

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Educators as Optimistic Futurists: A Critical Case Study Investigation into the Takeover of One Middle School in the Southwest United States

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9sh9c239>

Author

Smith, Matthew David

Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Educators as Optimistic Futurists:
A Critical Case Study Investigation into the Takeover of
One Middle School in the Southwest United States

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

by

Matthew David Smith

2012

© Copyright by
Matthew David Smith
2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Educators as Optimistic Futurists:
A Critical Case Study Investigation into the Takeover of
One Middle School in the Southwest United States

by

Matthew David Smith

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Peter McLaren, Chair

Advocates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) often champion a neoliberal agenda of privatization, deregulation, the mass firings of teachers and administrators, and takeovers of schools deemed to be “failing.” School takeovers are sanctioned under the No Child Left Behind Act’s Corrective Action measures, in which schools that have never made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are subject to mass firings, restructuring measures, and any other action deemed appropriate at the state and/or district level. The inner dynamics of NCLB function to create a hegemonic state in which the ruling class creates the achievement standards and assessment methods, then makes costly improvement recommendations for “failing” schools. This becomes a form of deregulation in which federal funding is moved from the public sector into private education corporations. Such a system is designed to discipline educational institutions which act contrary to the privatization agenda.

In December of 2008, the Puesta del Sol Independent School District, the largest school district in the State of New Mexico, announced that it would be removing the principals from La Independencia Middle School and Ortiz High School. The justification lie within each school's inability to make AYP. Yet throughout the takeover process questions were raised as to the nature and efficacy of the district's intentions.

In this dissertation, I seek to understand the inner workings, motivations, and consequences of the removal of La Independencia Middle School's leadership, its impact on the remaining faculty and administration, and the changes to the educational realities of the students.

The Dissertation of Matthew David Smith is approved.

Douglas Kellner

Daniel G. Solórzano

César J. Ayala

Peter McLaren, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

DEDICATION

No one ever pursues doctoral work alone, and few of us really know at the outset what we are getting ourselves into. This dissertation truly began on March 3, 1983, and thus my eternal gratitude first extends to my parents, Lauren Carolyn Kehr and Daniel Leo Smith. I never would have made it anywhere without you. To the two most outstanding siblings I could have ever had, Andrew Charles Smith and Valerie Smith Dunfee, and their terrific families, Julie Smith, and Richard, Elizabeth Aileen (bonky) and Natalie Andrea (ninja) Dunfee, thank you very much. My grandparents, Cmdr. Bertram Charles Smith, USN; Gervaise Andrea Messier Smith, RN; 1st Sgt. Lorrin Charles Kehr, USMC; Carolyn Ann Robertson; may you rest in much-deserved peace. To my extended family: my truly Great Aunt Margueritte Burrell; Phil, Dea, Ph.D., Timothy and Katy, Margaret, Joseph Boehme; Michael, Betty, Cameron, Kristen Smith, and to their amazing families; Mike and Sue Purkiss, and their wonderful children; and to the countless great uncles, great aunts, cousins, and everyone else, thank you all so very much.

Along the way, numerous kind souls have touched my life and to them I owe a great debt. To my best friend, Arturo Rodriguez, Ph.D. *La familia Rodríguez*, my unending respect and gratitude: *Señora*, you bring out the best in everyone. To Juan Brito, thank you! My longest running friends: the Radosevich family, James, Anita, Louis, and Martin; Aaron Gandy; Fr. Martin Brusato; Vito (Tony) Ferrante; Kyle Owensby (gone too soon); Kevin Magill; Arturo Fernandez; Rocky Samuel; Pamela, Ph.D., and her son Tom Verstynen; José Luís, Paula, and Cristia Amaya Santana;

Christine Probasco; Amanda Parker; Lisa Ann Paton; Mick; Beto Gutierrez;
Jacqueline A. Bennett; Richard Bamattre, I owe you all very much.

My teachers and professors, past and present: Steve Beckner; Dave
McLaughlin; Tom Hegdahl; Jim Adamson; Fred Gillette (Teddy) Sturm; Mohamed
E. Ali; Vera John-Steiner; Richard Wood; Richard Holder; Michael Kidd; Machiko
Bomberger; Leroy Ortiz; Mary Jiron-Belgarde; Lois Meyer. To my outstanding
dissertation committee, thank you for your guidance and insights throughout this
process: Peter McLaren, Douglas Kellner, Daniel G. Solórzano, César Ayala. Thank
you all so very much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		
1.	LA INDEPENDENCIA MIDDLE SCHOOL	1
	Research Question, Subquestions, Rationale.....	1
	Audience	7
	Site	7
2.	A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 AND THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001.....	10
	Introduction.....	10
	Origins of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.....	10
	Public Education and President Johnson: Drafting and Enacting the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.....	11
	Public Education and President Carter: Establishing the Department of Education.....	14
	Public Education and President Reagan: Neoliberal Capitalism, Neo-Federalism, and <i>A Nation at Risk</i>	15
	Public Education and President Bush: Conservative Intentions Pre-empted by Liberal Congress.....	19
	Public Education and President Clinton: Goals 2000 as the Pre-cursor to <i>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</i>	20
	Public Education and President W. Bush: Increased Privatization, High-Stakes Standardized Testing, and the Underfunding of Public Schools Nationwide.....	21
3.	THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001, EXISTING POLITICAL ECONOMY, CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND OTHER VARIOUS CRITIQUES	24

