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"VOICE"
Vision of Inclusive Community Engagement

A Design Development Study

By
Peter I. Parenti

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Education
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of the
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Committee in Charge:

Professor Tina Trujillo, Chair
Professor Heinrich Mintrop
Professor Valerie Shapiro

Spring 2017

Vision of Inclusive Community Engagement
"VOICE"

A Design Development Study to support school communities in engaging
African American Parents

By

Peter I. Parenti

Abstract

Vision of Inclusive Community Engagement, "VOICE"
A Design Development Study to support school leaders in engaging
African American Parents

By
Peter I. Parenti
Doctor of Education
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The ideal American education system is assumed to operate with democratic, inclusive, student-focused principles. Towards that end, recent California legislation emphasizes a local, community-based process encouraging parents and staff to share information about student needs, reason through problems, and make decisions together. However, while research strongly indicates that parent engagement is a primary factor in determining student success, school leaders and educators perpetuate a culture of racial inequality whereby African-American families are disenfranchised, and their students underperform.

The purpose of this study is to re-conceptualize leadership so that current practices become more proactive and racially inclusive. At the core of this design is a focus on shared leadership that empowers African American parents to profess their values and concerns, to influence decision-making, and to participate more fully in the school community.

The theory of action is based on three essential elements that support change: understanding inequities and their impact on student success, developing transformational leadership, and engaging and empowering parents. I incorporate these elements into a series of action-oriented team meetings and community engagement events. Learning by doing becomes the vehicle by which school and community leaders challenge the status quo.

Based on the findings, I argue that the theory of action is strong. The design contributed to an observable improvement in the participants' abilities to understand specific issues of inequity, to understand strategies that are effective at engaging African American parents, and to understand the qualities of leadership needed to address issues of inequity in public schools. The findings inform a set of design principles that drive future iterations. Primarily, school and community leaders need to reduce their dependence on rigid agendas that control participant behaviors, open dialogue with parents on issues that are difficult to discuss and resolve, and be willing to engage in emotional debates about issues related to race and discrimination. However, there were several limitations in the degree to which the design principles are readily transferrable to similar settings.

Dedication

For my school community - You are student-centered, willing to engage in difficult conversations about race and inequality, and committed to action.

For June - Sometimes in life, all it takes is one spark. Your public declaration inspired me to embrace the Local Control Accountability Plan as an opportunity to leverage real change.

For Jeff, my husband and best friend - Your love and support makes everything in my life possible.

Acknowledgements

My successful journey through the Leadership for Equity in Education Program (LEEP) was made possible because of so many good people who support me in my personal and professional life.

I appreciate the time, energy, and courage that the **African-American/Black Parent Engagement Team** contributed over the course of the past two years. They were willing to step outside of their comfort zones, to challenge me and my thinking, and most importantly to engage parents across the district about issues of inequality. As a group, they quickly established a bond of friendship and trust that carried the district forward.

I am grateful to be part of the **LEEP 8** cohort. Together, we showed Berkeley that the best is saved for last. You each provided me with ongoing support and cheerful camaraderie. Our journey together, oftentimes challenging but always fun, grounded my belief in the power of working together.

The faculty at UC Berkeley deserves recognition for designing a program that meets the needs of working professionals. Coursework was rigorous and challenging, and never without direct relevance to the challenges I face as a public school leader. Overall, my newfound ability to rationalize through complex problems and to design evidence-based solutions will serve schools for remainder of my career.

I owe my most sincere gratitude to my colleagues at work, including my Superintendents, the School Board Members, and a long list of Teachers, Parents, and Students. On a practical level, you each encouraged me to make my study an integral part of my daily responsibilities. With such a strong tie between school and work, I was able to maintain a healthy balance between my personal and professional life. On a more profound level, you embraced my study as your study. You have the courage to concern yourselves with the wellbeing of all people, especially those who are historically disenfranchised by a country that has yet to fulfill its promise to all people.

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Introduction

The ideal American education system is assumed to operate with democratic, inclusive, student-focused principles (Elmore, 1993; Tyack, 2002). Towards that end, recent California legislation emphasizes a local, community-based process that encourages parents and staff to share ideas, reason through problems, and make decisions together (CA Dept. of Education, 2016). Unfortunately, not all parents are encouraged, nor feel welcome to participate. While research strongly indicates that parent engagement and student success are inextricably linked (Epstein, 2001), school leaders and educators perpetuate racial inequities that disenfranchise certain groups of people (Baquedano-López et al, 2013; Flessa & Gregoire, 2012). School and community leaders must address these inequities in order to bring parents from disenfranchised backgrounds into the process (Auerbach, 2010; Shirley, 1997).

This design-development study will address a problem in leadership practice and ultimately change a school district organization to become more inclusive for African American parents. A design-development approach is an appropriate fit for this type of inquiry. First, instead of a more traditional research question, a *design challenge* frames the purpose and guides the careful design of interventions developed to meet the needs of a unique context (Brown, 1992; Cobb et al, 2003; van den Akker, 1999). Second, the researcher consults the professional knowledge base in order to inform the development of sound and transferable design principles (Mintrop, 2016). Because the intervention designs are expected to solve real problems with practical approaches, a *theory of action*, rather than a conceptual framework, describes the logical connections between the current state and the desired state (Plomp & Nieveen, 2010). And finally, the research approach couples the use of both impact and process data in order to understand how certain aspects of the change process influence the outcomes (Mintrop, 2016).

In sum, this is action research conducted by a school administrator who works full-time in the field of public education. There are two main goals: 1) to influence change in real time for real people, and 2) to develop a set of research-based design principles so that the next version of the program is even more successful. Chapter one will define and frame the problem of practice, describing the initial needs assessments that helped to focus the goals of this study. In chapter two, I consult the professional knowledge base to inform my understanding of the problem as well as the theory of action that is assumed to affect change. In chapter three, I describe the methods by which I collect and analyze data with an emphasis on the particular strategies that make design-development projects research-based. In chapter four, I present and analyze my findings from the two types of information that characterize design-development methods: impact data and process data. And finally in chapter five, I summarize a set of design principles and make recommendations for school leaders and researchers who will approach this work in the future.

Chapter ONE: The Problem of Practice

There are noble aspirations outlined in state law (CA Dept. of Education, 2016) and local school board policies that call educators to provide all students with opportunities to succeed and to include all stakeholders in shared leadership and decision-making. Unfortunately, in my particular school community, these aspirations are only beginning to translate into actions that advance a more inclusive culture. Notwithstanding a sense of urgency to address issues of racial inequity, current school and community leadership practices contribute to the problem that African-American parents are not engaged in ways that specifically address issues of race and disparity. Instead, school and community leaders in the local context spend a majority of their time engaged with parents in ways that are typical of White, Asian, upper middle-class norms whereby racial inequalities are not discussed and the current power structures between dominant parents and schools are left intact.

For example, the current parent engagement programs in my school district include strong Parent-Teacher Associations and other district-wide organizations that focus on raising funds, planning social events, and maintaining programs in the schools. While these agencies produce a substantial amount of much-needed support, they capture an inordinate amount of time and energy from school leaders. They operate with traditional hierarchal structures of leadership and unfortunately do not advance large-scale efforts to confront and change inequities related to race or class.

Also worth noting, in the recent efforts to reform academic standards in English, Math, and Science, school leaders direct all of the financial resources and time to replacing old curriculum, providing teachers with training and collaboration time, and aligning instruction to the new performance expectations. One major focus has been to maintain the rigor and opportunities that the dominant parents expect from their high-performing schools. Only a small amount of time has been spent on identifying and changing the underlying structures in the system that maintain inequities. And, sadly, even those efforts are not found consistently across the district. Specific issues like implicit teacher bias, access to advanced coursework, disproportionate rates of discipline referrals, and culturally relevant resources have not received the attention they deserve.

In response to this growing awareness, and as an initial attempt to intervene, I, together with colleagues and parents, established the "African American Parent Engagement Team." Our work stemmed from a 2014 presentation of essential student needs during one of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) stakeholder engagement meetings. One of the parents, an African American woman who serves as a trusted and revered community leader, expressed her dismay at the student achievement data on the screen. *"Why are the Black students always at the bottom of every graph? Why, in this school district of all places, are only 50% of the Black students achieving success?"*

A first of its kind in the district's history, this team of parents, teachers, and administrators began meeting regularly and quickly gained momentum throughout the 2015-16 school year. We began with only five members, but grew each month to the current thirteen. At the start of the 2016-17 school year, there were 3 school site administrators, 1 district

administrator (myself), 2 School Board members,1 teacher, 8 parents, and a consultant who specializes in leadership development and community organizing.

The Local Context

This design development study is situated in a California suburb community I will call "Seaview[1]." The city of Seaview is well known for having high quality Pre-K-12 public schools and residents with young children are attracted to live here. The ethnic make up is 61% White (non-Hispanic), 25% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% African American, 8% Hispanic/Latino, and 4% Native American/Other.

The Seaview School District is a public unified Pre-school - 12th grade organization of approximately 5,800 students. The ethnic makeup of the school enrollment is approximately 40% White/Non-Hispanic, 4% African American, 30% Asian, and 12% Hispanic/Latino. Much like the broader community, the largest groups are White and Asian.

In addition to public funds that come directly from state and federal government agencies, the Seaview community regularly passes local parcel and bond measure tax initiatives that provide millions of dollars for additional programs, services, and improved facilities. Furthermore, Seaview schools also receive more than two million dollars annually in cash donations from parents, community members, and local grassroots organizations.

While the median income in Seaview is relatively high, approximately 35% of the students in the Seaview School District qualify for the free/reduced lunch program and therefore, six of the eight schools, as well as the overall district, qualify for Federal Title I program funding. However, it is important to note that among the 400 African American students, only 13% qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

During the 2015/16 school year, the African American Parent Engagement Team meetings were focused on several issues. We discussed topics related to race and racial inequality, sometimes with heated debate about what name to use for the group and what actions to take. We planned for and facilitated two parent engagement events: one community-wide African American History Month celebration and one "Town Hall" meeting. There were two times when we reviewed our goals, tying them closely the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), a district strategic plan that I am responsible for writing. This was especially important at the beginning when I needed to bring the consultant's contract to the Board of Education for approval; and then again at the end of the year when we needed to report on our progress as it related to the goals in the LCAP for Parent Engagement and the future request for more funding from the District's LCAP process.

Needs Assessment

To more clearly understand the situation and to refine our focus for the 2016-17 school year, we designed a questionnaire (see appendix A) that was published to all parents of African American students. There are approximately 275 African American students in the Seaview school district and the automated email went out to one or both of their parents. From that population, we received 85 responses. In addition to the survey, the leadership team hosted a town-hall meeting and invited the same parents who were offered the survey. During the meeting, we presented information about our goals and invited the parents in attendance to

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[1] Some information has been changed to protect the confidentiality of the community and the individuals who

discuss essential questions in small groups and then to share out to the whole group. At the end of the meeting, parents filled out a survey with three questions (see appendix B).

The online survey offered nine questions. Some questions asked parents to name problems that currently exist for themselves and their children. Other questions asked about which potential solutions would be appropriate. Questions asked the parents to rank different topics in order of importance and the final questions asked about where to focus in the coming year.

From both the online survey responses and from the town hall meeting, there were several clear patterns. In most cases, parents framed their responses in student-centered terms. From this perspective, the responses named a sense of isolation as a problem due to the fact that African American students are such a small percentage of the overall population (~2.5%). Responses also asked that all students be provided with relevant curriculum that includes African American and Black culture, including more sensitive ways to portray history, contributions from Black people, as well as a focus on Math and Science and success in college/university.

Another frequent trend in the responses, both from the survey and the town hall meeting, was a need for the District to provide training to teachers on cultural awareness and sensitivity. In most cases, this was coupled with the claim that staff in the district held implicit bias against students of color and therefore, needed to acknowledge how their implicit bias translated into unfair disciplinary practices and a general lack of concern for the academic and social/emotional well being of African American students. Many responses asked for the District to hire a more diverse staff and to invite more African American students from other districts to attend schools in Seaview. Finally, many responses asked that the team engage African American parents more frequently so they could join together to share ideas, celebrate Black culture, and take action.

In summary, the symptoms of the problematic leadership behavior became clearer. According to those who responded, current leadership practices and the overall culture in the organization leave African American parents knowing that their children are not valued, that their culture is not celebrated, and that their voices are not heard. School and community leaders are not providing opportunities for African American parents to come together to share their concerns about student academic success and unfair disciplinary practices, to celebrate Black culture and identity and to advocate that it be included in the curriculum, and to become empowered to leverage policies and resources that support a more inclusive program for their children. Instead, school and community leaders spend most of their time operating within the current norms that promote the status quo. While never being described as overt discrimination or racism, the overall sense was that school system maintained an unconscious and harmful stereotype against Black students and their families.

Before proceeding, it is important to caution the reader against assuming homogeneity among people. While those in Seaview who responded to the survey clearly identified the problematic trends described above, we cannot presume everyone in the African American community agrees with these perspectives. As a matter of fact, less than twenty percent of the African American parents responded to the survey. With this in mind, I have no intent to essentialize any group of people, avoiding what can often occur in the scholarly world where researchers tend ascribe or reduce individuals only to their most essential characteristics.

As social beings, individuals bring unique and very personal perspectives to the lives they lead together with others. They each carry a set of social characteristics, lived experiences, and emotional responses. Race and ethnicity make up only one part of a very complex identity. On this note, we can assume that some of the African American community members might disagree

with the issues described above. So, in proceeding, remember that there are limits to transferability, not only to all African Americans in the community of Seaview, but to other communities as well.

Design Challenge

The challenge is to develop a series of activities that are effective at strengthening the capacity in school and community leaders to provide effective engagement activities for African American parents. More specifically, school district and community leaders need to facilitate events where the parents can share their experiences, express their points of view, establish a sense of belonging, and celebrate their culture and identity, as well as influence how the schools provide a high-quality education for their children.

School and community leaders have noted several challenges in designing the types of engagement activities that focus on race and racial inequalities. School leaders have been uncertain about how to articulate a clear purpose for initiating new opportunities for African American parents, how to best plan for engagement activities that call out and specify a group based on their racial identity, and how to mediate the sensitive concerns that will likely surface when parents voice their opinions related to race and then make their requests for change in the school system.

This challenge is exacerbated in the local context in which White and Asian middle-class parents make up a majority of the population and dominate the ways in which school and community leaders conceptualize engagement. More specifically, school and community leaders reinforce and support the ways in which the majority groups organize and mobilize resources, dominate time and energy from school leadership, and influence decision-making that favors their children's interests.

The design challenge will focus on developing a series of activities that will change the beliefs and the practices that school and community leaders have about parental engagement. The desired state is for school and community leaders to conceive of themselves as transformational leaders who disrupt the current status quo by promoting awareness and taking action on issues related to race and racial inequities. School and community leaders need to be more keenly aware of the structural inequities in the schools as they relate to segregated populations in course enrollment, culturally sensitive instruction, responses to discipline, and other school-related practices. Ultimately, school and community leaders need to strengthen and leverage relationships with African-American parents in order to mobilize change in programs and services that are sensitive to their students' needs.

Chapter TWO: The Professional Knowledge Base and Theory of Action

In design development studies, action researchers consult the professional knowledge base to understand the root causes of the problem and the ways in which they can be solved. Theories of action are then developed to explain how specific interventions are intended to impact the current state of affairs (Mintrop, 2016). Theories of action provide a model of intervention that predicts how to move from the current problematic state to the desired state (Argyris & Schon, 1978). By intentional design, this type of research is iterative, process-oriented, practical for the users in the real context, and well grounded in theory.

This is a design development study that combines theory with action. The interventions are intended to change organizational behavior so that African American parents are more engaged with their child's school. Towards this end, the intervention is, by design, an iterative learning process for school and community leaders. It is also concurrently a process of taking action and measuring impact. Put together, the intention is to encourage school and community leaders to become transformational leaders to challenge the status quo and engage disenfranchised parents.

Understanding of the Problem

Social and economic capital and the influence on school leadership practices.

In the context of an upper middle-class, suburban community where the majority of community members are White and Asian, there are particular challenges to changing the dynamics related to parental involvement. To start, theories of social and cultural capital propose that trusting relationships are of utmost importance for both the economic organization and the civic engagement of a community (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Shirley, 1997). Social and economic class status, as well as racial identity, correlate with the social capital that people have in their interactions with one another (Lareau, 2000; Horvat et al, 2003). As such, higher social class comes with higher social capital, which in turn affords parents the critical resources used to influence decision-making and to protect their advantages (Coleman, 1966; Cucchiara, 2009). Lower social class parents and ethnic minorities do not have similar types of social capital resources and are therefore left on the margins of community engagement (Acker, 2006; Bourdieu, 1986).

Correspondingly, school administrators act in accordance with the expectations and demands of their most powerful constituents, who wield their high levels of social and cultural capital to secure resources, insist on high standards, and intervene when they recognize problems (Cucchiara et al, 2009). Concurrently, community members who have power utilize their knowledge of the system and their relationships with school administrators to influence decision-making (Posey, 2012). The problem is that school administrators, while often very aware of the

racial and socioeconomic inequities in their school system, still neglect to take action (Flessa & Gregoire, 2012).

Furthermore, Karl Weick (1982) proposes that administrators are overly concerned with managerial activities that are reinforced with dense regulations and documentation. Weick claims that administrators are pressured by their constituents to perceive schools like other organizations as 'tightly coupled,' thereby requiring managers who monitor and control (p. 673). Instead, Weick argues, schools are more 'loosely coupled' systems, requiring a "different set of sensitivities and actions (p. 675)." McKenzie and Scheurich (2004), go further to situate the neglect as "patterns of thinking and behavior that trap the possibilities for creating equitable schools. (p. 603)." In this case, the neglect to take action is rooted in both the individual and the collective beliefs that some children are incapable of high performance because of their race.

The literature on social class and social capital, and their influence on community organizing for public education is quite extensive (Shirley, 1997). A strong theoretical basis was substantiated with Pierre Bourdieu's seminal work (1979, 1980) in sociology that defined social capital as a resource individual people inherently have in their network of relationships. This resource of social capital is capable of being transformed into other forms of economic and cultural capital. As schools operate within and among these exchanges, they most often reproduce the relations that exist within the different social groups (DeMaggio, 2014).

The theoretical basis on social capital was extended further by Robert Putnam (1993) who studied not only the social capital owned by individuals, but also the capital that is carried and used by *groups of people* to engage in collective action towards beneficial government responses (Levi, 1996). As this pertains to American education, therefore, schools themselves frequently reflect and reciprocate the characteristics of the social fabric found within their immediate local circles (Bryk et al, 2010; Goddard, 2003). In other words, as schools educate the children within their neighborhoods, they do so within certain boundaries of the dominant cultural and social characteristics found in the lives of the local parents and community members. Social capital, therefore, has an immediate and direct influence (Comer, 1984; Dika & Singh, 2002). Defined by the economic, cultural, and political status that individuals have, social capital impacts the abilities that different parents have to network and cultivate the relationships necessary to exert influence (Bourdieu, 1986; Dika & Singh, 2002; Lareau, 2000).

Parent networks can and often do influence the capacities that schools have towards reaching their goals and these networks vary across class categories. Horvat et al's study (2003) helps define this dynamic more clearly by summarizing that "*middle-class parents are uniquely able to draw on contacts with professionals to mobilize the information, expertise, or authority needed to contest the judgments of school officials* (p. 319)." Furthermore, the resources that parents are able to draw upon from each other have an impact on various aspects of their children's school experience, including teacher behaviors, programs, and course tracking (Horvat, 2003, p.321).

Families from lower-socioeconomic class, African American and Hispanic backgrounds often live within a school system that is matched culturally with White and Asian middle-class norms. Hence, these more disenfranchised families face sustained isolation and a lack of participation in the mainstream social, political, and economic activities of the community (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). These parents' networks do not as often include the professionals within the community and, therefore, they are not able to draw upon broad systems of communication (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011).

Posey-Maddox (2013) describes these powerful differences by writing:

Middle-class parents can employ their social, cultural, and economic capital to secure much-needed resources for public schools, increasing the quality of academic programs in ways that benefit low-income students as well. While this perspective is indeed plausible, research has shown middle-class parental involvement to reinscribe, rather than counter, class-based inequities in public schooling through support of policies such as tracking that favor these parents' children at the expense of others (Oakes, 1997, 2005). Research on middle- and upper-middle-class parents in urban public schooling, in particular, suggests that parents' engagement is not uniformly beneficial for all students within a school setting (Posey-Maddox, 2013 p236).

Distinguishing issues of class from issues of race.

While this literature base is relevant and informative to my study, it is important to recognize that in the local context of Seaview, the economic class status of African American families is assumed to have less of an influence on problems related to parent engagement. In the majority of the literature on parent engagement, issues of racial inequality are combined with issues of socio-economic inequality, thereby presenting a much more complicated set of variables that influence the opportunities parents have to be involved. Here in Seaview, only 13% of African American students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The majority of African American parents, including those on the parent engagement leadership team, are working professionals with a firm middle-class status. Many are highly educated with advanced degrees in a variety of fields.

But removing socioeconomic status as a variable presents a challenge to find relevant guidance from the world of research. Howard and Reynolds (2008) note that when race and class are considered, rarely are upper-class parents of color considered in the analysis. Instead, much of the general literature related to minority parent involvement focuses on how both racial *and* low-socioeconomic status influence the dynamic between home and school (Hayes, 2011). There are fewer studies that focus on middle-class African American parents and their experiences with parent engagement (Hayes, 2011; Howard, 2015).

Thankfully, those studies that do distinguish between low- and middle-class status offer helpful insights. Based on his findings when comparing two different groups of African American families in high school settings, Hayes (2011) cautions us to consider multiple variables, such as parent aspirations for their children, perceived teacher support, and parent education levels, as predictors of home and school involvement (p. 162). In particular, if parents do not perceive the school personnel to support their children, then parents are less likely to be involved with the school (p. 163).

Howard & Reynolds (2008) examined middle-class African American parent involvement in reversing the underachievement of their students and find that while most parents value being involved, they vary widely in their understanding of what involvement should look like (p. 90). Those who were actively involved in the school still needed to learn carefully about the particular venues where power truly resides (p. 91). These same parents also found themselves in positions where school administrators controlled decision-making. (p. 92).

Diamond, Wang, & Gomez (2006) studied how working- and middle-class African American and Chinese American families often possess distinct forms of ethnic and cultural capital that, while unrecognized by dominant school and community leaders, provide access to resources for involvement in their child's education. They conclude that community-based social capital is used to compensate for limitations in other forms of capital. They also advise that, in

order to create stronger connections between schools and communities, educators should recognize and build upon the distinct forms of capital that exist in racial minority communities.

Notwithstanding these important distinctions in the literature base between low- and middle-class economic status, the academic performance of African American students as well as the feedback from the parents in the initial needs assessment emphasize that there continue to be disparities in how different ethnic groups of people engage and succeed in the local public schools.

The problem is that issues related to social class, culture, and school leadership inhibit successful parent-school involvement. Schools form successful partnerships with individual parents and community-based agencies that exemplify White and Asian, middle-class norms. School staff, most often white and middle-class themselves, relate easily with white middle-class parents, engage together in school and community-wide activities, and collaborate often in the sphere of school-wide decision making (Cucchiara, 2009). Lower class and ethnic minority parents struggle to gain access because schools fail to understand their circumstances and fail at creating meaningful opportunities that would respond to their needs (Horvat, et al, 2003). Notwithstanding the rhetoric that schools address these issues for minority families, school and community leaders often overlook the substantial racial and socio-economic inequalities, thereby neglecting to challenge the status quo.

In sum, when the dominant voices of the majority exercise social and political advantages and contribute a significant amount of financial resources to the school district, administrators tend to focus on respecting their influence and heeding their concerns. In return, school leaders often get praised for their work as they hold the current systems in place. Not only are the parents and their organizing behaviors perceived as "exemplary" by school leaders, but the school leaders are perceived as "exemplary" by parents, thereby reciprocating a pattern that reinforces the school leader's beliefs that parents who are not currently engaged should be doing the things that the dominant parents are doing (Foley, 2015; Howard, 2015; Posey-Maddox, 2013). The overwhelming implication here for African American parents is for them to align their behaviors and norms of participation with those of the majority. African American parents are welcome to join in as long as they also perceive most everything to be exemplary and contribute their time and resources to maintain the status quo.

Inequality Regimes in Educational Organizations.

The literature indicates that school and community leaders in general lack an understanding of issues related to race and the racial inequities that undermine a school system's capacity to serve the needs of minority families of color (Acker, 2006; Shields et al, 2001). In Seaview District, there have been several attempts to address issues of equity in general, but a focus on race separate from other class, gender, and socio-economics has left the staff with vague, oftentimes contradictory conceptions of how to take explicit action (Theoharis, 2007). With respect to equity, the leadership tends to consolidate various groups like gender, EL, SPED and topics like funding, academic intervention, counseling into a collective bucket, thereby deferring energy towards solving the more unique and challenging issues that are particular to any one group.

At the very root of the problem is the social construct of racial inequality and implicit biases and how these deeply embedded beliefs plague the education system with inequitable access and opportunity for students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2006; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Several scholars have written about how differences in race and social class influence the

ways in which organizations support inequitable conditions for people from minority backgrounds (Acker, 2006; Anyon, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Studies of workplace institutions in general and schools in particular reveal the existence of class and gender hierarchies as well as segregation along racial and cultural lines. In essence, there exist a broad set of *inequality regimes*, defined by Jean Acker as 'loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities' (2006 p.443). Organizing processes, according to Acker, are found in formal job descriptions, hiring, wage setting, and supervision. These processes coalesce with less formal, yet powerful interactions between people to create a system that legitimizes inequalities and strongly resists most opportunities for change.

Inequality regimes observed in the general workplace find their parallels in the behaviors and norms of public schools (Deschenes et al, 2001; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Studies have found that students from various social classes are regularly prepared by schools and classrooms to occupy particular levels on the social and economic strata of society (Anyon, 1980). Students from lower socio-economic levels and racial minorities are more often tracked into less rigorous academics (Oakes & Wells, 1997), less often identified as gifted and talented (Valdes, 2003), and experience disproportionately higher rates of suspension and expulsion from school (Skiba et al, 2012).

In the Seaview school district, African American students are disproportionately referred for disciplinary issues and disproportionately suspended from school, as compared to other racial groups. Between 2013 and 2015, anywhere from 4% to 8% of all African American students were suspended from school, while only 0.5% to 2% of the other racial groups were suspended. African Americans have been tracked into lower level courses in mathematics and are disproportionately underrepresented in high school honors and Advanced Placement (AP) coursework. In 2015 for example, approximately 67% of White and Asian high school students were enrolled in at least one AP class while only 20% of African American students were enrolled in at least one AP classes.

On the new Smarter Balanced standardized tests in English and Math African American students in Seaview perform approximately 50 points lower in English and 40 points lower in Math as compared to their White and Asian counterparts. Interviews with African American students and their parents indicate that they see their race and culture unrepresented in the curriculum and among the staff members. When they are the only student in the classroom, which is often the case in Seaview, they feel isolated. Some students report that they feel like their teachers and administrators perceive them to be troublemakers and hold lower expectations for them in academic performance.

Inequality regimes found in institutions outside of education.
Schools are bureaucratic institutions, and like other sectors of public life, often perpetuate the inequitable practices that marginalize certain groups (Ladson-Billings, 2006; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). As such, literature on how minority middle-class adults perceive their relationships with institutions other than education may contribute to a more refined understanding of the problems.

In the healthcare industry, for example, Tina Sacks (2013) explores the experiences of African American middle-class women as they seek medical advice and treatment. The findings suggest that stereotyping and discrimination persist across different socioeconomic classes (p. 142), ultimately leading to differences in treatment and healthcare disparities. In an effort to

counteract negative stereotypes, African American women, regardless of socio-economic class status, present themselves as well-dressed professionals, feel compelled to conduct research on their conditions, and carefully prepare questions in advance, all in order to be viewed as competent individuals and gain the most favorable treatments possible, especially when gynecological and reproductive care is considered (p. 146).

The residential housing industry, coupled tightly with financial regulators and government policies, has long contributed to a system of segregated schools and segregated neighborhoods. In Rothstein's article on the racial achievement gap (2014), 'education policy is constrained by housing policy.' In the United States, a long history of discriminatory lending and government-sanctioned residential segregation has culminated in today's relatively low numbers of middle-class African Americans living in suburban middle-class neighborhoods.

Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) also looks outside of education to better reconceive of the negative perceptions minority parents have inside education. In her 2006 AERA Presidential Address, she borrows from the world of economics and outlines a powerful analogy between national financial debt and education debt. In short, the legacies of historical, economic, sociopolitical and moral inequalities substantiate an enormous and ongoing 'debt service' that *manifests itself in the distrust and suspicion about what schools can and will do in communities serving the poor and children of color (p. 9).'*

In sum, there is a substantial knowledge base that helps clarify my understanding of the problems. A long and sad history of implicit bias, racial discrimination and social stratification plague the system of education and challenge leaders to re-define their roles. The dominant norms and politics of equity-minded change are powerful forces that require the collective capacity of community leaders to act.

I conclude with a critique of the methods used in these fields to understand the problems. I notice an emphasis by many researchers to depend on large amounts of data gathered from a large number of participants. For example, see Bryk and Schneider, (2002a) demonstrate how a lack of trust in schools is a very important feature and the large volume of data and extensive timeframe for the studies bring a high degree of credibility to their findings. The researchers use data gathered over several years from hundreds of participants. While we gain an important understanding of the connection between relationships and school improvement, we lose the opportunity to listen to individual people who can bring a personal nuance and a clear voice to the findings. Also notable, the researchers themselves are almost exclusively coming into the organization from the outside. They bring their expert skills at research and objectivity, but lack the challenges faced by insiders who are there not only to understand the problems objectively, but also to navigate the seemingly impossible task of implementing change.

Maia Cucchiara (2008 & 2009), for example, helps us understand middle-class parental involvement and how these particular dynamics of power and privilege can affect students and communities. In fact, this research was impressive as well because there remained some level of individual voice and character to the actors portrayed in the narrative. However, as a researcher from the university, Cucchiara herself does not carry the same roles, responsibilities, and biases that an action-researcher does when they also serve as a hired employee inside the organization.

On the whole, while I very much appreciate the insight, there is one very critical component missing from the research literature. If issues of inequity are perpetuated by the cultural norms, institutionalized and systemic structures of exclusion, and historical legacies of discrimination, then who are these people in positions of influence and what happens when they try to do something to confront those norms? More specifically, where is the research that is

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authored by insiders who take action? And how can we build upon that type of knowledge base so that practitioners can respond to what we learn from the theoretical base?

To mitigate these two dynamics of scale and position, I turn to Design Development (Mintrop, 2016, Van den Akker, 1999) as a way to bridge the complex issues inherent in serving as both a researcher and an actor inside the system. This unique style of research provides both a careful review of how we make attempts to change systems as well as an insider's perspective on what happens when we balance theory with action. Later in this dissertation, I will provide a more in depth description of the methods and features found in Design Development. For now, I turn to a review of literature that helps understand the process of change.

Understanding the Change Process

Research literature can help school leaders frame their theories of action with an analytical foundation that confirms their intuitive ideas about why problems exist and what will work to influence change (Mintrop, 2016). In the following section, I explore the literature in three areas: transformational leadership, parent engagement and empowerment, and civic capacity and reform in urban education. I propose that these three areas of knowledge will inform the development of more practical change drivers that will result in achieving a more desirable state for the school community.

Transformational leadership and the politics of equity-minded change.

This design study calls for a change in school leadership beliefs and practices. Therefore, my first point of logic will focus on how school leaders can frame their responsibilities for social justice and how they can mediate the politics of enacting changes in school systems that respond to the needs of underachieving, minority students. Towards this end, I call upon the theories of transformational leadership (Epstein, et al 2011; Leithwood, 2005) as well as the theories related to the norms and politics of equity minded change (Oakes, et al 2005). The intersection between these two theoretical concepts represents what I predict in my design study to surface regularly during the intervention phase. Namely, school and community leaders will struggle to redefine their roles and responsibilities towards social justice change.

For the purpose of addressing some of the larger issues related to this problem of practice, it is critical to recognize that transformational leadership, compared to managerial and instructional styles, is relatively new to the field of education. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), transformational leadership embodies relationship building that helps set a new vision, supports collaboration, and advances social justice. If, in fact, relationships are at the heart of the work, principals and other school leaders must know how to navigate sensitive issues in their own practices related to race, culture, and class status. They must understand the structural and institutional patterns that currently inhibit certain groups from access (Acker, 2006' Anyon 1997) and they must also be willing to address and break those patterns (Baquedano et al, 2013; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Normore & Jean-Marie, 2008).

Finally, transformational leaders are expected to instill in others a motivation and a hope for change, while recognizing that there will exist a formidable struggle to enact social justice practices that others may perceive as threatening (Theoharis, 2004). In the particular circumstances found in the local context, these issues directly relate to how schools embrace a more collective responsibility for the inclusion of marginalized parents.

Through their participation on the leadership team and through the camaraderie that the team members cultivate for each other, the school and community leaders will reinforce their commitments to action and support each other through the challenges. It is on this note that I continue with a description of the norms and politics of equity-minded change by exploring the concept of "zones of mediation."

