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Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

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

in

Educational Leadership

by

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2020

The Dissertation of Nicole Adams is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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(Chair)

University of California San Diego

California State University, San Marcos

2020

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for their support throughout this journey: my mom and dad, Barbara and Lee Adams who instilled in me the love of learning and the value of education, my siblings, Lesley and Bryan who offered words of encouragement when I needed it most, my fiancée, Dave McCurdy who supported me unconditionally, and my niece, Taylor Adams who unknowingly inspired me to keep moving forward.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

by

Nicole Adams

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Carol Van Vooren, Chair

This mixed methods case study explores the role of magnet schools as a vehicle to promote integration and increase educational opportunity for historically underserved students in the U.S. public education system. Magnet schools were introduced in the 1970s and remain the most popular school choice option. Critics of magnet-based school choice contend that it exacerbates racial and social stratification, while proponents argue that it provides parents with the freedom to choose the school they believe offers their child the best education. The literature reveals two key facets associated with parent choice, factors and processes (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Bell, 2009). This study explored the factors the research indicates have a major impact on

parent choice and used bounded rationality and social capital theories to examine ways of

understanding the decision-making process. The research indicates that parents identify

academics to be the most significant school characteristic taken into consideration and reveals

that race and school demographics may play more of an integral role than previously

acknowledged (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Moreover, the literature demonstrates that the

selection process is complex and largely dependent on the context of the school and district

(Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Key findings of this study were in alignment with the current

literature.   This study also included a review of magnet school admissions criteria and utilized

critical race theory as a lens through which to examine and identify certain elements of district

policies and practices that promoted equity and diversity.

Keywords: school choice, magnet schools, parent choice, admissions criteria, social capital,
parental networks

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The United States public education system we know of today developed over the course of the nineteenth century and was also subject to scrutiny and debate about governance, structure, and access. In colonial America, parents were primarily responsible for providing schooling. Some parents hired tutors, sent young children to "dame" schools, or sent their children to mission or charity schools (Kaestle, 2001). Much like the current system, in this early model, race, gender, and family wealth had a significant impact on who could take advantage of these opportunities (Kaestle, 2001). Major political leaders of the time recognized the inequities and believed that a more systematic approach would benefit the nation (Kaestle, 2001). Since then, many reform movements have been ushered in with the goal of improving education for all. However, many of the initiatives that have been introduced have been mired in controversy in terms of their ability to bring about real change and their champions have been called into question and heavily scrutinized.

School choice is one such reform movement that remains in the educational arena and floats in and out of popularity. Introduced by economist Milton Friedman in the 1950s, school choice options include many different forms such as magnet schools, charter schools, and vouchers (Weiss, 1996). Most recently, school choice has received much attention with the appointment of Betsy DeVos in 2016 as the newest U.S. Secretary of Education under the Trump administration. Many fear that DeVos's reform efforts further encourage the move toward privatization of education and will increase the school choice options she has supported over the years including vouchers, tax credits, and educational savings accounts (Kaplan & Owings, 2018). The other major concern regarding school choice is that it may contribute to the

resegregation trends emerging across U.S. districts and schools (Orfield, Ee, Frankenberg, & Siegel-Hawley, 2016).

A report issued by the Civil Rights Project out of the *University of California Los Angeles* indicates that in a review of progress made over sixty years following the landmark legislation of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), schools across the nation are seeing an increase in segregation by both race and poverty (Orfield et al., 2016). Recent decisions by the Supreme Court that have limited desegregation policy have been identified as a major contributing factor to the increased segregation in schools (Orfield, et al., 2016). In the immediate years following the *Brown* decision, desegregation efforts were slow, and it took additional action from the Supreme Court before significant change was evident. In subsequent rulings, *Brown II* and *III* provided more detail about the timeline and manner in which to go about integrating schools. In the South in 1960, one Black student in one thousand was integrated. Four years later that number increased to one in fifty (Orfield, et al., 2016). The trend of increased access to White schools continued until it hit its peak in 1988.

During this same time, federal legislation was passed to address the growing inequities in education based on race and poverty. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law in 1965 followed by the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) in 1970. The ESEA was significant in that it established a key role of the federal government in the elementary and secondary education system and it provided for a substantial amount of funding to meet the unique needs of educating disadvantaged youth. The goal of ESAA was to provide funding to support the desegregation efforts of districts throughout the country. By 1970, schools in the southern region of the U.S. became the most integrated for African American students (Orfield, Ee, Frankenburg, & Kuscera, 2014). Outside of the South, *Brown* did not have

much of an impact on desegregation until another landmark case, *Keyes v School District Number One, Denver, Colorado* (1979). This case was significant in the fact that it addressed segregation of Hispanic/Latino students and extended the desegregation practices to include whole districts, rather than individual schools (Horn & Kurlaender, 2006). Subsequently, due to the change in the political climate, there was a substantial period of time following the *Keyes* decision during which the Supreme Court shifted its focus away from the expansion of desegregation plans. In 1981, under the Reagan administration, federal funding that supported research, desegregation efforts, and education on race relations was terminated. Moreover, between 1991 and 2007, there were many significant Supreme Court decisions abolishing state desegregation plans as well as eliminating any voluntary endeavors (Orfield et al., 2014). As a result, de facto segregation emerged. In 1991, following the termination of desegregation plans, there was a significant increase in segregation for Black and Hispanic/Latino students in public schools. Between 1988 and 2013, the number of intensely segregated, nonwhite public schools (schools with only 0-10% white students) more than tripled, rising from 5.7% to 18.6% (Orfield, et al., 2016).

Growing concern for the status of the U.S. public school system prompted a major revision to the ESEA. Known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), it was signed into law in 2002 by President George W. Bush. NCLB further increased the role of the federal government in the public education system through the implementation of a new accountability system. The goal of NCLB was to increase the academic achievement of all students and in particular, address the achievement gaps of traditionally underserved groups (i.e. students of color, low-income, etc.). While there have been some gains, overall, Black, Hispanic/Latino, and low-income students continue to have lower performance rates than their White, higher-

income counterparts as evidenced by the recent National Assessment of Educational Progress
(NAEP) scores (U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center
for Education Statistics, 2017; 2015). The average NAEP scores are reported on two different
scales based on subject area and grade level. In review of average scales scores on a 0-500 scale
for reading and a 0-300 scale for mathematics for grades 4, 8, and 12, there were significant gaps
between student groups in 2015 and 2017, nationwide (U.S. Department of Education. Institute
of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015; 2017).
See Figures 1 and 2 below for details. Please note, average score gap data for the National
School Lunch Program (NSLP) eligibility for twelfth grade is not available.
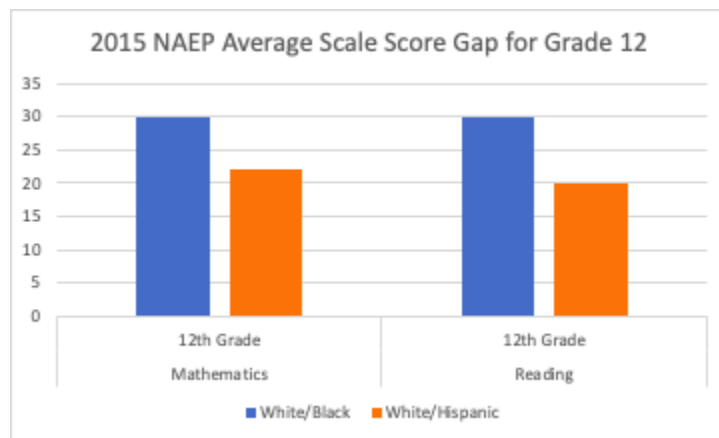
Figure 1. 2015 NAEP Average Scale Score Gap for Grade 12
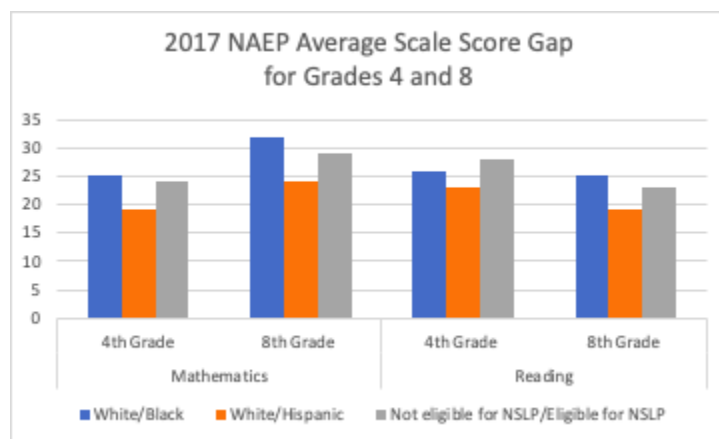
Figure 2. 2017 NAEP Average Scale Score Gap for Grades 4 and 8

Statement of the Problem

Despite efforts to address the growing disparities in the public educational system, specific groups of children continue to be segregated and unable to access educational opportunities. From the review of literature it is found that "(1) segregation creates unequal opportunities and helps perpetuate stratification in the society and (2) diverse schools have significant advantages, not only for learning and attainment but for the creation of better preparation for all groups to live and work successfully in a complex society which will have no racial majority (Orfield et al., p. 1, 2016; U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice, Guidance, December 2011). Magnet schools were introduced to the educational landscape in the 1970s with the sole purpose of increasing integration and thus, opportunity and access for those who have traditionally been underserved. However, the implementation of magnet schools as an effective tool utilized to meet the intended outcomes has been a growing concern among the educational and political communities.

Recent review of public school enrollment in the U.S. reveals that significant changes have occurred over the last thirty years with respect to size and racial composition. Public school enrollment has increased from 41.2 million in 1990 to almost 50 million in 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data). Between this same time period, the White student population decreased from 69% to 50%, while the Hispanic/Latino student population increased from 11% to 25%. The Asian student population experienced smaller growth going from 3% to 5%, while Black enrollment has stayed relatively stable at 15% (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data,

Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey Data; Orfield et al., 2014). The research findings suggest that this trend of multicultural changes will persist (Orfield et al., 2014).

As diversity has increased in the U.S., so has resegregation in public schools. In a seminal study, results revealed an increase in the number of "intensely segregated non-white schools" since 1988 (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 3). New York and Illinois have historically topped the list for the most segregated states for African American and Hispanic/Latino students (Orfield et al., 2016). In recent years, Maryland and California have moved up the list as a result of unique circumstances occurring in each state in terms of resegregation trends in certain neighborhoods and a shift in demographics, respectively (Orfield et al., 2014).

This study examined magnet schools as the most popular school choice option in the K-12 educational space. Specifically, this study focused on developing an in-depth understanding of parent behavior with regard to magnet middle school selection and the implications it has for policy. Magnet schools were established to address issues of diversity and lack of opportunity. If, as a system, we can better understand the needs of parents in terms of school choice options, then we can develop a structure that supports and meets the intended goals.

Finally, this study adds to the growing body of literature on school choice. The gap in school choice literature is related to the decision-making process parents undergo (Bell, 2009). In addition to the factors identified in the literature on school choice, equally as important is the resources parents employ that influence school selection (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Bell, 2009). In this study, social capital was examined as a key resource that parents utilize in the process. Again, this information has significant implications for schools, districts, and educational policy development.

Theoretical Framework

  This study utilized the theoretical frameworks of bounded rationality, social capital theory, and critical race theory to better understand the complex decision-making process of parents with regard to school selection and the magnet school structure implemented by districts as a means to support diversity and equity. As a backdrop, the school choice model is based on the concept of a free market economy (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Friedman & Friedman, 1980; Ravitch, 2016). The tenets of school choice focus on the organizational structure of the educational system with decentralization, competition, and parent choice at the core (Chubb & Moe, 1990). This model is based on the fundamental law of supply and demand and in alignment with rational choice theory, which identifies parents as consumers in a market system (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Henig, 1996; Schneider, Teske, Roch, & Marschall, 2000; Smith & Meier, 1995; Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

  In this study, bounded rationality and social capital theory were utilized to analyze the decision-making process of parents. Bounded rationality focuses on parents' choice sets, specifically, the construction of choice sets and the resources utilized to construct parents' choice sets (Bell, 2009). A choice set is defined as a set of schools parents consider during the selection process. In addition, bounded rationality states that it is impossible to consider all the possibilities with regard to making a choice (Bell, 2009; Simon, 1986). Rather, it is posited that as humans, we use "shortcuts and heuristics" in the decision-making process (Bell, p. 192). In other words, due to this notion of bounded rationality, individuals do not always choose the best option, but instead make a selection based on experiences and expectations. Individuals stop seeking additional solutions when one has been determined to meet the identified need (Bell, 2009; Simon, 1990). The argument is made that with respect to school choice, parents follow the

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same thought process and make a reasonable choice based on their own determinations (Bell, 2009).

In conjunction, social capital theory focuses on the role of parental networks in the decision-making process of parents. Social capital theory suggests that social networks are a powerful tool employed by parents to navigate the educational system (Acar, 2011; Sil, 2007; Horvat et al., 2003; Holme, 2002). It also posits that there are different characteristics associated with these networks that vary across social classes (Horvat, Weininger, & Laureau, 2003). Typically, the presence of parental networks is more prevalent in higher income communities, while working-class and poor families tend to have stronger ties with family (Horvat et al., 2003). In this study, social capital theory was utilized to explore the parental networks that were in place with a specific focus on the barriers that exist among low-income parents. It is argued that low-income families do have resources they can employ to negotiate the educational system that are largely unrecognized by the school community (Horvat et al., 2003).

Lastly, critical race theory was utilized in this study to analyze the ways in which magnet schools, as the primary choice option, are situated in this space and the implications this has for equity. Critical race theory offers an approach to understanding the institutional policies and practices within the education system. Critical race theory also highlights the importance of the historical context in the analysis of macro- and micro-level policies, in this case, related to magnet schools (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

Magnet schools were initially brought about to increase opportunity for disenfranchised students in the public education school system in response to the minimal progress made after the passage of the key *Brown* legislation. While court-ordered desegregation plans have been

omitted from the educational landscape, there is still a need to ensure equitable practices among districts and schools. Recent trends in demographic data reveal some regions are seeing an uptick in the percentage of students in intensely segregated schools (Orfield et al., 2016). As magnet schools continue to remain an option within the school choice realm, there is a need to explore and develop a better understanding of the relationship between policy and parent dynamics as impacted by individual social capital, socioeconomic status, and cultural norms. Specifically, districts need to understand how and why certain parent/familial characteristics influence the decisions parents make about schooling for their children in order to develop policies that promote diversity and increase access for all students.

Research Questions

Bounded rationality, social capital theory, and critical race theory were used as a lens through which to examine the following questions in this qualitative mixed methods study:

1. In what ways do magnet school policy and practices support or constrain diversity and equity in districts?

2. In what ways does the social capital of parents influence their decision-making process of magnet middle school selection?

The research questions concentrate on the manner in which district policies and practices regarding magnet schools play a role in supporting equity and diversity. The research questions also focus on how parents make choices about schooling for their children and the relationship this has to equitable practices within a district that offers school choice (between magnet and non-magnet schools).

Significance of the Study

This study serves to add to the literature on school choice, specifically magnet schools, as a tool to increase diversity and educational opportunities for marginalized students. This study focused on developing a better understanding of the intersection of the two major components of the school choice system: parents and policy. In particular, this study examined the parental characteristics and dynamics and how they influence parent behavior. In conjunction, policies and practices were also examined in order to better understand the ways in which they can effectively inform and support districts in establishing magnet schools that are diverse and representative of the larger community. Much of the current literature is focused on parents and the factors that influence their decision-making in terms of school selection (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Bell, 2009). Specific resources parents employ throughout the process is another major area explored in the school choice literature (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998). The literature is also centered on magnet school admissions criteria and other enrollment practices for student selection (Grooms & Williams, 2015; Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Smrekar & Goldring, 1999). The gap in the large body of research is related to the process parents undertake to make decisions about their children's schooling (Bell, 2009).

Definition of Terms

School choice: School choice allows parents to choose the school they believe offers their child the best education independent of assigned attendance areas.

Magnet schools: According to the United States Department of Education, a magnet school is defined as a "public elementary school, public secondary school, public elementary education center, or public secondary education center that offers a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different racial backgrounds."

Vouchers: Education dollars provided by the state to pay private or home school tuition (Kaplan & Owings, 2018).

Tax credit scholarship programs: "Allow corporations or individuals to offset state tax liability by donating to a private, nonprofit scholarship organization" (Kaplan & Owings, 2018, p. 61). These funds are then distributed to families to pay tuition for private schools.

Educational savings/scholarship accounts (ESA): "[...] fiscal programs into which the state sets aside money, usually based on per-pupil funding formula, into individual bank accounts for participating K-12 students" (Kaplan & Owings, 2018, p. 61).

Social capital: "The material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties" (Horvat et al., 2003, p. 323).

Diversity: The presence of diversity indicates generally that many people with many differences are present in an organization or group. Diversity refers to socioeconomics, power, privilege, class, ethnicity, language, gender, age, ability, and sexual orientation and all other aspects of culture" (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009, p. 166).

Equity: "The outcome of practices that result in the same outcomes for members of a group. Equitable programs may make accommodations for differences so that the outcomes are the same for all individuals" (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009, p. 166).

Assumptions and Limitations

The mixed methods case study involved the examination of magnet schools as a vehicle to support equity and diversity. In particular, the researcher focused on the interplay between the system in which the magnet schools are situated and the decision-making of low-income and minority parents. Creswell (2013) states that there are inherent limitations involved in conducting a case study. One of the primary limitations is the difficulty in making

generalizations since the context of each case differs (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, it can be challenging to produce an in-depth analysis due to the specific boundaries of the case explored (Creswell, 2013).

Moreover, my professional role as a school administrator could have been a limitation in this study for both the parent participants as well as for the district office staff member. Interviews with parents were included as part of the data collection process. As a result, there could have been instances in which parent participants were hesitant to open up due the fact that the researcher is an administrator in a school. In addition, both of the schools included in the study are located in the district in which the researcher currently works. There could have been some hesitation with parents and the district office staff member being aware of this and feeling inhibited to speak openly. With this in mind, the researcher worked to develop a rapport with participants, was clear about the purpose of the study, and included questions in the interview protocol that offered the participant an opportunity to talk freely, started with questions that were non-threatening, and ended the interview by providing the opportunity to add anything they wanted to share (Creswell, 2013).

Conclusion

In sum, school choice is a popular reform movement that has been at the center of debate among the educational community since it was first introduced almost seventy years ago. As part of the school choice model, magnet schools were brought about to boost integration efforts several years following the landmark *Brown* legislation. Since the elimination of many state desegregation plans, public schools are experiencing an increase in resegregation by both race and socioeconomic status (Orfield et al., 2016; Orfield et al., 2014). In addition, magnet schools, which were established for the specific purpose of increasing integration and educational

opportunity, have been called into question in terms of meeting the intended outcomes. Many argue that magnet schools are contributing to the emerging resegregation trends evident in the education system (Grooms & Williams, 2015; Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Goldring & Smrekar, 2000).

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, provides background, highlights the purpose for the study and related research questions, and identifies the theoretical frameworks that were utilized as a means through which to view this work. The second chapter consists of a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on school choice and magnet schools and highlights the gaps in current research. The third chapter of the study outlines the research methodology. It encompasses a detailed description of the six phases of the research design, including data sources and a timeline for data collection and analysis. In chapter four, the findings of the study are presented. Finally, chapter 5 includes a discussion regarding the findings and addresses the implications for educational leadership, social justice, as well as areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The public education system in the United States has struggled to overcome inequities in the quality of education each student receives since the 1964 Civil Rights Act and its undoing of mandatory segregation laws (Orfield et al., 2016). Research has continued to reveal substantial inequities still exist today and, in addition, some of this research asserts that programs and initiatives put forth to overcome the inequalities have had the unintended consequence of perpetuating or increasing them (Grooms & Williams, 2015; Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Goldring & Smrekar, 2000). Among the many educational reform movements that have been introduced and examined over the years, school choice remains at the center of the discussion.

School choice was introduced to the educational landscape in the 1950s and gained popularity in the 1980s as a means to address the growing inequalities in the education system (Weiss, 1996). During the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era, there was a renewed emphasis on school choice. School choice allows parents to choose the school they believe offers their child the best education independent of assigned attendance areas. Since its introduction, school choice has been subject to a great deal of scrutiny by politicians, scholars, and the K-12 educational community.

School choice is a broad term that encompasses different types of schools each with different goals or intended outcomes. School choice includes magnet schools, charter schools, private schools, and school voucher programs. Within the school choice realm, there is also what is referred to as managed or controlled choice, in which districts establish certain parameters with respect to student demographics (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Weiss, 1996). While

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the attention on charter schools has increased, magnet schools remain the most popular school choice option with 3.5 million students enrolled in magnet schools as indicated in the most recent report from Magnet Schools of America organization (2017).

Magnet schools were introduced in the 1970s as a means to address voluntary and court-ordered desegregation in schools. According to the United States Department of Education, a magnet school is a "public elementary school, public secondary school, public elementary education center, or public secondary education center that offers a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different racial backgrounds." The term "magnet" was chosen as a way to attract families and educators to the idea (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000).

The debate over school choice is not new; however, what has garnered more attention is the government's role in the education system in terms of determining the types of schooling available and where a child attends school. The research indicates the reason for the renewed interest in the school choice movement is due in part to three conditions that have emerged or intensified since the 1960s (Fuller, Elmore, & Orfield, 1996). The first notable condition identified by scholars is the Civil Rights Movement. The interpretation of legislation passed during this time did not align with the intended outcomes and efforts to integrate schools were met with opposition. Second, the lack of upward mobility during the early 1970s served to refocus the attention on the need for school reform to help bolster the economy. Lastly, the shift in demographics in the United States that occurred since the 1960s had a profound impact on the choice debate. The growth of ethnic diversity and the change in the family structure (i.e. increase in number of single-parent households) spurs discussion about the role of schools (Fuller, et al., 1996).

