed through document analysis.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that principals and students from only one school district were included. In addition, the sample size was limited to one school; therefore, findings may not be generalizable at the national level. Furthermore, all students were Central American males from age 18-22 due to the prevalence of this demographic group in the school division identified for the study. In the spirit of qualitative, case study research, this limitation is mitigated by providing contextual information to help readers understand and gauge the applicability of the study's findings to their individual settings.

Assumptions

This study is predicated upon several assumptions. I assumed that the practices shared by the principal and other school leaders in semi-structured interviews were being implemented with fidelity. I further assumed that the documents analyzed were authentic representations of school culture, and that the students' survey and semi-structured interview responses were valid and authentic.

Background and Role of Researcher

Although I was not an EL and do not have first-hand experience as a newcomer to the United States, I have worked with ELs for more than 27 years. I am bilingual in English and Spanish; however, my cultural background as a White, middle-class female means that my life experiences differ considerably from those of the students studied. My previous work as a secondary ESOL teacher, as well as my more recent roles as the High School ESOL Specialist for WCPS and an assistant principal in two majority Latino high schools within the district, have given me first-hand knowledge of this problem of

practice and may also influence my work in this study. While I have not worked in the school selected for the case study, I am familiar with it through my previous role as the district's High School ESOL Specialist. Given my knowledge of the school and the problem of practice, this study meets the following definition of insider research offered by Hays and Singh (2012): "Research where the investigator is not necessarily part of the organization and/or phenomenon of inquiry, but rather has knowledge of the organization and/or phenomenon prior to the student's commencement" (p. 140).

Definition of Relevant Terms

The following terms are utilized frequently in this study and therefore merit a brief explanation:

English Learner (EL). For the purposes of this study, the term English Learner, or EL, is utilized, as this is the official school designation under ESSA of students who have qualified to receive language supports through an ESOL program (García Kleifgen, 2018). The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights December 3, 1985, Memorandum and the 1991 Office of Civil Rights Policy require states to have programs to identify students eligible for additional language supports; however, states may decide on their method of identification (Bailey & Kelly, 2013). All states mandate the use of a Home Language Survey (HLS) to determine students' eligibility for language support services (Bailey & Kelly, 2010; 2013). Based on the results of the HLS, students may be assessed to determine their English Language Proficiency (ELP) level. The results of these language assessments determine whether the student qualifies to receive formal supports in his second language acquisition process; students who qualify are identified as ELs (Linquanti & Bailey, 2014).

Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learner (RAIEL). Myriad terms exist in the literature to describe ELs who have recently immigrated to a country. ESSA refers to ELs who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than a year as recently arrived English Learners, or RAELs. This term was crafted to afford newcomers flexibility in assessment requirements; however, some argue that the 12-month period embedded in this definition does not align with the policies, programs, or services often designed to serve newcomers (Hakuta et al., 2000; Umansky et al., 2018). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, newcomers are generally referred to as recently arrived immigrant English Learners, or RAIELs, defined as "foreign-born students who have been in U.S. for up to three academic years and who, upon entry into U.S schools, were classified as English learners" (Umansky et al., 2018, p. 4).

To create inclusive learning spaces for RAIELs, school districts must find ways to balance appropriate language supports with opportunities for integration. Federal guidance delineates schools' responsibilities in educating ELs. In January 2015, the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Education and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice published a Dear Colleague letter which provided guidelines to ensure that ELs "have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities, including the core curriculum, graduation requirements, specialized and advanced courses and programs, sports, and clubs" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b, p. 8). In addition, the directive specified that ELs should not be unnecessarily segregated. It explained further that while ELs might receive sheltered academic instruction for a limited period of time, this separation should be carried out in the "least segregative manner consistent with achieving the program's stated educational

goals" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b, p. 22). Under the policy, newcomer programs are acceptable for a limited period of time but should avoid unnecessary segregation; however, there continue to be wide disagreements on what constitutes segregation. Despite the arrival of a new political administration in 2017, the U.S. Department of Education (2016) continues to uphold the tenets espoused in the Dear Colleague letter in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act.

Student with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Many Central American males who begin their U.S. studies as high school students arrive with gaps in their formal education. These students are referred to as students with limited or interrupted formal education, or SLIFE. DeCapua et al. (2009) hold that SLIFE share the following characteristics: (a) speak a language other than English at home; (b) entered U.S. schools after second grade; and (c) function at least two grade levels below their English-speaking peers in reading and mathematics. While definitions of SLIFE vary by state, the New York Department of Education (as cited in Olivares-Orellana, 2017) adds that these learners have at least a two-year gap in their education and may be pre-literate in their native language. Furthermore, Freeman and Freeman (2002) state that SLIFE students are generally overage for their grade-level placement. These learners have unique needs that many traditional ESOL programs do not address. If these needs are not met, these students are at risk of leaving school before they graduate; some scholars (Fry, 2005) estimate that approximately 70% of SLIFE drop out of high school.

Unaccompanied Minor (UAM). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (as cited in Menjívar & Perreira, 2017) defines an unaccompanied minor as a

person under 18 who is "separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so" (p. 5). The majority of unaccompanied minors in the United States are adolescent males between the ages of 14 and 17 (Krogstad, 2016). In the literature, these immigrants are sometimes referred to as unaccompanied minors (UAMs) or unaccompanied alien children (UAC). As of 2016, the majority of UAMs in the U.S. were from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2016). Some experts maintain that the recent increase in migration of UAMs from Central America is occurring within the context of widespread violence, particularly gang-related, in the region (Clemens, 2017).

School Connectedness. Eccles et al. (1993) assert that early adolescence is a time during which students may experience a "downward educational spiral" (p. 90), particularly if their needs are not met at school. Stage-environment fit theory postulates that students' behavior, motivation, and mental health are impacted by the match between their developmental stages and the characteristics of their social environment. When the social environment of a school aligns with students' needs, their sense of school connectedness is high. An ideal social environment affords adolescents increasing opportunities for autonomy, demonstrations of competence, acceptance by peers, and support from caring adults (Eccles et al., 1993). According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, four factors correlate to high levels of school connectedness: (a) positive classroom climates, (b) student participation in extracurricular activities, (c) fair disciplinary policies, and (d) small school size (McNeely et al., 2002).

Academic Self-Concept. This study examines a fifth factor believed to correlate to the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males: academic self-concept. Academic self-concept refers to students' knowledge and perceptions about themselves in educational contexts (Wigfield & Karpathian, 1991). Browder (2014) contends that academic self-concept is an "internalization of one's external identity as a student or learner" (p. 22). When students have a strong academic self-concept, they tend to have a robust sense of academic self-efficacy, believing they can successfully execute specific learning tasks (Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Schunk, 1991).

Summary

The steady growth of the immigrant population in the United States continues to impact many classrooms. Currently, more than four million foreign-born students are enrolled in U.S. schools, comprising approximately 10% of the total student population. Of these students, RAIELs constitute a diverse group with varying educational backgrounds and literacy in their first language. In suburban school districts in the Washington, D.C., area, many of these RAIELs are Central American males who immigrate to the United States as adolescents. While these students arrive with assets such as resilience and self-reliance, many face significant challenges due to gaps in their education and socio-emotional needs often shaped by hardships such as trauma (Schmidt, 2019) and dislocation. RAIELs who arrive as high school students encounter additional pressures associated with meeting graduation requirements (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Because of these myriad challenges, many of these students leave high school before they graduate (Umansky et al., 2018). With today's political debate over immigration, not everyone agrees that these students merit attention. However, if educational leaders are

serious about narrowing persistent achievement gaps in today's public schools, increased efforts must be made to support these learners and prepare them to become fully contributing members of society. By leading through a social justice mindset incorporating student voice, high school principals can contribute to inclusive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging for these newcomers (Gerhart et al., 2011; Hos, 2016; Scanlan & López, 2012; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016) and, in turn, support their academic achievement.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on newcomer Central American males' sense of school connectedness. This chapter synthesizes the literature related to the following questions:

- What challenges do newcomer Central American males who arrive in the United States as high school students experience?
- What strengths assist newcomer Central American males in navigating these challenges?
- What is school connectedness, and why is it significant for newcomer Central American males at the high school level?
- What leadership beliefs, background knowledge, and practices are essential to fostering school connectedness for newcomer Central American males who arrive as high school students?

Methods Used to Develop Literature Review

Based on the problem of practice, the literature review is divided into three components. The initial search of the literature centered on defining the students on whom the problem of practice is focused, with the following guiding questions: What challenges do newcomer Central American males who arrive in the United States as high school students experience? What strengths assist newcomer Central American males in navigating these challenges?

The following keywords shaped the initial scan through Google Scholar: *newcomer English Learners, Latinos, newcomer adolescents, unaccompanied minors, emergent bilinguals, recent immigrant youth, mobility, educational outcomes, effective practices, and interventions*. While there was a considerable body of scholarship focused on RAIELs across grade levels, I concentrated on high school-related studies because of the added accountability measures associated with graduation. Some studies from the l980s and 1990s emerged; however, the scope of the search was limited primarily to peer reviewed, empirical studies in the last five to 10 years. This delineated time frame was significant due to the growth in the population of newcomer Central American males, particularly UAMs, during that period. Exceptions were made for seminal work on motivation theories, as well as research on second language acquisition. The first phase of the search revealed sources that provided background information about this population; however, many sources were intended for educators. I identified three dissertations related to newcomer adolescents from Central America, and the references proved helpful in identifying additional sources (Browder, 2014; Olivares-Orellana, 2017; Santiago, 2018).

The second phase of the literature review examined the construct of school connectedness. The following research questions undergirded this segment of the literature review: (a) Which elements of the school connectedness construct are most significant for newcomer Central American males at the high school level? (b) What additional elements of school connectedness, if any, should be considered to support these students? Initial keywords included *school connectedness, attachment, involvement, adolescent newcomers,* and *Latinos*. More specific terms, including *stage-fit theory,*

community of care, and *ethic of care,* were utilized to narrow the search. During this phase, I identified one recent capstone project related to school connectedness; the project's discussion of the construct of connectedness and extracurricular activities, as well as its list of references, was informative (Logan, 2016).

The final phase of the literature review focused on effective leadership for adolescent RAIELs. The preliminary scan centered on principals serving diverse populations and then narrowed to principals of high schools with sizeable EL populations. Because Central American males constitute a subgroup of RAIELs, it was challenging to find articles that solely examined this distinctive population. The following research question guided this portion of the search: What leadership beliefs, background knowledge, and practices are essential to fostering school connectedness for newcomer Central American males who arrive as high school students? Preliminary keywords included *newcomer adolescent English Learners* and *effective leadership*. More specific search terms included *social justice, equity, affective dimensions of leadership, transformative leadership, culturally responsive leadership, inclusive leadership, social justice leadership, school culture,* and *sociocultural integration*. Many of the empirical studies utilized case studies to highlight effective leadership practices in diverse schools (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017; Cooper, 2009; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Guerrero, 2016; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Suttmiller & González, 2006; Ylimaki et al., 2012). In analyzing these case studies, I maintained the researchers' original language about participants, using the term Latino or Hispanic accordingly.

The analysis of the resources guided the organization of the literature review reflected in the remainder of this chapter. The discussion of the challenges of Central

American males is divided into two sections: academic and socio-emotional. While some of these challenges may fall outside of the direct purview of schools, it is important for leaders to recognize the myriad obstacles facing their students. Given these students' challenges, schools must strive to recognize learners' resources and bolster their sense of school connectedness, a construct examined in the second section of the literature review. The review of the literature on school connectedness focuses on those elements most relevant to RAIELs and adds the component of academic self-concept to address many of these students' interrupted formal education. Finally, the third section of the literature review examines leadership beliefs and practices that cultivate an inclusive learning environment in which teachers and other school staff can support these learners.

A Review of the Literature on Newcomer Central American Males

According to Ruiz-de-Velasco and his colleagues (2000), approximately half of all RAIELs arrive during secondary school, a period of increased developmental vulnerability for all adolescents (Eccles & Roeser, 2003). Eccles et al. (1993) assert that many students may experience a "downward educational spiral" (p. 90) during early adolescence, particularly if schools do not address their needs. This decline is often more pronounced among immigrants who, in addition to the typical challenges associated with adolescence, face unique difficulties related to migration, resettlement, and acculturation (Phelan et al., as cited in Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). According to Short and Fitzsimmons (2007), adolescent RAIELs must do "double the work" (p. 1) of their English-speaking peers to learn English and meet graduation requirements. In addition, many hold additional responsibilities, such as interpreting for their families (Orellana et al., 2003), and working (Allard, 2015). Given these obstacles, coupled with research that

identified English language proficiency as the key predictor of academic success (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010), it is not surprising that RAIELs who arrive in the United States between the ages of 13 and 19 attain the lowest levels of achievement and overall education of any school-aged ELs (Erisman & Looney, 2007).

Given the aforementioned reality for many adolescent RAIELs, this section of the literature review examines the following questions:

- What challenges do newcomer Central American males who arrive in the United States as high school students experience?
- What strengths assist newcomer Central American males in navigating these challenges?

Academic Challenges

The EL population is diverse (Wright, 2019). Some foreign-born students arrive in the United States with a solid educational foundation and financial support, while others begin their studies with significant academic challenges (Umansky et al., 2018). This portion of the literature review examines some of the following most significant academic hurdles facing newcomer Central American males in particular: (a) limited or interrupted formal schooling, (b) the acculturation process, (c) delayed matriculation into U.S. schools, and (d) a lack of peer role models.

Limited or Interrupted Formal Schooling

Many Central American RAIELs arrive with limited or interrupted formal education because of multifaceted reasons. In Honduras and El Salvador, compulsory education ends after ninth grade. Despite this requirement, only 23% of students in El Salvador and 28% of students in Honduras complete their final year of required schooling

(Lukes, 2015). Some of these learners lacked access to high-quality instruction because of limited availability of schools, scant resources, insufficient preparation of teachers, and outdated pedagogy (Lukes, 2015; Potochnick, 2018). Furthermore, natural disasters, civil unrest, or gang violence impacted many students' schooling (Amnesty International, 2016; United Nations International Children's Fund, 2011). In addition, many learners came from countries that perceive the age of majority differently from how it is viewed in the United States. A 16-year-old male in Central America is often expected to assume certain adult financial responsibilities; in contrast, the same adolescent in the United States is generally considered a minor whose primary focus is his education (WIDA Consortium, 2015). These varying interpretations may explain some students' frustration with compulsory education requirements in the United States. Some scholars argue that these youth are faced with "shifting definitions of identity" (Lowenhaupt, 2016, p. 351) when they arrive in the United States. Many leave their countries at what is considered *el edad para ir al norte* – the age to go north – with the goal of working in the United States (López Castro, 2005). When they learn that they must study until they turn 18, some feel stymied (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017); the evolution from being self-sufficient wage earners to students in schools designed for more traditional learners is often challenging to accept.

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) who arrive as high school students face distinctive challenges. Many arrive overage for secondary school, a factor that puts these learners at greater risk of dropping out (Allensworth, 2005). Some arrive as refugees (Hos, 2016); others are unaccompanied and/or undocumented youth with substantial financial responsibilities (Allard, 2015) related partially to debt that they

may have incurred in their journey to the United States (Menjívar, 2008). In addition, these students arrive with literacy and numeracy gaps that often impact their self-confidence as learners (WIDA Consortium, 2015). Furthermore, many have had limited opportunities to develop literacy in their first language (Romo, 1993), which makes it challenging to acquire literacy skills in a second language (Browder, 2014; Thomas & Collier, 2002) and, therefore, to feel successful as students.

Acculturation

Upon immigrating to the United States, newcomers face the challenge of concomitantly acculturating to a new country and an unfamiliar school system (Cervantes & Cordova, 2011; Olivares-Orellana, 2016). To understand the challenges associated with acculturation, it is helpful to consider the theory of segmented assimilation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). According to this theory, the process of acculturation varies depending on the socioeconomic and racial segment of the community into which immigrants arrive. Although this theory focuses on second-generation immigrants, some scholars (Lowenhaupt, 2016) contend that it applies to first-generation immigrants as well. Proponents of this theory argue that immigrants have three basic pathways of acculturation: (a) upward assimilation, (b) downward assimilation, or (c) upward mobility coupled with biculturalism (Waters et al., 2010). Some scholars suggest that migration to affluent communities, such as the one in which WCPS is situated, offers opportunities for upward assimilation (Waters et al., 2010); others, however, argue that nuanced factors such as gender, race, and historical context must be considered instead of interpreting segmented assimilation in a “broad brush fashion” (Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004, p. 381). Furthermore, while schools often serve as a context of reception for immigrants

(Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), extant literature on the ability of lower-income groups to acculturate into more affluent communities is still evolving. Some experts argue that clustering into ethnic enclaves, often where there is more affordable housing, is common in affluent suburban communities (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Fry, 2009), a noticeable trend in the WCPS community.

In a five-year longitudinal study, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009) examined the academic trajectories of adolescent newcomers. They found that despite initial optimism, these students' aspirations and academic achievement declined with time. More specifically, they concluded that newcomer males struggled more academically and were more likely to drop out than their female counterparts, a finding supported by other researchers (Gándara & Gibson, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In addition, many male newcomers had fewer positive relationships with teachers than their female counterparts (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009), lacked positive peer or adult role models (Hurd, 2004), and were disproportionately over-represented in discipline infractions with discretionary consequences (Losen, 2011).

Delayed Matriculation into U.S. Schools

The acculturation process of Central American RAIELs often is complicated due to their registration in high school after the official opening of the school year (Allard, 2016). In an ethnographic study of 22 Mexican "latecomers" in a suburban high school, Allard (2016) found that students' matriculation after the start of the school year often was related to the complexity of the registration process. Some students lacked the necessary documents to register, while others struggled to identify someone willing to serve as a guardian. A substantial number lacked information about the rights and

responsibilities of undocumented students in the United States; many did not think they were expected or permitted to attend school (Allard, 2016). The delayed commencement of these newcomers' studies, coupled with the time needed to acquire English, affected their academic success. After arriving late in the year, these students often were placed in courses on audit status, impacting their ability to earn credit (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009). Furthermore, arriving late in the school year had negative social consequences. Many students found it difficult to develop strong relationships, form friendships (South & Haynie, 2004), or become involved in extracurricular activities (Rumberger et al., 1999), further contributing to their disengagement from school (Allard, 2016; Rumberger, 1987).

Lack of Peer Role Models

While sheltered ESOL classes may offer safe spaces for RAIELs, they also can perpetuate segregated enclaves with a dearth of role models. Gibson et al. (2004) posit that peers have a critical impact on the academic performance of immigrant students. While peer influences are significant for most adolescents, they are even more pronounced for students whose parents are still developing the navigational capital necessary to guide their children in their studies. Gibson et al. (2004) assert that through their organization and practices, schools are "co-constructors of peer relations" (p. 6), playing a significant role in fostering certain types of peer relations. Similarly, Varenne and McDermott (as cited in Gibson et al., 2004) argue that students' academic identities are connected to the places in which they spend time and the people with whom they interact. This argument suggests that sheltered classes for RAIELs may restrict these students to a limited range of peers, thereby impacting their integration into the school.

Some hold that these students can interact with monolingual English speakers in electives, lunch, and extracurricular activities; however, many newcomers are reluctant to speak English with these students out of fear of being ridiculed (Gibson et al., 2004).

Given this challenge of integration, many newcomers, particularly those from the same country or region, form subcultures within schools. These subcultures often serve as a way for students to reaffirm their national identities (Santiago, 2018). Allard (2015) describes newcomers as transnationals who maintain strong ties to their communities and native countries (Hamann, 2001). For some newcomer Central American males, this subculture is characterized by what Kohl (as cited in Gibson et al., 2004) describes as a reluctance to demonstrate academic achievement publicly. In a study of the behaviors of Mexican-descent male ELs in three sheltered English language development classes, Hurd (2004) observed that many students were influenced to perform for one another rather than focus on learning. In these classes that served immigrants who had recently arrived, as well as students who had received most of their education in the United States, Hurd found evidence of peer group solidarity as male students often supported an obstreperous classmate who was disrupting instruction.

Socio-Emotional Challenges

In addition to these academic hurdles, many RAIELs arrive with socio-emotional challenges, often connected to their journey to the United States (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Birman et al., 2007; Santiago, 2018). This portion of the literature review explores some of the most significant obstacles including trauma, separation and reunification, and uncertainty due to immigration status.

Trauma

Pre- and in-transit migration trauma are common, particularly for unaccompanied youth who travel long distances by land (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Birman et al., 2007; Santiago, 2018). Trauma experienced by many Central American adolescents is often connected to the following experiences: (a) witnessing gang-related violence, particularly homicides, in their native countries; (b) leaving their families behind, often in dangerous conditions; (c) traveling to the United States under perilous conditions; and (d) being detained at the border (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Kaplan et al., 2016; Santiago, 2018; Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014).

Based on interviews with four newcomer high school students, Olivares-Orellana (2020) depicted the traumatic experiences that many Central American youth encounter while detained at the United States border. In their *testimonios*, interviewees described their time spent in holding cells referred to as *hieleras*, the Spanish word for icebox or freezer (Cantor, 2015; Villalobos & Harvey, 2019). According to Cantor (2015), these cells are "extremely cold, frequently overcrowded, and routinely lacking in adequate food, water, and medical care" (p. 1). These inadequate facilities are meant for short-term detention; however, many border crossers refer to spending days and sometimes weeks in *las hieleras*. After experiencing this and other types of trauma in detention, fewer than 10% of detained youth receive post-release services to support their resettlement and integration (United States General Accountability Office, 2016); consequently, these young people are at greater risk of psychological distress, specifically anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and disengagement from school (Berger Cardoso et al., 2019; Potochnick & Perreira, 2010; Schmidt, 2019).

Separation and Reunification

In addition to trauma-related challenges, some RAIELs face difficulties associated with separation and reunification. In a comparative study of 385 immigrant youth derived from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2002) found that 85% of Central American children surveyed had been separated from both parents, often for five years or longer. In many cases, parents immigrated first to secure employment, leaving their children in the care of grandparents or other relatives. Upon departing from their countries to rejoin their parent, these adolescents had to leave behind the family member who raised them to reunite with family from whom they often felt estranged. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011b) assert that these migration separations "result in two sets of disruptions in emotional attachments for the children – first from the parent, and then from the caregiver to whom the child has become attached during their parent-child separation" (p. 2). According to Suárez-Orozco and her colleagues (2011a), these youth were continually missing someone they loved. This state of emotional fragility may explain why many adolescent immigrants struggle with conflicting feelings of joy and abandonment when they are reunited with their parents; some become defiant, withdrawn, or depressed once they reach their families in the United States (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002). These emotions can become even more complex to navigate if adolescents must also adapt to living with new family members such as stepparents, siblings, or stepsiblings (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011b). Parents may struggle with how to respond to their adolescent children's myriad emotions. Many parents expect their children to be grateful for the sacrifices they have made to bring them to the United States; at the same time, they often experience guilt for the separation from their children.

Parents' mixed emotions can become even more complicated as they work to reestablish credibility and authority with their teenage children (Suárez Orozco et al., 2011b), particularly if their caregivers in their home country had afforded them certain freedoms.

Uncertainty Related to Immigration Status

Although undocumented students are legally guaranteed the right to an education in the United States, their precarious immigration status often presents socio-emotional challenges. Statistics on the number of undocumented students vary across sources. According to Gelatt and Zong (2018), between 2012 and 2016, 16% of children under 18, or 809,000 youth, were undocumented. In 2017, approximately 12% of students under age 18 were undocumented, totaling 600,000 (Passel, as cited in Gándara & Ee, 2018). Menjívar (2006) asserts that these learners' "liminal legality" (p. 999) creates "grey areas of incertitude" (Menjívar, 2008, p. 180). In a similar vein, Bailey et al. (2002) contend that undocumented immigrants' uncertain legal status contributes to a sense of "permanent temporariness" (p. 125) that may impact their ability to become connected to their school. Many undocumented youths report living in fear that they or a family member may be deported (Gándara & Ee, 2018; Gonzales et al., 2013; Yoshikawa et al., 2016).

Cuevas and Cheung (2015) argue that undocumented youth are also tangled in a paradox between conflicting education and immigration policies. While these students are permitted to attend public school until they reach a certain age, restrictions on their ability to work, qualify for scholarships, receive financial aid, or participate in federally funded work study programs limit their post-secondary options (Yoshikawa et al., 2016). In an ethnographic study of 24 high school and college immigrant students, Abrego

(2006) found that undocumented students' recognition of barriers to post-secondary options negatively impacted their motivation as high school students.

Strengths

Central American RAIELs are often defined by their challenges rather than their strengths. Through their life experiences, many of these students demonstrate agentive behavior, resilience, and high-level coping strategies (Allard, 2015; Browder, 2014). Effective school leaders adopt an assets-based paradigm in their work with these learners, seeking to capitalize on their strengths and build a culture around supporting ELs (Crawford & Dorner, 2019).

Agentive Behavior

Many adolescent RAIELs have demonstrated agency in their decision to immigrate to the United States. In a case study of undocumented youth of Mexican descent in a suburban high school, Allard (2015) found that these students played an active role in the decision to migrate to the United States (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). In many cases, the students initiated the discussion about migrating, convincing their parents by emphasizing the potential financial benefits (Allard, 2015).

Central American youth also demonstrate agency during their migration to the United States. Because the journey by land can take weeks or months, many youth find temporary jobs along the way to support themselves (ITAM, as cited in Menjívar & Perreira, 2017). These migrants often face life-threatening experiences throughout their sojourn, traveling on the tops of trains, in cargo trucks, and by foot through deserts and other dangerous terrain (Villalobos & Harvey, 2019). During their journey, they hone

their survival skills and develop strategies to navigate the myriad obstacles that they encounter (Allard, 2015; Menjívar & Perreira, 2017).

Resilience

Many adolescent RAIELs also are characterized by their resilience (Allard, 2015; Browder, 2014; Potochnick, 2018). Pérez et al. (2009) define resilience as the "process of overcoming the negative impacts of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with those risks" (p. 153). Many experts emphasize that resilience is a process rather than a character trait (Gordon Rouse, 2001; Olsson et al., 2003); consequently, people can become more resilient through influences as well as experiences (Gordon Rouse, 2001). Some experts (Dozier, 2001) argue that to foster the success of undocumented students in particular, schools must build on these learners' resilience and other strengths such as high aspirations, work ethic, and family support. In her ethnographic study of undocumented high school students of Mexican descent, Allard (2015) found numerous examples of students' resilience during their journeys to the United States. The participants readily shared their migration stories, recounting the physical and emotional hardships that they had experienced. Many shared that they had made multiple attempts to cross the border, even though it entailed weeks or months of traveling under treacherous conditions.

Coping Strategies

Given the multitude of challenges that UAMs face in immigrating, many characterize these youths as vulnerable or "at risk" (Hodes et al., 2008). While the obstacles faced by UAMs often have a lasting psychological impact, some advocates prefer to describe these young people as "active survivors" rather than "passive victims"

(Rousseau et al., 2003, p. 78). In a qualitative case study of UAMs in Ireland, Ní Raghallaigh and Gilligan (2010) found that youth who had immigrated unaccompanied to Ireland were both vulnerable and resilient. In response to challenging life experiences, many newcomers developed a continuum of coping strategies, including the following: (a) maintaining continuity within a new context, (b) adapting to their new country, (c) choosing optimism, (d) concealing emotions by focusing on distractions, (e) being self-reliant, and (f) distrusting others. Allard (2015) also noted the use of humor as a coping skill; jokes and teasing related to being undocumented or getting deported were particularly prevalent among the high school students she observed. Coping skills that emphasize self-reliance and distrust of others, fear associated with being undocumented, and the goal of returning to their native countries may explain why many UAMs do not develop a sense of attachment to their new schools. According to some experts (Mitchell et al., 2010; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2013), students' willingness to trust others was closely connected to their sense of belonging. When students trust their teachers, they are more likely to value, feel connected to, and succeed in school. Conversely, students who exhibit high levels of distrust are less likely to feel a sense of school connectedness.

In a descriptive case study conducted in an urban California high school, Hopkins and her colleagues (2013) examined how school staff created conditions that cultivated social and cultural capital for newcomer Latino males to leverage. By examining how four Latino newcomers successfully navigated high school, Hopkins and her colleagues identified ways that school staff capitalized on students' linguistic and cultural capital, thereby supporting additive acculturation (Gibson, 2001). The researchers found that by offering rigorous bilingual instruction, staff created classrooms where students' language

and culture were recognized (Bourdieu, as cited in Hopkins et al., 2013) and utilized to strengthen their academic capital (Hopkins et al., 2013). Furthermore, by building relationships and checking in regularly with students on academic and personal matters, school staff built on students' cultural traditions emphasizing collectivism, or the importance of remaining connected to others (Ruiz, 2005). Finally, school staff created spaces that fostered networks in which newcomers were able to support each other through activities such as peer tutoring (Hopkins et al., 2013). While this study has limitations that may affect its generalizability to other settings, including its urban context, the availability of bilingual instruction, and the students' solid academic foundation in their native countries, its findings around the importance of relationships and peer networks carry validity in varied contexts.

A Review of the Literature on School Connectedness

Given the aforementioned challenges as well as varying levels of support offered by schools, it is not surprising that many newcomer Central American males lack feelings of school connectedness. If schools are serious about addressing the achievement gap between ELs and their White counterparts, leaders must begin by fostering inclusive cultures that bolster all students' sense of belonging. Since the achievement gap is particularly pronounced for foreign-born students who migrate as adolescents (Allard, 2015; Chiswick & DebBurman, 2003; Lucas, 2016), it is imperative for leaders to focus on bolstering these students' school connectedness, thereby creating conditions for their academic success. In order to examine how leaders can work toward this objective, this section of the literature review examines the following questions:

- What is school connectedness, and why is it significant for newcomer Central American males at the high school level?
- What factors impede and support school connectedness of these students?

Stage-Environment Fit Theory

To understand the connection among learning environments, school connectedness, and academic achievement, it is useful to examine the stage-environment fit theory (Eccles et al., 1993). This theory asserts that the alignment between students' developmental stages and their social environment impacts their behavior, motivation, and mental health. When learning environments align with students' needs, their sense of school connectedness is high; consequently, they are more likely to be successful academically. An ideal social environment affords students increasing opportunities for autonomy, demonstrations of competence, acceptance by peers, and support from caring adults (Eccles et al., 1993). These types of environments are critical to supporting adolescent immigrants as they navigate the dissonance between home and school and acclimate to a new country and school (Phelan et al., as cited in Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010).

Obstacles to School Connectedness

While ample evidence demonstrates the correlation between school connectedness and academic achievement, the academic and socio-emotional challenges of Central American RAIELs can affect schools' efforts to bolster these learners' sense of belonging. Two potential obstacles merit further examination: (a) misalignment of

student and school district goals, and (b) temporary segregation related to newcomer programs.

Misalignment of Student and School District Goals

Many experts argue that the academic and socio-emotional challenges of adolescent RAIELs contribute to a misalignment between these students' primary goals and the objectives of the school districts serving them (Allard, 2015; 2016; Drake, 2017). Some advocates contended that traditional curricula designed to prepare students for college fail to align with RAIELs' immediate needs upon arriving to a new country, which often alienates these learners from school (Allard, 2015). This misalignment between student and school goals is often a predictor of decreased engagement and dropping out (Rodriguez, 2012).

Other researchers have found evidence of this misalignment of goals. Based on an ethnographic study of undocumented Mexican newcomers, Allard (2015) concluded that schools often overlook adolescent RAIELs' fundamental needs. Through her interviews with these youth, Allard found that migrating to the United States signified a transition to adulthood, carrying with it responsibilities such as paying bills (Kleyn, 2011), paying off debts incurred to migrate to the United States, and sending home remittances, often to support their siblings' education (Menjívar, 2008). Many students viewed school as a means of learning English to secure higher-paying jobs. Work was their primary focus, and school had to fit around their financial responsibilities (Allard, 2015). A significant number of these learners demonstrated what Solis (2001) refers to as a "mindset of return" (p. 352), planning to remain in the United States only until they had attained a certain level of financial success (Allard, 2015; Massey & Taylor, 2004). Chiswick and

DebBurman (2004) argue that immigrants' propensity to return to their native country often impacts their level of investment in education and, in turn, their sense of school connectedness.

Temporary Segregation Related to Newcomer Programs

In addition to the challenges posed by this misalignment of goals, newcomer programs may also affect schools' efforts to foster RAIELs' sense of school connectedness. While empirical studies on high school RAIELs are increasing, little consensus exists on how best to meet these students' needs. In light of federal guidelines regarding the provision of services for ELs, high schools must determine how to support newcomers without imposing any unnecessary segregation (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). Many districts have initiated newcomer programs, or "specialized academic environments that serve newly arrived, immigrant English learners for a limited period of time" (Short & Boyson, 2012, Introduction); these programs often include wraparound services to meet students' socio-emotional needs. In a three-year, mixed-methods study of 10 newcomer programs, Short and Boyson (2012) found that most utilized a school within a school model. Proponents of this model argue that it offers safe learning spaces in which RAIELs receive scaffolded instruction from ESOL-certified teachers. Furthermore, this model's small, sheltered classes allow newcomers to build relationships with other ELs as well as with staff, thereby leading to positive educational outcomes (Allard, 2015). In addition, it affords ELs the potential opportunity to interact with monolingual English speakers during electives, lunch, and in extracurricular activities. At the same time, experts such as Short and Boyson (2012) argue that unless schools take deliberate measures to integrate RAIELs, these students may continue to be

isolated. Other researchers contend that sheltered classes can perpetuate segregated enclaves with a limited range of peers and a dearth of role models (Hurd, 2004). Some hold that this approach to instruction also constitutes tracking, restricting students' access to core content, limiting opportunities to earn verified credits toward graduation, and curtailing interactions with monolingual English speakers (Callahan, 2005; Callahan et al., 2010). Furthermore, Dabach (2014) asserts that separate courses for newcomers may stigmatize students and contribute to feelings of inferiority. In short, while newcomer programs have benefits, some experts argue that they can also impede RAIELs' integration into the broader school community.

Supports of School Connectedness

Despite the aforementioned obstacles, school staff can, in fact, bolster students' sense of connectedness. According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a national study of more than 75,000 students initiated in 1994-95, the following four factors correlate to high levels of school connectedness: (a) positive classroom climates, (b) student participation in extracurricular activities, (c) fair disciplinary policies, and (d) small school size (McNeely et al., 2002). This segment of the literature review focuses on the first three factors as they fall within an educational leader's direct purview. By leveraging these three areas, leaders can create conditions that allow teachers and other staff members to support RAIELs' sense of belonging and, in turn, their academic achievement.

Positive Classroom Climates

According to Hitt and Tucker (2016), effective leaders create conditions that support teachers in affording all students a high-quality learning experience. Research

indicates that the quality of student-teacher relationships is critical to positive learning experiences, impacting students' academic motivation as well as their attitudes toward school (Eccles et al., 1993). Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health revealed that teachers who demonstrate empathy and consistency, encourage student self-management, and afford students decision-making opportunities contribute to a positive classroom climate (McNeely et al., 2002). Despite the study's significant sample size and apparent applicability to ELs, its administration in English makes the complete generalizability of its findings to RAIELs unclear.