Equity-minded change is politically charged and, especially when confronted with mandates or experiences that challenge the status quo, school communities often find themselves at odds between their current knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes and what they are either expected to do differently by outside forces or what they realize they should be expecting of themselves (Nonaka, 1994; Trujillo, 2012). Without clear direction and a common sense of purpose, conflicting points of view and challenges to power and property very often create at best a false veneer of equity-minded rhetoric or at worst, gridlock and discord (Fullan, 2001).

In light of this dynamic, I refer to a study by Jeannie Oakes, et al (2005) that helps clarify the complex nature of equity-minded reforms as different from other types of less controversial reforms. Situated in a culture of normed behaviors and mediating within the broader context of the local and global community, school leaders who advance equity-minded change ultimately "entangle schools in larger cultural patterns related to race, class, and gender (Oakes et al, 2005 p283)."

According to the research, schools and their communities exist within two primary zones. One is a 'zone of tolerance' defining the boundaries where policies are allowed to be changed and developed without much controversy and the other is the 'zone of mediation' which situates the school itself as the institution that navigates between the local community and the broader political forces (Oakes et al, 2005 p287). Sometimes, schools are pushed to enact new policies from outside forces (i.e. court rulings, national- and state-level policy mandates). Other times, schools are pushed by locals to oppose them (i.e. punitive NCLB sanctions or detracking policies). School leaders in these situations must conceptualize their schools as the zones whereby forces to change intersect. Hence, in the local context where new state-policies expect more equitable parental involvement (CA Dept. of Education, 2016a) and local culture expects and defines middle-class norms of parental involvement, school and community leaders are situated in the middle and need to take careful action.

While Oakes applies the 'zone of mediation' to the particular challenges related to detracking high school courses, I call upon this concept as a vehicle by which school and community leaders can re-define their roles and responsibilities related to more equitable parental involvement. In particular, aspects that I predict will surface are the negative perceptions and lower levels of trust that parents and parent leaders may have about the school system. Howard's research on African American parents' perceptions of public school (2015) finds that in general, parents did not feel as though the schools were interested in listening to them and that most felt schools only contacted them when there were negative behavior issues to discuss (p. 77). He advises schools to recognize and celebrate cultural differences.

Additionally, Steven O. Roberts' article on parent involvement calls us to reconsider the more culturally distinct behaviors of Black parents that are often ignored as positive forms of school involvement (2011). In particular, racial socialization (i.e. telling children they are special, no matter what others say) and egalitarian messages (i.e. messages regarding racial equality and coexistence) have been shown to positively impact a child's performance.

In the context where we now understand how and why parental engagement too often serves to maintain the status quo, school leaders need to take thoughtful action about how to

engage parents who have been excluded from decision-making and other positions of influence. Instead of a more passive stance that allows the dominant White and Asian, middle-class norms to drive the directions of school services, school and community leaders need to break through the hidden boundaries that silence minority parents.

Parent engagement and empowerment.

When parent, school, and community engagement is strong, we find more cooperation between parents, teachers and administrators (Epstein, 2001), a balanced distribution of power between parents and administrators (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991), and a broader understanding on the part of school administrators about the various cultures that live within the community (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Unfortunately, school and community leaders too often lack understanding about how differences in race, culture, and class adversely affect the opportunities for minority parents to fully participate in their child's schooling and consequently, minority students continue to experience grave inequities in how they are provided a high-quality education (Baquedano-Lopez et al, 2013).

Parent engagement is a broad term that refers to the participation of parents in their child's schooling. It is most often conceptualized as the interactions between parent and child that support learning at home as well as participation of parents in school activities, especially as it relates to the interactions between parents and teachers (Epstein, 2001). Parent engagement is widely known to have direct and powerful impact on student achievement (Epstein, 2001; Howard & Reynolds, 2008). The more parents are engaged, the better the chances that the student will succeed.

Empowerment goes beyond engagement and is used to describe the process by which parents are afforded more access and opportunity in order to have an impact on their child's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Empowerment requires that parents are provided the means by which they can understand how the school system works as well as network their relationships with others in order to organize and exert influence towards change (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Shatkin & Gershberg, 2007).

In this design-development study, the theory of action is guided by the literature on organizing and mobilizing school communities for improvement (Bryk et al, 2010; Shirley, 2003). Shared leadership and a redistribution of resources allow parents the opportunity to address inequities in the system and to improve their children's success in school. In practice, school leaders restructure policies and budgets so that time, energy, and money are re-directed to counteract the systemic forces that keep minority students underperforming. Here, we should see leaders who tip the financial and bureaucratic scales in a new direction, away from the more predictable demands and towards the often less popular programs that provide the much-needed advantages for African American students to overcome their current state of affairs.

Civic capacity and reform in urban education; leveraging policy and planning.

Reform in education is challenging, in part because those inside the organization are unlikely to disrupt the normative habits that, in essence, enable and protect their own positional authority and power (Stone, 2001; Orr, 1999; Shipps, 2003). Civic capacity, as conceived by Clarence Stone (2001), is defined as the collaborative efforts from a wide variety of constituents across a community that are directed at broad issues of concern. The theory of action here is to leverage external pressures and demands that can mobilize change in the internal workings of a system (Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

In reference to education reform, Shipps (2003) incorporates civic capacity as an asset that can address the restraints that school district insiders have with regards to changing mental models, structures, and patterns of behavior. Towards that end, coalitions across various civic institutions are agenda specific, involve government and nongovernment actors, and very often include the empowerment of new leaders who bring new ideas and a strong potential for acceptance (2003, p.845-849).

As it relates to my design-development study, the public school system and the local political institutions have extremely close ties. Both the formal government agencies and the community-based, grassroots organizations frequently interact at both the district and school site levels. Towards this end, the "African American Parent Engagement Leadership Team" is, by intention, a coalition of various constituents. There are parents, teachers, students, PTA leaders, school site and district administrators, and school board members.

Additionally, I call upon these concepts of civic capacity to inform how I can leverage current state policies and strategic plans that govern community and stakeholder engagement in the development of strategic plans for the school system (Hambright & Diamantes, 2004; Humphrey et al, 2014). In essence, allocating power and resources to transformative parent, school, and community leaders is one of the key intervention strategies that I include in my design. On this note, I and the leadership team have already laid some groundwork by strategically outlining goals and objectives in the recently adopted Local Control Accountability Plan, as well as a substantial budget for the leadership team to use as they move forward with their action planning.

It is also important to recognize that for this design study, using civic capacity as a leverage strategy can also backfire. The strong ties among various constituents can just as effectively turn against the intentions to disrupt the status quo. As Stone writes, *"All of this is a difficult set of arrangements to maintain, and if these arrangements break down at some point or never quite gel, then there is a risk that misunderstanding and mistrust will carry the day.* (2001, p.615)*"* As an action researcher subject to the influences of an uncontrolled environment, I will need to carefully observe where and how new alliances of power may, in fact, counter the efforts to address long-standing inequities.

Theory of Action

My theory of action presumes that if school and community leaders can develop transformational leadership qualities, engage and empower parents, and build civic capacity, then parents can become more empowered with an understanding about how the school system operates, and more importantly, establish a willingness to get involved.

Change Drivers

A substantial body of literature describes organizational change as complex and challenging for leaders to enact (Fullan, 2001 & 2007, Tushman & O'Reilly, 2002; Nonaka, 1994). An effective change process requires an understanding of complex dynamics related to pacing, motivation, learning, operational and programmatic systems, and the resistance from those who see change as threatening and uncomfortable (Fullan, 2001; Schein, 2010; Senge, 2006). In particular, school leaders face a daunting task to create significant change within a culture conflicted between autonomous and collective professionalism, internal versus external

accountability, and the motivations of individuals who themselves perpetuate inequities for various students (Fullan, 2007 & 2001; Mintrop, 2012; Skrla, 2001; Schein, 2010).

Fortunately, organizational change is not random; researchers have identified the presence of particular change drivers or organizational levers that can influence a change from the current state to the desired state (Mintrop, 2016; Warner & Litwin, 1992). Change drivers vary depending on the intended outcome and contextual features found within the organization and can be categorized into four main types: commanding, engineering, teaching, and socializing (Huy, 2001). Commanding drivers lead to rapid change. Engineering drivers take place over an extended period of time. Teaching and socializing drivers balance between episodic changes in beliefs and longer-term changes in social relationships.

In my design development study, I have identified drivers that are related to learning and socializing. School leaders are confronted with the urgency to address issues of inequity while also developing their capacities as long-term change agents who build new relationships with disenfranchised parents. Towards that end, I have identified practical drivers that relate to the three broad concepts: developing transformational leadership qualities, engaging and empowering parents, and building civic capacity.

Figure 3.1: Change Drivers

CURRENT STATE	CHANGE DRIVERS	DESIRED STATE
School and Community Leaders recognize issues of inequity, but struggle to mediate change and therefore continue to behave in ways that favor the status quo. African-American/Black parents struggle to exercise their collective efforts and to turn their advocacy into action. They experience isolation and exclusion because of the underlying racial inequities that exist in the school system.	Keen awareness and knowledge of inequities in Math & Science. Race as a source of cultural pride and a category of solidarity towards addressing inequities. Self-concept of transformational leadership Working and learning together to plan for and engage parents. LCAP as a leverage tool to set goals, define programs, and garner resources.	School and Community leaders take responsibility to disrupt the status quo by organizing the community to engage African-American/Black parents. African-American/Black parents strengthen relationships with each other that are, in turn, used to express voice and mobilize action.

In the following section, I propose a set of practical change drivers based from a review of the knowledge base that influence change from the current state, low parental involvement for African-American/Black families, to the desired state, high parental involvement for African-American/Black families. The design elements are rooted in the capacities that leaders need in order to build a more inclusive culture for parents who have been marginalized in the past.

In the earlier review of the knowledge base, I identified developing transformational leadership qualities, engaging and empowering parents, and building civic capacity as primary change drivers for effective African American parent engagement. But these grand concepts from the knowledge base must be operationalized in concrete and pragmatic ways in order to design activities that engage these drivers. Hence, a design-development study turns its attention to developing a theory of intervention whereby activities are outlined that will engage the participants in the process of learning and doing.

In order to **develop transformational leadership qualities** school and community leaders need to first understand how current practices like mathematics and science enrollment patterns, discipline referral types and rates, and assessment data all demonstrate that African-American students are disproportionately underserved. Then, these school and community leaders need to learn how to actively pursue changes in policies, programs, and procedures in order to disrupt these problems. In addition, school and community leaders need to learn how and why the current social constructs of parent and community engagement leave race and racial inequities out of the picture. By including race as a focus for celebration and cultural identity, and by including race as a center point from which to identify actionable next steps, school and community leaders can break the pathologies of silence that inhibit parent engagement for African American parents.

In order to **engage and empower parents**, school and community leaders need to work together as a cohesive and organized team to plan for parent engagement events. These parent engagement events would strengthen community by emphasizing pride in Black history and culture, networking parents and students together, building communication systems, and organizing efforts to inform parents about issues of importance. In this study, race as a category of solidarity is an essential component of this social capital. As social, cultural, and intellectual capital builds around the shared identity found in the African American race and ethnicity, parents collectively elevate their sense of pride in African American culture, become more empowered to share their experiences, align their values, shed their sense of isolation, and position their influence towards a better education for their children.

Finally, in order to **build civic capacity,** the leadership team members need to build coalitions with others in the community and learn how to leverage policies and resources to their advantage. The leadership team meetings and the parent engagement events will include times when we will review and reflect on goals that are outlined in the LCAP, plan for formal presentations and engagement events with other community leadership groups, and network with other groups who share common interests. In this study, we are establishing a new empowerment regime (Shipps, 2003), and therefore, we need the support of various constituents who can allocate new authority, decision-making power, and funding.

The key is to choreograph these complex drivers into a series of activities that take into account the available resources, potential energy, and supportive socio-political climate that school leaders currently have at their disposal. Design elements take into consideration the needs that school leaders have to move from rhetoric to action. There are clear strategies to introduce and reinforce policies and socio-political structures in order to expand the current decision-making influence. They include specific practices, some co-opted from other more powerful groups, that welcome new voices, gather feedback, and amplify communication. Furthermore, the design provides research-based community organizing activities, not currently found in the mainstream patterns of practice, which will ultimately influence conditions for increasing parental engagement for minority communities.

Feasibility: Preconditions for implementing the Design

The features found in the local context establish a basis on which this intervention can be successful. Issues related to social class and racial equity have surfaced in the recent past and efforts to mediate for better student outcomes are growing stronger. School and community leaders, together with student and parents, have been raising awareness about inequities related to race and new initiatives have been supported by a broad coalition of people. In the area of

instruction, for example, as part of the recent adoption of new standards-aligned mathematics curriculum the secondary schools chose to eliminate tracking and segregated intervention classes. With more heterogeneous grouping, all students now have access to their grade-level instruction and there has been little resistance from the traditionally higher-achieving students and their parents.

In the area of leadership, the district management team, comprised of the Superintendent and all the administrators, has a concerted emphasis on issues of equity. Meeting time previously used for managerial issues has been replaced with bi-monthly retreats that engage participants in guided conversations about issues related to race, gender, language, and socio-economics. Sessions include the review of literature from popular authors in the field of education, including George Theoharis (2009), DuFour & Marzano (2007), and Peter Senge (2006). Reflection and planning exercises focus on specific issues of inequity related to race, class, and gender.

In the area of policy and legislation, the CA legislature recently passed a law that addresses the historical patterns of discriminatory practice whereby students of color exiting 8th grade have been disproportionately enrolled into lower-level 9th grade mathematics classes or required to repeat 8th grade courses that they had already passed successfully (California Legislative Information, 2016). The new legislation requires that the school district adopt a policy that effectively eradicates subjective measures of student performance as indicators for placement into 9th grade math courses.

Also worthy of note is the adoption of the Local Control Accountability Plan that expects school districts to engage stakeholders, especially parents, in the review of student achievement and the development of a plan and a budget to address issues of underachievement (California Dept. of Education, 2016a). In Seaview school district, this section of the LCAP specifically calls attention to the needs for specific parent engagement efforts targeted towards African American and Hispanic/Latino families. Budget allocations have been set aside, new programs have been designed, and support from the school Board and the community has been strong.

It is important to consider these local assets as they contribute directly to the potential that this intervention has towards making a difference. If a school community is experiencing an active resistance from those in majority groups towards changes that advance the rights of those in the minority groups, the learning in this design will not mediate that situation. This design is meant to help school leaders who already operate within a community culture that is prepared to challenge itself towards improving the conditions for minority groups.

Intervention Design

The theory of intervention provides a discussion of the activities and resources that I presume will lead towards the necessary learning on the part of school leaders to engage parents of African American students. These activities and resources are brought together into an intervention design titled "Vision of Inclusive Community Engagement (VOICE)." The VOICE intervention includes a series of leadership team meetings where school and community leaders come together to discuss issues relevant to equity, learn together about various topics related to inequities, leadership, and parent engagement, and most importantly to plan for events where parents are invited to engage.

What is most significant about this intervention is the emphasis on learning by doing. In essence, the leadership team spends its time learning about leadership by exercising leadership practices. They spend their time learning about engagement and empowerment by networking

and building relationships with parents. And they spend their time learning about inequities by examining those that exist in their own school system.

The VOICE Leadership meetings are designed for school and community leaders to exchange information and to plan for parent engagement events. The VOICE parent engagement activities provide the school leaders with options that fit the needs of their parent groups.

Table 2.1 Overview of VOICE Activities and Events

Session	Title	Purpose & Content
1	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Re-affirm goals and to discuss current issues and events.
2	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Review calendar of events for the year. Align events to the goals for parent engagement and the feedback from African American parents.
3	*Parent Engagement: Casual Meet & Greet*	Organize a casual meet and greet activity in a public setting. African American families are invited to drop by and meet each other and other community members.
4	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Plan ahead for the Parent Engagement Series focused on achievement in mathematics.
5	*Leadership Team Meeting: Project Planning*	Refine logistics for the Parent Engagement workshop #1.
6	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #1*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
7	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Review feedback from workshop participants. Discuss strengths and challenges to the event. Create communication campaign to celebrate the accomplishments of the event. Review calendar of events and plan ahead for upcoming workshops.
8	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #2*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
9	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #3*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
10	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Reflect on successes and challenges. Discuss issues related to how the current group is doing. Plan ahead for upcoming events.
11	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Refine logistics for the upcoming Black History Month Celebration. Plan ahead for the remainder of the year and discuss how to gather parent feedback on goals for the future.
12	*Parent Engagement: Black History Month Celebration*	This is a full family, full community event that will include introductory speeches, student performances, and a sit-down dinner.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

In the following chapter, I discuss methodological choices in research design with a focus on why Design Development methodology is the appropriate course of action. I also provide an explanation about how elements of action research methodology serve to mediate my dual role of researcher and practitioner. The chapter continues with a description of the participants as the unit of analysis, the subjects of learning and leadership as the units of study, and the data collection methods that serve to assess both the process as well as the impact of intervention.

Finally, when researchers like me are directly involved as members inside the organization it is critical to regulate and monitor what can easily become a favorability bias. When action researchers like me choose to design, implement, and evaluate their interventions, especially when they believe in the need to improve outcomes, favorability towards positive results can easily set in and skew the review of data and the interpretation of outcomes. Therefore, this chapter concludes with a discussion about how to build a rigorous level of research by incorporating practices that ensure reliability and validity.

Design Development Methodology

This study is both an act of research as well as an attempt to influence organizational change. It is about solving a significant problem of inequity related to parental engagement. In the local context, district and school leaders do not seek the input from African-American parents. The current practices in the school community do not encourage African-American parents to engage with each other to advocate for their children and influence decision-making. The result is that their voices are less heard and their children are less supported for success. In order to address this problem, school and community leaders need to break away from current habits and beliefs and learn new practices that will have a meaningful impact on how leadership can take action to increase the involvement of parents who have been heretofore on the margins.

Two overarching issues related to human interaction make conducting research under these conditions very challenging. First, there is no intent to control the participants as they live and work in the school community (Mintrop, 2016). Instead, the intent is to promote an iterative process of learning so that behaviors change (Cobb et al, 2003). Second, I am both a researcher as well as a school leader in the organization and while insider knowledge can add as much as it detracts from the research validity (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), I bring a powerful bias that favors a results-oriented disposition (Barab & Squire, 2004).

Design development methodology mediates these challenges while also promoting a type of study that serves to influence change (Mintrop, 2016). By itself, the term methodology refers to a combination of the worldview assumptions the researcher brings to the study about what counts as knowledge, the procedures of inquiry, and the specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2009). Also known as an *'epistemology'* (Crotty, 1998), the researcher's theory of what is truth and how it can be revealed through research strongly influences the orientation that the researcher holds for himself within the process, the specific procedures for data collection and analysis, and most importantly, the level of participation and self-advocacy that the researcher brings to the interventions they design (Creswell, 2009; Mintrop, 2016).

The intent of this design study is to influence and ultimately change the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of people in their natural setting. Also referred to as an '*advocacy worldview*'

(Creswell, 2009 p.9), this methodological choice cannot be rooted in passive observation and data collection. Instead, it must also include an action-oriented intervention that situates the researcher as someone who influences others by introducing new ideas and implementing new programs inside the organization (Mintrop, 2016; Van den Akker, 1999).

Design development research is geared towards addressing complex problems in a planned and deliberate way (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012) and often includes a focus on both the *process of learning* as well as the *outcome of this process* (Cobb, et al, 2003). Design development incorporates precise definitions of problematic and desirable states, evidence-based assumptions about needs and assets, the careful exploration of the knowledge base, a testable theory of action, and the implementation of a data collection stream based on scientific principles (Mintrop, 2016; Plomb, 2010). In design development, the researcher identifies a problem of practice, takes into account the features of the unique local context and is concerned with developing practical knowledge to solve the problem (Mintrop, 2016). This is research *in* action, as opposed to research *about* action. It is research that is concurrent and iterative in nature, and includes a collaborative approach between the researcher and the design team members (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

Design development research is also well-suited to a broader cultural norm that favors results-oriented performance where school leaders are increasingly held accountable for their decisions and actions, while they themselves strive for equity and integrity in their own professional lives (Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Mintrop, 2012).

It is important to highlight here that other particular research methodologies serve distinct and different research purposes. Case studies, for example, are designed to carefully observe, report on, and ultimately understand a particular event or phenomenon in its context without the researcher being fully involved in the events being studied (Yin, 2003). Experiments follow procedures that test pre-set hypotheses with the intent of discovering tight connections between cause and effect by distinguishing between treatment and control groups (Creswell, 2009). In these and other types of research, the researcher himself is situated as an external observer who documents what is going on, without the intent to engage as one of the actors inside the system (Creswell, 2009).

This study is designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to influence learning for school and community leaders to enable them to take action, and 2) to engage a nondominant group of parents to be more proactive in their children's education, for the overall benefit of the school community. This study builds capacity in school and community leaders so that they can take action to change the inequities related to African American parent engagement. This study also designs and incorporates parent engagement activities for African American families so that they have increased opportunities to celebrate their culture, build stronger relationships among each other, advocate for their children's right to education, and influence decision-making in the district.

Action Research

Action research takes place in real time and develops in an iterative way towards diagnosing problems, planning and taking action, and evaluating results (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Accordingly, when school leaders address problems in their communities, action research helps them address both the contextual issues and the practical realities that are inherent in an organization that is experiencing change (Cobb et al, 2003). In this regard, action research

produces a storyline that describes what happened and why it happened, using systematic data collection strategies.

Design development studies and action research are similar in many ways. They are both concurrent and iterative in nature, and include a collaborative approach between the researcher and the design team members (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). Yet, while design development provides the researcher with bounded definitions and strict data collection cycles, action research is more organic and incorporates the regular exercise of self-reflection, assumption-checking, and collaboration with objective third-party individuals (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mintrop, 2016).

The strengths of this approach include insider knowledge, the passion for reform, and the relationships with people that the researcher brings to the study (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Cobb et al, 2003). However, these same assets that help the researcher leverage organizational change are also threats to rigor (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Mintrop, 2016). When an individual combines the roles of designer, implementer, and researcher, there exists an inherent bias stemming from their positional authority, their passion to inspire change, the external pressures to be efficient leaders, and their internal advocacy that the work they invent is successful (Mintrop, 2016). In sum, researchers who are also action-oriented school leaders are strongly inclined to glorify their findings and assume that positive change has occurred in their organization.

Action research methodology helps researchers keep favorability bias in check by involving other critics to our work (Coghlan, 2005), forcing us to make our assumptions explicit (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), and searching for evidence that disconfirms what we feel most passionately about (Mintrop, 2016).

Towards this end, my design study incorporates specific features of action research. I worked collaboratively with a team of school and community leaders who met regularly to learn about the problems and to plan for activities for African-American/Black parent engagement (see Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p75). Design elements were co-constructed and assumptions about what might work were systematically shared and cross-examined. Furthermore, I incorporated the use of a private and personal journal (see Coghlan & Brannick, 2005 p. 37) where I reflected on my experiences as a member of the organization, as a university scholar, and as a member of a community where I want better outcomes for students of color. Finally, I employed third-party critical friends from outside the school community who brought a more distant and objective lens in the interpretation of process and outcome data.

Unit of Analysis

In social science research, the unit of analysis can be individual people, groups of people, or even whole communities or organizations (Light et al, 1990; Richie, 2013). Before making decisions about data types and collection methods, it is critical that the researcher has a clear understanding of the unit of analysis so that future observations can be made accordingly (Light et al, 1990). This clear definition describes what will and will not be at the center of the design. Furthermore, in design development studies, we not only choose a unit of analysis, we intervene with programs that will treat them (Mintrop, 2016; Van den Akker, 1999) and very often involve the people themselves in co-designing the intervention (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012).

The purpose of this design is to improve the leadership skills and dispositions for a mixed group of parent and school leaders, many of whom are African American themselves, so that African American parents are more supported in expressing their voices, taking responsibilities,

and engaging with others to influence decision-making. By focusing on school leaders as the unit of analysis, this study examines how their collaborative work in designing parent engagement strategies can change the leader's role conception from one that maintains the status quo to one that advocates for social justice and transformation.

What is unique about the unit of analysis in this study is the theoretical conception of school leader. As much of the parent engagement literature indicates (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, et al, 2011; Flessa, 2012; Theoharis, 2007), the term 'school leader' is typically defined as the administrator in charge of the organization. Most often the school Principal or Superintendent, this formal position of authority is called upon by social justice advocates to initiate and sustain change from within the system so that parents are more welcome to fully participate in their child's education (Auerbach, 2010; Theoharis, 2009).

This study builds upon this more conventional definition of school leader and broadens the notions about who, in reality, has power and influence to initiate and sustain change. Leadership that provides lasting capacity for change comes in many forms and brings the talents and strengths of a wide variety of constituents. In this regard, I call on the literature from civic capacity for urban school reform (Stone, 2001; Shirley, 1997) and from civic capacity and political regime building (Shipps, 2003; Comer, 1996) to broaden the definition of leader and to include as my unit of analysis the parents, teachers, and community members who have willingly stepped forward to become part of a district wide leadership team focused on engaging the parents from African American families.

As researchers point out (Stone, 2001, Shirley, 1997, Shipps, 2003, & Comer, 1996), the capacity for urban schools to reform how they interact with their communities is best achieved through collaborative partnerships with a broad constituency of leaders (see especially Stone, 2001 p611). According to Stone,

> *[Significant] reform never comes from people who are engaged in running routine operations. It comes only when members of the community acknowledge that they have a problem in need of attention of the community as a civic body (2001, p610).*

And according to Shirley,

> *Social capital theory suggests that if reformers seek to improve urban schools, they need to cultivate generalized reciprocity and social trust in such a manner that virtuous circles replace vicious ones. In addition --and this is a critical consequence of the argument-- they must abandon purely internal reforms within the school and emphasize the many potential relationships which can be built (and rebuilt) between a school and its community 1997, p27).*

Building upon this broader definition and in alignment with the purpose of this design development study, I now turn to a description of the leadership team members who worked together as a team to facilitate parent engagement for African American families, as well as a specific reference to the subset of members who served as my research subjects.

Selection of Research Subjects

A year before this study, I brought together a new leadership team of various school and community members to address the issue of African-American/Black parent engagement. The impetus for bringing this group together began with the district's response to California's new Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plan legislation (LCFF,

2015). In the new, mandated process of engaging stakeholders, disparities in student achievement related to different racial groups and social classes were highlighted. In general, students of color, especially African American students, were performing at lower levels on state and local assessments, were more often tracked into lower-level coursework, and were at greater risk for behavioral referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Staff and community members faced this awareness with a call to do something more for parental engagement.

While the membership on this new leadership team has grown over time, the core members include site administrators, parents, a professional consultant, and myself. Of the approximate fifteen (15) members on the design team, nine (9) volunteered to participate as subjects in the study. While most of the others were actively involved and while they also shared similar characteristics to those who did participate, those individuals did not respond to my invitation.

These nine individuals who did respond agreed to participate in the interview process and to continue their active involvement as members of the design team. Active involvement included the requirements to attend monthly leadership team meetings, take on responsibilities to plan for and facilitate the parent engagement events, and to attend the parent engagement events. Early on, one of the nine participants ended her active involvement for personal reasons, thereby leaving eight participants who fully participated and agreed to the interview process.

For the purpose of assessing the impact of the process as it pertains to learning and capacity for action, I interviewed these eight members to provide me with pre- and post-intervention sources of data. Ultimately, this design intervention attempted to resolve only one symptom of a much more complex problem related to institutionalized racism. Developing appropriate leadership strategies that aim at improving parental engagement requires a team of people who will actually use the intervention (van den Akker et al, 2007). As an action researcher, involving these school and community leaders allowed me to gather more information about the complexity of the issues. Together, these leaders brought a wide range of social networks and special talents to formulate coalitions focused on common goals and agendas with an orientation towards action across the community (Comer, 1996, p. 9).

Data

Design development studies depend on results and require specific data collection strategies in order to demonstrate an effected change from the current state to the desired state (Mintrop, 2016; Plomp & Nieveen, 2007). Towards this end, the action researcher is concerned with both *what* changed as well and *how* it changed and must employ careful data collection techniques that distinguish between the iterative process of learning and the summative process of uncovering results. Two types of data collection, impact data and process data, function together to reach these goals (Cobb et al, 2003; Mintrop, 2016).

This next section provides a brief overview of the data collection approaches as well as how these approaches relate to the overall purpose of the research study. I describe the types of impact and process data that have helped determine whether or not the design development was effective at helping school and community leaders learn how to affect change for better parent engagement.

Impact Data.

In design development studies, with an orientation towards designing workable and effective interventions (van den Akker, 2006), impact data are used to compare baseline observations of beliefs, attitudes, and low-inference behaviors with outcomes on the same dimensions (Mintrop, 2016). In this pre- and post- model, data are collected, analyzed and compared in order to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness and to substantiate conclusions that the effects were the result of the intervention.

Since design development studies hinge on outcomes, impact data contain elements that include clearly delineated and standardized indicators, quantifiable and observable metrics around specific categorized behaviors or tasks, and anchored outcomes. In this regard, impact data collection methods are tightly prescribed, creating a level of standardization that helps the researcher fix their perspectives and avoid bias (Mintrop et al., 2016).

In this design development study, I used impact data on three complementary levels (Cobb et al, 2003, p10). School and Community leaders needed to learn about the *inequities* that discriminate against African American students and parents, the *transformational leadership* capacities that will change these inequities, and the unique *parent engagement strategies* that work to engage a group of African American parents as active participants in their child's schooling.

Structured interviews highlighted the ways in which the research participants perceived and acted upon their roles their responsibilities within the school community. The participants brought their own unique levels of understanding related to parental engagement strategies that are effective for African American families. Therefore, baseline information from each participant was taken at the beginning of the study on three dimensions and was compared to outcome information on the same dimensions at the end of the study.

Process Data.

As stated earlier, the purpose of design development is to intervene in the real world in order to solve real problems of practice (Mintrop, 2016; van den Akker, 2006). It is a methodology that combines both the process of learning and the means that support that process (diSessa & Cobb, 2004). While impact data help the researcher determine whether or not the intervention was effective, process data helps clarify *how* that learning came to be (Plomp & Nieveen, 2007). Process data are geared towards capturing information in the context of an unpredictable and fluid environment. The data collection methods are designed carefully in advance, but are also open-ended and flexible enough to meet the needs of a complex change process occurring in real time. Most importantly, because design development studies are not in-depth case studies or ethnographies, process data are collected for one specific purpose: to explain impact data (Mintrop, 2016).

In this design-development study, leadership team meetings served as the primary basis for learning. Parent engagement events served as a secondary basis for learning. The data collection focused on how the participants came to understand transformational leadership and how that understanding strengthened as they worked together to plan for and implement parent engagement activities.

In order to gather process data, I took field notes during leadership team meetings and parent engagement events. The leadership team meetings were designed to provide the space and time for the participants to discuss issues, to plan for parent engagement events, and to reflect on their experiences after parent engagement events. I paid particular attention to occurrences when

participants expressed their points of view related to leadership, when they expressed an interest in taking responsibilities for action, when they articulated their understanding of the needs of African American parents.

Gathering relevant process data from these activities was challenging, due in large part to the sensitive nature of the conversations we had. In addition to the unpredictable nature of how people interact with each other in general, the participants in this study were engaged in conversations about their own personal experiences and understandings of the current school system. These meetings had established agendas, but they were unlike other types of school-related meetings. Instead of carefully planned topics, outcomes, and time allocations, these meetings provided lots of space for people to discuss issues of racial inequalities that they and their children face. As a member of the team and a leader in the organization, it was more important to respect their need for confidentiality, safety, and comfort as opposed to meeting my need to collect research data. It was certainly not helpful if the participants felt that they were being "studied," especially by a researcher who is a White, male, top-level bureaucrat in the very organization that perpetuates the problems at hand.

Therefore, the primary method of process data collection came in the form of reflective field notes taken by me immediately after each leadership team meeting. These methods were fluid enough to capture relevant information that could later be correlated to impact data (Mintrop, 2016). Towards this end, the data collection procedures were not meant to capture everything that happened from start to finish. Instead, the process data collection was reduced to a few pre-identified themes that account for evidence of learning and growth on a few dimensions.

Data Analysis

Impact data was collected via structured interview protocols (Creswell, 2009). The questions for the interviews were designed to capture information on three dimensions, each related to the theory of change from the review of literature and described in detail below. See Appendices D, E, and F for the interview questions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded for indicators that aligned to pre-identified and tightly defined criteria correlated to the same three dimensions (Saldana, 2009). See Appendices G, H, and I for the indicators and their respective citations from the literature base.

The first dimension is the capacity to understand a variety of inequities that persist for African American students and parents in their public schools. Were the participants able to identify and clearly articulate a variety of systemic structures, institutional barriers, beliefs and attitudes? Were they able to elaborate further on how those inequities have an impact on student success?

The second dimension is the capacity to understand the qualities of leadership that are necessary to confront and change structures of inequity. Sometimes named as "transformational change" (see Burke & Litwin, 1992) or "social justice leadership," (see Brown, 2004, Shields, 2004), were the participants able to describe a variety of skills and dispositions that leaders need in order to challenge the status quo and to increase educational access for African Americans? Furthermore, did these same school and parent leaders perceive themselves as having any of these qualities through their own roles and responsibilities as active team members?