This study reviews the literature on school choice and specifically magnet schools as a vehicle to support integration and equity in the American education system. A developing body of research has demonstrated a trend in the resegregation of schools whereby poor students and students of color are concentrated in lower performing schools and often times lack the opportunity and access to participate in other educational options (Orfield et al., 2014; Borman & Dowling, 2010; Kozol, 2005). Magnet schools were introduced with the specific purpose of bolstering desegregation efforts across the country. This was done in an effort to provide poor and minority students with greater access to higher quality education through the ability to transfer into the magnet schools. Some researchers wonder if the very mechanism that was put in place to support equity and diversity is unintentionally contributing to racial and socioeconomic stratification (Bell, 2009; Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Archbald, 2004; Goldring & Smrekar, 2000). This study examined the key elements associated with parent choice in conjunction with the relevant structures within the school system in which magnet schools are situated.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, several theories will be utilized in order to better understand the various nuances involved with school choice, in this case, magnet schools. With parents at the center of the school choice realm, it is imperative that educational leaders and policymakers understand the factors and conditions that influence the decision-making of parents. Equally as important, there is a need to develop a better understanding of the district policy and practices in place that support parents and allow all students the opportunity and resources to be able to participate, if they so choose.

Bounded Rationality will be utilized as a lens through which to view the decision-making process parents go through with regard to school selection. Economist and political scientist, Herbert Simon, is attributed with the development of the theory of bounded rationality (Simon, 1986; 1990). The notion of bounded rationality is a key facet of the decision-making process. Specifically, it suggests that when faced with decisions, it is impossible to consider all of the available options. In turn, decisions are made based upon experiences and expectations and one stops searching when it seems as if a viable solution has been determined. Within the school choice landscape, parents utilize their knowledge, resources, and experience to establish a set of schools for consideration (Bell, 2009). This study will be focused on the various components that serve to shape and mold parents' bounded rationality and ultimately, their school selection.

Coupled with bounded rationality, social capital theory will also be used to examine the complexity of the decision-making process of parent choice. The literature identifies social capital as an integral resource parents use to help their children do well in school (Bell, 2009; Chin & Phillips, 2004; Horvat et al., 2003). Social capital allows parents the ability to navigate a range of circumstances within the school system from how to resolve school-related issues to how parents obtain information about school choice (Bell, 2009). This study will examine a key component of social capital, parental networks, to develop a better understanding of the manner in which parents employ their social capital to select a magnet school for their child.

Finally, Critical Race Theory (CRT) will be utilized to examine the district policies and practices within the school choice model that support equity and diversity (Zamudio et al., 2011; Gillborn, 2005; Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT first emerged in the field of law in the mid-1970s in response to the slow progress following the initial progress made during the civil rights movement in the 1960s (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). One of the major tenets of

critical race theory offers that racism is difficult to resolve due to the fact that it is so ingrained in all aspects of society and that the "colorblind" approach only serves to address the more overt forms of racism while ignoring the lesser microaggressions that are more prevalent (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7; Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 47). Additionally, another major aspect of CRT is the notion of "interest convergence" that was first introduced by the founding researcher in the field, Derrick Bell (2004). Bell (2004) asserted that integration efforts of the country were pushed forth only when the interests of the dominant group also happened to align with the promotion of African Americans (Zamudio et al., 2011; Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). They contend that the motivation behind integration was not altruistic and as a result, may explain the lack of continued progress, and in some cases, a reversal of progress in this area since then (Zamudio et al., 2011; Bell, 2004) In recent years, CRT scholarship has been expanded to better understand, and in turn, transform education especially in the areas of discipline, tracking, and curriculum in order to improve educational experiences and outcomes for minority students (Zamudio et al., 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In this study, CRT was used to examine the student selection procedures in order to identify the processes and practices of districts and their ability to establish magnet schools that have student populations representative of the district. Specifically, there are three guiding questions identified in the literature that assist in the analysis of the established policies and are centered on the driving force behind the policy, the beneficiaries of the policy, and the outcomes associated with its implementation (Gillborn, 2005).

Literature Review

School Choice Theory

Supporters of school choice highlight the increased role of government as the problem with the current public educational system. Some researchers propose that the solution to the problem that plagues the schooling system in the U.S. is to address the way in which it is structured (Chubb & Moe, 1990). They argue that the fundamental issue with the system is that it is controlled by democratic institutions and subject to the competing interests of various groups. Moreover, they contend that the answer to this pervasive problem is to separate the educational system from the democratic institutions and place it in the control of the market economy (Chubb & Moe, 1990). In this model, parent choice is one of the major components along with competition and decentralization. The research suggests that the choice process consists of three components: the practical set of all the possible outcomes, the "causal structure" of a scenario (which aligns the specific options with the possible outcomes), and finally, a "ranking" of the options and expected outcomes (Elster, 1986, p. 4). The argument is made that school choice selections follow the same process; however, the literature indicates some dissimilarity associated with parents from different social classes (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Horvat et al., 2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998).

School Choice Theory Opposition. Several counter arguments are made in opposition to the market-based theory proposed by leading researchers in the field (Chubb & Moe, 1990). One such counterargument addresses the underlying assumptions of choice, which believes that there is a large group of discontented consumers that desire a better-quality system that is not evident in the school system today (Smith & Meier, 1995). In addition, the researchers pose questions regarding possible situations schools might face in the market-based system in the

event they are not successful. Similar to businesses, would schools be subject to bankruptcy if the intended outcomes were not met? And, what would happen to students in the event of a school closure? Scholars provide one such example of a choice school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Julia Hill, which closed its doors midyear and was forced to send students to other schools across the district (Smith & Meier, 1995). Another point raised is that in a market system, businesses are motivated to respond to the market demands, and in doing so it is the intent to utilize as few resources as possible in order to increase gains. It is suggested that in this system, schools could get into situations in which they are offering more than they can produce and in turn, it could have a negative impact on student achievement. Other scholars support this argument and make the claim that choice can lead to inequitable circumstances with regard to information, transportation, and outreach efforts (Archbald, 2004; Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Additionally, others argue for the implementation of controlled choice, which theorizes that all schools should be transformed into magnet schools as a way to meet the desired goals of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity (Schneider et al., 1997). Again, this notion is based on the assumptions identified earlier regarding the equitable nature of information and resources across the district.

School System: Magnet School Policy and Practices

Role of Magnet Schools. Magnet schools continue to be the most popular choice option in the public educational system. The research indicates that magnet schools are primarily found in large urban, low-socioeconomic districts (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000). Initially, magnet schools were subject to civil rights protections such as free transportation, access to information/parent outreach, and explicit desegregation goals. Magnet schools were not

originally slated to employ selective criteria for admissions; however, due to recent legislation these objectives are no longer in place today (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Over the years, federal funding has been provided to support the implementation efforts of magnet schools. Federal aid was initially provided in 1976 for magnet schools as part of the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA). In 1984, the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) was established with the specific intent to aggressively move forward the magnet school movement as a tool to meet desegregation goals and further support parent choice (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). In 2002, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was passed, which served to further promote the school choice option for parents as well as address the continued achievement gaps of historically underperforming students (i.e. Hispanic/Latino, Black, low-income, or English Learners). Both charter and magnet schools fall under the school choice umbrella; however, charter schools are independently operated and have more flexibility while the unique characteristic of magnet schools is the diversity goals and particular theme.

Since the emergence of magnet schools, researchers and policymakers have devoted a great deal of effort and resources to determine their effectiveness in terms of meeting one of the intended purposes of improving equity in schools. There is a growing body of research that asserts that magnet schools have not been successful in meeting the intended outcomes and have been forgotten in recent years with the increased attention on charter schools (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). The evaluation of the MSAP is one such tool. As part of the MSAP, evaluations are conducted periodically by the United States Department of Education to assess whether magnet schools are meeting one of the specified desegregation goals identified by the program. Other researchers examined the effectiveness of magnet schools based on four identified characteristics including theme, admissions criteria, schools selected to become

magnet, and access to students outside of school attendance boundaries (Hausman & Brown, 2002). These above-mentioned mechanisms provide a framework to determine the effectiveness of magnet schools but perhaps may fall short as the latter research indicates.

Magnet School Admissions Criteria. Initial desegregation plans, including those for magnet schools, indicated that school assignment for students should be based on interest, rather than ability (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Currently, many magnet schools across the country employ different criteria for the selection of students. Some districts utilize a lottery system; others allocate a certain number of seats for students that live in the neighborhood in which the school is located, and others utilize a combination of the two (Grooms & Williams, 2015). Depending upon the type of magnet school, other criteria may be utilized, such as auditions for performing arts schools. Additionally, some districts utilize other factors for admissions such as proximity to the school or whether siblings already attend the school (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). The research indicates higher levels of integration associated with certain types of enrollment procedures (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Due to recent legislation, racial diversity goals have been omitted from various magnet schools' admission policies across the country. In 1999, two Supreme Court cases, *Eisenburg v. Montgomery County Public Schools* and *Tuttle v. Arlington County School Board* nullified the use of race or ethnicity in school choice admission or student transfer criteria in two prominent public schools, Boston Latin in Massachusetts and Lowell High School in San Francisco (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Prior to the court's decision, the two schools were racially diverse. In Boston Latin, Blacks and Hispanic/Latinos made up over one-third of the population, White students comprised a little over half of the student demographic, and Asian students accounted for the remainder of the student body. Six years later, the percentage of Black and

Hispanic/Latino students dramatically decreased to approximately half of what it was prior. Lowell High also experienced a decrease in the Black and Hispanic/Latino student population after the Supreme Court ruling, dropping to 3% and 6%, respectively (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Additional legislation regarding the use of race or ethnicity as part of admissions criteria came about with the 2007 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v Seattle School District (PICS)*. The case involved the evaluation of the voluntary district integration plans that were in place in Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington. The court was divided but ultimately ruled that the "race-conscious student assignment plans" were unconstitutional. It was the majority opinion of the court that racial diversity is important; however, the ruling severely limited the legal options available to districts to support integration efforts (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). As indicated by scholars, it is important to note the far-reaching implications of such legislation with regard to magnet programs and their intended purpose as a means to support desegregation in schools across the country (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Given the elimination of racial diversity goals coupled with the popularity of magnet schools, districts have had to establish admissions criteria to balance the increased demand with the enrollment process. The types of admissions criteria employed by districts are categorized as competitive or noncompetitive. Examples of competitive or selective criteria include test scores, essays, and grade point averages (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). The research estimates that one-third of magnet schools utilize selective admissions criteria while the remaining schools employ a randomized system to select students (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999). On the contrary, noncompetitive admissions criteria are not based on performance in a particular area and access

is theoretically open to all though an application process. For the purpose of this study, the focus was centered on the noncompetitive criteria employed by districts to select students for magnet schools as most districts use this type of enrollment process.

From the review, the primary types of noncompetitive enrollment criteria implemented by magnet schools include lottery, open enrollment, or some combination thereof. In a national study conducted by the American Institutes for Research authorized by the United States Department of Education, almost 60% of the districts at that time employed a lottery system to select students (Blank, Levine, & Steel, 1996). In conjunction, additional guidelines for enrollment were identified including grade-level, time on wait list, attendance zones, and sibling enrollment (Blank et al., 1996). In a more recent study which surveyed over 250 educators at an annual Magnet Schools of America conference, 63% of respondents reported the use of a lottery system and 27% reported the use of open enrollment policies (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Important to note, the study highlighted the notion that the use of the two types of enrollment practices are not mutually exclusive and reiterated the point that many districts use more than one approach to select students (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Furthermore, findings revealed that magnet schools controlling admission through lotteries or open enrollment procedures reported the highest levels of integration (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Outreach and Transportation. The use of other factors in addition to admissions criteria has been discussed on a number of grounds. Most notably these include the outreach efforts of districts and the availability of transportation (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Blank et al., 1996). Based on the review, higher levels of integration were associated with specific outreach efforts that promoted diversity (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). In particular, the types that were associated with increased integration levels include parent

information centers and meetings held throughout the community. Moreover, additional activities that promote magnet schools and the use of staff for the basis of recruitment were also found to increase integration levels (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). Given the important role networks play in terms of parent access to information, the research also indicates that conducting outreach in various parts of the community can help support the dissemination of information to a wide range of students. (Acar, 2011; Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Sil, 2007; Holmes, 2002).

Accordingly, the availability of free transportation was originally introduced as a provision of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to support desegregation efforts (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Orfield, 1969). Since then, free transportation has been considered an effective resource districts and schools can employ to make school choice accessible to all families despite income levels, minority group isolation, language obstacles, or other family circumstances (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Wells, 1996). In fact, a major study conducted in two large midwestern districts found that for minority parents, the availability of transportation was a major consideration in choosing a magnet school for their children (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Smrekar & Goldring, 1999). This is especially significant given the increased trend of households with two working parents or single parents with work schedules that may not allow them the flexibility to transport their children to school (Frakenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008). These few studies are in alignment with other research findings, which suggest that practices such as these greatly impact the diversity goals of choice offerings and are a vital component in providing equal access and opportunity for magnet schools to all students (Smith & Meier, 2015; Fuller et al., 1996). Researchers posit that the manner in which magnet school

policies are implemented have far-reaching implications for students and districts (Grooms &

Williams, 2015).

School Location/Geography. As indicated by the research, geography plays an integral

role in parent choice patterns (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Ironically, the research also reveals that

locations for magnet schools are primarily decided based on reasons of efficiency, such as

vacancy or availability of space in a building (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Moreover,

neighborhood characteristics such as socioeconomic levels and racial segregation were not

factored into the decision-making process. This is an important finding given what the research

reveals regarding the impact of race and ethnicity as important factors in parents' choice

decisions.

In a seminal study conducted by Smrekar and Honey (2015), they utilized geographic

information system (GIS) software to examine the intersection of the racial and socioeconomic

composition of magnet schools. GIS is a commonly used tool in the areas of sociology,

economics, policy analysis, and scholarly research. Based on their analysis, significant themes

emerged and have important implications for future policy regarding magnet school location.

They found that student enrollment in magnet schools in predominantly non-White

neighborhoods mirrored the racial and socioeconomic composition of the neighborhood

compared to the district. Comparatively, student enrollment in magnet schools located in

primarily White neighborhoods and centrally located areas (i.e. downtown) reflected the racial

and socioeconomic composition of the district. Similar results were found upon analysis of

poverty rates for magnet schools. The percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price

meals (FARM) corresponded to the poverty rate of the neighborhood in which the schools were

located. Thus, schools with higher FARM rates than the district average tended to be located in

neighborhoods with higher poverty rates and schools with FARM rates lower than the district average tended to be located in neighborhoods with low poverty rates (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). In other words, the research suggests that the location of magnet schools is associated with varying levels of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic isolation.

Parents and School Choice

The notion of bounded rationality is identified as a key component of the parent choice construct. Bounded rationality posits that given the infinite options, it is impossible for parents to take into consideration all those available to them as they make decisions about where to send their children to school (Bell, 1992; Simon, 1986). Consequently, the research indicates that parents make decisions based on their limited scope shaped by their observations and assumptions (Bell, 2009; Simon, 1990). Because of this notion of bounded rationality, parents are forced to create a smaller choice set. Choice set is defined as the set of schools parents consider during the selection process. The research indicates that the choice set is utilized as an investigative mechanism by parents that mold their bounded rationality (Bell, 2009). Moreover, it is proposed that characteristics of the choice set provide researchers with additional insight regarding the process parents undergo during this endeavor (Bell, 2009).

Factors. Much of the literature on parent choice focuses on the factors parents take into consideration and the processes they undergo to make a decision (Bell, 2009; Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Smrekar and Honey (2015) refer to this as the "how" and "why" parents choose. Among the large body of research on parent choice, four major themes emerge with regard to the factors that impact parents' selections. These areas are typically centered on "academics/curriculum, safety/discipline, transportation/proximity/convenience, and religion/values" (Smrekar & Honey, 2015, p. 131). Among the four categories identified, overall, parents consider academics to be

the most significant school characteristic, followed by safety (Schneider et al., 1997). The researchers assert:

> In the comparison analyses of choosers (parents who choose magnet or alternative schools) and non-choosers (those who select their zoned or neighborhood schools), few differences emerged; both groups identified academic issues as primary, although notably more non-choosers selected safety and discipline while choosers focused on values and diversity in schools. (Smrekar & Honey, 2015, p. 131)

Correspondingly, other studies revealed that the decision to exercise choice was grounded in both "push (reasons for leaving) and pull factors (reasons for going)" such as dissatisfaction with the school of residence or wanting a particular course of study (Smrekar & Honey, 2015, p. 131). These findings are in alignment with another study which surveyed 800 low-income parents in Denver, Milwaukee, and Washington, D.C. and found that, similar to higher-income parents, high quality academics rated as the top reason for selecting a school followed by a particular course of study, and location or closeness to home (Teske, Fitzpatrick, & Kaplan, 2007). Comparatively, when analyzed by race and socioeconomic status, there were some differences. It was discovered that safety and discipline were greater areas of concern for Black or Hispanic/Latino parents from underprivileged neighborhoods, whereas White, college-educated parents put a greater emphasis on values (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

Parent Choice and Resources. There is a growing body of literature that illuminates the significance of the resources parents employ to make decisions regarding school choice (Bell, 2009). In particular, social capital has been identified as a vital component of the schooling process (Bell, 2009; Horvat et al., 2003). Social capital is defined as "the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties" (Horvat et al., 2003, p. 323). Seminal researchers, Bourdien (1986) and Coleman (1988), are "credited" with introducing the notion of social capital into the educational arena. Subsequent

researchers have narrowed in on parental networks as a central component of social capital, specifically, the structure of those networks and how they influence parents' decision making in terms of schooling (Acar, 2011; Bell, 2009; Sil, 2007; Horvat, et al., 2003, Holme, 2002; Ball & Vincent, 1998).

From the review, the characteristics of parental networks differ by social class more so than race (Horvat, et al., 2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998). In a comprehensive ethnographic study, Horvat et al. (2003) categorized parental networks as "middle-class," "working-class," and "poor" (pg. 319). Findings revealed that parental networks were more prevalent among middle-class families and were largely developed through the extracurricular activities their children were involved in. Comparatively, working-class and poor families had networks that were primarily organized around familial lines (Horvat, et al., 2003). This is, in part, due to the finding that lower-income families tended to participate in extracurricular activities less frequently, thereby minimizing their exposure for opportunities to develop their networks outside of their familial social circle (Horvat, et al., 2003).

By the same token, Ball and Vincent (1998) conducted a study involving interviews with 138 parents to examine the structure and processes of parental networks, which they labeled the "grapevine" (p. 378). Similarly, they defined the parental groups as "skilled/privileged," "semi-skilled," and "disconnected" and characterized each as having different sets of values regarding schooling and choice (Ball & Vincent, 1998, p. 378). Their research revealed the presence of many different types of "grapevines" and found that access to them is primarily dependent upon social class. Middle class networks provide parents with available resources to make it possible to customize their child's academic careers while low-income or working-class parents are less likely to question school authority (Horvat et al., 2003). There is additional research that

supports this notion. The literature asserts that for certain minority groups, refraining from

questioning school authority is grounded in the established cultural norms (Horvat et al., 2003).

Also worthy of note is the role of parental networks in influencing decision-making as it

relates to school choice. The research pinpoints the high degree of reliability parents have in

terms of information obtained from their networks. In particular, it was determined that parents

use their networks as a sense-making mechanism and consider the information shared among

parents as more reliable than information obtained from the educational institutions themselves

(Ball & Vincent, 1998). Ball and Vincent (1998) refer to the information obtained directly from

schools and districts as "official" knowledge and includes the traditional information

disseminated to the public. On the contrary, information gathered through parental networks is

labeled as "hot" knowledge. The researchers assert that "hot" knowledge is more personal and is

grounded in individual experiences and emotional responses (Ball & Vincent, 1998). This has

important implications for schools and districts when deciding the type and manner in which

information is shared or distributed to parents.

Role of Race, Culture, and School Demographics. Other considerations when

examining choice patterns are the race and socioeconomic status of parents (Smrekar & Honey,

2015). It was discovered that these attributes have a degree of impact on parent choice selections

but also illuminated that across the board, all parents, regardless of race and level of income

identified high quality academics as the top reasons for their selections. The important

distinction among these parent attributes is that White, college-educated parents stressed the

importance of teacher quality (an academic input) more so than parents of color

(Hispanic/Latino, Black, or Asian) without a college degree, who showed a tendency to focus

more on test scores (an academic output) (Schneider et al., 1997).

The research also reveals that the racial demographics of a school have a significant impact on parent choice patterns. Analysis of questionnaire data found that parents were not comfortable or were not willing to recognize the fact that the racial composition of a school played a role in their decision (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Teske et al., 2007). Additional studies support this notion and reveal that parents obtain information about racial composition from the Internet and utilize that information to choose schools that have a majority of the student population that reflect their ethnic background (Henig, 1996; Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Moreover, researchers in the field emphasize the need for additional studies that examine the relationship between school demographics and measures of school quality. Given the sensitive nature of race or ethnicity as factors that influence parent choice, school demographics may serve as a façade for measures of school quality (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Similarly, parents' perception of the location of the school and the neighborhood, good or bad, play a significant role in the set of schools parents considered for selection (Bell, 2009). The research suggests that "cultural familiarity and racial consistency" count heavily in their decision-making (Smrekar & Honey, 2015, p. 137).

One of the major gaps in discussions regarding parent choice rests with the notion of equitable access. A primary assumption underlying the school choice theory is that all parents, especially low-income families, have access to the same information regarding school choice as well as the necessary resources to exercise that option, such as transportation (Bell, 2009; Archbald, 2004). Furthermore, it is presumed that the set of schools that are options for choice sets range in quality. This notion is challenged based on other research that indicates that lower-income parents do not have the same quality of schools to choose from in their choice sets (Bell, 2009). While there are varying perspectives on the numerous dynamics surrounding parent

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choice, researchers seem to agree that the process families undergo with regard to school choice is multifaceted and dependent upon the personal, local, and political context (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

Summary of the Research

Within the school choice debate, there are two prominent points of view that scholars refer to as "organizational dichotomy" (Smith & Meier, 2015, p. 25). The researchers argue, "The organizational dichotomy is directly related to the prescriptive conclusions drawn on improving student performance. School choice supporters see much of the problem rooted in the organizational and institutional flaws of the existing system" (Smith & Meier, 2015, p. 25). Proponents of school choice favor decentralization, competition, and choice (Chubb & Moe, 1990). They argue that the strict bureaucratic oversight and lack of autonomy stifle schools and districts in their efforts to meet the demands of parents and students.

On the contrary, critics of school choice argue that centralization does not inhibit performance; rather, it provides a suitable structure for the education system. Additionally, it is argued that bureaucracy operates as a function of necessity, not out of a need for control (Smith & Meier, 2015). Challengers of the school choice model also highlight the assumptions that underpin the argument. One major assumption focuses on the inequities that exist with regard to access of information and availability of resources (Smith & Meier, 2015).