Although the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health may not adequately represent the experiences of RAIELs, other research emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive learning environments grounded in ethics of care and community (Furman, 2004; Riehl, 2000; Ylimaki et al., 2012). Valenzuela (as cited in Hopkins et al., 2013) describes the importance of adults who demonstrate *cariño,* or care, by conveying high expectations and providing students guidance on available resources. Tomlinson (2003) asserts that students have five basic emotional needs that must be met in order to feel invested in school: (a) affirmation, (b) contribution, (c) power, (d) purpose, and (e) challenge. These areas are particularly critical to newcomers who are SLIFE as they acclimate not only to a new country, but also to a formal school setting. By constructing strong relationships with students and ensuring that they feel safe, teachers can create conditions in which newcomers take the risks necessary for academic success (Hammond, 2015).

Numerous empirical studies demonstrate the correlation between positive relationships and the academic success of ELs (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green et al.,

2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009a; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009b). In the five-year Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study of 407 newcomers age 9-14, Suárez-Orozco and her colleagues (2009a) found that relationships were critical to RAIELs' academic engagement and achievement, as measured by their grade point average. Newcomers often begin school with optimism and a high level of engagement (Hopkins et al., 2013); however, this outlook may change due to sub-par school conditions, tracking, social isolation, and a misalignment between personal goals and school expectations (Allard, 2016; Drake, 2017; Gándara & Orfield, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2013). Suárez-Orozco and her colleagues (2009a) concluded that supportive relationships help RAIELs "bridge the gap between home and school cultures and provide important feelings of safety and opportunities for success in the school setting" (p. 741). For newcomers whose families are still developing navigational capital, school staff members can serve as role models, cultural interpreters, and academic advisors.

By supporting teachers' efforts to create positive classroom climates, leaders are also creating conditions to strengthen newcomers' academic self-concept. Wigfield and Karpathian (1991) define academic self-concept as students' perceptions of themselves as learners. Many newcomers, particularly young men with limited or interrupted formal schooling, may be developing confidence in themselves as students. Freeman et al. (2005) contend that learners must see themselves as bilinguals in order to learn a new language. Academic self-efficacy is critical in predicting how a student will engage in learning a new language, building relationships, and tackling academic tasks (Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Schunk, 1991). Higher academic self-efficacy contributes to learning as well as students' relational and academic engagement, all of which contribute to

academic achievement (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009b). English Learners have been found to have lower self-perceptions of themselves as learners than monolingual English speakers (Díaz et al., 2016). However, research suggests that this non-cognitive factor related to academic performance is malleable and can be positively impacted through short-term interventions (Farrington et al., 2012). For RAIELs who are developing their self-confidence in their academic ability, school staff can focus on ensuring their sense of belonging to a classroom community and strengthening their belief in their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1986).

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

In addition to the importance of positive student-teacher relationships, ample research demonstrates the correlation among students' participation in extracurricular activities, sense of school connectedness, and, in turn, academic achievement (Osterman, 2000; Pérez et al., 2009). Gibson et al. (2004) postulate that all high school students achieve at higher levels when they feel accepted as part of a larger school community. Similarly, Pérez et al. (2009) found that students' participation in extracurricular activities positively impacted their academic achievement by affording them opportunities to develop relationships with engaged peers as well as school staff. Pérez and his colleagues examined the resilience of 110 undocumented Latino high school, community college, and university students. Data were collected via online surveys regarding risk factors such as part-time jobs, personal protective factors such as value placed on school, environmental protective factors such as participation in extracurricular activities, and educational outcomes such as advanced courses. The researchers

concluded that participation in extracurricular activities was the strongest predictor of these students' academic achievement.

Fair Disciplinary Policies

In addition to positive school climates and participation in extracurricular activities, equitable disciplinary policies contribute positively to students' sense of school connectedness. In light of the nation-wide disproportionate impact of exclusionary disciplinary practices on Latino males, this factor is particularly critical in creating supportive learning environments. High suspension rates result in lost instructional time and are closely correlated to retention, loss of school connectedness, dropping out, and court involvement (Fabelo et al., 2011). Given the correlation between missed instructional time and academic success, Gregory et al. (2010) assert that narrowing the discipline gap through fair and consistent policies is critical to fostering school connectedness and, in turn, narrowing the achievement gap between Latinos and their White counterparts.

Extensive research demonstrates the role that leaders' attitudes play in shaping equitable discipline policies. In a six-year analysis of nearly 1,000,000 students in 3,900 Texas secondary schools, Fabelo and his colleagues (2011) found that how and when students are disciplined often depends on a principal's attitude toward suspension (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). In a case study of principals of schools with high-achieving Hispanic students, Gerhart and his colleagues (2011) found that consistent discipline, a structured learning environment, and clear behavioral expectations were critical to supporting all students' academic success.

To guide schools' prevention and intervention efforts, Gregory et al. (2017) proposed a Framework for Increasing Equity in School Discipline. Many school leaders are already incorporating prevention practices into their work, particularly through the utilization of positive behavioral interventions and supports. This proactive approach focuses on teaching students expected behaviors rather than relying on punitive measures. An increasing number of schools are also utilizing restorative practices as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Considerable evidence suggested that restorative practices positively impact learning environments by strengthening teacher-student relationships, decreasing disciplinary referrals and exclusionary practices, and improving students' overall academic achievement (Gregory et al., 2016); evidence suggested that restorative practices can be used effectively in ESOL classrooms to reimagine these spaces as "not only places of learning English, but places of meditation, reflection, and healing" (Pentón Herrera & McNair, 2020).

A Review of the Literature on Effective Leadership for RAIELs

To determine how high school principals can foster the school connectedness of adolescent RAIELs, it is first necessary to establish the definition of leadership that guides this work. Leithwood (2012) defines leadership as "the exercise of influence on organizational members and diverse stakeholders toward the identification and achievement of the organization's vision and goals" (p. 3). Furthermore, Leithwood (2012) asserts that leadership is "exercised through relationships between and among individuals" (p. 3) including administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. This definition suggests that through collective instructional leadership, school staff can work collectively to impact student achievement, a theory supported by other scholars as

well (Marks & Printy, 2003). While current scholarship demonstrates that teachers have the most significant impact on student achievement, the role of leaders, although indirect, is also significant. This segment of the literature review examines how leaders' beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices are essential to fostering school connectedness for RAIELs, particularly Central American males, who arrive as high school students.

The Need for Social Justice Leadership

Extensive literature asserts that leadership is critical to educational reform efforts, second only to teaching itself (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010). However, with the growing number of ELs in American public schools and the diversity within this group, a one-size-fits-all approach focusing solely on students' cognitive needs is inadequate to serve these learners (Ylimaki et al., 2012). As the demographics in American public schools continue shifting so, too, must leadership practices and school contexts (Khalifa et al., 2016). Khalifa and his colleagues argue that today's school-based leaders must foster learning environments that "understand, respond, incorporate, accommodate, and ultimately celebrate the entirety of the children they serve" (pp. 6 - 7). Although Khalifa and his colleagues advocate these actions within the Culturally Responsive School Leadership framework, the creation of inclusive environments also undergirds social justice leadership (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015). Social justice leadership focuses on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools (Theoharis, 2007) as well as on eliminating norms that privilege certain students at the expense of others (Brooks et al., 2007). Theoharis (2007) asserts, "Marginalized students do not

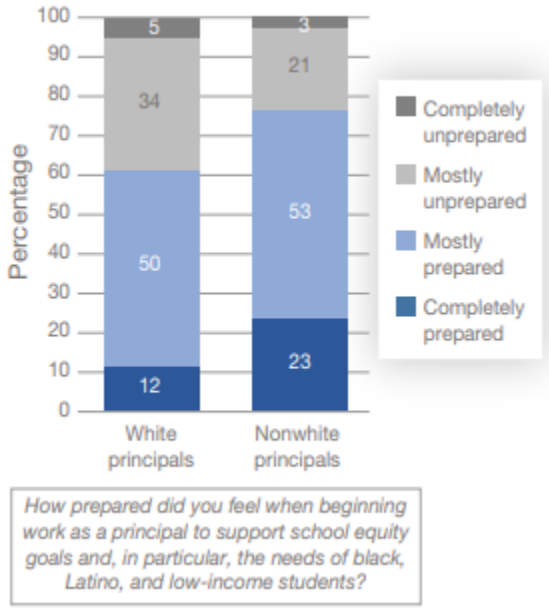
receive the education they deserve unless purposeful steps are taken to change schools on their behalf with both equity and justice consciously in mind" (p. 250).

Obstacles to Social Justice Leadership

Despite the need for effective leaders of schools serving culturally and linguistically diverse students, most leadership programs fail to prepare candidates for this role (Baecher et al., 2013). According to data extracted from the 2018 administration of the Measurement, Learning, and Improvement survey completed by more than 3,200 school leaders (Johnston & Young, 2016), only 60% of current principals believe that their pre-service program prepared them to support African-American, Latino, and economically disadvantaged students. White principals reported feeling more unprepared than their non-White colleagues, as evidenced by Figure 3.

Figure 3

School Leader Agreement that Preservice Training Prepared them to Support African-American, Latino, and Economically Disadvantaged Students



In a case study of seven social justice-driven principals, Theoharis (2007) found that leadership programs did not provide administrators with a solid foundation in social justice leadership. Many of the principals reported that their desire to serve as social justice leaders was intrinsic rather than inspired by a preparation program. Similarly, Marshall (2004) criticizes administrative preparation programs in which "equity concerns are given lip service" (p. 7). She maintains that administrators require "more skills beyond simplistic management or quick fixes" (p. 7) to lead effectively with a social justice mindset.

Leadership standards also provide inadequate guidance for social justice-driven leaders. Scanlan and Theoharis (2015) argue that the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards delineate leadership responsibilities but fail to articulate how to enact them with a social justice mindset. Standard 3 of the most recent 2015 ISLCC Standards identifies administrators' responsibilities related to equity and cultural responsiveness, stating that "effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 11). While this increased focus on equity is promising, many principals still feel unprepared to lead schools with sizeable EL populations. Despite the increasing numbers of school-aged ELs across the country, scant professional development opportunities exist for administrators serving these students. Landa (2011) asserts that professional development on working with ELs is generally designed for teachers rather than school-based leaders, a problematic trend given the research linking school leadership to student achievement (Leithwood & Louis, 2012).

Key Tenets of Social Justice Leadership

According to Baecher et al. (2013), effective leaders of ELs do not simply value multiculturalism; rather, they possess specific beliefs that enable their staff to meet these students' needs (Baecher et al., 2013). Riehl (2000) asserts that inclusive principals reject deficit thinking toward diverse learners, adopting instead an assets-based paradigm (Baecher et al., 2013; Cooper, 2009; Dozier, 2008; Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999). Social justice-driven leaders reject deficit thinking toward diverse learners, shifting the question from "What is wrong with these students?" to "How can we better serve these students?" (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 13). In short, these leaders refuse to blame these students or their parents for existing achievement gaps; rather, they accept responsibility for ensuring the success of all learners. To this end, Rodriguez (2012) calls on leaders to adopt a framework of recognition as a lens to understand the challenges facing Latino students. Furthermore, he urges school-based leaders to adopt an assets-based paradigm in their work with these learners, asserting that "we should assume that Latino(a) youth bring a wealth of experiences and expect schools to capitalize on these experiences" (p. 25). Other critical race theorists such as Yosso (2005) support this strengths-based approach, arguing that marginalized students of color bring multiple forms of capital to school that often go unnoticed. Yosso (2005) and other critical race theorists assert that schools must build on the experiential knowledge of diverse students to make learning encounters that are relevant, "culturally validating, and affirming" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). Furthermore, Gay (2018) contends that in order to improve student achievement, "teachers must learn how to recognize, honor, and incorporate the personal abilities of students into their teaching strategies" (p. 1).

In a case study of principals of schools along the U.S.-Mexico border with high-performing Latino students, González (1998) found that these leaders employed an assets-based paradigm in their work with these learners. All leaders believed in the ability of Latino students to succeed academically and conveyed respect for their language and culture; they also expected their staffs to embrace and enact these convictions. Similarly, Gerhart et al. (2011) found that effective principals of schools with Hispanic populations of at least 30% coupled their belief in students' ability to achieve with high expectations and a commitment to monitoring students' academic progress. While this study did not focus specifically on Hispanic ELs, these practices have been found to work effectively with this sub-group as well (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Lucas, 2016).

Incorporation of Student Voice

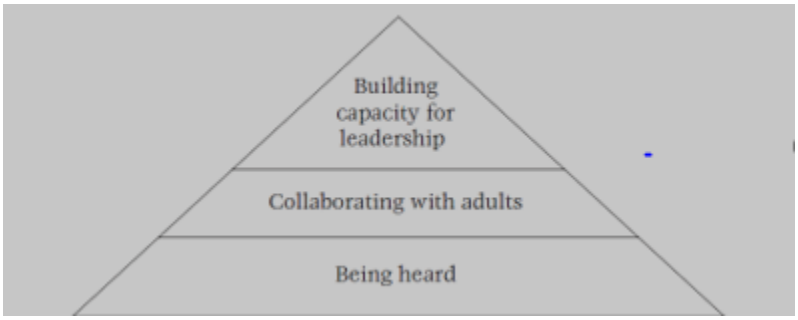
Social justice-driven leaders also believe in incorporating student voice into their decision-making processes. Since the 1990s, a growing body of scholarship has emerged suggesting the repositioning of students' roles in educational reform. Kozol and Perluss (1992) were some of the earliest advocates to argue that students' voices were notably absent from discussions of educational reforms. Many high school students, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, describe their school experiences as anonymous and powerless (Earls, as cited in Mitra and Gross, 2009); this type of alienation results in the disengagement of 25% to 70% of high school students (Cothran & Ennis, 2000; Marks, 2000). Although these statistics are not specific to a particular demographic group, disengaged students are more likely to drop out of school (Bridgeland et al., 2006; Rumberger, 1987). Many experts argue that considering this reality, schools must

actively elicit students' voices on teaching and learning and afford them the opportunity to shape their own education (Cook-Sather, 2006; Pekrul & Levin, 2007).

Mitra and Gross (2009) maintain that there are three forms of student voice. At the first and most common level, students can "be heard" by sharing their experiences with school staff. The next level affords students the opportunity to collaborate with adults to enact changes in the school. The final and least prevalent level invites students to share the ownership of the student voice initiative. These three levels are depicted below in Figure 4:

Figure 4

Pyramid of Student Voice



Note. Mitra and Gross, 2009.

While much of the literature on student voice is not specific to certain demographic groups, some experts' argument that voice and power are inextricably linked (Pekrul & Levin, 2007) suggests direct applications to ELs. Alcoff (as cited in Fielding, 2004, p. 300) asserts the following:

> ...issues of voice...are embedded in historically located structures and relations of power. Who is speaking to whom turns out to be as important for meaning and trust as what is said; in fact, what is said turns out to change according to who is speaking and who is listening.

For marginalized groups such as ELs, student voice can serve as a tool for empowerment.

Evidence-Based Practices

Social justice-driven leaders translate their beliefs into evidence-based practices that foster the progress of all students. While the role of teachers continues to be perceived as the key determinant of student achievement, ample evidence now exists of a leader's role, albeit indirect, in creating optimal conditions for student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Supovitz et al., 2009). According to Hitt and Tucker (2016), leaders contribute to student achievement by enacting specific practices that create generative learning environments for both teachers and students. After conducting a literature review of 56 empirical studies and three leadership frameworks examining the ways that leaders impact student achievement, Hitt and Tucker identified five overarching domains encapsulating effective leadership practices. They present these synthesized, high-impact domains in what they refer to as their unified model. This segment of the literature review focuses on the following four domains that are most relevant to social justice-driven leadership serving RAIELs: (a) establishing and conveying the vision, (b) building professional capacity, (c) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, and (d) connecting with external partners.

Establishing and Conveying the Vision

In considering how leaders establish and convey a vision for an organization, it is useful to begin by establishing a definition of leadership. In a definition similar to that of Leithwood (2012), Robinson et al. (2008) maintain that leadership involves the exercise of influence for the purpose of attaining a goal that is beneficial to all. By working with the stakeholders within an organization to craft a shared vision, effective leaders can inspire those actors to work collaboratively toward its attainment.

Organizational theorists maintain that one of a leader's greatest responsibilities is to establish a culture of teaching and learning (Fink & Resnick, 2001; MacNeil et al., 2009). Social justice-driven principals foster inclusive learning environments by communicating a shared vision focusing on equity. While the term inclusion is often utilized in the context of special education, inclusive education is not limited to students with disabilities (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2019). Social justice-driven leaders adhere to Sapon-Shevin's (2003) argument that "inclusion is not about disability…. [It is] about social justice" (p. 26). They also embrace UNESCO's (as cited in Ainscow & Sandill, 2010) interpretation of inclusive education as a reform that "supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners" (p. 402).

Social justice leadership is critical to creating a culture grounded in collective responsibility for meeting the academic and socio-emotional needs of ELs (August & Hakuta, 1997; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Elfers et al., 2013; Lucas, 2016; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015). Effective leaders emphasize collaboration and a shared responsibility among all educators for the instruction of second language learners (Brooks et al., 2010; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2019; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Without the leadership of social justice-driven leaders, implementation of cultural responsiveness is often disjointed (Khalifa et al., 2016), and resistors may go unchallenged (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018). In a case study of principals of high-performing, majority Latino schools, Wagstaff and Fusarelli (1999) observed that effective leaders conveyed a clear mission and vision grounded in the belief of all students' ability to succeed academically. In a similar vein, Lucas (2016) asserts that effective principals foster cultures in which

people, structures, and processes take ELs "beyond learning English" (p. 12) and fully integrate them into the school community.

Building Professional Capacity

To enact a shared vision, leaders must cultivate a culture of continuous professional learning. Fullan (1993) argues that schools cannot fully support student learning unless teachers themselves are constantly learning. In addition to the importance of teachers' continuous learning, Robinson and her colleagues (2008) assert that leaders must learn alongside their staff. Through their involvement in ongoing professional learning opportunities, leaders can strengthen their knowledge base, bolster their credibility among their staff, and become better-equipped to lead schools serving ELs.

Given the increasing numbers of ELs in schools across the nation and the shortage of teachers trained to meet their needs, high-quality professional development is critical for building these educators' capacity (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Elfers et al., 2013; Gándara et al., 2005; García et al., 2010; Karabenick & Noda, 2004). The opportunity for high-quality professional learning opportunities is particularly important given the increasing responsibility of general education teachers to address the socio-emotional and instructional needs of ELs in mainstream classes (Elfers et al., 2013; Hammond, 2015; Wei et al., 2009). Despite this shifting role related to accountability pressures, many general education teachers reported feeling unprepared or underprepared to work effectively with ELs (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Elfers & Stritikus, 2013; Gándara et al., 2005; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Rumberger & Gándara, 2004). These feelings of inadequacy are unsurprising given ELs' specific learning needs related to second language acquisition, the mastery of academic content, and the socio-emotional

dimension of learning (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013), coupled with a dearth of high-quality professional learning opportunities available for teachers and administrators of ELs (Landa, 2011; Wei et al., 2009). Gándara and her colleagues (2003) assert, "Students with limited English proficiency are more likely than any other children to be taught by teachers with an emergency credential" (p. 8). Many scholars argue that this limited teacher capacity, coupled with substandard conditions in many schools with large EL populations, constitutes a serious equity challenge (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013; Hopkins et al., 2019).

Considering this reality, social justice-driven leaders focus on building the capacity of their staff to meet the needs of ELs. These leaders understand the correlation between teacher preparation and student outcomes for ELs (López et al., 2013). They are also aware of the empirical evidence demonstrating that teachers' participation in high-quality professional development can influence their knowledge and beliefs about ELs and, in turn, effect a positive change in their instructional practices (Johnson & Bolshakova, 2015; Lee et al., 2016).

For professional learning opportunities to be meaningful, they must address an identified need. In some school districts, Central Office personnel collaborate with schools to offer differentiated professional learning opportunities for teachers of ELs (Covay Minor et al., 2016; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Gándara et al., 2005; Karabenick & Noda, 2004). However, given the logistical and financial challenges of diffusing professional learning across an entire district, particularly if it is large, the Central Office often seeks to share the work with school-based administrators. For example, Central Office personnel often offer ongoing workshops on topics of interest to all schools such

as effective co-teaching practices (Wei et al., 2009). At the same time, school-based leaders may be expected to lead professional learning tailored to their own schools. This distributed leadership approach is predicated upon the ability of school-based leaders to lead this type of differentiated, site-based learning. While research demonstrates the correlation between school leadership and student learning, most leadership programs and professional development opportunities fail to provide administrators with the skills and knowledge base necessary to lead diverse schools (Baecher et al., 2013; Landa, 2011; Seashore et al., 2010) serving ELs. Given this reality, some experts (Horwitz et al., 2009) argue that districts must ensure that school-based administrators receive the professional learning necessary to build their knowledge base around ELs, second language acquisition, and effective instructional strategies to meet these learners' needs. Other experts (Hopkins et al., 2019) contend that district leaders should foster collaborative structures for school-based administrators to hone their leadership practices related to ELs.

Considering the extensive instructional demands placed on high school principals, effective leaders harness internal expertise related to ELs. The utilization of internal experts such as ESOL Department Chairs as leaders of school-based professional learning is vital given the tensions that sometimes exist between school-based personnel and Central Office staff. Fullan (2007) argues that external approaches to instructional improvement "can never be powerful enough, specific enough, or sustained enough to alter the culture of the classroom and school" (p. 35). Depending on their role, internal experts can lead professional learning opportunities based on data and teachers' needs. They can also incorporate the voice of ELs and their families into professional learning

opportunities through student-made videos about their school experiences, student or parent panels, neighborhood walkthroughs, service projects in ELs' communities, or home visits (Cook-Sather, 2006; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; García et al., 2010).

Principals who lead with a social justice mindset encourage their staff to learn about ELs and their communities, the relationship of language to culture and identity, language acquisition, and effective instructional strategies for ELs (Lucas, 2016). By collaborating with internal and external experts on ELs, effective principals afford their staff ongoing, differentiated professional learning opportunities aligned with a clear, school-wide instructional vision to address these students' academic and socio-emotional needs (Covay-Minor et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gerhart et al., 2011; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Lucas, 2016; Odden, 2011). Furthermore, these leaders engage staff in honest conversations about beliefs and expectations, challenging deficit perspectives on students and rejecting a "commitment to niceness" (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018, p. 24). According to Nieto (2008), social justice-driven leaders convey to their staff the moral imperative of moving beyond "niceness," described below:

> Caring for students of color must go beyond being 'nice' to them…it means having rigorous standards and high expectations, pushing students further than they believe they can go, and supporting them as they try to accomplish their goals. Going beyond niceness also means creating classroom and school environments that are defined by deep confidence in students, acknowledgment that they have talents and strengths, and respect for their identities and their communities. (p. 197)

Extant scholarship provides evidence of the critical role of leadership in supporting teachers' professional learning related to ELs. In a qualitative case study of four Washington school divisions, Elfers and Stritikus (2014) found leadership to be integral to the creation of coherent systems of support for classroom teachers of ELs.

Collaborative efforts and communication between district and school leadership were essential to articulating, aligning, and coordinating supports to teachers of ELs. These supports included classroom-focused professional learning opportunities targeting the adaptation of instruction, collaboration between specialized staff and general education teachers, appropriate instructional resources, and a collective focus on ELs supported through data dialogues and protected time for teacher collaboration. In a case study of principals of schools with substantial Hispanic populations, Gerhart and his colleagues (2011) found that professional development to help teachers understand challenges related to poverty was also prevalent. Finally, in a study of four school districts demonstrating marked gains in EL achievement, Horwitz et al. (2009) identified common features and practices. All four districts communicated a shared vision for reform that included strategies for strengthening instruction and services for ELs. One district in New York City offered long-term, differentiated professional learning opportunities for both teachers and administrators. By participating in these opportunities, school-based leaders became more knowledgeable about the characteristics of high-quality instruction for ELs; as a result, they could more effectively support teachers in applying what they had learned in district-sponsored workshops.

Social justice-driven leaders also create conditions that support teachers' sense of efficacy in their work with ELs. Effective leaders recognize the connection between social capital, defined by Lin (as cited in Hopkins et al., 2019) as "resources embedded in social relations and social structure…that can be used by actors for action" (p. 5), and positive outcomes for teachers related to their beliefs and practices (Daly et al., 2010; Spillane et al., 2018). Effective leaders foster social capital by supporting the

development of social networks among staff which, in turn, allow teachers to share expertise related to instruction of ELs (Hopkins et al., 2019). These leaders ensure that collaborative teams, including ESOL teachers, meet regularly to discuss curriculum and instruction, assessment, and supports for all students (Gándara et al., 2005; Mizell, 2010; Odden, 2011). Principals in high-performing schools also foster opportunities for teachers to learn from each other through peer observations and coaching from ESOL specialists, research-based practices known to positively impact instructional practices (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gándara et al., 2005).

Facilitating a High-Quality Learning Experience for Students

To ensure that all students achieve at high levels, principals must demonstrate competence in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). The role of the principal as an instructional leader is essential given the research suggesting that high-quality learning environments are essential to ELs' academic success (Calderón et al., 2011). In a case study of seven social justice-driven principals, Theoharis (2007) found that all felt a "duty and moral obligation" (p. 232) to raise the achievement of marginalized learners.

Although there is a lack of consensus in the literature about the instructional practices of effective principals of ELs, some common themes are evident. Some experts contend that exemplary principals foster inclusive instructional practices and promote equitable treatment and access to curriculum (Baecher et al., 2013; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Murakami et al., 2013; Theoharis, 2007). According to Theoharis (2007), these practices include efforts to dismantle tracking, end unnecessary segregation, and minimize the use of pull out programs. In addition, Elfers and Stritikus (2014) concluded

from their qualitative case study of twelve diverse schools that leaders can support teachers of ELs by aligning district and school-level initiatives, implementing differentiated support systems, and utilizing data to guide improvement efforts.

In addition to the listed leadership practices, some argue that effective principals of diverse schools must demonstrate sociocultural affect (Ylimaki et al., 2012). Ylimaki and her colleagues (2012) contend that successful leaders of diverse schools adopt a holistic approach to understanding their students, build on their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and foster collaborative practices among teachers to address all students' needs. In a case study of the leadership of four Arizona principals in schools with changing demographics, Ylimaki et al. (2012) identified evidence of sociocultural affect in the following areas: (a) consciousness and awareness of geographical context and political environment, (b) culturally responsive leadership capacity, and (c) emphasis on constructing an ethic of community to foster a sense of collective moral purpose for all students (Furman, 2004).

Social justice-driven leaders also create inclusive learning environments grounded in an ethic of care (Riehl, 2000). Noddings argues that "the first job of the schools is to care for our children" (as cited in Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016, p. 16). In a case study of principals of schools with Hispanic populations totaling at least 30% of the student population, Gerhart and his colleagues (2011) observed that hiring the right staff was critical to establishing a caring environment in which students could excel. This approach to leadership holds that there is a relationship between students' feelings of emotional safety and their academic achievement. When positive relationships are an area of focus, school becomes a safe environment that fosters students' success (Hammond, 2015).

Evidence of the impact of culturally responsive leadership on demographically changing schools can be found in empirical studies conducted at the elementary and secondary levels. In their eight-month case study of a leader of a diverse high school, Madhlangobe and Gordon (2012) found that culturally responsive leadership was practiced through a focus on the following areas: (a) caring, (b) relationships, (c) distributed leadership through the delegation of responsibilities, (d) clear communication, and (e) the modeling and fostering of cultural responsiveness across the school. Similarly, Cooper (2009) concluded from a case study of two elementary schools undergoing demographic change that today's leaders must respond to cultural diversity by serving as transformative leaders, or "bridge builders who strive to create caring and/or emancipatory spaces for students, parents, and teachers" (López et al., as cited in Cooper, 2009, p. 698).

Connecting with External Partners

Effective leaders also understand the value of partnering with the community to ensure student success. These leaders understand that in many areas, families are invaluable resources that are often under-utilized. By capitalizing on these resources and forging home-school-community partnerships, leaders can positively impact student achievement (Sebring et al., 2006).

Leaders who operate with a social justice mindset understand the importance of partnering with the families of ELs. To foster collaboration with families, Murakami et al. (2013) found that effective principals of ELs emphasize communication and collaboration, insisting on the integration of Latinos and their families into the school community. In a case study of principals of schools with significant Hispanic

populations, Gerhart et al. (2011) found that exemplary leaders utilized myriad approaches to communicating with Hispanic parents, including extending personal invitations to school-sponsored events.

Summary

The continued sub-par achievement of RAIELs has caused many school districts to rethink their support systems for these learners. Newcomers who enroll at the high school level face unique academic, socio-emotional, cultural, and financial challenges (Allard, 2015; Olivares-Orellana, 2016). Consequently, these students, particularly Central American males, often experience high levels of disengagement and low levels of school connectedness, thereby putting them at greater risk of dropping out. Given that there are multiple contributing factors to the higher-than-average dropout rates for newcomer Central American males, some experts would classify the problem of practice as complex (Patton, 2012). Many contributing factors such as students' immigration status, age at immigration, and financial pressures are external and therefore fall outside of a school's direct purview. At the same time, these variables, as well as the current political climate, state and federal accountability measures, and a shortage of alternative pathways to graduation add layers of complexity to schools' efforts to address these students' needs. While high school principals need to be aware of this larger context, they must focus their efforts on their own schools. Social justice-driven administrators may not be able to change state and federal policies related to these newcomers. They can, however, support their staff in strengthening these students' sense of school connectedness and, in turn, their academic achievement. By attending to the needs of all RAIELs, regardless of their academic background, schools guided by an equity-driven

vision can bolster these learners' connections to school, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will stay in school, improve their English, and develop other critical skills necessary to graduate and prepare for their post-secondary pathway. While these newcomer Central American males arrive in U.S. high schools with considerable challenges, they also bring myriad strengths that, in a supportive learning environment that fosters school connectedness, can serve as springboards to academic success.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

In this chapter, the conceptual framework is presented to demonstrate the interplay among the extant literature on newcomer Central American males, school connectedness, effective leadership practices to support RAIELs, my professional experiences, and theoretical constructs (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). Given the extensive literature base asserting that leadership is critical to educational reform efforts (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010), this study seeks to understand how leaders' beliefs, background knowledge about English Learners (ELs), and practices foster the success of a burgeoning sub-group that is leaving high school prematurely. Considering this reality, high schools across the nation continue to seek effective ways to support these adolescent newcomers, many of whom are Central American males.

To examine this problem of practice, I utilized a mixed-methods approach to conduct a case study in a high school with a significant EL population. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with school leaders and students, a student survey, and document analysis. Next, I revisit my research questions and present the research design, as well as the processes for data collection and data analysis that I employed to examine these questions. Furthermore, I present information on how I triangulated the data collected and identify potential limitations to the methodology used.

Components of Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is predicated upon three premises. First, newcomer Central American males at the high school level, a marginalized population with higher-than-average dropout rates, merit increased attention. Second, given the challenges faced by this burgeoning population, school leaders must take concrete action to bolster these learners' sense of school connectedness and support staff in their work with these students. Third, to address the needs of these marginalized learners, effective school-based administrators should adopt a leadership mindset that ensures that "educational opportunities abound for all students" (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015, p. 3). Efficacious leaders of culturally and linguistically diverse learners utilize distributed leadership (Spillane et al., 2004), enlisting the expertise of other school staff so that they can make informed decisions regarding supports for these students. As principals may lack background knowledge related to ELs, this model affords a voice to stakeholders whose expertise with ELs can positively influence the decision-making processes related to these learners. These beliefs and knowledge then enable leaders to enact specific practices that create generative learning environments for both teachers and students (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). These three leadership components (beliefs, background knowledge, and practices) constitute the foundation of the conceptual framework guiding this study.

Beliefs

Given the evolving demographics in American public schools (Khalifa et al., 2016) and the impact of leadership on classroom instruction (Louis et al., 2010), culturally responsive leaders are more important than ever. To understand the behaviors of effective leaders of culturally and linguistically diverse students, it is first necessary to

understand their beliefs. The call for school-based leaders who honor diversity undergirds not only the Culturally Responsive School Leadership Framework but also social justice leadership (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015). According to Theoharis (2007), social justice-driven administrators lead with an equity mindset, striving to address and eliminate marginalization in schools. Riehl (2000) asserts that inclusive principals reject deficit thinking toward diverse learners, adopting instead an assets-based paradigm (Baecher et al., 2013; Cooper, 2009; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Furthermore, social justice-driven leaders recognize that students of color bring multiple forms of capital and experiential knowledge to school that should be recognized (Yosso, 2005).

Background Knowledge About ELs

While leaders' beliefs are critical to ensuring the success of all students, effective principals of ELs must also be knowledgeable about second language acquisition, curriculum and instruction, and research-based programming for these students (Baecher et al., 2013). The role of the principal as an instructional leader is particularly critical given the research suggesting that high-quality learning environments are essential to the academic success of ELs (Calderón et al., 2011). To foster these environments, Ylimaki and her colleagues (2012) contend that leaders need to recognize the affective factors that impact student achievement and adopt a holistic approach to understanding their learners.

While research demonstrates the correlation between school leadership and student learning, most leadership programs do not adequately prepare candidates to lead diverse schools (Baecher et al., 2013; Seashore et al., 2010). Furthermore, most professional learning opportunities on working with ELs are directed toward teachers rather than administrators (Landa, 2011). Because of limited professional learning

opportunities, many principals utilize a distributed leadership perspective and involve internal experts in decision-making processes. In a collective leadership model, faculty members within a school can serve as leaders or co-leaders in areas in which they have expertise (Louis et al., 2010).

The distributed leadership perspective, which considers leadership as distributed over leaders, followers, and the situation, highlights the interactions among these entities. These interactions can be captured through artifacts such as tools, routines, and structures that are constitutive of the leadership (Spillane et al., 2004). Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the distributed leadership perspective proposed by Spillane and his colleagues (2004).

Figure 5

Distributed Perspective of Leadership Practice

Considering this model and perspective in research suggests how a principal might utilize internal expertise to ensure informed decision-making related to ELs. If a principal lacks expertise about pedagogy related to ELs, for example, he would look to internal experts such as the ESOL Department Chair and ESOL teacher leaders for input on decisions related to these second language learners. Capturing the full range of leadership practice would entail identifying how the interactions among these leaders and

followers contribute to the outcomes considered, as well as how these interactions are guided by the artifacts comprising the situation.

Leadership Practices

By leading with a social justice mindset and building a knowledge base through distributed leadership, high school principals can enact practices in a culturally responsive manner. This conceptual framework identifies four of the leadership domains found by Hitt and Tucker (2016) to impact student achievement. These include: (a) establishing and conveying a shared vision, (b) building professional capacity, (c) facilitating a high-quality learning experience for students, and (d) connecting with external partners.