The final dimension is the capacity to understand how to plan for and implement activities that engage African American parents on issues related to race, racial inequalities, and student success. Were the participants able to recognize the need for African American parents to

have a space and time, sanctioned by their school system, in order to build relationships with each other, express their concerns, and participate in decision-making? Were the participants able to recognize the need for African American parents to have both a chance to celebrate their culture as well as a chance to influence change in structures, policies, and resources?

The presence (or absence) and relative quantity of these indicators from each dimension, combined with qualitative excerpts from the interviewees' responses was used to establish a baseline from which to assess impact at the end of the intervention.

It is important at this point to briefly describe issues related to data coding and analysis. The process of coding is, by itself, a form of initial analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2002). The choices I made as a researcher while sifting through qualitative data were exercises in sorting, categorizing, and interpreting. And while coding, by itself, is not synonymous with analysis (Saldana, 2009), the initial and subsequent cycles established data that became the basis by which interpretations were made. For these reasons, it was important to pursue coding as an iterative, cyclical process, revising the initial codes as new patterns and complications emerged and identifying connections between categories and big ideas as they related back to the essential research questions.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection methods can be repeated with the same results (van den Akker, 2006) as well as how they can consistently and systematically measure the target values (Creswell, 2009). Towards this end, the researcher needs to clearly articulate observable, low-inference behaviors that relate to the larger themes in the study. The researcher also needs to develop tightly defined interview protocols, observation criteria, and other procedural safeguards that target the critical learning goals. Finally, these various data-collection instruments need pre-defined, standardized metrics that can be easily applied across multiple events and a variety of people (Mintrop, 2016).

In this study, I only have a moderate level of confidence that, if applied to another setting, researchers would find similar results. I did field test the impact data interview questions and found that a Likert scale of 1 through 5 was too complicated and lengthy to use with participants. Oftentimes, they would ask me to describe each level in detail and the time required resulted in a very lengthy interview that lost its natural flow of conversation. Hence, in this study, the Likert scale was reduced to a range of 1 through 3. Furthermore, the self-reported levels of understanding were somewhat high inference and relied heavily on the explanations that participants provided after each initial question.

Furthermore, the process data collection was not tested in advance and the nature of the collection method relied on my interpretation of what occurred in a dynamic social setting. This method can be somewhat subjective depending on the position of the person collecting the data, especially when, as was the case in my situation, the person collecting data is also concurrently interacting and sometimes leading the activities.

Validity

The rigor of any study depends on the use of reliable measures, valid arguments between evidence and reasoning, and the degree to which the researcher's bias is kept under control (Mintrop, 2016). Validity is considered high when the conclusions about causal relationships are rooted in a strong theoretical underpinning, when those conclusions can be made based on sound

evidence from reliable measures, and when clear reasoning connects the processes of the intervention with the identified outcomes (Barab & Squire, 2004).

In design-development studies, internal validity, construct validity, and external validity are the most relevant to consider (Mintrop, 2016). *Internal validity* refers to the degree to which claims about causal relationships can be articulated and justified based on the researcher's ability to connect evidence between process data and impact data. When the intervention plans are carried out as intended, when impact data can be linked to evidence from process data, and when growth in impact data can be clearly identified from baseline to outcome, researchers can substantiate that their study has high internal validity. Researchers searching for internal validity must make compelling and logical arguments that communicate a strong link between the intended cause of their process and the resulting outcomes substantiated in the impact data.

In this study, it was important to understand that when conducting interviews, participants were responding from a highly subjective perspective. Because of my position as an administrator with positional authority and political influence, some participants, for example, may have geared their responses towards pleasing me with their performance or influencing my future actions and decisions. To help mitigate this threat to validity, I constructed a list of criteria from which to evaluate their responses (see Appendices G, H, and I). I have also constructed a method to evaluate their responses, in part, with an eye towards the process data. On that level, I ask whether or not the post-interview responses reflect the participants' experiences from the intervention activities.

Construct validity refers to the degree to which the instruments used in the study are developed based on sound theoretical concepts as well as whether they actually reflect the concepts they are intended to assess (Creswell, 2009). Process and impact data are gathered using various instruments that are indexes to a construct of interest, not the constructs themselves (Cobb, et al, 2003). In this design-study, for example, one construct is '*role perception related to transformational leadership.*' The structured interview questions included an opportunity for participants to elaborate on their initial self-reported rating. These elaborations, and their subsequent scoring on a pre-designed rubric, served as indexes for the concept of role perception. These questions were constructed in a way so as to reflect the theoretical knowledge base on transformational leadership as well as accurately capture information from the respondents about their role perceptions.

External validity relates to how well the research study is situated in an environmental context that reflects the realities of the world (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this case, the accurate and detailed description of the real-world context matters and the intervention activities do not force people to act in ways that are unnatural or contrived (Mintrop, 2016). The goal of external validity is to assume that the findings of the study can be applied beyond the unique circumstances of the participants and their situation.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings from one research study can be generalized and adapted to other contexts or settings. Design research is iterative and each cycle of planning and reflecting helps refine the effectiveness of the intervention (Plomb & Nieven, 2007). Transferability is enhanced when the contextual features of the local setting are clearly specified so that future researchers can carry forward design principles to new situations that address similar problems of practice (Mintrop, 2016). The aim here is to contribute to practical

design knowledge in a useful manner as it relates to African American parent engagement in the context of a predominantly White and Asian upper middle class community.

Rigor, Threats to Rigor, and Bias

Design development studies pivot on results (van den Akker, 1999), but as leaders and change agents inside the system, we have an inherent bias to interpret results as successful. I am held accountable for results in no uncertain terms and I have my own high hopes that the work I set forth will succeed. Furthermore, I have a wealth of insider knowledge about the local context, the authority and influence over people in the organization, and the responsibility to allocate resources.

Therefore, while I am positioned to influence change, I am not well situated to be objective about whether the efforts are worthwhile and have been effective. Hence, mediating my researcher bias becomes a formidable challenge that action research methods help resolve (Brown, 1992; Mintrop 2016). In the following section, I discuss some of the finer distinctions between design development and action research. Issues of role-duality are presented, and I describe some of the procedural safeguards that helped keep interpretations honest, including the regular practice of self-reflection, the team-oriented approach to design and implementation, and the use of third-party critical friends who could more easily maintain their distance from the project.

A familiar challenge to social science research exists when the researcher is intimately involved in all facets of the design, implementation, and evaluation of an intervention (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). Namely, the researcher himself is bias against making substantial, credible, and trustworthy assertions.

Often criticized as a threat to legitimacy (Anderson, 1999), insider research demands that design development be augmented with the methodology of action research in order to maintain the credibility that comes from the rigorous and objective interpretation of process and outcome data (Anderson, 2012; Mintrop, 2016). Hence, it is the self-reflective practices on the part of the researcher that action research brings to the table to help bolster the validity of the findings. The researcher in this regard regularly examines their position in relation to others in the organization, they use critical friends as objective third-party eyes, and they check their assumptions with other design team members to be certain that alternative assumptions are explored (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Mintrop, 2016).

In this design, I served in multiple roles: a doctoral student/researcher, a co-creator of professional learning and action planning for the school system, and an administrator with positional authority inside school system. The purpose of my academic research was not only to describe and understand a particular situation, but more importantly to change it. This epistemological assumption, rooted in a worldview of advocacy, embraces the tenets of action research and situates me as a both a scholar and a change agent.

However, there are certain risks inherent in role duality. Research conducted by insiders includes a personal stake and quite substantive emotional investments in the setting (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). In particular, insider researchers can struggle to sustain honest and transparent professional relationships while also confronting issues of politics (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Maintaining credibility as a school leader, a researcher, and as an effective driver of change presented challenges related to my various identities and responsibilities.

Furthermore, this study directly and purposefully addressed issues of race and racial inequality. Literature on critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998;

Tate, 1997) helps us understand that perceptions and experiences in life are subjective and that our complex notions of race go well beyond differences in culture, social status, or biological designation (Ladson-Billings, 1998 p. 8). Critical race theory goes further to explore the relationships among race, racism, and power and carries into the field of education to understand the complicated issues of discrimination within the school system (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

As a White male, I do not experience a life that carries the burdens of the historical and modern-day struggles of the African American experience. While many members of this marginalized group carry heavy burdens of discrimination and isolation and while they often internalize negative stereotypes related to these experiences, I myself carry a socially constructed privilege, free from a sense of low self-worth, and empowered with access and capacity (Leonardo, 2004; McIntosh, 1992). The most compelling and delicate responsibility I had was to build and maintain trust with the other participants and with the school system as a whole.

An approach to mediate these dynamics of role duality and multiple identities is the regular journaling by the researcher, a process of reflection that focuses on the experiences and perceptions I encountered during the process. This journaling process helped me clarify the lens through which I viewed and understood the process as it unfolded as well as the data I collected to interpret the success of the design. Furthermore, as co-designers, I encouraged a critical reflective process whereby the judgment of the leadership team members was included in assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and activities.

Conclusion to Research Design and Methodology

Methodological choices reflect the overall purpose of the research as well as the designs by which data are collected and analyzed. The purpose of this design study was to have an impact on the culture of an organization that struggles to engage the parents of African-American families. The intent was to help school and community members learn that their roles as leaders require an orientation for social justice and that collaboratively, through trial and error, they can take risks that challenge the status quo and thereby positively affect the outcomes for students of color. As both a researcher and an actor inside the organization, I was challenged to articulate a design process that was based on sound theory and knowledge, while also mediating my personal bias. Ultimately, my goal was to facilitate a positive impact while maintaining a level or rigor that presented honest conclusions.

Chapter Four: Findings

This study is action-oriented, conducted within the context of a public school system, and authored by a school district administrator. The activities were designed to influence the learning of school and community leaders who serve together on a team focused specifically on the engagement of African American parents. The purpose was to build capacity in these school and community leaders so that they can take action to change the inequities related to African American parent engagement.

Due in part to the profound and complex nature of the problems, combined with the relative short time frame, the goals for the study were very limited. The theory of action presumes that *if* a group of school and community leaders work together to discuss issues of inequity and to plan for parent engagement events, *then* these leaders will learn more about understanding inequities, understanding qualities of leadership for equity, and understanding strategies that successfully engage African American parents.

This chapter presents the findings from my study. In this chapter, I synthesize and analyze a substantial amount of both qualitative and quantitative types of data collected with the intent to tell a coherent story about how the participants in this design study responded to the intervention.

Organization of Data Analysis

Design Development studies collect two types of data to inform the effect of the intervention. Impact data helps the researcher determine whether or not the intervention was effective and process data helps clarify how that learning came to be (Mintrop, 2016; Plomp & Nieveen, 2007). To collect impact data, I used structured pre- and post-interviews with eight individual participants. Here, I searched for evidence to demonstrate learning on three dimensions: 1) understanding inequities that African American students and parent face, 2) understanding qualities of leadership for equity, and 3) understanding strategies that successfully engage African American parents in the local context.

To collect process data, I engaged as a member of the team and wrote meeting highlights and reflective journals. Here, I was searching for information that would substantiate when and how the participants may have learned more on the aforementioned three dimensions. There were two types of activities in the design study from which meeting highlights were captured: Leadership Team Meetings and Parent Engagement Events (See Appendix C for a summary chart of these events).

Leadership team meetings were held on a monthly basis lasting 1.5 to 2 hours each. The agendas were prepared most often by an outside facilitator hired by the school district who informed his decisions about agenda topics by listening to feedback from all of the participants, including myself. It was intentional that the agendas were not a rigid set of topics and time allocations.

While we always attempted to establish a sense of order and purpose, the activities were not tightly scripted as may be found in other design-development studies. Based on feedback from my earlier work, it was clear that the members on the team would not respond well to a scripted and programmed series of meetings. In other words, these participants were not interested in professional development or training where they would be taught something new.

Instead, they were coming together to share their stories and points of view and, more importantly, to plan for action.

Notwithstanding, there was common agreement about the overall purpose and goals for the group. Substantiated in the district's Local Control Accountability Plan and then more specifically articulated based on a needs assessment from the end of the prior year, we all agreed to focus on engaging the African American community with events that would encourage social interaction, relationship building, the celebration of African American culture, and an emphasis on mathematics achievement for African American students.

Parent engagement events were mapped out on the calendar to also occur approximately one time per month. The series began with an informal 'Meet and Greet' on a Saturday morning, continued with three consecutive and very carefully planned seminars on mathematics achievement, and concluding with a community-wide Black History Month celebration. For the purpose of this study, the engagement events hosted between October and February serve as the sources of process data. It is important to note that the events outlined in this study do not constitute the entire body of work that has taken place before this study began, nor that which has followed my final collection of impact data.

Impact Data Findings

The interview protocols consist of eleven questions (see Appendices D, E, & F). Of these eleven questions, four probed for the participant's understanding of inequities that affect African American students and parents, four probed for the participant's understanding of leadership qualities needed to advance issues of equity, and three probed for the participant's understanding of parent engagement strategies for African American parents in the local context.

Most of the questions began with a request to identify some level of understanding by choosing particular rating on a Likert scale (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, 'on a scale of 1-3 how clear are you about your own roles and responsibilities on the team? 1 = not very clear, 2 = somewhat clear, and 3 = very clear.' The intent here was to capture quantitative evidence that the participant's self-reported scale score would move, hopefully for the better, from the pre-interview to the post-interview. Every question then asked the participant to elaborate by providing examples and descriptions. The intent here was to capture qualitative evidence that the participant's understanding would become more complex and detailed. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using a pre-determined set of indicators.

Out of fifteen committee members who were invited to participate, a total of eight volunteered to participate by remaining actively engaged in the work and by engaging in the pre- and post-interview protocols. More than half of these participants are parents, some are also administrators, and one is both a teacher and a parent. Seven participants are African American and one is White. Six are female and two are male.

In order to protect confidentiality, I have intentionally chosen not to describe in detail each and every participant's race, gender, age, and role in the community. When necessary, I make note of these qualities in order to explore various interpretations about potential connections between process and impact data. But, I make no attempt to correlate overall impact with the particular qualities in each participant. For example, I did explore whether or not parents learn more than principals, or whether males learn more than females.

Summarizing Quantitative Data

The quantitative data comes in two forms; participants' self-reported levels of understanding and my own rubric scores based on an assessment of their responses. The pre-interview responses were compared to those from the post-interviews in an attempt to demonstrate growth. It is important to recognize the high-inference nature of such questions. Asking someone to rate their level of understanding is somewhat subjective and can only be validated to a certain degree by correlating the self-reported scores to some other source of evidence. In this case, those sources were found in the explanations provided after each initial question.

Finally, it is also important to recognize that often, the self-reported score may have as much to do with the person's potential motivation to impress the interviewer as it does to provide an accurate reflection of what is true. In this case, my position as a person of influence in the district leadership and/or the relationships that were forming between the participants and me may have skewed the reliability of these self-reported scores.

Quantitative Data related to Understanding Inequities

On the dimension of understanding inequities, there were two questions:
- *To what degree do you understand inequities for students?'*
- *'To what degree do you understand inequities for parents?'*

For both questions, level 1 represents a low understanding, level 2 represents some understanding, and level 3 represents a deep understanding. Table 4.1 summarizes the scores on this dimension and provides the difference between pre- and post-interview scores.

Table 4.1 Self-Reported Levels of Understanding Related to Inequities for African American Students and Parents

Name	Understanding Inequities for Students 1=low, 2=some, 3=deep			Understanding Inequities for Parents 1=low, 2=some, 3=deep		
	PRE	POST	Difference	PRE	POST	Difference
Bill	2	3	1	2	2	0
Crystal	2	3	1	2	2	0
Diane	3	3	0	3	3	0
Sally	2	2.5	0.5	2	2	0
Alice	3	3	0	2	3	1
Lisa	2	3	1	2	3	1
Sam	3	3	0	2	3	1
Lucy	3	3	0	3	2.5	-0.5

The data above shows that three participants reported growth in their understanding of inequities for students and three participants reported growth in their understanding of inequities for parents. Of these participants, only one, Lisa, reports growth in both areas. Bill, Crystal, and Lisa reported higher levels of understanding of student inequities in the post-interviews and all three of these participants also received a rubric score of 2 on their qualitative responses, noting some level of change in their explanations related to inequities.

Alice, Lisa, and Sam reported higher levels of understanding of parent inequities in the post-interviews and all three of these participants also received a rubric score of 2 on their qualitative responses. These positive relationships between self-reported scores and the explanations provided afterwards indicate that the self-reported scores may be somewhat reliable indicators that learning may have actually occurred. Alternatively, because there are only three cases, this may simply indicate a coincidence that cannot be attributed to any real effect.

Quantitative Data related to Understanding Leadership for Equity

On the dimension of understanding leadership for equity, there were three questions:
- *'To what degree is leadership for equity different than other types of leadership?'*
- *'To what degree are you clear about your own roles and responsibilities?'*
- *'To what degree are you confident in your roles and responsibilities?'*

For all three questions, level 1 represents a low level (not much, not clear, or not confident), level 2 represents a middle level (somewhat different, somewhat clear, and somewhat confident), and level 3 represents a high level (very different, very clear, very confident.) Table 4.2 summarizes the scores on this dimension and provides the difference between pre- and post-interview scores.

Table 4.2 Self-Reported Levels of Understanding Related to Leadership for Equity

Name	Degree to which Equity Leadership is different. 1=not much, 2= somewhat different, 3=very different			Clarity about roles and responsibilities 1=not clear, 2 = somewhat clear, 3 = very clear			Confidence about roles and responsibilities 1=not confident, 2 = somewhat confident, 3 = very confident		
	PRE	POST	Difference	PRE	POST	Difference	PRE	POST	Difference
Bill	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
Crystal	3	3	0	2	3	1	2	3	1
Diane	3	3	0	2	3	1	3	3	0
Sally	3	3	0	3	2	-1	2	2	0
Alice	2	1	-1	3	3	0	3	3	0
Lisa	2	2	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
Sam	1	3	2	2.5	3	0.5	3	3	0
Lucy	2	1	-1	2	2	0	3	2	-1

Several patterns are evident in this data. Only three participants, Alice, Lisa, and Sam, indicated growth on this dimension. These three participants also received rubric scores of 2 on their qualitative responses. These positive relationships between self-reported scores and the explanations provided afterwards indicate that the self-reported scores may be somewhat reliable indicators that learning may have actually occurred.

When declaring the degree to which leadership for equity is different, four of the eight participants named it as very different in both their pre- and post-interviews. Two of these participants, Diane and Sam emphasized that while leadership for equity is very different, they believed that it should *NOT* be different, and then proceeded to explain several qualities that should be evident regardless of the type of work that the leader was engaged in doing. In other words, working on issues of equity should be ingrained in all the actions and activities that leaders pursue.

The insights that these participants provided on this question pushed me to reconsider the validity of the question itself. I started to wonder. Might other participants be thinking the same things, but neglecting to state their ideas? Might African American parents view the term 'leadership for equity' as 'leadership for my child?' and if so, wouldn't that imply that if there were different types of leadership, one type for equity and one for everything else, then the leadership for everything else is actually leadership for the status quo?

Also noteworthy, no participants indicated that they had a low level of clarity or a low level of confidence in their own capacities as leaders on the parent engagement committee. Very few provided responses that indicated any growth, but because most participants were initially either somewhat or very clear and confident, these results do not surprise me. In these cases, I assume that these participants joined the group because of their initial levels of confidence and clarity.

In this case, my initial assumption that working together would increase confidence and clarity was incorrect. In essence, these participants who self-report strong and then remain strong, are the types of people we would expect to step forward and join a group focused on doing something new and courageous, like challenging the status quo and beginning programs to engage African American parents in the context of this community. One trend that did stand out came from the qualitative data participants provided to substantiate these ratings. In particular, several participants reported a clear responsibility to listen to other and maintain relationships with others, especially in the face of difficult conversations. In that regard, I can attribute the intervention as having a substantial affect on participant's willingness to develop new relationships and to treat those relationships with respect and care.

Quantitative Data related to Understanding Parent Engagement

On the dimension of understanding parent engagement, there were two questions:

- *How much do you know about how to engage and mobilize African American parents as compared to other racial groups?*
- *How would you assess your understanding of the ways African American parents can influence change in the school system?*

For both questions, level 1 represents a low level (not much understanding), level 2 represents a middle level (some understanding), and level 3 represents a high level (a lot of

understanding. Table 4.3 summarizes the scores on this dimension and provides the difference between pre- and post-interview scores.

Table 4.3 Self-Reported Levels of Understanding Related to Parent Engagement

Name	Understanding Parent Engagement 1=low, 2=some, 3=deep			Understanding how parents influence the system 1=low, 2=some, 3=deep		
	PRE	POST	Difference	PRE	POST	Difference
Bill	2	3	1	3	3	0
Crystal	1	2	1	3	3	0
Diane	2	2	0	2	3	1
Sally	2	2.5	0.5	1	2	1
Alice	3	2.5	-0.5	3	2.5	-0.5
Lisa	2	3	1	1	2	1
Sam	2	2	0	3	3	0
Lucy	2	2	0	3	3	0

The original purpose here was to distinguish the difference between the types of parent engagement that maintain the status quo and the types of parent engagement that empower parents to change various aspects of their children's schools in order to gain more access and opportunity. I began with an assumption that participants would likely report a deeper understanding of the first and less understanding of the second, but instead, the opposite occurred.

Several patterns are evident in this data. All but one participant began with a self-reported level two or level three understanding of parent engagement. In the post-interview, only three increased their self-reported score. Five participants began with a self-reported level of deep understanding related to how parents influence the system. Those participants who did not begin with level three increased their self-reported score in the post-interview.

On this dimension, the quantitative data correlates somewhat well with the qualitative data. But, because participants began with high scores, the quantitative data does not demonstrate a high degree of growth between pre- and post-interviews for most participants.

The qualitative data shows that of all three dimensions, understanding parent engagement was the dimension where participants demonstrated the most growth. However, the qualitative data does a much better job at demonstrating the growth in learning, due in large part to the participants' use of first-hand experiences from the intervention to describe their knowledge. These detailed explanations in the qualitative data exemplify the difference between naming an arbitrary level of understanding versus showing it. The recollection of experiences that represent quality parent engagement and empowerment become the standard by which I can substantiate a change in participant learning.

Overall, across all three dimensions there appear to be patterns and outliers that are very nuanced and slight in nature. Many of the scores did not move from baseline levels and those

that did only moved by one point. And while important and worthy of interpretation, I can only identify subtle distinctions between pre- and post-interviews and across the various participants.

Summarizing Qualitative Data

In order to summarize the qualitative data, I developed a 3-point rubric to evaluate the evidence from each participant's post-interview transcripts. In this exercise, the purpose was to capture a final quantitative score that would represent whether or not there was growth, as well as whether or not there was evidence that the growth was correlated to the intervention activities. In other words, could I find evidence of learning on each dimension and, if yes, could I justify that the learning was a result of the participant's active participation?

Essentially, the rubric was designed to review four features: 1) self-reported ratings, 2) the quantity of descriptors named by the participant in the post-interview as compared to the pre-interview, 3) the extent to which the descriptions change from pre- to the post-interviews, and 4) whether or not the post-interview responses included specific mention of any of the activities in the intervention. Table 4.4 provides the rubric that was used. Table 4.5 provides a summary chart of the overall scores that I assigned for each participant on each dimension. And finally, graph 4.1 provides a summary of the overall scores for each dimension and for each participant.
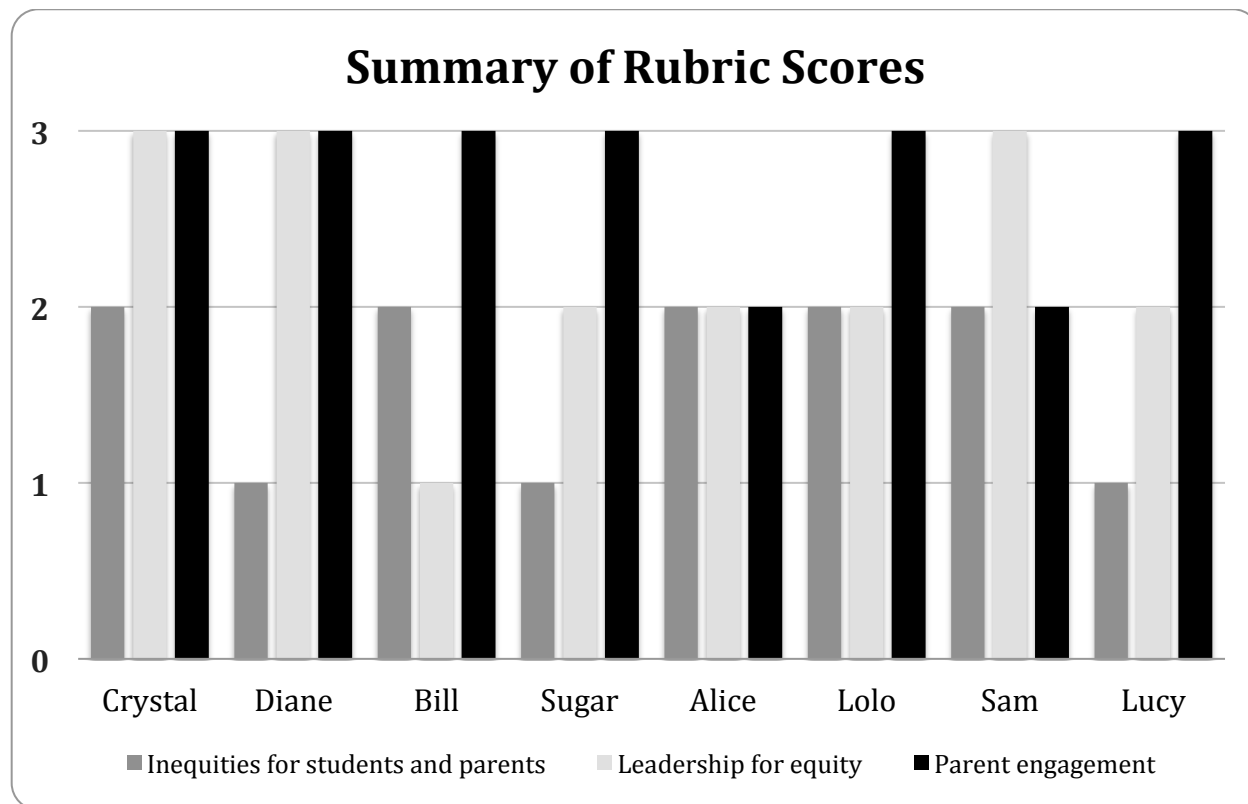
Table 4.4 Rubric to score each participant's post-interview responses

To what degree do the post-interview responses demonstrate that the participant increased their level of understanding as compared to the pre-interview questions?		
Level 1 Little to no evidence of growth from pre- to post-interview	**Level 2** Some evidence of growth from pre- to post-interview	**Level 3** Substantial evidence of growth from pre- to post-interview
The responses are not much different from the pre-interview. The self-reported levels of understanding remain the same or go down. Similar indicators are named. The descriptions are not substantially different. There are no examples from the intervention activities are used to elaborate or clarify.	The responses are somewhat different from the pre-interview. The self-reported levels of understanding remain the same or increased. More indicators are named **or** more clarity is provided to describe each indicator. There may be some examples from the intervention activities used to elaborate or clarify.	The responses are significantly different from the pre-interview. The self-reported level of understanding increases. More indicators are named **and** more clarity is provided to describe each indicator. Examples from the intervention activity are used to elaborate or clarify.

Table 4.5 Summary scores for each participant's post-interview responses

Name	Document	Dimension	Rubric Score
Crystal	Appendix J.1	Inequities for students & Parents	2
	Appendix J.2	Leadership for Equity	3
	Appendix J.3	Parent Engagement	3
Diane	Appendix J.4	Inequities for students & Parents	1
	Appendix J.5	Leadership for Equity	3
	Appendix J.6	Parent Engagement	3
Bill	Table 5.1	Inequities for students & Parents	2
	Appendix J.7	Leadership for Equity	1
	Appendix J.8	Parent Engagement	3
Sally	Appendix J.9	Inequities for students & Parents	1
	Table 5.2	Leadership for Equity	2
	Appendix J.10	Parent Engagement	3
Alice	Appendix J.11	Inequities for students & Parents	2
	Appendix J.12	Leadership for Equity	2
	Appendix J.13	Parent Engagement	2
Lisa	Appendix J.14	Inequities for students & Parents	2
	Appendix J.15	Leadership for Equity	2
	Table 5.3	Parent Engagement	3
Sam	Appendix J.16	Inequities for students & Parents	2
	Appendix J.17	Leadership for Equity	3
	Appendix J.18	Parent Engagement	2
Lucy	Appendix J.19	Inequities for students & Parents	1
	Appendix J.20	Leadership for Equity	2
	Appendix J.21	Parent Engagement	3

Graph 4.1 Summaries of Rubric Scores from Post-Interview Responses

Summary of Rubric Scores

[Bar chart showing rubric scores for eight participants across three dimensions]

Participant	Inequities for students and parents	Leadership for equity	Parent engagement
Crystal	2	3	3
Diane	1	3	3
Bill	2	1	3
Sugar	1	2	3
Alice	2	2	2
Lolo	2	2	3
Sam	2	3	2
Lucy	1	2	3

■ Inequities for students and parents   ■ Leadership for equity   ■ Parent engagement

A review of the impact data from this perspective provides some interesting insight into what types of impact occurred and to what degree each participant may have been influenced by the activities in the intervention.

On the first dimension related to <u>understanding inequities</u> for students and parents, no participants received a rubric score of 3 'substantial evidence of growth,' five participants received an overall rubric score of 2 'some evidence of growth,' and three participants received a rubric score of 1 'little to no evidence of growth.'

On the second dimension related to <u>understanding leadership for equity</u>, three participants received a rubric score of 3 'substantial evidence of growth,' four participants received a rubric score of 2 'some evidence of growth,' and one participant received a rubric score of 1 'little to no evidence of growth.'

On the third dimension related to <u>understanding parent engagement strategies</u>, six participants received a rubric score of 3 'substantial evidence of growth,' and two participants received a rubric score of 2 'some evidence of growth.' No participants received a rubric score of 1 'little to no evidence of growth.'

It is very important to reiterate that these rubric scores do not represent the actual depth of knowledge that each participant has on each dimension, but instead represents a relative shift towards learning more. To emphasize this point, I draw attention to Alice. While Alice did not receive any rubric scores of three (3), she did in fact have a very deep understanding from the beginning of the intervention. I attribute that her combined status as an African American, as a parent, and as a school administrator provided Alice with experiences and knowledge long

before the intervention. In fact, as the only participant in the study who embodies all three of these identities, it does not surprise me that she is also the only participant who does not demonstrate growth.

I also notice some differences between the three dimensions. Understanding inequities for students and parents received 13 overall points, understanding leadership for equity received 18 overall rubric points, and understanding parent engagement received 22 overall points. It is important to note here that a score of three (3) was only received if the participant did, in fact, use examples from the intervention activities to substantiate their responses. In that regard, because the committee's purpose was largely focused on parent engagement, it does not surprise me that this dimension received the strongest overall rubric score.

In analyzing the variations among the different participants, I recognize the need to provide a more textured and nuanced description of what may be contributing to the differences between participants in the study. While my purpose in the study was not to draw comparisons across certain types or groups of participants, it can be said that some of the different qualities they each have may contribute to their individual outcomes. To summarize again, of the total eight participants, seven were African American and one was White. Six were female and two were male. Each of the male participants was married to one of the other female participants.

All of the participants were parents, but the ages of their children vary widely, ranging in age from six to eighteen. The parents of the youngest children were also the youngest subjects in the study. Of all the different characteristics that make each participant unique, I believe that the age difference among the adults and their children may be the feature that most distinguishes how certain participants understood inequities for African American parents and students.

In hindsight, I notice that those parents who were the youngest more often framed their responses in reference to their own experiences with school while those with the oldest students framed their responses in reference to the children's experiences. In addition, I notice that the youngest participants, whose children were in pre-school through second grade, were the ones who more often described their involvement as something to benefit their children in the future. They also proceeded to take positions of active involvement in school governance, like serving on the LCAP advisory committee and on school site councils.

Tables 4.6 through 4.8 offer three examples that demonstrate the methods I used to summarize the individual participant responses to pre- and post-interview questions. In these summaries, as well as in all the others found in the appendices, I combine the participants' self-reported Likert ratings together with key quotes they provided to elaborate on their self-reported levels of understanding.

I chose these first three examples because they represent the variety of aspects related to the data collection and subsequent interpretations. To start, I chose one summary from each of the three dimensions: understanding inequities, understanding leadership for equity, and understanding parent engagement. In addition to representing these three dimensions, I chose to provide three different overall results. On the dimension of understanding inequities, the summary for Bill represents a participant who demonstrated growth in the qualitative measures, but did not demonstrate growth in quantitative measures. On the dimension of understanding leadership, the summary for Sally represents a participant who did not demonstrate growth in either qualitative or quantitative measures. And on the dimension of parent engagement, the summary for Lisa represents a participant who demonstrates growth in both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Using these examples in the body of this chapter is intended to help the reader understand the range of participant outcomes. These examples are not meant to represent the most successful cases or in any way skew the summary of all findings to be different than those housed in the appendices. Appendices L.1 through L.21 provide the remaining twenty-one individual participant summaries of impact data in the pre- and post-interviews.