	Corrective Action.....	24
	Political Economy.....	35
	Critical Race Theory.....	42
4.	METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY.....	48
	Guiding Principles.....	52
	Theoretical Framework.....	54
	NCLB: A Gramscian Analysis.....	57
	Ideology Critique.....	61
	The Case Study Method.....	63
	Units of Analysis.....	70
	D/discourse Analysis.....	72
	Data Presentation.....	75
	Proposed Interview Process.....	77
	Plan for Analysis.....	81
5.	DATA, OR VOICES FROM THE FIELD: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR OWN WORDS.....	92
	Kate Thomson, Biographical Information.....	92
	Interview Narrative.....	93
	Summary and Analysis.....	120
	Martin O’Connell, Biographical Information.....	122
	Interview Narrative.....	123
	Summary and Analysis.....	155

	Christina Jojola, Biographical Information.....	160
	Interview Narrative.....	160
	Summary and Analysis.....	192
	Cathy Wayne, Biographical Information.....	197
	Interview Narrative.....	197
	Summary and Analysis.....	224
6.	ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT THEMES.....	229
	<u>Theme One:</u> Collective Disagreement Regarding the Motivations for and Process of the Takeover.....	231
	<u>Theme Two:</u> Impact of the Takeover on the Remaining Faculty Members and Students.....	236
	<u>Theme Three:</u> Importance of Building Relationships with Students.....	241
	<u>Theme Four:</u> Advocacy of Neoliberalism in Education/ Privatization of Public Education.....	245
	<u>Theme Five:</u> Cathy Wayne’s Motivations for Removing Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson from La Independencia....	250
7.	CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.	255
	Conclusions.....	255
	Recommendations, Need for Further Research	260
	Looking to the Future.....	263
	REFERENCES	266

VITA

Educational Background

- May, 2008 M.A. University of New Mexico, Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies, College of Education, Fields of Specialization: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Related Area: Bilingual Education.
- July, 2006 Teaching License, Santa Fe Community College, Teacher Academy. Areas of Licensure: Social Studies, Modern and Classical Languages (Spanish), English as a Second Language, Bilingual Education.
- May, 2005 B.A. University of New Mexico. Department of Spanish and Portuguese, College of Arts and Sciences. Field of Specialization: Spanish Literature and Linguistics.
- May, 2005 B.A. University of New Mexico, Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences. Field of Specialization: Criminology.

Scholarly and Professional Awards

- 2005 Inducted Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Membership in Professional Organizations

- 2009 American Educational Research Association
2006 National Association for Bilingual Educators
2005-Present Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society

Publications

- Rodriguez, A. & Smith, M.D. (2012). “*Y las remesas?*: How economic slump policies affect Latino immigrants.” Invited essay for *ABC-CLIO Encyclopedia of Latino Issues Today*. (In press).
- Rodriguez, A. & Smith, M.D. (2011). Reimagining Freirean Pedagogy: Sendero for Teacher Education. *Journal of Critical Education and Policy Studies*. 9(2).
- Smith, M.D. & Rodriguez, A. (2011). A Critical Foundation for Bilingual Education. *Journal of Critical Educational and Policy Studies*. 9(2).
- Smith, M.D., Ryoo, J.J., McLaren, P. (2010). A Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy Manifesto for the 21st Century.” *Education and Society*. 28(3).
- Smith, M.D. & McLaren, P. (2010) Diverse Realities in Public Education. *Pátio – Ensino Médio*.

Smith, M.D. & McLaren, P. (2010). Overview of Critical Pedagogy. *Journal of Childhood Education*. (86).

Smith, M.D. & McLaren, P. (2010). How to Manage Violence and Indiscipline at School. *Pátio Revista - Pedagógica*. (53).

Major Presentations

2010: **Invited Panel** California Association of Freirean Educators conference, Los Angeles, California: *Reflections from Freirean Educators*.

2009: **Paper presentation** California Association of Freirean Educators conference Los Angeles, California: *Sendero for Teacher Education*.

2009: **Paper presentation** 3rd Annual Equity and Social Justice conference Richard J. Stockton College: *Reinventing Freirean Possibilities for a Post-No Child Left Behind Classroom*.

2008: **Conference presentation** La Cosecha Dual Language annual conference Santa Fe, NM: *Critical Literacy: A Dialogue and Reflection for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. With Susana Ibarra-Johnson.

2008: **Paper presentation** The National Association for Bilingual Education annual conference Tampa Bay, FL: *The Struggle for Dignity Identity and Validation in the Context of No Child Left Behind*.