As the most popular school choice option, there is a large body of literature regarding magnet schools as a vehicle to support equity and educational opportunity especially for the historically underserved populations. The literature includes an analysis of admissions criteria and other factors utilized for the selection of students that increase integration levels in magnet schools. This has become a major area of focus in recent years due to recent legislation, which

has eliminated race or ethnicity from magnet school admissions policies (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Equally as important, the research demonstrates that the location of magnet schools is a significant factor to consider given the trends evident in parent choice patterns, which highlight the notion that racial or cultural familiarity impacts parents' selection of a school (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Research reveals that this perspective is not widely taken into consideration when districts determine locations for schools, rather decisions are primarily based on convenience or efficiency (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

There is also a large body of school choice research that focuses on the factors that influence parent choice selections and the decision-making process. Patterns in the research reveal that parents identify high quality academics as the primary reason for selecting a school; however, deeper analysis of the findings indicate that race and school demographics may play a more integral role. In fact, it is theorized that school demographics may serve as a proxy for school quality (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Correspondingly, the research indicates that due to the notion of bounded rationality, parents' choice sets are limited. They make decisions about schooling for their children based on their knowledge, available resources and experiences. Also worthy of note, social capital in the form of parental networks further influence the decision-making process of parents (Bell, 2009).

In sum, the literature demonstrates that the school selection process within the school choice arena is complex and contextually bound (Grooms & Williams, 2015). This study serves to add to the growing body of literature on magnet schools and school choice as a major reform effort aimed at increasing diversity, equity, and educational opportunity. Specifically, it focuses

on the important relationship between magnet school policy and practices of districts and the key

role of parents.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the mixed methods case study that aims to better understand the relationship between the implementation of magnet school policy and parent behavior in terms of school selection. This within-case analysis focuses on two schools within Southern California, one magnet school and one non-magnet school, to examine how magnet school policy supports equity and diversity in districts and the role social capital plays in the decision-making process of parents. The data collection process included the review of extant data, archival records, and public records followed by a questionnaire that was completed by the selected parent participants. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected district staff and parent participants in order to dive deeper into questionnaire responses and district policies and practices related to magnet schools. Perhaps now, more than ever, educational reform is of particular interest to politicians and educational leaders across the country. This study adds to the growing body of literature on school choice and magnet schools, specifically, as a vehicle to support diversity and equity in schools in the public education system.

Research Design

A case study is a methodological approach to inquiry that serves to develop a better understanding of a phenomenon within a particular setting (Creswell, 2013). "A case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases and boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases" (Creswell, p. 100, 2013). In this study, the case that was explored was magnet schools as part of the school choice paradigm. This approach was selected because the goal of the study was to better understand the intersectionality of parents, as the centerpiece of the school choice system, and

the implications for policy development. Creswell (2013) refers to this as an instrumental case, as the intent is to develop an in-depth understanding of a single case or multiple cases to more accurately understand the problem, thus revealing "patterns" or "explanations" that help establish a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Please note, pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the district and participants.

Setting

This study took place in the Southern California region and included two middle schools within the same district, one magnet school, Sunset Magnet School, and one-non magnet school, Waterfall Middle School. The district of the schools in this study, Providence Unified School District, operates over thirty schools with approximately 22,000 students in grades TK-12 and serves three neighboring communities. Currently, there are five magnet schools including two each at the elementary and middle school levels and one at the high school level. Magnet school enrollment is approximately 4,500 students, which represents 22% of the district's total enrollment. Enrollment demographics provided by the 2019 California School Dashboard Report from the California Department of Education indicate that approximately 65% of the Providence Unified School District student population is considered socially-economically disadvantaged, 20% are classified as English learners, and almost 14% of students receive special education services. In addition, Hispanic/Latino students represent approximately 65% of enrollment, followed by White students who comprise 24%, and students with two or more races at 5%. The Asian student population comprises a little over 2% of the district's enrollment while Filipino and African American students represent 1.4% and 1.7%, respectively. The Pacific Islander and American Indian student population is less than 1% for both. See Table 1 for more detail of the district's current enrollment. The decision to focus on the two schools

included in this study, Waterfall Middle School and Sunset Middle School, was based on their

historical connection as well as that most Providence USD magnet school applications are for the

middle school level.

The non-magnet middle school included in this study is Waterfall Middle School. This

school was formerly known as Eastview Middle School when it was located on a different

campus in the downtown area of the city. As a part of a middle school restructuring plan, the

decision was made to relocate the entire student body of Eastview Middle School to a new

campus opening up several miles away, known as Waterfall Middle School. In January 2007,

Waterfall Middle opened its doors as a traditional, non-magnet school. For a period of time,

transportation was provided from Eastview Middle School to the new Waterfall Middle School

due to the low walkability of the neighborhood. The current enrollment for Waterfall Middle

School is a little over 700 students, which is down significantly since 2013-14 when it hit a peak

with a little over 900 students. Since then, enrollment at Waterfall Middle has continued to

decline as evidenced by the statistics from the California Department of Education.

The movement of Eastview to Waterfall Middle School created a vacancy in the central

city location building they previously inhabited. Ultimately, a district decision, indicated in the

district's magnet school documents, was made to establish a magnet school at that location.

Creating a new magnet school in the empty building allowed the district to address Williams

Settlement criteria for the facility, restructure the site to align to the school's academic theme, as

well as a few other options for consideration at the time related to managing secondary school

enrollment and parent choice offerings for 6th through 8th grades. The vacancy also provided the

district with several options for generating revenue by attracting students from outside the

district with the existence of another magnet school. The decision also included students who

typically would have been referred to the county-operated community day schools by establishing a regional program on site.

In the fall of 2007, Sunset Magnet Middle School opened as an International Baccalaureate school with an emphasis on math, science, and technology. The 2009-10 school year was the first year the school was fully operational with 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The school was originally slated for a minimum of 600 students and has since surpassed that as demonstrated in Table 1 below that includes enrollment demographics for the district and the two middle schools. Since opening, Sunset Magnet Middle School has experienced a steady increase in enrollment with the current enrollment at well over 800 students.

Table 1. School and District Demographics

	Waterfall Middle School	Sunset Magnet Middle School	District
Total Students	**717**	837	21,756
Socially-Economically Disadvantaged	89%	74%	65%
English Learners	29%	10%	20%
Students with Disabilities	20%	12%	14%
Homeless Youth	7%	1%	8%
Foster Youth	0.1%	0%	0.2%
Hispanic/Latino	88%	69%	65%
White	6%	21%	24%
2 or more races	2%	4%	5%
American Indian	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Pacific Islander	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%
African American	2%	2%	2%
Asian	0.3%	3%	2%
Filipino	1%	1%	1%

As it relates to academic achievement, Waterfall Middle School has a history of lower performance compared to the other schools in the district. Since the transition to the Common

Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment System beginning with the 2014-15

school year, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards in ELA and math

have been significantly low. For the most recent school year, 2018-19, the percent of students

who met or exceeded standards in ELA and math was 20% and 18%, respectively. For Sunset

Magnet Middle School, the percent of students who met or exceeded standards was 58% for

ELA and 54% for math. Given some slight variations over the years, these results are somewhat

typical of each school's academic performance since 2014-15. Table 2 below provides more

detail about the most recent performance indicators included in the California School Dashboard

Report for 2019 for the two middle schools included in the study and the district. Under

California's current accountability system, performance on the state's measures are represented

on a color scale. The color noted in parentheses next to the percentages in Table 2 below

indicates the corresponding performance level for the schools and district for the year. On this

scale, red represents the lowest level, followed by orange, yellow, green, and blue represents the

highest level. Performance levels are determined by a comparison of the current year and prior

year's results and whether there was improvement.

Table 2. 2019 California School Dashboard Data

Performance Indicators	Waterfall Middle School	Sunset Magnet Middle School	District
Academic Performance ELA/Math (%met/exceeded standard)	ELA: 20% (Red) Math: 18% (Orange) ELs: 44% Making progress towards English language proficiency	ELA: 58% (Blue) Math: 54% (Blue) ELs: 54% Making progress towards English language proficiency	ELA: 50% (Yellow) Math: 37% (Yellow) ELs: 48% Making progress towards English language proficiency
Academic Engagement - Chronic Absenteeism	15% (yellow)	5% (orange)	8% (orange)
Conditions & Climate - Suspension Rate	20% (red)	5% (orange)	4% (orange)

Again, the decision was made to focus on these two schools in the district given their connection and background as well as the overwhelming number of applications received at the middle school level.

Sample and Population

Site & District Selection. The research for this study was conducted over an approximately six-month period beginning in the fall of 2019. Schools, the district, and participants were recruited through phone calls and emails. Purposeful sampling in the form of convenience and criterion sampling were employed to select one magnet and one non-magnet middle school within the same district in San Diego County in order to identify any significant differences with respect to parent behavior and demographic trends as it relates to policy implementation. The middle school level was highlighted in this study since the magnet school

admission procedure for the district is based upon the middle school attendance areas and the fact that most of the applications are for the middle school level as evidenced by data collected by the district.

Participant Selection. Participants selected for this study included the district office staff member who is responsible for overseeing the magnet school admissions process and parents of both magnet and non-magnet middle school students. Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify specific district staff and parents of students. Participants were given a two-week window to decide whether or not to participate in the study.

The district office staff member was identified through my professional network. An initial email was sent and included a detailed description of the study (see Appendix A). Follow-up phone calls were made to answer any questions about the study.

Purposeful sampling was conducted to identify parent participants. The researcher contacted parents who were a part of the School Site Council (SSC), District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), the site-level English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), and/or other parent committees or attended Coffee with the Principal/Counselors. Parent participants were contacted through a phone call during which a detailed explanation of the study was provided. A research assistant was not utilized; the researcher handled all of the phone calls and an interpreter was utilized for non-English speaking families.

Data Collection

Data collection took place over the course of approximately six months during the fall of 2019 through the spring of 2020. This process began by collecting and reviewing extant data, archival records, and public records obtained from the selected district and sites. A semi-structured interview was then conducted with the identified district personnel. Next,

questionnaires were administered to the parent participants. Following the administration of the

questionnaire, a series of semi-structured interviews with parents took place. Finally, the last

step in the data collection process involved member-checking and triangulation in order to

validate the findings. Table 3 below outlines the research design and demonstrates alignment

between the research question and the data collection methods. In addition, Table 4 provides a

description of each phase of data collection, the corresponding sources, and the specific timeline.

Table 3. Research Design

Research Question	Method	Data Analysis	Rationale
1. In what ways does magnet school policy support or constrain diversity and equity in districts and schools?	● Artifacts and documents ● Semi-structured interviews	● Document review ● Coding (several rounds) ● Within case analysis ● Triangulation	● Through the CRT lens, explore and understand how magnet school policy and practices can promote diversity and equity. ● Multiple sources of information will aid in the development of an in-depth analysis
2. In what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection?	● Questionnaire ● Semi-structured interviews	● Coding (several rounds) ● Within case analysis ● Triangulation	● To better understand the ways in which social capital, in particular, parental networks, influence parent behavior regarding school selection. ● Identify the needs of parents, in particular, low-income, minority parents with respect to access to parental networks

Table 4. Data Collection Matrix

Phases	Data Source(s)	Timeline
Phase 1: Purposeful selection of schools	Magnet/non-magnet schools identified	October 2019
Phase 2: Document collection & analysis	Extant data, archival data, and public records including: - District statistics - Board meeting agendas - Board meeting minutes - Board meeting presentations - Meeting minutes related to magnet schools - Policies and procedures related to magnet schools - District communications - Published material distributed to the community - Questionnaires conducted by district or other entities - Social media	October - November 2019
Phase 3: Individual interviews with district personnel	Semi-structured interviews using the Interview Protocol	October 2019
Phase 4: Parent Questionnaire	Questionnaire responses	December 2019 - March 2020
Phase 5: Individual interviews with parents	Semi-structured interviews using the Interview Protocol	February - March 2020
Phase 6: Member Checking	Informal conversations following each interview and follow-up emails	February - March 2020

Document Collection. In the first step, extant data, archival records, and public documents were collected. The purpose of this initial step was to develop an understanding of the current state of the district as it relates to magnet schools as well as the history of school choice. Documents that were collected included district and school demographics, district board meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations related to magnet schools, along with magnet school policies and procedures. Additional documents that were collected include district

communications, published material distributed to the community, and questionnaires conducted by the districts and other organizations that pertain to magnet schooling and parent choice.

Questionnaire. The researcher attended the identified parent meetings to present a report on the study to the participants and a questionnaire was disseminated in either paper or electronic format. For those parents who elected to complete it online, an electronic device and the link to the questionnaire were provided. The results of the questionnaire were only available to the individual participant and the researcher. The questions for the questionnaire were developed based on themes identified in the review of literature regarding factors and resources associated with parent choice. In addition, specific elements of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) model/framework were also taken into consideration (D. Solórzano, 1997, 1998; D. Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, in press; D. Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix J.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews with district personnel and parents were conducted in the third and fifth phases of data collection. This type of interview was appropriate for this study as semi-structured interviews allow the researcher some flexibility. The interviews were intentionally situated at this point in the study to allow the researcher time to establish a rapport with participants in order to obtain authenticity (Creswell, 2013). As Creswell (2013) and other scholars point out, it is important to take into consideration the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Nunkoosing, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2000). Purposeful sampling was employed to select district staff and parents as they can best answer the research questions posed in order to meet the goals of the study. An interview protocol was utilized. The questions for the interview protocol were developed to be in alignment with the research questions and in a format that the participants can comprehend

(Creswell, 2013). Additionally, an electronic device was utilized to record the interviews. Once completed, the interviews were submitted for transcription (See Appendices G & H for interview protocols).

Validation Strategies. Finally, member-checking and triangulation were conducted to check for accuracy in the information synthesized by the researcher (Creswell, 2013). It is particularly important in qualitative inquiry that participants are involved in the research process and that researchers substantiate their findings based on the various sources of data collected as it helps yield credibility to the study (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis began with a review of the documents collected from the district and each site as identified in the above table (Table 1). During this stage, the researcher took notes and wrote memos to capture initial thoughts. A spreadsheet was utilized to track the type of document reviewed and key information obtained from each one. Following this, several rounds of coding were conducted. The data was reviewed, analyzed, and synthesized by type in chronological order then across types to identify coding families and themes. This practice is known as "within-case" analysis and is consistent with case study research (Creswell, 2013, p. 101). Subsequently, the data was checked against the results from the questionnaire and the transcripts from semi-structured interviews.

The same cycle of review, analysis, and synthesis was carried out for the additional data sources including the questionnaire, district staff member interview, and parent interviews. Responses from the questionnaire were automatically organized in a separate database through Qualtrics.com. A number of rounds of open coding were performed, followed by a reduction in data and then sorted into themes. The questionnaire responses were utilized to inform and guide

the semi-structured interviews. In addition, the district office staff member and parent interviews were submitted for transcription. Again, within-case analysis was conducted across the various data types.

Lastly, member-checking and triangulation were conducted to validate the data obtained from the multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). Validation in this sense referred to the process the researcher underwent to "document the accuracy of their studies" (Creswell, 2013, p. 250; Angen, 2000). After the each of the data sources were reviewed, analyzed and synthesized, the researcher went back to review the themes and sub-themes of each and checked them against each other. The similarities between the themes and data sources were highlighted through this process and confirmed the findings. This final step also helped to take into account the associated ethical considerations.

Ethical Considerations

Positionality. The researcher is an administrator at the non-magnet middle school in the district included in the study. While this position provided a wealth of background regarding this particular subject, it was also an avenue for bias to be introduced into the study. For example, the researcher could have been seen as in favor of opposition to magnet schools as an administrator in one of the non-magnet middle schools. To account for this, member checking and the triangulation of data was conducted to validate the research findings. As a result, this helped to shift the presence of positionality as a resource rather than a limitation.

Limitations. There are inherent limitations that exist with case study research design. For example, the review of a single case can limit the amount of information needed to provide an in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, with this type of research design, there is a lack of generalizability due to the fact that the analysis is largely dependent upon the context in

which the case is situated (Creswell 2013; Merriam, 1988). To account for this, specific purposeful sampling strategies were selected that aimed to shed light on the bounded system that was examined. There was also a carefully developed plan for data collection, which included the scope of information to be collected. This provided the researcher with clear direction and boundaries surrounding the case that was explored (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher's professional role as a school administrator could have been a limitation relative to the parent and district staff member participants. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight the imbalance of power that inherently exists between the interviewer and the interviewee. As suggested, the researcher attempted to employ a more collaborative process to help correct the inequality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Furthermore, steps were taken to make the participants feel comfortable. This was achieved through the structure of the interview protocol, the use of a neutral location, and the use of "good" interview procedures such as following the interview protocol, completing the interview within the allotted time frame, and being a good listener (Creswell, 2013, p. 166).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The research questions for this study were: (1) in what ways does magnet school or school choice policy support or constrain diversity and equity in districts and schools and (2) in what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection? This chapter addresses these research questions through an analysis of documents obtained from the district and other public documents regarding school choice and magnet school procedures as well as providing details of the participants of the study, their demographic backgrounds and experiences with the magnet school admissions process through questionnaires and individual interviews. The research design as well as the district, site, and participant methods of recruitment are included followed by a review of data analysis. The themes and sub-themes identified through hand coding are addressed followed by a summary of the findings and includes a discussion regarding the alignment to the research questions.

In order to answer the research questions that were posed, a mixed methods case study was designed. The research took place in Southern California in the San Diego area. Purposeful sampling was employed to select a district as well as the specific schools, which included a magnet school and a non-magnet middle school. This strategy was also used to identify the parent participants in the study. Lastly, the district participant included in the study was selected through criterion sampling as he had firsthand knowledge of the case that was to be explored.

Data collection began with document collection and analysis in order to develop a deep understanding of the magnet school admissions procedure, the associated practices, and the perspective of the various stakeholders. The next phase of data collection included the

dissemination of the parent questionnaire through Qualtrics.com. Finally, interviews were conducted with parents from a magnet and non-magnet middle school in the district along with the Executive Director who oversees the magnet school admission process.

Document Review and Analysis

Data analysis began with a review of extant data, archival data, and public records involving school choice and magnet schools. The documents reviewed included district statistics and demographics, board meeting presentations and minutes, other meeting minutes related to magnet schools, magnet school policies and procedures, district communications, published material distributed to the community, questionnaires conducted by the district or other entities, and social media.

The first cycle of analysis began with holistic and descriptive coding to get an overview of all the documents collected and the specific contents of each. The district has in place a board policy for programs of choice and a magnet school admission procedure. These documents were obtained through the district website. The board policy outlines how the district's alternative or programs of choice may differ from the traditional program in terms of "academic emphasis, the sequence of curriculum, philosophy, instructional strategy, structure, setting, size, scheduling, targeted student population, decision-making process, and/or other components." The magnet school admission procedure provides detail of the goals of the district, the application and selection process, priority admission, the lottery process, parental notification, acceptance of an offer of admission, waitlist procedures, post-deadline applications, and the close of the admissions period.

Magnet School Admission Procedure. Parents are required to complete and submit an application for magnet school admission due to the limited number of spaces available each year.

There is one application for all of the magnet schools. Families may apply to more than school through the single application but are required to indicate their first, second, or third choice. As noted in the procedure, this application can be completed electronically or through a paper format for those parents unable to complete it online. For paper applications, a district employee contacts the parent in their primary language to assist them with the completion of the online application on their behalf. Parents are provided a 6-week window to apply. Following the close of the application process, the student selection process begins with determining the number of students admitted through priority status. Then, once that has been determined the district conducts a lottery for the remaining open spaces. In the magnet school admission procedure for the current year, the priority admission categories include: siblings (including half and step if living in the same household), parent or step-parent is a permanent employee of the district (excluding "at-will" or exempt), student is currently enrolled in a magnet school in the district in 5th or 8th grade (magnet-to-magnet), children of active duty military personnel, and foster or homeless youth. Statistics from the district regarding magnet school enrollment indicate the admission rate for priority applicants is 100% and for lottery admissions is 33%, overall; however, the admission rates do vary by school. Students who are not admitted through the lottery process are added to a waitlist by school, grade, and lottery order and notified by district office staff. Tables 5 and 6 provide more detail of the magnet school enrollment and admission rates for the 2018-19 school year, which is the most recent year of data available.

Table 5. Magnet School Enrollment and Admission Rate for Priority Admission

School	Number of Students	Total Spaces (K/6th/9th)	Priority Applicants	Priority Admission Rate (%)
Coral Coast Elementary	587	94	43	100%
Maple Hills Elementary	611	87	30	100%
Sunset Middle School	837	293	164	100%
Silver Creek Middle School	805	269	151	100%
Hillview High School	1,688	486	253	100%
Total	4,528	1,229	641	100%

Table 6. Magnet School Enrollment and Admission Rate for Lottery Admission

School	Number of Students	Remaining Spaces (K/6th/9th)	Lottery Applicants	Lottery Admission Rate (%)
Coral Coast Elementary	587	51	184	28%
Maple Hills Elementary	611	57	135	42%
Sunset Middle School	837	129	633	20%
Silver Creek Middle School	805	118	592	20%
Hillview High School	1,688	233	225	100%
Total	4,528	588	1,769	33%

The data reveals that priority admissions comprise 52% of the total magnet school

enrollment with the sibling and magnet-to-magnet priorities being the most common at the

elementary and middle school level, respectively. Also, important to note, the data demonstrates

that the magnet middle school admissions rate is only 20% compared to almost 50% for one of

the elementary schools and 100% for the high school. The lottery process is overseen by the

district office and a randomized electronic method is used to select the remaining available

spaces for each magnet school. Students who live within the district's boundaries are assigned to

one out of three pools based on the middle school attendance area and interdistrict transfer

students are assigned to the out-of-district pool. Then, each pool is randomly assigned a place in

drawing order out of the four pools and the student drawing order within each pool is randomly

rearranged. The out-of-district enrollment is limited to 10% of the total lottery enrollment for

magnet schools; however, the procedure denotes that the board has the right to adjust this

percentage through the lottery process. Students are selected in the order they are drawn from

the lottery until the spaces for each grade level and school are filled. Any other students that

remain are then placed on a waitlist in the order they are drawn from the lottery. The date for the

lottery is included in the procedure and the method and timeline for communication to families

about the results is also included in the procedure. In addition, if a student has applied to more

than one school and gets into one of their choices via priority admission or lottery, then they are

removed from the other school lists.