Following each summary table, subsequent narratives outline my interpretation of the impact data and conclude with claims about whether or not any evidence of learning is present. If evidence of learning is present, I offer some explanations about why the evidence matters, which parts of the process may have influenced the learning, as well as other plausible reasons why the participant may be presenting such growth. When evidence appears to demonstrate a lack of learning or when evidence demonstrates other significant patterns, I offer some explanations about what may be occurring.

I also provide some insight into how either the qualitative or the quantitative evidence substantiates a claim about impact. In some cases, both sources of data work together to support the claim that learning occurred. In other cases, they contradict each other with one source indicating growth and the other indicating no growth. And finally, in some cases, they combine to negate the claim that learning occurred.

Table 4.6 Interview Findings for Bill; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level 2 (some) understanding of inequities for students. 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes about African American students' intelligence • Lower expectations for African American students. Level 2 (some) understanding of inequities for parents. 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes about African American parents.	Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes against African American student intelligence. Level 2 (some) understanding of parent inequities, 1 indicator: • Little or no support for parent empowerment.
Notable Quotes	"I know you have to complete a certain level of math to move on. If you start early with kids, getting excited about math, being good at math then it helps them to be successful in math when they're older. But if they get discouraged an early age it will impact them the whole way through." "If you're not attending those events, then you're not networking, so then you're missing out on other things that those other parents could provide. So, instead another school where you might have more people of color, you might bump into someone who is a nurse. But here you might bump into a *doctor*. And so those are different networking opportunities."	"I remember the one parent was talking about the AP (advanced placement) classes. And so she felt really strongly about that and then another item that came up was students having access to the same quality of equipment." "As for the AP classes, is not that the knowledge isn't there, it's not that the students don't know how to do the work, but if they're not encouraged to do it, and if they're not talked to – if the teacher doesn't suggest it like, "this is great, you should [enroll in AP]" – how do they know?" "When the guest speaker came and she talked about how math is the cornerstone for whatever it is that you're going to do, so if you do well in math, you're going to do well in whatever you decide to do."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Bill[2]; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Bill's responses about understanding inequities for African American students and parents, I notice that in both interviews he described the effects that higher level mathematics have on a student's future in academics and career opportunities. He described a difference between teachers who encourage students to pursue rigorous coursework and teachers who do not. During the post-interview Bill provides more complex descriptions, including more details and direct references to events that occurred during the intervention, but all of these remain on the same issue of mathematics.

It is also noteworthy that in the second interview, Bill referenced an experience from one of the leadership team meetings during which another parent expressed her frustration that her child was not referred to the highest level of mathematics. To me, Bill's recollection of the event indicates that the meetings have had an effect on Bill, but not necessarily in regards to learning more technical detail about inequities. More specifically, while I do not see evidence that Bill has a deeper understanding specific to inequities in mathematics, Bill does reference the relationship with another African American parent on the team. Process data informs me that the new relationship is valued and respected and provides Bill with a first-hand understanding about how the inequity affects another African American parent.

This act of recalling specific experiences occurs more than once in the second interview when Bill describes what he learned from the presenter during one of the parent engagement events. To summarize, the parent engagement team worked with the school district to hire an outside expert in the area of African American achievement in mathematics. During the keynote speech, the expert presented several points of data related to how higher level mathematics courses affect a student's high school transcript and potential for being accepted into prestigious four-year universities. The expert made explicit connections between teacher encouragements, effective counseling, and parent involvement as strategies that motivate African American students to enroll in Advanced Placement courses.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In reviewing the quantitative data, I notice that Bill's self-reported levels of understanding go up for student inequities, from level 2 (some) to level three (deep), but remain the same for parent inequities which in both interviews remain at a level 2 (some). In addition, the number and variety of indicators did not increase from the pre- to the post-interview. I find that overall the increase in self-reported growth in understanding student inequities does not correlate to the qualitative data he provides.

Summary

It is possible that much of Bill's post-interview data may not have been the result of the intervention activity at all. As is true for all participants, the increased depth and detail of the post-interview descriptions may have been the result of how people generally engage in dialogue with someone when they've already had both a preliminary interview as well as months of regular interaction together. The relative short duration between pre- and post-interviews could mean that Bill remembered what he discussed initially and therefore chose to simply provide

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[2] All names have been changed in order to protect participant anonymity.

more detail. The relationship I built with Bill over the course of the intervention could also have influenced the data. Bill knows the importance this study has for me personally and has expressed his hope that all goes well. This particular hope may have lead Bill to want to give more in the post-interview so that the findings would be favorable.

Overall, I interpret that little evidence of change can be found in the quantitative data from Bill's interviews, but qualitative data suggests that his active participation on the leadership team over the course of five months appears to have had a direct impact on how Bill understands inequities for students and parents. The most significant change that I notice from Bill's interviews is related to how Bill refers to experiences and relationships with others from the design intervention activities.

Table 4.7 Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Leaders should have little or no fear in disrupting the status quo Very clear and somewhat confident about roles and responsibilities, 2 indicators: • Caring and empathetic character • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between teachers and parents	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 2 indicators: • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between teachers and parents • Little or no fear of disrupting the current beliefs and mental models that perpetuate inequality Somewhat clear and somewhat confidents in roles and responsibilities, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Ability to build and strengthen relationships among the group members on the team
Notable Quotes	"I think the first thing to know is that there is a problem and they [leaders] need to recognize it as an overall problem for everyone, not just for the African American and Hispanic students. They need to recognize it as a problem for the whole community so that they care about it more." "As a parent my role is to be the parent and to advocate for my students and for what I see for the other students. It's not so much the technical staff like the planning and things like that. I am a participant and we participate in all of the activities and things like that but I'm more so there to let people know how I feel and to let people know how I think that my kids feel and the other African American families who are not participating or can't participate. There are things that are heard or seen or that I would discuss with them…I'm there to bring that to the table."	"I think we are talking about a hard subject -- so it makes things different and makes our meetings more emotional though. It makes people get upset easier or get happy about it easier. It opened up kind of a can of worms that some people don't want to talk about and they don't want to deal with. It takes a certain type of person to be a member of the group in the first place. It takes somebody who is open and who is willing to have hard conversations." "My role is to be active and be engaged and to help out when needed and to give my opinion when asked and when not asked." "When you come to these meetings, a role or responsibility you have is to be very mindful of how people are feeling because you know that you're going to enter into some controversial or difficult to talk about territory."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Sally's responses about understanding qualities of leadership for equity, I notice in both the pre- and post-interview transcripts that the primary responsibility is for the leader to be able to recognize and confront issues of inequity. She describes this in no uncertain terms, especially during the pre-interview when she says that leaders need to understand that these issues of inequity are problems not only for the African American and Latino students, but also for all students.

I notice, however, that in the post-interview, Sally is able to describe this leadership quality as something that makes the meetings emotional and difficult for people. Here in the post-interview, she is making reference to her own experiences in the group throughout the time of the intervention. She states that we have *"opened a can of worms that people don't want to talk about and they don't want to deal with."* She also states that it takes a certain type of person to do this work and that leaders need to be very mindful of how people are feeling and reacting to the conversations they will have.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In reviewing the quantitative data, I notice that Sally's self-reported degree to which leadership for equity is different does not change. In both pre- and post-interviews, she claims that it is very different. The number and variety of indicators did not increase much from the pre- to the post-interview. The indicator 'building relationships' appears in both interviews, but in the second interview, she does name 'confront inequities' as a necessary quality. While Sally's level of confidence (somewhat clear) remains constant, it is interesting that her level of clarity goes down from 'very clear' to 'somewhat clear.'

Often the result of new experiences, many of us can come to realize that we start the learning process by realizing all the things that we don't yet understand. In this case, Sally's new experiences serving as a leader on the team may have simply increased her awareness of how complicated leadership for equity can be. Hence, in the post-interview, if this interpretation holds true, it would make sense that she reports being less clear.

Summary

I interpret these findings to mean that Sally knew all along that issues of inequity were difficult to address, but now Sally has first-hand experience working with a group of parents and school staff in doing this work together. Later in the interview, she explains that she is an active participant and that she thinks a lot about the conversations long after the meetings are over. Ultimately, I interpret this to indicate, while the interviews do not show direct evidence that Sally learned more specifics about inequities, they do show that Sally now has several first-hand experiences that help her process the inequities and deepen her sense of responsibility to confront them in the school system.

Table 4.8 Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 1 indicator: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and with school staff. Level one (limited) understanding of how parents influence the system, 1 indicator: • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence and who will listen and respond to concerns.	Level three (deep) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 1 indicator: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and with school staff. Level two (some) understanding of how parents influence the system, 1 indicator: • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence and who will listen and respond to concerns.
Notable Quotes	To engage, that's being part of the school… well, I'm a volunteer at the high school and there I've met a couple of parents and [I try] talking to parents and getting to know them and seeing if they would be interested in joining our group. So [parent engagement] is just communicating, maybe attending certain events." "If there's anything that I have a concern with, I'm going to the source, going to administration, going to a teacher, trying to find out or get an understanding on what's going on, if there's a problem, 'Hey I want to work this out, let's try to make a change.'"	"I think that's the key I think is really publicizing where it's just talking face to face to somebody or making flyers are posing it I think that to will give people to." "I've learned with my children that you need to know the teachers, know that administration. They see your face when you volunteer, you're part of some groups they are going to like that. They are going to know that's your child. So if there is a problem we all have to try to address it because we know this parent is going to be back, you know." "They [staff] see a caring parent, they see one that is involved with the school, they see one that is just going to make sure that everything is taken care of when it comes it could be there can and could be somebody else is there, you know you are there and your helping out."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

> *Qualitative Data Analysis*

In examining Lisa's responses to understanding parent engagement, I notice that she emphasizes the need for parents to establish and maintain relationships with staff. She names teachers and administrators as important people in the system and she goes further to correlate volunteering at school with the practice of being seen so that administrators know you, 'see your face,' and understand you will be back if there are problems. She did not describe this in a way to sound threatening. Instead, she expressed these ideas with a sense that parents and staff can have a relationship that is mutually respectful and beneficial for students. She explained that her volunteering shows the staff that she cares and that her caring would inspire the staff to provide care in return.

I also notice that in the post-interview, she explains that good parent engagement includes strong communication strategies. She refers to the parent engagement events that the team organized. Lisa emphasized the need to reach out to individual parents through one-on-one casual conversations. She also emphasized the need to increase marketing by including more announcements in school newsletters, posting flyers around school sites, and making announcements after each event to thank people and to celebrate the success of the event.

> *Quantitative Data Analysis*

In reviewing the quantitative data, I notice that Lisa's self-reported understanding of parent engagement strategies goes up from level 2 (some) to level 3 (deep). Her self-reported understanding of how parents can have an effect on the school system also goes up from level 1 (little) to level 2 (some). In both of these cases, the qualitative data substantiates these increases. Furthermore, while the number of indicators does not increase, the depth and complexity by which Lisa describes these indicators increases from pre- to post-interview.

> *Summary*

I interpret both the qualitative and quantitative data to indicate that Lisa learned something more about parent engagement strategies. I interpret her emphasis on communication to her role as an active school volunteer who coordinates student activities and uses school communication networks to promote those activities. I also interpret her participation in the parent engagement series as another influence on her learning about engaging parents. She uses examples from the events to clarify what she would write in the announcements and on the flyers. Notwithstanding her suggestions about how to improve our work, she refers to the recent events with a sense of hope, *"So I think however, if we continue with the same pattern and strategy that we are doing, I think it is just going to multiply."*

Also important, Lisa was the only participant in this study who felt compelled to reach out after the interview to provide one more idea. During the post-interview, we had discussed the strategies parent groups use in banding together when they approach schools with concerns they want addressed. After the post-interview, Lisa wanted me to be sure I included something specific to African American parent engagement related to this strategy. *She emailed, "A lot of times when a group of African American people come together to resolve a problem, other people feel scared, intimidated, and threatened. Please make note of this in your research paper."*

I interpret this as evidence that the intervention activities helped Lori strengthen her understanding about the importance of sharing ideas as a way to improve the school system. I regard this comment as one that could be difficult for her communicate to me because a) it represents something profoundly inequitable in how our society perceives African Americans as a group and b) it takes courage to name it and then express hope that mobilizing African Americans can eventually become more respected.

Lisa not only shared this with me, but she requested that it be noted here. This tells me two things: 1) the intervention may have worked to reduce a barrier between an African American parent and formal school leadership and 2) Lisa is aware that the intervention is part of my research and hopes that her voice will be heard in this venue.

It is important to explore other interpretations as to why Lisa demonstrates growth. Several other possibilities exist that would have easily influenced this impact data. First, Lisa has a lot of experience as an African American parent in the public school system. Her children are almost graduated from high school and the family has moved in and out of three different school districts. Lisa herself volunteers regularly with the school system and she works closely with her husband who, together, both share a commitment to being involved. All this experience, coupled with a new relationship with me may simply lead to a more confortable setting in the post-interview whereby more details were provided.

The only true indication that the intervention has had an effect is in Lisa's use of first-hand experiences from the intervention to describe how she understands parent engagement. While Lisa has been an active parent all along, this newfound parent engagement team and their related activities are now an important part of Lisa's collective experiences.

Process Data, Findings from Field Notes

The process data comes in the form of field notes taken immediately after leadership team meetings and parent engagement events. The field notes consist of meetings highlights and reflective journaling, capturing information on pre-identified topics and themes. First, I recorded a summary of the event with a description of the stated purpose and outcomes. After the summary, I recorded a description of the parts of the discussion that related to issues of inequity. For example, *"Did participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?"*

This included any relevant participant behaviors and the emphasis was on the conversations that participants had with each other. Then, I recorded a description of the parts of the discussion that related to taking responsibility to act. *"Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?"* Finally, I concluded the field notes with my own reflections and interpretations. *"Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?"*

Tables 4.9 and 4.10 offer two examples of my field note summaries. These two examples demonstrate my methods to summarize the participants' behaviors during leadership team meetings and parent engagement events, capturing only the information that pertains to the three dimensions of learning about inequities, leadership for equity, and parent engagement strategies. I chose to highlight these two summaries because they represent two very different types of meetings. These cases are neither outliers, nor cherry-picked examples of process data that had the most impact. Instead these two cases represent some key features that can be found in the other cases provided in the appendices.

The first example provided here was not planned in advance and contained very difficult topics of conversation. The second example provided here was planned in advance and did not contain any difficult topics of conversation. The presence or absence of difficult conversations comes up later as a feature that became a prominent part of the analysis and interpretation about how process may have contributed to impact. Appendices L.1 through L.8 provide the remaining summaries of process data collected from all of the field notes taken.

Table 4.9 Summaries of Field Notes from Process Data, Session #1

	Session #1: Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	Other members on the team called this meeting. The expressed purpose was to get back in touch with one another before the opening of school. We spent a short amount of time checking with each other about summer vacations and then the discussion focused on the unexpected departure of some African American staff members.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	Several participants expressed their concerns about the departure of some African American staff members. The resignations were voluntary, but presumptions of racial bias and a lack of support from White supervisors were also expressed and discussed. One of the staff members who resigned was present for the meeting and described both a conscious choice based on their need for a better salary, as well as a sense that they had reached a ceiling of opportunity in the district. Participants identified three distinct needs related to equity: 1. <u>African American students need to have African American role models in teaching and administrative positions.</u> In this case, the students had built relationships of trust with someone they could identify with and now those relationships were lost. The participants discussed the fact that there is a disproportionately high ratio of African American employees in the custodial and Para-professional ranks of the organization, which in interpreted as sending the wrong messages to African American students about the opportunities that should exist in society. 2. <u>African American parents need to have African American staff members for themselves and their students.</u> This particular connection, based on a shared racial identity helped build trust, especially when issues of discipline and academic achievement would need to be addressed. 3. <u>The school district needs</u> to have a better reputation in the greater metropolitan area, a reputation that does not include being racist against African Americans.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that the participants identified the following actions: 1. We need to improve the District's reputation in the local universities. The presumption for now is that local universities discourage African American students from choosing to teach and lead in Seaview. 2. The District Human Resource Department needs to reach out to the surrounding universities in order to target African American candidates for teaching and administrative positions. 3. African American teachers and administrators need to organize a support group that would meet frequently to help each other

	to recognize opportunities for advancement, and to respond proactively when they experience discrimination.
What are my own reflections from this session?	I sat and listened quietly for at least 30 minutes until one of the participants asked what I thought and how I would respond to this problem. He qualified his question with, *'you are **part** of the District.'* Would I talk to Human Resources? Would I talk to the Superintendent? Could I bring those officials to this group? What about the School Board? Personally, this was extremely challenging for me because I represent typical characteristics of a system that is not supportive of African American needs. I am White, male, and positioned as a senior member of the District's executive team. I left the meeting with a sense of uncertainty about whether the group would be willing to continue their partnership with the District to engage African American parents. I wondered if the participants would come back together on the next scheduled date.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I interpret my observations to indicate that participants were engaged in an experience that directly related to their learning on all three dimensions: equity, leadership, and parent engagement. The participants clearly identified issues of inequity related to racial discrimination and a diversified staff in the District. There were strong emotions of anger, frustration, and dismay expressed by many of the people in the meeting. They discussed these issues openly and honestly with other African American parents, teachers, and school leaders in the group. They described the impact on students and then identified ways to respond collectively.

Table 4.10 Summaries of Field Notes of Process Data, Session #5

	Session #5: Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	This was the final planning meeting for the parent engagement series on mathematics success for African American students. The focus was on a long list of very detailed items, including sign-in sheets, nametags, furniture set up, childcare for pre-school age kids, introductory speeches, room numbers, posters, and more. Participants had a lot of details they wanted to share and clarify with others on the team. It was a very busy and active meeting with an emphasis on details and actions.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	I noted that the participants discussed issues of equity, but it is important to note that these discussions did not necessarily focus on the inequities themselves. Instead the actions and details exemplified the types of inequities that participants wanted to address. 1. Participants wanted to be sure that school board members and the Superintendent were invited and would attend. This relates to the issue of leadership for equity. African American parents need relationships with officials in the District who have influence. 2. The participants wanted to be sure we had math teachers for each of the breakout rooms. This also relates to the issue of leadership for equity. African American parents need relationships with teachers who don't hold a bias against student intelligence. 3. Participants wanted to be sure that parents had lots of access to this type of event and noted the fact that we were planning for a series of three events, instead of just one.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that the participants were focused on the tasks at hand. These tasks were all geared towards making sure the event was well organized and focused on a topic that had not be addressed before in the District. All the participants were taking responsibilities to coordinate certain tasks and needed a good working relationship with each other. The participants also discussed the telephone campaign. Those who signed up to make telephone calls had completed their work and were reporting that the calls were a success. They felt good about reaching out personally.

What are my own reflections from this session?	This felt very successful. Of all the leadership team meetings so far, this one appeared to me to be the most energetic and positive. In this meeting, there were no difficult conversations. Instead, the participants were happy and excited that everything seemed to be coming together. The participants worked together on coordinating their responsibilities so that everyone would be successful. For example, parents in charge of refreshments needed administrators who could get the furniture. Parents making purchases needed me, the District administrator, to reimburse them for the expenses. Everyone needed to understand and agree to the flow of activities so that if attendees had questions, they would get the answers they were looking for. The participants in charge of the breakout rooms needed Principals who could secure math teachers to facilitate the activities.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I interpret these findings to indicate that this meeting may have contributed to the participants' learning. My overall assumption here is that participants learned the value of building relationships with each other. As noted in the literature, parents who mobilize together can be effective at making change. There was some mention of the telephone campaigning in the post-interview transcripts.

Summary of Process Data

The process data collected comes from the series of leadership team meetings and parent engagement events. In total, there were six (6) leadership team meetings and five (5) parent engagement events. Unlike many other Design Development studies, each session of the intervention was not as tightly prescribed with specific professional development or training outcomes. This was due, in large part, to several important factors connected with the type of membership, the purpose of the leadership team meetings, and the reluctance to use traditional administrative strategies of organizing and leading.

To start, the group included a majority of parents who came to the work voluntarily and with an expectation that they would be planning for parent engagement events, not sitting though specific training modules. To meet their needs, we published agendas in advance so people knew what to expect of their time. However, the agendas were targeted at action-oriented topics, like delegating responsibilities for the upcoming events.

Also, the group needed lots of flexible space and time to discuss difficult topics and exchange ideas. These topics were not going to come with advance warning and preparation. Instead, they were naturally generated by recent experience or, in some cases, an immediate recognition that there were disagreements on a certain topic. In addition, some of these difficult topics arose from the participants' need to forecast what they would experience as they rolled out parent engagement events not tried before in Seaview.

Finally, the group needed a more 'hands-off' approach from administrators, like me, who tend to manage and coordinate the direction of a meeting. For these reasons, the collection of process data needed to be flexible, open-ended, but most importantly, non-intrusive. The collection of process data could not include active engagement in the form of participant reflections, post-meeting interviews, or exit tickets. There were a few times when I attempted to pull individuals aside to capture their ideas, but those were rare. While eight of the participants agreed to participate in the study, there were at least ten more who were not directly participating. In order to respect some level of confidentiality and to build trust for the group to be engaged on such topics, the only notes I took during the meetings were the kind that helped the group summarize its main points and next steps.

Notwithstanding these dynamics, process data are an important feature of design development studies and the relationship between process data and impact data is critical to substantiating the credibility of the findings. With this in mind, I was able to capture a substantial amount of qualitative information in systematic ways on pre-determined dimensions.

Most notably, there were four leadership meetings where the group engaged in challenging and lengthy conversations about issues of racism and bias against African Americans. To substantiate my qualification of 'challenging conversation,' I engaged in conversations afterwards with the consultant hired to help facilitate the meetings. As an outsider to both the school district and the community, this person served as a critical colleague for me throughout this study.

I also had plenty of opportunities to gather what some researchers refer to as "hallway data." This type of information is not validated as worthy in design development studies that hinge on tightly prescribed methods, but instead informs a more gut level feeling or interpretation. Those hallway conversations throughout the time confirmed that these particular conversations were difficult for many people. Over time and in passing, these were the conversations that remained on participant's minds.

Interestingly, the events where difficult conversations took place were also the most frequently noted experiences that participants referred to in the post-interviews. Eighteen (18) separate excerpts from seven (7) of the eight participants demonstrate this trend. And as Lisa pointed out during the post-interview,

> *I think we are talking about a hard subject -- so it makes things different and makes our meetings more emotional though. It makes people get upset easier or get happy about it easier. It opened up kind of a can of worms that some people don't want to talk about and they don't want to deal with. It takes a certain type of person to be a member of the group in the first place. It takes somebody who is open and who is willing to have hard conversations.*

Intersection of Impact and Process Data

In design development studies, the purpose is for the process to have an impact on participant learning. We use the process data to draw connections between what happened during the intervention with the impact data collected before and after the intervention takes place.

When I review the summary of rubric scores from the impact data, I notice some patterns related to the how the qualitative and quantitative impact data relates to the process data. To start, I notice that the dimension with the highest level of rubric scores, 'understanding parent engagement,' is also the dimension that received the most attention during the leadership team meetings. The primary purpose of the committee was to engage parents and the process data shows that most of the meetings were spent discussing programs and strategies that would be most effective as we moved forward from one event to the next.

In sum, we planned for and facilitated five parent engagement events in the span of five months. My interpretation here is quite straightforward; we see the most growth in the area where spend the most time and energy.

To a much lesser degree, while we emphasized student achievement in mathematics for three out of five events, during the leadership team meetings we did not discuss in any detail the types of inequities that exist for African American students in math. And while during the leadership team meetings, a few ideas did surface related to course placement, those conversations focused more on the individual parent's feelings about the problems, not the actual inequities in the system that cause African American students to be placed in lower-level courses.

In regards to the dimension of leadership for equity, the process data has very little if any evidence that connects directly to the impact data. I noticed that all of the participants exercised leadership to some degree, mostly in the area of building relationships with others to support the pursuit of a common goal. However, the leadership team meetings did not make leadership an explicit topic of conversation. At best, the participants were learning about leadership through their own experience or through the observations of other participant behaviors.

On this dimension of leadership, however, I was impressed with the participants' initial understanding that leaders who are successful at changing schools to become more equitable embody certain basic qualities. Namely, they build relationships with others, they value diverse people and points of view, and they either manage their fears or have none in the first place.

The Unexpected Change Driver: Difficult Conversations

Our routines and agendas were built with an eye towards doing something, not studying something. These were not seminars, trainings, nor professional development exercises. In sum, we designed and executed five parent engagement events in the span of five months. While exhausting, it was this "doing" nature that kept us together, especially at times when the conversations were emotional, painful, and sometimes confrontational.

During the leadership team meetings, the discussions about planning and coordinating were framed by open conversations about inequality, race, and racism. In much simpler terms, the _how_ we would work together was always coupled with the _why_ we are working together. Talking about _why_ meant talking about what people were experiencing. Participants, most frequently the African American parents, were bringing their own stories to the table about issues not only found in history, but events that were happening here and now in the school district.

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And those were the conversations that became difficult. *'Why wasn't my child recommended for the honors class?' 'Why did we lose two African American staff members who are role models for our children?' 'What can we do for that parent whose child was suspended?' 'Why didn't we know about this red tape earlier?'*

I interpreted both the process and impact data as evidence that having difficult conversations became the most influential catalyst for this learning. In the post-interviews, the participants did, in fact, refer to these conversations as the examples relevant to their learning. And yet, having these conversations without a commitment to action would have likely destroyed the relationships needed to maintain our shared commitments to action. Therefore, the learning needed to take place in a space that was oriented towards action.

Overall, I did find that the qualitative data provided much more information than the quantitative data and substantiated the majority of my findings. The descriptions that participants provided after responding to the initial questions were rich in detail and were the primary source of information that connected the impact data with the process data. These descriptions also deepened my understanding of the three dimensions beyond what I had learned from reviewing the research literature.

In conclusion, I claim that the intervention had some effect on the participants' ability to learn more about the dimensions of inequity, leadership, and parent engagement. There are some clear connections between the data that was gathered in the pre- and post-interviews as well as between the post-interviews and the process data. Most notably, there were multiple examples of how having difficult conversations about racial inequality impacted the participants' ability to clarify their understanding through the use of real experience. In the following and final chapter, I will summarize my interpretations about why these relationships can be made with some level of justification that ties back to the theory of action and to the review of literature.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to address problems in leadership practice so that a predominantly White and Asian school community would become more inclusive for African American families. The problem has long been that leaders perpetuate racial inequality by spending a majority of their time supporting activities that are typical of the dominant White and Asian culture. By doing so, leaders ignore systemic inequities, lack courage to have difficult conversations, and avoid engaging African Americans in ways that can mobilize collective action towards change.

My theory of action is straightforward, but extremely challenging and complex. If school and community leaders discuss issues of inequity and plan parent engagement events for African Americans, then they will understand more about 1) the inequities in their schools, 2) the qualities of leadership needed to address those inequities, and 3) how best to engage African American parents.

In this study, many participants demonstrated some level of increased understanding on all three dimensions. It became clear that effective parent engagement meant we needed to talk openly about the racism and discrimination that African Americans experience. We then needed to identify in ourselves the necessary dispositions and actions that leaders use to influence change. And finally, we needed to plan for activities that encouraged and supported these conversations for others.

There are some takeaways for those who are interested in implementing a similar design development study. So, in this chapter, I revisit my theory of action and identify principles of practice for future researchers and practitioners. Towards that end, I will discuss some of the essential change drivers that, whether directly or indirectly, had the most impact. I will also describe some broad theoretical topics that relate to what surfaced during this study, primarily on how race and racism shape the nature of organization change. And finally, I conclude with some recommendations for school leaders who will embrace the courage and tenacity to move this work forward in their own communities.

Organizational Change

Leading for organizational change in public education is complex and challenging. On a technical level, it demands an understanding of management skills unlike those used in more traditional settings. Public schools are not tightly coupled systems (Weick, 2002), so leaders must accept that we cannot tie strategy X to outcome Y. Actions and their resulting causality are more elusive, less predictable, and open to interpretation by various constituents.

Educational leadership also embodies an understanding of how politics and policy interact to shape behaviors. At this political level, leaders need to understand how to build lasting civic capacity in an environment filled with potential conflict (Stone, 2001). Building new coalitions with a specific agenda focused on empowering a disenfranchised minority requires a leader who can successfully bring various interest groups together to share resources and decision making (Shipps, 2003).

But most importantly, significant and lasting change is only affected by leaders who address the underlying beliefs and mental models that operate deep beneath the surface structures

and behaviors (Schein, 2010; Senge, 2006). Leaders who are courageous enough to dive this deep must engage others in moral dialogue so that new relationships are built in order to overcome deficit thinking (Shields, 2004).

This work is both relational and personal, especially when confronting the social injustices that stem from racism. As is highlighted in this study, organizational change that is specific to addressing racial inequality is extremely challenging because the racism found inside the institution is embedded deeply within the culture outside of the institution. These deeply held beliefs that perpetuate power struggles between different ethnic groups, primarily Black people and White people, drive a culture defined by dominance and submission. This culture surrounds the school community and will most often contradict a school leader's efforts at achieving equity among different ethnic groups.

Therefore, to accomplish this type of change, leaders need to understand that their schools both reflect and mediate these deeper cultural norms. On a political level, Kirst and Wirt (2009) present this dynamic as a process of inputs and outputs, with school systems situated as processors in between. In this sense, political forces exert pressure and schools respond with various levels of acceptance or resistance to change. On the much less neutral level of racial inequity, Oakes et al (2005) help school leaders understand this dynamic as a competition for resources, one which emphasizes a commonly held belief that one person's achievement needs to come at the cost of another person's access to opportunity.
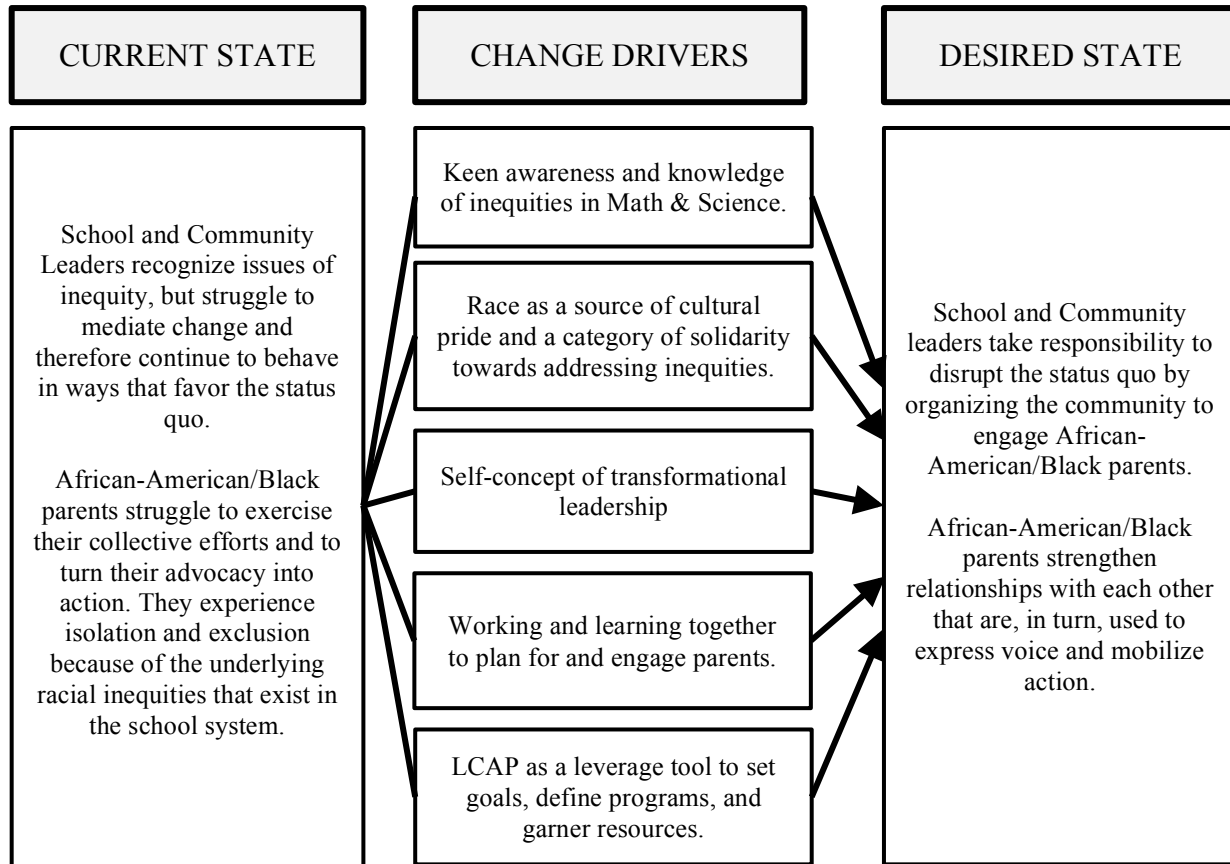
But fortunately, cultural norms of discrimination are not universal and the forces that drive the culture of a school are not exclusively found in the local community. According to Oakes et al (2005), leaders need to understand that schools also operate as mediating institutions within larger regional, national, and global forces that, if beneficial to the cause, can be leveraged to influence change (p. 290).