Visual Representation of Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study frames a leader's beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices as the basis for the creation of inclusive learning environments that foster the connectedness of newcomer Central American males. The conceptual framework asserts that effective leaders of RAIELs ground their beliefs in a social justice framework committed to serving marginalized students. These beliefs are paired with a knowledge base generated through a distributed leadership perspective that elicits the input of stakeholders with expertise about ELs. These beliefs and knowledge base then provide leaders with a mindset with which they approach their leadership practices, tailoring them to address the unique needs of newcomer Central American males. The melding of the three frameworks is depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6

How High School Principals Foster School Connectedness

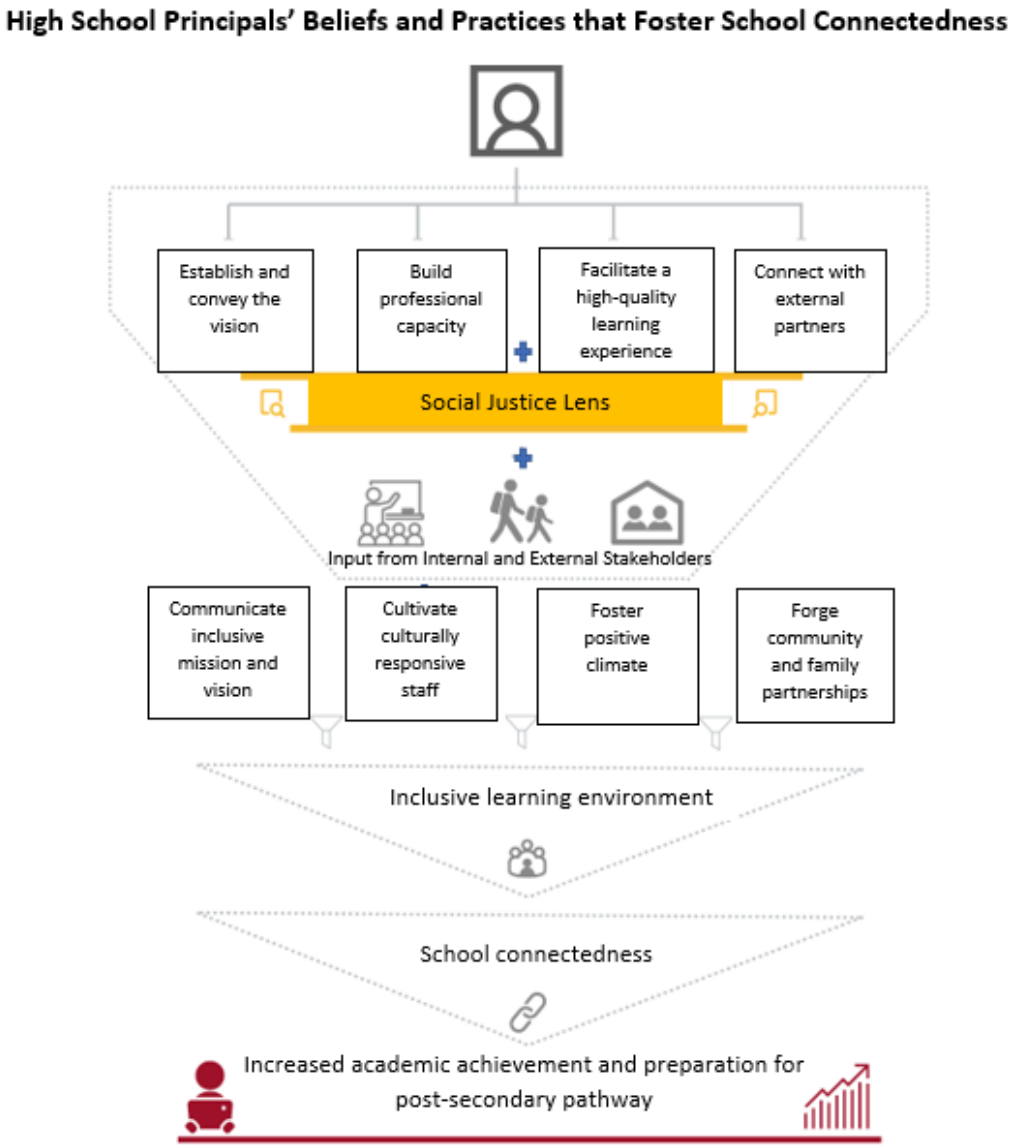
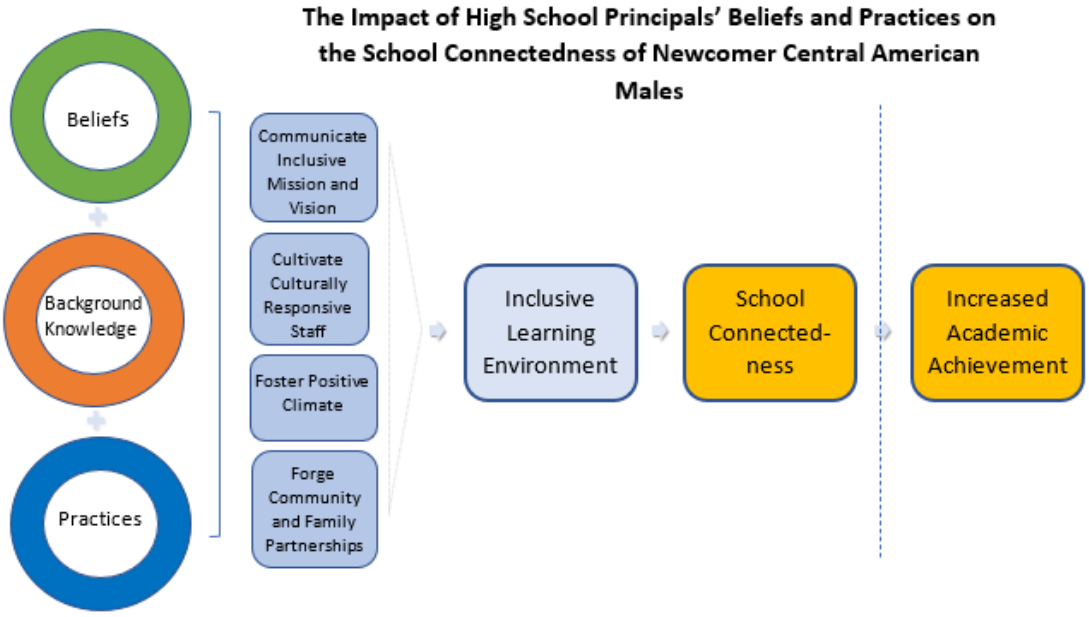


Figure 7 represents the conceptual framework, a simplified version of the interplay among these three frameworks, as well as their intended outcomes.

Figure 7

Conceptual Framework



Research Questions

To identify the impact of high school principals' beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, I examined the following research questions in this study:

- Research Question 1: What are the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness?
- Research Question 2: How do school leaders determine what practices, programs, and supports are necessary to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?

- Research Question 3: What practices, programs, and supports are being employed to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?

Each research question served a distinct purpose. The initial question elicited school leaders' and students' perspectives on the needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness. The second question was designed to examine the decision-making process used by school leaders to determine supports for newcomer Central American males and the staff who serve them. Because high school principals often lack background knowledge related to ELs, this question also examined how the principal might use a distributed leadership perspective in his decision-making processes related to ELs. More specifically, it explored how the principal utilized expertise from internal stakeholders, including the ESOL administrator, ESOL Department Chair, and ELs, as well as external stakeholders such as the ESOL Office, to identify meaningful supports for newcomer Central American males. The purpose of the third question was to identify the practices, programs, and supports currently in place to meet students' needs.

Study Design

According to Butin (2010), a study's purpose and design must be aligned. Tobin (2012) defines a case study as a "systematic way of looking at what is often termed a bounded system, meaning one entity that has distinct limitations or a finite size" (p. 2). Butin maintains that the purpose of case studies is to provide descriptive information and suggest theoretical relevance. Given these dual objectives, a case study approach aligns with this study's purpose, which was both descriptive and evaluative in nature. A case study of a high school with a significant population of newcomer Central American

males allowed me to examine programs and practices currently in place as well as factors to which learners attributed their sense of school connectedness; these findings may, in turn, inform the practices of other high school principals. To generate rich descriptions and make theoretical connections (Tobin, 2012), I employed a mixed-methods approach that incorporated semi-structured interviews with leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey.

Setting and Participants

This case study was conducted in one high school in WCPS: Davis Springs High School (DSHS). A high school setting was selected because of the accountability pressures faced by RAIELs who arrive as adolescents. This school was chosen for several reasons. First, as of May 2020, Latino males constituted 57% of the total student population, making them the school's largest ethnic group. Second, DSHS has a significant EL population, with more than 26% of students receiving ESOL services (WCPS, 2020c). In the 2019-20 school year, the school had approximately 400 ELs and 19 ESOL teachers, making it the third largest high school ESOL department in WCPS. According to the ESOL Department Chair, of the approximately 400 ELs at DSHS in 2019-20, 265 were newcomers with ELP levels of 1 or 2. Third, DSHS's School Improvement Plan indicates a focus on improving its dropout, chronic absenteeism, and graduation rates, areas in which ELs constitute an underperforming subgroup (WCPS, 2020c). Furthermore, despite these challenges, Davis Springs has experienced an increase in the number of ELs who arrive as newcomers and graduate in four years due to their access to credit-bearing courses toward graduation beginning in ninth grade (E. Underwood, personal communication, December 10, 2019; WCPS, 2017).

The literature review as well as my professional experience shaped the selection of the participants for the study. Given the extant literature suggesting limited professional development opportunities for principals of schools with significant EL populations (Baecher et al., 2013; Landa, 2011), the study included internal stakeholders who informed the school leaders' decision-making processes related to newcomer Central American males. Because high schools in WCPS are large, they often utilize distributed leadership, with assistant principals serving as liaisons between the departments that they supervise and the principal. Within this leadership perspective, the assistant principal works closely with the department chair of the content area that he supervises, often capitalizing on the teacher leader's background knowledge of ELs. Given this prevalent structure in WCPS, this study included the principal, the assistant principal who supervises ESOL, the ESOL Department Chair, and three other school leaders who work closely with ELs. Before the semi-structured interview, the principal was asked to identify staff members whom he consulted in his decision-making processes related to supports for newcomers. Invitations were then extended to staff members whose role aligned most closely with the goals of the study. Finally, while the principal was asked about the influence of external stakeholders such as the Office of ESOL Services on his decision-making processes, data were only collected from internal stakeholders. This decision to limit the parameters of data collection stemmed from an effort to examine the interplay between a social justice leadership framework and the collective leadership model, as viewed through a distributed leadership perspective. Table 3 provides background information about the school leaders who participated in the study; pseudonyms are employed to protect participants' privacy:

Table 3

Descriptive Information About School Leader Participants and Their Roles

Pseudonym	Role	Number of Years in Role at DSHS
Mark Everett	ESOL Department Chair	3
Ever Fernandez	ESOL Counselor	4
Cristina Inmar	ESOL Counselor	1
Linda Ivery	Director of Student Services	3
Richard Norton	Assistant Principal, ESOL Department	2
Daniel Pembrooke	Principal	4

In addition, given the literature about the role of student voice in educational reform (Cook-Sather, 2006; Mitra, 2007; Pekrul & Levin, 2007), this study included Central American males who began high school in the United States as newcomers and were preparing to graduate in the 2019-2020 school year. Twenty-four students completed the survey, and five of these learners also participated in a semi-structured interview. Students were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria established prior to the study (Patton, 2012). Participants were identified based on the following criteria: (a) 12th graders between the ages of 17 and 22, with the latter being the upper age limit for students in WCPS high schools; and (b) ELs or former ELs who began high school in the United States as newcomers. Students reflected on their experiences at DSHS and identified supports that were most critical to their success. Table 4 provides background information about the five students who participated in the semi-structured interviews; pseudonyms are utilized to preserve participants' anonymity.

Table 4

Descriptive Information About Student Participants in Semi-Structured Interviews

Pseudonym	Country of Origin	Age of Arrival in United States	Current Age
Abel	Honduras	16	18
Carlos	El Salvador	13	18
Fernando	Guatemala	17	20
Guillermo	El Salvador	16	19
Miguel	Nicaragua	14	17

Data Sources Collection Plan and Rationale

Data collection for this case study occurred in four phases over a four-month period between December 2019 and March 2020.

Data Collection Part 1: Interviews with School Leaders

In the first phase of data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal and other school leaders who support newcomer ELs (see Appendix K and L, respectively) to answer the three research questions guiding the study. The questions for the semi-structured interviews aligned with the research questions and the literature review. The interviews were designed with the following objectives: (a) comprehend school leaders' perspectives on the needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness; (b) understand the decision-making processes involved in determining practices, programs, and supports to address those needs; and (c) identify the actual practices, programs, and supports in place to support these learners. A semi-structured format was selected to afford the interviewees a voice in the structure and process of the interview. While Hays and Singh (2012) maintain that semi-structured

interviews sometimes lack consistency across participants, the opportunity for participant voice provides a rich depiction of the topic that is being examined. The interview protocols incorporated background, experience, opinion, knowledge, and feeling questions as well as probes (Hays & Singh, 2012) to ensure an examination of the problem of practice from different vantage points. Both interview protocols were vetted through a face validity pilot process (Edmonson & Irby, 2008). The questions were piloted with a high school principal, and revisions were made as needed. Interviews were conducted in school leaders' offices during the school day and lasted from 25-50 minutes. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and interviewees were asked to review the transcript for accuracy before responses were coded.

Data Collection Part 2: Document Collection

During part 2 of the data collection process, documents were identified as potential evidence of the school's decision-making processes and existing supports designed to undergird newcomer Central American males (research questions two and three). Butin (2010) asserts that texts are public documents that represent an organization publicly; therefore, the artifacts selected allowed for an examination of the alignment between school leaders' espoused and enacted beliefs and practices. Because what is written does not always align with actual practice, multiple artifacts were examined to find evidence of the school's efforts to bolster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males.

Data Collection Part 3: Student Survey

Parts 3 and 4 of the data collection process were conducted using a sequential explanatory strategy, with the quantitative data collected and analyzed first, followed by

qualitative data collection and analysis to delve deeper into broader findings (Hays & Singh, 2012). In part 3, a student survey (Appendix N) on school connectedness was administered to 24 Central American males expected to graduate in the 2019-20 school year; the sample size was derived from the number of term graduates meeting the study's selection criteria. Because student participants were seniors, they had acquired a certain level of proficiency in English; consequently, the survey itself was administered in English. The survey included closed and Likert scale questions with a 5-point scale (Fink, 2017). In order to determine the questions for the survey, I took into consideration the types of engagement – behavioral, emotional, and cognitive – that aligned most closely with the levers related to school connectedness (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012). To generate the survey questions, I drew from three sources: (a) the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (McNeely et al., 2002); (b) the Student Engagement Instrument (Appleton et al., 2006); and (c) self-report measures of student engagement commonly used in research (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012). From these sources, I identified questions related to themes that surfaced in the literature and adapted them.

The survey was designed to be brief, using statements with clear language; participants took 5-10 minutes to complete it. Questions elicited the following background information about students: (a) country of origin, (b) years of formal schooling completed, (c) age upon arrival in the United States, (d) current age, (e) grade upon commencement of studies in the United States, and (f) initial ELP level upon arrival in the United States. In addition, survey questions elicited responses about students' academic self-concept, as well as school and classroom climate, extracurricular activities, and the school's disciplinary policies. Before administration of the survey, three ESOL

teachers were asked to provide feedback on the verbiage employed; edits were made based on their suggestions. The instrument was then piloted with a small group of Latino male ELs at my own high school to verify clarity, ensuring a higher likelihood of reliability and validity (Fink, 2017).

Administration of the survey took place in two parts. On the first day, I visited several ESOL classes with seniors, discussed the study using the Student Participant Recruitment Script provided in Appendix F and answered questions. I then distributed the parent/guardian notification letter (Appendix G) and consent forms in English and Spanish (Appendix H and I, respectively) to ensure that participants fully understood the documents. After collecting the consent forms over the course of a week, I returned to the school to administer the survey during a time identified by the ESOL Department Chair and an ESOL teacher who works closely with seniors. Before beginning the survey (Appendix N), students completed the consent form (Appendix J) online. They then completed the survey on a school-issued laptop or their phone to ensure a 100% response rate. Data collected from survey responses were utilized to refine the subsequent semi-structured interview protocol for students.

Data Collection Part 4: Interviews with Students

The fourth and final segment of the study consisted of semi-structured interviews with five student survey respondents (Appendix O). The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain how the school's practices, programs, and supports had impacted these learners' level of school connectedness. The ESOL Department Chair identified 10 potential participants who met the criteria, and five were invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews. Although all participants shared the selection criteria, a

concerted effort was made to include students with varying characteristics such as different countries of origin. Through the selection process, I strove to ensure that the experiences of the interviewees represented to the greatest extent possible those of the larger population who participated in the survey. Interview questions were open-ended to allow for participant voice (Hays & Singh, 2012); question content was derived from survey data and the literature review.

Summary

In summary, the data sources were selected in alignment with the three research questions undergirding the study. In part one, individual semi-structured interviews offered an understanding of leaders' and students' perceived needs of newcomer Central American males. In part two, a document analysis, characterized by Butin (2010) as a "powerful yet oftentimes underused research strategy" (p. 99), was utilized to triangulate the data provided by the semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data collected through the student survey in part three were utilized to gain a broad understanding of the level of school connectedness among the Central American male subgroup. Finally, in part four, the student interviews allowed for a more in-depth understanding of these learners' perspectives. Table 5 provides an overview of the data collection plan and rationale for each segment.

Table 5

Summary of Data Collection Plan

	Rationale	Implementation	Method	Sample
Part 1: Semi-structured interview with	To understand leaders' perspectives on newcomer Central American males'	Open-ended questions focusing on: (a) perceived student needs;	Identify patterns in coded transcriptions; compare/contrast responses and	Principal and five school leaders with

principal and other school leaders	needs related to school connectedness (RQ 1) To examine the processes used by school leaders to address perceived student needs (RQ 2) To identify the practices, programs, and supports currently in place (RQ 3)	(b) decision-making processes that determine practices, programs, and supports; (c) current supports in place to meet those needs	perspectives across leadership team	varying roles
Part 2: Document analysis	To identify additional evidence of existing programs and practices in order to triangulate data provided by principal/school leaders (RQ 3)	Collection of varied artifacts related to efforts to bolster school connectedness, including the following: Communication with families and community organizations EL discipline data from WCPS Equity Profile ESOL master schedule Evidence of multi-tiered system of supports Minutes from ESOL department meetings	To examine the degree of alignment between school leaders' espoused beliefs regarding the creation of a supportive school culture for ELs and practices in place	Varied artifacts

		Professional development related to ELs School Improvement Plan School website Student Services' SMARTR goal related to school connectedness Websites of community organizations supporting DSHS		
Part 3: Student survey	To examine student perspectives on newcomers' needs (RQ 1), essential supports for school connectedness (RQ 3)	Likert scale and closed questions to gauge students' sense of connectedness related to positive classroom climates, participation in extracurricular activities, and fair and consistent discipline policies	Identify themes and categories in student responses regarding areas of greatest leverage related to school connectedness; utilize findings to inform questions and probes for semi-structured student interviews	24 Central American males in grade 12 who began high school as newcomers
Part 4: Semi-structured interviews with students	To collect more detailed information on student perspectives on newcomers' needs (RQ 1), essential	Open-ended questions designed to identify areas of greatest impact as well as gaps	Identify patterns in coded transcriptions; compare/contrast responses and perspectives	5 Central American males term graduates who began high

	supports for school connectedness (RQ 3), and students' role in classroom/school decision-making processes (RQ 2)	in implementation	across student responses	school as newcomers

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Part 1: Interviews with School Leaders

Data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed through a multi-step process (Hays & Singh, 2012). Interview responses were first recorded and transcribed. Following the interview, an analytic memo was written to serve as a preliminary descriptive summary (McLeod, 2001) encapsulating initial impressions. Next, deductive coding was applied (Benaquisto & Given, 2008) according to the three key aspects of the conceptual framework: beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices. A codebook was generated (Appendix P) and included the abbreviation used as well as a brief description. When certain codes were found to emerge more frequently than others, sub-codes were created (Hays & Singh, 2012). After the initial coding, the transcript was reviewed using open coding to capture any additional themes that had surfaced. Following the process of open coding, codes were reviewed to identify themes or patterns. I then engaged in what Patton (2012) refers to as comparative pattern analysis to understand convergence and divergence within an individual interview as well as across all interviews. Analytic memos were employed throughout the coding process to capture my evolving understanding. At the end of the process, a main narrative was generated (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999) to synthesize the identified patterns and reflect on how the categories aligned with the research questions.

Data Analysis Part 2: Document Analysis

Hodder (as cited in Butin, 2010) defines document analysis as the analysis of a text "through a specific, standardized, and theoretically informed protocol" (p. 99). The document analysis served to triangulate the data collected through semi-structured interviews with the principal and other school leaders. A matrix with specific, predefined criteria related to the literature review and research questions one and two (Butin, 2010) was utilized to assess the documents selected (Appendix M). Each document was examined to ascertain whether it served as evidence of any of the four leadership practices essential to the social justice leadership framework: (a) communicate inclusive mission and vision, (b) cultivate culturally responsive staff, (c) foster positive climate, and (d) forge community and family partnerships.

Data Analysis Part 3: Survey

Survey data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. Numerical values were assigned to responses for survey questions incorporating a 5-point Likert scale. These questions included five response choices ranging from Strongly Disagree (1 point) to Strongly Agree (5 points). Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the mean of responses to questions with Likert scales, and responses were represented through tables and graphs. In addition, the percentage of students who responded Agree or Strongly Agree to questions was calculated to demonstrate areas of greatest impact on school connectedness.

Data Analysis Part 4: Interviews with Students

The same steps outlined for the semi-structured interviews with adult participants was followed for the student interviews. A comparative analysis was then conducted to

determine the degree of alignment between existing practices, programs, and supports and perceived student needs. Areas of alignment as well as gaps in alignment were communicated in the action communication to stakeholders.

Methodological Limitations

This study has several limitations worth noting. First, because the sample size is limited to one school, findings may not be generalizable at the national level. However, in the spirit of case-study research, I sought to provide in-depth information about the setting so that others could judge for themselves how applicable the findings might be to their own schools. Also, this school is in an affluent suburban school district with a long history of serving ELs, which may also impact its generalizability. Furthermore, the sample focused on Central American males age 18-22 due to the prevalence of this demographic group in the school district identified for the study; findings may not be applicable in other contexts or with different demographic groups.

Researcher Bias

In addition to the listed limitations, it is important to acknowledge the bias that I bring as a scholar practitioner who has worked with ELs for more than 27 years. My previous work as a secondary ESOL teacher, as well as my more recent roles as the High School ESOL Specialist for WCPS and an assistant principal in two majority Latino high schools, influenced my work in this study. Furthermore, this study is predicated upon the belief that newcomer Central American males have the right to an education regardless of their immigration status. It is also grounded in the assumption that to narrow the achievement gap between Latinos and their White counterparts, greater attention must be paid to the growing student population of newcomer Central American males. This

attention, however, must shift from the deficit-based approach that is the norm in many schools to a strengths-based paradigm. My professional experiences support the belief that by incorporating the voices of these young men into decision-making processes, high school principals can build a more welcoming school culture to support these students' integration (Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) and, ultimately, their academic achievement.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of high school principals' beliefs, background knowledge about ELs, and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. Through a mixed-methods approach that included data collection through semi-structured interviews with school leaders, document analysis, as well as student surveys and interviews, I explored how high school principals create inclusive learning environments that support these learners and the staff members who work with them. Findings may inform other secondary leaders who are seeking ways to cultivate a sense of belonging for similar newcomers (Gerhart et al., 2011; Hos, 2016; Scanlan & López, 2012; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016) and, in turn, foster their academic achievement.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This study examined how high school principals' beliefs, background knowledge of ELs, and practices impact the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. This work is grounded in current research asserting leaders' critical role, albeit indirect, in creating generative learning environments that foster student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Supovitz et al., 2009). These optimal conditions are vital in supporting newcomer Central American males at the high school level, a growing population with higher-than-average dropout rates. The research literature suggests that by addressing these students' needs, school leaders guided by an equity-driven vision can bolster these learners' connections to school, thereby increasing the probability that they will remain in school, improve their English, and develop other essential skills necessary to graduate and prepare for their post-secondary pathway.

In this study, semi-structured interviews with leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey added detail to the field's understanding of what newcomer Central American males need and how one school, noted for its success, addressed those needs. First, I will present the data around the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males from the perspectives of school leaders and the students themselves (research question one). Next, data will be presented and analyzed regarding the decision-making processes employed by school leaders to determine the supports necessary to address these learners' unique needs (research question two). Finally, I will describe the

findings on the practices, programs, and supports in place at DSHS to support newcomer Central American males (research question three).

Perceived Needs of Newcomer Central American Males (Research Question One)

Based on their experiences working with newcomers, the six school leaders at DSHS described what they saw as the most significant challenges faced by these students. The five student participants reflected on their own experiences and recalled the challenges that they had encountered upon arriving in the United States. The challenges identified can be grouped into four categories: (a) physiological needs, (b) socio-emotional needs, (c) needs related to acculturation, and (d) academic needs. These data points also laid the groundwork for research question two regarding the decision-making processes utilized to identify practices, programs, and supports to address these learners' unique needs, as well as research question three regarding the practices, programs, and supports in place to address these identified needs.

Physiological Needs

The school leaders interviewed recognized that while newcomers arrive with myriad strengths, they also face considerable challenges in satisfying their essential needs. Daniel Pembrooke, Principal of DSHS, spoke of the challenges that many students and their families face when finding housing. Many students live in crowded conditions or rent a room from a non-relative. In addition, a significant number may move due to a change in employment or in an effort to find more affordable housing. In 2020, the year that data were collected for this study, the school's mobility rate was 19.9%, compared to the district average of 11.7% (WCPS, 2020c).

In addition, several leaders described students' need for reliable sources of food, an unsurprising necessity given that 54% of DSHS students qualify for free or reduced lunch (WCPS 2020c). Cristina Inmar, ESOL Counselor, discussed the need for food on weekends and during extended breaks. Ms. Inmar explained, "When we have those big holidays, that access [to food] is gone. My job is to support that basic need while they don't have us at home…so that they can come to school and be successful." Students' need for reliable food sources became particularly evident during the district's closure in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many families were not eligible for financial assistance from the government, so some shared with school staff the challenges that they were facing in paying for groceries and rent. In seeing this need, school staff delivered food to families and hosted events such as a milk and dairy giveaway that supported approximately 1,400 families (M. Everett, personal communication, June 13, 2020).

Many newcomers also need assistance with other essential needs. The school offers students backpacks and school supplies when they arrive. Furthermore, because these learners come from countries with warm climates, a significant number lack appropriate clothing for fall and winter, such as long-sleeved shirts or coats. Finally, access to affordable health care presents another challenge for families who lack medical and dental insurance.

Maintenance of Dignity

In addition to these physiological needs, leaders also recognized students' desire to maintain their dignity. Cristina Inmar, ESOL Counselor, spoke at length about the dual challenge of wanting to help students while also respecting their pride and independence,

a sentiment that was corroborated by two of the students interviewed. One of the students, 19-year-old Guillermo, reflected on his agentive behavior and explained the origins of his self-reliance as the following:

> Well, since I was in my country I learn [sic] to not to give up, even if I don't have help. When I was back there, my grandparents, they're old so I only have my aunt. She was the only one who used to help me with the homework, but she didn't finish high school back there in my country, so she didn't know a lot about school. So, I had to handle it by myself. I had to have my own responsibility to do what I had to do. When I came here, it was the same thing.

Guillermo's comments contextualized Ms. Inmar's observation that many young men are reluctant to ask for or accept resources from the school. According to the counselor, when offered items from the school's food pantry or clothing closet, these students often expressed the sentiment of "I'm not going to take something from anybody." Similarly, they are often reluctant to ask for help when they are in physical pain. Many experience back pain because they carry heavy items at work or dental pain due to lack of preventive care. However, if Ms. Inmar offers to find them medical assistance, they often minimize their discomfort. Ms. Inmar believes that this resistance to outside resources stems from the students' pride, but it may also be rooted in their belief that they cannot afford these supports. Ms. Inmar said that her responsibility is to build relationships with students so that they feel comfortable asking for help.

Financial Pressures

When asked about the challenges that they faced as newcomers, students' responses often contrasted with those shared by school leaders. Both groups, however, acknowledged the pressure of meeting financial obligations, as well as the impact of this pressure on their performance in school.

The five students interviewed worked during high school, although the number of hours per week varied. Guillermo, for example, reported that he lived with his guardian and worked 10–15 hours during the week. He explained the impact of working on his grades:

> So, in weekdays I only have [work] two days and sometimes three, but that is not a lot. It's only from 5:00 to 10:00. Even if it's not a lot, I feel like that has a great impact on my school qualifications, in my grades. Because if I had the whole time on it just for school, I'm pretty sure I'd had straight A's all my years, but I have a couple of C's and B's, which I think it's okay, right? I am trying to balance school and work and personal life, I think I'm doing a pretty good job, but yes, it has an effect on it [my grades].

Guillermo also shared that these financial pressures often made it challenging to envision himself graduating. When asked about his academic goals when he arrived in the United States, Guillermo reported that he did not know if he would graduate. In his perspective, "The purpose when you are in your country and you come here is to help your family to recover from what you've lost."

Another student, 20-year-old Fernando, shared his perspective on the importance of working. Before immigrating to the United States, Fernando was studying to be a mechanic in his final year of secondary school in Guatemala. He arrived in the United States in February 2017 and was placed in 11th grade due to the transfer credits accepted from his previous school. According to the ESOL Department Chair, Fernando was scheduled to be in 11th grade this year for the fourth time because he did not have enough credits to become a senior. This year, he had opted to take an Academy class in Auto Collision, one of the specialized classes offered in the district's six Academies that are part of the Career and Technical Education program. While taking an Academy class offered Fernando the opportunity to earn an industry certification, it also limited room in his schedule for other courses required for graduation. Despite his parents'

encouragement to focus on his studies, Fernando worked in a restaurant five days a week from 4:00–11:00. He explained that most students from Central America come to the United States with the goal of concomitantly working and attending school; however, he was fully aware of the adverse effects of working on his performance in school. After work, he had to do his homework and often went to bed close to 1:00 a.m., making it difficult to wake up for school. His parents would wake him when he overslept, urging him to go to school. Despite these supports, Fernando stopped attending Davis Springs for two weeks in fall 2019 to work. When he began missing school, one of his ESOL teachers noticed and called him several times, urging him to return to DSHS. Fernando reported that he had enrolled in an online program recommended by friends to earn his high school diploma. His teacher asked him to reconsider his decision and meet with her to discuss all of his options, including WCPS' Adult High School. Eventually, Fernando returned to school and expressed his desire to graduate to his ESOL teacher, counselor, and the ESOL Department Chair. By dropping his Auto Collision class and an elective, moving into senior sections of his English 11 and English Language Development (ELD) classes, and taking on two academic courses, he officially became a senior. According to ESOL Department Chair Mark Everett, Fernando's age placed him at high risk for dropping out. Mr. Everett believes that the decision to change Fernando's schedule was instrumental in keeping him in school until he graduated; however, he acknowledged the loss of practical experience associated with having to drop the Auto Collision course. Fernando could have stayed at Davis Springs until he was 22 in order to potentially earn his industry certification in Auto Collision; however, he expressed the desire to graduate as soon as possible so that he could begin working.

Student survey responses corroborated the tension between working and fulfilling school-related responsibilities (see Table 6). Only 67% of students responded “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” when asked if they regularly attended their classes. However, 75% of students indicated that they regularly completed assignments, suggesting that some are finishing their work even if they are not attending class. These survey data, along with the student interviews, suggest that financial pressures may adversely affect students’ attendance and academic performance, a reality that I observed in my previous role as an ESOL teacher.

Table 6

Percentage of Students Who Agree or Strongly Agree (4 or 5) with Survey Statements

Domain	Survey Question	Student Response
Sample Size		n = 24
Academic Self-Concept	1. I regularly attend all of my classes.	67%
	2. I regularly complete my work for my classes.	75%
	3. Graduating from high school is important to me.	88%
	4. After I graduate from high school, I will go to work.	50%
	5. After I graduate from high school, I will go to college.	38%
School Climate	6. I feel welcome at this school.	75%
	7. I feel safe at this school.	79%
	8. I feel connected to students at this school.	54%
	9. Adults at this school care about me.	75%
	10. Adults at this school know about me as a person.	42%
	11. Adults at this school want me to be successful.	79%
	12. I can get help at this school if I need it.	75%
	13. I have a voice in my classroom or school.	50%

Disciplinary Policies	14. Teachers at this school respect students.	88%
	15. Administrators at this school respect students.	88%
	16. The security team at this school respects students.	83%
	17. If I get in trouble, the consequences are fair.	71%
Extracurricular Activities	18. I know about sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	67%
	19. It is easy to understand how to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	50%
	20. It is important to me to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school.	42%
	21. I feel welcome to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school.	42%

Three other students shared their decisions to limit how much they worked. All students had worked at some point in their high school career but were not working at the time of the interview. Carlos, an 18-year-old student who played soccer for DSHS for two years, spoke of the challenges of balancing school, work, and being on the team. During soccer season, he worked part-time in a restaurant, but he limited his hours to one weekday and weekends. Carlos said that he wanted to continue working, but he stopped so that he could watch his little sister after school when his mother got a job. Like Carlos, Miguel, a 17-year-old from Nicaragua, limited the amount of time that he worked. At his mother's urging, Miguel worked only in the summer so that he could focus on his studies during the school year. Similarly, Abel, an 18-year-old Honduran, limited his work hours to some weekends, when he would occasionally accompany his father to his construction site. Abel recognized how physically taxing his father's job was, and he saw the value in

his father's advice to stay in school. According to Abel, his father told him, "If you want something better, you need to study."

School leaders also recognized the financial pressures facing newcomer Central American males. Richard Norton, the Assistant Principal who supervises ESOL, explained that as young men, these students are often expected to attend school but also to provide financial support to their families. According to the ESOL Department Chair, these students must often contribute to expenses such as rent. At the same time, they often need to repay family members who helped finance their journey to the United States and send money to support their families in their home countries. Counselor Cristina Inmar, who is of Central American descent, explained that these financial pressures also stem from what she perceives to be part of *machismo*. According to Ms. Inmar, these students feel obligated to provide for their families, a sentiment that is compounded if they have children of their own. They know that if they work right away, they can earn money to support their families. This immediate return is appealing; consequently, many students are often willing to take on any type of job that they can find, regardless of how physically taxing it might be. Some young men become frustrated if Ms. Inmar informs them that they are not old enough to work. The counselor tries to convey to students that their job is to come to school and "get ahead." However, Ms. Inmar often finds it challenging to convince students of the long-term benefits of finishing high school when, many "want immediate gratification." She explained that it is challenging to compete with students' basic needs:

> They know that if they work right now, they'll get a paycheck and that's immediate and they can help out. They see that return right away. I'm telling them, 'Come to school every day, wait four years, and then you'll get a [high school] degree and be working less.' It's not as appealing. I think that's really

> difficult for them. It's hard for me to say, ‘Come to school,’ when I know they don't have what they need to eat. So, of course me telling them stay in school for seven hours when you can get a check for seven hours. I can't fight with that.