2007: **Paper presentation** La Cosecha Dual Language annual conference Albuquerque, NM: *Differences between a Teacher and a “Docente” from Oaxaca*. With José Luís Santana, Mary Haney, and Julianna Kirwin.

2007: **Paper presentation** University of New Mexico Graduate Symposium: *“Comunalidad” and “Docente”:* *The Intricacies of Communal-Based Teaching*. With José Luís Santana, Mary Haney, and Julianna Kirwin.

Fields of Study

Major Subject: Urban Schooling

CHAPTER ONE: LA INDEPENDENCIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Title

Educators as Optimistic Futurists: A Critical Case Study Investigation into the Takeover of One New Mexico Middle School.

Research Question

1. How did the No Child Left Behind Act's phase of Corrective Action (the restructuring of public schools) impact the administration and faculty of La Independencia Middle School in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District of New Mexico? By impact, I refer to its effect on the administration at school, the teachers, and the larger school community.

Subquestions

2. Did the takeover of La Independencia Middle School impact student test scores? If so, how?
3. Has the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 blocked progressive education?

Rationale

When I first set foot on La Independencia Middle School (MS) in August 2007, I was greeted in the parking lot by a janitor who had previously graduated from the school ten years prior. His presence indicated a strong sense of commitment to the community. When I asked him directions to the main office, he smiled and pointed towards the door, "Turn right as soon as you go through the door, it's the first room on the left." A large mural on the locker bay wall depicted an adult clown holding the hands of two young clowns, a school bus in the back and a clear blue sky overhead. La Independencia MS was known throughout the Puesta del Sol Independent School District for being one of

the lower achieving schools (Puesta del Sol ISD is the largest school district in the State of New Mexico, serving approximately 90,000 students). Skeptical of such claims, I was eager to teach in the community and join a school that had in place a strong bilingual education program.

My interview with the Principal, Christina Jojola, lasted 30 minutes. I answered questions regarding pedagogy, curriculum, bilingualism, literacy instruction, my thoughts on collaboration with other faculty, as well as my own level of Spanish fluency. I told her that I had previously taught in two private schools, one middle school and one high school. We also discussed the Master's program I was halfway through, as she and I both had some of the same professors. Shortly after the interview, the Principal called and offered me a position on the faculty as an instructor of bilingual social studies. I accepted, and soon met with my mentor teacher who would help me with transitioning into the new school. I was shown to my classroom and given a copy of the prescribed U.S. History textbooks, separate versions of English and Spanish. I began to draft lesson plans according to the department template and coordinate team teaching activities with the mentor teacher.

I was tasked with teaching 4 periods daily of bilingual U.S. History and one class of "Literacy Strategies," a course focused on helping students to develop written literacy and reading comprehension. Tension was high throughout the year, as La Independencia MS had never made Adequate Yearly Progress on the standardized exams, despite numerous interventions, pedagogical restrictions, and pricey, new-fangled programs. Frequent chatter revolved around what the future would be for the faculty and administration of La Independencia. Principal Jojola openly stated in several faculty

meetings that her position with the school was definitely in question, and that the faculty members were also potentially in danger of being fired, having to re-apply for their current positions, or other possibilities. The phrase “Restructuring II” appeared incessantly; in faculty meetings, hallway conversations, memos. I had heard of the damage wreaked by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. However, my previous experience with it had been minimal, mostly limited to readings in my Master’s program at the University of New Mexico.

After only a few months it was clear to me that there were many teachers, coaches, and volunteers at La Independencia that had committed themselves to the youth of the area. They were truly meeting the needs of the students, needs that were made clear and understood through close collaboration with the surrounding school community. The people had designed and employed terrific programs, clubs, and other various mechanisms. The mechanisms that I am referring to successfully engaged students in developing confidence and a love of learning. Unfortunately but not surprisingly they were disregarded by the Puesta del Sol Independent School District officials who were evaluating the achievement of La Independencia. Such mechanisms included (but were not limited to) a quality bilingual education program, the only middle school in the nation to offer an elective course on the art of clowning (led by a certified clown), successful after school programs committed to cultural activities, and a very successful soccer program.

The year had been a rollercoaster: the school was officially in jeopardy of being taken over, Jojola’s position had been threatened by district officials, one student had been murdered early in the year, and the soccer team had won the city title.

After the 2007-2008 academic year, I joined an interdisciplinary team of teachers that represented the science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies departments. The four of us would share the same students, conduct interdisciplinary lessons, and hold mediations for students who either asked for or needed extra attention in conducting their academic and daily affairs. The year began with an impending mood; would this be the year that La Independencia is taken over, the first one in the Puesta del Sol ISD to undergo such “corrective action?” The AYP goal was more unattainable than ever.