Change Drivers

In this study, I kept these leadership dynamics in mind when I originally figured that five things would drive the change process. In retrospect, all of these change drivers did, in fact, generate their own varying degree of influence, some more than others. And yet, the methods used to observe for change in participant learning, while helpful in determining impact, were not directly correlated to the change drivers. I did not, for example, ask participants to reflect on their understanding of how the Local Control Accountability Plan had any influence in the success of parent engagement events.

Figure 5.1 on the next page summarizes the current problematic state of affairs, the five change drivers, and the desired state for more responsible leadership and stronger relationships between African Americans and their schools.

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Figure 5.1 Change Drivers

CURRENT STATE	CHANGE DRIVERS	DESIRED STATE
School and Community Leaders recognize issues of inequity, but struggle to mediate change and therefore continue to behave in ways that favor the status quo. African-American/Black parents struggle to exercise their collective efforts and to turn their advocacy into action. They experience isolation and exclusion because of the underlying racial inequities that exist in the school system.	Keen awareness and knowledge of inequities in Math & Science. Race as a source of cultural pride and a category of solidarity towards addressing inequities. Self-concept of transformational leadership Working and learning together to plan for and engage parents. LCAP as a leverage tool to set goals, define programs, and garner resources.	School and Community leaders take responsibility to disrupt the status quo by organizing the community to engage African-American/Black parents. African-American/Black parents strengthen relationships with each other that are, in turn, used to express voice and mobilize action.

Leveraging the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) had the least direct impact as a change driver and should probably be considered more of a pre-condition for future studies. Securing political support from the Board of Education and allocating financial resources were two essential elements in place long before the intervention activities began.

The LCAP did not surface in the process or impact data. Nevertheless, the participants were aware that the LCAP was a powerful policy used to publicly articulate a goal for African American parent engagement, as well as to garner political and financial support. Unlike all other community groups, nothing we did would require us to solicit donations. Equally important, the LCAP helped the participants trust that if they took risks, the Board and the school district leadership would back them up. Sometimes, Board members even showed up to our meetings, which always elevated a sense of importance and respect for the work.

The LCAP also allowed me to redefine how I approached my working relationships with school board members, the superintendent and executive cabinet, school site leaders, PTA presidents, and others in traditionally influential positions. More specifically, I purposefully leveraged the features of the LCAP to emphasize indicators of inequity and the ways in which funding would be re-directed. Over time, it became more and more normal to overcome the pathologies of silence that help maintain the disparate opportunities for African American students and their parents.

Another change driver, <u>self-concept of transformational leader</u>, was also less directly impactful, but not entirely absent. There was evidence through participant actions that a sense of responsibility for social justice strengthened their personal identity as transformational leaders. The impact data from the post-interview transcripts show that several participants increased their level of clarity and confidence in their roles and responsibilities. Crystal presented the most substantial evidence of this growth in both her interview and her actions throughout the intervention. By the end, she was coordinating much of the communication between staff, students, and the team members. This matters because the intervention prompted a new leader to emerge. Positioned as a teacher, a parent, and an African American, Crystal secured her position as a trusted person within the school system who will advocate that these programs endure.

But, most importantly there is evidence that two change drivers were very impactful. <u>Working and Learning Together</u> combined with <u>Cultural Pride and Solidarity</u> were the most frequently observed dynamics that affected progress. The <u>Working and Learning Together</u> driver was supported by the nature of each session. School and community leaders came to every meeting with a clear purpose that they were organizing events for others. There was no meeting agenda that didn't have at least a portion of time dedicated to coordinating engagement events. The dates had been set and the announcements made, so this commitment to shared responsibility sustained the group's motivation. The impact data on the dimension of parent engagement highlights the strength of these two drivers. Most participants demonstrated growth and those who did not were already quite advanced in their understanding of these concepts.

The change driver <u>Cultural Pride and Solidarity</u> was supported in large part by a commitment to the students. Every engagement event included children and while the participants were always mindful of and focused on changing the problems at hand, their emphasis for the children was on how to instill a sense of pride and belonging. The process data demonstrates the strength of this driver. Participants frequently named the attributes of Black culture that deserved attention and then planned for the engagement events to celebrate these attributes. They recognized intelligence and ingenuity through the series of events on mathematics, and celebrated their relationships, music, 'soul food,' political accomplishments, and triumph over oppression at the Meet & Greet and the Black History Month celebrations.

Design Principles for Researchers & Practitioners

The purpose of a design-development method is to identify the strategies and tools that impact the learning required to change problems of practice (Mintrop, 2016). Known as 'design principles' (van den Akker, 1999), they describe the essential characteristics of the intervention activities, draw connections to the learning that these activities promote, and inform future iterations. From my study, I draw upon the impact and process data to inform future researchers and practitioners about what worked best and what to revise.

Design Principle #1: Maintain an Action Oriented Approach

The first design principle is to maintain an action-oriented approach for the parent engagement leadership team. The theory of action included working together and learning together, but the emphasis on working together allowed for those spaces in between for participants to have the deeper conversations that influenced learning about inequities and leadership. Based on the analysis of both impact and process data, it is clear that the participants

maintained their stamina to have challenging conversations because of their shared commitment to producing outcomes for the African American parent community.

On a more practical level, and more from my point of view as a school leader as opposed to an action researcher, the action-oriented approach directly influences the parents' willingness to attend leadership team meetings and to remain committed to the work. Unlike many other design-development studies, this work challenged the definition of school leader to include those outside of the formal organizational structure.

While employees can, to some degree, be expected to participate in the projects their supervisors manage, parent volunteers have no formal obligation to remain engaged. Furthermore, when those parents are understandably skeptical about the integrity of a reform or the honesty of the reformer, the only true motivation is to realize action quickly.

Design Principle #2: Build Civic Capacity

The second design principle is to build civic capacity and pay a lot of attention to coalition building. It should be noted here that my recommendation for design principles is most geared towards district-level administrators. So, while the following ideas are universal for any person seeking to shift the balance of power for African American parents, the examples come from my own insider perspective.

Calling again on Dorothy Shipps' model of building civic capacity (2009), school administrators must understand the dynamics of empowerment regimes. An empowerment regime is defined as an empowered group of people represented by newly authorized decision-makers (Shipps, p.856). In order to establish this, we need to garner support from the newly empowered group members themselves (the African American parents) as well as the government actors (the school board and school administrators) who can sanction the new power relationships.

Towards this end, the Local Control Accountability Plan helped generate a common message across both groups in Seaview: the legitimacy of the school district was called into question because African American student achievement was low and African American parents declared their lack of trust in the system. The LCAP clearly named these problems through its careful articulation of student needs and through the comprehensive stakeholder engagement phase.

Building these necessary coalitions was much more complex and as a specific design-principle is much less prescriptive than the LCAP. These coalitions were built upon a wide variety of long-standing relationships between individuals. I, myself, have been in the school district for many years and I called on African American parents and school Principals who I knew very well. This was also the case for the school Principals who called upon the African American parents they knew well. We started small and worked together for a year prior to this design study. So, in essence the coalition building was in the making before we knew it would become an empowerment regime.

Design Principle #3: Overcome the Pathology of Silence about Race

This study centered its focus on race and racism as it pertains to how African American parents engage with a school system dominated by White and Asian norms of behavior. These norms perpetuate a culture that does not embrace difficult conversations about how and why African American students are denied the opportunities they need to succeed.

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School and community leaders who want to address inequities based on race need to push against the belief that the responsibilities for achievement rest on the individual instead of the school. Carolyn Shields (2004) provides us with a critical examination for how educational leadership for social justice should overcome pathologies of silence about issues such as ethnicity and social class (p. 110). In order to clarify, Shields offers this:

> *Pathologizing may be overt when, for example, policies, statements, or practices use discriminatory language. However, it is equally common for pathologizing to be covert and silent, engendering in students and their families feelings that, somehow, they and their lived experiences are abnormal and unacceptable within the boundaries of the school community and their abilities subnormal within the tightly prescribed bounds of core curriculum or transmissive pedagogy still too common in many schools and classrooms.*

In this regard, the design principles are admittedly less prescriptive. Here, I make three recommendations for leadership practices and dispositions.

First, I recommend strongly that school leaders critically examine their own position, taking into account how their gender, identity, ethnicity, and economic status shape their viewpoints and dispositions towards change. For me, this meant that I needed to reflect on how being a White male in a position of authority, without children of my own, blinded me to the realities of African Americans, mostly mothers and sometimes also teachers, who find themselves pushing back against an institution. In reality, this meant that during team meetings and engagement events, feelings of fear, anger, and frustration would often be directed at me, not as an act of personal confrontation, but instead as an expression against what I represent. Often, I heard the words *'the district needs to…'* and once I finally asked, *'When you say the district, who are you referring to?'* Their response: *"YOU."*

Leaders need to be prepared to be uncomfortable in these meetings, while at the same time trusting that as things progress, relationships are strengthening. In this experience, when I allowed myself to listen and be uncomfortable, I also noticed that the African American parents on my team began to entrust me more and more with their stories about how the profession of education contributes to their inability to engage successfully.

Second, I recommend that school leaders amplify the lessons learned from these conversations to other spaces in their work. As two of the participants explained, our roles inside the system are to empower the African American parents to tell their stories to us, and then for us to carry their stories to other venues where they will have impact. This means translating the messages to the teachers, the other parents, the other administrators, and in my case, the boardroom. More and more often, the members of the team who were school administrators would leverage this carefully and strategically. *"The African American Parent Engagement Team reports that their children feel uncomfortable when you focus on slavery as the primary aspect of African American history."* Or, *"The African American Parent Engagement Team reports that the parents want more teachers of color hired for their schools."* On this dimension, school leaders need to be less fearful of naming issues of racism in venues where they were previously silenced. School leaders can take full advantage of the bureaucratic and political functions that were put in place for these voices to be amplified.

Finally, I recommend that school leaders be prepared for shocking and tragic outcomes of racially motivated hate behavior. Incidents of overt racism manifest themselves in ugly and damaging ways and will unfortunately challenge the fragile relationships that take so much time

and energy to build. In this case, I refer to an incident of harassment perpetuated by Whites and Asians in Seaview against Black females. Divulging more details would compromise the anonymity of the participants in this study, but suffice to note that the incident resonated across the region as an example of deeply rooted hatred that fractured a community and ruined the lives of many people.

The advice here is for school leaders who establish a leadership team for African American Parent Engagement. While these leaders will almost certainly build their programs with school-focused goals related to increasing academic achievement or building a more positive school climate, the team they build will need to have very strong relationships among its members. In the face of crisis, these relationships will need to survive an expectation from the community to lead something much more profound. In this regard, our team was thrust to the forefront of a situation where we were positioned to help families grieve, to provide space and time for large groups to express their fears and sorrows, and to provide a community with hope.

Final Thoughts on the Implications for School Leaders

In some ways, this study exemplifies much of what gets lost when we, as educational leaders and scholars, attempt to study issues related to race and ethnicity. Namely, we focus on what is seen and not so much on what is unseen. We search for the evidence of racial inequality instead of its roots and we make attempts to change things that will affect the structures, but overlook the foundations.

I argue that a school administrator's study of race typically highlights the superficial or "above the waterline" features of the racial divide. Administrators pay attention to test scores, suspension rates and behavioral referrals, enrollment patterns, and parent involvement activities. They pay much less attention to the deep-seated mental models and beliefs that influence these indicators.

Leaders who are oriented towards social justice need a much deeper understanding of race and racism if they are going to have any effect on correcting educational inequity (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Racism, viewed as a structure of power inequality, undermines the attempts to correct educational inequities such as access to higher-level mathematics or disproportionate discipline rates (Howard & Reynolds, 2015).

To begin, leaders must understand how the study of racial inequality in public education is lacking in certain key areas. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) offer us a start by proposing three central propositions in their study of critical race theory and education. One, race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the U.S. Two, U.S. society is based on property rights. And three, the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand inequity (p. 48).

This intersection highlights that a democracy built on capitalism can be quite undemocratic. School funding, as one prime example, is based on property taxes. And because property taxes vary between rich and poor communities, it is fairly easy to see the explicit inequalities in the intellectual property each school can provide.

In addition, leaders must understand how race and racism affect parental involvement in schools. For example, it is critical to know that African American parents provide certain types of racial socialization messages in order to bolster their children's self-worth before sending them off to school (Roberts, 2010). Without these messages, African American students are less likely to succeed in a racist environment filled with negative stereotypes and attacks on Black

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culture and identity. School leaders who don't know that African American parents need to empower their children every morning just to survive their daily experience will find it impossible to build trusting relationships with their African American community.

School leaders also need to know what to expect when they do attempt to build those relationships. As Howard & Reynolds (2008) point out in their study of African American parent involvement, parents need to be able to talk about how *'they believe racial dynamics influence the manner of the relationships that they attempt to set up with school capital and space'* (p94). The implication for school leaders is to know how race and racism influence parental involvement long before any attempt to initiate change. If school leaders are not prepared to analyze their own implicit bias or explicit discriminatory behaviors, they are ill equipped to listen and respond to the truths about how their leadership performance inhibits opportunity.

Study Limitations

There are three primary limitations to this study: the scope of the intervention, the claim for transferability, and the position of the researcher/practitioner. Due to the relatively short duration, the study was only designed to address the needs of the participants to learn more about inequities for African American students and parents, leadership qualities for equity, and parent engagement strategies. The study did not consider how the design actually impacted the broader African American parent community, nor did it attempt to consider the ultimate impact on overall African American student achievement.

And while the design is intended to impact school and community leaders in general, the claim for transferability is tenuous. There are several interconnected and unique factors in the local context that created the conditions for this design. Most notably, there were already long-standing relationships among many of the participants and the participant selection was voluntary by nature. In any other context, the nature of the relationships among the participants and the motivation by which they come together will vary.

Another very important limitation to this study is my own position as both a researcher and a school district administrator. As is often acknowledged in the field of research, the influence that a researcher holds over its subjects can create conditions that compromise the validity of the data collected, the trustworthiness of the interpretations and the claims made by the researcher. In this case, I was positioned as a senior district administrator whose subjects clearly perceived as someone with influence in the bureaucracy. For example, I was the only person with the authority to bring topics to the school board meeting agendas. I was also the only person with the authority to release funding and sign contracts for service. These powerful positions over resources and political influence undoubtedly had some underlying influence on how the participants engaged and how they responded to the pre- and post-interview questions.

For future researchers, I would suggest a few strategies that may help mediate this influence. For one, I would hire or assign a third-party assistant to conduct the interviews and then provide some layer of anonymity between the participant identities and the researcher. This practice would allow the participant to respond without the added complexity of mediating his or her relationship with someone in my position. I would also suggest that a third-party researcher take the field notes during the team meetings and engagement events. As both a researcher and practitioner, it was extremely challenging to objectively synthesize what I perceived to be occurring in regards to participant relationships and difficult conversations. It would have been very helpful to have a second, more objective, point of view.

Conclusion

This study, and the continued present-day oppressions we witness against African Americans, can easily dissuade our efforts to change an education system so rooted in discrimination and inequality. In fact, the implications outlined above emphasize only the deeper challenges we face when trying to establish effective leadership for meaningful parental involvement. And yet, on an academic level, this study showed promise. The impact and process data contributed to growth in many of the participants and the theory of action was sound. The participants, together with many others on the team, successfully engaged African American parents so that their children's academic success and cultural pride would become more respected within the school community.

The title of the study is VOICE: Vision of Inclusive Community Engagement and the voices heard in this dissertation give me hope. During the time of this study, the Seaview African American Parent Engagement Team, comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators, (and now school board members and community leaders), maintained a shared commitment to make a difference. At the conclusion of this study, their relationships are stronger, even as their challenges grow larger.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions from Initial Needs Assessment "Online Survey"

Question #1: What area of change would you prefer the parent engagement committee focus its initial efforts? a) Student achievement in Math and Science, b) Increased membership in the African American Parent Engagement Team, c) School site environment, behavioral referrals, etc. d) Other (please specify)

Question #2: What do you think/feel are the most critical obstacles to success for the African American Parent Engagement Initiative?

Question #3: As a parent, what do you think/feel should be the district's (Board, Central Office, administrators & teachers) priorities?

Question #4: Rank in order of importance to the Albany African American Parent/Student Community: a) Equity and Inclusion, b) Student Achievement, c) Teacher Diversity, d) Culturally Responsive curriculum

Question #5: How often should the entire African American Parent Community (Including parents of African American students) meet per school year? a) once per month, b) once per school year (separate from special events), c) once per quarter, d) twice per year, e) other (please specify)

Question #6: Rank the academic and social events you would like to see hosted by the African American Parent engagement committee during the 2016-17 academic year. a) Math and Science learning, b) African American History Month celebration, c) All parent social event (excluding students and children), d) All Family Social event

Question #7: If we did not list an event option you would like the African American Parent Engagement committee to hose, please list your choice or preference below.

Question #8: Rank in order of importance: a) math and science student achievement, b) AP Class enrollment and access, c) African American parent engagement membership, d) school site environment, behavioral referrals, suspensions, and expulsions

Question #9: If an area of concern or focus was not addressed in this survey, what comment or concern would you like to add?

Appendix B: Survey Questions from Initial Needs Assessment "Town Hall Meeting"

Question #1	What questions, concerns, and/or comments would you like to offer?
Question #2	How does the success of this parent engagement group relate to your own child's success and aspirations?
Questions #3	What are some contributions you can make to this group?
Question #4	To become more informed, please leave us your contact information (optional).

Appendix C: Overview of VOICE Activities and Events

Session	Title	Purpose & Content
1	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Re-affirm goals and to discuss current issues and events.
2	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Review calendar of events for the year, Align events to the goals for parent engagement and the feedback from African American parents.
3	*Parent Engagement: Casual Meet & Greet*	Organize a casual meet and greet activity in a public setting. African American families are invited to drop by and meet each other and other community members.
4	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Plan ahead for the Parent Engagement Series focused on achievement in mathematics.
5	*Leadership Team Meeting: Project Planning*	Refine logistics for the Parent Engagement workshop #1.
6	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #1*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
7	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Review feedback from workshop participants. Discuss strengths and challenges to the event. Create communication campaign to celebrate the accomplishments of the event. Review calendar of events and plan ahead for upcoming workshops.
8	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #2*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
9	*Parent Engagement: Presentation & Workshop #3*	African American leader in mathematics achievement provides keynote speech. Teachers from Seaview schools provide breakout workshops for parents and their children.
10	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Reflect on successes and challenges. Discuss issues related to how the current group is doing. Plan ahead for upcoming events.
11	*Leadership Team Meeting*	Refine logistics for the upcoming Black History Month Celebration. Plan ahead for the remainder of the year and discuss how to gather parent feedback on goals for the future.
12	*Parent Engagement: Black History Month Celebration*	This is a full family, full community event that will include introductory speeches, student performances, and a sit-down dinner.

Appendix D: Impact Data, Structured Interview Questions for Dimension One

Dimension ONE
 	
Inequities in schools for African American/Black Students and Parents
	1. On a scale of 1-3, how deep is your understanding of the inequalities that exist in schools for African American/Black students?
	
	                    Level 1 = Limited understanding
	                    Level 2 = Fair understanding
	                    Level 3 = Deep understanding
	
	Probing Question: Please elaborate by providing specific examples.

	2. Describe how these inequities impact African American/Black student access, performance, or opportunity? Probing Question: Please elaborate by providing specific examples or describing actual cases where you have been witness to such an impact.

	3. On a scale of 1-3, how would you assess your knowledge of how performance in math can shape a student's academic future?
	
	                    Level 1 = Limited understanding
	                    Level 2 = Fair understanding
	                    Level 3 = Deep understanding
	
	Probing Questions: Please elaborate by describing what you know about early childhood self-impressions in math, high school math progressions, college admissions, and career opportunities.

	4. On a scale of 1-3, how deep is your understanding of the inequalities that exist in schools for African American/Black parents?
	
	                    Level 1 = Limited understanding
	                    Level 2 = Fair understanding
	                    Level 3 = Deep understanding
	
	Probing Question: Please elaborate by providing specific examples.

Appendix E: Impact Data, Structured Interview Questions for Dimension Two.

	5. As you think about leadership, on a scale of 1-3, to what extent are the responsibilities different when leading for equity as compared to leading other work in schools?
	
	            1 = Not much different
	            2 = Somewhat different
	            3 = Very different
	    Probing Question: Please elaborate. Describe what leaders need to be able to know and do in order to be successful at leadership for equity.

Dimension TWO
 	
Qualities of
Leadership for Equity
	6. Compare these African American/Black Parent Engagement Leadership Team meetings to other types of meetings in schools. (Provide some examples: PTA, School Site Council, School Board Meetings, etc.) On a scale of 1 to 3, to what extent are the Parent Engagement Leadership Team meetings different?
	
	            1 = Not very different
	            2 = Somewhat different
	            3 = Very different
	    Probing Questions: What are some things that you notice? What is different? What is similar?

	7. As you think about yourself as a member of the AA/Black Parent Engagement Team, on a scale of 1-3, how **clear** are you about your own roles and responsibilities?
	
	            1 = Not very clear
	            2 = Somewhat clear
	            3 = Very clear
	    Probing Question: Please elaborate by describing some of the roles and responsibilities that you have.

	8. As you think about your roles and responsibilities, on a scale of 1-3 how would you rate your **confidence** in your own abilities?
	
	            1 = Low
	            2 = Medium
	            3 = High
	    Probing Question: Please elaborate. If you're confidence is low, what you need in order to feel more confident? If it is high, how did you gain such confidence?

Appendix F: Impact Data, Structured Interview Questions for Dimension Three.

Dimension THREE Effective Strategies to Engage and Mobilize African American/Black Parents	9. On a scale of 1-3, how much do you know about how to engage and mobilize African American parents as compared to other racial groups? 1 = Not much 2 = Some 3 = A lot Probing Question: Please elaborate by describing some of the specific strategies and why they are effective.
	10. On a scale of 1-3, how would you assess your understanding of the ways African American parents can influence change in the school system? Level 1 = Limited understanding Level 2 = Fair understanding Level 3 = Deep understanding Probing Questions: Please elaborate by describing specific ways in which parents can exert influence in their child's school, with their teachers, and with regards to policy.
	11. On a scale of 1-3, how would you assess the strength of the relationships among the African-American/Black parent in the Seaview community? 1 = Not very strong 2 = Somewhat strong 3 = Very strong Probing Question: Please elaborate. Why do you describe it this way?

Appendix G: Indicators for Coding and Evaluating the Responses to the Structured Interview Questions for Dimension One.

Indicators for Dimension ONE: Inequalities in schools for African American/Black Students and Parents
1. **Negative stereotypes against African American students.** Examples include bias against intelligence, behaviors, and/or attitudes; lower expectations for students' academic performance; higher rates of discipline referrals and suspensions. (Cooper, 2003; Solorzano, 1997; Wilson, 2015; Valencia, 1997)
2. **Negative stereotypes against African American parents.** Examples include bias against intelligence, behaviors, and/or attitudes; lower expectations for parents to be interested and involved; lack of support for parent engagement; little or no respect for parents as partners. (Desimone, 1999; Howard, 2015; Roberts, 2010; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001; Smith, 2005; Solorzano, 1997)
3. **Ethnic diversity in school staff.** There are very few, if any, African American teachers and administrators. African American students lack role models (Howard, 2015; Turner, 2014).
4. **Culturally relevant curriculum.** The curriculum is lacking in rigor and cultural relevance (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Sleeter, 2012; Theoharis, 2007).
5. **Course enrollment patterns.** Disproportionately lower enrollment in higher-level, Advanced Placement and Honors coursework, and consequently higher enrollment in lower level coursework & (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Oakes, 1992).
6. **No leadership for equity or social justice.** For example, leaders protect the status quo, ignore concerns expressed by minority parents, lack of support for parent empowerment. (Auerbach, 2012; Howard, 2015; Shirley, 1997; Theoharis, 2007).

Appendix H: Indicators for Coding and Evaluating the Responses to the Structured Interview Questions for Dimension Two.

Indicators for Dimension TWO: Qualities of Leadership for Equity
1. **Caring and empathetic character.** These leaders express their care for all students and their families (Epstein, 2010; Normore & Jean-Marie, 2008; Shields, 2004).
2. **Moral compass.** These leaders choose their roles based on a strong sense of morality (Theoharis, 2007; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014).
3. **Trusting relationships.** These leaders build relationships with people. Examples include relationships between students and staff, parents and staff, themselves and parents (Howard, 2015; Smith, 2005; Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014; Theoharis, 2007).
4. **Recognize and change structures of inequality.** These leaders are aware of the problems in the schools and are willing to confront them. Examples include tracking, discipline, and school climate. (Theoharis, 2007; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004)
5. **Respect for differences.** High degree of respect for students and parents from all cultures and backgrounds Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001; Leithwood et al, 2004.)
6. **Recognize and change beliefs of inequality.** These leaders are aware of the underlying beliefs and mental models that perpetuate inequality. They work to change the culture of the organization. (Trujillo & Scott, 2014; Theoharis, 2009).

Appendix I: Indicators for Coding and Evaluating the Responses to the Structured Interview Questions for Dimension Three.

Indicators for Dimension THREE: Effective Strategies to Engage and Mobilize African American/Black Parents
1. **Relationships.** Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and the school (Warren et al, 2009; Leithwood et al, 2004).
2. **Expression.** Create space and time for parents to express their concerns (Howard & Reynolds, 2008; Lareau & Horvat, 1999)
3. **Empowerment.** Empower groups of parents to make decisions that actually have impact (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011; Howard & Reynolds, 2008).
4. **Information.** Inform parents about how school systems work, especially where and how decisions are made. Bring parents together with others who have influence and who will listen and respond to their concerns. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Epstein, 2001).
5. **Engagement.** Include engaging activities for parents, students, and staff in order to celebrate culture and ethnicity, and to recognize differences as assets to the school community. (Epstein, 2001; Roberts, 2010; Shields, 2004; Sleeter, 2012).
6. **Policies and Resources.** Structure policies and resources that embed parent engagement into the system (Koppich et al, 2015; Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011; Flessa & Gregoire, 2012).

Appendix J: Summary Tables and Analyses of Impact Data

Table J.1 Interview Findings for Crystal; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level 2 (some) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes against African American Students. (Bias against behavior, intelligence, & motivation) • Curriculum lacking in rigor (Math as a gatekeeper to college, tracking in Math to lower-level courses) Level 2 (some) understanding of inequities for parents, 1 indicator noted: • Negative stereotypes against African American Parents (Sense of not feeling welcome)	Level 3 (deep) understanding of student inequities, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes against African American Students. (Bias against behavior, intelligence, & motivation) • Curriculum lacking in rigor & cultural relevance Math as gatekeeper to college, reference to early exposure to Algebra Low enrollment in advanced coursework Level 2 (some) understanding of parent inequities, no indicators noted.
Notable Quotes	"If your teacher thinks you are not going to do well then why would you do well? Some students go the other extreme and do 110% but from what I see is like if the bar is low then that's where they are going to rise to." "I know that math is a gatekeeper to college in terms of the level that you get to and as far as the understanding. Kids who can think through math problems can handle the rigor of college in terms of being able to learn things quickly and have your brain be nimble. I'm not sure that it's the math necessarily as much as it is your ability to approach a task and learn it.	"So, if you're expelled from class, if you're sent to the office, if you're not in the room because your behavior is such that it doesn't match the expectations then you're missing out on lessons, right? "If you chose to not take an AP class because nobody else is taking that class, then you're missing out on that opportunity. And even if you stay in the class, if you are trying to be quiet, trying to not be noticed, trying to just kind of fade in, so people don't know that – then you're missing that opportunity to grow and stretch and whatnot." "Confidence is very important. If students feel like, 'I'm the only black person in here. Why am I the only black person in here? If this was normal, there would be more of us in here and I could be stronger,' kind of thing, the power in numbers. Also, if you're the 'other,' you don't want a bunch of eyes on you looking at why you're different, how you're different, how is your answer different, or often, 'Can you speak how other Black people feel about such and such?' You don't want everyone to look at you like you can answer that 'Black question.'"

Analysis of Interview Findings for Crystal; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

Qualitative Data Analysis
In examining Crystal's responses about inequalities for African American students and parents, I noticed that she provides many more examples related to students than to parents. In both pre- and post-interviews, she focuses on how students are perceived and treated unfairly in classrooms. Motivation from teachers, access to advanced AP coursework, and expulsion from class are provided as clear examples of discrimination that African American students experience.

It is also noteworthy that in the pre-interview, Crystal did mention one specific inequity related to parents, a sense of not belonging, but did not mention any indicators in the post-interview. In fact, in the post-interview, she clarified that she didn't believe there were any inequities for parents inside the school system and that teachers work very hard to understand their students.

Quantitative Data Analysis
In examining Crystal's self reported ratings about understanding inequities for African American students and parents, I notice that she perceived herself to understand some inequities in the pre-interview and then rated herself as having a deep understanding in the post-interview. It is noteworthy that in both cases, she named two specific issues of inequity, but in the post-interview she provided significantly deeper descriptions of the inequities for students and how those inequities have an impact.

Summary
I cannot conclude with any certainty that Crystal's participation as a member of the parent engagement team had any effect on her understanding of inequities. I am certain from the process data that Crystal was actively engaged in the work and deepened her relationships with others on the team, including me. She made commitments and followed through on her responsibilities every time we hosted a parent engagement event. I believe that the increased depth and detail found in Crystal's post-interview responses are more a product of the relationship we built over the period of the intervention. In essence, I assume that Crystal was simply more comfortable and engaged in the second interview and was therefore, able to elaborate more freely about the things she already knew.

It was very surprising to me that in the second interview, Crystal would state that there are no inequities for parents in the school system. She clearly described several issues that African American students face, but then stated that for parents there are none. I can only assume that while Crystal is an African American parent, she is also a teacher and an active participant in the teacher's union. I would assume that her commitment to her colleagues would make it very difficult for Crystal to also hold negative sentiments towards them about how they could potentially mistreat African American parents. If this is true, Crystal is either consciously ignoring the problems, or choosing not to admit them to a school administrator.

To me, Crystal's position as an African American teacher and as a parent of an African American child means she began this work with a deep understanding about the inequities that students face in school. It is possible that she did not want to initially declare herself as having a deep understanding because of a potential assumption that my position affords me more

understanding or more respect. In fact, during the first interview, she referred to me as the "heavy hitter," implying my level of authority and influence as a district administrator. She also referred the work as "your baby," implying my early commitment to initiating the African American Parent Engagement Team. Overall, during the first interview, I interpreted Crystal has having a respectful, yet somewhat shy demeanor.

Based on this, I assume that Crystal's increase in detail comes from the tendency for interviewees to elaborate during follow-up interviews. Furthermore, between the beginning and the end of the intervention phase, Crystal and I increased our time working together on both the parent engagement team as well as in the context of other work in the district. During the intervention, for example, Crystal became an active member of the LCAP Advisory Committee, a project that I lead in the district. So, ultimately, I believe that as our professional relationship grew stronger, so did Crystal's ability to describe sensitive issues related to student inequities.

Table J.2 Interview Findings for Crystal; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize & confront inequities (reference to awareness of White privilege.) • Moral compass (reference to passion about issues that matter, like mathematics) Somewhat clear and somewhat confident about roles and responsibilities, 4 indicators noted: • Providing culturally relevant instruction • Proactive in engaging with the group and taking action • Build relationships with those in influential positions • Engage parents to celebrate their culture	Leadership for equity is very different, 4 indicators: • Trusting relationships with people (differences noted depending on the race of the leader correlated to the race of those being lead. Ability to empathize.) • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Understand & Respect cultural differences • Moral compass (reference to a sense of 'life or death urgency' if the students don't get the opportunities they deserve; sense of obligation to attend & participate.) Very clear and very confident about roles and responsibilities, 3 indicators noted. • Ability to build relationships, references to the stamina of the group to stay together, respect each other, and cherish disagreements. • Caring and empathetic charter, reference to recent personal experiences • Providing culturally relevant curriculum
Notable Quotes	"I don't always contribute and so I think when I do contribute people are like 'Crystal is talking' versus someone who's always talking and you just kind of listen and observe. I feel like because I'm the only high school representative at the table that they are interested in what I have to say in terms of my perspective."	"We talked about how yes, men, White people, whatever, can go to a women's rally or go to a persons of color rally but you have to come at it from an angle of, 'I'm standing next to you to help you lead." Versus, 'I'm going to lead you, Black people, into the promised land.' And so, I think that [optics] is huge." "I have to be here for this and I understand that this hasn't been done before and we want this to continue. So, what do we need to do? We want it. We have all these goals and everything, and it's like, 'What do we need to do?' I need to be here. We need to be proactive."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Crystal; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

> *Qualitative Data Analysis*
> In examining Crystal's self-reported ratings about leadership, I notice that she maintained the perception that leadership for equity is very different than leadership for other types of work in school. On this topic, in the pre-interview she clarified that leadership for equity requires a deep understanding of the plight of minority groups, as well as a strong compassion and drive to expose White privilege. In the post-interview, she provided even more examples and continued to emphasize the difference between how White people should lead for equity and how Black people should lead for equity. In the case of White leaders, she described the need for them to recognize their lack of exposure and personal experience with racism.
> I also notice that her self-reported levels of confidence and clarity moved from "somewhat" to "very." Here, while she didn't elaborate more in the post-interview, I do notice that she shifted her description of who was responsible for these actions. In the pre-interview, all indicators were self-centered. She felt personal responsibility for each of those listed. In the post-interview, she described the indicators as responsibilities everyone should take. In this case, she used pronouns 'we' and 'us' as opposed to 'I.' I interpret this to indicate a growth in understanding that shared responsibility is more powerful that individual responsibility. "Strength in numbers" was a phrase she used a few times.