Additional magnet school application data obtained as part of the steering committee

work was reviewed in order to provide insight into the students and families that apply to magnet

schools each year. There are five magnet schools in the district, including two at the elementary

level, two at the middle school level, and one at the high school level, which comprises 22% of

the district's total enrollment with approximately 4,500 students enrolled. For the 2019-20

school year, approximately 2,550 students applied to the magnet schools. A vast majority of the

applications submitted were for the 6th grade (over 900), followed by 9th grade (over 600). The

two magnet middle schools had the most applications with almost 900 submitted for each school.

The application data demonstrates that of the 2,550 students who applied, 22% were

classified as English learners and 45% qualified for free or reduced lunch. In addition, 8% of the

applicants received special education services. Compared to the district, English learners

comprise 17% of the population, students who qualify for free/reduced lunch comprise 60%, and

15% of the population receive special education services. Table 7 provides disaggregated data of

the magnet school applicants compared to the enrollment percentages for the particular schools

and the district for the 2019-20 school year. Again, pseudonyms are used to protect the

anonymity of the district and participants.

Table 7. Magnet School Applicant and Enrollment Data by Student Group

Percentages	English Learners	Free/ Reduced Lunch	Special Education	Homeless	Migrant Youth	Foster Youth
Percentage of Magnet School Applicants	22%	45%	8%	2%	Data Unavailable	0%
Percentage of Magnet School Enrollment	12%	50%	10%	6%	2.5%	0.2%
District Enrollment	17%	60%	15%	7%	3.2%	0.37%

This data demonstrates that with respect to the demographics for each of the student

groups, magnet school enrollment does not closely mirror those of the district. Applicant data

revealed that English learner students apply to magnet schools at a higher rate; however, they

only make up 12% of the total magnet school enrollment compared to 17% of the district's enrollment. Moreover, there were lower application rates and, as a result, lower enrollment percentages for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch and/or receive special education services. Students with free or reduced lunch status comprised 45% of the magnet school applications for the 2019-20 school year and represent 50% of the overall magnet school enrollment and 60% of the total district enrollment. Additionally, students receiving special education services accounted for 8% of the magnet school applications for the same year and comprise 10% of the current magnet school enrollment and 15% of the district's enrollment.

In terms of race/ethnicity, approximately 43% of the magnet school applicants self-identified as Hispanic/Latino, approximately 32% identified as White/Caucasian, and 16% identified as two or more races. This is similar to the district demographics in that these three groups represent the highest enrollment percentages for the district but vary with respect to the percentage of enrollment and rates of application. For example, the Hispanic/Latino student population accounts for 65% of the district's population; however, they comprise 52% of magnet school enrollment. Comparatively, the district's White student population represents 24% of the overall enrollment and over a third of the magnet school enrollment at 35%. Table 8 provides additional information regarding the breakdown of magnet school enrollment by race/ethnicity for the 2019-20 school year.

Table 8. Magnet School Applicant and Enrollment Data by Race/Ethnicity

Percentage	Hispanic/Latino	White	Two or More Races
Percentage of Magnet School Applicants	43%	32%	16%
Percentage of Magnet School Enrollment	52%	35%	5%
District Enrollment	65%	24%	5%

Given that the focus of this study is centered on middle schools, Table 9 provides detailed information regarding the enrollment data obtained from the 2019 California School Dashboard report for the magnet and non-magnet middle schools in the district for comparison.

Table 9. Middle School Enrollment Data by Student Group

Groups	English Learners	Free/ Reduced Lunch	Special Education	Homeless Youth	Migrant Youth	Foster Youth
Sunset Magnet Middle School	10%	74%	12%	7%	5%	0%
Silver Creek Magnet Middle School	6%	44%	11%	3%	1%	0.1%
Waterfall Middle School	29%	89%	20%	11%	10%	0.1%
Forestlake Middle School	16%	67%	17%	7%	2%	0.1%
Eureka Middle School	11%	75%	15%	5%	0.2%	0.2%
District	20%	65%	14%	8%	4%	0.2%

Table 10. Middle School Enrollment Data by Race/Ethnicity

Groups	White	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or More Races
Sunset Magnet Middle School	21%	69%	4%
Silver Creek Magnet Middle School	34%	53%	8%
Waterfall Middle School	6%	88%	2%
Forestlake Middle School	21%	64%	5%
Eureka Middle School	24%	64%	5%
District	24%	65%	5%

The data reveals some differences related to enrollment for the magnet schools compared to the non-magnet middle schools in the district. For example, the percentage of English learners enrolled in the non-magnet middle schools is similar to the district percentage at approximately 18% and 20%, respectively. For the magnet middle schools, English learners account for approximately 8% of the enrollment. Similarly, the students who qualify for free/reduced lunch have a higher rate of enrollment in the non-magnet middle school enrollment at approximately 70% compared to 60% for the magnet middle schools. While not as wide-ranging, there were some differences for the population of students with disabilities. The percentage of students receiving services enrolled in the non-magnet middle schools accounted for 17% of enrollment compared to 11.5% for the magnet middle schools. More important to note are the differences between some of the individual schools. Overall, Sunset Magnet Middle school demographics are similar to those of the district and, in some cases, higher in terms of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and the percentage of the Hispanic/Latino student population. However, there are some vast disparities evident when Silver Creek Magnet and Waterfall Middle Schools are compared. Overall, the demographics for the Waterfall Middle School highlight the fact that

there is a disproportionate rate of certain student groups represented compared to the magnet schools and the district's total enrollment. On the other hand, the same student groups are significantly underrepresented in the Silver Creek Magnet School student population.

Board Meeting Presentations and Minutes. Board meeting minutes and the corresponding presentations were reviewed as a part of the data set. The minutes and presentations are from meetings held within the last three school years including 2017-18, 2018-19, and the current school year, 2019-20. In December of 2017, the executive director of the department responsible for the magnet school admissions process delivered a presentation to the board of education regarding the procedures. The presentation included a summary of the feedback received from the community about the current procedure, adjustments that would be made for the following school year, and future considerations for changes to the procedure. The community feedback included in the presentation was gathered over the spring and fall of 2017 and centered on increasing access to magnet schools for all students in the district, increasing the transparency of the selection process, and bolstering opportunities for families to become more familiar with all of the schools rather than just the magnet schools. The adjustments to the procedures that were presented for implementation the following school year moved up the magnet school admissions application window and lottery to take place earlier in the second semester, expanded outreach to the community, and reduced the out-of-district pool of students from 25% to 10%, which in turn, increased the percentage of enrollment for current students in the district from 75% to 90%. Per the admissions procedure, the lottery pool is divided among the three middle school assigned attendance areas. In other words, 30% of the lottery spaces are set aside per each middle school attendance area for Waterfall, Forestlake, and Eureka Middle Schools along with 10% for the out-of-district pool. Also, the term "permanent employee" was

more clearly defined in the procedure. Lastly, the considerations that were presented included the implementation of an online randomized lottery system, centralizing the application submission process to the district office, reducing the magnet-to-magnet priority group, as well as continuing the development of the curricular pathways between magnet schools across grade spans.

The meeting minutes also reflected a conversation among the members regarding increasing student access to the magnet schools. Specifically, the discussion focused on the percentage of seats set aside for the out-of-district transfer students and the "unintended consequences" that have emerged as a result of limiting the spots available to students within the district, improving outreach to the community, transparency with regard to finances, and simplifying the lottery process. The minutes also included discussion about the priority groups and why they were originally included in the procedure. It was also noted in the minutes of the work that has been done in the last several years to improve the procedure.

In November 2018, another presentation regarding magnet school admissions was presented to the school board by the new executive director in charge of the department that oversees the admissions process. The purpose of the presentation was to provide an update to the board regarding the magnet school procedures. The information presented included a brief background and overview of magnet schools in the district, a review of the current policy, a summary of stakeholder feedback solicited through a questionnaire and community forums, as well as possible options for changes to the policy.

 There were several options included in the presentation for consideration as possible adjustments to the policy. One option included retaining the current policy without changes or with minor changes that would not impact the priority groups or interdistrict transfer students.

Similarly, another option included retaining the current policy along with changes that would affect some, but not all, of the priority groups or interdistrict transfer students. The other options presented centered on variations of the lottery system and included either a lottery system with some, but not all, of the currently identified priority admission categories or a lottery system with different priority admission categories altogether. For the sake of comparison, the presentation also included information on admission rates for a "hypothetical" pure lottery without any priority or guaranteed admission categories. In this scenario, the lottery admission rate would increase to 51% versus the current 33% overall admission rate. The minutes from this meeting also captured the feedback from the parents and community members that were present at the meeting. There was a range of comments both in favor and against the current magnet school procedures as well as the proposed adjustments or options that were presented.

Other board meeting minutes reviewed from later in the fall of 2018 centered on the magnet school admission procedures or process as well. The minutes indicated that a special task force or committee would be established to examine the magnet school admissions procedure in detail and that the changes that were proposed for the following school year would be set aside. There was also mention of the unintended consequences of the current procedure and that the opportunity to involve more stakeholders in the process would be positive.

Finally, board meeting minutes from the fall of 2019 were reviewed. The minutes encapsulate the report that was presented by the steering committee about their findings regarding the magnet school admissions procedure. Important to note, the steering committee was composed of parents, students, teachers, and administrators from both magnet and non-magnet schools across grade spans. The committee established a mission and identified several outcomes for their work. To achieve the goals established, the committee was divided into

smaller teams to research specific areas related to the admissions procedure including magnet school applicant data, the application itself, and communication and outreach to parents. The subsequent report revealed three key findings related to these areas. First, based on the data reviewed, the committee concluded that the magnet schools were inclusive; however, it was also noted that there was a complexity associated with the analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic composition of a school. Second, the committee found that there is a positive fiscal impact associated with the magnet schools as they do serve as a source of revenue for the district. And third, the findings indicated that there is a need for better communication regarding the magnet schools and the application process and offered suggestions for improvements.

Stakeholder Feedback and Community Outreach. Various documents summarizing the feedback from stakeholders over the last several years (2017-18 through 2019-20 school years) regarding the magnet school admissions procedure were examined. The feedback was obtained primarily through community forums, focus groups, parent questionnaires, and administrator meetings. The documents included information about the manner in which feedback was solicited, magnet school enrollment data, access as it relates to the student selection criteria (i.e. priority/lottery/out-of-district admissions), communication and outreach, and suggestions for modifications to the policy.

District Website, Communications, and Published Material. For the last document analysis conducted, information from the district website was reviewed. Information about magnet schools is located on the district's website. There is a dedicated page to magnet schools and it includes information about the historical overview of magnet schools in the United States, a general overview of magnet schools in the district and their specific purpose, descriptions of each of the magnet schools, magnet school steering committee information, and links to several

other sources of information including direct links to the magnet schools, FAQs, the current

magnet school admission procedure, the application, a form to submit feedback, and

informational videos. There is also a link to a detailed history of magnet schools in the district

beginning with the voluntary integration plan that was drafted in 1991 through 2013 and contains

extensive information regarding budgets, staffing, communication to families and other

stakeholders, themes of the magnet schools, proposed plans for new and existing schools,

committee reports, and board meeting minutes.

The district's voluntary integration plan was put into place in an effort to obtain a better

racial/ethnic balance at the schools across the district.   The plan established the threshold for

minority enrollment for the district to be within twenty percentage points of the average for

minority students at any grade level. The plan also included the establishment of two magnet

schools at the elementary level and choice for students to stay at their current school if they had

been moved twice as a result of boundary changes, given that they could provide their own

transportation. There were some later additions to the plan that called for an analysis of minority

enrollment percentages at some of the other elementary schools to determine if modifications

needed to be made to their attendance areas. Furthermore, the plan established a magnet school

steering committee, outlined the committee's composition and sub-committees, and identified

the four elements of a magnet school. The criteria included a specific curriculum based on a

certain theme or instructional pedagogy, served a specific role in the district's voluntary

desegregation efforts, voluntary school choice, and access to students outside of the assigned

attendance areas.

Development of Themes

The second cycle of coding in the analysis of the documents collected involved patterned coding and was informed by the themes present in the literature, the recurrence of those themes in the data, and the Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework. CRT offered a lens through which to examine the magnet school admissions procedure and the work centered around making improvements to the procedure in order to increase equity and diversity. Specifically, there were three guiding questions highlighted in the CRT literature that focused on identifying the priorities in terms of who or what was driving the procedure, the beneficiaries as a result, and the subsequent outcomes (Gillborn, 2005). Through this exercise in coding, three broad categories emerged and include process, access, and awareness. Within these overarching themes, there were also several sub-themes that came to light.

Process. The theme of process, highlighted in the district's magnet school admission procedure, was referenced the most in the collection of documents reviewed. The sub-themes associated with this category include the areas of equity and transparency. The overall sentiment that emerged from a thorough analysis of the documents highlight the notion that the magnet school admission process should be equitable in terms of access, communication and outreach to parents, and transparency. Notes from an initial planning meeting held in the spring of 2019 regarding the structure of the magnet school steering committee outlined possible points for consideration in the development of the group's mission and included on the list were the phrases, "equitable solutions," "transparent oversight," and "all stakeholders have a voice/community voice." The phrase, "equitable outcomes" was also included on the group's list of desired outcomes. Additionally, the notes specifically referred to the application process as an area of focus for the community feedback. Subsequently, included in the steering

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committee's final guiding document, one of the elements of the mission of the group states, "To ensure an equitable application process, with a straightforward application that is universally accessible to all members of the community."

In minutes from a board meeting held in 2018, one of the parents commented on the need to make it "equal for all students" and a staff member commented that "any system where students cannot get in is not equitable." Coupled with this was the sentiment that there was a need to increase diversity. Minutes from a board meeting held in 2019, referenced the need to find solutions for the admissions process so that the magnet schools "represent the diversity of our community" and an additional comment from the same board meeting stated the desire to "increase the diversity of all schools." This notion was also present in earlier documents included in the district's Voluntary Integration Plan from 1992-93. The plan explicitly stated that the desire of the district was to have more diverse schools and established an attendance committee to achieve this goal, in part, through the development of a magnet elementary school.

The term "transparency" was explicitly mentioned in the corpus of data ten times. In particular, transparency was discussed in terms of the admissions process in general as well as it relates to communication about the process, and communication and outreach to parents. In a presentation about feedback received from the community, it was noted that there was a need to "increase transparency of [the] selection process." Other community feedback from this time period mentioned transparency about the waitlist specifically and informing parents where they were on the list. It was also suggested that the application submission process be centralized through the district office. In board meeting minutes from 2019, it was noted that communication should be "open and transparent" and that there was a need to "greatly improve communication to everyone" so that more students and families were made aware of the

opportunity. In the magnet school admission procedure, the theme of transparency is also evident. In the first section of the document that outlines the goals of the district, it explicitly speaks to the intent to provide a "clear, fair, and balanced admissions process." In addition, the procedure states that the "district conducts and oversees the lotteries to ensure compliance with the magnet school admission procedure."

Access. The theme of access is evident throughout the documents regarding the application itself, increasing access for certain student groups, and the identification of barriers that limit access. As stated in the magnet school admission procedure for the current school year, the application is provided in an online and paper format. Parents who do not have the capability to complete the application online can get assistance from a district staff member. In this case, the district staff member essentially completes the online application on the behalf of the parent. One of the suggestions offered by the steering committee was to hold magnet school application support and informational sessions throughout the district to provide "on-the-spot" support for parents in getting more information about magnet schools and completing the application. This finding was based on feedback received from the community during the forums. In May of 2019, specific feedback regarding the application process mentioned the "underrepresented communities" and for leadership to have more communication and a greater presence in the Hispanic/Latino community especially. In board meeting minutes from November 2018 parent feedback about possible changes to the policy focused on the impact the proposed changes would have in terms of access for certain student groups such as those with priority status versus those without. One parent commented that there is a "Need to change priorities. No more privileges. Needs to be equal for all students." On the other hand, another parent stated that there was a need to "Honor the promises that were made." These two

comments were representative of the general feelings on both sides of the argument with respect to the priority and non-priority admissions criteria. Additionally, another parent commented that there should be "increased family and staff involvement" in the revision of the policy.

As part of the presentation, the Executive Director summarized the results of a questionnaire that was disseminated district-wide to all parents and staff in the fall of 2018. It was an open-ended questionnaire with one question about the current magnet school policy. There were a little over 800 English-speaking respondents (92%) compared to 67 Spanish-language respondents (8%). A majority of the English-speaking respondents were magnet school parents (72%) and almost half of the Spanish-speaking respondents were magnet school parents (48%). In addition, a third of the staff respondents were from magnet schools. Comparatively, demographics provided by the district indicate that almost 32% of parents have Spanish as their corresponding language. In addition, magnet school enrollment accounts for approximately 22% of the district's enrollment; which indicates that a majority of the feedback received was from the magnet school community. Feedback about the magnet school policy was also solicited via community forums held in the fall of 2018. The feedback obtained centered on the priority admission categories and the out-of-district percentage. Overall, those in favor of the priority categories argued that there were certain, positive reasons to keep the categories and that it was something that was previously promised to them. On the contrary, those who argued in favor of eliminating the priority categories offered that the categories have successfully disenfranchised student populations, such as low-income or minority students, who already had a significantly reduced chance for magnet school admission.

Results from a survey that was distributed throughout the district in December 2018 by parents for parents reported that the application was not "transparent" and that it was "not as easy

for [the] Spanish-speaking segment" of the population. Over 500 parents were surveyed of which the majority were magnet school parents as was the case with the district survey. The survey consisted of 15 questions and was open for ten days in both electronic and paper formats and was also provided in English and Spanish. In addition, the survey was advertised through multiple Facebook groups. The results from the survey also included reasons why parents did not apply to a magnet and the top reasons listed were because of a missed deadline, was not sure how or when to apply, and was generally not aware. Location in terms of proximity to home was noted as a major factor that parents considered in choosing a magnet school versus their neighborhood school.

     Awareness. The theme of awareness was prominent in the analysis of the documents pertaining to magnet school. There was an overall sentiment expressed by various stakeholder groups that the admission procedure should be inclusive and accessible to all students and families, not just select groups. The notion that the current procedure may be falling short of this goal was also evident from the analysis. Beginning with the magnet school admission procedure document, it states in the Goals section at the top that the "district strives to provide a clear, fair, and balanced admissions procedure." It also includes a statement about accepting students from various groups such as students with disabilities, English learners, etc. In a presentation to the Board in November 2018, these terms were defined as follows: "Clear: easy to perceive, understand, or interpret; Fair: free from bias, dishonesty, or injustice; Balanced: being in a state of balance: having different parts of elements properly or effectively arranged, proportioned, regulated, considered, etc." In that same presentation, a summary of feedback obtained from the community was shared. One of the major points of feedback regarding the magnet school admission procedure highlighted the disenfranchisement of traditionally marginalized students.

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In the board meeting minutes regarding the magnet school admission procedure, the overall sentiment of the comments that were made centered on the need for fairness and equality, increasing access, more communication among stakeholders, and recognition of the unintended consequences that have impacted the non-magnet schools. Meeting minutes from December of 2017 included discussion regarding the "unintended consequences" of magnet schools that have displaced some students due to the limited number of available spaces combined with the out-of-district spots. Similarly, meeting minutes from November of 2018, mentioned unintended consequences with respect to declining enrollment of the non-magnet schools in the district as a result of the limited availability and magnet schools operating at capacity, especially at the middle school level. In November of 2019, the unintended consequences centered on the need to increase diversity in the magnet schools so that they are reflective of the community. Lastly, unintended consequences were discussed with respect to the neighborhood schools and the perception that they are somehow "less than". Coupled with this was the need to elevate or promote the non-magnet schools in the district as much as the magnet schools. This was explicitly stated as one of the desired outcomes for the magnet school steering committee which states, "...reduce the perception of inequality among Providence Unified District schools by proactively and concretely addressing perceptions of "good" schools versus "other schools.""

Questionnaire Data Analysis

The parent participants were provided with a short questionnaire in either English or Spanish through Qualtrics.com. The questionnaire was also provided in a paper format for participants without access to technology. The questionnaire was developed based on themes identified in the review of literature regarding school choice and the factors and resources employed in the decision-making process of parents in selecting schools for their children.