Ever Fernandez, an ESOL counselor of South American descent, explains that the pressure to work becomes particularly pronounced when students turn 18, the age when compulsory education ceases. At that point, many students find themselves deciding whether they will stay in school or leave to work full-time. According to Mr. Fernandez, “If there’s no strong connection to school, ...they’re going to choose work.”

Socio-Emotional Needs

In addition to meeting students’ physiological needs, school leaders recognized the importance of providing students with socio-emotional support during their acculturation process.

Challenges Related to Trauma, Separation, and Reunification

According to the principal, many of these students have experienced trauma, either in their native countries or during their journey to the United States. In addition, a significant number of students have faced challenges associated with separation from loved ones in their home country or reunification with family members after years of separation. For example, Guillermo left behind his grandparents and an aunt in El Salvador. He did not provide any details about his parents, explaining only that his aunt was the only person who helped him with his homework since his grandparents were elderly. Guillermo came to the United States to live with an uncle, his girlfriend, and their three children, all of whom he met for the first time when he arrived in this country. The other four students explained that they had been separated from at least one parent for between seven and fourteen years.

Challenges of Cultural Norms

Despite these challenges with trauma, separation, and reunification, many students are reluctant to discuss personal problems with school staff. Several of the students explained that they only talked about academic issues with teachers and counselors; only one of the students interviewed knew that the school had a social worker and a school psychologist. When asked to identify an adult at school with whom he had a trusting relationship, Miguel explained his preference to keep personal problems private: "I don't talk a lot about my life, like personal problems. If I want something or I need something…, I will ask my mom... But if I'm sad, I don't talk about that. I keep it inside." Counselor Cristina Inmar recognized that many newcomers, particularly young men, need time before they can trust adults at school. Ms. Inmar has found that some students welcome the opportunity to talk about their emotions related to separation, reunification, or other issues. If she cannot help them, she can introduce them to the school's social worker or psychologist. Other students, such as Miguel, are reluctant to discuss any challenges related to their families. As a Latina, the counselor believes that some of the desire for privacy may be cultural:

> Everything that's home stays at home. You don't share family problems. They don't cry. 'We're not supposed to be emotional.' It's just a lot of unpacking with the boys…Once you have broken down the walls, they're more willing to be more open to sharing…So, once I get their trust, I feel they come back and check in a lot more often and they know that this is a comfortable, safe space for them…It's like pulling teeth to get there, but once it's there, I see they come back and they check in and it's not me prying anymore.

Desire for Belonging

While student and leader perspectives did not fully align on the need for socio-emotional supports, both groups agreed on newcomers' desires to carve out a social niche

in their new school. All of the students identified making friends and fitting in as one of the primary challenges that they faced upon arriving at DSHS. Many found it simple to make friends because the school has a significant Spanish-speaking population. The majority befriended other Latinos in their ESOL classes. Miguel described his experience in his P.E. class meeting Latinos born in the United States, while Carlos explained that his cousin who was at DSHS introduced him to his friends.

These positive experiences were partially reflected in their survey responses to questions about school climate. Seventy-five percent of students indicated that they felt welcome at the school, and 79% reported feeling safe. However, only 54% of students indicated that they felt connected to students at DSHS (see Table 6). The lower response to the question about connectedness to other students suggests that students' friendships may be limited to classmates. Richard Norton, DSHS Assistant Principal, shared that sometimes newcomers are not fully welcomed by other students. Norton remarked: "They're strangers in a new land and…they're easy targets for some of the English-speaking kids…These kids who don't speak the language and are new, they get picked on and it's difficult."

Extracurricular activities. Extracurricular involvement surfaced as a sub-theme within the discussion of students' need for a sense of belonging. Students and leaders differed in the perception of the importance of involvement in after-school clubs, activities, and sports. Of the five students interviewed, only Carlos played soccer for the school team, an experience that helped him make friends from varying backgrounds; he stopped after two years due to family obligations. Miguel shared that he wanted to try out for the team, but he did not have the right paperwork regarding the required medical

insurance. Other students did not participate in sports due to lack of interest or limited time because of their work schedules. According to Guillermo, sports did not appeal to him because he does not consider himself an athlete. He spoke instead about his involvement in after-school activities such as the National Honor Society or clubs with a focus on college preparation. According to Guillermo, he found time to participate in these activities because they aligned to his interests and goals. He was particularly drawn to activities where he could learn from guest speakers about the college application process.

Several leaders discussed the value of fostering student involvement in extracurricular activities to bolster their sense of belonging. Counselor Cristina Inmar explained that becoming involved in after-school activities can yield multiple benefits for students; she acknowledged, however, that the paperwork associated with the eligibility process is complicated. This notion was confirmed by student survey data, with only 50% of students reporting that they found it easy to understand how to participate in extracurricular activities (see Table 6). According to the counselor, the required paperwork hinders newcomers' participation in sports:

> The process to get them to play sports is so over their heads. That would be such a great outlet to keep them off the street. But how are they going to do that concussion training? How are they going to get that insurance? How are they going to fill out these forms that [are]…in English only? If that process could be a little bit more… streamlined, I could get more kids playing soccer into a healthier outlet that helps their mental health as well as their social skills, in terms of getting them to practice more English and teamwork and just basic skills that you need at a job anywhere when you get out of here. If I could do that…, we'd be in a better place in terms of a lot of our kids not falling into the wrong crowds.

The counselor's comments illuminate some of the obstacles that students face if they want to participate in sports. Although the paperwork described is required by the state's

governing organization for interscholastic athletic competition, school leaders echoed the challenges. They recognized that students would benefit from additional supports to guide them through the process, a topic that is addressed further in the discussion of research question three.

Challenges of Acculturation

Leaders and students both described the challenges associated with simultaneously acclimating to a new country and an unfamiliar school setting.

Acclimation to Life in the United States

The students spoke more about the challenges of acclimating to life in the United States than the school leaders. The young men shared that they had come from small towns or cities in Central America where people knew each other. Guillermo described how humbling it was to be in a new country where everything was unfamiliar. He readily volunteered to share his experience about trying to get to his school's Back-to-School orientation session shortly after his arrival in the United States:

> Orientation day is when you come to see how school is. I mean, there's teachers and everything, so you can feel good in school, right? So, I was…waiting for the bus, but I did not know where the bus was going to come…There was no one there…so I missed the bus. I didn't want to be late, so I started walking, but I did not know where I was walking to. I walked for 30 minutes. I was lost, and I was 45 minutes late. I arrived in the back of the school and I come in and I was like, 'Oh my God, this is so new.' And I didn't know any English, so I couldn't communicate with people to ask for directions or…any questions. I was just like paying attention without saying anything. That was so awkward.

This anecdote provides a first-hand description of the challenges of life in a new country. At the same time, it demonstrates Guillermo's agentive behavior. Guillermo's guardian could not take the day off from work to drive him to the orientation, but he was determined to get to the school on his own.

Both leaders and students spoke about the natural tendency of newcomers to seek out familiarity in the United States, particularly other Spanish speakers. School leaders also spoke of students' propensity to seek out Spanish-speaking staff members. Counselor Ever Fernandez explained that students at DSHS are assigned to an ESOL counselor when they are English Language Proficiency (ELP) Level 1 or 2; when they reach ELP Level 3, they transition to a different counselor according to their last name. Both he and the Assistant Principal of ESOL shared that even after ELs are officially assigned to a new counselor, many continue to seek out the assistance of their ESOL counselor and other Spanish-speaking staff members. According to Mr. Fernandez, the impact of being able to communicate with students in their native language is sometimes underestimated:

> Sometimes people don't really understand how strong the language is informing and helping people adapt and finding a comfort level. You see that even with the Threes and Fours that go back to that alpha [counselor], they still come to us because they know we speak the same language.

All the students indicated that they quickly made friends with Spanish speakers from their own or other Spanish-speaking countries. According to the ESOL Department Chair, one strength of Latino students is their willingness to support each other. He explained that even students from Guatemala who speak indigenous languages are usually able to connect with other students at the school. Despite the advantages of having a significant Latino population at the school, Counselor Ever Fernandez suggested that this demographic reality can sometimes contribute to segregated enclaves. Because newcomers tend to associate with others who speak the same language or share the same culture, these learners can become isolated both culturally and linguistically. Mr. Fernandez explained:

> A lot of the perceptions they have on American culture is based on what they see on TV or what their other relatives that have come over have told them about the United States. That's just a small part of what the US is…Because of the language, they'll go to the same store where people speak the same language or things like that, so it's a very narrow view of the US culture. It's like there's no tie, there's no connection, a strong connection, to the school, which is a challenge.

This comment provides insights on the challenges that school leaders face in fostering a sense of school connectedness for many newcomers. If students feel comfortable with other students who have similar backgrounds and speak the same language, they may be hesitant to interact with students from different backgrounds, particularly if there is a language barrier.

Acclimation to School in the United States

The challenge of acclimating to school in the United States was a common theme in interviews with both leaders and students. Several leaders spoke of the difficulty that many students with limited or interrupted formal education, or SLIFE, faced in beginning their studies after being out of school for some time. According to Counselor Ever Fernandez, many students worked in agriculture in their home countries so their attendance at school may have been erratic. When it was harvest season, young men were expected to work rather than attend school. Mr. Fernandez also reported that some students did not attend school regularly due to fear of gangs or dangerous commutes to school. None of the students interviewed reported gaps in their studies like those described by Mr. Fernandez; Carlos, however, did speak about the presence of gangs in his community when he was asked about something he had disliked about his last school in El Salvador.

Some leaders spoke of the challenges associated with students' age upon arrival in the United States. According to Mark Everett, ESOL Department Chair, some newcomer

Central American males arrive at age 17 or 18. Many feel frustrated when they realize that it may take several years to graduate because they must start by taking English 9. In addition, because many were working in their countries, they sometimes struggle to understand some of the school rules. Assistant Principal Norton summarized some of his conversations with students: "'What do you mean not talking in class? What do you mean I can't go to the bathroom when I want?' Those are things that they have not experienced." Linda Ivery, Director of Student Services, added that school staff cannot assume that newcomers know and understand school and district rules; students must be taught expectations in a comprehensible manner. Because some students may lack literacy in Spanish, school staff must find varied ways to share important information.

The construct of time also surfaced as a common theme in responses from both leaders and students. Several of the students interviewed explained that schools in their country offered morning and afternoon sessions, which meant that they generally attended school for four hours a day. Guillermo also shared that in his school in El Salvador, the students had two 30-minute breaks during which they could visit with friends, buy a snack from the canteen, or play soccer. The transition to a longer school day in the United States, coupled with the challenges of navigating an immense building and being immersed in a new language for seven hours, was taxing for the students when they were newcomers. In addition, Assistant Principal Richard Norton explained that some students struggle with the strict bell schedule and limited passing time between classes. At DSHS, the administration conducts frequent tardy sweeps to ensure that all students arrive to class on time. As the Assistant Principal who handles all discipline for newcomers, Mr. Norton frequently addresses issues of tardiness. Mr. Norton, who is

Latino, explained the challenges that some students face in adapting to expectations in U.S. schools regarding time and punctuality:

> The other challenges ELs have is the structure. Our school system isn't structured to support students who have not grown up in this certain system. And what I mean that by is, no other place in the world that they have to be somewhere at 8:10 and at 9:37. That kind of specificity regarding time, that's not the world they grew up in.

Mr. Norton's remarks suggest that to support newcomers, staff must understand students' cultural backgrounds. To foster cultural proficiency, high-quality professional learning opportunities are needed, a topic that is explored later in a discussion of research question three regarding practices, programs, and supports that are in place at DSHS to support newcomer Central American males.

Academic Needs

The need for academic support surfaced as a common theme across interviews. A review of the coded interviews revealed four main areas where newcomers needed support: (a) language acquisition, (b) relevant curriculum and instruction, (c) academic guidance, and (d) alternate pathways to graduation and post-secondary success.

Language Acquisition

The challenge of learning English was one of the most pronounced themes that emerged from the interviews. Four out of five students and all of the leaders cited the acquisition of a new language as a significant challenge for newcomers. Two students discussed the value of learning English. When asked about his academic goals, Guillermo shared that his initial objective upon arriving to the United States was to learn English, not necessarily to graduate:

> When I came here, my goal was to learn English, not graduation. I was like, I don't know if I'm going to finish school…But since I was a minor, I had to come

> to school. Even if I wasn't a minor,…I still would have taken English classes, because I know they will help me a lot in the future.

When Guillermo arrived in WCPS, his English was assessed at Central Registration, and he tested into Level 2, one level higher than many newcomers achieve upon arrival. After one year in sheltered ESOL classes, Guillermo tested into Level 4 based on his results on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessment. When asked how he progressed so quickly, Guillermo replied that his teachers pushed him to use his English even though there were many Spanish-speaking students in his classes. He said it was challenging to practice his English because it was tempting to speak Spanish with his Latino classmates. He admitted that he lacked confidence in himself and worried about saying things incorrectly. According to Guillermo, he often thought, “Oh my God, what are they going to say if I make a mistake? They're going to laugh at me."

Abel also emphasized the importance of learning English. He recounted that his father moved to the United States first, and Abel remained in Honduras with his mother. After thirteen years of separation, his father informed Abel that he would bring him to the United States in a year. To prepare for the move, his father helped finance English classes every Saturday. Despite this year of classes, Abel tested into Level 1 ESOL upon arriving in WCPS. When asked what was most challenging about English, Abel said that it was hard for him to speak the language. He shared that he is timid in Spanish and thought that his reserved nature in his first language might contribute to his reticence to speak in English. According to Abel, his father does not speak English fluently, but he continues to tell his son how important it is for him to learn the language to be successful.

Several students also discussed the challenge of finding the opportunity to practice their English when they were newcomers. When asked about their preference

between sheltered ESOL classes and general education classes with monolingual English speakers, the students reported that they saw value in both settings. The young men recognized that when they first arrived, they needed support from Spanish-speaking peers who knew some English. Carlos said that he did not practice his English that much in his ESOL classes because there were so many Latino students; instead, he practiced with his cousin and later with his teammates on the school's soccer team. Abel spoke English with his 13-year-old brother with whom he had traveled to the United States because his sibling was acquiring English with greater ease than he was. Some of their teachers used Spanish to explain difficult concepts. In contrast, Abel shared that in several of his ESOL classes, teachers had a rule that students had to speak in English, which he liked. Similarly, Guillermo shared the benefit of having a teacher who encouraged him to practice his English:

> I didn't know English a lot, so I used to speak Spanish with all my classmates. One of my teachers was there like, 'English, all English.' And I was like, 'Oh my God, I have to do it.' And she kind of pushed me on that, to speak more English. That helped me a lot, getting used to speak more English with my classmates, even though we all knew and wanted to speak in Spanish with everybody.

When students transitioned into mainstream classes with monolingual English speakers, they had to develop more coping strategies such as self-advocacy. Miguel, a young man from Nicaragua who exited the ESOL program in two years, shared how he handled the challenge of being in mainstream classes:

> So, it actually happens to me now that I have some classes that …don't have like any Hispanics... If I need something, I will ask them to help me, explain me a lot better because I didn't understand English. But these students here are actually nice, like they can help you.

Fernando shared that the biggest challenge in mainstream classes was how quickly some people spoke, so he had to advocate for himself and ask them to repeat themselves.

School leaders also recognized the challenges that students faced in learning the academic English necessary to graduate from high school. The ESOL Department Chair shared that, in his experience, some Central American males come to high school with the goal of learning English to secure employment. According to him, students often find it challenging when they are presented with more academically rigorous tasks such as reading Shakespeare, which they may not find relevant to their immediate goals.

Another leader spoke of the need for additional supports for newcomers when they first arrive. He believes that it would be helpful to have recently arrived ELs attend a newcomer academy at an alternate location for a year to assist them as they acclimate to school in the United States:

> I know they say it's a school inside of a school, but some kind of level one, level two school where we can teach kids to be students, where they could have access to the English, the Math, [and] some kind of technical course….They need to learn a little bit of the academics. They need to learn the school and then come back to their base school.

Curriculum and Instruction

Some students expressed the need for classes to prepare them for their post-secondary pathway. Fernando, for example, said that he dropped out temporarily to work in a restaurant because he found school "boring." When asked what the school could do to help other students with similar backgrounds, Fernando remarked, "[Schools should] have more programs so that they [students] can keep going to school. More than anything guys my age like the Academy…Some of them like air conditioning and auto collision." Carlos also spoke of the value of the Academy classes offered by WCPS. Students such as Carlos who are interested in taking Academy courses at a WCPS school other than their own are provided transportation; however, they must have enough room in their

schedule to accommodate the class and the travel time. Assistant Principal Norton stated that traveling to another school can be challenging because high schools have varying bell schedules, an issue that DSHS is seeking to address with its new bell schedule for the upcoming school year. In addition, students need some proficiency in English to enroll in Academy classes as many have extensive technical vocabulary. When he was a junior, Carlos took his cousin's advice and enrolled in Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) I and II at another WCPS school to prepare to work after he graduated. When asked why some students drop out before they graduate, Carlos explained that some students did not find relevance in what they were studying.

School leaders also recognized the value of Academy courses. Cristina Inmar, ESOL Counselor, believes that Academy courses align with many students' need for immediate benefits. She remarked,

> I would just like to see more opportunities in terms of Academies, allowing them to leave with some certificate when they leave, just so they have something to be able to work off of…If I could say, 'Look, do this class for two years and you can walk out with some kind of certificate that'll help you get a job,' I feel it is very appealing… If I could offer something like that, I think would be really helpful. It might help me keep them at school longer.

The comments from students and leaders about the value of the Academies are pertinent as the school looks for ways to keep students in school until they graduate. Because many students are not able to access Academy courses until their junior year, the first two years of their high school careers are critical. The school's efforts to keep students at DSHS beyond the first two years is addressed with the discussion of research question three.

Academic Guidance

The need for academic guidance surfaced as a theme in both sets of semi-structured interviews. Several school leaders talked about the importance of engaging

students in goal setting, a theme echoed by students. When asked what the school could do to help other students with similar backgrounds, Miguel shared the following suggestion:

> I think you have to interview the student by Spanish or it depends on the country they came and prepare the student how to describe what he wants to be in the future. So, the school can give some help or choosing the right classes for him and they can give tips about how to succeed in the future. You can talk more with some adult, a counselor, so you can know more about where you are going to be.

Survey results revealed students' goals for the immediate future and their post-secondary pathway. Of the students surveyed, 88% indicated that graduating from high school was a priority. Regarding post-secondary plans, 50% of students reported that they planned to work, and 38% responded that they planned to go to college (see Table 6). It must be noted, however, that these data derived from the survey responses may not fully represent students' post-secondary plans. For example, during the semi-structured interviews, Abel reported that he planned to work first to earn money for college; these plans may not be accurately depicted in the survey data.

Several students pointed out that their goals had evolved over their high school career. Carlos shared that he knew early in his high school career that he wanted to study HVAC, as his cousin had taken this pathway and recommended it. In contrast, Miguel did not start considering potential career fields until his sophomore year, when his mother began asking him about his plans for the future. Similarly, Guillermo began thinking seriously about graduating during his junior year:

> I think it was…my junior year, because I heard from classmates or teachers like, 'This is your second last year guys. You got to make sure you got all the credits and you know how to go out and take the next step out of high school.' And I was like, 'What are these teachers talking about?' And I realized, 'I have to graduate next year.' I was like, 'I need to have everything ready for graduation. I need all

> my classes. I need to make sure I know enough English to go out there and communicate with people.' And so, I started having…closer communication with my counselor and talking about credits and classes.

Several students spoke about the need for academic guidance regarding classes required for graduation. Guillermo explained that when he first arrived at DSHS, he did not fully understand which classes were required for graduation, so he relied on his counselor's guidance. One of the school's ESOL teachers shared that understanding graduation requirements is a common challenge, and that many students do not understand the difference between elective classes and classes that will count towards graduation. According to Guillermo, he was one credit short of earning an advanced diploma because he took Algebra I Part I his first year for elective credit. In the interview, he shared that in retrospect, he wished he had taken a more advanced mathematics class his freshman year:

> I have all the credits. I have some extra credits, but I still need one math credit, which I cannot now, because it's too late. I'm a senior, so I'm going to have to go for the secondary [standard] diploma.

Several students also expressed the need for information about the college application process. Two of the students interviewed shared that they actively sought out information on scholarships and financial aid. They reported that they went to their counselor for information about classes and required paperwork such as transcripts; however, they also enlisted the assistance of other staff members, after-school groups, and volunteers from community organizations associated with the school. Miguel planned to go to a local community college and then transfer to a four-year university. He shared that one of his former ESOL teachers provided him with information about scholarships and helped him apply. Miguel reported that when he saw signs posted outside of classrooms indicating where teachers had attended college, he would ask them

about their experiences. When asked about how he succeeded, Miguel emphasized the importance of asking others for help and learning from their experiences.

Alternate Pathways to Graduation and Post-Secondary Success

Several leaders expressed the need to have multiple pathways available to prepare students for their post-secondary lives. One leader explained that some newcomers come to school with the goal of learning enough English to begin working. According to him, these students would benefit from additional supports to ensure that they can be successful if they leave high school before they graduate:

> We just need more options. At the moment, there's mostly a one-size-fits-all sort of package. You all take English nine, you're all going to be on a four-year graduation path. And that's not true for a lot of kids. So, I think we need to be able to offer other things that help them meet their goals. And if their goal is not to graduate, I think we need to accept that and do what we can to help them in a year or two that they are going to be at our school.

He said that while Academy classes are of interest to many of these students, their ability to access these courses is often delayed until they have acquired more English or have enough space in their schedule. Given this reality and the accountability pressures associated with on-time graduation, this leader said he is unsure what the solution to this challenge might be.

Students also expressed the need for more preparation for life after high school. When asked if they felt prepared for the next step in their lives, many students were unsure. Carlos said, “They tell me how to get prepared for college, but not for life I would say.” Similarly, Guillermo said that school had prepared him to attend community college, but he was not convinced it had prepared him for life in general. When asked what the school could do to support students in this area, Guillermo suggested:

> I think the school should teach more of the strategies after high school. They only focus more on class and how to solve math problems. I think they should focus more…about out in society stuff. Not just in school academics and all that kind of stuff. They should think more outside of school.

Fernando, a student who plans to work after graduating, says that he thinks that students would benefit from learning more in high school about how to manage their finances.

Summary of Research Question One

Several salient themes regarding the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males (research question one) emerged from the perspectives of the six interviewed school leaders and five students preparing to graduate, along with student survey data. The data suggest that the most pressing needs of these students fall into the following categories: (a) physiological needs, (b) socio-emotional challenges, (c) challenges related to acculturation, and (d) academics. Within these categories, areas of alignment and misalignment between the responses of the two participant groups were identified; areas of misalignment are discussed and analyzed in Chapter 5. This identification of perceived needs is critical to the discussion of research questions two and three regarding the processes used to determine the practices, programs, and supports that DSHS has enacted to support their newcomer Central American males.

Processes to Determine Practices, Programs, and Supports in Response to Perceived Needs (Research Question Two)

Through semi-structured interviews, DSHS leaders proffered their perspectives on the processes utilized to act on their perceptions of students' needs and determine the practices, programs, and supports necessary to support newcomer Central American males at the school (research question two). Next, I examine how DSHS school leaders

utilize distributed leadership to draw on internal and external expertise to carry out their work, as guided by their vision-driven and data-driven decision-making processes.

Distributed Leadership

Central to the distributed leadership perspective is just how, through "artifacts" like tools, routine, and structures (Halverson, 2006), interactions among leaders distribute leadership responsibilities among them. In his interview, Dr. Pembrooke discussed the importance of valuing the expertise of others and then empowering them to carry out aspects of the work. The collective of interviews provided many examples of this leadership perspective in practice.

Dr. Pembrooke shared the evolution of his role related to decision-making processes about ELs. As a former science teacher and administrator at a less diverse high school in WCPS, Dr. Pembrooke acknowledged that he "had a lot of learning to do" about ELs when he first arrived at DSHS. During his first year as principal, the district was in the process of revamping its HS ESOL curriculum to provide ELs with a four-year pathway to graduation. Some DSHS ESOL teachers found it challenging to implement the new curriculum and wanted to share their concerns directly with Dr. Pembrooke. Several teachers did not fully agree with the new curriculum, and they feared that the principal was not going to allow them any flexibility with implementation. Dr. Pembrooke's goal was to empower the teachers and convey a sense of flexibility. He said that he communicated to his ESOL teachers that they were all working toward the same goal of student progress; they were the experts in the classroom, and they had some flexibility and freedom with their students.

Dr. Pembrooke provided another example of how his role in decision-making processes related to ELs has shifted since his arrival at DSHS. When Dr. Pembrooke first arrived at DSHS, many teachers wanted to speak directly to him rather than meeting with their assistant principal first. While he acknowledged that it is common for staff to want to meet directly with a new principal, he described that now, he and other school leaders have built an instructional leadership team that teachers trust. Dr. Pembrooke described the evolution of his interactions with staff in the following way:

> A lot of [teachers] don't come straight to me anymore. They work through this …leadership support group that we have for them that we've…empowered. Generally, now what happens is it will move…through that structure and then the administrator for ESOL will come to me and say, 'We're facing this challenge. Can you help me problem solve this challenge that we're facing?'

Dr. Pembrooke described how he believes in empowering staff to make the right decisions with his counsel as needed. He stated that his goal is to create a culture where people "can think creatively and be innovating" and that he wants his staff to know that he supports them but that he is not "looking over their shoulder." He described how this means that on questions such as course selection or the creation of the ESOL master schedule, he defers to his leaders with expertise in those areas.

Other school leaders confirmed the existence of this decision-making structure at the school. However, there appeared to be varying interpretations of the principal's role in providing counsel related to ELs. Some leaders shared that when asked for input, Dr. Pembrooke is often deliberative. At times, however, his need to reflect on issues can be a source of frustration for some staff members seeking a response for an issue that they perceive as time-sensitive.

Several examples of the utilization of internal expertise congruent with the principal's leadership philosophy emerged from other interviews and follow-up emails from the ESOL Department Chair. Considering the instructional demands placed on school leaders, it is not surprising that the principal and assistant principal frequently utilize the ESOL Department Chair's expertise. The ESOL Department Chair also plays a pivotal role in building staff awareness about ELs. At schools such as DSHS with significant EL populations, the ESOL Department Chair has a non-teaching position in order to carry out the extensive administrative responsibilities associated with the role. At DSHS, the ESOL Department Chair works regularly with CTs on implementing instructional and testing accommodations for ELs as well as on accessing information on students' English proficiency in a district-wide database. Furthermore, the ESOL Department Chair attends meetings for students who qualify for both special education and ESOL services to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the student's ELP level and progress on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment used by the district. In addition, the Department Chair serves as a resource for ESOL and general education teachers who may have questions about individual students, instructional strategies, or resources.

The ESOL department provides support to other teams in the building as well. During the 2019-20 school year, the department received a professional development grant from the district's Office of ESOL Services to engage in school-based professional learning through a book study. Schools that applied for the grant had the option of selecting a text about supporting ELs. The Office of ESOL Services provided individual copies of the text for each ESOL teacher, as well as guiding questions around the text to discuss during a district-wide ESOL inservice. The ESOL department elected to read

Unlocking English Learners' Potential (Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017) about how to support ELs as they work to meet rigorous content standards. The ESOL Department Chair shared extra copies of the text with several general education teachers. In addition, ESOL teachers used the information gleaned from this book to enhance their own work teaching academic content such as government and to serve as a resource to general education teachers.

Besides supporting general education teachers in their work with ELs, this year the ESOL department held joint trainings with Student Services to support these students. Within Student Services, the ESOL counselors also served as resources because both had cultural and linguistic insights about ELs, particularly because one of the counselors was a former EL. For example, the Director of Student Services noticed that ELs were not signing up for certain electives, or they would complete what was required but would not go any further. She asked Mr. Fernandez, the ESOL counselor who is a former EL, if he had any insights. Based on his personal and professional experiences, he explained that Latin American students did not generally take electives in their home countries due to the compressed school day divided into morning and afternoon sessions; consequently, many were unaccustomed to selecting optional courses of interest. While this information was not confirmed in student interviews, these insights helped the Director of Student Services understand the need to provide ELs with more information about electives.

As is the case in many high schools, distributed leadership at DSHS involves collaboration among several teams across the school. One example of this collaboration is the relationship among the ESOL Department Chair, the assistant principal who supervises ESOL, and the principal. If issues surface in the ESOL department that need to

be addressed, the ESOL Department Chair will bring them to the attention of his assistant principal if he needs additional support. The assistant principal then decides whether he will involve other leaders in the building such as the principal or the Director of Student Services in the discussion or address the issue himself.

During the semi-structured interview, Dr. Pembrooke provided an example of a decision related to ELs in which he was directly involved. In spring 2019, the ESOL Department Chair and Assistant Principal Norton met with the principal and asked to pilot a new mathematics course sequence designed by the district's Office of ESOL Services for implementation during the following school year. This new sequence was comprised of two double block options to support students with numeracy gaps and prepare them for Algebra I. Dr. Pembrooke appreciated that the ESOL department perceived this pilot as an opportunity to meet students' needs more effectively, and he approved the request. The principal viewed this as an example of success in the building because ESOL teachers had the confidence and willingness to take on this challenge to support the school's ELs.

In most cases, the ESOL Department Chair works directly with the assistant principal of ESOL to address issues related to ELs. During the 2019-20 school year, a decision was made to have SLIFE focus on developing their numeracy and literacy skills during their first year at DSHS. Rather than take Government for ELs when they first arrived, as was recommended by the district, DSHS decided that they would take this class in their second year. In a similar vein, when the ESOL department recognized the need for additional supports for seniors, the ESOL Department Chair worked directly with the Assistant Principal of ESOL to organize an after-school program for ELs in

conjunction with a local faith-based organization. According to the ESOL Department Chair, during the program's pilot year, 15 ELs from varying demographic backgrounds regularly attended the after-school meetings once a week.

Data collected from semi-structured interviews revealed other examples of distributed leadership at DSHS. Linda Ivery, the Director of Student Services, collaborates closely with the two ESOL counselors. According to Ms. Ivery, the ESOL counselors will approach her if they see a situation or a trend that needs to be addressed. For instance, the triad has discussed which classes an EL might audit if he arrives at a certain point in the school year. The ESOL counselors shared with the Director of Student Services that students sometimes became confused when they had to retake an audited course the following year. The team recognized that this confusion indicated that students might not have understood the rationale for or implications of auditing a class; they agreed that they needed to take steps to ensure that these decisions were fully comprehended by students and families. In addition to these collaborative conversations, Ever Fernandez, ESOL Counselor, spoke of the trust inherent in his relationship with the Director of Student Services. Mr. Fernandez has a voice in raising caps in ESOL classes or adding sections if needed, particularly to accommodate an influx of students. If he sees that these classes are full, he approaches the Director of Student Services to let her know what he thinks needs to be done; he is then entrusted to take the necessary action to support students and teachers.

ESOL counselors also collaborate with the ESOL Department Chair and the Assistant Principal of ESOL to address the needs of newcomers. This team meets regularly to discuss students who may need additional support with grades, attendance,

behavior, or mental health concerns. At these meetings, the ESOL Department Chair shares any insights from teachers in his department. The team then works collaboratively to examine root causes of issues, identify interventions, and assign a person in charge of following up with the student. Because many newcomers, particularly young men, are older than their peers, the team also discusses whether WCPS' Adult High School might be considered as an option if needed.

Utilization of Student Voice

While the utilization of the internal expertise of staff was evident in the school's distributed leadership model, leaders cited the incorporation of student voice into decision-making processes as an area for potential growth. Dr. Pembrooke acknowledged that the school does not currently have a platform through which ELs can communicate directly with the principal. He has visited some classes such as Strategies for Success, but he believes that a more structured forum such as an ESOL Leadership class might help ensure that more students' voices are heard. This class, which seeks to develop the leadership skills of ELs, has been introduced at two WCPS high schools with a similar student population. DSHS will pilot its own ESOL Leadership class in the 2020-21 school year, and it will be open to ELs as an elective option. Ever Fernandez, ESOL Counselor, believes that the lack of opportunities for student voice is not because school leaders lack interest or do not care; he attributes it to the language barrier between newcomers and school staff. Linda Ivery, Director of Student Services, opined that many students are not accustomed to being asked to provide their perspective, so it might take some training to help them understand that they need to voice their needs.

While the voice of ELs may not be as evident at the school level, students can express their opinions to school staff such as their counselor and teachers. This perspective was partially corroborated by students through their survey and interview responses. Only 50 percent of survey respondents felt that they had a voice in the classroom or school (see Table 6). In the interviews, some students were aware of opportunities for students to have a voice at the school level. Abel said that his friend was in the Leadership class, and Miguel shared the example of Leadership students planning events such as Pajama Day during Spirit Week. Guillermo, a student who led a club after school, recognized that when students work together at the school level, they can enact change:

> If you want something to change at the school level, you get together a good amount of students. But if I do it myself...I think it wouldn't make any change. In my classroom…if I tell the teacher, 'Teacher, I think we should do this better than this or I do better with this,' I think the teacher will listen to me.

Other students shared Guillermo's perspective that their voices were heard at the classroom level. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents indicated that they could get help at the school if they needed it; during the interview, several students specified that they felt comfortable staying after school for extra help. Fernando appreciated how school staff supported him when he returned to school after reconsidering his decision to leave school to work full-time. When Fernando returned after a two-week absence, Assistant Principal Norton met with him to see how the school could support him. Fernando explained that in addition to the two weeks that he had missed, he had accumulated several other absences. Mr. Norton gave Fernando several options when they met. Fernando felt supported through this conversation, and he described the impact it had on him:

> They asked me if I wanted to change my schedule, and I said, 'No, it was okay.' They gave me options to do different things like leave early. I said, 'No, it was okay.' They gave me a deadline to prove myself and to go up in my classes. If I did well, they wouldn't make any changes. If I didn't do well, they would make a change. I went up in my classes.

The peer mentoring program initiated by senior ELs is one example of the incorporation of student voice at DSHS. According to ESOL teacher Karen Peterson, many newcomers "feel as if they have zero support at school," and her seniors wanted to do something to help (K. Peterson, personal communication, March 16, 2020). Ms. Peterson explained that ESOL teachers try to advise newcomers; however, some students are more likely to accept guidance from their peers, especially if they speak the same language. In this program, Ms. Peterson paired seniors with beginning-level ELs based on shared gender, language, personality traits, and interests to help the newcomers feel more comfortable at school. She also considered students' backgrounds, sometimes matching a struggling newcomer with a senior who had a similar experience when he first arrived. According to Ms. Peterson, the seniors were particularly effective in explaining the classes, credits, and exams that students needed to graduate. Mentors explained the difference between classes that counted toward graduation and classes that only counted as an elective credit, a concept that many seniors said they did not understand when they first arrived at DSHS.

Some students shared other ideas on how to ensure that more students' voices are heard at DSHS. Carlos and Miguel both suggested having individual conversations with newcomers. When asked what advice he would give to the principal about supporting young men like him, Carlos responded, "Listen to them. The teachers, they can see it, and they can tell the principal. Then the principal can talk to them one-on-one." Miguel

believed that young men would benefit from more goal-setting conversations in their native language. He explained:

> I think you have to interview the student by Spanish and prepare the student…to describe what he want [sic] to be in the future. The school can give some help or choosing the right classes for him and they can give tips about how to succeed in the future. You can talk more with some adult, a counselor, so you can know more about where you are going to be.