> *Quantitative Data Analysis*
> The quantitative information is much less informative to me than the qualitative. To summarize briefly again, Crystal did not change her rating of leadership for equity. Her rating remained "very different" in both pre- and post-interviews. Her rating about clarity and confidence did improve from somewhat to very, and while this is important to note by itself, it is the qualitative descriptions that substantiate the claim that learning occurred.

> *Summary*
> My interpretation of these excerpts is based, in part, on my review of body language and voice tone. Both implied to me that Crystal was very welcoming and receptive to joining together with people from different racial backgrounds to lead for equity. The quote *"it's very clear that you're here with us, you're not trying to tell us how we should solve our problems,"* indicated to me that, while she may have been complimenting me, she was also noting the subtle distinctions of how Whites should lead for Black equality.
> I also interpret some of the post-interview growth to relate to my own position as a White, male school administrator. I believe that Crystal's choice to focus on a leader's ethnicity and to clearly distinguish between White and Black leaders who lead for equity is rooted in the fact that I, as both the interviewer and the school leader, am White.
> Overall, the qualitative data, coupled with the increase in self-reported confidence and clarity, demonstrates to me that the intervention contributed strongly to Crystal's understanding of leadership. Furthermore, I believe that it was Crystal's active involvement in coordinating events, coupled with her active participation during leadership team meetings that provided her with the confidence to deepen her understanding of her own leadership capacity.

Table J.3 Interview Findings for Crystal; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level One (low) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 1 indicator: • Create space and time for parents to come together (personal telephone calls noted) Level Three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 3 indicators noted: • Connect with those inside the system who have influence. • Create space & time to build relationships with teachers. • Empower groups of parents to influence decision-making	Level Two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 2 indicators: • Include engaging activities for parents and their children, references to personal outreach via telephone calls. • Inform parents about how the school system works, references to engaging about mathematics Level Three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 2 indicators: • Connect with those inside the system who have influence, reference to attending board meetings & connecting regularly with principals & teachers. • Empower groups of parents to influence decision-making, reference to rallying together against biased campus police.
Notable Quotes	[Parents can…] "...show up at back to school night. We [Black parents] don't have a big response, we just don't so that type of thing. So, showing that you are interested that you are engaged scheduling meetings with teachers, emailing teachers, just being involved and at the basic level.	"I think our Black History Month celebration was phenomenal. And I think that personal touch of calling parents was huge. I think we've done it before, but for some reason this time, I don't know, maybe because they've gotten a couple of calls now, they – they're answering. And the parents were very receptive. "And the fact that we have the series on mathematics. It's like, 'Oh, they're interested in my kid's ability to do Math.' And, [remember that parent who] felt like he could come out and say, "This is what I feel and this is how I feel.' It's huge. And he felt like he could say that and it would be received. So, that's big."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Crystal, Dimension 3 "Understanding Parent Engagement"

Qualitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Crystal uses the Black History Month celebration from the prior year as the example to highlight her understanding of parent engagement. More specifically, when she elaborated in the first interview, she described that the telephone banking campaign seemed like a good idea, but when she elaborated in the second interview, she named that as a successful strategy. Telephone campaigns are not specifically noted in the literature as meaningful engagement/empowerment strategies. So, while I won't qualify this an indicator of growth, I do appreciate her recognition of the strategy as a method to build connections with others. I do note that in the post interview, she elaborates more about how parents can influence the system, although most responses focus on the traditional activities of meeting with teachers and attending school-sponsored events. There were no descriptions in either the pre- or post-interviews that situate parent engagement as a method to change the school system to be more equitable.

It is worth noting that Crystal described one event that was very memorable to several participants as an example of progress related to parent empowerment. Discussed later in the section on process data, Crystal recalled the time during one of the engagement activities when an African American father expressed his concerns that the District should be careful not to situate the parent engagement problems as issues generated by Black parents, but instead as problems generated by the school system. Crystal recognized that event as pivotal.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In examining Crystal's self-reported ratings of her understanding of parent engagement, I notice that even though she reported level one (low) in the pre-interview and level two (some) in the post interview, she did not express herself very confidently either time. Alost noteworthy, Crystal rated herself as having a level 3 (deep) understanding about how parents can influence change in the school system. But, the examples she provided do not correspond to the types of actions described in the literature. Here, Crystal names keeping in touch with teachers about schoolwork as her primary example.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that Crystal learned some things about parent engagement, but I cannot be certain from the data that Crystal learned about the strategies parents use to influence change. She provided examples from the intervention to describe her understanding of good communication, celebrating culture, and listening to parents who have concerns that may be difficult to discuss openly. However, Crystal's examples of parent engagement in the post-interview continue to emphasize the types of behaviors that typically maintain status quo.

Table J.4 Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequalities**	Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes of African American students • Disproportionate enrollment in higher level coursework Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for parents, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes of African American parents • Lack of support for parent empowerment	Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes as seen in lower-expectations for African American student academic performance, disproportionate rates of discipline referrals, and the expectations for one African American to represent many • Curriculum lacking in rigor. Lower rates of enrollment in higher-level coursework, clarified further to impact access to other courses as well as certain after-school Science clubs and events. Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for parents, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes against parents as seen in their need to prove themselves to staff as caring and qualified, their need to protect their students against bias, and the disadvantages they face knowing their children are treated unfairly. • Lack of support for parent empowerment as seen in their sense that they don't fully belong.
Notable Quotes	"I'm not saying all teachers, but I'm saying that this is the experience that our kids and parents have of feeling like the teachers aren't expecting as high from them, they are not supporting them in the ways that make them feel like *'you may be struggling but I know you can do this and here is how we are going to get you there.'"* "I've had parents talk about going in for conferences with the teacher and feeling that they had to prove themselves before the parent, before the teacher would kind of give them that same respect...which I feel like it's valid and in of itself whether it's something the teacher is doing or not... that's their experience at our schools." "I think there is something in the way that teachers are supporting and interacting with African American students that's not working for them. There is so much research out there about performance being tied to self-esteem. *'Does a teacher have high expectations of me?'"*	"Our school is not setup to have the belief of *'it's our responsibility to support kids in doing these pieces.'* School systems in generally are more set up to say, *'here's the expectations. Here's what we need. Yeah, we'll give you extra help here and there but if you don't take advantage of it, then it's on you.'"* "We have a very narrow idea of what a good student looks like and it's this student who is quiet and sits in their seat and does their work and raises their hand and participates positively.. I think there's a lot of different cultural pieces that play into how you interact and how you are in the world and how you interact with others and so I think the students who comply with our standard are offered more opportunities and the kids who have different approach to how they interact with the world that doesn't comply with the US educational you know…narrow box are offered less opportunities. So a lot of times I see this kid who is charismatic and interesting and has all these things but yes, a little bit of a handful in the traditional classroom. But why NOT give that leadership opportunity to the student?"

Analysis of Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

Qualitative Data Analysis
In analyzing Diane's responses, I notice that she elaborates to a great extent when describing each indicator. She includes first-hand experiences noticing both the details about each inequality as well as the impact they are having on students and parents. In both the pre- and post-interviews, she took a lot of time to qualify that her deep understanding of African American inequities does not come from any personal experience, but instead from her regular interaction with African American parents in her school community. I also notice a keen awareness of her role as a school Principal and as a white person. She's quoted as saying, *"I'm not an African American parent. I haven't had that experience so I think I understand it on an intellectual and empathetic level."*

Diane communicates a highly technical understanding of the inequities related to mathematics. She describes not only the surface level issues of academic performance and tracking, but also the deeper issues of how math ability tends to falsely represent a generalized perception of intelligence.

Quantitative Data Analysis
The quantitative data does not provide any evidence of growth. In both the pre- and post-interviews, she rates herself as having a level three (deep) understanding of inequities for students and parents.

Summary
I interpret these findings to indicate that Diane already had quite a deep understanding of inequities for African American students and parents. I noticed a lot of details provided in both the pre- and post-interviews and I noticed that these details were rooted in her experience as an educator and school leader. While her deep understanding is encouraging, I cannot be certain that the intervention activities had any further effect on deepening her understanding.

Table J.5 Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is as <u>very</u> different, but qualified strongly that it shouldn't be different. 3 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity, to disrupt current beliefs & mental models • Caring and empathetic character, as noted in listening carefully and seeking to understand • Trusting relationships, as noted in the need to show up and demonstrate support Somewhat clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities. 2 indicators: • High degree of respect, manifested in being present, but leaving the space open for the parents to have a voice • Ability to bridge relationships between parents and staff	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, but qualified strongly that it shouldn't be different. 4 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity, clarified in issues like teacher evaluation, master scheduling, and professional development. • High degree of respect to develop leadership in others, as noted in her intentional choice not to speak too much herself during African American Parent engagement meetings. • Ability to build relationships between teachers and parents • No fear in disrupting current beliefs and mental models that perpetuate inequity. Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities. 1 indicator: • Recognize and change structures of inequality, manifested in empowering parents and leveraging position to increase access.
Notable Quotes	"[Leading for equity] should be the same thing [as leading everything else] because it should all be integrated. If you are really for equity, then that is the lens you should be going through for all the other things you're doing. "My major role is showing up and listening. I feel like my presence there communicates that as the leader of the school this matters to me. I'm taking time out of my day, out of my family time because I care about African American students and families and so I feel like one of my major roles is just being there, and listening and hearing what people have to say. I think the other piece is that hopefully I can take what's happening and channel some of those pieces into action, right? …that I have the ability to make some change [in my role as Principal. I can actually do something and so I think another role I have is hearing what's happening and giving access and entry points to our parents. 'This is something that's not working...' how can I shift that, how can I fix that, how can I make this more accessible."	"I really feel like the meetings are there to empower that group of parents to have a voice and to take leadership so I make, I try to make constant decisions of when to speak up and I try to speak up only in support of their work. I really try to listen and figure where can my role provide support leverage, as supposed to being 'the voice' that's driving or guiding or facilitating." "When you have a number of life experiences where you felt like you're not being given an equal shake at things, then that's the lens you're bringing to the world and I feel like those meetings that that is the lens of feeling that things haven't been equal. We haven't been giving voice or kids aren't given equal access so we're coming to this place having to fight those things and raise those issues and push those hard questions and all of that.

Analysis of Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Diane's responses to questions on this dimension, I noticed that in both pre- and post-interviews there were several examples provided to clarify her understanding of leadership qualities. I noticed that Diane understood the differences between leading for equity versus leading in other ways, but more importantly Diane emphasized the importance of combining leadership for equity with everything else that school leaders must attend to. She named master scheduling, curriculum development, athletics, recess and lunchtime activities, and discipline.

Diane recalled an issue that surfaced during the planning phase for the Black History Month celebration. The issue was a rooted in a request by one parent on the committee to change the order in the list of those groups who would be providing entertainment. The committee member wanted a Black student group to perform last, instead of a group made up of mostly White students. Some felt that ending the event with mostly White students was not a good idea and would potentially communicate a lack of respect. Others felt that changing the order when the programs had already gone to print would be seen as a mistake, and more importantly a mistake that some people would be expecting African Americans to make.

Diane recognized this episode as evidence that African American parents more often need to approach situations with an expectation that others are carrying a deficit perspective on their abilities to do things well.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In both the pre- and post-interview, Diane describes leadership for equity as very different. In the pre-interview Diane rates herself as being somewhat clear and very confident in her roles and responsibilities on the team. In the post-interview, Diane rates herself as being very clear and very confident. The only growth noted here is her level of clarity, which moved from somewhat to very. Yet, it is impressive to me that this growth is not related to a change in perspective, only an increase in her resolve that her responsibility is to listen more than talk, and then to use her position in the system to make changes that have a positive impact.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that while Diane already began this work with a deep understanding of leadership for equity, she was now able to refer to experiences from the intervention to clarify her understanding. This was especially clear in her description of how and why African American parents need to approach situations with an assumption that others hold low expectations. This was also clear in her description about why it is important for White school leaders to listen for understanding, as opposed to speaking and/or controlling the space occupied by African American parents.

Table J.6 Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 3 "Understanding Parent Engagement"

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies. 2 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to express their concerns • Create space and time for parents to build relationships Level two (some) understanding of how parents influence the system. 2 indicators: • Empower groups of parents to made decisions • Build bridges with those who have influence	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies. 4 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships • Include activities that bring parents together with those who have influence. • Structure policies and resources that embed engagement into the system • Empower groups of parents to make decisions Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system. (But qualified as extremely difficult.) 3 indicators: • Inform parents about how school systems work. • Build relationships with those who have influence. • Create space and time for parents to build relationships.
Notable Quotes	"In terms of the larger picture of school change I think it can be tricky, and in terms of how parents influence change, I'm not really sure. As a leader of the school I think me hearing what they are saying and taking that seriously and doing something with that… sometimes if they want to impact other parents I can facilitate that and make things happen. But the type of big systematic change, it's just tricky I feel like there is parent input there's what's going on the school, there is structures in place, there is a lot of different factors, and so I'm not entirely sure what that looks like."	"I think that providing regular meeting times and access to things happening is important. I feel like the people don't want to just sit around and talk. No one wants to do that. They want action. They want access and action." "I think [parent engagement] is listening and figuring out what the goals are. I feel like having an African American [parent engagement team] is really important. I am really glad to see that happen in this particular group. I think that really makes a big difference. "That is their experience and so to me, they are coming from a place of feeling like, 'we have to fight to just get up to the base level here' and so I feel like there is this greater sense of urgency with it. I feel like there is its not coming from automatic place to trust and trust is a big piece that's just not been part of their experience holistically." "I think it's hard for parents to influence change in the school system is what I think. I think it's hard for everybody to influence change… especially hard for parents."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Diane; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Diane's responses, overall I notice that she described more indicators in the post-interview as compared to the pre-interview. In particular, I notice her emphasis on specifying the qualities of leaders who facilitate the parent engagement leadership team. Diane clarifies that in order to be successful; the district-level White administrator should not be *"in charge of the whole thing because it sets up a power dynamic, the whole point of which is to avoid."* She goes further to explain that the person leading, and hence empowering, the group should ideally be a person from outside of the community who is African American and an expert in African American parent engagement. If this ideal facilitator is not available, then the facilitator should at least be a parent member of the group instead of a staff member of the district. Diane also includes the caveat that change in school systems is hard to accomplish, but when there is an effort to do so, parents need to be connected with the school site leader, teachers, and other parents.

I interpret Diane's insight to demonstrate that through the process of working as a member of this team, she has learned something about engaging African American parents. In fact, we did use a third party expert in the fields of parent engagement, group facilitation, and leadership development. Furthermore, the expert was introduced to the district by one of the parents on the team, not by a school administrator.

The fact that the school board approved both the Local Control Accountability Plan goals related to this work, as well as a specific contract to hire this third-party expert at the District's expense may have contributed to Diane's understanding of the power dynamics that need to shift. Shifting power dynamics, according to Diane, was essential in building trust with parents who up until now have found it necessary to approach their schools with skepticism and doubt.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In both the pre- and post-interviews, Diane rates herself as having a level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies. And while her self-reported level of understanding did not shift, the qualitative description she provided in the post-interview was more substantial and relevant to the activities that were provided by the team.

As for Diane's level of understanding about how parents influence the school system, in the pre-interview, she rated herself as having a level two (some) understanding and in the post-interview she rated herself as having a level three (deep) understanding. Here, she also provided more substantial detail but emphasized that changing schools is inherently very difficult to do.

Summary

I interpret Diane's post-interview discussion as the most relevant data to indicate that the intervention may have influenced learning. Diane appears to have learned even more about how taking action is so critical to maintaining momentum. In this case, she refers to the many parent engagement activities that the team planned for and coordinated. The monthly leadership team meetings were balanced with time spent talking about issues and time spent planning for events. In the span of five months, the team hosted five parent engagement events. In the post-interview, Diane made direct reference to the activities as indicators that define the strength of the work.

Table J.7 Interview Findings for Bill; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 3 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront inequities. • High degree of respect for students and parents from all backgrounds. • Moral compass to do what's best for students Very clear and very confident about roles and responsibilities, 3 indicators: • Ability to build trusting relationships and follow through on commitments. • Ability to build and strengthen relationships among others. • Moral compass to advocate for what's right and good for children.	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 3 indicators: • High degree of respect for students and parents from all cultures • Ability to build and strengthen relationships • Moral compass to do what's best for students Very clear and very confident about roles and responsibilities, 1 indicator: • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between teachers, parents, and students
Notable Quotes	I think leaders need to have an understanding of why things are the way they are, why certain rules are in place. The inter-district transfer rule; why is that in place, why is it the way it is, why is it tougher for a student to get into a good school? Because [school quality] is supposed to be equal? Supposedly we already fought that fight and it's over but it's not over. It comes in different forms now." "I think that just being overall engaged and making sure that I give it as much time and attention as I think it deserves. Because you want what's best for your children and in order to get that you have to invest the time and so I think that's the key responsibility, making sure that I make time for the meetings and I make time for the activities. But then also letting other parents know who might not have the same access."	"I think that to be successful [leading for equity], you have to understand where both are coming from and the backgrounds most of the time are completely different. And in order to be a successful leader, you have to understand both sides of it." "I think that [my responsibilities are] making time for the group, being there, participating in the activities, being a part of that. I think the most important part is getting the other parents involved and letting them know, 'This is what we're doing. This is a great thing. You should be a part of it. If you don't have the time to actually join the leadership team, that's okay. But still participate in the activities that we're planning, because they're all geared towards helping your student do better.'"

Analysis of Interview Findings for Bill; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Bill's responses to the questions about leadership, I notice that in both the pre- and post-interview transcripts Bill makes regular connections to the motivation he has for serving as an active participant on the leadership team. Bill's motivation is rooted in his desire to do what is best for his children and he reiterates that other parents should have the same motivation. Phrases like, "because they're all geared towards helping your student do better" and "you have to go above and beyond in some direction in order for your kids to succeed" lead me to interpret Bill's motivation as something strongly rooted in his moral compass to do what's right for children.

I also notice an emphasis in Bill's descriptions of leadership on the need to understand people and their experiences with inequity, as well as to understand how the structures of the system can work either for or against equality. In particular, Bill understood from the beginning of the intervention that networking with parents was critical in advocating for his own child's success. He clearly described the difference between networking in Seaview, an upper middle class community, and networking in other neighboring communities. In Seaview, he noted, you are more likely to meet a doctor, as opposed to meeting a nurse.

He related this difference to the broader issue of inequities in education that exist across school district boundaries and connected this to the topic of inter-district transfers. While Bill's family lives within the boundaries of the Seaview community and therefore has the legal rights to attend the Seaview schools, he is keenly aware that knowledge about obtaining inter-district transfer permits is something parents who live outside of the community should know more about. He described that the inequalities between different school districts was rooted in the U.S. history of school segregation and was something that "supposedly we already fought over." In the modern day, according to Bill, school inequality "comes in different forms now."

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data does not indicate any substantial amount of growth over time. In both the pre-and post-interviews, Bill describes leadership as <u>very</u> different and maintains that he is both very clear and very confident in his roles and responsibilities on the leadership team. In fact, when connected with the qualitative data, there appears to be a more detailed description of roles and responsibilities in the pre-interview as opposed to the post interview.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that the intervention activities had some effect on Bill's understanding of leadership, but it is unclear to me whether he learned something new or whether he deepened the resolve that he had at the start. In the post-interview, Bill references his experience in the activities as examples of what other parents can do. But these references only serve to emphasize what he had already described well in the pre-interview.

Table J.8 Interview Findings for Bill; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 1 indicator: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships Level 3 (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 1 indicator: • Bring parents together with others who have influence.	Level three (deep) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 2 indicators: • Include engaging activities for parents, students and staff. • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence Level 3 (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 1 indicator: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships
Notable Quotes	"I think the most effective is just talking to people, building that rapport. Once you talk to somebody and you build like a certain trust level with them then you can start to have those types of conversations. But you have to know a person a little bit before you can go there. You never know how somebody is going to react to something like this. Everybody reacts to racial relations differently." "I think in regards to policy being a part of the groups that they allow you to be apart of, like the site council and the PTA. As far as the teachers just being in contact with the teachers, figuring out their best mode of communication and then letting them know that if there is anything that is happening with my child, you can let me know."	"So informing parents, think of the five events we had. We had the Three Math Engagement events, we have the Meet and Greet in the Park, and we had the Black History Month Celebration. And they had certain kinds of activities; we had certain types of marketing and communication beforehand." "That's exactly what I meant when I said in my opening at the event 'Meet somebody that you don't already know, because your goals might be the same.' And so at the event in the park, I met a couple of dads, and we were coming on the same page. They both had older children one had a student in middle school, and the other had two kids at high school. And so it was nice to talk to them, and hear about their experiences, because that time is coming [for my daughter]." "Because just engaging with people, and saying, 'Hey, I care about you coming to this event. I care about your kid, and like, I want to see you guys do well.' For me, I definitely want my children to do great things. But for me, it would be important for me to see all of the students do well, especially the African-American ones. I think about it all the time. I know them all and I can name them all."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Bill; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Bills responses to the questions about parent engagement, I notice across both the pre- and post-interviews that Bill emphasizes his value in building relationships with other parents. He describes the need to talk to parents who have older children in the school district so that he can learn from their experiences and prepare his own children for the future. He describes reaching out to parents to describe why it is so important for them to be involved and to stay connected with each other. And, he describes his personal drive and motivation to participate on the African American Parent Engagement team in order to promote more of these types of activities.

I notice that in the post-interview, on this dimension Bill continues as he did before to relate what he believes and what he has learned to specific events that took place during the intervention phase. For example, in the second interview he specifies why during his speech at the Black History Month celebration, he encouraged parents to talk to someone they didn't already know because for Bill, "your goals might be the same." Furthermore, he regularly links his actions to his personal qualities as a father who will do whatever it takes to ensure a bright future for his children, as well as a leader who will go out of his way to meet new people and care about their children. "It would be important for me to see all the student do well, especially the African American ones."

Quantitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Bill rates himself as having a level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies. In the post-interview, this rating changes to a level three (deep) understanding. This growth in self-reported understanding is connected to the qualitative data. In fact, when describing his responses in the post-interview, Bill provides much more detail and refers directly to activities that were facilitated by the leadership team.

As for Bill's understanding of how parents influence change in the school system, Bill's response does not change from pre- to post-interview. He maintains a self-reported level three (deep) understanding. From the start, he believes he understands this dynamic well, but the indicators he provides are more typically understood as perpetuating the status quo. Namely, getting along well with people, building relationships, serving on School Site Council and the PTA are usually situated as maintaining the status quo.

Summary

I interpret these interviews to demonstrate that while Bill began this work with a good understanding of parent engagement he deepened his understanding in part because of the intervention activities. In the pre-interview, he used personal relationships as a primary example, but in the post-interview Bill used his concrete experiences to describe in more detail how to successfully connect with and engage parents. But, as for using these parent engagement strategies to make a change in the school system, there is little evidence to indicate that Bill learned more about this important dynamic.

Table J.9 Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level 2 (fair) understanding of inequities for students, 3 indicators: • Little or no ethnic diversity in school staff • Curriculum lacking in rigor, cultural relevance, in the form of testing • Negative stereotypes & deficit thinking against African American students, in the form of low enrollment in higher level courses Level 2 (fair) understanding of inequities for parents, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes against African American parents	Level between 2 & 3 (fair to deep) understanding of inequities for students, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes & deficit thinking against African American students, in the form of low enrollment in higher level courses Level 2 (fair) understanding of inequities for African American parents, 1 indicator: • Little or no support for parent engagement & empowerment.
Notable Quotes	"I think that going to school with people who don't look like you and being taught by people who don't look like you and can't understand where you are coming from just puts up a barrier so it makes it harder for them to relate to their teachers and their peers and harder for them to get along in class." "I know that math is one of the main subjects. It's something that is really important and I know that the minorities have a harder time with advancing to the higher math levels." "I feel the same way that the students feel. There are not that many people to talk to and to relate to. We get invited to less stuff and when we are invited there is kind of an awkward pause to see if we belong or if we know the other people there. So it just makes things a little awkward."	"It [higher level math course enrollment] gives them that perception for themselves, their family members, the staff -- If something was happening at school and they were to get in trouble yet they were doing really good academically and we're in all these higher level math classes, I think that they'll be taken into consideration." "I think I have learned more about the system and who to talk to if I have a problem with something because I'm involved in the group. I speak to parents and staff members and district members and other people that I'm in contact a lot more often with than I would be if wasn't in the group."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

> *Qualitative Data Analysis*
> In examining Sally's responses about understanding inequities for African American students, I notice in the pre-interview that she describes two factors; one related to diversity in staffing and the other related to achievement in mathematics. She explains that when African American students are in settings with few or no peers of the same race, they feel like the other students and teachers don't understand them. This sense of isolation, according to Sally, translates to a more difficult time building relationships with peers in class.
> Sally equates the issue of lacking diversity to the inequities she feels as a parent. In the Seaview community, African American people are a very small minority of the population, making up only about 2% of the total school enrollment. Sally describes a sense of not belonging and of feeling awkward when attending events where groups of parents congregate together.
> In the post-interview, Sally makes a connection between academic performance and the impressions or responses others may have about a students' behavior in relation to their math performance. If, according to Sally, the student is enrolled in higher-level coursework, then when they get in trouble, the consequences are less severe. Also in the post-interview, Sally relates her experience and her sense of belonging to the African American parent engagement team with a stronger connection to people of influence in the school system. When I probed deeper on this question, Sally went on to describe that she sees more school officials more often and that this access "will kind of open doors for conversations."

> *Quantitative Data Analysis*
> In the pre-interview, Sally rated herself as having a level two (some) understanding of student inequities and then in the post-interview, she reported a slight increase stating that she had between a level two and level three (deep) understanding. On this dimension, while she rated herself slightly higher in the second interview, she provided more examples in the first interview, which seems to contradict any claim that she actually deepened her understanding. On the other hand, she may have simply remembered the first interview and chose not to come across as redundant. Also notable, the example Sally provides in the second interview comes from one of the parent engagement events that focused on math inequity. During those events, the guest presenter discussed how students who are enrolled in the most academically challenging courses often receive less severe punishments for the same misbehaviors as compared to students who are enrolled in lower-level courses.
> In regards to understanding parent inequities, Sally's self-reported rating of level two (fair) remains the same from pre- to post-interview. The nature of her indicator to describe this inequity changes from negative stereotypes to a lack of support for parent empowerment.

> *Summary*
> I interpret both the pre- and post-interviews to demonstrate that Crystal has a general sense of the inequities that students and parents face, but there is little evidence from the interviews that Sally learned a great deal more, with one exception: Sally recognizes that her presence at these meetings puts her at an advantage because she has build relationships with school officials. This particular distinction could be attributed to the fact that these relationships are actually taking shape because teachers and administrators are members of the leadership

team. It may also be because her husband who is also an active participant, shares similar points of view about the potential benefits of being networked with influential people.

Table J.10 Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding about parent engagement, 2 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and the school • Inform parents about how the school system works Level one (limited) understanding about how parents can influence change in the system, no indicators mentioned.	Between Level two (some) and level three (deep) understanding about parent engagement, 3 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to express their concerns • Inform parents about how the school system works • Include engaging activities for parents, students, and staff Level two (some) understanding about how parents can influence change in the system, 1 indicator: • Empower groups of parents to make decisions that actually have impact
Notable Quotes	"I think that we can change things with the teachers, but I think changing policy is a lot harder and I wouldn't really know where to start if something really big bothered me. I know that there is the PTA and I'm on the PTA, but we are not building on any big [issues] at school."	"I think having those monthly meetings in general is effective and gets people, opportunity to at least say what's on their mind and to bring things up to a center group so that we can attempt to come up with some kind of solution. I think that's effective and it helps people." "I think that [the math engagement events] show people that we're serious about our children's academics and their children's academics and their Math performance. It shows people that our group has some substance and I think that it helps to get people more involved when they know that someone is backing them." "There's no way that we have spoken to every parent of an African American here, there's no way. So, whichever opportunities that we have where we can give that chance to say what they want to say like, '*great job with the math events,*' or '*this other thing totally sucks for me. My kid really needs help with this issue, can you guys put on your calendar for next year?*'"

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sally; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Sally's responses to the questions about understanding parent engagement, I recall in both the pre- and post-interviews her overall sense of shyness or reluctance to say that she knows much about this topic. However, when probed with questions to elaborate, Sally describes some very important features of parent engagement. Namely, in the first interview, she describes the differences between the African Parent Engagement team and other groups, such as the Parent-Teachers Association. In this regard, she describes in the pre-interview that the new engagement team is a good thing because we "let people know that we see the problem and that we are attempting to do something about it." She acknowledges that our plans to engage parents about mathematics are a good idea, but only a start to a much larger process.

In the post-interview, Sally is much more clear and explicit about parent engagement strategies and references several of the events that the team has hosted over the past few months. Here, she clarifies that the events send a strong message that we are moving in the right direction. She also references a particular planning meeting where the group was looking ahead at the future and trying to decide which events to host in the spring. In the prior year, the team hosted a "town-hall meeting" where African American parents were invited to express their concerns, as opposed to participating in training or celebrating culture. But this time, a few members of the team preferred to host another celebration instead of a town-hall meeting. Sally disagreed strongly and told the group she did not join this committee just to plan parties for people. Instead, she wants to give them space to express their concerns again.

Quantitative Data Analysis

On the quantitative front, the responses Sally provides are not as informative, but still help substantiate something important about Sally's learning. When asked to rate her level of understanding for parent engagement strategies, in both pre- and post-interviews, she chooses level two (some) understanding. But then, she proceeds to describe parent engagement with several indicators and in the post-interview uses examples from recent experience serving on the engagement committee.

When asked to rate her level of understanding for how parents can influence change in the school system, Sally starts with a report of having a level one (limited) understanding and then ends with a report of having a level two (some) understanding. Her descriptions are in alignment with the types of strategies that I found in the literature review. Namely, she describes the formation of a group that is empowered to express concerns and to take collective and organized action.

Summary

These interview findings indicate to me that Sally has deepened her understanding about parent engagement. She does a much better job in the post-interview describing the need to organize events focused on academic success, create space and time to express concerns, and to leverage the leadership team as a demonstration to the community that we are serious about our intent to make a difference.

Table J.11 Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Curriculum lacking in rigor • Negative stereotypes against student behavior and intelligence Level 2 (fair) understanding of inequities for parents, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes against parents level of intelligence and commitment	Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes against student behavior, intelligence • Little or no leadership for equity Level 3 (deep) understanding of inequities for parents, 2 indicators: • Little or no diversity in school staff • Lack of support for parent empowerment
Notable quotes	"When they feel inadequate in the classroom, that manifests itself in a lack of engagement and achievement. So it's just a vicious cycle that goes back and forth. If you catch a kid early and you start to engage them early, that impact is limited but when it's not, then it's a perpetual give and take." "More students of color are being pulled from the classroom, being disciplined in different ways. So all that ties together; the academic, the social economical and discipline. I think our students in particular, find the inequities impact their cohorts and impact their groups. What's interesting about our [Black] culture is that we tend to envelope our own personas based on what the community is doing at large." "Regardless of [a parents'] college education, regardless of pedigree or academic achievement for your students, when you're the only person that looks like you in a meeting or in a classroom or in an organization such as the PTA or the Site Council, then that in itself is an inequity that's sometimes more comfortable for others and not for some."	"Even though [students] are in a leadership position, if [students] are not in the circles that influence others…then it just seems like it's not an effective use of leadership capacity." "What I hear most would be the lack of diversity in the teaching ranks. Balanced with more black custodians than Black teachers… that's a problem for the African-American community and every conversation I have [with parents] either has an element of that or tends to come back to that." "The work with the parent engagement committee has been profound on some levels, it's been discouraging on some levels, and it's been just exhilarating for me personally on many different levels. So, collectively I've seen the ability for these parents to become engaged when they decide to step into the ring. When they decide to engage themselves and give it a chance, we see results."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

> ### *Qualitative Data Analysis*
> In examining Alice's self-reported ratings about understanding inequalities for African American students and parents, I notice in both the pre- and post-interviews that she describes the inequalities in depth and from two very important perspectives; that of an African American parent and that of an African American teacher and administrator in the school system. Given these two positions, it does not surprise me that Alice is able to clearly name and describe in detail issues of inequity.
>
> In particular, Alice describes the inequities in mathematics on several levels. There are very few African American students in the school district, so when they do enroll in higher level math courses, there is a sense of feeling isolated and a sense of feeling responsible to represent other African American students. Alice goes on to describe that enrollment in math is strongly correlated to enrollment in Science. Finally, Alice recognizes that enrollment is not simply a matter of a student's ability to demonstrate their intelligence. Access to higher-level coursework is also a matter of a parent's ability to maneuver the system.
>
> In the post-interview, Alice goes further to describe that only a parent who really knows the system will know to first advocate strongly to the school for their child's access and second to substantiate that advocacy with pressure focused back on the student to take summer courses and after-school tutoring, all in order to prove that their child was ready to succeed. In other words, it would be an embarrassment for a parent who advocates that their child be enrolled in higher-level courses if the child was, in fact, not also going to be successful. This dynamic appears to describe an aspect of student performance as it relates to a parent's status in the community. For some parents, it appears that having their child in the upper-level courses is both a reflection of good parenting as well as a way to maintain a positive place in the social standing with other community members.