Thirty-two participants completed the questionnaire and included parents from a magnet and a

non-magnet middle school in the Providence Unified School District. Fifteen of the parent

participants were from Waterfall Middle School and seventeen were from Sunset Magnet Middle

School. The questionnaire asked demographic questions including race/ethnicity, highest level

of schooling completed, annual household income, and the race/ethnicity of their child. Figure 3

provides additional detail of the participants that completed the questionnaire.
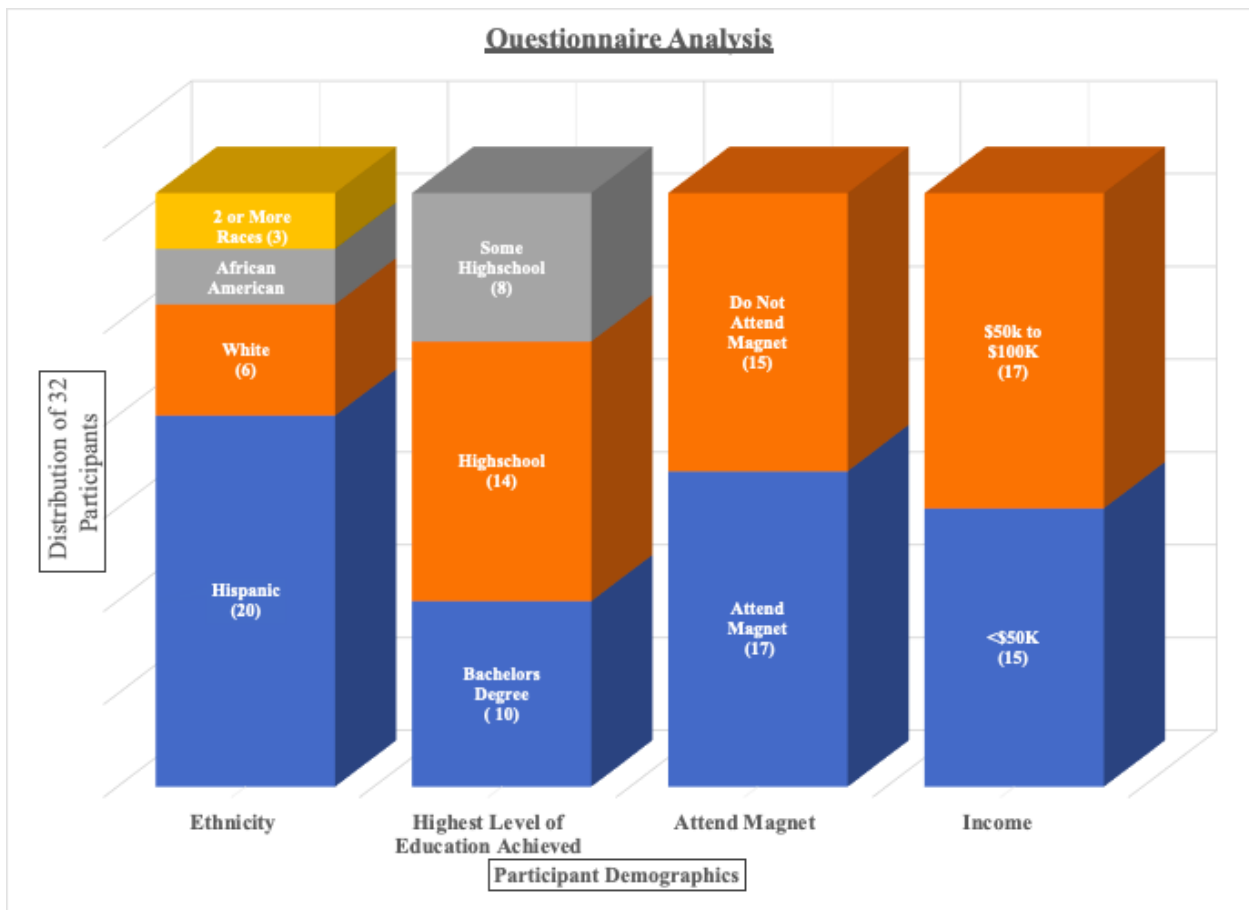

Figure 3. Participant Demographic Data

Based upon analysis of the questionnaire data, most of the participants self-identified as

Hispanic/Latino (20), followed by White (6), African American (3), and Two or More Races (3).

Of the thirty-two participants, ten reported a bachelor's degree as the highest level of schooling

completed. Eight participants reported their highest level of education as some high school, no diploma. Most of the questionnaire participants (15) reported their annual income as less than $49,000. The income level for the remainder of the questionnaire participants varied from $50,000 to greater than or equal to $100,000 annually. And, seventeen of the questionnaires were completed in Spanish.

A vast majority of the participants who took the questionnaire reported that they were aware that the district in which their child/children attend offers school choice (29 out of 32). Most participants reported that they learned of school choice through informational meetings held throughout the district (18 out of 32) and from other parents (12 out of 32). The questionnaire participants indicated that they also learned of this information from promotional material distributed by the district and from the district website (11 out of 32). Additionally, most of the parents who took the questionnaire (29 out of 32) reported that they know what a magnet school is.

The questionnaire asked participants about specific reasons they would select a different school for their child/children other than their neighborhood school. The top three reasons parents indicated as reasons to choose a different school outside of their assigned attendance area include the school's theme or academic focus (28), followed by safety (12), and having shared values (9). There were similar results when parents were asked about the most important aspect of schooling for their child; twenty-four (24) of the thirty-two (32) parents who took the questionnaire reported that the school's academic theme or focus is their top priority. Safety, opportunities for parent involvement, and location were also indicated as the most important aspect of schooling for the parents who took the questionnaire for a combined total of six out of the thirty-two parents who completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included questions about the interactions between friends and family as it relates to decision-making about schooling for their children in order to obtain information about parental networks. In particular, participants were asked if their friends or family ever talk with them about the quality of their child's school, expressing interest in moving their child to a different school, and indicating specific reasons for wanting to select a different school for their child. Almost all of the participants (31 out of 32) indicated that their friends/family discuss the quality of their child's school with them and twenty-three (23) of those participants reported that their friends/family talk with them about moving their child to a different school. The responses varied to the question about specific reasons for wanting to select a different school for their child. The school's theme or academic focus was selected by most of the questionnaire respondents (17 out of 32) followed by safety and location with eight (8) respondents and seven (7) respondents respectively, indicating these areas as reasons for wanting to choose a different school for their child. The results were the same when disaggregated by magnet and non-magnet school parents. A school's theme or academic focus was the top reason for both groups.

A series of questions included in the questionnaire asked respondents about magnet school meetings and information distributed by the district. A majority of the questionnaire respondents (26) indicated that they attended meetings about magnet schools. Of those who indicated they attended, seventeen (17) considered the information shared at the meetings to be very helpful and eight (8) considered the information shared to be somewhat helpful. Also, important to note, the majority (17) of parents who indicated that they attended magnet school related meetings were parents of currently enrolled magnet students. Furthermore, a majority of questionnaire respondents (23) also reported that the magnet school information included reasons for considering a magnet school for their child. Additional questions asked participants about

the written information received regarding magnet schools. Twenty-three (23) of the respondents indicated that they received written information and twenty-four (24) of the respondents indicated that the information was written in their primary language. A majority (14) of the respondents who indicated that they received written information and it was in their primary language were parents of currently enrolled magnet school students. A majority of questionnaire participants also reported that the information they received was easy to understand (24), helpful (22), and detailed enough to influence their decision about whether or not to send their child to a magnet school (21). Out of the thirty-two questionnaire respondents, twenty-three (23) reported that they participated in the magnet school admissions process and seventeen (17) reported that they currently have a child attending a magnet school.

Other questions included in the questionnaire also focused on further identifying reasons parents make decisions about schooling for their children. Specifically, twenty-six (26) of the questionnaire respondents indicated that being at a school with other students who share the same family values is important to them. Responses varied to the question posed about whether or not being at a school with other students who look like them is important. Seventeen (17) respondents indicated this was important while twelve (12) indicated that it was not. A majority of the participants (24) also indicated that the current school their child is attending was their first choice, five (5) participants indicated it was their second choice, and one (1) respondent reported it was their third choice. A majority (15) of the respondents who indicated that the school was their first choice were parents of magnet school students. In terms of location, most of the questionnaire respondents (22) reported that they did not choose a place to live based on the school their child would attend.

Finally, all of the respondents indicated that they believe that parents should talk to school leaders about what they want for their child's education. And, when asked about the overall quality of their child's education, seventeen respondents reported they were extremely satisfied and thirteen reported they were somewhat satisfied. Most (13) of the parents who indicated that they were extremely satisfied currently have a child in the magnet schools. Overall, there were two primary themes that emerged from analysis of the questionnaire data and include factors (or reasons) and information, which in this case functions as a resource. These themes relate to the manner in which parents' make decisions about schooling for their children and connect to the theoretical frameworks of bounded rationality and social capital theory.

Development of Themes

Factors. One of the questions included in the questionnaire looked at reasons to change to a different school from a neighborhood school and 88% of the parents, of which most were Sunset Magnet School parents, responded with the school's theme or academic focus (see Appendix J). The next two questions asked about reasons people in the respondent's social circle would select a different school and again, the school's theme or academic focus was the primary reason selected (53% of respondents). In this case, the majority of respondents who specified this were Waterfall Middle School parents. When respondents were asked about the most important aspect of schooling for their children, parents once again identified the school's theme or academic focus as the primary reason (75% of respondents; most from the magnet school). In looking at other factors that impact the decision-making of parents regarding school selection, 53% of respondents indicated that being at a school with other students who look like their family was important and 81% reported that having shared values with the school is important. Most of the parents who indicated this were from the magnet school.

Information (as a Resource). The other primary theme of the questionnaire data was information. In particular, information was examined in terms of what type of information parents utilized to inform their decisions, where they obtained the information, and if it was effective in contributing to their school selection. A little over half of the respondents (56%) indicated that they learned of school choice from informational meetings that were held throughout the district and 38% reported that this information came from other parents in the district. When asked about whether or not they have attended meetings about magnet schools, 81% of the respondents indicated that they had and 68% reported that the information was very helpful. Additionally, 72% of respondents reported that the information shared at the meetings included reasons for considering a magnet school. There were several questions that asked respondents about the written information they received regarding magnet schools. A majority of the respondents (72%) stated that they had received information about magnet schools and that it was in their primary language (75%). Respondents also indicated that the written information was easy to understand (75%) and helpful (85%). Lastly, 66% of respondents reported that the written information was detailed enough to influence their decision in selecting a magnet school for their child. Overall, Sunset Magnet Middle School parents represented a majority of the respondents to each of the above questions. See Figure 4 below for a comparison of parent responses on the questionnaire disaggregated by the non-magnet and magnet middle school for each of the major themes.
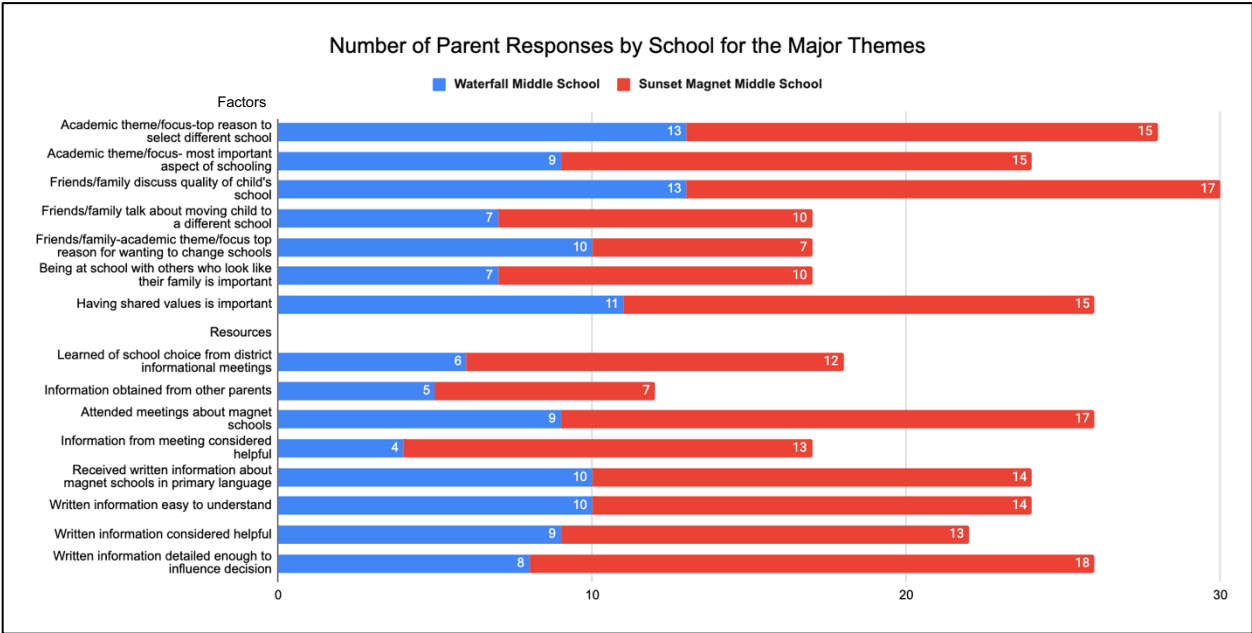
Figure 4. Number of Parent Responses by School for the Major Themes

Interview Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a part of the research design and included the staff responsible for the oversight of the magnet school admissions process for the district and with parents of magnet and non-magnet middle school students, Sunset Magnet Middle School and Waterfall Middle School, respectively. A total of one district staff member and ten parents were interviewed. The district staff member interviewed, John Smith, is responsible for the oversight of the magnet school admission process. Half of the parents (5) that were interviewed had students in magnet middle school and the other half (5) had students in non-magnet middle school in the district. Two of the interviews were conducted in Spanish and an interpreter was used. Interviews were conducted one-on-one via in-person or the telephone, transcribed via professional transcriptionist, and then underwent several rounds of coding by the

researcher. Analysis began with a round of open coding to develop a general sentiment of the perspective of the participants followed by several rounds of additional coding by hand to identify themes and sub-themes.

The interview questions included in the educator and parent interview protocols were developed based on review of the school choice literature and research questions. The educator interview protocol included eleven open-ended questions while the parent interview protocol included fifteen questions that were also open-ended (See Appendices G and H). There were different themes that emerged from the two sets of interviews; however, there were some areas of commonality as it relates to access.

District Office Staff Member Interview. The interview began with a review of the magnet school admission process in terms of the online application itself and the admissions criteria. John reported that most parents complete the application online during the 6-week window. He also mentioned that there is assistance for those parents without access to technology to do so. The analysis of the interview revealed two major themes, access and awareness. Then, within each of those themes, sub-themes were identified. The three sub-themes of access are focused on location/convenience, admissions criteria, and the barriers to access. Related to the theme of awareness, the sub-themes identified focused on the awareness of leadership in terms of the goals of the district versus the reality or unintended outcomes evident as well as the public pressure that exists surrounding the specific magnet school admission criteria. Again, the CRT framework was employed to understand the manner in which the admissions procedure supports or constrains equity and diversity.

Development of Themes

    Access. Based on the review of literature, one of the interview questions asked specifically about the location of magnet schools in the district. The overall sentiment suggested that the location of the magnet schools has had an impact in terms of the district's goal of diversity. Three of the magnet schools were discussed in particular concerning the decisions that were made about where to place them. The first magnet middle school location was determined based on availability of a vacant site after the opening of a new school. This vacant site, which is more centrally located, became the magnet school and the new site, located further from the center of town was considered a neighborhood school. The location for one of the other magnet middle schools was selected due to its academic performance. John stated that the rationale behind this decision was to turn the historically underperforming school into a magnet school with the aim of improving student achievement. This school is also located closer to the center of town. One of the more recent magnet schools that was opened is located in a wealthier part of town. John stated that there is no public or district-provided transportation to this site and there are a very limited number of "walkable" surrounding neighborhoods. John reported that with respect to all three of these magnet schools, only one has demographics that are somewhat similar to the district as a whole while the others have become less diverse (i.e. higher income and less Hispanic/Latino) as evidenced by district demographic data, which shows that the non-magnet middle schools have experienced a notable shift in the socioeconomic levels and racial/ethnic composition since the opening of the magnet schools.

    For the 2014-15 school year, a comparison of the middle school enrollment by student groups (i.e. EL, socioeconomically disadvantaged, etc.) and by race/ethnicity revealed that the demographics of the middle schools were somewhat similar and closer to the district

demographics. In fact, the magnet middle schools had a higher percentage of students who were classified as low-income and the Hispanic/Latino student population comprised almost 84% of the student population of Silver Creek Magnet Middle School. Comparatively, the demographics outlined in the 2019 California School Dashboard report revealed that the gap in percentages of enrollment for the same student groups have widened. The percentage of English learners enrolled in the non-magnet middle schools has doubled compared to the magnet middle schools, approximately 8% and 18%, respectively. For students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, they comprised approximately 60% of the magnet middle school enrollment compared to 76% of the non-magnet middle school enrollment. Moreover, students receiving special education services in the magnet middle schools accounted for 11.5% of the student population compared to approximately 17% of the non-magnet middle school students. For that same magnet middle school, Silver Creek, the Hispanic/Latino population accounted for approximately 50% while White students comprised 38% of the student population. Additionally, the non-magnet middle school enrollment has experienced a continuous decline since the magnet schools opened. Overall, the district is experiencing a decline in enrollment; however, the magnet middle schools have seen a steady increase in enrollment since they opened. Enrollment trends for the non-magnet and magnet elementary and high school grade spans follow a similar pattern with respect to a change in demographics.

In the interview analysis, access also related to the specific admissions criteria outlined in the magnet school admissions procedure. The procedure identifies two categories of applicants including priority admission and non-priority. Again, students who apply and meet one of five criteria listed in the procedure receive priority status in the application process while all others fall under the lottery. It was very clear both during the interview and in subsequent analysis that

the priority admission criteria is the source of much debate within the district. In particular, John stated that the biggest source of contention is the magnet-to-magnet pathway, which allows students in grades five and eight to transition to the next grade span at their preferred magnet school (i.e. middle school and high school). Based on data analysis conducted by the district, John stated that the priority students take up over half the available spaces and that "there's never been a situation where the number of priority students is greater than the number of available spaces, at least not for kindergarten, 6th grade and then 9th grade." This, in turn, limits the available spaces for the non-priority applicants.

The interview analysis also revealed several barriers in terms of parents being able to access or take advantage of the magnet school opportunities. The most prevalent in the interview focused on the sophistication of parents in terms of navigating the education system and getting their children in the magnet school system early in order to take advantage of the magnet-to-magnet pathway. John stated that "...the more sophisticated, more educated parents are a lot of times picking magnet schools. Once they get into that magnet school in kindergarten, when it comes time for 6th grade, they have that built-in priority." On the contrary, John went on to note that,

> "By that time, when some of the families may be less familiar with the system of education in the U.S. or may not speak English as their primary language...they hear about these magnet schools and want to get in. The problem is, the result is, and the analysis they did last year for our board showed, that if you're a student who's been in a magnet school, elementary school, you essentially have a 100% chance to get in because I mentioned, there's always more spaces available than there are priority students. But priority students end up taking over half of the available spaces."

Awareness. In analysis of the interview, there was an overall sense of awareness that the policy may not be meeting its intended goals. One of the interview questions asked the

participant about how the district views the purpose of magnet schools in an effort to gain insight into the first research question regarding the possible constraints and supports of the magnet school policy. John noted that there might have been a slight shift in the original intent, but since he has been a part of the district, at least one of the goals was to attract and retain students to counteract the decline in enrollment that was happening across the district at the time. John stated that, "...the school district was losing more students than it was gaining through the interdistrict transfer process...and so I know that Superintendent Jared Beach's interest was in creating some schools that were very attractive and they actually even set aside 30% of available spaces for students coming to us from outside the district." He also noted that at one point, about a third of the magnet high school students who attended were from outside the district, which served to generate revenue for the district.

As a follow-up question, the interviewee was asked about the level of satisfaction with the current magnet school admissions procedure. John stated that he was not completely satisfied as it relates to the priority admission criteria and that finding a solution is "incredibly difficult." It was clear through analysis of the interview that there was a tangible element of public pressure related to finding possible solutions. John referenced several recent public meetings in which the views expressed by parents regarding possible changes to the admissions procedure were intense and strongly in favor of maintaining the priority admissions criteria. In particular, he noted that the elementary parents wanted to keep the magnet-to-magnet pathway in place. Again, it was mentioned that the more sophisticated parents intentionally get into the magnet school system early (i.e. in kindergarten) and/or take advantage of the sibling priority admissions category, in order to secure a spot in middle school and high school.

Parent Interviews. The interviewees were parents of magnet and non-magnet middle school students within Providence Unified School District. Initially, parents were purposefully selected from various parent meetings including ELAC, DELAC, SSC, and the Coffee with the Principal/Counselor to complete the questionnaire. The last question on the questionnaire provided the opportunity for parents to indicate if they would be willing to do a follow-up interview and to leave their contact information. From there, ten parents indicated that they wanted to do the interview; five (5) of the parents were from Sunset Magnet Middle School and the remaining five (5) parents were from the non-magnet, Waterfall Middle School. All interviews were recorded, interpreted as needed, transcribed, and underwent several rounds of coding.

The interview began with asking participants several demographic and introductory questions before getting into the more detailed questions about school choice. Interestingly, four out of the five magnet school parents reported that other family members previously attended the magnet middle school their child currently attends. All of the Sunset Magnet Middle School interviewees indicated that this was not their neighborhood school in that they had to apply to attend, although two of the parents reported that they live nearby the school. Three out of the five Waterfall Middle School parents indicated that it was their neighborhood school; however, they also shared that they applied to one of the magnet middle schools. Two of the parents who submitted applications did not get accepted though the lottery process and the third parent shared that her child was accepted but made the decision not to send her after visiting the school. Also, two of the parents, one form Waterfall Middle School and the other from Sunset Magnet Middle School, are current employees of the school district.

Participants were asked about their participation in the school community and most of the participants (8 out of 10 from both the magnet and non-magnet schools), reported that they attend school or district meetings. The interviewees mentioned that they attend PTA, school site council, coffee with the principal/counselors, board meetings, ELAC, and DELAC. Two of the magnet school parent participants commented that they attended the community forums (regarding magnet schools) while none of the non-magnet parents mentioned attending.

The themes that emerged from analysis of the parent interviews were related to the factors and resources parents utilize in the decision-making process in selecting a school for their children. The factors were further categorized into sub-themes including the academic theme or focus, location and convenience, and parent perception. The resources mentioned primarily related to parental networks in terms of where and how parents obtain their information throughout the school selection process. As is the case with the questionnaire, Bounded Rationality and Social Capital Theory frameworks were applied in the analysis.

Development of Themes

Factors. The academic theme/focus was the most prevalent factor parents reported they took into consideration during this process. This was evident in both the magnet and non-magnet school interviews; however, it was more prevalent among the magnet school parents. All five of the Sunset Magnet Middle School parents mentioned the school's academic theme and three of them mentioned it twice. Comparatively, three of the Waterfall Middle School parents discussed the school's theme and one of them mentioned it two times during the interview. In particular, when parents spoke of this, they specifically named the academic themes such as "International Baccalaureate (IB)" or "science or math." One participant mentioned specifically, "The elementary school was an IB Elementary School so that helped our choice with Sunset Magnet

Middle School." Another participant stated, "So, I think her strength is math. So, I want her to be in a school where they're based on mathematics, basically." Moreover, a participant noted that, "I wanted more of a traditional school, but with an emphasis on science and math."

Location and convenience (including transportation) were also significant factors the interviewees mentioned as a reason to select a magnet school. It was mentioned more from the magnet school parents than the non-magnet middle school parents. In fact, only one Waterfall Middle School parent mentioned it once compared to the four out of the five Sunset Magnet Middle School parents. Moreover, three of the magnet school parents mentioned it multiple times. In most cases, the participants mentioned that the magnet school was closer to their home than their neighborhood school, which influenced their decision. One participant noted, "...it [magnet school] was just as close as our home school," and another stated, "and that one's pretty close to our house also." Several interviewees spoke specifically about the convenience of living next to the magnet school and the lack of transportation. One interviewee stated that the process of looking into a magnet school "...started because of the convenience of where I lived, because we don't have transportation, so I was able to walk my kids to school..." Another participant commented about selecting a magnet school because of the "ease of closeness...there was one across the street...because I really don't drive, so if they could go by themselves the better. There was also a sentiment expressed by some of the participants that the location or convenience of getting to a magnet school could limit access for some parents. One parent noted that, "Sunset Magnet is a lot farther. So, for some people it's the convenience..." and another interviewee stated that, "...a lot of parents have trouble getting to school and they walk for miles just to come to Sunset Magnet."