Utilization of External Expertise

In addition to utilizing internal expertise to inform its decision-making processes related to ELs, the DSHS leadership team collaborates with external experts such as community organizations and the district's Office of ESOL Services. Davis Springs has partnered with multiple non-profit and faith-based organizations to address the unique needs of its ELs and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males. By offering students supports such as gender-specific reunification groups and individual mentors, the school is addressing these learners' needs in a holistic manner.

The school also partners with the Office of ESOL Services on fostering the academic achievement of ELs. The Office of ESOL Services provides curriculum, resources, professional learning opportunities, and guidance to DSHS and the other WCPS high schools. Dr. Pembrooke explained that as the principal, he navigates how to utilize guidance from the Office of ESOL Services while also considering adaptations that may need to be made to meet the needs of the school's ELs. He recognizes that there is a sometimes a disconnect between the curriculum disseminated by the Office of ESOL Services and the perspectives of teachers who are charged with teaching with the materials. Dr. Pembrooke strives to "honor what is being asked of us to do with ESOL

students but also honor the staff that are working with these kids every day." He explained his approach to this challenge in the following way:

> If these folks come to me and say, 'This is really hard for us to do it this way. Can we have a little flexibility, a little freedom to approach it a little differently, keeping the same outcomes in mind?' I've tried to be very flexible about that because I know they have the kids' best interest in mind. I think that that's been helpful in supporting the kids, by supporting the teachers that are working with the kids and the teams that are working with the kids.

Vision- and Data-Driven Decision Making

To guarantee that all students are achieving at high levels, leaders must ensure that the school's vision is more than simply words on a website or in a School Improvement Plan. For a school's vision to translate into action, it must be shared across the school and rooted in a sense of collective responsibility for all students. At DSHS, this crafting of a shared vision occurs through frequent interactions such as formal and informal meetings among leaders. As a result, the shared vision of ensuring that all students are learning serves as a tool that shapes and directs the school's decision-making processes. For example, according to Dr. Pembrooke, he and his leadership team use the following questions to guide them as they make decisions: "Does it lead us towards this purpose, or does it lead us away? And if it leads us away from this purpose, why are we doing it?"

According to school leaders, the administrative team's discussion of possible changes to the bell schedule illustrates how the school's shared vision drives decision-making processes. In the 2019-20 school year, before the team began considering adjustments to the bell schedule for the 2020-21 school year, Dr. Pembrooke reminded his team that any decision made should be aligned to their commitment to ensure that all students are learning. Prior to the COVID-19 closure in March 2020, DSHS decided to

alter its bell schedule to incorporate a second breakfast every day and an advisory/intervention block every other day. According to school leaders, the new bell schedule will benefit ELs in several ways. Adding a second breakfast will help ensure that all students have time to eat in the morning. Furthermore, adding an advisory period in which a teacher mentors a group of students over four years will help strengthen relationships. In addition, Assistant Principal Norton believes that the new bell schedule will enhance learning opportunities for ELs interested in taking Academy classes at other WCPS schools. He indicated that many young men have expressed interest in enrolling in the electrical and construction classes offered at another of the district's six Academies, but many have been unable to access the classes due to the lack of alignment between the schools' bell schedules. Under the current schedule, students who access those courses miss out on a period of class when they return to DSHS because of the differing bell schedules. For ELs who already face the challenge of acquiring the required credits for graduation, this loss of instructional time is particularly problematic. Mr. Norton is hopeful that the new bell schedule will allow more ELs to access these courses. Despite these possible advantages, some school leaders expressed concern that the elimination of the school's 50-minute period that meets daily might make it more challenging for counselors or intervention groups to find time to work with students; however, the addition of an intervention block to support students holistically appears to have addressed these concerns. This example demonstrates how the school's vision drives its decision-making processes; other decisions also raise points about their potential impact on ELs.

Several school leaders also cited the importance of data-driven decision making at DSHS. Linda Ivery, Director of Student Services, explained the importance of utilizing data as evidence if something is not working effectively. Ivery described the process that she uses to approach the principal about an issue that she feels should be addressed:

> So, I gather up [data] and then I typically present my points to the principal like, 'We have a problem here. This is something that has to change. I have already talked to these people. I've got them to understand where the holes are. You're going to need to make the decision which way it goes, but here I present essentially my case.' Then he will do his own…research if necessary, or he may just trust my case. He might have enough of his own evidence as it is for that.

She went on to share an example of a decision related to the size of ESOL classes. Before the 2019-20 school year began, some teachers in the ESOL Department requested to start the year with smaller class sizes to accommodate any growth in the EL population during the first quarter. While growth in the EL population sometimes occurs in the fall, Ms. Ivery related how that she had not felt comfortable justifying smaller class sizes based on uncertain predictions. She recognized that some staff members disagreed with the decision and felt that their voices were not being heard; however, her goal was to do what was best for students based on the data available when the decision was made. This discussion, common in high schools with large EL populations, is challenging because schools are staffed based on enrollment from January of the previous school year; consequently, increases in student enrollment that occur during the summer or fall are often difficult to accommodate. After the school year began and EL enrollment was increasing, the ESOL Department shared its concerns about class size with the principal. The school was eventually allotted two additional ESOL teachers. In addition, some ESOL teachers at the school accepted an extended teaching contract to cover the added

classes; however, WCPS policy required them to reach a certain enrollment number that fall to qualify for the additional staffing.

The school's leadership team also utilized data to decide which classes would be co-taught to provide more support for ELs. In spring 2019, during a discussion of staffing for the following 2019-20 school year, the ESOL Department was allotted a certain number of sections for co-teaching. The Director of Student Services met with the school's assistant principals to determine which content areas would benefit most from having additional support from an ESOL teacher. Based on those conversations and a review of student achievement data on state-mandated end-of-course assessments, they decided to team-teach in English and math. Due to changes that occurred over the summer, they then recognized that they could only team in one content area. After reviewing the data, they decided to team in three English classes that were critical to preparing students for the English 11 reading and writing assessments required for graduation.

Summary of Research Question Two

In this section, I described and analyzed the processes and interactions utilized by DSHS leaders to elucidate their perceptions of student needs. These shared perceptions then determined the practices, programs, and supports necessary to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. Data collected through semi-structured interviews, student surveys, and analysis of documents such as ESOL department meeting notes substantiated that leaders at Davis Springs operate with this distributed leadership approach, engaging multiple stakeholders in order to include internal and external expertise to guide the school's work in supporting these learners.

The utilization of vision-driven decision-making processes, part of the conceptual framework, is also illustrated, as well as data-driven decision making.

Practices, Programs, and Supports (Research Question Three)

In order to address the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males, as noted in the previous sections, DSHS leaders have enacted specific practices, programs, and supports. Next, I present these findings, drawing upon the data collected through semi-structured interviews with school leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey. The findings are organized by element of the conceptual framework (see Figure 7): (a) communicate an inclusive mission and vision; (b) cultivate a culturally responsive staff; (c) foster a positive climate; and (d) forge community and family partnerships. Together these practices, programs, and structures constitute the means by which leadership for ELs is distributed at DSHS.

Practices and Programs

Data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods identified several practices and programs currently in place to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. This section describes those practices and programs and then analyzes similarities and differences in participants' perspectives on their impact.

Communicate an Inclusive Mission and Vision

According to the school's website, DSHS "is committed to increasing student achievement and maintaining high expectations while meeting the needs of all learners" (WCPS, 2020c). Furthermore, the vision of DSHS is to be a "collaborative, nurturing environment that celebrates academic success while fostering mutual respect, a joy of learning, and pride in our community." Principal Pembrooke explained that the school's

primary purpose is to ensure learning for all students, a goal that aligns with the social justice leadership framework (Lindsey et al., 2009) incorporated into this study's conceptual framework (see Figure 6).

Data collected from interviews with school leaders suggest that the school's mission and vision are grounded in an assets-based mindset toward the school's ELs. When asked to describe the strengths of newcomer Central American males in particular, leaders cited their resilience, determination, positivity, willingness to take risks and support each other, and strong work ethic. The principal remarked:

> These kids are really resilient, much more resilient than you think they would be. My natural instinct was [that] they're going to be…more fragile. In actuality, because of what they've gone through to get here, and every kid has a different story, they actually bring a resilience to them that…is helping them now that they're here facing language challenges, economic challenges, [and] housing challenges.

These positive comments about the school's ELs aligned with student survey responses related to disciplinary policies and school climate, respectively (see Table 6). Eighty-eight percent of students, the highest overall percentage, agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "Administrators at this school respect students." Similarly, 79% of students responded affirmatively that adults at DSHS wanted them to be successful; this response rate was the second highest in the survey.

Planning and Instruction. Some school leaders discussed the influence of the school's mission statement on the work of its collaborative teams (CTs). According to Assistant Principal Richard Norton, one of the strengths of the school's CTs, particularly in the ESOL Department, is their focus on working collaboratively to meet individual student needs. Because newcomers take several classes designed specifically to support beginning-level ELs, these teachers work together to support their shared students "by

name and by need." While ESOL teachers naturally collaborate with each other to support their students, this collaboration can be challenging due to limited common planning time for CTs into the master schedule. The ESOL Department Chair shared the ESOL master schedule and explained that only one of the ESOL CTs, English 9/ELD for Level 1 ELs, has common planning time during the school day. He acknowledged that because ESOL teachers may teach several different classes, it is challenging to incorporate common planning time for all CTs; nevertheless, the lack of shared time for teachers means that they must communicate via email or find time during lunch or before or after school.

Several leaders also discussed ways to ensure that the learning of ELs is viewed as a priority. According to Dr. Pembrooke, there is sometimes a misperception that the ESOL program is not always a priority. He asserted that his role as a principal is to make sure that ESOL teachers and ELs feel supported:

> There is sometimes this sense that ESOL…can play second fiddle. So, a principal needs to make sure that they do what they can do to make sure that that's not the case, that those teachers and students feel supported. Principals need to experience what they experience on a daily basis and be in those classrooms and talk with those teachers and talk with those kids and take actions and be visible to the point that those kids know that you know them. I'm by no means an expert in ESOL programming, but I do know that the teachers and those students know that I know them.

Other school leaders also discussed the importance of a principal's presence and interaction with ELs, particularly newcomers. One school leader shared that Dr. Pembrooke's presence at the culminating event for the school's reunification group was impactful. On another occasion when this leader was talking to newcomers about important people in the building, he asked if they knew who the principal was. The students all knew that Dr. Pembrooke was the principal; however, only half said that they

had seen him in the hallways. This leader acknowledged that with the school's increased emphasis on tardy sweeps, the presence of the principal and other administrators was more noticeable in the hallway. He acknowledged that in many high schools, the assistant principal often has more direct contact with students than the principal. The leader added that oftentimes, administrators interact with students at sporting events. However, because many newcomers do not attend these events due to financial or family obligations, this venue may not add to interactions with administrators.

Location and Inclusivity. Some leaders contended that the physical location of some ESOL classrooms hinders inclusivity. Several ESOL classes at DSHS are clustered in one hallway, which may isolate some ELs from the rest of the student body. According to the ESOL Department Chair, staff presence in that area of the building positively impacts students' feeling of connectedness. One of the school's soccer coaches made a concerted effort to visit ESOL classes to introduce himself, explain the preparatory training on "Green Days" and tryouts, and invite students to participate. According to the ESOL Department Chair, these extra efforts made a difference, as evidenced by the number of ELs who attended the first "Green Day." He shared that many of the 80 students who attended these conditioning days were ELs, a marked increase from turnouts in previous years.

As DSHS undergoes renovation, its leadership team is working with the district's Design and Construction team to ensure that the new building represents the inclusivity to which the school aspires. Dr. Pembrooke acknowledged that due to the number of classes that newcomers take with ESOL teachers when they first arrive, it can appear as if they are separated from the general education population. The principal is mindful of this

challenge and remarked, “It’s hard sometimes from a scheduling standpoint…Although reality dictates it sometimes, we don’t want them to feel like they’re in a school within a school.” The principal’s comments provide context for conversations currently underway about where to situate ESOL classrooms in the renovated building. Dr. Pembrooke explained that as his team met with Design and Construction, they discussed the perception that emerges when viewing the schematics of the new building. According to Dr. Pembrooke, “…the perception is we have a significant percentage of our students that are in this [ESOL] program, but that is not the way it looks when you look at the [building] schematic.” As principal, Dr. Pembrooke wants to ensure that space is allocated equitably so that ESOL teachers and ELs feel supported.

Cultivate A Culturally Responsive Staff

In addition to the communication of an inclusive mission and vision, data collected from semi-structured interviews and document analysis of the district website and the DSHS School Improvement Plan revealed efforts to foster cultural proficiency in the school’s staff. Some of the available professional learning opportunities originated at the district level. According to the WCPS website, one of the district’s goals in its Strategic Plan is that “all WCPS employees will demonstrate cultural responsiveness when supporting families, students, and other staff” (WCPS, 2019a). To this end, WCPS employees in all schools have participated in six required modules of equity and cultural responsiveness training totaling approximately 10 hours.

The school also offers ongoing EL-related supports to specific teams. One of the goals in DSHS’s School Improvement Plan is to build the capacity of SPED and ESOL co-teaching teams. To prepare ELs for the state-mandated end-of-course reading and

writing exams administered when students take English 11, the school has prioritized co-teaching in three English Learner Teamed (ELT) courses: ELT English 9, ELT English 10, and ELT English 11. In these courses, English and ESOL teachers work collaboratively to serve general education students as well as ELs. These teams allow for continual, organic professional learning as ESOL teachers can suggest strategies for instruction and assessment. In addition, these co-teaching teams are provided with training throughout the year. At the beginning of the year, teams participated in a workshop led by district-level resource teachers about co-teaching models and norms. The workshop facilitators provided each team with a copy of *Co-Teaching for English Learners: A Guide to Collaborative Planning, Instruction, Assessment, and Reflection* (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2017) as a reference. In a second training, teams collaborated to design lessons to increase student engagement through intentional grouping and academic conversations. Throughout the year, members of the administrative team, as well as the SPED and ESOL Department Chairs, observed co-teaching teams and provided them with feedback. The school team then met with the district-level resource teachers twice a month to discuss the observations, share data collected, and strategize ways to continue to support the co-teaching teams.

Foster a Positive Climate

In addition to cultivating a culturally responsive staff, Davis Springs High School strives to create a welcoming climate for all students. According to the principal, DSHS is a school that emphasizes relationships. When he arrived at DSHS, Dr. Pembrooke found that the nurturing environment described in the school's vision was a reality. The staff's commitment to supporting the school's ELs was particularly evident. He explained

that the level of dedication at DSHS is not something that people can be trained to do; rather, it is a question of what he refers to as "heart." He described his staff in the following way:

> They have a huge heart for the challenges that these kids bring and how much more difficult it is for these students to find success and move through the stages of a traditional high school…That was here before I even got here, just this sense of 'We're here because we love working with this group of students…' It's not a real technical piece. It's more of a heart piece, but it's there…We've really tried to foster that so that those kids know that they have adults in the building, whether it be teachers or counselors or an administrator, that have their best interest in mind and heart.

The school's ESOL counselors serve as linchpins in its efforts to connect with recently arrived students and their families. According to Counselor Ever Fernandez, these relationships are critical. He explains, "Of course we're a school so academics are important, but the connections that they make while they're here…are the most important thing." In addition to his responsibility as a school counselor, Mr. Fernandez sometimes assists the school's social worker or psychologist if they need an interpreter. While he is more than willing to assist, he finds that the language barrier between clinicians and newcomers can be challenging. It is sometimes difficult for him to convey a student's emotions accurately when interpreting. In addition, Mr. Fernandez believes that some students feel outnumbered by the number of adults in the room if an interpreter is needed. He, along with another school leader, acknowledged that because of these challenges, it would be helpful to have at least one bilingual clinician; however, he recognized that WCPS has a limited number of staff with these qualifications.

The two ESOL counselors at DSHS also assist students during the acculturation process. At least once a quarter, both counselors visit newcomers in Strategies for Success, a course designed to help students become acclimated to school. At the

beginning of the year, the counselors discuss the roles of staff members and the location of key supports in the school, such as the clinic and the library. Later in the year, counselors discuss grades, report cards, and graduation requirements. According to Counselor Cristina Inmar, many of the students feel discouraged if they do not think they are learning English fast enough. The counselors strive to validate the students' feelings and reassure them that learning a new language takes time. Ms. Inmar remarked:

> A lot of them just feel a lack of progress so they get really frustrated. We try to go into the classroom and let them know that it's normal…for them to struggle. We [tell them that we] expect them to take longer to graduate and just put it in perspective that they can't really compare themselves to…other students because in addition to all of the requirements they have, they're also trying to learn a…new language.

The ESOL counselors also strive to create a positive climate by encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities. During their visits to the Strategies for Success class, counselors inform students of upcoming extracurricular activities, particularly sports. They explain to students the process for trying out, as well as the required eligibility paperwork. They also post English and Spanish flyers around the building about upcoming activities. Ms. Inmar also uses the Remind app to communicate important information such as upcoming dates for tryouts. Ms. Inmar explained that one of her goals is to encourage students to advocate for themselves. She provides students with a way to communicate, but she reminds students that they must take the initiative of using the tool if they need assistance.

The ESOL counselors' efforts to bolster the participation of newcomer ELs in extracurricular activities are reflected in a data-driven goal crafted to increase these students' involvement in sports. In 2018-19, Ever Fernandez, the sole ESOL counselor at that time, sought to increase the participation of newcomer ELs in sports by 5% over the

course of the school year. According to baseline data, a total of 568 students participated in sports or clubs in 2017-18; seven of these students were newcomers whose ELP level was 1 or 2. During that year, Mr. Fernandez conducted "So You Want to Play Sports?" workshops prior to winter and spring tryouts. Based on data collected by the Student Activities Office during tryouts that year, 64 newcomer ELs out of a total of 766 students participated in tryouts; this increase represented a gain of 7% from the previous school year.

While these data are promising, they do not align completely with the student survey data related to extracurricular activities (see Table 7).

Table 7

Average Student Ratings on School Connectedness Survey

Domain	Survey Question	Average Student Response
Sample Size		n = 24
Academic Self-Concept	1. I regularly attend all of my classes.	4.0
	2. I regularly complete my work for my classes.	3.8
	3. Graduating from high school is important to me.	4.6
	4. After I graduate from high school, I will go to work.	3.5
	5. After I graduate from high school, I will go to college.	3.3
School Climate	6. I feel welcome at this school.	4.0
	7. I feel safe at this school.	4.3
	8. I feel connected to students at this school.	3.7
	9. Adults at this school care about me.	4.0
	10. Adults at this school know about me as a person.	3.3
	11. Adults at this school want me to be successful.	4.3
	12. I can get help at this school if I need it.	4.3
	13. I have a voice in my classroom or school.	3.7

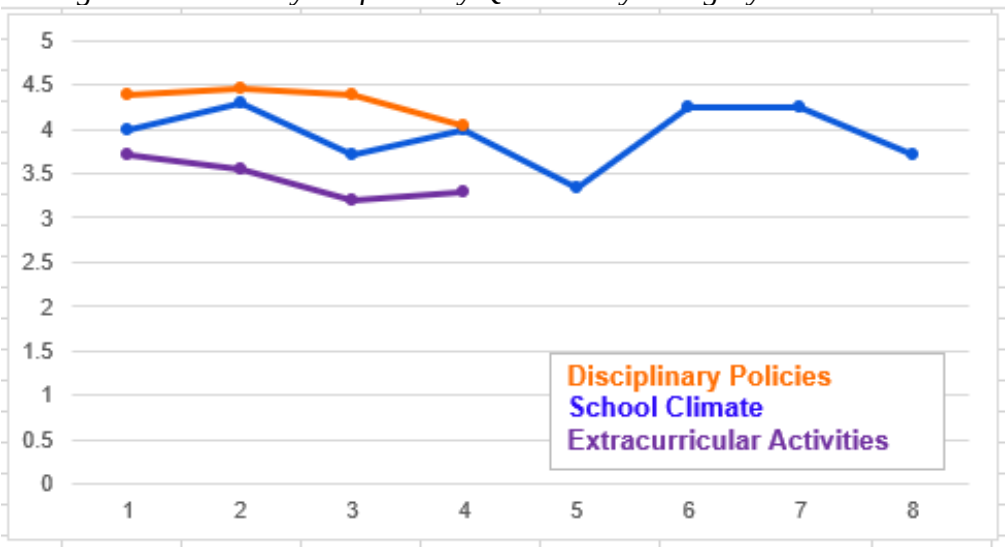
Disciplinary Policies	14. Teachers at this school respect students.	4.4
	15. Administrators at this school respect students.	4.5
	16. The security team at this school respects students.	4.4
	17. If I get in trouble, the consequences are fair.	4.0
Extracurricular Activities	18. I know about sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	3.7
	19. It is easy to understand how to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	3.5
	20. It is important to me to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school.	3.2
	21. I feel welcome to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school.	3.3

Note. Each rating reflects the mean student response to Likert-scale questions making up that scale or variables with ratings as follows: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

The mean responses for the four questions about extracurricular activities (3.4) were lower than those related to the eight about school climate (4.0) or the four about fair disciplinary policies (4.3), the other factors that correlate to school connectedness. These data are presented in Figure 8:

Figure 8

Average Student Survey Response by Question by Category



Of all the survey responses, the statement eliciting students' feelings about the importance of participating in extracurricular activities received the lowest average response overall: 3.2. These data suggest that while students were aware of extracurricular activities, participating in these activities was not important to many of them. This lack of interest could be attributed to the reasons suggested by the students in their interviews such as work commitments or family responsibilities; they might also be related to students' perception of feeling unwelcome in these activities, as evidenced in Table 6.

Forge Community and Family Partnerships

In addition to fostering a positive climate, DSHS makes a concerted effort to cultivate positive relationships with community organizations as well as with language minority families.

Community Partnerships. The challenges of reunification are prevalent for many newcomers. After years of separation, students often experience various emotions ranging from depression to anger when they are reunited with their parents. To support students who are experiencing these challenges, DSHS has partnered with a nonprofit organization that supports family needs throughout the community. This organization, referred to henceforth by the pseudonym Hope Family Services, leads two reunification programs at DSHS, one for students and the other for parents. To support students, the organization collaborates with the school's ESOL counselors to offer two four-month workshops. Every week, they run gender-specific groups once a week during Strategies for Success classes which meet daily. The organization's website indicates that topics discussed include students' journeys to the United States and family reunification, as well

as conflict resolution, communication skills, stress management, goal setting, and healthy relationships (Hope Family Services, 2020). By separating students out from parents and grouping them by gender, the organization attempts to create a safe environment in which students feel comfortable discussing topics that they may not want to broach with their parents or members of the opposite sex. ESOL counselors believe that the weekly sessions positively impact students, as evidenced by their grades and attendance. However, because the groups are small and are only offered at one time each week, some newcomers are unable to participate due to their schedule.

Hope Family Services also supports parents who have experienced separation from and reunification with their children. Once reunited with their teenage children, some parents struggle to reconnect, particularly when they last saw them at a much younger age. Many cannot understand why their children are angry or rebellious after the sacrifices that they have made to support them and bring them to the United States. To support these parents, Hope Family Services offers parenting education classes and resources during the reunification process (WCPS, 2020e).

In addition to this partnership with Hope Family Services, DSHS collaborates with two faith-based organizations. One local church, henceforth referred to as City of Angels, began collaborating with the school in fall 2019 when one of its parishioners, an ESOL teacher at DSHS, saw the need for more mentors for the school's Latino male ELs (L. Baker, personal communication, March 30, 2020). The teacher reached out to the church's pastor about the school's needs, and City of Angels provided fourteen volunteers during the 2019-20 school year. Many mentors were young men in their 20s and 30s, some of whom spoke Spanish. Several supported seniors applying to college by

offering an after-school program called the Dreams Project. These volunteers assisted 15 seniors with tasks such as studying for the SAT and placement tests for the local community college, completing college applications and financial aid forms, and applying for scholarships. Two program participants, Guillermo and Miguel, were interviewed for this study. In the fall of their senior year, students were asked to share their post-graduation plans as well as the name of their dream college. At that time, both young men shared their intentions to attend a local community college. When asked for the name of their dream college, Guillermo responded "Unknown" and Miguel said that he didn't have a dream college. These comments demonstrate these two students' perspectives regarding options for college when they began working with the Dreams Project; after participating in the program, both attained their goal of being accepted at a community college.

As an added support, ten volunteers from City of Angels mentored ELs who were struggling academically. These underclassmen, whose ELP levels ranged from 1 - 3 out of 6, were recommended to participate in the program based on low grades or erratic attendance. Students were matched with a volunteer who came to school once a week to check in and help them with assignments. Spanish-speaking volunteers generally worked with the Level 1 students, and English-speaking mentors were paired with students who were more proficient in English. According to the ESOL teacher who initiated this program, these students demonstrated higher levels of engagement after working with a volunteer, particularly in their grades and attendance. In addition to providing volunteers to the school, this church delivered food and gift cards to families in need during extended breaks as well as during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Furthermore,

it donated school supplies and winter coats and procured eye exams and glasses as needed. In the future, City of Angels hopes to provide more funding to support field trips for ELs and more Spanish-speaking volunteers. It is also planning to expand its current facility, located close to DSHS, to serve as a community center offering English classes for adults and after-school programs for students.

Davis Springs also benefits from its collaboration with another local church, henceforth referred to by the pseudonym Grace Community Church. This church has supported DSHS for several years by providing classroom volunteers and donating food for school events. In the 2019-20 school year, Grace Community Church supplied snacks for the after-school Dreams Project for ELs who were preparing to graduate. In addition, the church sponsored a field trip for seniors to a local art museum, paying for the buses as well as students' lunch. With their assistance, these students participated in a cultural opportunity that they might otherwise have missed due to family or work responsibilities.

The school also partners with a local nonprofit organization that offers after-school programs for immigrant youth. This organization has been collaborating with the school since fall 2018 and offers a drop-in program two afternoons a week, typically for students with ELP levels 2-4. The program focuses on the core themes of civic/community engagement, college access, and career preparation. According to a representative from the organization, the overall goal of the program is to build students' awareness of available resources and options for their future (L. Jensen, personal communication, March 27, 2020). To foster students' community engagement, the organization provides students with opportunities to volunteer in school-based events such as Family Math Night. To build students' awareness of resources in the community,

the organization invites in guest speakers such as Latino police officers and the school's principal; it also organizes field trips to local sites such as museums and colleges. For the college access component of the program, students learn about the different types of universities and receive information on financial aid and scholarships; in addition, alumni of the program serve as guest speakers and share their experiences in college. Finally, for the career preparation component, students work on developing professional skills such as writing resumes and cover letters and interviewing; students also benefit from visits from guest speakers in a variety of career fields that align to their own areas of interest. Several of the students interviewed spoke of the value of this program, especially the opportunity to hear guest speakers discuss their experiences in college, explain how to apply for scholarships, and clarify how to apply for financial aid.

Family Partnerships. In addition to forging partnerships with community organizations, DSHS strives to build relationships with its culturally and linguistically diverse families. Many staff members are bilingual in English and Spanish, which facilitates ongoing communication with Latino families. The school also has two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons who work to build bridges between school and home. The liaisons communicate on behalf of staff members, field questions from parents, and provide parents with the information and resources to ensure their child's socio-emotional and academic success. In addition, the school's Parent Resource Center operates five days a week. During the 2019-20 school year, DSHS offered the Parent Project Parenting Program in Spanish. This program, sponsored by the division's Family and School Partnerships Office, consists of 10 sessions designed to support parents of teenagers demonstrating harmful behaviors or struggling to adjust to their new home. The

program was initiated in spring 2020 but was discontinued due to the physical closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The school's bilingual ESOL counselors and Assistant Principal of ESOL also work closely with newcomer families. One of the counselors explained that in addition to suggesting certain services to families, counselors often need to guide them through the application process for these services. Even if applications are translated into Spanish, many families require assistance as some parents are not literate in that language. Assistant Principal Richard Norton shared that his bilingualism also assists him in his work with families related to disciplinary matters. According to Mr. Norton, some of the parents of students with chronic discipline infractions lack literacy in English or Spanish. Parents are often focusing on meeting basic needs such as providing food for their family. Oftentimes, they work more than one job, and it is challenging for them to secure time to leave work for school-related appointments. While these parents focus on providing for their families, they trust school staff to take care of matters related to their education. Mr. Norton provided an example to illustrate some of these challenges:

> I had a parent in here yesterday and I gave her my phone number…She couldn't type it in the phone, so I typed it in for her. It's hard…How do I explain to her 'Oh, your son has come late 30 times?' She doesn't understand that or 'He has an F in a class.' What does she know what an F is?

Even though the school offers some parenting classes, Mr. Norton believes that more education programs for parents are warranted. He realizes that this is challenging due to many parents' work schedules, but he still asserts that additional efforts are needed in this area. Members of the school's ESOL department have also spearheaded parent outreach efforts. During the 2019-20 school year, an ESOL teacher was awarded an English Learner Family Engagement Mini-Grant from the district's Office of ESOL Services (V.

Brown, personal communication, March 30, 2020). With the grant funding provided, the school organized two Family Math/Literacy Nights in 2019-20 to provide the community with an opportunity to see how students learn mathematics. The school's ELs hosted the event and led student-run stations with different problem-solving tasks. In addition to fostering home-school connections, this event allowed students to strengthen their role as members of the DSHS community and to utilize their English skills in an authentic context. Several of the school's ELs planned and executed advertising for the event, wrote invitations to their families, friends, and feeder school communities, and practiced their presentation skills as they ran their individual stations. After the event, students used their English skills to debrief about the event, write thank you notes to community members who donated items, and share highlights of the evening with staff and classmates.

Supports for Newcomers

In addition to these practices and programs, DSHS has put several other supports into place to support newcomer Central American males. The next section provides a description and analysis of the structural, curricular and instructional, and other supports designed to help these students.

Structural Supports

Several structural supports exist at DSHS to support ELs. These include the school's master schedule and its use of staffing.

Master Schedule. The school's master schedule incorporates several supports for its ELs. While these supports are not specific to any sub-group of ELs, they aim to benefit all of the school's emergent bilinguals. One unique feature of the school's master

schedule is the blocking of English 9 and English Language Development (ELD) for Level 1 ELs. This English 9 for ELs course allows students to earn English credit towards graduation; the ELD elective class supports English 9 and focuses on students' language development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. While the district's Office of ESOL Services recommends that these courses be taught by two different teachers, the ESOL Department found this model challenging. When two different people taught the courses, the ESOL Department Chair found that there was often inconsistency despite the intended goal for the classes to be complementary. Furthermore, the ELD classes were not always aligned across teachers; consequently, if a student's schedule was changed, he did not necessarily arrive in a class where the same content was being taught. In addition to addressing these challenges, the ESOL Department Chair believed that having the same teacher for both classes would benefit both teachers and students, particularly Level 1 ELs. In spring 2019, the ESOL Department Chair and Assistant Principal of ESOL met with the principal to recommend having one teacher for both classes. The ESOL Department Chair brought evidence to illustrate why some students were struggling with the two-teacher model in place. Dr. Pembrooke agreed to the change for the following school year despite the challenges that double-blocked classes can create in a school's master schedule. Teachers of the Level 1 blocked English 9 for ELs/ELD class were granted a common planning time to unpack standards, discuss pacing, design assessments, and discuss student needs. Anecdotal evidence from the ESOL teachers involved suggests that this model fostered relationship building because students had the same teacher every day. To further examine the effectiveness of this change, the

Assistant Principal of ESOL would also like to examine the impact of the blocked model on students' performance in both English 9 and English 10.

In addition to the blocking of certain courses, the master schedule includes other supports for ELs. According to Linda Ivery, Director of Student Services, multiple sections of the Strategies for Success class for newcomers were offered in the 2019-20 school year during the 50-minute period that meets daily. This class is useful for recently arrived ELs because teachers, counselors, and community organizations such as Hope Family Services use this opportunity as a time to work collaboratively to support students in their acclimation process. Due to the importance of this class, counselors would sometimes revise students' schedules to ensure that they could access this class, particularly if they felt they would benefit from working with Hope Family Services.

Staffing. Davis Springs High School has made several staffing decisions that benefit newcomer Central American males by affording them greater access to Spanish-speaking staff. First, they decided to have a Latino assistant principal who works solely with newcomers who are ELP Level 1 or Level 2. Prior to adopting this structure, two other models had been employed at the school. In the first model, newcomer ELs were assigned to the school's five assistant principals according to last name. At that time, DSHS had only one bilingual assistant principal and one bilingual ESOL counselor, so the ESOL counselor was often asked to interpret when disciplinary issues arose. In the second model, ELs with ELP levels 1 - 4 were divided between two assistant principals, one of whom was bilingual; in this model, the ESOL counselor was frequently asked to interpret as well. The ESOL counselor willingly assisted the assistant principals who did not speak Spanish, but the time that he spent interpreting impacted his availability for

other counseling-related tasks. The current model allows the assistant principal and two ESOL counselors to work on their own areas of responsibility; however, they can also collaborate as needed.

The ESOL counselor's position at DSHS has also evolved over the last few years. Four years ago, Ever Fernandez transitioned from being a traditional counselor at the school to a counselor serving ELs with ELP Levels 1 - 4. The first year that Mr. Fernandez served in that capacity, the EL population increased dramatically. As a result, his case load grew from 280 to almost 400 students over the course of the school year, compared to an average case load of approximately 260 students. Mr. Fernandez found it challenging to meet his students' needs, and he felt that he spent most of his time enrolling new students. After the first year, his case load was limited to newcomers with ELP Levels 1 or 2. While this model was more manageable, Mr. Fernandez still found it difficult to address his students' needs. The principal encouraged the counselor to collect data on the number of students that he was supporting. The following year, the school added a second bilingual ESOL counselor who supports approximately 150 newcomers and leads the school's on-time graduation efforts. Both counselors work with only one assistant principal to streamline communication.

While school leaders recognize the benefits of the current model, they acknowledge that the school might yet do more to help students transition to their counselor once they reach ELP level 3. Assistant Principal Norton explained that even after being assigned to a new counselor, many students return to their ESOL counselor or to him for assistance. He attributes this tendency to the relationships and the shared language that students have with these staff members. Linda Ivery, Director of Student

Services, also acknowledged this pattern and explained that students sometimes assume that if a staff member speaks Spanish, that person is their counselor or assistant principal. Data collected through student interviews revealed a different perspective. When asked about the differences that they experienced between working with their ESOL counselor and their current counselor, all spoke solely of their interactions with the latter. Students described their encounters with their current counselor as largely transactional, focusing on questions about their schedule, graduation, or processes such as requesting transcripts.