> ### *Quantitative Data Analysis*
> In both the pre- and post-interviews, Alice rates herself as having a level three (deep) understanding of student inequities. She uses very clear examples to substantiate this claim, examples that clearly come from her prior experience as a teacher, her current experience as an administrator, and her identity as an African American parent. On the dimension of parent inequities, Alice rated herself as having a level two (some) understanding in the pre-interview and a level three (deep) understanding in the post-interview. And yet, my interpretation of the qualitative data leads me to consider that Alice probably had a deep understanding all along. In both interviews, she provided in depth details and examples from recent experience.

> ### *Summary*
> I find it difficult to consider that the Alice's participation on the parent engagement team contributed to Alice's understanding of inequities. While I found Alice to be inspired by the work and to serve one of the more dedicated leaders in recruiting and supporting parents on the team, I assume that Alice already came well-prepared through personal and professional experience to understand the inequities.
>
> I will note, however, that in the post-interview, Alice made several references to members of the committee and events that took place. She communicated her excitement about the recent success as well as her concern that with such low numbers of African American

parents as well as a few who will be 'graduating out' this year, there may be real challenges sustaining this committee in the future.

Table J.12 Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is somewhat different. 2 indicators: • High degree of respect for students and parents from all cultures • Moral compass Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Ability to build relationships between parents and staff	Leadership for equity is <u>not much</u> different, 2 indicators: • Caring and empathetic character • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity, disrupting current beliefs and mental models Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities, 1 indicator: • Ability to build trusting relationships between parents and staff
Notable Quotes	"What's interesting is when you go into topics of equity, you have to... you get permission to be more genuine but at the same time, I think for our community, you also are put on guard a bit more and you start to read you audience in terms of 'how far can I go right now with poking the bear on this topic." "So with our [African American] community, you kind of deal with that emotional component. You've got to because then you have to do the heavy lifting on next steps. If it were just leading for other work in schools, sometimes you don't have to dig through the emotional baggage that comes with the topic. Sometimes it's not healthy because you're going to get stuck in that. But for the Black community, once you address that emotional topic, you can then get to the intellectual topic, which leads to next steps." "I honor the role of being that dual personality in the group where I do have all the systems knowledge of Seaview Unified, and then I have that parent perspective of coming through the school district."	"Well I think any good project manager, any good leader, really instills in their stakeholders the idea that your authentic enough to be able to discuss these conditions with folks and then truly be able to act them out in your practices and not just once but all the time." "Equity is definitely like systems thinking because equity should be embedded in every discussion point as well the system thinking practices that are able to move collective voices to collective action absolutely." "What goes deeper would be the feeling of security with the parents in the room to approach topics that they would never talk about in a different venue. So I think that's been extremely helpful and then that gets back to the community in some capacity, so that's a sign that there is a door open for that communication to occur." "The other piece too is that because I've seen some shifts happen in the past couple of years that I haven't seen before, my confidence personally is building because I do see that momentum where we haven't seen it before really ever."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Alice's responses to the interview questions, Alice describes that on some levels, leadership for equity shares a lot in common with other types of leadership. She names the skills related to managing projects, recruiting people to join committees, and establishing structures and routines within a school system. However, in both the pre- and post-interviews, Alice distinguishes some key distinctions when leaders choose to take on issues of equity. Namely, she describes a need to recognize and respect the emotions that people will bring to the conversations. She elaborates that the emotions run deeper when confronting issues of inequity because African American people are required to overcome stereotypes and deficit thinking. They often recall historical legacies of discrimination and need to guard carefully against using humor to lighten the burden of holding on to sadness or despair.

I do notice in the post-interview that Alice refers more frequently to actual conversations that took place during the African American leadership team meetings. One in particular was a moment when I asked the parents what type of flower corsage they wanted to wear during the Black History Month celebration. The flower corsage was meant to identify for the community that these were the individuals who made the event a reality. *"Anything is fine, as long as you don't buy cotton flowers!"* joked one of the moms, clearly referencing the history of cotton picking during the time of slavery. Alice noticed this as a meaningful indication that maybe things were improving. Prior to this year, according to Alice, that type of joke would not have been told in mixed race company.

Quantitative Data Analysis

When describing leadership for equity, in the pre-interview, Alice indicated that this kind of leadership was somewhat different (level two). In the post-interview, Alice indicated that this kind of leadership was not much different (level one). In both the pre- and post-interviews, Alice indicated that she was very clear and very confident about her roles and responsibilities on the parent engagement team. These quantitative ratings are not surprising to me, given her particular status as both an African American parent and administrator, as well as knowing a lot about her personal qualities long before the intervention began.

Summary

As before with the dimension of understanding inequities, I cannot find evidence that the intervention activities have had a significant impact on Alice's understanding of leadership for equity. Alice came into this work with deep understanding of leadership and the qualities that leaders need when they confront issues of inequity. In both pre- and post-interviews, she described things in detail and provided examples to substantiate her understanding.

I do notice that in the post-interview, the examples she provides come from the leadership team meetings and the parent engagement events that were part of the intervention design. I also notice in the post-interview that, according to Alice, these activities have given her more confidence and hope that things might be changing in Seaview. Although I must also include the fact that Alice worries about the future. With such low numbers of African American families in Seaview, it is likely that the strength of the new committee will be inconsistent from one year to another. She asks pointedly, *"The parent piece is a moving target…so, how do you sustain that?"*

One other dynamic might also be present in understanding Alice's responses. While I attribute Alice's self-reported ratings and explanations as a result of Alice's professional and personal life experience, it is also important to note that I serve as Alice's direct supervisor. Research methods always emphasize the need to unpack any potential relationships of power that may influence an interviewee's responses. In this case, the relationship of supervisor cannot be underestimated or dismissed. There is always the potential that an employee will want to positively impress their supervisor in order to receive a positive evaluation or to garner future advantages.

Table J.13 Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level three (deep) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 2 indicators: • Empower groups of parents to make decisions that actually have impact • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and with the school staff Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 2 indicators: • Inform parents about how the system works • Empower groups of parents to make decisions that actually have impact	Between level two (some) and level three (deep) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 2 indicators: • Empower groups of parents to make decisions that actually have impact • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and with the school staff Between level two (some) and level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 2 indicators: • Structure policies and resources that embed parent engagement into the system • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence.
Notable Quotes	"Within our own [African American] community, sometimes we do wait for that invitation. A couple of reasons why: we don't want to be rejected and we've seen historically that we've been rejected from positions of leadership and sometimes you don't know how to navigate through that system." "Just like kids don't see others that look like them in the Advanced Placement classes, when someone recognizes you, 1) you don't want to let them down, 2) you're flattered, and 3) sometimes you feel, 'wow, if I do this, maybe that will open up the door for someone else.'" "There was that whole thing about class size and you had a bunch of White parents who stood up at the Board 'we want this' and the Board said 'okay, you've got it.' We [African Americans] don't have that within our own community and if we develop those skills, we could certainly be a player when it comes to affecting change within the school system."	"If I were to look at the efforts we've made to get more people involved in the events then I think we've done a really good job there…in terms of the events and if that's a marker of engagement then I think we've done really well with that, but again going back to the leadership group it's been interesting." "It can also be coming down to qualitative versus quantitative, so if we have some quality Black leadership in your group dynamic then you can get a lot done." "Group strength in numbers; strength in numbers and strength in fiscal dynamics." "We [African Americans] are 5% in the district right now, so we can't compete with others who are 50% strong." "They all want to do what's best for their kids so if the pieces have to come together in terms of a parent being effective in school change versus a parent being effective in their own students change it's a lot different when you are talking about this one particular ethnic group."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Alice; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Alice's responses to understanding parent engagement, I notice that in the pre-interview, Alice is more focused on describing the inequities that African American parents face instead of describing the strategies that either school systems or groups of parents can use to mobilize and engage. For example, in describing the practice of attending school board meetings as a strategy, she describes it as an activity that White parents are successful at doing. In this case, she refers to White parents who wanted lower class sizes and ultimately prevailed by aligning with teachers and flooding the public comment section during board meetings. Another example from Alice's pre-interview was in regards to African American parents who are called to serve on committees and in positions of leadership. Here, she draws a similarity between the parents' feelings as the only African American with the feelings of students in high-level coursework. Namely, they feel isolated as the only minority and they feel overly responsible to represent the African American perspective.

In the post-interview, I notice fewer references to issues of inequity. Instead, when asked to elaborate on her understanding of parent engagement, Alice references some of the success she sees in the recent work of the African American Parent Engagement committee. *"If I were to look at the efforts we've made to get more people involved in the events then I think we've done a really good job there."*

However, as with the previous dimension on leadership for equity, Alice remains concerned that the relatively small size of African Americans in Seaview, as compared to the overall demographics, will always present great challenges to finding good African American parent leaders.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Alice reports having a level three (deep) understanding of parent engagement strategies and in the post-interview, her reported level falls slightly to 'somewhere between level two (some) and level three (deep). On the dimension of understanding how parents influence the school system, the results are the same. In the pre-interview, she reports having a level three (deep) understanding and in the post-interview, she reports having a 'somewhere between a level two (some) and level three (deep) understanding.

On both of these dimensions and in both interviews, however, Alice elaborates with very clear descriptions of the types of strategies that are effective. I interpret this to mean that the quantitative data is relatively limited in nature as a tool to actually communicate or interpret what someone actually understands.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that on this dimension, the intervention has had some impact on what Alice has learned about parent engagement. While she came to the work with a deep understanding, the experiences serving on this committee have given Alice concrete examples of how parents can come together to be more engaged as a group, to express their concerns in relative comfort, and to deepen their commitment to action in service to their children's future. It is also possible, however, that Alice knew these things all along but only now has the relevant experience to connect what she knows to what she has witnessed in action.

Table J.14 Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level two (fair) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Curriculum lacking in rigor and cultural relevance • Little or no ethnic diversity in school staff Level two (fair) understanding of inequities for parents, 2 indicators: • Little or no leadership for equity • Negative stereotypes or deficit thinking about African American parents	Level three (deep) understanding of inequities for students, 2 indicators: • Curriculum lacking in rigor and cultural relevance • Little or no ethnic diversity in school staff Level three (deep) understanding of inequities for parents, 2 indicators: • Little or no leadership for equity • Negative stereotypes or deficit thinking about African American parents
Notable Quotes	"There are not a lot of teachers and administrators who look like [African American students], that they can identify with, so that's another inequality that I feel exist in school. If they don't see anyone that looks like them, they might not open up to that person. They may not feel that individual understands them, so if they can find that someone who looks like them and they can relate to, I feel they would do better with their performance." "I feel that a lot of times the schools do not relay to the parents that, "Hey, your child is excelling really well, so why don't you put them in GATE programs?" "Certainly, you have to pull in order for someone to let you know what your kid can get into.	"I think not being able to identify with teachers or administrators, someone who looks like them, that could be in an inequity for them because they may feel, 'I can't achieve if no one really understands what I'm feeling.'" "Well if you're achieving that's really good because you can move on and you can do Advanced Placement. I mean you can really excel. That is good for you if you plan or go in college. If you're not doing that well, then it could limit you when it comes to college or even day to day if you don't know your basics, you know?" "A lot of times you are not aware of what your children can have access to. I think if you have a really good administrator or teacher that may bring that to your attention, then it will be up to the parent whether or not they want to act on that." "I like the 'math counts workshops' that we had, those were really informative. I like too, how the teachers had the group sessions and they had different games for the different levels. So I think with doing the stuff like that, I think that will really help…I took a lot of notes."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Lisa's responses about inequalities for African American students and parents, I notice that in both interviews, she emphasizes the need for students to have diversity in school staffing and the need for parents to be informed of the system. She explains that students need *'someone who looks like them'* in order for the students to feel like someone understands how they are feeling. This sense of feeling understood, according to Lisa, translates directly to the students' ability to perform academically.

In the post-interview when Lisa described the inequities related to instruction, she used the parent engagement events on mathematics as the example of what she wanted to see more of. Here, she specified that the keynote speaker provided a lot of relevant statistics and good information about inequities related to African American student performance in math. Lisa also went further to compliment the teachers who were available in the breakout sessions to work with parents and their children with hands-on games related to mathematics.

In regards to the inequities for parents, she describes in both the pre- and post-interviews the lack of understanding that parents have with regards to the opportunities that are available in the school system. Lisa names three specific examples: access to Advanced Placement courses, access to Gifted and Talented Education programs, and understanding about Special Education Individual Education Plans. According to Lisa, people in the school system do not inform African American parents of the opportunities that exist for their children. She explains that, unless they are *'really good teachers or administrators, it's not 'brought to the forefront for us.'*

Quantitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Lisa rates herself as having a level two (fair) understanding of student inequities and a level two (fair) understanding of parent inequities. In the post-interview, both of these ratings move from level two (fair) to level three (deep). The qualitative data substantiates this increase through the use of more detail and reference to the experiences found in the parent engagement events.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that Lisa's participation in the intervention had some impact on her learning more about inequities for students and parents. The responses in both the pre- and the post-interviews are very similar in content. However, her self-reported scales on both indicators went up from "fair understanding" to "deep understanding" and her descriptions were more detailed.

Therefore, while I cannot demonstrate evidence that Lisa learned more technical understanding of the inequities related to African American students and parents, I see lots of evidence that the intervention activities did impact her ability to describe the inequities more clearly and to understand how we might change them. Namely, Lisa wants parents to be more informed and she wants students to have more African American teachers who can motivate them to perform better in math.

Table J.15 Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is <u>somewhat</u> different, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between parents and staff Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities, 2 indicators: • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between parents and staff • Ability to care for all students and their families	Leadership for equity is <u>somewhat</u> different, 2 indicators: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity • Leaders with a caring and empathetic character. Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities, 1 indicator: • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between parents and staff
Notable Quotes	"We're targeting one group of people. We're talking about parents, students, teachers and administrators. When you're talking about our group of African-American parents we're trying to reach the parents of the Black students. Our focus is engaging, where PTA, PTSA is not really their focus. I mean they're doing everything on a vast majority, so we're just targeting a certain group of people." "You're not always accepted in certain groups. And so if you want to be part of that group, if you want your children to be part of that group, you as a parent have to engage. Get to know everyone else and so then hopefully, your kid will be accepted and they can be part of this group also." "I feel right now [my responsibility] is talking to other parents, trying to see if they want to be part of the group. Attending meetings we have, any community events we have because the one we had was very good because there were people there that I hadn't met before. There were White people that were part of it who were raising Black children and to talk to them and hear their experiences that they were going through was really beneficial and then with making sure when we have our math parent engagement series."	"The PTSA is not going to focus on the inequities with African American or Hispanics…they are not. They have a certain guideline that they follow: fundraising." "It [leadership] should be focused on making sure that all students, whether they are African American or Hispanic, are on the same level as Caucasian and Chinese students." "We want to focus on African American students. We want to engage in retaining staff, administrators that kids can identify with that's are goal we want to look into suspension making sure its equal across the board." "Because that's our arena. That's why we're there, as opposed to figuring out a fundraiser."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lisa; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership for Equity'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Lisa's responses about leadership for equity, I notice that in both the pre- and post-interviews, Lisa remains focused mostly on recruiting and retaining African American teachers and administrators. For Lisa, this leadership responsibility would provide students with role models who can relate to them and therefore, inspire them to do well in school. Lisa clarifies that part of the team's responsibility is to talk about why this matters.

> *That's when we're talking about how to retain African American teachers and to see why they aren't staying. When we have African American teachers and administrators, we need to make it so it's welcoming to them and they want to stay. Especially when kids identify and get really close to them…I don't want to say it's just about the color of their skin, but they are able relate to them and get more comfortable with them and then it's like, they're gone. 'Who am I going to be able to turn to now?' Sometimes people take that extra step to get to know you and other people just do their job.*

Early on in the school year, the leadership team meeting discussed the departure of two African American staff members. (See Table 5.4, the description of process data from session #1 for details.) While Lisa doesn't make an explicit reference to that meeting, there is clear evidence that the event and the discussion had an impact. Lisa discuss the issue of retaining African American staff at length.

In the post-interview, I also notice that Lisa emphasizes her belief that race matters when it comes to the composition of the leadership team. She appreciates that the group is made up of diverse ethnicities, but when the team recently discussed how to recruit new members, Lisa chose to speak up about her view that we should try as hard as possible to identify and recruit African Americans first. Ultimately, she explains that she is more confident in bringing these sensitive issues forward because the team has been together for a while now and *"that's our forum"* to talk about these things. *"Everyone comes to the table with our different opinions, but we're able to come together to make it work."*

Quantitative Data Analysis

In both pre- and post-interviews, Lisa describes leadership for equity as somewhat different. And in both interviews, the examples she provides include several key indicators and good descriptions of the details for each indicator. Most notably, leadership for equity is different than the type of leadership that the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) provides because we are targeting one group of people based on their ethnicity.

In both pre- and post-interviews, Lisa declares that she is very clear and very confident in her roles and responsibilities. Here she elaborates consistently that this work is about building and strengthening relationships.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that Lisa has learned something more about leadership for equity. Namely, Lisa has learned the value in having a group willing to set aside the more traditional responsibilities like fundraising and instead take the time to discuss sensitive issues related to race. In both the pre- and the post-interviews, she not only describes a few qualities of leadership for equity, but she goes further and uses her experiences from attending

the leadership team meetings to explain how these conversations should take place. According to Lisa, they should be respectful of different points of view and they should not be afraid to talk about race-specific issues that affect student well being.

It is possible, however, that Lisa's clarity and confidence does not come from her participation in the leadership team meeting. It could also very well be related to her many years of active participation as an involved parent who organizes student activities at the high school level. In those capacities, her abilities to build and maintain good working relationships with parents and school staff are of utmost importance to the success of her programs.

Table J.16 Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level three (deep) understanding of student inequities, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American students • Little or no ethnic diversity in school staff Between a 2 (fair) and a 3 (deep) understanding of parent inequities, 1 indicator named: • Lack of support for parent engagement.	Level three (deep) understanding of student inequities, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American students • Curriculum lacking in rigor, cultural relevance Level three (deep) understanding of parent inequities, 2 indicators: • Lack of support for parent empowerment. • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American students
Notable Quotes	"…many of the young Black children and people of color, do not have positive role models. And it was just in the sense important for them to see a role model last year." "Is this a place where they can actually come back [after graduation] and maybe end up being a part of small town favorite? It's nice city. Can they [African American students] see role models…and I know that that's not totally the school district's problem. However it would have been beneficial because that's the place of education." "With single parents they become more of 'latchkey kids' and they tend to hope that when they send them to school, the school is going to take over that role and as they say 'do that job and send me home with that successful child' but there might be something else that child needs, that child might need you or want you to be there."	"You know most of these young people we've talked to, they feel like people don't care. They look at the demographics of the district and there's a belief that you know, if you're not participating in athletics and something that receives immediate gratifications then you just go through the motions. With them seeing the district starting to reach out in areas that are important to them, then that I can see it can give them a sense of pride and motivation." "One of our members that had a situation where I believe was on his Math that was you know, excluded for a point or two and she felt that would preclude him from going to the AP Classes." "Then they [African American parents] sit back and they'll suffer in silence until someone shares the same problem with them. They'll say, 'oh that's just the way [things are.]' But, it's not just the way [things are]. Are you accessing the right individuals to find out the answers to your questions?

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

   Qualitative Data Analysis
   In examining Sam's response to questions about understanding inequalities, I notice that in the pre-interview, Sam focuses on a comparison of Seaview to other school communities. He and his family have lived in other school district communities before coming to Seaview, so he frames his description of inequity differently than the other participants in the study. In this regard, Sam views Seaview as the better school district when it comes to preparing students for college and having a strong level of support from the community. He names the fact that in Seaview, there are generations of school graduates who remain connected. However, he also notices that, *"what Seaview tends to lack is the understanding of the need for diversity."*
   I also notice in the pre-interview that Sam describes inequalities using broad societal issues including the differences found in various sectors of the workforce, issues related to different post-high school pathways for students, and the experiences 'outsiders' may have trying to fit into a small, upper middle class community. There is a marked difference in the responses found in the post-interview. Here, he uses examples from the intervention activities to describe inequities. He re-tells stories about the conversations we had during leadership team meetings to highlight inequity in math placement. And, he describes in detail how he interprets the feelings of team members when they argue about working with the public school bureaucracy.
   I notice an understanding about inequities related to mathematics that transcend the more common topics of tracking, access to Advanced Placement, and college admissions. In both the pre- and post-interviews, Sam describes mathematics as a content area that defines a student's identity in both school and in life. He connects math performance to a student's sense of intelligence and confidence. He also carefully describes how confidence in math begins at an early age and can impact a person's level of confidence throughout their career.
   I notice that Sam describes parent inequities differently in the pre-interview as compared to the post-interview. In the pre-interview, he situates parent inequities as issues of the larger society. Lower socio-economic status and single parenthood are used to highlight what African American students have to face when trying to be successful in school. However, in the post-interview, Sam's describes parent involvement and school engagement activities as ways to highlight the inequities that African American parents face. In both situations, Sam places an emphasis on a parent's responsibility. But in the post-interview, the descriptions are much more proactive and Sam uses examples from our parent engagement events as models that we should be using in schools.

   Quantitative Data Analysis
   In both the pre- and post-interviews, Sam reports his level of understanding of student inequities as level three (deep). He substantiates his ratings with elaborate examples related to both academic and social-emotional well-being. On the dimension of understanding parent inequities, there is a slight increase from pre- to post-interview. In the pre-interview, Sam rates his level of understanding as 'between two (fair) and three (deep). In the post-interview, Sam rates his level of understanding as level three (deep.) Here, he shifts from describing parent engagement issues in the pre-interview to parent empowerment issues in the post-interview, which indicates to me that the quantitative data is a reliable indicator of growth.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that the intervention activities have had an impact on Sam's understanding of the inequities that African American students and parents face. While in both pre- and post-interviews, he demonstrates a deep understanding about the topics, the post-interview includes examples that are more specific and rooted in the experiences from participating as a team member.

Of all the participants, I found Sam's interviews to be the most interesting. Sam's responses included descriptions that compared different types of school communities. Having lived in two other very large and poor school districts, and now living in this very small and upper middle-class school community, Sam was able to provide a more nuanced collection of examples that clarified his responses about inequities. He also connected aspects of inequity inside school to issues found in other institutions outside of school. No other participant carried such a deep understanding of life outside of Seaview.

Table J.17 Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is not much different, (and shouldn't be different at all), 2 indicators: • Caring and empathetic character • Moral compass Between somewhat and very clear about roles and responsibilities. Very confident in roles and responsibilities, 1 indicator: • Trusting relationships, following through on commitments.	Leadership for equity is <u>very</u> different, 2 indicators: • Caring and empathetic character for all students and their families • Trusting relationships, leaders who follow through on their commitments Very clear and very confident in roles and responsibilities, 2 indicators: • Caring and empathetic character for all students and their families, emphasis on younger generations • Include engaging activities for parents, students and staff.
Notable Quotes	"Newt Gingrich said that the reason why people were disappointed with Obama is because it's going to take a White male to point it [inequity] out because as an African-American leader, he can speak to it, but the people that he's trying to make an impression on… did they understand it?" "And I think that's one of the major things for African Americans is fear of failure. They just you know, it always blows my mind. I always tell them about Barry Bonds. What you know about him? Homerun game. What else does he need the majors in? Strike outs. Every time he hit a home run, he had to strike out. 5, or 6, or 7, 8 times." "[The team is] listening because many things I say doesn't require an answer. It's just to provoke a thought. The last time when I said, so we're dealing with the "talented ten."	"This group may find even though we try to [maintain certain monthly routines,] you can throw an incident in and that's only going to take the whole focus to a whole different level and that could last a month, you know?" "Well I try to be more of a facilitator and supporter and the reason for that is [I'm older]. Unless it's offered, you try to assist those who are going to come up in the system and you know, this is you want to make sure they feel comfortable. For example, we had the young man at the Black History program with a younger child in the district."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Sam's responses to understanding leadership for equity, I notice significant differences between the types of examples he provides in the pre-interview as compared to the post-interview. In the pre-interview, he uses examples from the larger society or from history to describe the types of leadership needed. For example, he talks about the effect of having an African American United States President. He questions whether White people can really learn from an African American leader when he quotes Newt Gingrich as saying that *'it's going to take a White male to point out the inequities.'*

I notice in the post-interview that Sam includes parent leadership for other children as one characteristic, which reminded me of Maia Cucchiara's study, published in 2009, finding that a collective perspective of parent involvement had a more positive effect than an individualistic perspective. In essence, Sam knows that when you lead for all children instead of just your own child, everyone benefits.

Sam also characterizes patience and flexibility as a very important quality and uses examples from our work together on the parent engagement team. For example, he refers to the request that the team made to diversify the staff and then names the challenge that the district faces when within the same school year; the team wants to know if we've made any progress.

I also notice that in the post-interview, when he describes qualities of leadership for equity, he uses examples from the leadership team meetings to elaborate. He refers to the time when some members struggled with the bureaucracy of approving contracts before publishing an event flyer:

> *The parent felt in a sense that they were being deceived, that they were not being informed when if you do follow government, you realize there are stages, as always brought to our attention. There are certain things that need approval. So you know, calendars are calendars and agendas are agendas. It's not as if you work in a situation where all you do is call up and say 'hey, Donald Trump. I need such and such.'*

Finally, I notice that in the post-interview, he qualifies leadership for equity as very different. This is a change from the pre-interview response of "not much different." And again here he qualifies his response with a description of all the times when the group began the meetings with what appeared to be a normal agenda of planning and programming. When leading for equity, he clarifies, *"you have to be prepared for the fact that something may just pop up and if the group feels that way, we should be able to be flexible enough to be able shift focus and then come back and still try to get the other one done in a timely manner also."*

Quantitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Sam declares that leadership for equity is not much different and then in the post-interview, he declares that leadership for equity is very different. He clarifies that the difference is rooted mainly in the fact that leadership for equity is less predictable and controlled. He describes that leadership for equity must be prepared to deal with unexpected events and issues, like an upset parent, a disagreement, or a misunderstanding.

In the pre-interview Sam states that his level of clarity is between level two (somewhat) and level three (very) about his roles and responsibilities. In both pre- and post-interviews, Sam states that he is very confident in his roles and responsibilities. On this dimension, Sam is clear that he positions himself as an elder who needs to encourage the younger parents. Sam's

youngest child will be graduating from high school this year and most of the other parents have young children in elementary school. So, for Sam it is very important that he encourage them to take up the cause to lead this work. In fact, Sam regularly sits on the outer edges of the room and contributes by offering deeper questions instead of detailed ideas.

Summary

I interpret these findings to indicate that Sam has learned something more about leadership for equity, but there is also plentiful evidence that Sam's experiences in life were all related and available for Sam to refer to as he participated on the team. In some ways, I wonder if Sam was also elaborating in the hope that I would be learning, which thankfully was often what was actually happening during the interviews. His phrases were often shaped in a way that encouraged me to remember these ideas he was bringing to the table.

While both pre- and post-interview responses demonstrate a deep understanding of how leadership works, the post-interview responses refer to particular events that demonstrate what leaders need to know and be able to do in each situation. In particular, be patient and allow space for lots of emotion when listening to parent concerns. Be inclusive of others and their capacity to lead, especially if they are younger and have more potential for lasting impact in the school system. And, finally, keep helping parents understand how the system works so that they learn how to identify their points of access without getting frustrated or disengaged.

Table J.18 Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	**Post-Interview Data**
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, no indicators named. Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 2 indicators: • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence • Inform parents about how the school system works	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 1 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and with school staff Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the system, 2 indicators: • Include engaging activities for parents, students, and staff • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence
Notable Quotes	"One thing that a teacher needs is to be able to see the parent behind that student and the relationship that exists between the two." "When I was coming up and some of the kids that were bussed during the [days of bussing], there was a thought in the black community that if I was bussed to the other High School, it was a better school and I'm going to learn more. Well you know, you can't legislate hearts and minds and many black parents felt that if it's a better school district, they got it but they don't make their presence known which actually helps the school actually recognize that there is another group of parents that we have to serve not just the children."	"As long as they [parents] are present in being part of the solutions rather than the problems. It's the small things you can do, you know? So people see, you know?" "My wife is a volunteer, that's to help her and other girls. That's an investment so we're not just telling our daughter to go to school. We might as well get involved. You have to get involved. You have to meet the people in an environment other than when you go to have a problem." "Provide parents with opportunities that may spark their interests to come in and see what's going on. Make sure you introduce yourself, lend your hand, and welcome them. Try to motivate them to come back."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Sam; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis
In examining Sam's responses to understanding parent engagement, I notice significant differences between the pre-interview and the post-interview quotes. I notice in the pre-interview that Sam focuses parent engagement as a one-on-one relationship between the parent and the teacher. When asked about how parents influence the system, he described a situation in his own childhood when they were prevented from influencing the system. Here, he talked about the practice of bussing students to a far away high school that was perceived by parents to be better, but because of the distance, prevented them from being involved.

In the post-interview, Sam referred to the experiences he and his wife have as active volunteers inside Seaview schools. He refers to the engagement events that the team hosted and the several times when Sam and his wife focused on greeting new attendees and encouraged them to return to the next event. Several times, he clarifies that parents should be involved not only when there are problems to resolve, but also when there are opportunities to meet new people and show the school staff that the parents care about the students' success.

Quantitative Data Analysis
In both the pre- and post-interviews, Sam reported a level two (fair) understanding of parent engagement strategies. In both pre- and post-interviews, Sam reported a level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence change in the school system. On both dimensions, the descriptions Sam provided substantiate his self-reported scores, but as the qualitative data shows, the reference to our engagement activities helped Sam describe issues in more detail.

Summary
I interpret these findings to indicate that Sam's participation in the intervention has had an effect on his understanding of parent engagement strategies. While from pre- and post-interviews, he demonstrated an understanding about why parent engagement is important, the post-interview responses show evidence from his experience that he knows positive relationships matter. *"You have to get involved. You have to meet the people in an environment other than when you go to have a problem."*

Table J.19 Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequities'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 1 **Indicators for Inequities**	Level three (deep) understanding of inequities for African American students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American students • Curriculum lacking in rigor, cultural relevance Level three (deep) understanding of inequities for African American parents, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American parents	Level three (deep) understanding of inequities for African American students, 2 indicators: • Negative stereotypes against African American students, reference to discipline, higher level coursework • Curriculum lacking in rigor, cultural relevance Between level two (some) and level three (deep) understanding of inequities for African American parents, 1 indicator: • Negative stereotypes and deficit thinking against African American parents
Notable Quotes	"I think that most commonly, it's not deliberate. We just sort of put students in certain buckets and then discipline and grading, things like that become inequitable. Just sort of, what do they call it, 'unconscious bias' definitely happens even with the most well-intended teachers." "And I went and talked to the teacher and she said "This is all I expect," and I said "Well, I expect more because my daughter is going to college so you have to push her, you have to challenge her," but he was willing to just accept that and I know that if it hadn't been for me pushing her, if I had been a parent that had not gone to college or didn't know how to navigate through high school to get your child prepared for college, she would not have gone to college." "So sometimes kids of color get lost in that because it's just assumed that they come from a lower income household, the parents are uneducated, that they're barely going to graduate and then forget about going to college."	"These inequities have existed since the beginning of time and I remember reading in 'The Mis-Education of a Negro,' Carter G. Woodson, which was written in 1931, the same inequities that he stated in 1931 still exist in 2017." The behavior and academics go hand-in-hand. If you have a student who's having some problems at home and he's bringing them to the classroom then they're going to get a referral out of classroom and they're going to sit in the principal's office for half a day and then get suspended." "So whenever I would go meet with the teacher they would be shocked. I always felt that they had some misguided perception about me and then when I would sit in front of them and I would speak to them they would change that attitude. I got this sense that they thought that I was going to come in and blame them for everything."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 1 'Understanding Inequalities'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Lucy's self-reported ratings about understanding inequities for African American students and parents, I notice that she substantiated her ratings with lengthy descriptions of her own experiences as an African American high school student, an African American parent of a high school student, as well as her experiences as an enrollment and guidance counselor in public education.

In both the pre- and post-interviews, she described teachers who had low expectations of her in mathematics and teachers who had low expectations for her daughter's performance in school. She also described her understanding of the pipeline to prison concept whereby students, especially African American students, who can't ready by the end of 3rd grade are more likely to end up in prison. She linked this an extensive description of the disproportionate rates of discipline referrals and suspensions for African American students.