Lastly, parent perception as it relates to the school leader or the reputation of the school itself also emerged as factors that influence the decision-making process of parents in analysis of the interview data. This notion was mentioned in seven out of the ten interviews of which four were magnet school parents and three were the non-magnet school parents. Most of the magnet and non-magnet school parents discussed this factor multiple times. In addition, the school leader was mentioned specifically by four parents for a total of five times. Most of these were from the Sunset Magnet Middle School parents (3 out of 5) and one was from a Waterfall Middle School parent who referenced the school leader on two occasions. In one case, one of the magnet school participants opted not to send her child to the neighborhood school due to changes in leadership. The non-magnet school parent participant commented that she considered applying to a magnet school based on the "previous principal" but later reconsidered when a new principal came on. On the other hand, several interviewees mentioned the school leader as one of the reasons to select a magnet school. One participant stated, "[...] was the principal there and she was kind of a no-nonsense lady…" Another participant in discussing the differences between the personalities of two principals believed that one was preferred over the other and stated, "...I think that was a big draw for a lot of people."

It was also clear from the interview analysis of this notion of better, best, or more with respect to the magnet schools. The interviewees commented that the decision was made to apply to a magnet school because it was, "better academically," "the best opportunity," or the "best fit" or something similar. Some participants even directly commented about the reputation of the school. One participant referred to one of the magnet schools as the "fun school" or "popular school" while another participant stated that one of the neighborhood schools was referred to as the "bad school" and that, "everybody calls us the bad school." Additionally, some of the

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participants stated that the magnet schools, "have more programs," or "have more support in those areas," or "...offer to help the kids." The sentiment of the magnet schools being better or having more was expressed by seven out of the ten parents with slightly more being from the magnet school parents (4 out of 7). Additionally, more of the magnet school parents indicated this notion multiple times.

Resources. It was evident that the predominant source of information the interviewees utilized in the decision-making process was obtained through their personal connections or networks. The most prevalent source of information came from their friends or family as evidenced by the fact that this was mentioned in seven out of ten interviews. Two participants, one a magnet school parent and the other a non-magnet school parent, stated that their sisters told them about the magnet schools. Others stated that they got information from other parents, both magnet and non-magnet school parents, either through regular interactions at school or through extra-curricular activities (i.e. Girls Scouts). A couple of the interviewees, both from the magnet school, mentioned that some of the moms they knew and interacted with also worked in the district. One non-magnet parent in particular noted that, "In the past when I had applied, some of my choices were more based on some of the parents' feedback that I got." Interestingly, more of the non-magnet parents referenced that they obtained information from their friends or family.

In alignment with the tenets of social capital theory, it was also clear that participants gathered information through their own personal experiences such as parent involvement opportunities, being an employee in the district, living near a magnet school, having prior knowledge from a previous district, conducting their own research via online (including social media), or interviewing the staff or administrators at the schools themselves (Bell, 2009). This notion was present in seven of the interviews. One Sunset Magnet School participant stated that,

"I was a very involved mom. I'm a stay at home mom, so I was able to...I think those parents like myself, I think we're just very involved in volunteering and we talk a lot." Another participant from the non-magnet, Waterfall Middle School mentioned in regard to her decision not to select a magnet school, that "...once I interviewed at that school, I was not happy." One magnet school participant commented specifically about the information she obtained online that factored into her decision to consider a magnet school for her child. She noted that, "...there was a lot of information on social media just from other parents...there was a lot of helpful information that went out and other parents would post…" Moreover, there were at least two parents who mentioned that their children first explored the magnet schools and brought the idea to their attention. One was from the magnet school and the other the non-magnet school.

Finally, it was noted that the participants sought information about magnet schools from the district or school itself. It was mentioned that information came from district phone calls, presentations by magnet school staff at the elementary schools, the district website, the all schools' showcase put on by the district each year, from teachers, and through tours offered at the magnet schools. One participant from the magnet school noted in particular that the information she and her child obtained from the magnet schools during the tours was very impactful in regard to their school selection. The interviewee stated that, "It was helpful to see the tour while kids were there...we got a better feel for things at the school when we could see it in action." She went on to say that,

> "They gave us course information, what would be expected and required of our student. They gave us, at least one of them, the opportunity for our child to sort of walk in the shoes of another student and see the classes and see them in action...we were able to talk with students, and the kids on tour were able to talk with other students and get information about the school."

Ultimately, she noted that they let their daughter choose after touring both magnet schools.

Summary of Results

This mixed methods study analyzed the relationship between the implementation of magnet school policy and parent behavior with respect to school selection. Using bounded rationality, social capital theory, and critical race theory as the theoretical frameworks, the researcher examined and analyzed various documents pertaining to magnet schools, a parent questionnaire, and educator and parent interviews as part of the data collection process then triangulated the results of the data to answer the two research questions. In what ways does magnet school or school choice policy support or constrain diversity and equity in districts and schools? And, in what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection. The table below represents alignment between the themes, sub-themes, data sources and theoretical frameworks.

Table 11. Matrix of Themes and Sub-themes of Data Sources

Theoretical Framework	Critical Race Theory		Bounded Rationality and Social Capital Theory	
Themes/ Sub-Themes	Document Analysis	Interview - District Staff Member	Parent Questionnaire	Interviews - Parents
Process - Equity - Transparency	✓			
Access - Location/Convenience - Admissions Criteria - Barriers	✓	✓		
Awareness	✓	✓		
Factors			✓	✓
Resources/ Information			✓	✓

Analysis of Document Review

This corpus of data served to provide insight into the first research question that focuses on identifying the elements of the magnet school policy or procedure that serve to either constrain or support equity and diversity across the district, and more specifically, determine who or what may be driving the development of policy/procedure, who is benefiting the most from the current procedure, and what are the outcomes. In this first phase of data collection, an array of extant data, archival records, and public documents were reviewed, and hand coded as part of the analysis process. The major themes that emerged from the data analysis include process, access, and awareness. The overall sentiment from the documents reviewed is that there is a need to make the magnet school admission process more equitable and accessible to historically underserved students and families. The terms "diversity," "equitable," and "transparent" appeared repeatedly in the set of documents collected. Additionally, it is clear from the analysis that a significant portion of the stakeholders believe that the priority admissions criteria outlined in the board-adopted procedure effectively serves as barriers for the non-priority pool. Statistics collected by the district regarding magnet school enrollment support this notion. The analysis of magnet school enrollment and admission rates from the 2018-19 school year revealed that students who fall in the priority admissions category with 100% admission comprise a little over half (52%) of the magnet school enrollment while the average lottery admission rate is 33%. Specifically, for the magnet middle schools, the admission rate drops to 20%. Furthermore, magnet school enrollment demonstrates that while certain student groups may be applying at greater rates, the demographics of accepted students overall do not reflect those of the district.

The review of data also revealed that while there is this general feeling that the magnet school admission procedures may fall short in helping the district reach its goals of equity and diversity, there is an awareness on the part of leadership, at various levels, that agree that improvements could be made in order to better serve the community and regularly seek feedback and input from parents and others to this end. Analysis of the data revealed that the admissions procedure was modified at the end of the 2016-17 school year based on feedback from parents and staff. This change in the procedure lowered the percentage, from 30% to 10%, of students admitted from out of the district thereby increasing opportunities for current students in the district.

Analysis of Questionnaire and Interviews

In this phase of data collection, a questionnaire was administered to a select group of parents of magnet and non-magnet middle school parents and follow-up interviews were conducted with parents who volunteered. Additionally, an interview was conducted with a district staff member who is responsible for the oversight of the magnet school admissions process. Analysis of data from this phase of data collection also addresses the first research question that focused on identifying and analyzing elements of the magnet school policy that constrain or support equity and diversity. Again, elements of CRT were taken into consideration. This set of data also helped to answer the second research question that focuses on the manner in which the social capital of parents influences their decision-making as it relates to school selection for their children. Overall, parents reported that they were aware of the school choice option in the district and magnet school, specifically.

Parent Questionnaire and Interviews. The themes that emerged from both the questionnaire that was administered to parents and the subsequent interviews were factors and

resources. Overwhelmingly, parents from both the magnet and non-magnet school identified a school's theme or academic focus as the primary reason to select a school other than their neighborhood school. Analysis of this same data also highlighted the fact that parents consider a school's theme or focus as the most important aspect of schooling for their children. This was primarily the case for the magnet school parents more so than the non-magnet school parents. Additional factors that were identified to influence their decision-making included location or convenience and parent perception. The interview data specifically highlighted the notion of parent perception as it relates to the school leader and the school's reputation and how that factored into their decisions. This was evident from both the magnet and non-magnet school parents.

The theme of resources that emerged from the questionnaire and interview data highlights the information parents obtain and employ in the school selection decision-making process. The questionnaire asked specific questions about how they learned of school choice in the district. Most participants, of which most were magnet school parents, responded that they learned of this information primarily from the district. Less than half of the participants who took the questionnaire indicated that they got the information from other parents. This finding was slightly different when compared to the interview data. The analysis of interview data revealed that the primary source of information for magnet and non-magnet parents obtained regarding magnet schools came from people in their social circle or personal network (i.e. friends and family). Information from the school or district was the second most cited source of information. While there was a slight variance with these two specific data points, a vast majority of the questionnaire participants did indicate that their friends and family talk to them about the quality of their child's schooling or about moving their child to a different school. These findings are in

alignment with the literature and theoretical frameworks of bounded rationality and social capital theory in that parents obtain information from both official avenues and through their social ties during the decision-making process (Bell, 2009; Chin & Phillips, 2004; Horvat et al., 2003; Ball & Vincent, 1998).

District Staff Member Interview. In alignment with the analysis of the document review, the analysis of the interview with the district staff member who oversees the magnet school admissions process, the themes of process, access and awareness were evident and also helped to answer the first research question. Location or convenience were a sub-theme of access and were identified as barriers for some parents in accessing magnet schools. Additionally, two specific criteria within the priority admission category (siblings and magnet-to-magnet) were also identified as problematic and possibly serve as a constraint in terms of equity and diversity.   There was a general sense of awareness that was clear in the analysis of the interview data. The participant acknowledged partial satisfaction with the current magnet school admissions procedure and added that finding a solution that most can agree with is "incredibly difficult," which speaks to the sub-theme of public pressure that was also evident in the analysis. Moreover, when viewed through the CRT lens, this calls into question who is benefiting from the procedure as it stands and who might be the driving force behind it.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview of the Problem

Over sixty years following the passage of the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), there has been an increase in segregation by both race/ethnicity and poverty in schools across the nation (Orfield et. al, 2016). Since then, many education reform initiatives have been implemented with the hopes of reversing this trend of double segregation. Some argue that the programs or initiatives that have been implemented over the years to address these issues have only served to exacerbate the original problem. School choice is one such example. School choice provides parents the option to select a school they believe offers their child the best education regardless of the assigned attendance area. This has gained new attention in recent years with the appointment of Betsy DeVos as the U.S. Secretary of Education who has been a well-known supporter of school choice.

School choice originated in the educational space in the early 1950s with the aim of reforming the entire education system as a whole (Weiss, 1966). It was believed that competition among schools, such as businesses in a free market economy, would elevate their status and ultimately the entire education system (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Friedman & Friedman, 1980; Ravitch 2016). There are many forms of school choice; however, magnet schools remain the most popular with 3.5 million students enrolled according to the most recent report from the Magnet Schools of America organization. Magnet schools were introduced to the educational arena in the 1970s as a way to specifically address the continued segregation of schools and increase educational opportunities for traditionally underserved students. Some researchers posit that the very mechanism that was established to support equity and diversity is unintentionally

contributing to racial/ethnic and socioeconomic stratification (Bell, 2009; Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Archbald, 2004; Goldring & Smrekar, 2000).

This study examined the major components of parent choice in relation to the magnet school or school choice paradigm. The theoretical frameworks of bounded rationality, social capital theory, and critical race theory were employed as a lens through which to examine and better understand this bounded system. Specifically, bounded rationality and social capital theory were utilized to better understand the decision-making process of parents as it relates to school selection. Additionally, critical race theory was utilized to analyze the district policies and practices that serve to constrain or support equity and diversity. A mixed methods case study was designed to answer the following research questions: 1) In what ways does magnet school magnet school or school choice policy support or constrain equity and diversity districts and schools? and 2) In what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection? The research methodology included document collection, a parent questionnaire, and interviews with parents and district personnel in order to answer these questions.

In the following sections, answers to these research questions will be addressed. The chapter will end with a discussion regarding the implications of these findings for educational leadership and social justice as well as potential areas for future research on school choice and magnet schools.

Research Question #1: In what ways does school choice or magnet schools support or constrain equity and diversity in districts and schools?

This research question focused on identifying specific elements of the magnet school admissions procedure and practices that either support or constrain equity and diversity in

schools across the district. Key findings and considerations are discussed in detail in the following sections: areas of support and areas of constraint.

Areas of Support.

In review of the magnet school admissions procedure itself, it is evident that the district strives to have a process in place that is inclusive and equitable. In the first section of the magnet school admission procedure for the current school year, it explicitly states that, "The district strives to provide a clear, fair, and balanced admissions procedure." The definition of these terms was included in a presentation in the spring of 2019 to the board about the magnet school admission procedures and possible changes for the coming year. That statement is followed by another statement that describes that magnet school enrollment is available to all students regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, etc. The document also includes detailed information regarding the application, the selection process, priority and lottery admissions, notification timelines and procedures, as well as information about the waitlist process and the close of the admissions period. In the lottery section, it mentions specifically that the district office will "oversee the lotteries to ensure compliance with this admission procedure." It is evident that the goal of the district is to make the admissions process as straightforward and fair and as possible; however, there is also a great deal of concern that it may fall short in some areas as evidenced by the feedback from various stakeholders.

Another area of support is related to the openness of the district to seek and provide regular opportunities for stakeholders to offer input and feedback regarding the magnet school admissions procedure. There are several formal mechanisms in place to support this including the community forums that are held twice each year (once during the fall and during spring semesters), the establishment of the Magnet School Steering Committee, which is comprised of

staff, students, and parents, and is tasked with gathering data regarding magnet school enrollment and making recommendations for improvement. Then, more informally, there is a community feedback form that is located on the district's magnet school webpage that is open at all times. In addition, the district is willing to make adjustments based on stakeholder feedback. During the 2018-19 school year, the out-of-district enrollment pool was adjusted to take effect the following school year. It was originally established that 30% of the magnet school lottery seats were set aside for inter-district transfers; however, that was adjusted to 10% based on input from the community. In turn, this shift resulted in the availability of more spaces for currently enrolled students in the district.

While there is a level of concern among stakeholders about the district's communication and outreach efforts to parents about magnet schools in general as well as the application process, there are some positive findings in this area. Based on the analysis of data, most parent participants who took the questionnaire and were interviewed are aware of school choice and magnet schools in the district. Most parents also reported that they received information about magnet schools from the district and found that information to be easy to understand and helpful. Moreover, parents found the magnet school application "easy" and "straightforward" to complete. Again, communication and outreach were identified as areas in need of improvement; however, there are some things that seem to be working that should be noted. Communication and outreach were also areas that the Magnet School Steering Committee examined and put forth several recommendations for improvements, the most notable being the establishment of magnet school application support and informational sessions held throughout the district and the use of school site support staff to disseminate information. The application support and informational sessions would provide "on-the-spot expert" assistance (from magnet school staff) to parents to

help with the completion of the application and to answer any questions they might have. Support staff such as attendance clerks, school secretaries, school-community liaisons, etc. would also have magnet school information readily available for interested parents. These recommendations seem as they would be effective in making the application process more accessible to parents and are in alignment with the literature. Higher levels of integration in magnet schools were associated with outreach activities such as parent information centers and meetings held throughout the community as well as the use of staff for recruitment efforts (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008).

Another area identified that relates to increasing equity and diversity is the presence of a sense of awareness of leadership from various levels regarding the unintended outcomes that have resulted with the implementation of the magnet school admissions policy or procedure over the course of the years. In alignment with the principles of CRT, Gillborn (2005) calls on educational institutions to examine the outcomes of the policy with respect to the intent and impact of its implementation. It was clear that there was a general sentiment that improvement is needed in order to increase access, especially for the traditionally underserved families. Specifically, location or convenience was mentioned as it relates to magnet schools and the ability of parents being able to access them (i.e. transportation). There was also a great deal of concern expressed with the priority admission categories and the notion that this may also unintentionally limit access for certain populations and provide an unfair advantage for others, which is one of the primary areas identified as a source of constraint or a barrier in supporting equity and diversity.

Areas of Constraint. There were two primary areas that emerged with respect to aspects of the magnet school admissions procedure and practices of the district that constrain equity and

diversity. These pertain to the priority admissions criteria and the notion of convenience, including location and transportation.

Admissions Criteria. The procedure outlines the criteria for admissions, which is divided into two main categories: priority and non-priority admissions. The available spaces in the magnet schools are first filled with students who have priority admission status and then a lottery is conducted for the remaining spots for students who do not qualify under any of the priority categories. There are five categories for priority admission; however, the most popular are the sibling priority at the elementary level and the magnet-to-magnet priority at the secondary level. Statistics published by the district for magnet school enrollment for the 2018-19 school year demonstrate a preference towards students with priority status as evidenced by the 100% admission rate, which results in guaranteed admission. Moreover, priority admissions make-up over half of the total magnet school enrollment. On the contrary, the non-priority or lottery admission rate is 30% overall and 20% for middle schools, specifically. With the elimination of racial diversity goals that were once present in magnet schools' admissions policies when they were first introduced, districts have been required to develop policies that address the demand while also maintaining a focus on equity and diversity. This raises the question that CRT highlights in terms of identifying the beneficiaries of policies that have been implemented (Gillborn, 2005; Zamudio et al., 2011).

Location/Convenience/Transportation. Another area identified that creates a barrier to equity and diversity involves the location of some magnet schools and the degree of convenience associated with getting a child to and from the school. School location in conjunction with the lack of transportation was mentioned as a reason parents opted not to consider a magnet school for their child. A couple of parents shared that they would not have been able to have their

children attend the magnet school if it had not been located in their neighborhood due to that fact they do not drive. The only way they were able to get to the school was by foot. The lack of transportation limits access for a number of families, in particular lower income families without the financial means to access transportation. This notion is also supported by the literature. The research indicates that the availability of free transportation is associated with higher rates of integration and is an effective tool districts can employ to make school choice/magnet schools a viable option for families regardless of income levels and other family circumstances (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Wells, 1996). This is an area that is not as easy to implement given the amount of financial resources needed to carry this out; however, it has far reaching implications in terms of increasing equity and diversity.

Research Question #2: In what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection?

Through the lens of bounded rationality and social capital theory, this question examined the factors and resources that parents utilize in the school selection decision-making process. The research on bounded rationality posits that parents employ their knowledge, experiences, and resources to establish a set of schools for consideration and ultimately make a decision based on this information (Bell, 2009.) In conjunction, the social capital theoretical framework was applied to look at parental networks as a resource parents utilize in the decision-making process as well (Bell, 2009; Chin & Phillips, 2004; Horvat et al., 2003).

Factors.

In alignment with the literature on parent choice, a school's theme or academic focus was by far the most important factor parents identified in selecting a school other than the neighborhood school for their child (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Bell, 2009; Teske, Fitzpatrick, &

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Kaplan, 2007; Schneider et al., 1997). Interestingly, there seemed to be a connection between the specialized academic theme and the perceived quality of the schools. In the interviews, parents often referred to the school as being better, having more, and being the "best option" for their child. Listed as one of the magnet school steering committee's desired outcomes is to "reduce the perception of inequality among Providence Unified School District schools by proactively and concretely addressing perceptions of "good" schools versus "other schools." This same notion was evident in other areas of data analysis as well. Several board meeting minutes and other documents referenced the need to focus and promote all schools and not simply the magnet schools. An unintended outcome that has resulted is that more parents consider a magnet school for their children because they believe the neighborhood schools are not good options, which is in alignment with the bounded rationality and social capital theories. Parents stop searching for schools once they believe they have found the best option and, in this case, the best option according to parents is a magnet school. This sentiment is then confirmed based on the information they obtain through their parental networks.

Location, convenience, transportation was discussed in a previous section as a barrier or a point of constraint with respect to equity and diversity; however, it is also a factor here that was considered to significantly influence the decision-making of parents in terms of school selection. Again, location or the convenience of getting a child to school is a major factor in whether or not parents even consider a magnet school as a viable option depending on whether or not they have the resources to get their child there either through private vehicle or to pay someone to transport them.

Closely related is another factor identified by parents that is referred to as the "push and pull" factor in the literature (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). This notion emerged out of the analysis

of the parent interview data and is centered on parent perception in terms of the reputation of the school and the school leader. Some parents mentioned specifically that the principal was a reason to select a magnet school. Others spoke of the poor reputation of one of the neighborhood schools and how that initially impacted her decision. Almost 66% of the over 500 parents surveyed through a questionnaire administered by a group of parents in the district in December of 2018, reported that the positive reputation of school was a reason to select a magnet school.

Resources. A key finding/takeaway in looking at where and how parents obtain information during the decision-making process or construction of their set of schools for consideration is congruent with the literature on parental networks and social capital theory. Seminal researchers coined the terms "official" and "hot" knowledge to characterize the origin of the information parents gather (Ball & Vincent, 1998). "Official" knowledge is the information that comes directly from the district or school while "hot" knowledge is information parents obtain through their social or parental networks. The research asserts that parents place more value on the information obtained through their network or "hot" knowledge (Ball & Vincent, 1998). It was evident that both types of knowledge were present and contributed to their decision-making process. A majority of parents reported going to informational meetings about magnet schools and receiving written information from the district as well and found the information helpful in influencing their decision. Most parents also indicated that their friends and family talk with them about the quality of their child's schooling. The interviews with parents in particular, highlighted the significance of the "hot" knowledge. Most mentioned gathering information from friends or family as well as through their personal experiences such as spending time at the school, social media, or from their own children who first did the research and then shared it with them. The sense that emerged is that there was a lot of value

placed on the information obtained through these relationships as mentioned by one of the participants herself stating that, "some of my choices were based on some of the parents' feedback that I got." As the research contends, "hot" knowledge is more personal and connected to one's individual experiences and emotions (Ball & Vincent, 1998).