In addition to having bilingual counselors and an assistant principal dedicated to supporting newcomers, DSHS has a bilingual Dean of Students. The Dean, a position staffed during the 2019-20 school year after several years of not having someone in the role, focuses on attendance, particularly students who are chronically absent. Chronic absenteeism, defined by the state as missing more than 10% of instructional days, presents a significant challenge for DSHS. During the 2018-19 school year, 18% of DSHS students were chronically absent, compared to the district's overall chronic absenteeism rate of eight percent. In 2018-19, ELs at DSHS had a 30% rate of chronic absenteeism, the highest rate of all students; this rate is significantly higher than the district's overall chronic absenteeism rate for ELs of 14 percent (WCPS, 2020f). It must be noted, however, that this rate of chronic absenteeism is comparable to rates at other WCPS high schools with significant EL populations. While these data provide some detail about the scope of the challenge, they are not broken down by students' ELP level; consequently, it is unclear how many chronically absent students at DSHS are newcomer ELs. The Dean's work supports one of Davis Springs' School Improvement Plan goals for the 2019-20 school year to ensure that the chronic absenteeism rate is at or below

15% in accordance with state accreditation standards. The Dean is responsible for monitoring attendance data, identifying students who are frequently absent, and then working with those students and their families to understand the root causes of the absenteeism and put interventions into place to maintain their engagement in school. Because 30% of ELs were chronically absent during the 2018-19 school year, the Dean works closely with this population.

In addition to the Dean, DSHS has a Reading Specialist, an uncommon position in the district's high schools. While this specialist does not serve newcomer Central American males exclusively, her role is noteworthy in that she supports more proficient ELs as they approach graduation. According to Dr. Pembrooke, the Reading Specialist collaborates with the ESOL and English departments to support individual students, monitor their progress, and ensure that they are prepared for the end-of-course English 11 exams or approved alternate assessments required by the state for graduation.

Curricular and Instructional Supports. Davis Springs High School has several curricular and instructional supports in place to undergird the success of its newcomers. These school supports include specialized courses for students with students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) and other Level 1 ELs, Academy classes, and other tailored electives. While these supports were not designed specifically to help newcomer Central American males, these students have nevertheless benefitted from them.

Support for SLIFE and Level 1 ELs. Davis Springs High School has several curricular supports in place to address the needs of students with gaps in their education. To serve the 20 students officially identified as SLIFE, DSHS offers three sheltered

classes to bolster these learners' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their English language development. These elective courses aim to provide students with foundational skills to address any gaps associated with their interrupted schooling; they are also designed to begin preparing students to enroll in credit-bearing courses required for graduation.

While many students with interrupted schooling find success in their classes, others struggle in more academic courses such as Government for ELs. This class, part of the WCPS High School ESOL curriculum, allows beginning-level ELs to earn a social studies credit towards graduation. The district's Office of ESOL Services recommends that recently arrived ELs take this course during their first year of high school. Despite this recommendation, only 46 of approximately 156 newcomers who took Level 1 Government for ELs during the 2018-19 school year earned a passing grade and received credit for the course. According to the ESOL Department Chair, these data include students who were withdrawn as well as students who audited the class due to their late arrival in the school year; Assistant Principal Richard Norton believes that that the school must meet these students' needs in a different way. Because the standard diploma requires only three social studies credits, Mr. Norton asserts that these newcomers should focus on building foundational English skills their first year rather than taking Government for ELs. He gave the example of one student with the pseudonym Obed who had to be taught to write his name when he first arrived as DSHS because of his limited literacy in Spanish. For learners such as Obed, Mr. Norton contends that the initial instructional focus should be on building their literacy skills in Spanish as well as English. In lieu of taking Government for ELs in their first year at DSHS, some of these

students were enrolled in a Spanish for Fluent Speakers class to build literacy skills in their first language which they could then transfer to learning English. In their second year at DSHS, they took Government for ELs to begin meeting the social studies requirements required for graduation.

Academy Courses. In addition to the traditional courses offered at Davis Springs, students have access to Academy courses offered at DSHS as well as at neighboring schools. As several students in the study indicated, many young men find the technical knowledge and skills offered in Academy courses relevant. In the 2019-20 school year, 35 Central American males of varying ELP levels were enrolled in 39 Academy courses at DSHS, with Auto Tech being the most popular. Students were also enrolled in courses such as Criminal Justice, Medical Assisting, and Pharmacy Tech. In addition, 16 Central American males of varying ELP levels were enrolled in Academy classes at a nearby sister high school. HVAC is the most popular program among these students, but some are also enrolled in Auto Collision, Construction Tech, and Electrical Construction. These students take a shuttle to the sister school during the day to access these classes. According to the ESOL resource teacher assigned to DSHS' Academy, this shuttle was cancelled a few years ago due to limited enrollment; this decision adversely affected DSHS students as many were unable to drive themselves to the Academy (T. Vanderbilt, personal communication, March 31, 2020). Thus, the ESOL resource teachers at both schools, as well as Davis Springs' ESOL Department Chair, collaborated to recruit more students to take Academy classes; the shuttle was provided again the following years due to the increased numbers.

Because Academy courses are available to ELs who have acquired some proficiency in English, newcomers have more limited access to these classes. Level 1 ELs generally do not take Academy courses because the technical language in the courses is dense, and students are focusing on acquiring English. Mark Everett, ESOL Department Chair, shared his concerns about newcomers' delayed access to Academy courses. In his experience, some of the Central American males who arrive at DSHS do not always see the relevance in the required courses that they are taking; some students openly share that they plan to stay in school only until they turn 18. While many young men express interest in learning skills offered by the Academy, they are generally unable to access the courses until they have been at the school for a year or two. Mr. Everett wishes the school had more to offer these students to help them meet their goals.

Other Electives. Davis Springs offers other electives designed specifically to support ELs. Dr. Pembrooke acknowledged that the school continues to look for electives that are accessible to Level 1 ELs, a common challenge in many WCPS high schools. While many of these students thrive in more hands-on electives such as Art, space is often limited in those classes. Currently, ESOL teachers offer three sections of Computer Applications, an introductory course that allows students to earn a Career and Technical Education (CTE) credit towards graduation. In some high schools, this course is taught by a CTE teacher, but these teachers sometimes feel unprepared to work with beginning-level ELs. Some educators assert that by having an ESOL teacher offer this course, ELs learn essential computer skills while also developing their academic language through differentiated instruction. Others, however, believe that efforts should be made to build

the capacity of CTE teachers to offer this course to foster a sense of collective efficacy across the school.

In addition to the scaffolded Computer Applications course, beginning-level ELs can enroll in an ESOL Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) course designed to develop students' executive functioning skills and prepare them for college. Davis Springs High School is an AVID school, but most students cannot access the general education AVID class until they reach ELP Level 3, which often happens in their junior year. To provide ELs with earlier access to AVID supports, the school created this unique course for Level 2 ELs who will be in the school for at least two more years and have expressed interest in attending college. These students follow the ninth-grade AVID curriculum, participate in college visits with other AVID students, and receive some support from the senior AVID class. According to the ESOL Department Chair, approximately one third of the ELs in the ESOL AVID class enroll in the general education AVID class the following year. While this class was a unique offering that other WCPS AVID schools expressed interest in replicating, DSHS will not offer ESOL AVID during the 2020-21 school year; instead, it will introduce ESOL Leadership, a course that is currently offered at two other high schools in the district with similar student populations.

For the 2019-20 school year, Davis Springs' ESOL Department introduced an English Language Development (ELD)12 class for seniors. The department initiated this course to ensure that seniors received the support that they needed to prepare for any outstanding state-mandated exams as well as for their post-secondary pathways. During the 2019-20 school year, approximately 25 seniors were enrolled in the course which

focuses on life skills such as writing resumes and applying for scholarships (K. Peterson, personal communication, March 16, 2020). Some students were unable to fit the class into their schedule, so they were offered similar supports through the after-school Dreams Project.

***Other Supports*.** Finally, beginning in the 2019-20 school year, the school began implementing a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to ensure that all students receive the individualized assistance that they need. While MTSS is a district-wide area of focus, high schools are in various phases of implementation. This year, the MTSS team at DSHS, comprised of the ESOL Department Chair, clinicians, the Director of Student Services, the Assistant Principal of ESOL, and the ESOL counselors met to discuss interventions for ELs who were struggling to make progress. The team identified several students who were repeating Level 1 ESOL. Many of these learners were SLIFE who, despite earnest efforts, were making only incremental progress. Because MTSS is a district-wide initiative, DSHS will continue to advance its work in this area in the 2020-21 school year. The school's new bell schedule for the 2020-21 school year will include an intervention block, which will provide dedicated time for MTSS interventions to be implemented according to students' academic and socio-emotional needs.

Leaders' Perspectives on Impact

During the semi-structured interviews, leaders were asked to reflect on the success of the current practices, programs, and supports in addressing the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males. One leader commented on the limits of the state accountability metrics in capturing varying types of success:

> I think the largest indicator of whether we're being successful or not is our on-time graduation index and our attendance. Just looking at those two sets of data,

> you could say that we're not being successful because our highest rate of absence is in our ESOL population and our lowest rate of graduation is our ESOL population. Just looking at those two, an outsider would say, 'Whatever you're doing is not working.' I think that's where a lot of frustration comes from, not only in the teachers but in the counselors, the admin, because the challenges that the students are coming to us with are not really being addressed as far as significant interruptions in education…We're trying to play catch up while the student is expected to learn English and learn curriculum to graduate.

This leader contends that there are other metrics of success. He believes that the school's efforts have been effective when students feel connected to school, progress in learning English, and gain skills that will help them once they leave DSHS. In his opinion, success is not only about earning a high school diploma, but it is also about "opening students' eyes to beyond [Davis Springs] and what lies out there." Another leader shared a similar perspective, asserting that sometimes students leave school before they graduate because of life circumstances that are beyond the school's control. He explained, "Students who end up dropping out, it's not necessarily because they didn't receive the supports here at school. It's because of life…We do the best that we can for as many kids as we can."

Other leaders spoke of successes that are challenging to quantify by the traditional metrics, such as rates of chronic absenteeism and on-time graduation. Dr. Pembrooke shared that he views other, non-traditional evidence of success:

> I see students coming to school and engaged in classrooms. I see students that feel welcome. They know they have a place where adults care for them and not only care for them but want them to learn and succeed. I see students that, with all the challenges and potential trauma…, are making it happen.

In a similar vein, the ESOL Department Chair spoke of the school's success in meeting students' basic needs such as food and clothing. Likewise, one of the ESOL counselors spoke of the importance of building trusting relationships with students over time. She knows she is having an impact when students make eye contact with her in the hallway,

stop by her office and leave her a note, or send her a message via Remind. Although it is challenging to quantify these successes using traditional accountability metrics, they provide staff with evidence that their efforts are making a difference.

School leaders also acknowledged room for growth, particularly as it relates to fostering an inclusive learning environment. One school leader explained that between classes, the school plays music as an auditory cue for students to proceed to their next class. While students enjoy hearing songs throughout the day, he believes they would appreciate different types of music that represent the school's diverse cultures:

> I know that there's roadblocks, copyrights, but the only music you hear is in English. But what kind of impact would that have on a student if they hear one song in Spanish or one song in Vietnamese or one song in Arabic? I can guarantee that they would be talking about that for the rest of the day, and that little thing helps form connections.

Students' Perspectives on Impact

Students' perspectives on the impact of the practices, programs, and supports were not entirely consistent on the surveys and in the five interviewed students' responses. These variances are described next and organized in terms of the categories on the survey: disciplinary policies, positive climate, and extracurricular activities.

Students' highest means were on survey responses related to disciplinary policies, possibly because most questions elicited students' perceptions of feeling respected by school staff. These data appear to be corroborated by the school's data on disruptive behavior, provided by the district as part of the Davis Springs' Equity Profile. In 2018-19, nine percent of ELs at DSHS had documented infractions of disruptive behavior, compared to the district average of five percent. Although the school's rate is higher than that of the district, it represents a decrease from the previous year's rate of 13%. In

addition, it stands in contrast to higher rates of disruptive behavior for the school's students with disabilities (15%) and African-American students (16%). It should also be noted that these rates are lower than those for other WCPS high schools with similar demographics (WCPS, 2020g). Although these data regarding the EL sub-group do not provide specific details on newcomer Central American males, they do suggest that rates of disruptive behavior are comparable to district averages.

Despite the data, students' interview comments regarding the fairness of the school's disciplinary policies were limited in scope. When asked why some students got into trouble, participants cited problems such as skipping, not paying attention in class, being disrespectful to teachers, or fighting. According to Fernando, students who got in trouble understood the rules but did not take them seriously. He explained, "They look at the problem like it's no big deal." Another student, Carlos, said that he tried to talk to some of his friends who got in trouble, but "sometimes they don't listen." While the interviewees could articulate why some students got into trouble, only Carlos expressed an opinion when asked if the consequences that students received were fair. He opined that sometimes, certain students were unfairly blamed for infractions that they did not commit. Other students explained that they had not gotten in trouble a lot during their time at DSHS or that they stayed away from students who got into trouble, which may explain why they did not comment extensively on the fairness of the school's disciplinary policies.

The importance of a positive climate surfaced in both survey and interview data. Responses related to eight questions about school climate were second highest, with students responding most favorably to three questions: (a) feeling safe at school (79%);

(b) believing that adults at the school wanted them to be successful (79%); and (c) believing that adults at the school cared about them (75%). In the interviews, each student spoke of a positive relationship with at least one adult at Davis Springs, citing support from an ESOL and general education teacher, counselor, soccer coach, and a mentor from a community organization. Abel shared that when he did not pass his US/VA History state assessment the first time, he said to himself, "I'm not going to graduate." When he needed to retake the test a year later, he went back to his former teacher for help. Abel, a shy student, explained that he decided to ask his teacher because "he always told us that we could do it." With the teacher's support, Abel passed the retake and so earned the credit verified required for graduation.

Participation in extracurricular activities emerged as the least important lever of school connectedness for the students in the study. While most students were aware of the school's offerings of clubs, activities, and sports, only 42% of survey respondents said that participating in extracurricular activities was important to them. In contrast to these survey results, two students spoke extensively about the usefulness of their involvement in after-school activities related to preparing for college, specifically their participation in the Dreams Project. Both young men are planning to attend the local community college in fall 2020, and they attributed their success partially to the information provided by this program. While survey data indicated extracurricular activities were not a priority for newcomer Central American males, interviewees shared alternate ideas for fostering school connectedness. When asked what they had liked about their schools in their native countries, several shared fond memories of playing soccer with classmates during breaks. Miguel also shared his enjoyment of school-wide

assemblies that involved folkloric dance performances. Guillermo suggested that the school engage students in class meetings to "have fun with them and make them feel comfortable with the school." He also suggested taking students out to the school's athletic fields to play some sports informally. He believed that having an event such as a field day would help students feel more comfortable at school. He explained, "I think that will help them a lot, to meet more people, feel more comfortable with school, even if they only speak Spanish. Whenever they feel they are communicating with a lot with people, they would let that go out and they would try to learn more English [because] they would have to speak it."

Summary of Research Question Three

This section of the capstone described and analyzed the practices, programs, and supports currently in place at DSHS to address the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males identified in research question one. Data derived from semi-structured interviews, student surveys, and document analysis revealed supports that align with the leadership practices presented in the conceptual framework. This section was concluded with a comparison of leaders' and students' perspectives on the impact of the practices, programs, and supports on newcomer Central American males' sense of school connectedness, a topic that is revisited in Chapter 5.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings for the three research questions guiding this study. These findings were grounded in data drawn from semi-structured interviews with school leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey; they also aligned with the conceptual framework and literature review guiding this study. In the

next chapter, I discuss how these findings align with the literature, identify potential implications of this study, and make recommendations to other school leaders.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND ACTION COMMUNICATION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. In the conceptual framework guiding this study, I hypothesized that by adopting a leadership model that incorporated elements of the social justice leadership framework (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015), the distributed leadership perspective (Spillane et al., 2004), and Hitt and Tucker's (2016) unified leadership framework, high school principals can cultivate inclusive learning environments to positively impact these learners' sense of school connectedness and, in turn, their academic achievement.

To examine this hypothesis, I conducted a mixed-methods case study at Davis Springs High School with three guiding research questions. The first research question examined the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males by eliciting the perspectives of school leaders and students. The second research question addressed the decision-making processes employed to address these learners' unique needs, and the third research question explored the programs, practices, and supports in place to support these students. In Chapter IV, I presented the findings drawn from semi-structured interviews with school leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey.

In this chapter, I explain how the themes that emerged from the findings relate to the conceptual framework and the research presented in the literature review. I then present my recommendations to practitioners regarding the impact of belief and practices

on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. These recommendations draw upon the literature grounding the study, as well as the findings presented in Chapter IV. Finally, I have included the action communication products for this study, in which I present my findings and recommendations to the DSHS principal as well as to district leaders in WCPS to inform their future work supporting newcomer Central American males.

Discussion of Findings

Finding One: Discerning Student Needs (Research Question One and Research Question Three)

Based on the data collected, it is evident that school leaders at DSHS recognize the unique needs of newcomer Central American males. Semi-structured interviews and survey results revealed general alignment between leaders and students in the discussion of challenges associated with supporting students' physiological needs, their acculturation process, and certain academic needs. However, some differences emerged between leaders' and students' perceptions of these learners' socio-emotional and certain academic needs. In this section, I discuss potential explanations for these divergent perceptions in terms of the literature presented in Chapter II.

Socio-Emotional Needs

School leaders frequently described understanding and addressing students' socio-emotional needs as a focus for their work, while students articulated a desire to maintain boundaries with school staff in discussing personal concerns. The literature review in Chapter II suggests that the differences in perspectives may be explained by cultural and gender norms, students' self-perception of adulthood, and coping strategies developed by these learners.

Varying Cultural and Gender Norms. One of the DSHS school counselors, who is of Central American descent, attributed Latino males' reluctance to share personal problems to cultural norms that dictate what can and cannot be discussed outside of one's family. The literature review in Chapter II partially supports this interpretation. Ruiz (2005) suggests that *familismo* constitutes an essential cultural value among Latinos that influences behaviors. According to Ruiz, family relationships in the Latino community are defined by loyalty and reliance on family for support, which may explain the reluctance of some newcomer Central American males to seek help from school staff regarding non-academic issues. Furthermore, many students alluded to the importance of familial capital (Yosso, 2005) to solve personal problems, sharing that they would discuss issues with a family member rather than with school staff. In contrast, other scholars (Green et al., 2008; Stanton-Salazar et al., 2001) might attribute this reluctance to seek help to culturally dictated gender roles that discourage young men from demonstrating vulnerability by asking for help.

School leaders and students also shared divergent perspectives on the importance of extracurricular activities to meet the socio-emotional need for a sense of belonging in the school. Although there is ample evidence suggesting that participation in extracurricular activities bolsters school connectedness (Logan, 2016; McNeely et al., 2002), the findings drawn from students' survey and interview responses suggest a different interpretation. Several explanations from the literature review in Chapter II may explain this misalignment in perceptions. For these young men with adult responsibilities, financial and familial responsibilities took precedence over extracurricular activities (Allard, 2015; Kleyn, 2011). In addition, based on their experiential knowledge (Yosso,

2005) developed in their previous schools, students expressed interest in extracurricular activities that differed from those offered at Davis Springs. When asked to share what they had liked about their schools in their home countries, many students shared memories of playing impromptu soccer games or of participating in assemblies during the school day with music and folkloric dance. Students also emphasized that they only attended school in their home countries for half a day, which meant that extracurricular activities were limited. In addition to students' perceptions of appealing extracurricular activities, some expressed concerns about the eligibility paperwork required to participate in sports at DSHS; others reported in the survey that they did not feel welcome to participate.

Self-Perception of Adulthood and Coping Strategies. Based on the literature review in Chapter II, students' perception of themselves as adults, coupled with coping strategies developed prior to and during the migration process, may also affect their willingness to discuss socio-emotional needs with school staff. Several students interviewed spoke of the independence and problem-solving skills that they developed while separated from their parents, a coping mechanism that some scholars (Menjívar & Perreira, 2017; Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010) suggest may have been strengthened during their journeys to the United States. In addition, several of the young men shared the adult responsibilities that they had in the United States, a theme aligned with the scholarship suggesting that immigrating to the United States signifies a transition to adulthood (Allard, 2015). This self-perception of adulthood may shape students' perspectives about handling non-academic challenges by themselves or with the help of family members.

Other coping strategies from the literature may explain why these students may be reluctant to discuss their socio-emotional needs with school staff. One of the ESOL counselors explained that it takes time to build trust with her newcomer male students, a theme aligned with the literature suggesting that some immigrant youth may distrust others or suppress emotions as coping mechanisms (Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010). These mechanisms may be heightened particularly if students have experienced trauma (Schmidt, 2019) or are living with uncertainty related to immigration status (Bailey et al., 2002; Menjívar, 2006), factors that often impact the ability to forge ties to the school (Dutro & Bien, 2014). In addition, students experiencing culture shock during the acculturation process may enter a silent period during which they are reluctant to interact with others (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Despite these potential barriers, the counselor clarified that once she develops trust with these learners, many seek her out for support. The ESOL Department Chair confirmed this pattern as well, sharing the example of students who communicated with trusted staff members during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 to ask for assistance with rent and food. These data suggest that while students reported wanting to maintain boundaries between academic and nonacademic needs, some were willing to seek support regarding personal challenges from certain trusted adults at DSHS.

Academic Needs

School leaders and students also held some divergent perceptions regarding the academic needs of newcomer Central American males. Both groups expressed the need for relevant curriculum to prepare students for their post-secondary pathways. Several school leaders articulated the challenge of how to support students whose espoused

academic goals might not fit within the mission and vision of DSHS and the district, a misalignment that is often a predictor of decreased engagement and dropping out (Rodriguez, 2012). While leaders want students to earn a high school diploma, they struggle with how best to support students who share their goal of learning enough English to begin working once they turn 18. These leaders recognized the inherent tension among operating within local and state educational policies, supporting the school and district's mission and vision, and honoring the stated intentions of some students. This sensemaking process aligns with the work of scholars such as Drake (2017), who found that teachers of SLIFE students often perceive themselves serving as "mediators between policy and student needs" (p. 337). Similar to the teachers in Drake's study, leaders at DSHS made a concerted effort to ensure that students were aware of alternate pathways to graduation such as completing their coursework at the district's Adult High School. At the same time, several leaders expressed a desire for more options for older students such as Fernando. Frustrated by the amount of time it was taking to graduate, Fernando dropped out with the plan of working and completing his studies online, an approach that a friend suggested might be a faster pathway to graduation. He returned to DSHS at the urging of one of his teachers and graduated in June 2020 at the age of 20.

Another salient theme from the literature review in Chapter II is the evolution of students' engagement throughout their high school career. Green et al. (2008) found that engagement of Latin American immigrant youth changed over time and was positively impacted by supportive relationships with adults. Similarly, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2009b) found that the academic trajectories of adolescent newcomers evolved from initial optimism to increased disengagement over time, a trend that was particularly pronounced

among males. Given these shifting levels of engagement, it is understandable that leaders' and students' perceptions of academic needs may not always align. Students shared that their academic goals had evolved over the course of high school; many acknowledged that they did not have clear ideas about graduation or their post-secondary plans until their sophomore or junior year. School leaders at DSHS recognized the need for differentiated supports as students progressed through high school. Based on their experiences, leaders made concerted efforts to put extensive supports in place such as the reunification and peer mentoring programs during newcomers' first two years at DSHS. At the same time, school leaders expressed frustration that many newcomers were unable to access Academy courses, as they believed that this hands-on learning experience might appeal to students who might otherwise plan to leave before graduating in order to work.

Finding Two: Fostering Collective Responsibility through Distributed Leadership (Research Question Two)

A second finding from this study is that distributed leadership, further focused by a social justice mindset, allows for a collective approach to supporting the unique needs of newcomer Central American males, even with the sizable number of ELs at DSHS. Tools, routines, and structures (Halverson, 2006) allow DSHS leaders to coordinate interactions and distribute responsibilities amongst themselves to leverage the school's internal expertise to support ELs and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males. These artifacts of distributed leadership and social justice also enable the DSHS school leaders to draw on external district-level expertise from the district and community to enact meaningful supports.

Interaction Among Leaders, Followers, and Situation

Spillane and his colleagues (2004) assert that "leadership capacity is constituted…in the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation in the execution of particular leadership tasks" (p. 10). These scholars hold that the enactment of leadership tasks is "stretched over" leaders and followers who interact as part of an interdependent web, with each person bringing different resources to the task at hand. By working together, these actors can enact practices that potentially yield more than what each person could contribute individually.

This interdependent network of efforts is evident in the work at Davis Springs High School. Given the research base suggesting a dearth of professional learning opportunities for school leaders regarding best practices for supporting ELs (Landa, 2011), coupled with the size of schools such as DSHS, it is not surprising that the school's principal purposefully strives to engage both internal and external expertise. Throughout Davis Springs, clusters of highly-qualified, caring staff members work collectively to answer the essential question that Lindsey et al. (2009) contend should be at the forefront of all educators of diverse learners: "How can we better serve these students?" (p. 13). Interviews with school leaders illustrate that these staff members recognize that to address these learners' needs in a holistic manner, partnerships with community-based organizations such as Hope Family Services are also invaluable.

Collective Responsibility

Along with a distributed leadership approach, what the literature refers to as social justice leadership is critical to creating a culture grounded in collective responsibility for meeting these students' needs (August & Hakuta, 1997; Elfers &

Stritikus, 2014; Elfers et al., 2013; Lucas, 2016; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015). According to the literature, this means that leaders emphasize collaboration and a shared responsibility among all educators for the instruction of all learners, no matter their additional needs (Brooks et al., 2010; Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2019; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011).

In reflecting upon their practices, several DSHS leaders saw successes, and additional potential for growth, in fostering collective responsibility for ELs across the school. School leaders recognized that the structures currently in place to support newcomers, such as having a dedicated administrator who works with two ESOL counselors, helps ensure that recently arrived ELs feel cared for and visible. At the same time, given that these newcomers will eventually transition to another counselor and administrator, as well as to mainstream classes with general education teachers, leaders commented that more could be done to expand the circle of supports for these students to prepare for this transition. In other words, these leaders acknowledged that newcomers benefit from a system of intensive supports when they first arrive; however, these supports are temporary and must be coupled with simultaneous efforts to foster collective responsibility for these students, particularly since they comprise more than a quarter of the student body.

Student Voice

According to Theoharis and O'Toole (2011), social justice-driven leaders create inclusive learning environments for ELs by providing these students with "the right to an authentic sense of belonging" (p. 649). To this end, leaders with a social justice mindset view ELs through an assets-based paradigm that seeks to capitalize on their strengths and

honor their experiences, incorporating these students' voices into decision-making processes to ensure that these students feel valued and engaged (Guerra & Nelson, 2007; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012).

While the utilization of staff members' expertise was evident in the school's distributed leadership for ELs, the incorporation of student expertise into decision-making processes was cited by leaders as another area for potential growth. Dr. Pembrooke acknowledged that the school does not currently have a platform through which ELs can communicate directly with the principal. Ever Fernandez, ESOL Counselor, believes that the lack of opportunities for student voice is not because school leaders do not care; he attributes it instead to the language barrier between newcomers and school staff. Linda Ivery, Director of Student Services, opined that some students may not be accustomed to being asked to provide their perspective, so it might take some training to help them understand that they need to voice their needs. Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, DSHS will introduce an ESOL Leadership class to help ensure that more students' voices are heard; this model has been adopted at two WCPS high schools with similar student populations. Students in this class may be able to visit ESOL classes to elicit ELs' perspectives on topics such as offering additional extracurricular activities, honoring students' cultural backgrounds during events such as Spirit Weeks or pep rallies, or offering supports with the eligibility paperwork and physicals required for sports.

Finding Three: Offering a System of Supports (Research Questions One, Two, and Three)

A third finding from this study is that in order to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, DSHS has enacted a range of practices, programs,

and supports that align with the following leadership practices presented in the conceptual framework: (a) communicate an inclusive mission and vision grounded in an assets-based approach to ELs; (b) cultivate culturally responsive staff (Hammond, 2015); (c) foster a positive climate emphasizing relationships and sociocultural affect (Hammond, 2015; Ylimaki et al., 2012); and (d) forge community and family partnerships to meet student needs (Sebring et al., 2016; Sugarman, 2015). The Central American males in this study indicated that the last two of these practices, Davis Springs' efforts to foster a positive climate grounded in relationships and its community partnerships, were particularly impactful on their sense of school connectedness.

Positive Climate

Davis Springs' emphasis on relationships aligns directly with the stage-environment-fit theory proposed by Eccles and his colleagues (1993), which suggests that an ideal learning environment includes, among other factors, support from caring adults. These types of environments are particularly critical in supporting adolescent immigrants as they acclimate to a new country and school (Phelan et al., as cited in Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Numerous studies demonstrate the correlation between positive relationships and the academic success of ELs (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Green et al., 2008; Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2009a; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009b). By building relationships with students and ensuring that they feel safe, teachers can create conditions in which newcomer ELs take the risks necessary to excel academically (Hammond, 2015).

Numerous examples of the importance of relationships at DSHS emerged during the study. When students were asked during the structured interviews to identify a staff member with whom they had a positive relationship, they all readily named an adult at

the school who had supported them. One student spoke of a soccer coach who had checked in on him when his grades were declining; another spoke of the ESOL teacher who convinced him to reconsider his decision to drop out of school. Furthermore, students described how staff members had made them aware of resources such as scholarships and financial aid, an advisory role found in the literature to be critical to the success of ELs (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009a). While students shared their desire to maintain a boundary with academic and non-academic needs, staff used their expertise to address these learners' needs in a holistic manner. Supports ranging from the distribution of school supplies to the dissemination of food during the COVID-19 crisis in spring 2020 provided evidence of the staff's commitment to constructing an ethic of community for these students (Furman, 2004).

Community Partnerships

Partnerships with community-based organizations illustrate how Davis Springs' staff enact the evidence-based practices described in the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) presented in Chapter II. According to PSEL Standard 5, effective educational leaders "promote…school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 13). Similarly, PSEL Standard 8 asserts that efficacious school leaders "build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote…student learning" (p. 16).

Partnerships with community-based organizations and DSHS are noteworthy for several reasons. Some of its partnerships, such as the reunification program offered in collaboration with Hope Family Services, are common in WCPS high schools with

significant EL populations. However, the school's partnership with numerous faith-based and civic-based organizations are exemplary practices that are not as prevalent in the district's high schools. Many of these partnerships have taken root because of staff members who recognized the need for additional supports. An ESOL teacher initiated the partnership with City of Angels church when she saw the need for more mentors for the school's Latino ELs. Similarly, the ESOL Department Chair attended an event at a local church to promote the school and to encourage parishioners to volunteer at DSHS. During the COVID-19 crisis in spring 2020, the staff's proactive, solution-oriented approach manifested itself in the organization of a milk and dairy giveaway that supported approximately 1,400 families in need; volunteers from local churches and other community organizations assisted with this endeavor. Students also cited the usefulness of community-based after-school programs such as the Dreams Project as a support to help them navigate the college application process, a complex undertaking for these learners. These examples demonstrate how Davis Springs extends the impact of its ethic of care by collaborating with local organizations that can offer invaluable resources.

Areas for Potential Growth

The school's efforts to communicate an inclusive mission and vision and to cultivate culturally responsive staff were also evident; however, these areas of practice represent areas of potential growth, particularly as they relate to recognizing and leveraging the linguistic and cultural capital of newcomer Central American males (Hopkins et al., 2013). Riehl (2000) asserts that inclusive principals reject deficit thinking toward diverse learners, adopting instead an assets-based paradigm (Baecher et al., 2013; Cooper, 2009; Dozier, 2001; Ní Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010; Wagstaff & Fusarelli,

1999). These leaders accept responsibility for ensuring the success of all learners, a reality reflected in the school's mission statement. However, scholars such as Rodriguez (2012) encourage school-based leaders to "assume that Latino(a) youth bring a wealth of experiences and expect schools to capitalize on these experiences" (p. 25). While Davis Springs' school leaders clearly recognize the unique needs of its newcomer Central American males, research suggests that efforts to capitalize on these students' strengths may be an area for potential growth. As part of the district-wide focus on equity and cultural responsiveness, for example, these learners can serve as an invaluable source of internal expertise, particularly if they are afforded the opportunity to share their experiences through *testimonios* (Olivares-Orellana, 2017; 2020) in which they share their stories.

Recommendations for Practice

Davis Springs High School was selected for the case study based on its efforts to support its ELs and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males. This school has enacted a continuum of practices, programs, and supports to address these students' needs in a holistic manner. At the same time, school leaders acknowledge that there is still work to be done to bolster these learners' school connectedness and, in turn, their academic success. Based on the data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV, as well as the literature presented in Chapter II, I now present several recommendations; many of these suggestions build on current practices at DSHS. These recommendations are intended to be constructive as leaders at DSHS and other high schools continue to seek ways to expand the network of supports for newcomer Central American males. They are aligned with the three research questions guiding this study and thereby focus on perceptions of

the needs of newcomer Central American males (research question one), decision-making processes to address those needs (research question two), and practices, programs, and supports enacted to support these learners (research question three).

Expand Newcomers' Awareness of Resources to Address Socio-Emotional Needs (Research Question One)

Although several students shared their reluctance to seek out assistance from school staff for socio-emotional needs, these needs do, in fact, exist. As one of the ESOL counselors indicated, many students will approach staff once they have had the opportunity to establish trust. Because it is uncertain how long it takes individual students to build trust or when the need may arise for students to discuss challenges that they are facing, it is important for all students to be aware of resources available to them. For example, since most students interviewed stated that they were unaware that the school had a social worker and a psychologist, it would be helpful to have these staff members introduce themselves and discuss their role at the school. These introductions could take place at the beginning of the year, perhaps through Strategies for Success classes, in conjunction with the ESOL counselors' lessons on key personnel. This introductory visit could be followed up through more proactive measures such as quarterly visits to Strategies for Success classes to discuss topics such as simple stress management strategies; they could also occur through targeted intervention groups held during the school's new advisory/intervention period for students who may need additional support.

In addition, parents would benefit from increased awareness of available resources to address their children's socio-emotional needs. Besides knowing that students have access to a counselor, social worker, and psychologist, it would be helpful for parents to have information about any available community resources to support their

children. The dissemination of this information could be accomplished through a community resources fair at Back-to-School events, parent meetings, or through the school's parenting programs.

Finally, DSHS may wish to consider having a community-based organization such as Hope Family Services provide staff with a professional learning opportunity around trauma-informed strategies. By learning more about the types of trauma to which students may have been exposed, as well as their effects, staff will become more informed so that they can reach out for consultation and collaboration if a student needs additional support (Hope Family Services, 2020). This information will also help ensure that student behaviors that may be trauma-related are addressed in a constructive manner.

Identify and Address Barriers to Newcomers' Participation in Extracurricular Activities (Research Questions One and Three)

Students and school leaders identified two significant barriers hindering newcomers' participation in extracurricular activities: institutional and relational. Although some institutional barriers are related to policies and procedures established by the state's governing organization for high school athletics, there are certain measures that DSHS can take or revisit to support newcomers. Given the district-wide focus on equity, a review of extracurricular participation data by demographic group, including students' ELP level, would inform the school's consideration of next steps. These quantitative metrics can be coupled with qualitative data elicited from student athletes such as Carlos to identify ways to increase the participation of students with similar backgrounds. Furthermore, Davis Springs is encouraged to continue having coaches from multiple sports visit ESOL classes to: (a) discuss eligibility, tryouts, and the expected time commitment to play on a school team; (b) explain the required paperwork; and (c)

field questions. ESOL teachers can then follow up by ensuring that newcomers know the location of the school's Student Activities Office. The ESOL Department Chair can also collaborate with the Director of Student Activities to ensure that the required forms are available in multiple languages and that physicals are offered on-site.