Quantitative Data Analysis

In both the pre- and post-interviews, Lucy rated herself as having level three (deep) understanding of inequities related to students. And while her examples substantiate her understanding, they also imply that her understanding comes more from her experience as an African American parent and as a school guidance counselor, as opposed to her participation on the parent engagement team.

In both the pre-interview, Lucy rated herself as having a level three (deep) understanding of inequities for parents. Surprisingly though, in the post-interview Lucy rated herself as having only a level two (fair) understanding. In both interviews, the descriptions were rooted in her personal life experiences and not from the activity on the parent engagement team.

Summary

I interpret this set of pre- and post-interview responses to indicate that Lucy's participation in the intervention had little effect on her learning more about specific inequities for African American students and parents. I find that, likely because of her background as an African American parent and a school district employee, she was already keenly aware of negative stereotypes, bias against intelligence and behavior, and bias against parents long before she began participating in the work. Her pre-interview responses were as in depth and detailed as her post-interview responses. Furthermore, her descriptions were all rooted in personal or professional experience. She did not make any reference to experiences that came through her participation on the African American parent engagement team.

Table J.20 Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 2 **Indicators for Leadership**	Leadership for equity is <u>somewhat</u> different, 2 indicators: • High degree of respect for students and parents from all cultures • Ability to build and strengthen relationships between teachers and parents <u>Somewhat</u> clear with a <u>high level</u> of confidence in roles and responsibilities, 1 indicator: • Build trusting relationships and follow through on commitments	Leadership for equity is <u>not much</u> different, 1 indicator: • Ability to recognize and confront issues of inequity <u>Somewhat</u> clear and <u>somewhat</u> confident in roles and responsibilities, no specific indicators mentioned.
Notable Quotes	"You may not be an expert in every culture, but you can certainly have a certain sensitivity and awareness that culturally, things can be different." "I think that...also as leaders, the curriculum needs to be all inclusive and you can do that without saying, 'Okay, it's Black history month, so we're going to read novels by Black people or novels about Black people, only during this time of the year.'" "Now with the Black parent engagement team, one of our concerns definitely is curriculum and recruitment of African American teachers. I don't see any other group having that as a focus." "I don't think I have any set roles except as a participant and when there's an event that's coming."	"You have to deal with equity the same way you deal with Math, the same way you deal with – let's just say you want to introduce new textbooks, you have to deal with these issues all the same way." "The difference is when you have a parent group, an African American parent group, we're only going to deal with how attendance is affecting African American students, how the textbooks are affecting the African American students, how discipline is affecting the African American students." "I'm able to contribute my thoughts and my ideas. I'm able to contribute my time and I see it as a service to the District, to students, to the parents. I don't know if my contribution to this group is making a difference in the District or not but I feel like someone's listening. It gives us a platform to have a voice."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 2 'Understanding Leadership'

    Qualitative Data Analysis

In examining Lucy's responses, I notice that overall, her pre-interview responses provided more detail and clarity about her understanding of leadership for equity. While in both pre- and post-interviews, Lucy claimed that leadership for equity is fairly similar to other types of leadership, the pre-interview responses described skills in recognizing problems in curriculum, working to recruit and hire a more diverse staff, and seeing the African American Parent Engagement team as unique in its focus on issues of inequity.

In the pre-interview, Lucy is reluctant to qualify herself as having clear roles, but then goes on to describe in detail the multitude of tasks that she accomplished in the prior year planning events, as well as the people she partnered with to accomplish tasks. She described herself as having a unique position as both an African American parent and as a former employee at the district office. With those positions, she stated that others treated her as an asset and portrayed her as an insider who could share information about how things really work inside the system. In the post-interview, she actually described her roles and responsibilities with less clarity. *"I see myself as a contributor, I think,"* and *"I don't know if my contribution to this group is making a difference"* seem to me to communicate a diminished sense of capacity, but one that is undeserved. In all likelihood, based on my observations, Lucy is one of the stronger and more dependable participants on the team.

On another level, I recognize that in the post-interview when probed to describe the leadership qualities of the African American parent engagement team, she did clearly describe a strengthened capacity for herself and others in the group to have disagreements respectfully and to reflect deeply on what she heard from others. Lucy states, *"So even if someone says something that I don't necessarily agree with or I don't understand, I listen to them. And sometimes I may even think about what they said on my drive home. Then, maybe it makes sense to me after I've thought about it. But we don't shut anyone down in the group."*

    Quantitative Data Analysis

In the pre-interview, Lucy states that leadership for equity is somewhat different and then in the post-interview, she states that it is not much different. The qualitative responses substantiate this change in perception. The pre-interview qualifications focus on differences in culture and the needs for curriculum to emphasize those differences. The post-interview responses focus on the similarities leadership qualities have, regardless of the program or purpose the leader is focused on.

In the pre-interview, Lucy states that she is somewhat clear and very confident in her roles and responsibilities. In the post-interview, Lucy states that she is somewhat clear and somewhat confident in her roles and responsibilities. I cannot determine why there would be a shift away from feeling very confident. In fact, over time, Lucy took on more responsibilities that placed her in the spotlight of attention. Namely, she spoke in front of groups more frequently, designed the program for the Black History Month celebration and published it to the committee to receive feedback, and spoke up more frequently during engagement team meetings. During difficult conversations, she also spoke about her clear point of view and at the same time, helped mediate between different points of view from other participants. Therefore, on this dimension, the quantitative data doesn't substantiate the qualitative data.

Summary

I interpret these findings to be mixed. On one level, Lucy's responses do not indicate evidence that her understanding of leadership is any deeper than when she began to participate. In fact, if I only review the interview transcripts, then there is evidence that her understanding has somewhat diminished. Actually, I prefer to doubt the interview findings as opposed to claiming that her understanding has in fact diminished.

On another level, Lucy's responses do indicate that relationships on the parent engagement team have strengthened and those relationships help the group have difficult conversations about how to move work forward. During the interview, she described a recent debate about whether the year should end with a celebration or with a town-hall meeting to listen to parents' concerns. Lucy remarked, *"And I get that, I understand that and maybe, I think the group wanted a deeper discussion about what our goals are, what we've done over the past year. And I totally understand that and I'm not against that, that's why I offered the next suggestion, which I thought okay, this might be crazy but instead of having a town hall maybe we present to the Board?"*

Table J.21 Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

	Pre-Interview Data	Post-Interview Data
Dimension 3 **Indicators for Parent Engagement**	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 2 indicators: • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and the school system • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the school system, 1 indicator: • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence	Level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies, 3 indicators: • Include engaging activities for parents, students, and staff • Create space and time for parents to build relationships with each other and the school system • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence Level three (deep) understanding of how parents influence the school system, 1 indicator: • Include activities that bring parents together with others who have influence
Notable Quotes	"Well, you have to call, I know that's one of the main ways to get African American families to engage is the personal touch." "When you're that visible, the administrators see you and when there's, you know a specific item coming up on the board that they need parent input, there is an event that they want a parent to speak out or something that they're going to talk to... they're going to the parents that they see most often." "Also unfortunately complaining [helps change the system], that's another way that parents' voices get heard and action starts and gets the ball rolling for whatever action that they want, whatever outcome that they want. When parents send letters to the Superintendent or request to meet with the Superintendent or go to the board with a complaint."	"I know that if you have a person's child performing at an event, then that parent is going to come. If you're doing something that's a cultural event like our Black History Event, that's going to encourage parents to come. If you're doing the Math Night although it was a school, a district-wide event." "So, it's having the events that are specific to African American students, having events where an African American student is participating so that brings the parents, the personal touches, the phone calls, the emails, when you see them in the grocery store or at the school pick up, you talk and you say "Hey, this is what we're doing." The meet and greet I thought was the great idea. It gave us an opportunity to just – without an agenda just to talk and be there." "It's not just chaperoning field trips, I mean it can, that's a start. But it's also being at Board meetings, it's emailing the Superintendent. It's having that access to you and to the Superintendent and to the other administrators that I think makes the difference, but parents need to know that they have that access. In this district we have a lot of access to the Superintendent."

Analysis of Interview Findings for Lucy; Dimension 3 'Understanding Parent Engagement'

Qualitative Data Analysis

In analyzing Lucy's responses I find it encouraging that in the post-interview, Lucy referenced the casual 'meet-and-greet' social event hosted in the city park, the parent engagement events focused on success in mathematics, and the Black History Month celebration. For each of these, she linked a specific purpose. For the 'meet and greet,' she recognized that as *"an opportunity to just – without an agenda – just talk and be there,"* as well as something people talked about long afterwards. For the math engagement series and the Black History Month celebrations, Lucy named these as opportunities to include children into as a way to encourage parents to attend.

Lucy also referenced a strategy we used to promote our events. In addition to mass emails, announcements in school bulletins and on websites, we also made personal telephone calls to every African American family in the district. I pulled the reports from the district database, another member coordinated the logistics, and everyone was assigned about 25 names and numbers. The calls were expected to simply advertise the event date, time, and location. But often, team members who completed their calls described opportunities to talk further with some parents who wanted to know more about the committee or wanted to express their thanks for reaching out. In the post-interview, Lucy mentions this specifically as a *"personal touch that parents appreciated."*

Quantitative Data Analysis

In both the pre- and post-interview, Lucy reported that she had a level two (some) understanding of parent engagement strategies. However, in the post-interview the qualitative data indicates that she may have, in fact, increased her understanding. During the post-interview, Lucy made very clear connections between the various events and their specific purposes, some being specifically social and others being more educational. In both the pre- and post-interviews, Lucy reported that she had a level three (deep) understanding of how parents can influence the school system. Her descriptions from both pre- and post-interviews substantiate her understanding. They include the types of strategies that are found in the literature. Namely, she describes parents who network together to identify and address specific problems.

Summary

On this dimension of parent engagement, I can see evidence that Lucy's participation in the intervention had an impact on her learning about effective strategies that work to engage African American parents. While she already knew about how parents in general can influence the school system by being present, being noticed by administrators, and banding together to express concerns, the post-interview descriptions are more nuanced and specific as to what she believes will work for African American parents. Namely, she describes events that celebrate African American culture, events that are specific to African American issues without excluding others, and leadership team meetings that engage in difficult conversations.

Appendix K: Field note taking guide for Process Data

	Session # and Title
Summary	
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	
What are my own reflections from this session?	
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	

Appendix L: Summary Tables and Analysis of Process Data

Table L.1 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #2

	Session #2: Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	The meeting reviewed and discussed the goals for the school year. There were some new members on the team who were not part of the group in the previous year. The group reviewed a draft calendar of parent engagement events and leadership team meetings. The emphasis was action-oriented and focused on planning and coordinating event details, such as choosing the best dates, times, and locations.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	The participants in the meeting discussed issues related to inequity as they reviewed this year's goals for parent engagement. Participants identified five distinct needs related to inequity: 1. <u>African American parents need to have a chance to express their concerns.</u> This was part of the discussion on planning parent engagement activities. When and how would we host a town hall meeting? 2. <u>African American parents needed to know about the important of mathematics achievement.</u> They need to know about high school course progressions, Advanced Placement courses, college admission requirements, intervention and support classes, elementary and middle school mathematics. One parent on the team was very upset with the teacher's recommendation for her child's math placement. She disagreed that her child was not placed in the highest level of math and claimed it was unfair to make the decision based on only one test or a few points missed from an absence. 3. <u>African American parents needed to know how the school system works.</u> They needed to know about their rights to challenge a course placement and to ask for tutoring from the high school counseling department, how to apply for AP coursework and AP exams. 4. <u>All people in the school community need to know about these issues as well.</u> This is not exclusive to African American families and when others are part of the conversation, there is a better chance at reaching our goals. 5. <u>People need to know more about the inter-district permit process.</u> In the past, when the District needed to increase enrollment, inter-district permits were made available and more African American students from the neighboring cities chose to enroll. While today, the vast majority of African American families live within the city limits; there is a misperception that many don't live in Seaview.

	Notwithstanding, those parents who don't live in the city limits need to be engaged. 6. <u>African American parents need to receive a lot of communication from the leadership team.</u> They need information about the upcoming events and the overall goals of this leadership team.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that the participants identified the following actions: 1. There was a lengthy discussion about proactively reaching out to parents. Participants wanted to make personal phone calls and we needed to coordinate the details related to identifying a coordinator, pulling reports from the database, assigning each member a list, writing a script, and identifying the best times to call. 2. Participants took responsibility to craft their messages carefully so that the topics remain focused on the needs of African American students, but that all community members would be welcome to attend and participate. 3. Participants took responsibility to arrange the details for the first parent engagement seminar on mathematics.

What are my own reflections from this session?	I felt encouraged by the discussions and the outcomes that were realized during this meeting. There was a strong sense of shared commitment. The action-oriented approach was very much in alignment with my roles and responsibilities as an administrator in the District. There was one difficult conversation where a parent shared her frustration about her child's math placement. The personal story helped motivate the team members to keep their commitments to focusing on mathematics achievement.
	     In this meeting, we targeted a long list of responsibilities, articulated a lot of details and next steps, and followed up regularly with each other using email. The telephone campaign project was successful. Every African American parent in the District received a telephone call inviting him or her to the parent engagement series on mathematics. An African American expert in the field of math and parent engagement was identified and I was coordinating the plans for the District to enter into a contract agreement. There were plans made for refreshments, materials, and supplies to be available.
	     One key feature of the planning was the decision to host a keynote speech combined with an opportunity for parents to be engaged in mathematics exercises with their children. Therefore, we chose to plan for events that included children. We planned for a 30-minute keynote speech to be followed by a 60-minute break out session, one for each division of the district: Elementary, Middle, and High School.
	     We chose to identify and encourage teachers to plan for and

	facilitate the breakout sessions. This would help build relationships between parents and their math teachers. It would also help the District build capacity in the math teachers to recognize and respond to issues of inequity in their math instruction.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I interpret my observations to indicate that participants were engaged in an experience that directly related to their learning on all three dimensions: equity, leadership, and parent engagement. The participants clearly identified issues of inequity related to racial discrimination and the relevance of mathematics achievement. They discussed these issues openly and honestly with other African American parents, teachers, and school leaders in the group. They described the impact on students and then identified ways to respond collectively. Evidence that this event had an impact can be found in the post-interview transcripts. Some participants used this event as an example when describing inequities, qualities of leadership, and parent engagement strategies.

Table L.2 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #3

	Session #3: Parent Engagement Event, "Casual Meet and Greet"
Summary	This was planned in advance using mostly email communication between the members of the team. The goal was to provide a space in a public venue for African American families to come together casually. There would be no agenda, no public speeches, and no planned activities. There would be cookies, juice, and coffee in the public park on a Saturday morning between 10am and 12noon. People in the community could stop by whenever they had some free time.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	I was not able to attend and therefore, did not take field notes during the event. However, I did note that during the planning phase the participants identified the following needs related to equity: 1. African American parents need to meet each other in a casual setting so that they can get to know each other's names, interact with each other's children, and strengthen their sense of belonging together in the community. 2. African American parents need to meet various staff from the school district in a casual setting with no agenda to discuss school business. 3. Seaview Community members need to see that African American families are a part of their community.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that the participants identified the following actions: 1. They would plan to purchase refreshments and have them available in the park at 10:00am. 2. They would create a flyer that would be made available on all school sites, an email that would be sent to all African American families, and an announcement that would be placed in every school's Principal newsletter. 3. They would talk about the event with their friends, family members, students, and staff.
What are my own reflections from this session?	During the couple of weeks leading up to the event, I received a few calls from other District officials and community leaders asking if the event was only for African American families or if they could also attend to show their support. I encouraged them to attend. This made me wonder about how issues of inequity for a specific ethnic group could be addressed without creating a sense of separation and isolation for others in the community. I needed to take care of some personal family matters and I was disappointed that I could not attend. I wondered if my absence would be perceived as a lack of support.

	After the event, participants sent their photos to me and to the District communications coordinator so that we could post the event on our District website and social media pages.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	Participants talked at lot about this event afterwards. They noted that at one point, there were about fifty African American people all together. They noted that the city Mayor and the school district Superintendent attended the event.
	Participants described this event as "a first for Seaview." They noted that a group of mostly African Americans had probably never gathered before in the city park on a Saturday morning. That level of visibility was impressive to the participants.
	They described a story about a police car pulling up and for a moment many wondered if a crowd of mostly African Americans had sparked a call of concern from a neighbor. In fact, the police officer was simply noticing the event and wanted to say hello.
	Evidence that this event had an impact can be found in the post-interview transcripts. Some participants used this event as an example when describing inequities, qualities of leadership, and parent engagement strategies.

Table L.3 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #4

	Session #4: Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	This meeting was scheduled in order to review final details for the parent engagement series on mathematics achievement. Participants were reporting on their progress and bringing questions or next steps to discuss. The meeting was dominated by a very difficult conversation about the timing of the communication to parents and the timing of the school board approval of the contract for the guest speaker. We were all eager to begin communicating and the consultant was a key feature that would attract parents. The parent who volunteered to prepare the flyer presented a product that included the name and picture of the consultant. Participants described this as a big deal because the flyer served as a symbol of our progress towards publicly naming and advertising an issue of inequity. However, the school board had not yet approved the contract and it would be another week before that would occur. As the District office representative, this was my responsibility and when I clarified the timing for the process, it created a tense situation that needed to be discussed. People expressed a lot of frustration. Some of the participants felt discouraged that the District had not yet approved the contract. They were not familiar with the bi-monthly schedule of Board meetings and the long period of time necessary from introducing a contract to approving a contract. Explaining this timeline did not help diffuse the frustration. They felt that the disjointed timing created a situation where the African American Parent Engagement team would look bad no matter which next steps would be taken. If we advertised the event without the keynote speaker featured, then the event would be less appealing. If we advertised the event with the keynote speaker featured, but before Board approval, then the Board would not be pleased with our presumption. And if we waited until after Board approval, then we would appear to be advertising too close to the event date. Any of these situations were perceived to make the team look bad. Some even suggested that other people in the community would be looking for this group to make mistakes and now here was their opportunity. We discussed and debated these issues for almost an hour. Near the end, some participants were ready to accept matters as they were and move on. We chose to send a "SAVE THE DATE" announcement and a follow-up message after the contract is approved.

Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	The participants discussed one key issues related to inequity: Several participants focused on the bureaucratic functions of the District. On this dimension, I had overlooked my responsibility to inform them earlier about the time it would take to approve a contract. With this gap in understanding, parents on the team felt misguided and unappreciated and I felt terribly irresponsible.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that the participants identified the following actions: 1. Discuss and debate issues respectfully. Even when emotions run high, it was important not to focus on blame and instead focus on people. This concept was reinforced later in the post-interview responses. 2. Identify issues that appear to discourage the efforts and then work around them with different strategies. A few of the participants began to ask that we move beyond the problem and keep supporting the work.
What are my own reflections from this session?	This was challenging for me because of my position in the District as the one responsible for negotiating the contracts and bringing them to the Board for approval. Furthermore, my position on this team is geared to increase systemic access and to remove bureaucratic barriers. I'm here, in part, to revise policies like the Local Control Accountability Plan and the Mathematics Placement protocols so that this team can function successfully. I could have anticipated the particular conflicts between timing, protocols, and action.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I interpret my observations that this experience had some effect for some of the participants and their learning on two dimensions: 2) leadership for equity and 2) inequalities for African American parents. On the dimension of leadership for equity, some of the participants learned more about the importance of understanding the system and how to function within the constraints of a bureaucracy. On the dimension of inequalities for African American parents, the conflict surfaced some assumptions about how others in the community would perceive this work with a deficit frame of mind. According to the participants, people outside of the African American community would be looking for this group to make mistakes. This experience was mentioned in some of the post-interview transcripts as a feature of leadership for equity.

Table L.4 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Sessions #6, #8, & #9

	Session #6, #8, and #9: Parent Engagement Series on Mathematics Achievement for African American Students
Summary	These events were hosted in a large school library in the early evenings during the winter months of November, December, and January. They began with a keynote speech by an African American expert in the field of Mathematics Success for African American students. There were approximately 125 attendees, adults and children, at the first event, and 30 to 50 attendees at the second and third events. The keynote speeches focused on two major topics: 1) naming and describing issues of inequity for African American students in mathematics and 2) the strategies that schools and parents can use to address the inequities. The keynote speaker used data points directly from Seaview schools to highlight the inequities in academic achievement and course enrollment. After naming and describing the inequities, the presentation moved to a description of the shifts made in adopting the common core standards. Each event had a specific theme: #1 = Perseverance, #2 = Common Core Content, #3 = Advocacy and Resiliency.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	I found that taking field notes on participant behaviors was not possible during these events. I was not able to work closely with any of the participants, as we were all busy spending time with other parents, students, administrators, and community members. There is one significant exception to this gap in data collection. It took place during the third event, near the end of the keynote speech. One of the attendees, an African American parent who was new to the District, raised his hand and described his concerns that these events appeared to characterize the problems as primarily a result of parents. He described his point of view that the District was sponsoring the events in order to lay responsibility onto the African American parents for their children's lack of success. He cautioned the District to look inside the system at issues of inequity that appear in teacher bias, systemic exclusion and tracking, and a lack of support for parent involvement. Participants from the leadership team responded respectfully, yet firmly to defend their efforts. About four different participants responded one at a time. They described the efforts teachers were making to re-work their curriculum and the efforts the District was making to re-work the progression of math courses, especially at the high school. As a group of parents and school staff, we were working in partnership with each other and invited the parent to join us at the next leadership meeting.

Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noted that through their actions, participants were taking responsibilities that aligned to issues of inequity: 1. African American parents need strong relationships with each other and with school staff. On this dimension, participants encouraged parents to bring their children. They also engaged in conversation with the attendees and encouraged some of them to join the leadership team. 2. During the one episode where the attendee expressed his concerns, the attendees declared their work as a partnership with shared responsibilities to address inequities by changing things inside the system, as well as engaging parents to learn more about their roles as parents.
What are my own reflections from this session?	I felt very proud of the parent engagement team because of their accomplishments in remaining true to their goals. The team worked hard during the leadership team meetings to negotiate their responsibilities with each other. They spent hours in between to make sure all of the tasks were completed and then they engaged well with parents during all of the events. To me, while there wasn't as much specific process data to collect, the events represented to me that these participants had built substantially stronger relationships with each other. They were building confidence in their capacity to establish and reach their goals.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	In advance, I had expected to collect lots of evidence that these parent engagement events would demonstrate learning. Instead, while the events were lively and full of activity, I was surprised that I couldn't pinpoint any particular behaviors that exemplify learning. I do note the one situation where the participants responded to the parent's concern. To me this indicates that the participants were learning something on the dimension of parent engagement. Namely, they recognized the need to create space and time for parents to express their concerns. There is evidence in the post-interviews that this event had an impact.

Table L.5 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #7

	Session #7 Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	This meeting agenda included a chance to check in and refine any responsibilities for the upcoming parent engagement event #2 on mathematics. But, because so many details were covered in previous meetings, there was also time to look ahead and articulate plans for the future. The participants each offered their ideas on a concern that needed to be addressed by the committee.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	The participants discussed issues related to improving efforts for parent engagement. Each participant was asked to name an area of needed improvement and to name an action that would respond appropriately to the need. In total, 11 concerns were offered. • Concern #1: December is challenging for some people. Suggestion not to schedule parent engagement in December. • Concern #2: The committee needs to expand the membership. This will help with long-term stability as parents "age-out." Suggestion for current committee members to reach out and personally to invite other people during the month of January. First ask: help with the February event. • Concern #3: The current committee members don't always show up and don't inform the committee that they aren't coming. Suggestion to remind the committee members to RSVP in advance. • Concern #4: A series of events that cover three months in a row is too much in a short amount of time. Suggestion to spread this out: one at the beginning of the year, one in the middle, and one in early spring. • Concern #5: There are many other concerns that need to be addressed other than math. There is another concern that has yet to be addressed: recruiting and supporting African American staff, as well as other issues of equity. Suggestion to pick a theme each year based on the town hall meeting feedback. • Concern #6: What is the purpose of hosting a town hall at the end of the year? The concern is that an expression of issues is not effective at the end of the year. Suggestion to swap town hall and meet & greet. Or, suggestion to host both town hall and meet & greet at the beginning of the year. • Concern #7: The February event is coming up after the January event and we have not yet planned ahead for that event. Suggestion to make this an agenda item for an upcoming meeting. • Concern #8: Expanding our influence and ability to address

	various topics require more effort and energy. Suggestion to have a presence at school board meetings and for heavy recruiting at Black colleges and/or reaching out to local colleges. • Concern #9: We need to be connecting our work with student achievement. If we don't make progress with student achievement, we are not meeting our goals. • Concern #10: We need to be more proactive in making African American teachers feel valued by their immediate supervisors and District administrators. This may help them feel more connected. Suggestions to include focus groups & mentor programs. • Concern #11: The issues related to budget are not clear and there is a concern that this committee will run out of funds. Suggestion to include a budget review in an upcoming meeting.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	On this dimension, I found evidence that the participants were able to name clear next steps in response to the concerns. While I did not see evidence that any of the participants followed up with action, it is important to note that some of the suggestions were geared towards the long-term planning for next year.
What are my own reflections from this session?	I was interested in listening to the participants' renewed sense of concern and urgency. There were so many things that needed to be addressed, and the participants had just expended lots of energy and emotion into facilitating the three-part parent engagement series on mathematics. I wondered if the participants were learning anything about the overall slow pace of change.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I cannot interpret any of my observations from this meeting as evidence that participants were learning more on the three dimensions of equity, leadership, and parent engagement. At this point, I made note of a pattern that may have begun to emerge. I noticed that during leadership team meetings where we debated about issues of inequity or argued about our points of view, there appeared to be more evidence that participants were learning something. When we engaged in meetings that didn't include emotional exchanges and disagreements, there seemed to be less evidence of learning.

Table L.6 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #10

	Session #10 Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	This meeting agenda included discussions that were designed to motivate the participants to remain committed to the work. Each participant was asked to name and describe their personal motivation and the goals that they hold for the committee. There was also time for the consultant to reframe his responsibilities for the group with an eye towards building more independence. We then discussed what was working well and what needed to be done differently. Finally, there was a discussion about next steps in planning for the upcoming Black History Month celebration.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	Each participant offered a goal for the parent engagement team. The goals were all tied to some issue of inequity for African American students and parents. ● Diversify the teacher workforce ● Provide Professional Development on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to all teachers ● Build sustainability for this committee so that it remains strong and in tact in the coming years. More specifically, create a timeline marking the date when the current consultant will no longer be available for this committee. ● Formalize roles and responsibilities for this committee, like President, Treasurer, Secretary ● Establish a scholarship for African American Students ● Increase parent involvement on both this leadership team and in attendance rates for the larger parent engagement events ● Create opportunities for community building among students so that they feel more engaged and included Next, the participants identified things that were working well: ● The team successfully addressed the request from parents to focus on mathematics achievement. ● The parent engagement events on mathematics achievement focused on issues that people don't necessarily want to talk about. ● There is a commitment to be inclusive. The team is not expecting their events to only be for African American people. ● There are efforts to help teachers become culturally competent. ● The parent engagement on mathematics achievement helped parents realize that we do have some diversity in the teacher workforce. There are some African American math teachers in Seaview. ● Two of these committee members are also members of the LCAP Advisory Committee.

	Next, the participants offered ideas on what should be done differently: ● There should be more district leadership and board members at these committee meetings. ● One of the African American Parent Engagement committee members should be on the school board. ● This committee should choose a sharp and focused theme each year. ● This committee should talk more about issues of inequity. ● There should be an event marking the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. ● There should be an event on Earth day so that we emphasize Science achievement for African American students. ● There should be a day of service for these committee members together with African American students so that the community sees the group as in service to others, not just a group that wants to receive things from others. ● The Town Hall meeting where we solicit parents' concerns should be moved to the beginning or the middle of the school year, instead of the end of the school year. ● There should be an end-of-year celebration for African American High School graduates.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	I noticed that the participants were eager to express their ideas to do more in the near or far future, but I did not notice any explicit agreements made during this meeting to take any next steps on any of the ideas that were generated. Instead, the participants moved to a discussion about the upcoming Black History Month celebration. On this topic, all the participants began negotiating with each other about what they wanted to do and then named clear next steps. For example, some stated that they would manage the student performances, others would manage the food services, and others would focus on communication.
What are my own reflections from this session?	I assume that the participants were eager to name several changes and programs for African American students and parents because expressing these big ideas helps clarify their vision for leadership. I noticed that each participant was speaking to the group, not necessarily to me, which implies to me that they are continuing to build their relationships as co-leaders who want to align their individual hopes and dreams for the future. I also assume that because of the pending "Black History Month" celebration, the participants did not have the stamina to begin planning next steps on any of the other ideas.
Analysis:	I am not certain that this session contributed substantially to

Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	any of the participants learning. I did not find evidence in the post-interview transcripts that this event was memorable. However, I can make a plausible claim that the conversations between participants helped to strengthen their relationships in general. The participants were sharing ideas and hoping for some agreement from others. Some of the participants stated in the post-interviews that they felt the team was doing a good job establishing trust and creating a space where people could talk about difficult things.

Table L.7 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #11

	Session #11 Leadership Team Meeting
Summary	The agenda for this meeting was focused on planning for the upcoming Black History Month Celebration. There was a lengthy review of the various student performances, with input about what order to follow. There was a discussion about who should be the Emcee. There was then a shift in the agenda to talk about scheduling events after the February Black History Month celebration.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	A majority of time was spent on operational details related to the upcoming event. However, there were two topics that surfaced that were directly related to issues of equity: 1. Participants discussed the racial make-up of the student performers. In some cases, the groups had no African American students. In other cases, the groups were 100% African American. The committee quickly agreed that it was good to have a variety of ethnicities represented. However, it was discovered that the final student performance had no African American students. Some wanted to debate the "optics" of ending the event with White and Asian student performers. The program had already gone to print, so someone else offered a concern that if we re-arranged the order, someone might notice that the program was not accurate. Ultimately, the group chose to keep the order in tact and stated that this should be about inclusion. 2. After the managerial tasks were assigned, there was a discussion about the value of hosting a Town Hall meeting near the end of the school year. The Town Hall meeting was intended to provide a space where African American parents could express their concerns. At last year's Town Hall meeting, held in May, many parents brought sensitive and difficult issues to the table. Now, some participants wanted to delay the Town Hall meeting to the beginning of the next school year and instead wanted to host an end-of-year celebration. Other participants stated that they did not want to continue with more celebrations and wanted instead to hear about what parents were thinking. 3. A third topic introduced the possibility of presenting to the school board.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities	In this meeting, I noticed every participant taking responsibilities to facilitate the Black History Month celebration event. While I would not qualify these as the most critical attributes of leadership for equity, there is evidence that they were thinking on

that qualify as leadership for equity?	those levels. For example, several discussed the fact that this would only be the second time in the District's history and hosting this event symbolized that the committee was still working together. Several discussed the racial make-up of students who would be performing and debated the merits of hosting an event that included everyone, or an event that included only African Americans.
	Finally, I noted that there were different viewpoints on the value of presenting to the school board. This indicated to me that they were thinking about politics and influence in the community as it relates to making systemic change.
What are my own reflections from this session?	I noticed a lot of positive energy around the planning of the upcoming event. It was exciting to see every member of the team contributing in a major way. Each person's workload was substantial and each person wanted to explain his or her details and receive open and honest feedback. That led me to believe in the group's growing level of trust.
	I also noticed the groups ability to debate sensitive issues like the ethnic make-up of the student performances. It was good to hear the group focus on an inclusive theme that encouraged everyone in Seaview, regardless of his or her ethnicity, would want to celebrate Black culture.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	I found evidence that this session had some impact on the participants' level of understanding about inequities related to African American students and parents. In the subsequent post-interview transcripts, some of the participants made direct reference to the discussions we had about the ethnic make-up of the student performers as well as the order of the student performers. For those participants, the discussion and the ultimate decisions were both noted as evidence that African American parents need a space and a group of trusted individuals with which to share these feelings and ideas.

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Table L.8 Summary from Field Notes of Process Data, Session #12

	Session #12 Black History Month Celebration
Summary	This event was hosted in a large multi-purpose gymnasium at one of the school sites. We began with welcoming speeches that opened the event and acknowledged the contributions of all the committee members. There were approximately 225 attendees, adults and children, which was double in comparison to the event in the prior year. The first hour provided the audience with performances from students who ranged in age and ethnicity. There was singing, dancing, cheerleading, and art displays. The Emcee was one of the participants in this study and carried a sense of humor and graciousness to the event. The second hour provided the audience with a nice dinner of "soul food." Committee members make all the arrangements and expressed their pride in serving food that tied to the Black culture.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and discuss issues of inequity for African American students and parents?	As with the parent engagement series on mathematics, I found that taking field notes on participant behaviors was not possible. I was not able to work closely with any of the participants, as we were all busy enjoying our time with other parents, students, administrators, and community members.
Field Notes: Do participants identify and agree to take responsibilities that qualify as leadership for equity?	N/A
What are my own reflections from this session?	This was an important experience for many of the participants, and they mentioned this experience as a benchmark marking their accomplishments and their increased sense of permanency. After this event, during casual conversations, leadership team meetings, and email exchanges, there were already suggestions about what to do in year three.
Analysis: Is there any evidence that this experience influenced learning for the participants?	This was mentioned in several of the post-interviews as an example of parent engagement that helped African Americans increase their sense of belonging.

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