Limitations

A major limitation of the study was the relatively small sample size. The research design was limited to two sites, one magnet and one non-magnet middle school within the same district. Broadening the scope of the sample and population to include multiple sites and different grade spans in the district might have provided the opportunity for a more diverse group of parent participants who in turn might have been able to offer different perspectives to enrich the data.

Another limitation of the study is related to the generalizability. By design, there are inherent limitations associated with case studies due to the fact that the analysis is primarily dependent upon the context in which the study is situated (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1988). In this case, again, the scope of the study was limited to include one magnet and non-magnet middle school in the district.

Lastly, there is a possibility that the positionality of the researcher could have impacted the study. The researcher is an administrator in the district and at one of the sites included in the study and the primary participant group in the study was parents. Researchers highlight the fundamental imbalance of power that exists between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This phenomenon could have been compounded due to the fact the researcher is in a leadership position in the district.

Implications

       This study provided an opportunity to better understand parent behavior in the school

selection process and how this information can support the development of school choice and

magnet school policy as a tool to increase equity and diversity. Parents utilize information from

multiple sources including what is provided by the educational institution and what they gather

through their personal connections. While both are important, there are other factors that parents

take into consideration to make their decision. By far, the most significant factor parents

considered was the school's theme or academic focus. This is an area to consider in terms of

promoting the neighborhood schools in the district and/or elevating their status as needed.

Another major factor was the school's location and ability for parents to get their children back

and forth each day. As the literature asserts, the parent decision-making process is multi-faceted

and heavily dependent on the context in which it lies, which has larger implications for

leadership, policy, and social justice (Smrekar & Honey, 2015).

Educational Leadership and Policy.

       As schools and districts work to improve educational outcomes for all students, it is

imperative that the policies and practices established to support these efforts do not

unintentionally exclude those who have been historically marginalized or underserved.

Unfortunately, this has been the case with many of the education reform movements, such as

school choice and magnet schools, that were implemented to address these concerns. It is also

critical that districts and policymakers include a diverse group of parents in the development of

the policies and seek to truly understand the needs of the communities they serve. Magnet

school parents (and staff) represented a majority of the feedback obtained across the board yet

comprised 22% of the district's enrollment. Again, this highlights two of the core questions

CRT research has identified with respect to educational policy: who/what is driving the policy and who is benefitting as a result (Gillborn, 2005; Zamudio, et. al, 2011). Focusing on these critical questions may serve to expand the opportunities for marginalized groups thereby increasing equity and diversity.

Magnet schools provide students with unique educational opportunities. To increase access for all students, there are some key takeaways that should be considered as it relates to accessibility. The first major consideration is the admission criteria. The manner in which this is structured has a profound impact on who has access. While there is a need for districts and programs to manage the demand, there must be a balance between this and increasing access in a manner that does not penalize certain groups of students. According to the research, most districts achieve this through a combination of open enrollment and lotteries, which are associated with higher levels of integration (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Blank, Levine, & Steel, 1996). The presence of specialty or priority enrollment criteria should be carefully considered as it inherently limits access. Unfortunately, this can be difficult to do in the face of significant public pressure.

Closely related, there might be a need to conduct more in-depth analysis of the admissions and enrollment data for magnet schools in order to develop a better understanding or different perspective of the outcomes. For example, in this study the English learner student population was found to have a higher application rate compared to the other student groups; however, the percentage of enrollment was much lower. Is this a result of the higher number of applicants at the middle school level compared to the amount of available spaces for non-priority students? For the magnet middle schools, the number of lottery applicants was almost five times that of the available spaces. And, is this disparity compounded by the middle school attendance

pools? As parents become more aware of the magnet school option as their students' progress through the education system, the more highly competitive it becomes and as a result there are fewer positions available. This is a critical point of consideration and an area to be explored.

Next, districts should consider the availability of free transportation as well as the location of magnet schools. Understandably, the location of most magnet schools is typically determined based on efficiency or the availability of space rather than neighborhood characteristics such as income levels of racial/ethnic segregation (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). It has been found that higher levels of integration are related to the availability of free transportation and more centrally located magnet schools (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). Decisions about magnet school location can be challenging as there are many factors that come into play; however, if magnet school is an option available to all students, then there should be resources allocated so that all can access it. As districts have more flexibility in funding this is an area that should be heavily considered as it has far reaching implications for families who do not have the resources to take advantage of the opportunity.

Lastly, as districts continue to develop unique educational opportunities for students and families, they should also consider the larger scope of the district. The notion that the magnet schools offer more or are better than the neighborhood schools emerged as an underlying subtext of the study. The promotion and celebration of all schools is important and there should be a system in place to support this. This has the ability to strengthen a district as a whole.

Social Justice.

At a time when the divide between those who have access and those who do not seems to be continuously expanding, it is imperative that educational institutions serve as mediators rather than contributors. School choice and later magnet schools were introduced to help remedy the

growing disparities in the education system and in society as a whole. In particular, the primary purpose of magnet schools was to increase diversity and put an end to racially and socioeconomically segregated schools. With the elimination of key legislation, these goals were pushed aside and magnet schools, in some places, contributed to the problem it set out to address.

An important consideration for the educational community is to revisit the role or purpose of the initial push for integration by advocates. The CRT research asserts that the driving force behind integration was not simply for the sake of integration, rather the intent was for underserved students to receive the full benefit of a high-quality education (Zamudio et. al, 2011). In many cases, the notion of integration has become synonymous with better, which research has revealed is not the reality (Zamudio et. al, 2011; Clotfelter, 2004). In some places, the historically marginalized groups remain as such in integrated schools as a result of being tracked into lower level classes or treated differently than their White, higher-income counterparts (Zamudio et. al, 2011; Clotfelter, 2004).

It behooves us to move beyond the immediate goal of integration and focus our attention on the other important aspects of education such as pedagogy and curriculum as seminal researchers in the field have suggested (Zamudio et. al, 2011); which offer up a chance for substantial, long-lasting change for the positive. This shortsightedness prohibits us from engaging in the much-needed discourse about the larger historical context and the harsh reality of the reason progress has been stunted over the years since the landmark legislation of *Brown I*, *II*, and *III* (Zamudio et. al, 2011). The continued segregation and resegregation in American schools is not accidental and should not be treated as such according to leading CRT researchers (Zamudio et. al, 2011). The argument is made that those who are against integration want to

hold onto the privilege that exists and that by expanding opportunity to others threatens this advantage and is the reason for the ongoing struggle between segregation, desegregation, and resegregation in this country (Zamudio et. al, 2011). Given these notions, educators need to carefully examine the initiatives that are put forth in an effort to remedy this perpetual problem. School choice and magnet schools have been touted as viable solutions to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for underrepresented student groups. Unfortunately, the development and implementation of school choice policy does not always align with the intended goals. It really requires the policymakers and educational leaders to look carefully through the lens of CRT and engage in the difficult and courageous conversations regarding the priorities or motivation behind the policy and ask themselves, who ultimately benefits (or not) as a result of those established priorities, and what are the effects of the policy (Gillborn, 2005)? Transformative change can only be achieved by intentionally addressing these key components on a larger scale.

Significance of Study

This study adds to the literature on school choice and magnet schools, in particular, as mechanisms to improve educational outcomes, especially for highly impacted students, and increase diversity in schools. This study focused on better understanding the relationship between parent behavior related to school selection and magnet school policy. Specifically, the characteristics and dynamics that influence parent behavior were examined in conjunction with magnet school policy to identify elements that either support or constrain equity and diversity in districts.

The current literature related to parent choice is centered on the factors and resources that impact the decision-making process. In alignment with the growing body of research, this study

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found that there are a number of factors that parents attach a greater value than others. In addition, it was found that the personal connections parents have also contribute heavily in the process of school selection.

This study also examined magnet school admissions policy and practices with a specific focus on areas that support the equity and diversity efforts in schools and districts. The admissions criteria were found to have a significant impact in this area. Other components such as the availability of transportation, school location, and communication and outreach efforts were also found to contribute to access or as barriers to equity and diversity in magnet schools.

Areas for Future Research

The school choice literature highlights a facade that may exist in relation to school quality and school demographics (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). The research asserts that the racial composition of a school has a significant impact on parent choice patterns; however, due to the sensitive nature of this fact, the reasons for school selection are often mis-characterized (Smrekar & Honey, 2015; Teske et al., 2007). This same phenomenon may be connected to other areas and is a direction for future research. In this study parents considered a school's academic theme or area of focus to be the most important aspect of schooling, as is congruent with the larger body of research in this area (Smrekar & Honey, 2015). This sentiment was underscored in the interviews conducted with parents. Parents referred to the school's academic focus such as being an IB school or STEM-related school as reasons to select the magnet school because they considered it to be "better academically" or the "best option" for their child. In the same manner that school quality can be confused with school demographics, so too may school quality and a school's academic focus or theme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this mixed methods study included an analysis of documents related to magnet schools, a parent questionnaire, and interviews with parents as well as district staff to develop a better understanding of the relationship between the two primary elements of school choice: parents and policy. The two overarching questions were: In what ways does magnet school or school choice policy support or constrain diversity and equity within a district? In what ways does the social capital of parents influence the decision-making process for magnet middle school selection?

There were several areas that positively contributed to supporting the goal of equity and diversity in the district. First, it is evident that the district put a great deal of effort and thought into the development of the magnet school admissions policy. The procedure explicitly mentions the goal of providing a "...clear, fair, and balanced admissions procedure." This notion was reiterated in the one-on-one interview with the district staff member responsible for the oversight of this process. In addition, this desire was expressed by various other leadership at different levels. Coupled with this is the sense of awareness from leadership that the policy as is may not be meeting its intended outcomes. To this end, the district has established regular and ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback in hopes of getting closer to the established goal. A steering committee was established in the spring of 2019 with goals of improving the magnet school admissions process in order to make it more accessible.

On the contrary, there were areas identified that may be standing in the way of the district meeting its goals. The priority admission categories were noted as a significant source of contention in the district. There are strong voices on both sides of the argument; however, it was evident that the magnet school parents and supporters tend to provide the most feedback. Those

in favor of the priority admission categories offer that they should remain as they were previously promised, and parents have made decisions accordingly. Conversely, those in opposition of the priority status argue that it contributes to the disenfranchisement of certain student populations who are historically marginalized, such as lower income and students of color. Others with this same point of viewpoint to the shift in demographics in middle schools that has occurred since the opening of the magnet middle schools. The non-magnet middle schools have become less diverse ethnically/racially and socioeconomically.

Accordingly, there are other implications in terms of the reality of additional services required for the schools with disproportionate numbers (50% more) of English learners and (30%) students receiving special education services. These schools are experiencing a decline in enrollment, and as a result losing funding, at a time when they need more services and support. For instance, these schools may be subjected to a reduction in staff such as the loss of an assistant principal or counselor. As a result of the strain on resources, there might be more faculty or leadership turnover. This contributes to the notion that a school is "not a good school."

Another area that was identified as a point of constraint is the location of some magnet schools and the ability of parents to get their children back and forth. Some parents explicitly stated that they would not have been able to participate in the magnet program if they did not live nearby due to a lack of transportation. Other parents spoke of the inconvenience in getting their child to a school outside of their neighborhood. In addition, one of the magnet schools is located in a wealthier part of town and there are no public transportation options. This was also a significant factor considered by parents.

In terms of the second research question that examined the manner in which the social capital of parents influences their school choice related decisions. While parents took into consideration information about magnet schools they received directly from the schools or districts, they also relied heavily on the information obtained through their personal connections. Many parents mentioned getting information from a family member, a friend, or a parent who already had a child in one of the magnet schools. Connected with this was the parents' perception of the school or school leader. Some of the parents talked about the school's reputation and mentioned that the principal was a specific reason they chose a school.

Finally, there was an interesting notion that emerged in speaking with the magnet school parents, in particular. There was a general sense expressed by the magnet school parents that magnet schools offered more than the neighborhood schools in terms of academics and spoke expressly about their associated academic themes. This stood out as an interesting finding and has larger implications for the educational community. The additional magnet school funding to develop and enhance their themed programs is another unintended consequence that may have a negative impact on the non-magnet schools in the district that are not provided the same opportunity. This investment in the development of magnet school staff certainly boosts the quality of teaching and support. It also gives the faculty more self-efficacy and confidence in the classroom and the community.

It is important to consider the larger educational environment of a district when implementing new initiatives and programs. Much like parents when making decisions about schooling for their child, districts go through the same process. As the bounded rationality theory posits, it is impossible to consider all of the options and in fact, one may not always select the best option, nonetheless a choice is made when it is believed to meet the identified need

(Bell, 2009). The dynamics of parent choice are complex, and the challenges districts face are ever-changing. What is important is to maintain a focus on improving the outcomes for all students.

APPENDIX A: EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN MIXED METHODS STUDY

Dear Educator,

I am a student in the Joint Doctoral Program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD). I am conducting a research study that seeks to explore the magnet school policies and practices utilized by districts. You are being contacted because you were identified as an educator who currently oversees this process or has experience in this area for your district.

Through this research, I will identify elements of magnet school policy and practices that support and constrain diversity and equity in districts. I believe this study has the potential to positively affect educational practices to improve academic opportunities and outcomes for low-income and minority students.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed individually. The interview will be conversational in style and will last approximately 30 minutes. You may choose to have the interview take place at your office or at another location of your choosing, wherever you feel most comfortable. During the interview you will be asked to describe your experiences with the process of selecting students for magnet school admissions. These experiences include the magnet school admissions policy and procedures, the nature of stakeholder involvement, and the district outreach efforts.

Your confidentiality will be respected throughout this process. Pseudonyms for districts, schools, and educators will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

I hope you will agree to participate in this research project. If you would like to participate, please reply to this email by October 29, 2019. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,
Nicole Adams
Doctoral Student
UC San Diego and CSU San Marcos
661.900.6406
adams01@cougars.csusm.edu

Magnet School and the Quest for Equity

Information Sheet
(Educator)

Dear Participant,

My name is Nicole Adams and I am a doctoral student in the Education Studies Department at California State University San Marcos. I am conducting a research study that seeks to explore the school choice and/or magnet school policies and practices utilized by districts and the perception of parents on their knowledge and participation in the magnet or specialty middle school(s) in the district. The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study.

Why am I being invited to take part in this study?
You are invited to take part in this study because you were identified as an educator who currently oversees this process or has experience in this area for your district. Through this research, I will identify elements of school choice/magnet school policy and practices that support and constrain diversity and equity in districts. I believe this study has the potential to positively affect educational practices to improve academic opportunities and outcomes for low-income and minority students.

What will I do if I agree to participate?
If you agree to participate in the study, you will partake in an interview about your experiences with the implementation of school choice/magnet school policies and procedures. The interview will be conducted sometime between September 2019 and February 2020. The researcher, who is also a credentialed teacher and school administrator, will conduct the interview. The interview administration time is approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted in English. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. If you wish, you will be able to view and determine the accuracy of the interview transcription. The interviews will be held in a location that is mutually agreed upon by the educator and researcher (classroom, school office, or neutral off-site location). The overall duration of your involvement with this study will end upon completion of the interview, which will take place no later than February 2020.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate at any time, even after the study has started. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty, and you will be able to keep any incentives you have earned up to the point at which you withdraw.

What are the benefits to me for being in this study?
Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is the opportunity to reflect on how you feel about the practices associated with school choice/magnet schools. Additionally, the researcher may learn more about how best to support districts in their efforts to bolster diversity and equity, which may benefit the local community.

What happens to the information collected for the study?
Your responses will be confidential. Pseudonyms for districts, schools, and educators will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. All data will be stored in a file drawer that is locked and located in my residence. The laptop and file containing data will be password protected. The data stored on the computer will be numerically coded. Only the researcher will have access to the data. The data will be retained for up to 3 years after the project is completed and will be disposed thereafter. Paper records will be shredded, and digital files will be erased.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? Is there any risk to me by being in this study? If so, how will these risks be minimized?
There are minimal risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no administrator, teacher, or student names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the CSUSM Institutional Review Board.
2. Although the interview is brief, there is a possibility educators may become bored or fatigued. Because the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.
3. The administration of this interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the educator, district, and/ or students. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the staff member or students.
4. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

Who should I contact for questions?
If you have questions about the study, please call me at 661-900-6406 or email me at adams01@cougars.csusm.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Carol Van Vooren at cvanvoor@csusm.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the IRB Office at irb@csusm.edu or (760) 750-4029.

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS

California State University San Marcos
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

Dear [name] District Parents,

Hello, my name is Nicole Adams. I am currently a doctoral student at California State University, San Marcos. For my dissertation project, I am interested in learning about the decision-making process of parents in selecting schools for their children. I believe this will help educators with the development of magnet school policy and practice in order to increase educational opportunity and equity in the district.

You are being invited to participate in this research study because I believe your experiences will be of great help in this work. This packet includes consent forms and a questionnaire that you are invited to complete. The information gathered will remain confidential. This questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please return the questionnaire within two weeks from today's date.

I will be carrying out this study as a researcher from the California State University, San Marcos. I want you to understand that this research has no connection at all to your school or the [Name] School District.

All responses will be kept completely confidential. I will never use your name, your children's or their teachers' names, the name of your children's school, or the school district in any publication or presentation. I will safeguard any risk of loss of confidentiality by using pseudonyms for all research participants as well as the names of the district and all schools. All data will be stored on my personal password-protected computer in an encrypted and password-protected folder.

Since this is an investigational study there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

If you have any questions at all regarding this research project, or the questionnaire, please call me at 661-900-6406 or email me at adams01@cougars.csusm.edu and I will be happy to clarify.

Thank you very much,
Nicole Adams

APPENDIX D: INVITACIÓN PARA PADRES A PARTICIPAR EN EL ESTUDIO DE

MÉTODOS MIXTOS

Universidad Estatal de California San Marcos

Consentimiento de los padres para actuar como sujeto de investigación
Escuelas magnet y la búsqueda de la equidad

Estimado [nombre] padre del distrito,

Mi nombre es Nicole Adams. Actualmente soy una alumna en el programa de doctorado en la Universidad Estatal de California San Marcos. Para mi proyecto de tesis, estoy interesada en aprender sobre el proceso que los padres toman en hacer la decisión para seleccionar la escuela de sus hijos. Yo creo que esta investigación ayudará a los educadores a desarrollar la política y la práctica de las escuelas magnet para aumentar las oportunidades educativas y la equidad dentro del distrito.

Los invito a participar en este estudio de investigación porque creo que sus experiencias serán de gran ayuda en este trabajo. Este paquete incluye formularios de consentimiento y un cuestionario que los invito a completar. La información reunida permanecerá confidencial. Esta encuesta tomará aproximadamente 10 minutos para completar. Por favor devuelva la encuesta dentro de una semana a partir de la fecha de hoy.

Realizaré este estudio como investigadora de la Universidad Estatal de California San Marcos. Quiero que usted entienda que esta investigación no tiene ninguna conexión con su escuela o el Distrito Escolar.

Todas las respuestas serán completamente confidenciales. Nunca usaré el nombre de usted, ni los nombres de sus hijos o los nombres de sus maestros, ni el nombre de la escuela de sus hijos o el distrito escolar en ninguna publicación o presentación. Protegeré cualquier riesgo de pérdida de confidencialidad mediante el uso de seudónimos para todos los participantes de la investigación, así como los nombres del distrito y de todas las escuelas. Todos los datos se almacenarán en mi computadora personal protegida con mi contraseña dentro de una carpeta cifrada y protegida con otra contraseña.

Dado que este es un estudio de investigación, puede haber unos riesgos desconocidos que actualmente son imprevisibles. Se les informará de cualquier hallazgo nuevo significativo.

Si tiene cualquier pregunta de cualquier cosa en referencia a este proyecto de investigación, o sobre el cuestionario, por favor no dude en llamarme al 661-900-6406 o envíeme un correo electrónico a adams01@cougars.csusm.edu y estaré encantada de aclararles cualquier cosa.

Muchas gracias,
Nicole Adams

California State University San Marcos
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

Information Sheet
(Parent)

Dear Participant,

My name is Nicole Adams and I am a doctoral student in the Education Studies Department at California State University San Marcos. I am conducting a research study to find out about the magnet school policy and practices that support or inhibit diversity and equity in districts. The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study.

Why am I being invited to take part in this study?
You are invited to take part in this study because you have a child in one of the middle schools in the district. There will be approximately 10 parent participants per site and 1 district personnel included in this study. I believe this study has the potential to positively affect educational practices to improve academic opportunities and outcomes for low-income and minority students.

What will I do if I agree to participate?
If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete the school choice questionnaire and indicate on the last question if you are willing to participate in a future interview about the same topic. If you choose not to participate in the interview, then your participation will end upon completion of the questionnaire. If you agree, and are selected, you will participate in a face-to-face interview in English or Spanish. The researcher, who is also a credentialed teacher and administrator, will conduct the English interviews. An interpreter will conduct the Spanish interviews. Interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted sometime between September 2019 and March 2020. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. If you wish, you will be able to view and determine the accuracy of the interview transcription. The overall duration of your involvement with this study will end upon completion of the questionnaire and possible interview in the winter or Spring of 2020.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate at any time, even after the study has started. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty, and you will be able to keep any incentives you have earned up to the point at which you withdraw.

What are the benefits to me for being in this study?
Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is the opportunity to provide input about the practices associated with school choice and/or magnet

schools. Additionally, the researcher may learn more about how best to support districts in their efforts to increase diversity and equity, which may benefit the local community.

What happens to the information collected for the study?
Your responses will be confidential. Pseudonyms for districts, schools, and educators will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. All data will be stored in a file drawer that is locked and located in my residence. The laptop and file containing data will be password protected. The data stored on the computer will be numerically coded. Only the researcher will have access to the data. The data will be retained for up to 3 years after the project is completed and will be disposed thereafter. Paper records will be shredded, and digital files will be erased.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? Is there any risk to me by being in this study? If so, how will these risks be minimized?
There are minimal risks and inconveniences to participating in this study. These include:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no administrator, teacher, or student names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the CSUSM Institutional Review Board.
2. Although the questionnaire and interview are brief, there is a possibility parents may become bored or fatigued. Because the questionnaire and interview are voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue either if this occurs.
3. The administration of the questionnaire and interview and their contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the parent, district, and/ or students. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the parents or their students.
4. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

Who should I contact for questions?
If you have questions about the study, please call me at 661-900-6406 or email me at adams01@cougars.csusm.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Carol Van Vooren at cvanvoor@csusm.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the IRB Office at irb@csusm.edu or (760) 750-4029.