Given the survey data indicating that many students did not feel welcome to participate in extracurricular activities, Davis Springs is also encouraged to consider ways to address these perceived barriers. Since newcomers may be reluctant to participate in activities due to the language barrier or the absence of their friends, the school is encouraged to have student athletes or club officers, especially if they are bilingual, visit ESOL classes to extend personal invitations to students to participate. Furthermore, senior EL mentors can encourage their newcomer mentees to identify a potential club or sport of interest.

Davis Springs is also encouraged to consider expanding extracurricular options to include newcomers who may have limited after-school availability. Due to financial or family obligations, some newcomers may not be able to commit to the rigorous practice schedule of a school team. However, students might be interested in participating in an intramural scrimmage one afternoon a week, particularly if there is a late bus available. Given the school's success with partnering with community organizations, Davis Springs is encouraged to consider partnering with its neighborhood recreation center or faith-based organization to offer intramurals one afternoon a week.

Strengthen Newcomers' Awareness of Academic Options and Supports (Research Questions One and Three)

School leaders and students both discussed the importance of providing newcomers with comprehensible academic guidance, particularly during their first two

years of high school. ESOL counselors work closely with these students, sharing academic guidance in Spanish to ensure that it is comprehensible. However, the counselors, as well as ESOL teachers who work with newcomers, shared that it can be challenging to present information about long-term goals such as graduation when newcomers are focusing on their immediate needs. As a complement to the guidance offered by ESOL counselors and ESOL teachers, DSHS is encouraged to continue its peer mentoring program initiated by seniors during the 2019-20 school year. Partnering seniors who arrived as newcomers and achieved success with recently arrived ELs allows these students to learn from peers with relatable experiences. Through these partnerships, seniors can impart their wisdom about topics in which they have clear expertise, such as balancing school, work, and family responsibilities, asking for extra help, and navigating the college application process. In short, these partnerships honor the assets of the students preparing to graduate and expand the circle of trusted resources available to newcomers.

Several students also shared the value of the courses offered through the Career and Technical Education Academy available at DSHS as well as sister schools in WCPS. Students such as Fernando and Carlos spoke of how the Academy provided them with skills to prepare them for life after high school. Given that some newcomer Central American males drop out of school to work before their schedule permits them to take Academy classes, DSHS is encouraged to continue its efforts to build newcomers' awareness of the Academy during the first two years. This could be accomplished through organizing field trips to the Academy, inviting teachers from the Academy to

speak about their class and career field, or organizing a panel of students who took Academy classes to share their experiences and answer questions.

Create Additional Space for Student Voice (Research Questions Two and Three)

Because both leaders and students indicated the need to expand opportunities for student voice, DSHS is encouraged to consider ways for ELs and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males, to be heard and engaged in school decisions. The addition of an ESOL Leadership class in the 2020-21 school year will provide a formal structure that affords more students to share their perspectives. This class will allow the administration opportunities to meet with ELs to hear their ideas, and it will also create space for more peer-to-peer dialogue.

Davis Springs High School is also encouraged to invite ELs to share their stories with the faculty and the community. As the school continues to work to address achievement gaps involving the EL sub-group, inviting ELs to communicate their experiences can enhance existing professional learning opportunities for staff. Students can be asked to share their challenges and successes during faculty meetings, on dedicated professional development days, or through video clips. These insights from students, particularly those who arrived as newcomers and are preparing to graduate, allow staff to see the effect of their efforts and to learn which supports were most impactful. More importantly, this qualitative data adds another, more personal, layer to the quantitative metrics generally utilized to measure student achievement.

Amplify Opportunities for Vertical Articulation among Staff Regarding Newcomers (Research Question Two)

Several leaders recognized that newcomers at DSHS benefit from a system of intensive supports when they first arrive. At the same time, they acknowledged that in

order to ensure that students transition smoothly into a mainstream setting, more efforts must be made to prepare students and staff for that shift. The current reality, which is common in many high schools, is that newcomers become attached to the staff members with whom they have the most contact upon arriving at a school, particularly if those adults speak the same language. Many students continue to rely on these adults, even when they attain more advanced levels of English. Given this reality, DSHS is encouraged to consider ways to strengthen vertical articulation among teachers, counselors, and administrators so that students feel supported as they transition out of newcomer classes. While these conversations may already occur informally, they could potentially be augmented through proactive measures such as having staff visit ESOL classes before the transition occurs to introduce themselves and begin making personal connections with these learners.

Utilize a Systems Perspective to View and Connect Existing Supports (Research Question Three)

Despite having a wide range of practices, programs, and supports in place to support newcomer Central American males, several school leaders expressed frustration that the results of these efforts were not always captured by state accountability metrics of student achievement. At the same time, some leaders expressed their concern that they were not doing enough to address these learners' needs, believing, for example, that DSHS would benefit from additional partnerships with community organizations as well as grant funding to further support the EL population at the school.

Given these perceptions, DSHS is encouraged to bolster its current continuum of supports by viewing them through a systems lens to ensure coherence among efforts. As the school progresses in its implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)

during the 2020-21 school year and beyond, this system will allow school staff to more effectively measure the impact of interventions on students' incremental progress towards graduation. By utilizing a system to identify students warranting additional support, pinpointing the primary challenges facing those students and their root causes, implementing targeted interventions, and then measuring the impact of those interventions, school staff will have more proximate metrics to guide their work and indicate whether they need to refine their practices (Heath, 2020). By involving students in these conversations, learners and staff alike will have a better sense of what supports are needed to help students achieve short-term goals that, over time, will lead them to graduation and their post-secondary pathways.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of this study and related them to the conceptual framework as well as to the extant literature presented in Chapter II. Based on the findings, I presented several recommendations as potential next steps for the school leaders at Davis Springs High School as well as other leaders of high schools serving significant EL populations.

In the final chapter of her book *The Newcomers*, journalist Helen Thorpe (2017) reflects upon the opportunity facing today's schools serving increasingly diverse student populations. She asserts that schools have a choice in how to respond to the arrival of students from diverse backgrounds:

> We could fill our hearts with fear or with hope, and the choice would affect more than just our own dispositions. For in choosing which type of seeds to sow, we would dictate the type of harvest. (p. 432)

Davis Springs High School has chosen to sow seeds of hope for its newcomer Central American males. My intention in sharing these findings and recommendations is to bolster the work of other high school principals and their leadership teams as they, too, work to create inclusive learning environments grounded in hope for these learners.

Action Communication Products

In order to share the findings and recommendations of this study, I created three action communication products. First, I sent a briefing memo with an accompanying infographic to the principal of Davis Springs High School summarizing the study findings and recommendations. Second, I created a PowerPoint and shared it with the principal during a meeting to discuss the findings and identify ways to share the information with his leadership team and staff. Furthermore, I sent a briefing memo to the Director of the Office of ESOL Services, the WCPS sponsor of this research, to apprise him of the study findings and recommendations. Finally, I conferred with the principal, the research sponsor, and the Executive Principal for DSHS to determine other possible WCPS venues in which to share the findings such as at a meeting of the High School Principals Association or the High School ESOL Department Chairs.

Briefing Memo for Principal of Davis Springs High School

Dear Dr. Pembrooke:

Thank you for allowing me to carry out my research study, "Building Pockets of Hope": The Impact of High School Principals' Beliefs and Practices on the School Connectedness of Newcomer Central American Males" at your school. As you may recall, data for this mixed-methods case study were collected through semi-structured interviews with leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey.

Three research questions guided this study. The first research question focused on leaders' and students' perceptions of the needs of newcomer Central American males. The second research question examined the school's decision-making processes to address the needs. Finally, the third research question identified the practices, programs, and supports enacted to support these learners.

I am writing to present a summary of the study findings and recommendations. It is my hope that this information validates the work that you and your staff are doing to address the unique needs of these learners while also identifying potential areas for growth. The findings are as follows:

- **School leaders recognize the unique needs of newcomer Central American males.** Overall, there was alignment between leaders' and students' perceptions of the challenges facing these students; however, some differences emerged in perceptions of how to elicit and meet these learners' socio-emotional and certain academic needs.

- **Given the size of the EL population at your school and the unique needs of newcomer Central American males, distributed leadership, coupled with a social justice mindset, allows for a collective approach to support these learners.** School leaders use tools, routines, and structures to leverage internal and external expertise to enact meaningful supports for these learners; however, opportunities may exist to expand the sense of collective responsibility for these students.

- **In order to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, your school has enacted a range of practices, programs, and supports, the most impactful of which are grounded in an ethic of care and directly aligned to students' wants and needs.** Of the practices examined, Davis Springs' efforts to foster a positive climate grounded in relationships, as well as its community partnerships, were particularly impactful on Central American males' sense of school connectedness. The impact of the supports might be further enhanced through increased coordination of efforts and a systematic method for measuring their effect on students.

Based on these findings, including reflections from school leaders and students, as well as current research, I offer the following recommendations to further support newcomer Central American males at your school:

- Expand newcomers' awareness of resources to address their socio-emotional needs.
- Identify and address institutional and relational barriers to newcomers' participation in extracurricular activities.
- Strengthen newcomers' awareness of academic options and supports.
- Create additional space for student voice.
- Amplify opportunities for vertical articulation among staff to ensure continuity as newcomers progress in their acquisition of English.
- Utilize a systems perspective to view and connect existing supports and measure their impact on students.

I hope that you find these findings and recommendations useful. At your convenience, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you in person, answer questions, and discuss how I might share the findings with your leadership team and staff.

Respectfully,

Michelle Campiglia

Briefing Memo for Director of the Office of ESOL Services

Dear Director Reynolds:

Thank you for sponsoring my research study, "Building Pockets of Hope": The Impact of High School Principals' Beliefs and Practices on the School Connectedness of Newcomer Central American Males" at one of the high schools in WCPS. As you may recall, data for this mixed-methods case study were collected through semi-structured interviews with leaders and students, document analysis, and a student survey.

Three research questions guided this study. The first research question focused on leaders' and students' perceptions of the needs of newcomer Central American males. The second research question examined the school's decision-making processes to address the needs. Finally, the third research question identified the practices, programs, and supports enacted to support these learners.

I am writing to share a summary of the study findings and recommendations. It is my hope that this information validates the work that WCPS high schools are doing to address the unique needs of these learners while also identifying potential areas for growth. The findings are as follows:

- **School leaders recognize the unique needs of newcomer Central American males.** Overall, there was alignment between leaders' and students' perceptions of the challenges facing these students; however, some differences emerged in perceptions of these learners' socio-emotional and certain academic needs.

- **Given the size of the EL population at DSHS and the unique needs of newcomer Central American males, distributed leadership, coupled with a social justice mindset, allows for a collective approach to support these learners.** School leaders used tools, routines, and structures to draw on internal and external expertise to enact meaningful supports for these learners; however, opportunities may exist to expand the sense of collective responsibility for these students.

- **In order to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, this high school has enacted a range of practices, programs, and supports, the most impactful of which are grounded in an ethic of care and directly aligned to students' wants and needs.** The school's efforts to foster a positive climate grounded in relationships, as well as its community partnerships, were particularly impactful on Central American males' sense of school connectedness. The impact of the supports might be further enhanced through increased coordination of efforts and a systematic method for measuring their effect on students.

Based on these findings, including reflections from school leaders and students, as well as current research, I offer the following recommendations to further support newcomer Central American males:

- Expand newcomers' awareness of resources to address their socio-emotional needs.
- Identify and address institutional and relational barriers to newcomers' participation in extracurricular activities.
- Strengthen newcomers' awareness of academic options and supports.
- Create additional space for student voice.
- Amplify opportunities for vertical articulation among staff to ensure continuity as newcomers progress in their acquisition of English.
- Adopt a systems perspective to connect existing practices, programs, and supports and measure their impact on students.

I hope that you find these findings and recommendations useful. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you in person, answer questions, and identify potential ways to share the study's outcomes with other district leaders.

Respectfully,

Michelle Campiglia

Infographic

School Presentation

Creating "Pockets of Hope": The Impact of High School Principals' Beliefs and Practices on the School Connectedness of Newcomer Central American Males

Research Findings and Recommendations
Presented to Davis Springs High School

Michelle Campiglia
October 2020

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Creating "Pockets of Hope"

Pockets of hope are physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and political communities where participants engage in reflection and action...In these pockets of hope, the presence and participation of all members is seen as essential to their survival, development, and future...An unyielding faith in the future describes the strength, courage, and determination that one finds in these pockets of hope (de los Reyes, 2001, pp. 23-24).

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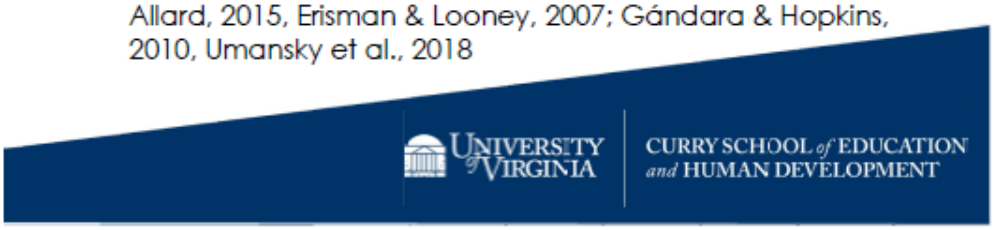
Problem of Practice

- Newcomer Central American males who arrive in the United States as high school students have higher-than-average dropout rates.
- Between 40 and 70% of newcomers who arrive at age 14 or older leave school before they graduate.

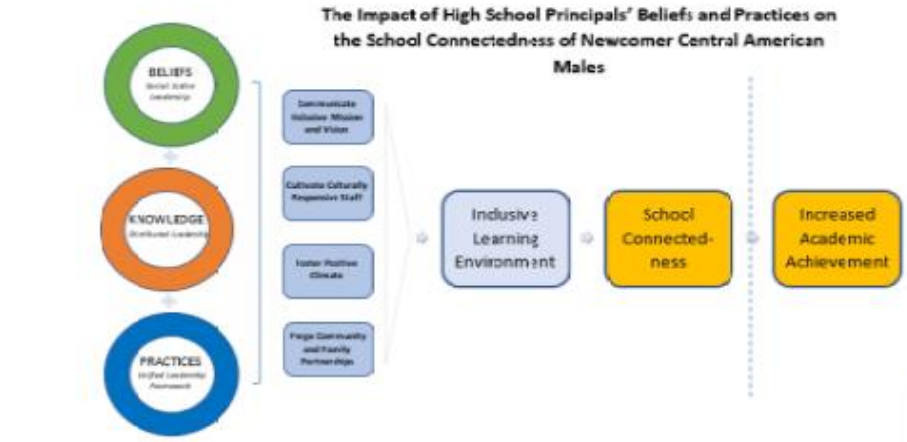
Allard, 2015, Erisman & Looney, 2007; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010, Umansky et al., 2018



Purpose of the Study

Given this challenge, what can high school leaders do to bolster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males, thereby supporting their academic achievement?

Conceptual Framework



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Research Questions

RQ 1: What are the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness?

RQ 2: How do school leaders determine what practices, programs, and supports are necessary to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?

RQ 3: What practices, programs, and supports are being employed to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?

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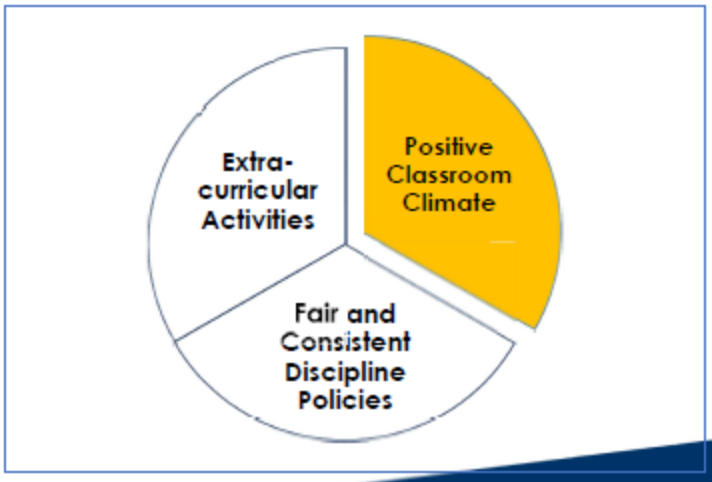
School Connectedness



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Study Design

Context:

- High school with one of largest EL populations in district
- Significant Central American EL population

Methods:

- Semi-Structured Interviews with 6 leaders
- Document analysis
- Survey of 24 Central American males (Grade 12)
- Semi-Structured Interview with 5 Central American males (Grade 12)

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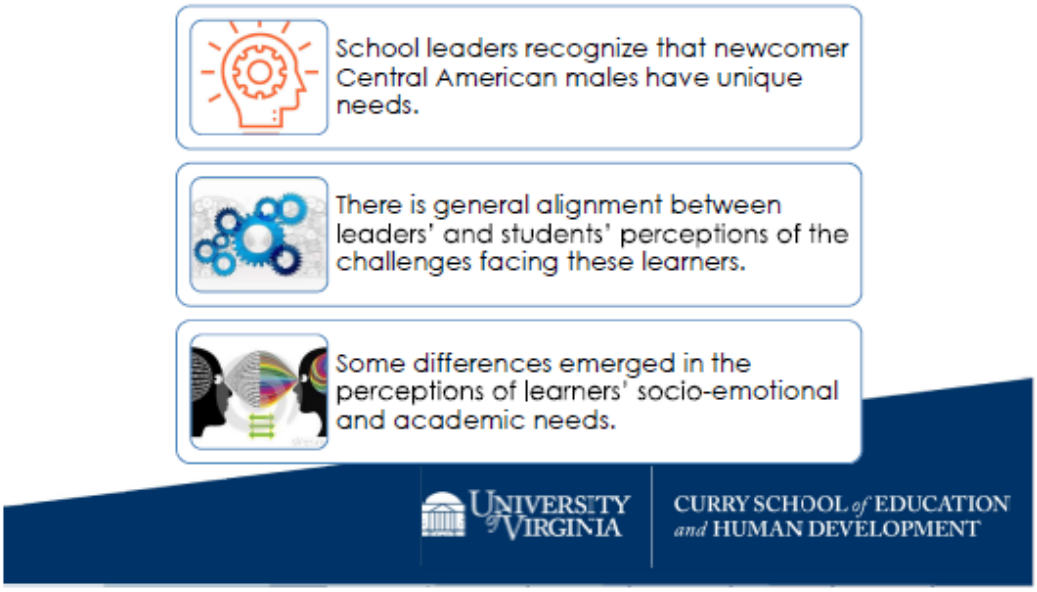
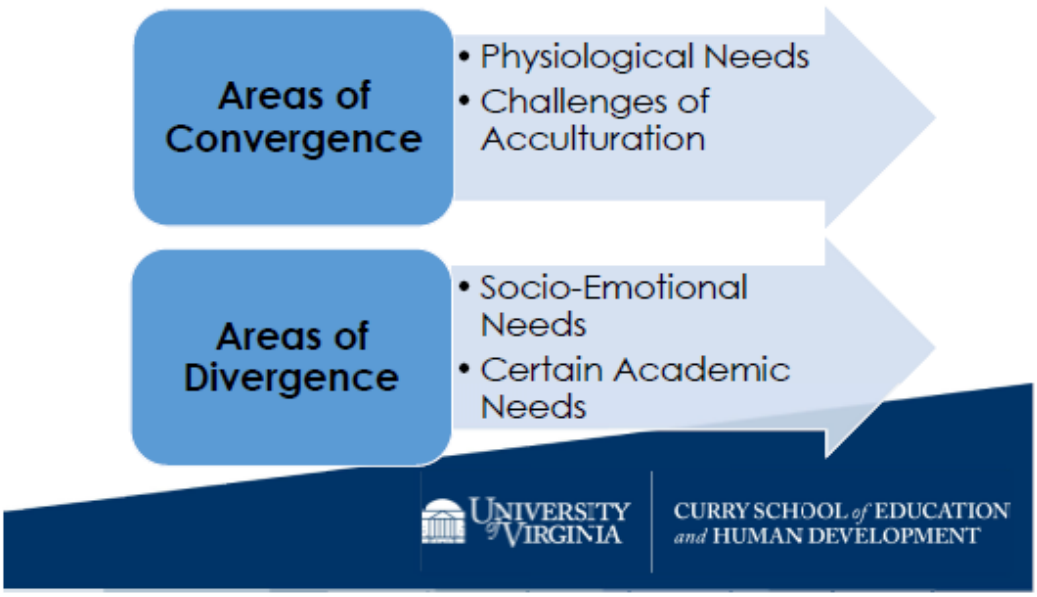
RQ 1: What are the perceived needs of newcomer Central American males related to school connectedness?



Leaders' and Students' Perceptions of Needs



Socio-Emotional Needs

Students

Adults at this school care about me.	75%*
Adults at this school know about me as a person.	42%

"I don't really like to communicate with teachers a lot. Yeah, I don't get too close to them."

Leaders

"Everything that's home stays at home. You don't share family problems. They don't cry. 'We're not supposed to be emotional.' It's just a lot of unpacking with the boys. I just feel once you have broken down the walls, they're more willing to be more open to sharing. So, once I get their trust, I feel they come back and check in a lot more often and they know that this is a comfortable, safe space for them…"

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Need for Belonging: Extracurricular Activities

Students

"I want to apply for the school teams, but I need a paper…Because I didn't have that paper I couldn't apply. I asked my mom if I [can apply], and she's like, 'You can't because we don't have that paper.' It was like for medical insurance."

Leaders

"If the process [to get into sports] could be…streamlined, I could get more kids playing soccer [to help] their mental health as well as their social skills. If I could do that, I feel we'd be in a better place in terms of a lot of our kids not falling into the wrong crowds."

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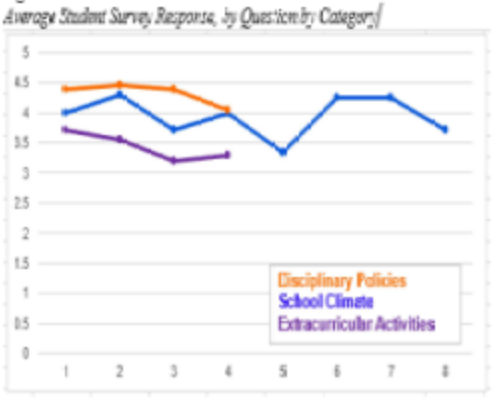
Extracurricular Activities: Student Survey Data

I know about sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	67%*
It is easy to understand how to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	50%
It is important to me to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	42%
I feel welcome to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school.	42%

Figure 8
Average Student Survey Response, by Question by Category



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Students' Perspectives

Awareness of Available Resources

Preparation for Life after HS

Leaders' Perspectives

Additional Support for SLIFE

Additional Time and Pathways

Academic Guidance

Relevant Curriculum With Real-World Connections

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Academic Needs: Students' Perspectives

88%* Graduating from high school is important to me.

50% After I graduate from high school, I will go to work.

38% After I graduate from high school, I will go to college.

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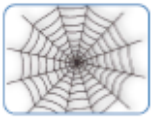
RQ 2: How do school leaders determine what practices, programs, and supports are necessary to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?



Distributed leadership, coupled with a social justice mindset, allows for a collective approach to support these learners.

The use of tools, routines, and structures allows leaders to draw on internal and external expertise to enact meaningful supports.

Opportunities may exist to expand a sense of collective responsibility for these students.

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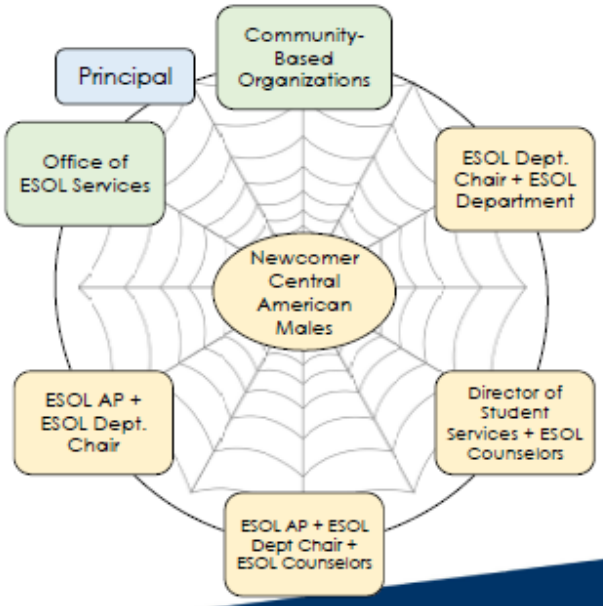
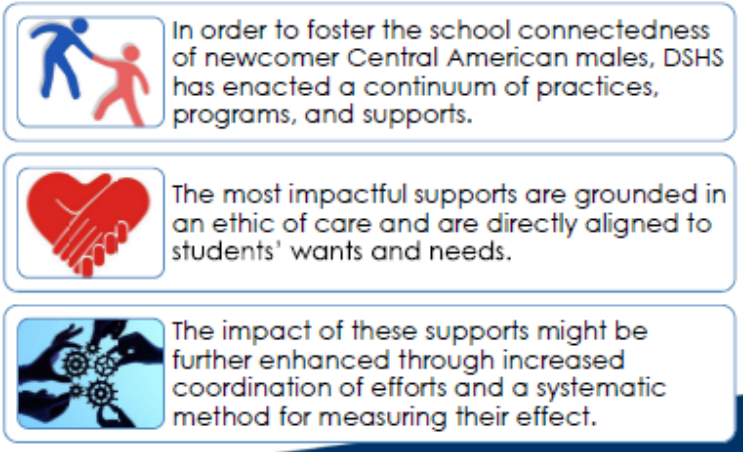
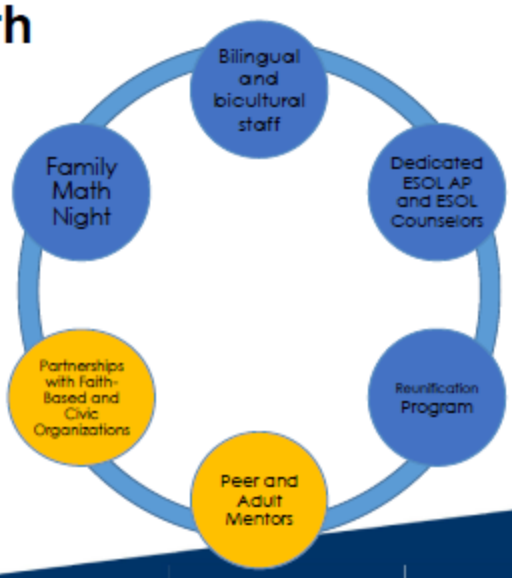


RQ 3: What practices, programs, and supports are being employed to foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?



Leadership Practices: Areas of Strength



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Students' Perspectives on Impact of Supports

I feel safe at this school.	79%*
Adults at this school want me to be successful.	79%
Adults at this school care about me.	75%
I can get help at this school if I need it.	75%
I feel connected to students at this school.	54%
I feel a voice in my classroom or school.	50%
Adults at this school know about me as a person.	42%

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Leaders' Perspectives on Impact of Supports

"I think the largest indicator of whether we're being successful or not is our on-time graduation index and our attendance...Just looking at those two sets of data, you could say that we're not being successful because our highest rate of absence is in our ESOL population and our lowest rate of graduation is our ESOL population. Just looking at those two, an outsider would say, 'Whatever you're doing is not working...'"

"I see students coming to school and engaged in classrooms. I see students that feel welcome. They know they have a place where adults care for them and not only care for them but want them to learn and succeed. I see students that with all the challenges and potential trauma...are making it happen."

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School leaders can make a difference.

"We could fill our hearts with fear or with hope, and the choice would affect more than just our own dispositions. For in choosing which type of seeds to sow, we would dictate the type of harvest" (Thorpe, 2017, p. 432).

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Recommendations

1. Expand newcomers' awareness of resources to address socio-emotional needs.	2. Strengthen newcomers' awareness of academic options and supports.	3. Identify and address institutional and relational barriers to newcomers' participation in extracurricular activities.
4. Create additional space for student voice.	5. Amplify opportunities for vertical articulation among staff to ensure continuity as newcomers progress in their acquisition of English.	6. Utilize a systems perspective to view and connect existing supports and measure their impact on students.

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Questions/Feedback

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Thank you for your participation.

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APPENDIX A

Initial Electronic Correspondence for Consent from Principal
(via Executive Principal for selected region)

Dear *Executive Principal*:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me last week regarding my capstone project. To recap, I recently finished my doctoral coursework at the University of Virginia and am now working on my culminating capstone project for my Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. In order to fulfill this final requirement, I am researching the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. My study will culminate in a capstone paper that will support out division's Strategic Plan and Closing the Achievement Gap Framework. I am attaching Chapter One of my proposal for your reference.

I am hoping to conduct my research in WCPS and am in the process of identifying a potential school for my study. I am seeking an exemplar high school with a significant Central American EL population that is led by an equity-minded principal. As I mentioned in our conversation, I believe that Davis Springs High School would be the ideal setting for this study. I am familiar with the work of Dr. Pembrooke and his leadership team and feel that learning more about their efforts to support newcomer Central American males would be beneficial not only to me but to the region, division, and districts across the nation.

I recognize that Dr. Pembrooke and his team have extensive responsibilities, so I will keep time demands to a minimum:

- **Individual interviews** with Dr. Pembrooke, the ESOL AP, and the ESOL Department Chair, as well as three other school leaders who support newcomer Central American males (e.g., ESOL counselor, Director of Student Services); estimated time commitment: 30 – 45 minutes/interview
- **Document analysis** of artifacts that demonstrate the school's support of these students; estimated time commitment: minimal as most documents are available online
- **Electronic survey of 20 – 25 Central American 12th grade males** who arrived as newcomers and are preparing to graduate; estimated time commitment: 10 minutes during remediation block
- **Interviews with five of the aforementioned seniors**; estimated time commitment: 30 minutes during remediation block

I defended my capstone proposal at UVA on September 3 and am now in the process of securing IRB approval from UVA and WCPS. Depending on the length of the approval process, I will begin my research in December 2019 or January 2020.

Thank you in advance for offering to reach out to Dr. Pembrooke regarding my study.
Michelle Campiglia

APPENDIX B

Initial Correspondence with Principal

Dear Dr. Pembrooke:

Thank you for choosing to participate in my doctoral research study. As I mentioned in our conversation, I am a graduate student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. I am currently working on my culminating capstone for my Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. To this end, I am examining the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. This study has been approved by the University of Virginia and Wilson County Public Schools.

In the first phase of this study, I would like to interview you, the assistant principal who supervises ESOL, and the ESOL Department Chair. In addition, I would like to interview three other school leaders who support newcomer Central American males. The interviews should take 30 – 45 minutes for each participant.

To prepare for the interviews, I ask that you kindly complete the following tasks:

- Print, sign, and email a scanned copy of the informed consent form attached to me at mrc2w@virginia.edu.
- Email me the name of **five** school leaders whom you believe are critical to supporting the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males at your school. From these leaders, I will select three randomly so that their participation will be confidential.

I recognize how busy you are, so I will contact your administrative assistant to identify a mutually convenient time for a 30 to 45-minute interview. I hope to complete the interviews with you and other school leaders between December 2 and 13.

Please contact me at mrc2w@virginia.edu if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Michelle Campiglia

APPENDIX C

Initial Correspondence with School Leaders other than School Principal
(Email to be Sent by Principal)

Dear *School Leaders*:

My name is Michelle Campiglia, and I am a doctoral student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. I am currently working on my culminating capstone project for my Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. To this end, I am examining the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. This study has been approved by the University of Virginia, this school division, your Region Assistant Superintendent, and your principal.

During the first phase of my research, I will be conducting individual interviews with your principal, assistant principal who supervises ESOL, and your ESOL Department Chair as well as three other school leaders who support the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. Your principal, Dr. Pembrooke, provided me with the names of five school leaders, and I selected three at random for this phase of the research. In order to protect the identity of the school leaders selected, identities will not be shared with your principal or anyone else.

If you are willing to participate in this study, the only commitment is an interview that will take 30 – 45 minutes of your time. I am currently scheduled to be at your school on [date] and [date] and am hoping to meet with you on one of those dates. I recognize how busy you are, and I want to work around your schedule.

If you are interested in participating in the study, kindly complete the following tasks:

- Sign the attached informed consent form, scan it, and email it to me at mrc2w@virginia.edu.
- Email me your preferred date and time for an interview.

Please email me at mrc2w@virginia.edu if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,

Michelle Campiglia

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Agreement: Semi-Structured Interviews with School Leaders

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Michelle Campiglia, a student of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. The purpose of the study is to examine the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males.

What you will do in the study: You will be asked to participate in an interview about your work to support the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. With your permission, the researcher would like to record this interview in order to accurately capture your responses. You have the right to skip any questions, and you may stop the interview at any time or for any reason.

Time required: The study will require about 30 – 45 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. The study may help us understand how school leaders can support the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number/pseudonym. The list connecting your name to this code/pseudonym will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report. The audio file of your interview will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

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. Withdrawal from the study will not affect your employment. If you decide to withdraw, your audio file for the interview will be destroyed.

How to withdraw from the study: If you want to withdraw from the study, tell the interviewer to stop the interview.

Payment: You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Using data beyond this study: The data you provide in this study will be retained in a secure manner by the researcher for one year and then destroyed.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu
Sara Dexter, Associate Professor
University of Virginia, Curry School of Education
P.O. Box 400265, Charlottesville, VA 22903
sdexter@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) 924-5999
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.

Full Name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to be audiotaped for this research study. I understand that only the researcher will have access to this recording and that it will be destroyed one year from the study's completion.

Full Name: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

APPENDIX E

Initial Correspondence with School Leaders Regarding Student Participants

Dear *Assistant Principal Supervising ESOL and ESOL Department Chair*:

My name is Michelle Campiglia, and I am a doctoral student in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. I am currently working on my culminating capstone project for my Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. To this end, I am examining the impact of high school principals' beliefs and practices on the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. This study has been approved by the University of Virginia, this school division, your Region Assistant Superintendent, and your principal.

As part of my study, I will individually be interviewing your principal and other school leaders who support the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. My study also involves Central American male students who arrived in the United States as newcomer high school students and are now seniors preparing to graduate. I believe that it is important to incorporate these students' voices to understand their perspective on the supports that the school has provided them.

I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying potential students to participate in the study. I am seeking 20 – 25 students to participate in a survey and five of those students to participate in a subsequent interview. I will be at your school on [date] and [date] and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and answer any questions that you might have about the study. I recognize how busy you are and want to honor your time; the meeting will take no more than 30 minutes.

Please email me with your preferred date and time. I can be reached by email at mrc2w@virginia.edu.