The teaching team I had joined determined that we would do all that was possible for the children’s education, but our pedagogical and curricular hands were being tied behind our backs. Still, we refused to sacrifice our time with the children to the demands of the testing industry. In October 2008, a counselor who had spent 33 of his 34-year career at La Independencia Middle School, passed away. His death was felt by students from as far back as the 1980s, who returned to his memorial and gave testimony of the counselor’s dedication and compassion to the youth of the area. His passing also impacted the morale of the teachers, administrators, and school community in a very emotional way. Not more than six weeks after his death, close to the end of the fall semester, the Superintendent of the Puesta del Sol Independent School District, Tom Grey, announced the following:

- Principal Jojola and Assistant Principal Jackson would be given direct transfers to any open position in the district (provided that it not be as a principal);
- Jojola and Jackson should apply as soon as any desired positions opened and they would be re-assigned;

- If no desired positions became available, they would be re-assigned somewhere in the district;
- Ortiz High School, the high school into which La Independencia Middle School fed would undergo a similar takeover/change-out in leadership;
- Leadership in the two schools would be principals transferred from within the district or brought in from outside;
- Each school was to form a “design team” that would help facilitate the takeovers. They were to collaborate with one another and with the local Teachers Union.

What followed next was nothing short of the most chaotic, disruptive, and unprofessional interference from a school district that I have ever encountered in an educational setting.

Now, as a doctoral candidate in the Division of Urban Schooling, I am returning to La Independencia Middle School with the language of critical pedagogy, critical policy studies, and critical theory to better understand my own experiences and the fallout of the NCLB-sanctioned takeover. Thus, part of this dissertation is a re-visitation of my own history, as well as an ideological, political, and economic critique. My study will be part auto-ethnography, an engaged, thick description of the setting, the children, faculty members, administrators, and district officials who ultimately conducted an unjust action in the name of reform. What happened to La Independencia MS is of historical significance, since no takeover of this kind had ever been conducted in the district. Understanding this event will contribute to a broader challenge to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Teaching in the wake of NCLB has been a challenge for progressive and critical educators since its enactment. Paired with the current educational discussions on Capitol Hill, teachers and policy makers (nay, President Obama and Secretary Duncan subtly) are concluding that NCLB has failed the American public. Yet there has been little mention of the Restructuring II phase, and the controversial takeovers of schools. Neither the reauthorization of NCLB nor any impending educational legislation should neglect omitting school takeovers as an option for reforming “failing” schools.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of Corrective Action upon a school community that has been neglected by its parent district. Corrective Action is the section within No Child Left Behind that lists consequences for schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (115 STAT. 1483). Possibilities include: a public school being reconstituted into a charter school, the administration removed, and the teaching faculty forced to reapply for their previously held teaching positions. (A more detailed history and exploration of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 will follow). As related to this study, administrators in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District drew momentum from the Corrective Action legislation by shifting their actions toward La Independencia MS from an agenda of neglect to one of takeover and “reform.” The administration and faculty in La Independencia Middle School subsequently underwent a barrage of public attacks and internal pressure. The responses from La Independencia MS administration and faculty yielded insightful knowledge about teaching and school reform in the wake of NCLB (Smith & Rodriguez, 2009). Presently, President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan’s Race to the Top initiative gives the impression that No Child Left

Behind has somehow become obsolete, or replaced by a more competitive model for accelerating the motivation and achievement of public school students.

As of this writing, U.S. Congress and the President of the United States remain on the cusp of reauthorizing the most significant education legislation in decades. Yet scant attention has thus far been paid to the implication of Corrective Action against schools with high populations of immigrant students, students of color, and particularly those students residing in poor and working class communities. The significance of this study is therefore the shortage of current research and the impending reauthorization, and its future impact in the above-mentioned communities.

Audience

This study is intended to inform scholars and practitioners in the fields of curriculum and instruction, educational leadership, educational policy, and teacher education. The theoretical, ideological, and practical aspects of school takeovers affect professionals in each of these fields. Along with the expected reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in March 2011 and the recent increase in the number of schools that have entered the extended phases of Corrective Action within the past two academic years, more K-12 public school teachers and administrators will be teaching in times of extreme occupational and economic uncertainty.

Site

The study site I will be investigating will be referred to as “La Independencia Middle School” or “La Independencia MS.” La Independencia MS is a public 6th-8th grade school of approximately 800 students. The student population is quite diverse, a common thread being some level of fluency in Spanish. Families within the school

community identify ethnically along several possibilities (including, but not limited to): *Mexicana/Mexicano*, *Chicana/Chicano*, *Latina/Latino*, Spanish, Northern New Mexican. As one walks or drives through the community surrounding La Independencia MS (and Ortiz High School), dirt roads will surely be underfoot; segments of the community refuse to allow the city to pave roads for they understand that the pavement will bring in more food chains and strip malls. Thus, protecting the existing neighborhood businesses and shops (*Llantera Suarez, Helado Michoacán*) is prioritized above “development.” The presence of only one medical facility has proven to be very helpful to the community, but still the area is medically underserved.