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS

APPENDIX F: LAS ESCUELAS MAGNET Y LA BÚSQUEDA DE LA EQUIDAD

Universidad Estatal de California San Marcos

Consentimiento de los padres para actuar como sujeto de investigación
Escuelas magnet y la búsqueda de la equidad

Hoja informativa
(Padre)

Querido Participante,

Mi nombre es Nicole Adams y soy estudiante de doctorado en el Departamento de Estudios de Educación en la Universidad Estatal de California en San Marcos. Estoy realizando un estudio de investigación para conocer la política y las prácticas de la escuela magnet que apoyan o inhiben la diversidad y la equidad en los distritos. El propósito de este formulario es informarlo sobre el estudio.

¿Por qué me invitan a participar en este estudio?
Lo invitamos a participar en este estudio porque tiene un hijo en una de las escuelas intermedias del Distrito [nombre]. Habrá aproximadamente 10 participantes parentales por sitio y 1 trabajadores del distrito incluidos en este estudio. Creo que este estudio tiene el potencial de afectar positivamente las prácticas educativas para mejorar las oportunidades académicas y los resultados para los estudiantes de bajos ingresos y de minorías.

¿Qué haré si estoy de acuerdo en participar?
Si acepta participar en el estudio, se le pedirá que complete el cuestionario de elección de escuela e indique en la última pregunta si está dispuesto a participar en una entrevista futura sobre el mismo tema. Si elige no participar en la entrevista, su participación finalizará al completar el cuestionario de elección de los padres. Si está de acuerdo y es seleccionado, participará en una entrevista personal en inglés o español. La investigadora, que también es un maestra y administradora acreditada, llevará a cabo las entrevistas en inglés. Un intérprete realizará las entrevistas en español. Las entrevistas durarán aproximadamente 30 minutos y se realizarán entre septiembre de 2019 y marzo de 2020. La entrevista será grabada y transcrita en audio. Si lo desea, podrá ver y determinar la exactitud de la transcripción de la entrevista. La duración total de su participación en este estudio finalizará al completar el cuestionario y la posible entrevista en algún momento del invierno o la primavera de 2020.

¿Qué pasa si digo que sí, pero luego cambio de opinión?
Tu participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Puede negarse a participar en cualquier momento, incluso después de que el estudio haya comenzado. Si elige no participar o retirarse del estudio, no habrá ninguna sanción y podrá mantener los incentivos que haya ganado hasta el momento en que se retire.

¿Cuáles son los beneficios para mí por estar en este estudio?

Si bien puede que no haya un beneficio directo para usted, el posible beneficio de su participación es la oportunidad de proporcionar información sobre las prácticas asociadas con las escuelas magnet. Además, la investigadora puede aprender más sobre cómo apoyar mejor a los distritos en sus esfuerzos por aumentar la diversidad y la equidad, lo que puede beneficiar a la comunidad local.

¿Qué pasa con la información recopilada para el estudio?
Sus respuestas serán confidenciales. Se usarán seudónimos para distritos, escuelas y educadores para minimizar el riesgo de identificación. Se le dará la oportunidad de revisar la entrevista transcrita y de eliminar cualquier comentario o referencia que considere que pueda ser identificable o tenga connotaciones negativas. Sus respuestas no estarán vinculadas a su nombre o dirección.

Los resultados de este estudio pueden usarse en informes, presentaciones o publicaciones, pero no se usará su nombre. Todos los datos se almacenarán en un cajón de archivos que está bloqueado y ubicado en mi residencia. La computadora portátil y el archivo que contiene los datos estarán protegidos por contraseña. Los datos almacenados en la computadora serán codificados numéricamente. Solo la investigadora tendrá acceso a los datos. Los datos se conservarán hasta 3 años después de la finalización del proyecto y se eliminarán a partir de entonces. Se triturarán los registros en papel y se borrarán los archivos digitales.

¿Es posible perjudicarme al estar en este estudio? ¿Hay algún riesgo para mí por estar en este estudio? Si es así, ¿cómo se minimizarán estos riesgos?
Existen riesgos e inconvenientes mínimos para participar en este estudio. Éstos incluyen:

1. La posibilidad para la pérdida de confidencialidad. Esto es muy poco probable ya que no se utilizarán nombres de administrador, maestro o estudiante. Los registros de investigación se mantendrán confidenciales en la medida en que lo permita la ley. Los registros de investigación pueden ser revisados por la Junta de Revisión Institucional de CSUSM.
2. Aunque el cuestionario y la entrevista son breves, existe la posibilidad de que los padres se aburran o se fatiguen. Debido a que el cuestionario y la entrevista son voluntarios, los participantes pueden omitir una pregunta o descontinuar si esto ocurre.
3. La administración del cuestionario y la entrevista y sus contenidos no crean, de ninguna manera, un riesgo para los padres, el distrito y / o los estudiantes. Los resultados no están relacionados de ninguna manera con ninguna evaluación o juicio de los padres o sus estudiantes.
4. Debido a que este es un estudio de investigación, también puede haber algunos riesgos desconocidos que actualmente son imprevisibles. Se le informará de cualquier hallazgo significativo.

¿A quién debo contactar para preguntas?
Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, llámeme al 661-900-6406 o envíeme un correo electrónico a adams01@cougars.csusm.edu. También puede comunicarse con la consejera de mi facultad, la Dra. Carol Van Vooren en cvanvoor@csusm.edu. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos

como participante en esta investigación o si cree que se ha puesto en riesgo, puede comunicarse con la Oficina del IRB en irb@csusm.edu o al (760) 750-4029.

POR FAVOR GUARDE ESTA HOJA DE INFORMACIÓN PARA SUS REGISTROS

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL-EDUCATOR VERSION

Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

Date	
Time of Interview	
Place	
Participant	
Title	
School District	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to understand how magnet school policy and practice can be informed by the low-income and minority parent decision-making process in selecting schools for their children in order to increase educational opportunity and equity in the district.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 2020.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Questions:
1. Tell me about yourself. What is your position in the district? What are your responsibilities?

2. I would like to start with learning a little more about the entire magnet school admissions process. Can you describe for me your district's magnet schools admissions process and how students are selected?

3. Can you tell me more about how parents are made aware of magnet schools and about the outreach efforts of the district?

4. Are there any specific outreach efforts to reach low-income and minority parents?

5. Are parents involved in the development and/or planning process of magnet school policy? If so, how are the parents selected?

6. In regard to magnet school demographics, is there any attempt to mirror the neighborhood or the district?

7. In regard to location, how was the location for each of the magnet schools decided?

8. Is transportation provided to any of the students who attend a magnet school?

9. Is there anything more you would like to add?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL-PARENT VERSION

Magnet Schools and the Quest for Equity

Date	
Time of Interview	
Place	
Participant	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to understand how magnet school policy and practice can be informed by the parent decision-making process in selecting schools for their children in order to increase educational opportunity and equity in the district.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 2020.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Questions:

1. Which school does your child attend?

2. What is the current grade level of your child(ren)?

3. How long has your child been at his/her current school?

4. Is this your neighborhood school?

5. Do other family members such as siblings or cousins attend this school?

6. Does your child walk to school?

7. Is there transportation to your child's school?

8. What school/district committee meetings do you attend?

9. What do you know about magnet school choice in your district?

10. How did you become aware of the magnet school choice? Did this affect your choice in selecting a school for your child?

11. Have you ever gone through the magnet school application and admissions process? If yes, what was the process like for you?

12. How did you make your choice to select a specific magnet school for your child? What information did you use? Where did you find that information?

13. How could the district share more information or help you learn more about magnet schools in your district?

14. What is your ideal vision of a school for your child?

15. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX I: PROTOCOLO ENTREVISTA-VERSIÓN PARA PADRES

Las escuelas magnet y la búsqueda de la equidad

Fecha	
Hora de entrevista	
Lugar	
Partícipe	

Gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista. El propósito de este estudio es comprender cómo la políza y la práctica de las escuelas magnet pueden ser informadas por medio del proceso de toma de decisiones de los padres al punto de seleccionar escuelas para sus hijos con el fin de aumentar las oportunidades educativas y la equidad en el distrito.

Los datos de su entrevista se mantendrán confidenciales, disponibles solo para el investigador para fines de análisis. Solo el investigador y un transcriptor profesional escucharán y transcribirán la información que usted proporcione. Las cintas de audio serán destruidas después del análisis final; a más tardar en junio de 2020.

Su participación es completamente voluntaria y puede ser retirada en cualquier momento. Si la duración de la entrevista se convierte en un inconveniente, puede detenerse en cualquier momento. No hay consecuencias si usted decide no participar.

Preguntas:

1. ¿A qué escuela asiste su hijo?

2. ¿Cuál es el nivel de grado actual de su(s) hijo(s)?

3. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado su hijo en su escuela actual?

4. ¿Es esta la escuela de su vecindad/barrio?

5. ¿Asisten a esta escuela otros miembros de la familia, como hermanos o primos?

6. ¿Su hijo camina a la escuela?

7. ¿Hay transporte a la escuela de su hijo?

8. ¿Asiste usted a alguna reunión de comité escolar/distrito? En caso afirmativo, ¿a cuáles asiste usted?

9. ¿Qué sabe usted acerca de la opción de escuelas magnet en su distrito?

10. ¿Cómo se dio cuenta de que había elección de mandar a su hijo a una escuela magnet?

11. ¿Afectó esto su elección al seleccionar una escuela para su hijo?

12. ¿Alguna vez has pasado por el proceso de aplicar y la admisión a una escuela magnet? Si es así, ¿cómo fue el proceso para usted?

13. ¿Cómo hizo su elección para seleccionar una escuela magnet específica para su hijo? ¿Qué información uso usted? ¿Dónde encontró usted esa información?

14. ¿Cómo podría el distrito compartir más información o ayudarlo a aprender más sobre las escuelas magnet en su distrito?

15. ¿Cuál es su visión ideal de una escuela para su hijo?

APPENDIX J: MAGNET SCHOOL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for responding to the questionnaire. This questionnaire is part of a study about school choice and magnet schools. School choice allows parents to choose the school they believe offers their child the best education regardless of school attendance boundaries. Magnet schools are one of the most popular school choice options in the K-12 education system.

The following questionnaire is focused on the decision-making process of parents in selecting schools for their children. This information can help districts with the development of magnet school policy as a way to increase educational opportunity for all students. This questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. All responses will be kept completely confidential.

Thank you,
Nicole Adams

1. What is your race/ethnicity?
   a. White
   b. Black (includes African American)
   c. Hispanic (includes Latino)
   d. Asian
   e. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
   f. American Indian/Alaska Native
   g. Two or More Races
   h. Other: _____

2. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?
   a. Less than high school
   b. Some high school, no diploma
   c. High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (GED)
   d. Some college credit, no degree
   e. Trade/technical/vocational training
   f. Associate degree
   g. Bachelor's degree
   h. Master's degree
   i. Professional degree
   j. Doctorate degree

3. What is your yearly household income?
   a. Less than $49,999
   b. $50,000 to $74,999
   c. $75,000 to $99,999
   d. Greater than or equal to $100,000

4. What is the race/ethnicity of your child?
    a. White
    b. Black (includes African American)
    c. Hispanic (includes Latino)
    d. Asian
    e. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
    f. American Indian/Alaska Native
    g. Two or More Races
    h. Other: _____

5. Are you aware that this district offers you the choice of where your child can attend school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. If yes, how did you learn about this?
    a. Informational meetings held throughout the district
    b. District website
    c. Promotional material distributed by the district
    d. From other parents in the district
    e. Other:

7. Do you know what a magnet school is?
    a. Yes
    b. No

8. What would be a good reason for you to change to a different school from your neighborhood school in this district? Please check all that apply.
    a. The school's theme or academic focus (academics).
    b. The school is safe.
    c. The school is located close to my home, job, or childcare.
    d. The racial/ethnic mix of the school.
    e. My child was not performing well at his or her current school.
    f. Disciplinary reasons.
    g. My child's friend attends the school.
    h. There are opportunities for parental involvement.
    i. The school and my family share the same values.

9. Do your friends/family ever talk to you about the quality of their child's school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

10. Do your friends/family ever talk to you about moving their child to a different school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

11. If yes, please select the reason(s) they mentioned for wanting to choose a different school for their child? Please select all that apply.
    a. The school's theme or academic focus (academics).
    b. The school is safe.
    c. The school is located close to my home, job, or childcare.
    d. The racial/ethnic mix of the school.
    e. Their child was not performing well at his or her current school.
    f. Disciplinary reasons.
    g. Child's friend attends the school.
    h. Opportunities for parental involvement.
    i. The school and my family share the same values.

12. Do you attend meetings that share information about magnet schools?
    a. Yes
    b. No

13. If yes, were those meetings helpful in learning about magnet schools in the district?
    a. Very helpful
    b. Somewhat helpful
    c. Not at all helpful

14. If yes, did the magnet school information include reasons for considering a magnet school for your child?
    a. Yes
    b. No

15. Have you received written information about magnet school admissions procedures in your school district?
    a. Yes
    b. No

16. Was the written information you received about magnet school admissions procedures written in your primary language?
    a. Yes
    b. No

17. Was the information easy to understand?
    a. Yes
    b. No

18. Was the information helpful?
    a. Yes
    b. No

19. Was the information detailed enough to influence whether or not you would consider sending your child to a magnet school?

a. Yes
b. No

20. What is the most important aspect to you of schooling for your child?
    a. The school's theme or academic focus (academics).
    b. The school is safe.
    c. The school is located close to my home, job, or childcare.
    d. The racial/ethnic mix of the school.
    e. My child was not performing well at his or her current school.
    f. Disciplinary reasons.
    g. My child's friend attends the school.
    h. There are opportunities for parental involvement.
    i. The school and my family share the same values.

21. Do you believe that parents should talk to school leaders about what they want for their child's education?
    a. Yes
    b. No

22. How satisfied are you with the education your child is receiving?
    a. Extremely satisfied
    b. Somewhat satisfied
    c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
    d. Somewhat dissatisfied
    e. Extremely dissatisfied

23. When making a decision about where to send your child to school, was this school your first, second, or third choice?
    a. First
    b. Second
    c. Third

24. Did you choose where to live so that your child could attend his or her current school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

25. Does your child currently attend the neighborhood school?
    a. Yes
    b. No

26. Does your child currently attend a magnet school in the district?
    a. Yes
    b. No

27. Did you participate in the magnet school admissions process?
    a. Yes

      b. No

28. Is being at a school with other students who look like your family important to you?
      a. Yes
      b. No

29. Is being at a school with other students who share the same values as your family important to you?
      a. Yes
      b. No

30. May I contact you with follow-up questions? If you are interested, please enter your name and contact information below.

Name: _____

Telephone number or email: _____

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX K: LAS ESCUELAS MAGNET CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES

Gracias por responder al cuestionario. Es a través de la participación de los padres y otras partes interesadas, los investigadores pueden identificar oportunidades para mejorar la experiencia educativa de todos los estudiantes. Este cuestionario es parte de un estudio de investigación sobre escuelas de elección y escuelas magnet. La elección escolar permite a los padres a elegir la escuela que creen que ofrece la mejor educación a sus hijos independiente de las áreas de asistencia asignadas. Las escuelas magnet son una de las opciones de elección de escuela más populares en el sistema educativo K-12.

El siguiente cuestionario está diseñado para ayudar a los educadores a aprender más sobre el proceso de cómo tomar la decisión como padres en la selección de escuelas para sus hijos y con el desarrollo de la póliza de la escuela magnet para aumentar las oportunidades educativas y la equidad en el distrito. Este cuestionario tardará unos 10 minutos en completarse. Todas las respuestas serán completamente confidenciales.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor llámeme al 661-900-6406 o envíeme un correo electrónico a adams01@cougars.csusm.edu y estaremos encantados de aclarar.

Gracias,
Nicole Adams

1. Cuál es su raza/etnia?
   a. Blanco
   b. Negro/afroamericano
   c. Hispano/latino
   d. Asiático
   e. Nativo de Hawái/otras islas del Pacífico
   f. Indio Americano/nativo de Alaska
   g. Dos o más razas
   h. Otro: _____

2. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación que ha completado?
   a. Menos que el colegio
   b. Algo de preparatoria, sin diploma
   c. Graduado de preparatoria, diploma o equivalente (GED)
   d. Algún crédito de colegio, sin diploma
   e. Formación comercial/técnica/profesional
   f. Grado asociado
   g. Bachillerato
   h. Licenciatura superior
   i. Título profesional
   j. Doctorado

3. ¿Cuál es el ingreso anual de su hogar?
   a. Menos de $49,999
   b. $50,000 a $74,999
   c. $75,000 a $99,999
   d. Más que o igual a $100,000

4. ¿Cuál es la raza/etnia de su hijo?
   a. Blanco
   b. Negro/afroamericano
   c. Hispano/latino
   d. Asiático
   e. Nativo de Hawái/otras islas del Pacífico
   f. Indio Americano/nativo de Alaska
   g. Dos o más razas
   h. Otro: _____

5. ¿Sabe que este distrito le ofrece la opción de dónde puede asistir su hijo a la escuela?
   a. Sí
   b. No

6. Si es así, ¿cómo se enteró de esto? Por favor marque todos los que apliquen.
   a. Reuniones informativas realizadas en todo el distrito
   b. Sitio web del distrito
   c. Material promocional distribuido por el distrito
   d. De otros padres en el distrito
   e. Otro: _____

7. ¿Sabe usted que es una escuela magnet?
   a. Sí
   b. No

8. ¿Cuál sería una buena razón para que cambie a una escuela diferente de la de tu vecindario en este distrito? Por favor marque todas las razones que apliquen.
   a. El tema de la escuela o el enfoque académico (académica).
   b. La escuela es segura.
   c. La escuela está ubicada cerca de mi casa, trabajo o guardería.
   d. La mezcla racial/étnica de la escuela.
   e. Mi hijo no estaba teniendo un buen desempeño en su escuela actual.
   f. Razones disciplinarias.
   g. El amigo/pariente de mi hijo asiste a la escuela.
   h. Hay oportunidades para la participación de los padres.
   i. La escuela y mi familia comparten los mismos valores.

9. ¿Alguna vez sus amigos/familiares le hablan sobre la calidad de la escuela de sus hijos?
   a. Sí
   b. No

10. ¿Alguna vez sus amigos/familiares le hablan acerca de mudar a sus hijos a una escuela diferente?
    a. Sí
    b. No

11. Si es así, seleccione la(s) razón(es) que mencionaron para querer elegir una escuela diferente para su hijo. Por favor seleccione todas las respuestas válidas.
    a. El tema de la escuela o el enfoque académico (académica).
    b. La escuela es segura.
    c. La escuela está ubicada cerca de mi casa, trabajo o guardería.
    d. La mezcla racial/etnia de la escuela.
    e. Mi hijo no estaba teniendo un buen desempeño en su escuela actual.

f. Razones disciplinarias.

g. Los amigos de mi hijo asiste a la escuela.

h. Hay oportunidades para la participación de los padres.

i. La escuela y mi familia comparten los mismos valores.

12. ¿Asiste a reuniones que comparten información sobre las escuelas magnet?

a. Sí

b. No

13. Si es así, ¿fueron útiles esas reuniones para aprender sobre las escuelas magnet en el distrito?

a. Muy útil

b. Algo útil

c. Nada útil

14. Si es así, ¿la información de la escuela magnet incluyó razones para considerar una escuela magnet para su hijo?

a. Sí

b. No

15. ¿Ha recibido información por escrito sobre los procedimientos de admisión a la escuela magnet en su distrito escolar?

a. Sí

b. No estoy seguro

c. No

16. ¿La información escrita que recibió sobre los procedimientos de admisión a la escuela magnet en su idioma primario?

a. Sí

b. No

17. ¿Fue la información fácil de entender?

a. Sí

b. No

18. ¿Fue útil la información?

a. Sí

b. No

19. ¿Fue lo suficientemente detallada la información para influir en si usted consideraría o no enviar a su hijo a una escuela magnet?
      a. Sí
      b. No

20. ¿Cuál es el aspecto más importante para usted de la educación para su hijo?
      a. El tema de la escuela o el enfoque académico.
      b. La escuela es segura.
      c. La escuela está ubicada cerca de mi casa, trabajo o guardería.
      d. La mezcla racial/étnica de la escuela.
      e. Mi hijo no estaba teniendo un buen desempeño en su escuela actual.
      f. Razones disciplinarias.
      g. Mi hijo tiene amistades que asisten a la escuela.
      h. Hay oportunidades para la participación de los padres.
      i. La escuela y mi familia comparten los mismos valores.

21. ¿Cree que los padres deberían hablar con los líderes escolares sobre lo que quieren para la educación de sus hijos?
      a. Sí
      b. No

22. ¿Qué tan satisfecho está con la educación que recibe su hijo?
      a. Extremadamente satisfecho
      b. De alguna manera satisfecho
      c. Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho
      d. De alguna manera insatisfecho
      e. Extremadamente insatisfecho

23. Al tomar una decisión sobre a dónde enviar a su hijo a la escuela, ¿fue la escuela a la que asiste ahora su primera, segunda o tercera opción?
      a. Primera
      b. Segunda
      c. Tercera

24. ¿Escogió dónde vivir para que su hijo pudiera asistir a su escuela actual?
      a. Sí
      b. No

25. ¿Su hijo asiste actualmente a la escuela del vecindario?
      a. Sí

       b.   No

26. ¿Su hijo asiste actualmente a una escuela magnet en el distrito?
       a.   Sí
       b.   No

27. ¿Participó en el proceso de ingreso a la escuela magnet?
       a.   Sí
       b.   No

28. ¿Es importante para Ud. estar en una escuela con otros estudiantes que se parecen a su familia?
       a.   Sí
       b.   No

29. ¿Es importante para usted estar en una escuela con otros estudiantes que comparten los mismos valores que su familia?
       a.   Sí
       b.   No

30. ¿Puedo contactar con Ud. para una entrevista de seguimiento? Si está interesado, escriba su nombre e información de contacto a continuación.

Nombre: _____

Numero de teléfono y correo electrónico: _____

¡Gracias por su tiempo!

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