Thank you,

Michelle Campiglia

APPENDIX F

Student Participant Recruitment Script

The following script will be used during a meeting with potential student participants during the advisory period of their school day. Since the students are seniors who have demonstrated enough proficiency in English to be eligible to graduate, I will present the information in English; however, if there is any clarifying information that needs to be communicated in Spanish, I will do so.

Good morning,

My name is Michelle Campiglia, and I am a student at the University of Virginia. I am working on a research project as part of my doctoral program at my university. I am here to tell you about my project because I am hoping that you might be interested in participating. My project is not part of your classwork, and there are no grades or exams involved. I am interested in learning how schools can support Central American male students who begin their studies in the United States as newcomers, or level 1 or 2 English Learners. In this study, I will speak with your principal and other school leaders about how they help these students feel connected to school, but I also want to hear your perspective. All of you arrived as newcomers, and now you are preparing to graduate, which is outstanding. Your voices are important to me because I want to hear how this school has helped you feel connected and succeed in your studies. The information that you share with me will help the leaders of this school and other schools understand how we can effectively support students like you.

There are two ways that you can participate in this project. First, I am looking for some students to complete a survey about your experiences at school. The survey will take no more than 10 minutes and will be administered during school hours. The survey will ask you about your experiences at school and, more specifically, your opinion about how the school has supported you. This survey is about you and your experiences. It is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. In addition to the survey, I am looking for five students to participate in a follow-up interview that will last approximately 30 minutes. In the interview, I will follow up on some of the questions that I asked in the survey about what supports have been most helpful to you during your time here as a student.

I want you to know that there will not be any identifiable information about you in the project. I would change your name, as well as the name of the school, school district, and state. I will record the interviews because I want to remember exactly what you say; however, I am the only person who will have access to these recordings, and they will be password protected. I will not discuss anything that you say with another person, but I will include your ideas in my final paper about the project using what we call a pseudonym, or another name. The only time that I would need to report something is if you said that you wanted to hurt yourself or someone wanted to harm you; in that case, I would have to report that information in order to keep you safe.

If you are interested in participating in the study, I will need your help with two required forms. Your parent or guardian will need to sign the Parental Consent form which is written in English and Spanish, and you will need to sign the Minor Assent

form. If you choose to participate in the survey, you will receive a $10 gift card. The five students who also participate in the interview will receive a $20 gift card and will be eligible to win a $50 gift card. Those students entered in the drawing for the $50 gift card will have a 1 in 5 chance of winning.

APPENDIX G

Parent/Guardian Notification Letter (English and Spanish)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Michelle Campiglia, and I am conducting a research study at your son's school. I am interested in studying how school leaders can support newcomer Central American males so that they can be successful in school.

To conduct this study, I will be in your student's school for approximately two months. During that time, I would like to hear the perspectives of your student and other 12th grade Central American male students who began high school as newcomers. More specifically, I would like to hear how the school has supported them during their high school studies. I will collect information through a short survey and, for some students, a follow-up interview that will allow me to better understand their perspectives on how the school has helped them. If you allow your student to participate, he will not miss any instructional time to participate in the study, and his participation will not affect his grade in any classes. I will not record your student's name or any other materials that will identify your student; his responses will be completely anonymous. If I interview your student, I would like to record it so that I have an accurate record of his responses. However, I will be the only person with access to the recording, and it will be password protected.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, or if you would like to withdraw your student from the study, please contact me:

Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

If you agree to allow your son to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and have your student return it to Ms. xxxx by February 12, 2020.

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) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Michelle Campiglia

Carta de notificación de padres/apoderados

Estimado Padre o Apoderado:

Mi nombre es Michelle Campiglia, y estoy realizando un estudio de investigación en la escuela de su hijo. Me interesa estudiar cómo los líderes escolares pueden apoyar a los varones centroamericanos recién llegados para que puedan tener éxito en la escuela.

Para llevar a cabo este estudio, estaré en la escuela de su hijo por aproximadamente dos meses. Durante ese tiempo, me gustaría escuchar las opiniones de su hijo y otros estudiantes varones centroamericanos del grado 12 que comenzaron la escuela secundaria como estudiantes de ingles recién llegados. Más específicamente, me gustaría escuchar cómo la escuela los ha apoyado durante sus estudios de bachillerato. Recopilaré información a través de una breve encuesta y, para algunos estudiantes, una entrevista de seguimiento que me permitirá comprender mejor sus perspectivas sobre cómo la escuela les ha ayudado. Si permite que su hijo participe en el estudio, él no perderá ningún tiempo de instrucción, y su participación no afectará su calificación en ninguna clase. No inscribiré el nombre de su hijo ni incluiré ningún otro material que lo identifique. Sus respuestas serán completamente anónimas. Si entrevisto a su hijo, me gustaría grabarlo para tener una copia precisa de sus respuestas. Sin embargo, seré la única persona con acceso a la grabación, y estará protegida por contraseña.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud sobre el estudio, o si desea sacar a su hijo del estudio, póngase en contacto conmigo:

Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Si usted accede a que su hijo participe en este estudio, complete el formulario de consentimiento adjunto y pídale a su hijo que lo devuelva a la Sra. xxxx antes del 12 de febrero de 2020.

Para obtener más información sobre el estudio, hacer preguntas sobre los procedimientos de la investigación, expresar inquietudes sobre su participación, o reportar enfermedades u otros problemas, comuníquese con:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de las Ciencias Sociales y conductuales
One Morton Dr Suite 500
University of Virginia
P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Teléfono: (434) 924-5999
Correo electrónico: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu; sitio web: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Atentamente,
Michelle Campiglia

APPENDIX H

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Agreement (English and Spanish)

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study. Your child will also receive an assent form; please review the assent form with your child.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to understand how high school principals' beliefs and practices impact the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. To complete the study, the researcher plans to speak to school leaders as well as students to hear their perspectives.

What your child will do in the study: If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, he will be asked to participate in a brief survey about how the school has helped him feel a sense of belonging. He may also be asked to participate in a follow-up interview about how the school has supported him.

Time required: The survey will take your child approximately 10 minutes to complete, and it will be administered during the school day. If your child is selected to participate in an interview, it will take 30 – 45 minutes during the school day. Your child will not miss any instructional time to complete these tasks.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you or your child for participating in this research study. The study may help us understand how schools can support newcomer Central American males studying in U.S. high schools.

Confidentiality: The information that your child provides in the survey will be anonymous. If your child participates in the interview, his information and your information will be assigned a code number/pseudonym. The list connecting your child's name to this code/pseudonym will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed. Your child's name and your name will not be used in any report. The audio recordings of interviews will be kept in a secure location for one year after the completion of the study and then destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your child's participation and/or your participation in the study is completely voluntary. Your child's grades will not be affected by the study.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw your child and yourself from the study at any time without penalty. If you and/or your child want to withdraw from the study, any audio files will be destroyed.

How to withdraw from the study: If you and/or your child want to withdraw from the study, tell the researcher. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

Payment: Upon completion of the survey, your child will receive a $10 Visa gift card. If he completes the interview, he will also receive a $20 Visa gift card. Students who complete the survey and the interview will be entered in a drawing for one $50 Visa gift card. Students have a 1 in 5 chance of winning the $50 gift card.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Sara Dexter, Associate Professor
University of Virginia, Curry School of Education
P.O. Box 400265
Charlottesville, VA 22904
sdexter@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) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Agreement:
I agree to allow my child to participate in the research study described above.

Full Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed):_____
Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Full Name of Student (Printed):_____

I agree to allow my student to be audiotaped for this research study. I understand that only the researcher will have access to this recording and that it will be destroyed one year from the study's completion.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Acuerdo de Consentimiento Informado para Padres/Apoderados

Lea atentamente este acuerdo antes de dar su consentimiento para que su hijo participe en este estudio. Su hijo también recibirá un formulario de consentimiento; por favor revise el formulario de consentimiento con su hijo.

Propósito del estudio de investigación: El propósito del estudio es entender cómo las creencias y prácticas de los directores de la escuela secundaria afectan la conexión escolar de los varones recién llegados de Centroamérica. Para completar el estudio, la investigadora planea hablar con los líderes de la escuela, así como con los estudiantes, para escuchar sus puntos de vista.

Qué hará su hijo en el estudio: Si usted está de acuerdo en acceder a que su hijo tome parte en este estudio, a él se le pedirá que participe en una breve encuesta sobre cómo la escuela le ha ayudado a tener un sentido de pertenencia. También se le puede pedir que participe en una entrevista de seguimiento sobre cómo la escuela lo ha apoyado.

Tiempo requerido: La encuesta con su hijo será aproximadamente de 10 minutos y se administrará durante el día escolar. Si su hijo es seleccionado para participar en una entrevista, esta tendrá una duración de 30 a 45 minutos y se realizará durante el día escolar también. Su hijo no perderá ningún tiempo de instrucción para completar estas tareas.

Riesgos: La participación en este estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo.

Beneficios: No hay beneficios directos para usted o su hijo por participar en este trabajo de investigación. Esta investigación nos podría ayudar a entender cómo las escuelas pueden apoyar a los varones centroamericanos recién llegados que estudian en las escuelas secundarias de los Estados Unidos.

Confidencialidad: La información que su hijo proporcione en la encuesta será anónima. Si su hijo participa en la entrevista, sus datos y los de él tendrán un número de código/seudónimo. La lista que conecta el nombre de su hijo a este código/seudónimo se guardará en un archivo asegurado. Cuando se complete el estudio y se hayan analizado los datos, esta lista se destruirá. El nombre de su hijo y su nombre no se utilizarán en ningún informe. Las grabaciones de audio de las entrevistas se mantendrán en un lugar seguro durante un año después de la finalización del estudio y luego se destruirán.

Participación voluntaria: La participación de su hijo en el estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Las calificaciones de su hijo no se verán afectadas por el estudio.

Derecho a retirarse del estudio: Usted tiene el derecho de dejar de participar en el estudio y de sacar a su hijo de este en cualquier momento sin ninguna sanción. Si usted y/o su hijo quieren dejar de participar en el estudio, los archivos de audio serán destruidos.

Cómo retirarse del estudio: Si usted y/o su hijo quieren dejar de participar en el estudio, comuníquese con la investigadora. No hay ninguna sanción por salirse.

Pago: Al finalizar la encuesta, su hijo recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de $10. Si completa la entrevista, también recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de $20. Los estudiantes que completen la encuesta y la entrevista participaran en un sorteo de una tarjeta de regalo de $50. Los estudiantes tendrán una probabilidad de 1 entre 5 de ganarse la tarjeta de regalo de $50.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, comuníquese con:
Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Sara Dexter, Profesora Asociada
Universidad de Virginia, Escuela de Educación Curry
P.O. Box 400265
Charlottesville, VA 22904
sdexter@virginia.edu

Para obtener más información sobre el estudio, hacer preguntas sobre los procedimientos de la investigación, aclarar dudas sobre su participación, o reportar alguna enfermedad u otros problemas, comuníquese con:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de las Ciencias Sociales y conductuales
One Morton Dr Suite 500
University of Virginia
P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Teléfono: (434) 924-5999
Correo electrónico: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Sitio web: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Acuerdo:
Estoy de acuerdo en permitir que mi hijo participe en el estudio de investigación descrito anteriormente.

Nombre completo del padre/apoderado (impreso):_____
Firma:_____Fecha:_____
Nombre completo del estudiante (impreso):_____

Doy permiso a que mi hijo sea grabado para este trabajo de investigación. Entiendo que sólo el investigador tendrá acceso a esta grabación y que será destruida un año después de la conclusión del estudio.

Firma:_____

Recibirá una copia de este formulario para sus archivos.

APPENDIX I

Minor Informed Assent Agreement: Semi-Structured Interviews (English and Spanish)

Please read this assent agreement with your parent(s) or guardian(s) before you decide to participate in the study. Your parent or guardian will also give permission to let you participate in the study.

My name is Michelle Campiglia, and I am a student at The University of Virginia. I would like to talk to you about a research study that I am conducting. In our study, we want to learn about how high school principals can help newcomer Central American males feel connected to school so that they can be successful.

What will I do in this study?
As part of our study, we would like to ask you to provide your perspective on how your school has supported you.

- In addition to the online survey that you completed, you are being asked to participate in an interview that will last 30 – 45 minutes. The interview will be conducted at school in a space that provides privacy. You may skip any questions during the interview that make you uncomfortable or ask the researcher to stop the interview at any time.
- With your permission, the researcher will audio record the interview to make sure she remembers what you say. The researcher is the only person who will listen to the recording; it will be kept in a secure location.

What are the risks?
We don't think that there are any risks to you in this study.

What are the benefits?
If you participate in this study, there won't be any benefit to you. However, your responses may help school leaders understand how they can support other students like you.

Will the information be kept confidential?
The information that you give to us during this study will be kept private. If you participate in the interview, your real name will not be used. The researcher will make a secure list with the code name/pseudonym assigned to your real name, and the list will be destroyed after all the data are collected. No one who reads about our study will know it was you. We keep things locked up so that only our researchers see them.

Do I have to participate in the study?
No, you don't have to participate in the study. If you do not participate, there will not be any negative consequences; your grade will not be affected.

What if I do not want to participate or if I change my mind about participating?

You can stop doing the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, tell Michelle Campiglia. If you choose to stop before we are finished, any answers you already gave or any audio recordings will be destroyed. There is no penalty for stopping. If you decide that you don't want your materials in the study but already turned them in, contact Michelle Campiglia.

Will I receive any compensation for the study?
Yes. Students who complete the interview will receive a $20 gift card. Students who complete the survey and the interview will be entered in a drawing for one $50 gift card; there is a 1 in 5 chance of winning.

If you have questions about the study, contact:
Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Sara Dexter, Associate Professor
University of Virginia, Curry School of Education
P.O. Box 400265
Charlottesville, VA 22904
sdexter@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.
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University of Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Telephone: (434) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs

Agreement:
I agree to participate in the research study described above.

Full Name (Printed): _____
Age: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to be audiotaped for this research study. I understand that only the researcher will have access to this recording and that it will be destroyed one year from the study's completion.

Full Name (Printed): _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____
You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Acuerdo de Consentimiento Informado: Entrevistas semiestructuradas

Por favor, lea este acuerdo de consentimiento antes de tomar la decisión de participar en el estudio.

Mi nombre es Michelle Campiglia, y soy estudiante de la Universidad de Virginia. Me gustaría hablarle de un estudio de investigación que estoy haciendo. El propósito del estudio es averiguar cómo los directores de la escuela secundaria pueden ayudar a los varones recién llegados de Centroamérica a sentirse conectados a la escuela para que puedan tener éxito.

¿Qué voy a hacer en este estudio?
Como parte de este estudio, me gustaría pedirle que proporcione su perspectiva sobre cómo su escuela lo ha apoyado.

- Además de la encuesta en línea que ha completado, se le pide que participe en una entrevista que durará de 30 a 45 minutos. La entrevista se llevará a cabo durante el día escolar en un espacio que proporciona la privacidad. Puede omitir cualquier pregunta durante la entrevista que le haga sentirse incómodo o que no desee responder o pedirle a la investigadora que termine la entrevista en cualquier momento.
- Con su permiso, la investigadora grabará la entrevista para tener una copia precisa de sus respuestas. La investigadora es la única persona que escuchará la grabación; se mantendrá en un archivo asegurado.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos?
La participación en este estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo.

¿Cuáles son los beneficios?
No hay beneficios directos para usted por participar en este trabajo de investigación. Sin embargo, sus respuestas pueden ayudar a los líderes escolares a entender cómo pueden apoyar a otros estudiantes como usted.

¿Se mantendrá la confidencialidad de la información?
La información que nos proporcione durante este estudio se mantendrá confidencial. Si participa en la entrevista, su nombre real no será utilizado. La investigadora hará una lista segura con el nombre en clave/seudónimo asignado a su nombre real, y cuando se complete el estudio y se hayan analizado los datos, esta lista se destruirá. Nadie que lea sobre este estudio sabrá que fue Usted. Mantenemos la información asegurada para que sólo nuestra investigadora la vea.

¿Tengo que participar en el estudio?
No, no tiene que participar en el estudio. Si no participa, no habrá consecuencias negativas; su calificación no se verá afectada.

¿Qué pasa si no quiero participar o si cambio de opinión acerca de mi participación?

Puede dejar de participar en cualquier momento. Si decide dejar de participar en el estudio, dígale a Michelle Campiglia. Si decide parar antes de que termine el estudio, cualquier respuesta que ya haya dado o una grabación de audio será destruida. No hay ninguna sanción por culminar antes que finalice el estudio. Si decide que no quiere exponer sus materiales en el estudio, pero ya los entregó, póngase en contacto con Michelle Campiglia.

¿Recibiré alguna compensación por el estudio?
Sí. Los estudiantes que completen la entrevista recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de $20. Los estudiantes que completen la encuesta y la entrevista participaran en un sorteo por una tarjeta de regalo de $50. Los estudiantes tendrán una probabilidad de 1 entre 6 de ganarse la tarjeta de regalo de $50.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, comuníquese con:
Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Sara Dexter, Profesora Asociada
Universidad de Virginia, Escuela de Educación Curry
P.O. Box 400265
Charlottesville, VA 22904
sdexter@virginia.edu

Para obtener más información sobre el estudio, hacer preguntas sobre los procedimientos de investigación, expresar inquietudes sobre su participación, o reportar enfermedades u otros problemas, comuníquese con:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de las Ciencias Sociales y conductuales
One Morton Dr Suite 500
Universidad de Virginia, P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392

Acuerdo:
Acepto participar en el estudio de investigación descrito anteriormente.

Nombre Completo (impreso): _____
Edad: _____
Firma: _____

Estoy de acuerdo en ser audiograbado para este estudio de investigación. Entiendo que sola la investigadora tendrá acceso a esta grabación y que será destruida un año después de la finalización del estudio.
Nombre Completo (impreso):_____
Firma:_____

Recibirá una copia de este formulario para sus registros.

APPENDIX J

Minor Informed Assent Agreement 13-17: Online Survey (English and Spanish)

Please read this consent agreement carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to learn how high school principals can help newcomer Central American males feel connected to school so that they can be successful.

What you will do in the study: You will complete a 10-item online survey regarding how your school has supported you since you arrived as a newcomer.

Time required: The study will require about 10 - 15 minutes of your time. It will be conducted during your remediation block, so you will not miss any instructional time.

Risks: There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research study. The study may help school leaders understand how they can support other students like you.

Confidentiality: Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be collected or linked to the data. Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible for the researchers to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you do not wish to answer. A decision not to participate would have no effect on your status as a student.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Because the data are anonymous, you cannot withdraw after you submit your data.

How to withdraw from the study: If you do not complete the survey, you are withdrawn from the study. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Your decision whether to participate will have no effect on grades or school services.

Payment: You will receive a $10 Visa gift card for completing the survey.

If you have questions about the study, contact: Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@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) 924-5999
Email: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Website: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs
Reference UVA IRB-SBS #3015

Agreement:
I agree to participate in the research study described above.
Agree button must be submitted before moving to survey screen.

You may print a copy of this page for your records.

Acuerdo de Consentimiento Informado: Encuesta en línea

Lea atentamente este acuerdo de consentimiento antes de tomar la decisión de participar en el estudio.

Propósito del estudio de investigación: El propósito del estudio es averiguar cómo los directores de la escuela secundaria pueden ayudar a los varones recién llegados de Centroamérica a sentirse conectados a la escuela para que puedan tener éxito.

Lo que hará en el estudio: Completará una encuesta en línea de 10 artículos sobre cómo su escuela le ha apoyado desde que llegó como estudiante nuevo a la escuela.

Tiempo requerido: El estudio requiere alrededor de 10 - 15 minutos de su tiempo. Se llevará a cabo durante el día escolar, por lo que no perderá ningún tiempo de instrucción.

Riesgos: Su participación en este estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo.

Beneficios: No hay beneficios directos para usted por participar en este estudio de investigación. El estudio puede ayudar a los líderes de la escuela a comprender cómo pueden apoyar a otros estudiantes como usted.

Confidencialidad: Sus datos serán anónimos, lo que significa que su nombre no será guardado o vinculado a los datos. Debido a la naturaleza de los datos, puede ser posible que la investigadora deduzca su identidad; sin embargo, no se intentará hacerlo y sus datos serán reportados de una manera que no se le pueda identificar.

Participación voluntaria: Su participación en el estudio es completamente voluntaria. Puede omitir cualquier pregunta que le haga sentirse incómodo o que no desee responder. La decisión de abstenerse en participar no afectaría en nada su condición de estudiante.

Derecho a salirse del estudio: Usted tiene derecho a dejar de participar en el estudio en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad. Debido a que los datos son anónimos, no puede dejar de participar después de enviar sus datos.

Cómo salirse del estudio: Si no completa la encuesta, se le saca del estudio. No hay penalidad por salirse. Su decisión de participar no afectará en nada sus calificaciones o los servicios escolares.

Pago: Recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de $10 por completar la encuesta.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, póngase en contacto con: Michelle Campiglia, mrc2w@virginia.edu

Para obtener más información sobre el estudio, hacer preguntas sobre los procedimientos de investigación, expresar inquietudes sobre su participación, o reportar enfermedades, lesiones u otros problemas, comuníquese con:

Tonya R. Moon, Ph.D.
Presidente, Junta de Revisión Institucional para las Ciencias Sociales y del Comportamiento
Una Morton Dr. Suite 500
Universidad de Virginia
P.O. Box 800392
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0392
Teléfono: (434) 924-5999
Correo electrónico: irbsbshelp@virginia.edu
Sitio web: www.virginia.edu/vpr/irb/sbs
Referencia UVA IRB-SBS #3015

Acuerdo:
Acepto participar en el estudio de investigación descrito anteriormente.
El botón de acuerdo debe enviarse antes de pasar a la pantalla de la encuesta.

Puede imprimir una copia de esta página para sus archivos.

APPENDIX K

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for High School Principals

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I am a doctoral student at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. I am conducting a study on how the beliefs and practices of high school principals impact the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. The information collected will be used in my capstone project, and recommendations will be shared with high school principals in the division. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Virginia and this school division.

This is a semi-structured interview, and you have the freedom to skip questions, ask for clarification, and ask questions of me at any point. I would like to record this interview so that I may accurately refer to your responses when writing my paper. I would also like to take notes during the interview if that is alright with you. These notes will help me keep track of the interview as it progresses. Do I have your permission to record this interview? Do I have your permission to take notes?

____ Recording OK?
____ Note-taking OK?

I would like to remind you that you can withdraw your consent at any time. Do I have your consent to move forward with the interview?

Date of Interview: _____
Role: _____
Interview #: _____
Start Time: _____
End Time: _____
Audio Filename: _____
Transcript Filename: _____

Research Question	**Interview Question**	**Probes**
Introduction	1. I would like to start by asking you about your decision to become the principal of this school. What drew you to this school?	
RQ 1: Leader's perception of student needs	2. Let's talk now about the school's population of English Learners (ELs) and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males. In your opinion,	*diversity, needs, attendance, academic achievement, communication, resources, instruction, differentiation,*

	what strengths and challenges do these learners bring?	*staffing, importance of holistic approach*
RQ 2: Beliefs, shared vision	3. The school's mission statement states that your school "is committed to increasing student achievement and maintaining high expectations while meeting the needs of all learners." As a principal, how do you shape a school culture that embodies this mission statement?	*cultural proficiency, expectations, relationships, teacher mindset, alignment of theory and practice, engagement, courageous conversations, bias, collective efficacy, sociocultural affect*
RQ 3: Programs and practices	4. Based on the challenges that you identified for newcomer Central American males, what programs and practices has your school put in place for these students?	*mentoring, reunification support, ESOL counselor, Check and Connect, bilingual social worker, connection with community resources, intervention groups, staffing, social services*
RQ 2: Decision-making processes regarding supports for staff	5. I would like to talk about your work as an instructional leader. How do you support teachers in their work with newcomer Central American males?	*direct or indirect impact, influencing conditions for teachers, opportunities for collaboration, professional learning opportunities, classroom observations, feedback, shared leadership, trust, building capacity*
RQ 2: Distributed leadership	6. As a leader, how do you make decisions regarding supports for newcomer Central American males and the staff who support them? With whom do you confer and why?	*internal and external experts, shared decision-making, community organizations, ESOL Office*
RQ 2: Student voice	7. How, if at all, are the perspectives of newcomer Central American males incorporated into decisions related to how to meet their needs?	*student voice, Strategies for Success, ESOL Government, ESOL counselor, bilingual staff*
RQ 1, 3: Alignment of programs,	8. How have the programs and practices currently in place succeeded in addressing the needs	*student engagement, participation in extracurricular activities,*

practices, and student needs	of newcomer Central American males? How do you know? Follow-up Question: What work remains to be done?	*attendance, fewer disciplinary referrals, graduation rates*
Closing	9. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you think is important for me to understand regarding the impact of principals on fostering the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?	

APPENDIX L

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for School Leaders

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I am a doctoral student at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. I am conducting a study on how the beliefs and practices of suburban high school principals impact the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. The information collected will be used in my capstone project, and recommendations will be shared with high school principals in the division. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Virginia and this school division.

This is a semi-structured interview, and you have the freedom to skip questions, ask for clarification, and ask questions of me at any point. I would like to record this interview so that I may accurately refer to your responses when writing my paper. I would also like to take notes during the interview if that is alright with you. These notes will help me keep track of the interview as it progresses. Do I have your permission to record this interview? Do I have your permission to take notes?

____ Recording OK?
____ Note-taking OK?

I would like to remind you that you can withdraw your consent at any time. Do I have your consent to move forward with the interview?

Date of Interview: _____
Role: _____
Interview #: _____
Start Time: _____
End Time: _____
Audio Filename: _____
Transcript Filename: _____

Research Question	**Interview Question**	**Probes**
Introduction	1. I would like to start by asking you about your decision to come to this school. What drew you here?	
RQ 1: Leader's perception of student needs	2. Let's talk now about the school's population of English Learners (ELs) and, more specifically, newcomer Central American males. In your opinion,	*diversity, needs, attendance, academic achievement, communication, resources, instruction, differentiation,*

	what strengths and challenges do these learners bring?	*staffing, importance of holistic approach*
RQ 2: Beliefs, shared vision	3. The school's mission statement states that your school "is committed to increasing student achievement and maintaining high expectations while meeting the needs of all learners." In your opinion as a school leader, how does the principal shape a school culture that embodies this mission statement?	*cultural proficiency, expectations, relationships, teacher mindset, alignment of theory and practice, engagement, courageous conversations, bias, collective efficacy, sociocultural affect*
RQ 3: Programs and practices	4. Based on the challenges that you identified for newcomer Central American males, what programs and practices has your school put in place for these students?	*mentoring, reunification support, ESOL counselor, Check and Connect, bilingual social worker, connection with community resources, intervention groups, staffing, social services*
RQ 2: Decision-making processes regarding supports for staff	5. Your school has a significant population of ELs. How does your principal support teachers in their work with newcomer Central American males?	*direct or indirect impact, influencing conditions for teachers, opportunities for collaboration, professional learning opportunities, classroom observations, feedback, shared leadership, trust, building capacity*
RQ 2: Distributed leadership	6. How are decisions made regarding supports for newcomer Central American males? As a school leader, what role do you play, if any, in these decision-making processes?	*internal and external experts, shared decision-making, community organizations, ESOL Office*
RQ 2: Student voice	7. How, if at all, are the perspectives of newcomer Central American males incorporated into decisions related to how to meet their needs?	*student voice, Strategies for Success, ESOL Government, ESOL counselor, bilingual staff*

RQ 1, 3: Alignment of programs, practices, and student needs	8. How have the programs and practices currently in place succeeded in addressing the needs of newcomer Central American males? How do you know? Follow-up Question: What work remains to be done?	*student engagement, participation in extracurricular activities, attendance, fewer disciplinary referrals, graduation rates*
Closing	9. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you think is important for me to understand regarding how your school's leaders foster the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males?	

APPENDIX M

Document Analysis Matrix

Document	Communicate inclusive mission and vision	Cultivate culturally responsive staff	Foster positive climate	Forge community and family partnerships	Notes
School Improvement Plan	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	
School Website	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	
Information on Intervention Groups	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	
Professional Development Related to ELs	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	

	Communicate inclusive mission and vision	Cultivate culturally responsive staff	Foster positive climate	Forge community and family partnerships	Notes	rge nunity family erships	Notes
SMARTR Goal on ELs' Involvement in Extracurricular Activities	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence			
Communication with Families and Community Organizations	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence			
ESOL Master Schedule	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence			
ESOL Department Meeting Notes	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence			
EL Discipline Data from WCPS Equity Profile	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence	Confirmed Disconfirmed No Evidence			

APPENDIX N

Student Survey

Category	**Question**
Background Information	1. What Central American country are you from? a. El Salvador b. Guatemala c. Honduras d. Other: Please specify.
Background Information	2. How many years of school did you complete in your country?
Background Information	3. How old were you when you arrived in the United States?
Background Information	4. How old are you now?
Background Information	5. In what grade did you begin your studies in the United States? a. Grade 9 b. Grade 10 c. Grade 11
Background Information	6. What was your English level when you started school in the United States? a. Level 1 b. Level 2 c. Level 3 d. Level 4
Academic Self-Concept	7. Please respond to the following statements about yourself as a student. (5-item Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) I regularly attend all of my classes. I regularly complete my work for all my classes. Graduating from high school is important to me. After graduating from high school, I will go to work. After graduating from high school, I will go to college.

Classroom Climate	8. Please answer the following questions related to your school experience. (5-item Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) I feel welcome at this school. I feel safe at this school. I feel connected to students at this school. Adults at this school care about me. Adults at this school know about me as a person. I can get help at this school if I need it. I have a voice in my classroom or school. Adults at this school believe that I can be successful.
Disciplinary Policies	9. Please answer the following questions related to your school experience. (5-item Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) Teachers at this school respect students. Administrators at this school respect students. The security team at this school respects students. If I get in trouble, the consequences are fair.
Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Sports	10. Please answer the following questions related to your school experience. (5-item Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) I know about sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school. It is easy to understand how to participate in sports, clubs, and other after-school activities at this school. It is important to me to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school. I feel welcome to participate in sports, clubs, or other after-school activities at this school.

APPENDIX O

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Central American Male Students, Grade 12

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I am a doctoral student at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. I am conducting a study about how the beliefs and practices of high school principals impact the school connectedness of newcomer Central American males. The information collected will be used in my research project, and recommendations will be shared with high school principals in our school district and in other schools as well. This study has been approved by the University of Virginia and this school district.

This is a semi-structured interview, and you have the freedom to skip questions, ask for clarification, and ask me questions. You may answer the questions in English or Spanish. I would like to record this interview so that I can refer to your responses when writing my paper. Only I will listen to the recordings.

Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Yes _____
No_____

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Yes _____
No_____

I would like to remind you that you can withdraw your permission to participate at any time. Do I have your permission to begin the interview?

Yes _____
No_____

Category	Question
Background	1. Tell me a little about yourself. How old are you, and what country are you from? Follow-up Question: Tell me a little about your last school in your country. What did you like and dislike about your school?
Classroom/School Climate	2. Now I would like to know a little bit about when you first came to this school. What challenges did you face? How did you handle those challenges?

Classroom/School Climate/Inclusion	3. When you were first learning English, you were in classes with other students who were learning English. Now you are taking more classes with students whose first language is English. How have your experiences changed over time? Follow-Up Question: Did you prefer being in ESOL classes or in the classes that you are in now? Why?
Classroom/School Climate/Academic Self-Concept	4. Tell me about your academic goals that you had when you first arrived. How, if at all, have those goals changed over time? Follow-Up Question: If they have changed, why?
Classroom/School Climate	5. Think about the teachers and other staff members with whom you have spent time. Tell me about an adult at this school with whom you have built a positive relationship. Could you give me an example of how this person helped you? Follow-Up Question: What differences, if any, have you experienced being with an ESOL counselor versus your current counselor? Follow-Up Question: Have you or anyone that you know worked with the school social worker or psychologist? Why or why not?
Classroom/School Climate/Student Voice	6. I would like to talk now about whether adults listen to students' voices at this school. Do you feel that you have a voice in your classroom or in the decisions of the school? Why do you say that? Follow-Up Question: Could you give me an example to explain your answer?

Extracurricular Activities	7. This school has a lot of activities, clubs, and sports. Tell me about your involvement in any of these. Follow-Up Question: If you did not participate in any activities, what influenced your decision?
Disciplinary Policies	8. Tell me a little about how discipline is handled at this school. Why do some students get in trouble? Follow-Up Question: What do you think about the consequences that students receive? In your opinion, are consequences fair and consistent?
Analysis of Impact of School's Programs and Practices	9. You are preparing to graduate this year. As you think back on your time here at this school, what supports helped you the most? How? Follow-Up Question: What are your future plans? How has this school prepared you for life after high school? What else could the school have done to help you?
Analysis of Impact of School's Programs and Practices/Identification of Gaps	10. If you could give the principal and the staff advice on how to help students with experiences like yours, what would you say? Follow-Up Question: Sometimes students drop out before they graduate. In your opinion, how can this school address this problem?
Closing	11. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you think is important for me to understand about how the school has supported you during your time here?

APPENDIX P

Codebook

Code Identification	Code Abbreviation	Code Description
Leadership Beliefs (Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015)		
Communicate assets-based philosophy	LB: SJ	Refers to adoption of philosophy that recognizes students' strengths and capital and rejects deficit thinking
Background Knowledge (Baecher et al., 2013; Calderón et al., 2011; Ylimaki et al., 2012)		
Possess background knowledge specific to ELs	BK: EL	Refers to principal's knowledge about second language acquisition, curriculum and instruction, and research-based programming for ELs
Adopt holistic approach to understanding learners	BK: HA	Refers to leaders' recognition of affective factors that impact student achievement
Utilize internal expertise about ELs	BK: IE	Refers to leaders' use of internal experts' knowledge of ELs
Leadership Practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Scanlan & Theoharis, 2015; Spillane et al., 2004;)		
Communicate inclusive mission and vision	LP: MV	Refers to efforts to convey a mission and vision in which all students are valued
Cultivate culturally responsive staff	LP: CR	Refers to efforts to build staff capacity by addressing issues of race and equity and providing ongoing professional learning opportunities to this end
Foster positive climate	LP: PC	Refers to efforts to foster a warm and welcoming school climate grounded in relationships
Forge community and family partnerships	LP: CF	Refers to efforts to build partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families as well as with community organizations
Demonstrate distributed leadership	LP: DL	Refers to efforts to distribute decision-making across stakeholders, regardless of title

Demonstrate distributed leadership through incorporation of student voice	LP: DLSV	Refers to efforts to distribute decision-making across stakeholders, including students
School Connectedness (McNeely et al., 2002; Mitra, 2006)		
Positive School/Classroom Climate	SC: PC	Refers to classrooms with strong teacher-student relationships; characterized by teachers who demonstrate empathy and consistency and encourage student self-management
Positive School/Classroom Climate: Academic Self-Concept	SC: PCASC	Refers to learning environments that foster students' perceptions of themselves as capable learners
Positive School/Classroom Climate: Student Voice	SC: PCSV	Refers to classrooms that afford students decision-making opportunities and the opportunity to be heard
Extracurricular Activities	SC: EA	Refers to sports, clubs, and other school-related activities
Fair Disciplinary Policies	SC: DIS	Refers to equitable disciplinary practices