The school is located in a semi-rural area within the Puesta del Sol Independent School District (pseudonym), which serves approximately 90,000 students. This site was selected on the basis of several criteria: (1), that it was the first school takeover in the Puesta del Sol ISD, thus serving as a reference point for future takeovers; (2), my former participation as a faculty member while the takeover was underway provided me with insider access to the experiences of the faculty and administration; (3), while the takeover was sanctioned under NCLB, the manner in which the La Independencia MS takeover took place was based on criteria that was applicable to the majority of public middle schools in the Puesta del Sol ISD; thus, questions arose regarding the reason that La Independencia MS was targeted for the takeover.

According to 2000 US Census Bureau data (2010 data is not yet available for this area), the community in which La Independencia MS is located consisted of 30,000 residents, 77 percent of whom identified as Hispanic or Latino. 16 percent of families and 20 percent of individuals live below the poverty line. Spanish and English are the most

commonly preferred languages in the area (53 percent speak a language other than English in the home). The income level of the area warranted the designation Title-I under NCLB, as the vast majority of students were considered “disadvantaged.”

I have chosen to conduct this investigation as a critical case study for two reasons: one, the demographics of La Independencia MS as related to the larger Puesta del Sol ISD constitute a large immigrant population, overwhelmingly poor and working-class. Given that the continued exploitation of the school community is a dehumanizing reality for the residents, I have an ethical obligation to name and problematize its manifestations in the situation of a school takeover. Critical case study methods will thus allow me to centralize the exploitation of the school community.

Two, the intricacies and inner workings of faculty and administration can only be understood if viewed in the larger context of the school community. That is, the successes and authentic achievements of La Independencia MS students must be viewed in relation to the monetary and material neglect on the part of Puesta del Sol ISD. The inadequate educational resources and the poor facilities make the students’ successes (and there are many) all the more important.

CHAPTER TWO: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 AND THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

...an educational act has a political nature and a political act has an educational nature.

Paulo Freire

Macedo, 2006, p. 98

Introduction

The history of education in the United States and particularly the Southwest is one of oppression, injustice, and exploitation (Spring 2009). Instances of racism, sexism, labor exploitation, and other manifestations of oppression mark the long history (McLaren 2006; Freire 2005). While this dissertation is not a treatise on the history of American education, this chapter will serve as a foundation for understanding the origins of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

For the purposes of this dissertation research I will begin with the social and legal context from which the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) emerged. Furthermore I will explore the subsequent reauthorizations of ESEA and the peripheral yet relevant educational achievements, setbacks, and legal decisions. I will also contextualize the different periods of reauthorization within the subsequent Presidencies after the emergence of ESEA during the Civil Rights Movement.

Origins of ESEA

The *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 was one of many precursors to the United States Civil Rights Movement, eventually producing change on an international level. The unanimous 9-0 ruling in the *Brown v. Board* legal case was the third challenge to the *Plessey v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 which sanctioned de jure segregation in the racist “separate but equal” framework. The *Brown v. Board* decision

quickly became a guiding tenet for the Civil Rights Movement making equal educational access one of its platform issues. This ensured public education transitioned from state and local control to a suzerain, a relationship in which the federal government would provide overriding policy and funding while the states and local districts maintained a given level of autonomy. In essence the U.S. Supreme Court interceded with regard to the ongoing oppression of students of color; as mentioned above education would no longer be an issue mediated solely at the local and state levels. Instead, public education would become an issue that every presidential candidate and campaign would discuss and prioritize (the following sections will elaborate on the successive Presidents' educational agendas).

Public Education and President Johnson: Drafting and Enacting ESEA

By the time Lyndon B. Johnson took office in 1963 the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing, the momentum unstoppable and popular support unwavering. From 1963 to 1965, the Johnson Administration drafted the initial designs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Johnson then officially signed into law the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA). ESEA was originally introduced by President Johnson in his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964. Many across the country saw ESEA as a fulfillment of former President Kennedy's desire to bring the issues of educational access and equity under the auspices of the federal government. President Johnson then announced the War on Poverty and successfully persuaded Congress to pass the *Economic Opportunity Act of 1964*, the *Social Security Act of 1965*, and *ESEA*.

McGuinn (2006) writes, “ESEA was intended to be primarily a redistributive bill, to put a floor under spending in the nation’s poorest communities and to lend federal muscle to efforts to innovate and improve educational services” (p. 31). In theory, Title-I of ESEA would serve as the vehicle for moving federal funding into the hands of educational administrators serving exploited and oppressed communities. Eventually 94% of all school districts would receive Title-I funds, at the discretion of local school officials to determine how the funding was to be used (Eidenberg and Morey, 1969, p. 247). As more social and public organizations gave their approval, collective bipartisan fervor for expanding the federal government’s role in education gathered strength. Yet Sander (2010) explains:

Although the federal government has had at least some involvement in education since the founding of the United States, opposition to general federal aid for education was strong, especially in the House of Representatives, and the enactment of ESEA was slow going. (p. 14)

Sander’s point is well taken, for the struggle to improve educational hence opportunities for the poor and people of color was fought in public and private arenas. It is likely that Kennedy was unable to pass legislation such as ESEA during his presidency because the resistance from conservatives was simply too entrenched for progress of this kind to be made.

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* carried with it several notable principles, two are most pertinent to this dissertation. First: ESEA developed a categorical approach for providing federal funds to individual states. The categorical

model ensured that federal funds were allocated to states based on each state's population of poor and working class students.

Second, ESEA reflected the federal government's inclination to assist in providing a more just and accessible educational reality for marginalized students. For example, ESEA caused a major improvement in the educational realities of Spanish-speaking students residing in Texas by mandating funding to quality bilingual education programs. For many non-native English speakers in Texas, the educational landscape and linguistic reality shifted: education would support bilingualism and be accessible, as opposed to English immersion models used in schools. Thus, ESEA essentially authorized federal funding for research and development of bilingual education programs. This portion, originally called Title-VII, became the *Bilingual Education Act of 1968*. (See Orozco, *Del Rio ISD v. Salvierra* for a detailed analysis of the first legal ruling on the segregation of Mexican Americans in public schools).

Lawsuits aimed at disrupting racism based in linguistic oppression gained strength and provided the impetus for support of all students in American public schools. Among the notable legal victories that influenced many state educational policies: the *Lau v. Nichols* decision of 1974 in which school districts were mandated to provide a quality education to all students regardless of linguistic preference. Bilingual programs and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes became commonplace in districts with high numbers of students fluent in languages other than English.

This change in language policies represented an alleviation of the perpetual linguistic racism faced by millions of students. It would hold successful until the mid-1990s, when several states began to eliminate their bilingual education programs, pass

legislation that made English the official state language, and organize new and creative ways of oppressing language-minority students (Smith & Rodriguez, 2011).

Public Education and President Carter:

Establishing the Department of Education

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter made the Department of Education a cabinet position and appointed Shirley Mount Hufstader as the first U.S. Secretary of Education. Congressional Republicans were furious over this move, stating that since the Constitution never mentioned education it was thus unbecoming to raise the Department of Education to a cabinet-level organization, an unnecessary extension of an already burgeoning government. What eventually became Reagan's hostile outlook towards the Department of Education rapidly gained support from a public that believed the effects of U.S. federal education policy were akin to Britain's "nanny state" which sought to provide entitlements instead of effect lasting change or mandate responsibility (McGuinn, 2006, p. 39).

In this way, U.S. public opinion began to show an increased pre-Civil Rights Movement mentality, one of supporting overt acts of racism, patriarchy, and class exploitation. McLaren (2011a) writes, "...Reagan made union-bashing a popular pastime among Americans, when they were not exploiting White male resentment by denouncing the African American 'welfare queens' so brutally demonized by Reagan" (p. 378). The collective resentment against people of color that the Reagan Administration fostered resulted in a sickening rollback of the clock on labor and civil rights.

**Public Education and President Reagan: Neoliberal Capitalism, neo-Federalism,
and *A Nation at Risk***

Reagan halted Jimmy Carter's re-election bid by a significant margin in the electoral college. With the help of a Republican-controlled Congress he would soon embark on a mission to deregulate numerous public services. He and Margaret Thatcher conducted rather similar attacks against their respective countries' social assistance programs, entitlements, and trade unions (Reagan's crushing of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization strike in 1981 served as both a model and symbol of international solidarity for Thatcher's defeat of the UK coal miners' strike in 1985 and the development of transnational capitalism). Deregulation and promotion of the free market ideology grew as the general public rapidly sank into poverty and experienced skyrocketing personal debt. Neoliberalism and transnational capitalism were thus taking root on two separate continents.

This international conservatism and neoliberal (transitioning to transnational) capitalism would manifest itself in America throughout the Reagan administration's repeated attempts to cancel the U.S. Department of Education, shrink the federal government's role in public education, and deregulate public services in general. President Reagan's onslaught against ESEA began with the enactment of the *Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981* (ECIA). According to a report prepared for the RAND Corporation by Linda Darling-Hammond and Ellen L. Marks, the Reagan administration was emboldened by the *Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981* to shrink federal participation in and support of social programs. Darling-Hammond and Marks (1983, p. v) write, "this act [ECIA] is part of the new federalism - - the Reagan

Administration's effort to decrease federal intervention in and financial support of domestic social endeavors." The ECIA thus marked the beginning of Reagan's simultaneous deregulation and privatization of public education. McLaren's (2011b) assessment of the privatization movement in public education is precise as he writes:

The whole privatization movement in education wants to smash the power of the teachers unions and to destroy decent public wages for workers, be they teachers or other public employees. You have to see this in the context of the larger logic of neoliberal capitalism. (¶12)

The privatization of public education has only accelerated since the Reagan administration enacted its agenda. McGuinn (2006) astutely points out that "Reagan hoped either to eliminate the federal role in schools or to redefine the nature of the federal education policy regime by making privatization, choice, and competition – rather than equity – its guiding principles" (p. 42). The "guiding principles" McGuinn refers to are consequently those promoting capitalism. From the ECIA emerges the initial evisceration of the public sphere (further attacks on unions, promotion of the "welfare queen" stereotype, deregulation of public services). McLaren (2011b) and McGuinn (2006) thus bring to light how capitalism has transformed public education into a financial market ripe for the picking, making public education an economic subsector against which corporations can profit and instruction can increasingly seal the cracks in the school to prison and school to military pipeline; this reality began during Reagan's presidency.

Reagan's first Secretary of Education, Terrel H. Bell, quickly appointed the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1981 (Retrieved from <http://millercenter.org/president/reagan/essays/cabinet/660>). In 1983, Bell and the NCEE

released *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for School Reform*. This report would present the educational climate as being in a state of crisis, with standardized test scores falling and the manufactured appearance that many students were settling for mediocrity.

A Nation at Risk ultimately did not support Reagan's agenda for changing public education, and in some parts openly contradicted it. Reagan's initial response was a refusal to formally receive the report, but eventually he rescinded and treated the document as meretricious. According to McGuinn (2006):

... Reagan received the report at a Rose Garden ceremony in which he praised the report for its call to eliminate the Department of Education and for its support of vouchers, tuition tax credits, and school prayer, none of which the report actually endorsed. (p. 43)

Reagan's assessment of the report was more than dishonest or inaccurate; the intention merely to bolster the conservatives' educational agenda. Despite Reagan's attempt to misuse public opinion, *A Nation at Risk* resulted in heightened media attention on education. Those who were aware of what the report actually said recognized Reagan's assessment as fallacious and manipulative.

For the next five years Congressional Democrats and Republicans alike would argue vehemently over a variety of initiatives. Although Bell knew of President Reagan's intentions to eliminate the Department of Education, Bell remained highly optimistic that Reagan would recognize its importance and leave it intact. Ultimately the Department of Education would continue, but from 1980-1988 Reagan continued to argue that public education should be dealt with at the state level and according to McGuinn (2006), Reagan would effectively reduce federal spending to public education by seventy percent.

President Reagan's vicious and relentless attacks on the Department of Education thus operated under the rhetoric of misuse of federal funds and claims that the Department of Education had become a means of enabling poor and working class students to rely upon government handouts. These attacks were cloaked in the rhetoric of exposing low motivation amongst the poor and people of color, yet Reagan's intention was an act of blaming and further exploiting victims of capitalist modes of production. Macedo (2006) writes:

... we even accepted the Agriculture Department's infamous reclassification of ketchup as a vegetable in the school lunch program, going along with the Reagan administration's cutting back on funding of lunch programs for millions of children who, without them, would either go hungry or suffer from malnutrition.
(p. 93)

Macedo goes on to discuss the massive theft of wealth from the working class for the elite, the significant increase in prison population (mostly comprised of African American and Hispanic males), and the extensive damage inflicted on public education during Reagan's eight years in the Oval Office. It was also during the Reagan administration when the school-to-prison pipeline began to solidify, feeding numerous young males of color to the penal system.

Eventually Reagan would introduce his notion of the "welfare queen" and thus continue a violent assault on people of color and the already overexploited. Vinovskis (2009) writes: the 1988 reauthorization of ESEA included provisions that increased accountability for schools with students not showing academic gains after receiving Title-I funding for two years. Extensive critiques from liberal educational groups went

unheeded, and the 1988 reauthorization of ESEA passed almost unanimously in both chambers of Congress. This reauthorization also dealt a major blow to the bilingual education community as English-only programs received funds that had previously been directed at the former, much to the celebration of Reagan and his new Secretary of Education, William Bennett.

Public Education and President Bush:

Conservative Intentions Preempted by Liberal Congress

At the close of President Reagan's final term Vice President George H. W. Bush accepted the Republican nomination and ran against Democrat Michael Dukakis. In the presidential election of 1988, both Bush and Dukakis stated their resolve to reform education but the end results each one envisioned differed greatly. Bush's plan outlined "more Head Start spending; endorsed school choice; [support for] the Pledge of Allegiance in schools; and reaffirmed the primacy of the family and local schools in education" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 20). Dukakis advocated for three main educational issues during the election: improving the quality of teacher effectiveness, ending adult illiteracy, and reducing university and college tuition (Dukakis, 1988). Bush's victory in 1988 would thereby defeat Dukakis' initiatives.

Despite leaving the Oval Office, Reagan's stance on public education still had a vanguard in newly elected President George H.W. Bush. During his only term in the White House, President Bush continually touted himself as an "education president" yet did not succeed in enacting the conservatives' public education agenda. Two significant factors stood in the way of Bush having the same level of success as his predecessor in reshaping public education: first, ESEA was not available for reauthorization until 1993.

This somewhat protected ESEA from attempts by conservatives to either shrink or abolish the Department of Education by placing it out of Bush's reach. Second, in the 1988 election Republicans retained the White House but lost a significant amount of congressional seats to the Democrats, thus preventing Congress from rubber-stamping Bush's initiatives.

Bush's education agenda however did come through in his *America 2000* initiative. According to Macedo (2006, p. 167):

America 2000 embraced a corporate ideology that promotes individualism, privatization, and competition, as seen from its goals:

1. Every child will start school ready to learn
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to 90 percent
3. Competency will be demonstrated in five core subjects in grades 4, 8, and 12
4. American students will be ranked first in the world in both math and sciences
5. Every American adult will be a literate and responsible citizen
6. Every school will be liberated from drugs and violence

After a mere glance at *America 2000*, we can recognize that its authors have absorbed the very goals that Reagan promoted thus shaping federal education policy to meet them. The conservatives' agenda for public education remained relatively unchanged from Reagan to Bush, a seamless transition reflecting the ongoing deficit lens with regard to public education and an asinine commitment to the war on drugs, and complete neglect for abundant research on literacy.

Public Education and President Clinton:

Goals 2000 as the pre-cursor to No Child Left Behind

After Democrat Bill Clinton won the 1993 presidential election, two major events took place in public education: the passage of *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, and the reauthorization of ESEA. *Goals 2000* was the direct precursor to the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, in that it called for the quantification of student academic

achievement. President Clinton enthusiastically supported *Goals 2000*, and subsequently approved the reauthorization of ESEA under the moniker “*Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994*.” Among other changes, the new *Improving America’s Schools Act* greatly increased funding to bilingual education programs and to immigrant education.

Public Education and President George W. Bush: Increased Privatization, High-Stakes Standardized Testing, and the Underfunding of Public Schools Nationwide

Throughout the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign, Republican nominee George W. Bush announced that public education reform and the War on Drugs would be his top domestic priorities. President George W. Bush made several speeches regarding how existing policy (*Goals 2000*) “failed” to provide increased student achievement. Bush touted NCLB as the long overdue federal legislation that would “empower” parents and guardians with the necessary information to demand more and better education. In November 2000, George W. Bush was given the Presidency by a 5-4 vote in the Supreme Court, thus making him the 43rd President.

Bush (and to a lesser extent Sen. Ted Kennedy) wrapped the new educational agenda in red, white, and blue and announced it with the tired yet reliable rhetoric of “reform”. They effectively appealed to patriotic fervor and a back-to-basics mentality that had proven effective under previous conservative administrations. Bush was thus able to use the quantitative assessment techniques promoted in *Goals 2000* with truly difficult circumstances in urban schools (caused mostly by increasingly entrenched neoliberal capitalism) to simultaneously manufacture a crisis in public education while promoting the costly and inadequate remedies and assessment tools.

Essentially, the W. Bush administration moved the privatization initiatives one giant step further than either Reagan or H. W. Bush and created the new educational dogma that necessitates “scientifically-proven” teaching methods and focuses on an unattainable goal, that of making 100 percent of public education students proficient in reading and math by 2014 (see Au, 2008).

Bush found a new way of redirecting funding from local and state departments of education by mandating the specific reading and math programs, the standardized form of assessments required in public schools (all of which must be purchased from publishing companies with long-running connections to the Bush family). For uncooperative schools or those that otherwise do not adopt the required programs, make enough adequate yearly progress on the standardized exams, a costly and punitive system has been designed to rectify the situation. Once the new standard had been developed and implemented, local and state educational authorities were under pressure to conform. The following is the beginning of the relationships between NCLB and the promotion of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

Bush received repeated bipartisan criticism for ignoring suggestions from liberals who called for more challenging academic standards, higher increases in federal funding, and retention of some categorical ESEA programs, as well as conservatives that called upon him to:

... first, develop a key role for the federal government as a motivator to states and local communities for improved schooling; second, combine state and local discretion in spending federal education funds with clear goals and accountability;

and third use NAEP scores in comparison with states results to ensure that real reforms occurred. (Rees, 2001, as cited in Vinovskis, 2009)

Instead, the W. Administration proceeded with an agenda that was based on education “reforms” implemented in Texas during Bush’s time as Governor (see Angela Valenzuela, 2004, for exposure of the fallacies of the Texas-style reform). Three days after Bush’s inauguration, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* was enacted. A more detailed description of Corrective Action, the punitive section of NCLB, can be found in chapter three of this dissertation.

CHAPTER THREE: THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001, EXISTING POLITICAL ECONOMY, CRITICAL RACE THEORY, AND OTHER VARIOUS CRITIQUES

For the purposes of this dissertation it is necessary to understand precisely what the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB or the Act) states regarding possibilities for Corrective Action. As mentioned above the Act was originally a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB was touted by both Republicans and Democrats alike as being “the” legislation necessary to fix public education and make American public schools more competitive in world rankings. After several Amendments and debates, the final vote in the House of Representatives was held on Dec. 13, 2001, the results being 348 Ayes-41 Nays, with 12 not voting. Dec. 18, 2001, witnessed the final Senate vote, with 87 Ayes-10 Nays, 3 not voting (“H.R. 1: No child Left Behind Act of 2001”, Roll Call Votes, Govtrack.us). Both chambers of Congress overwhelmingly approved NCLB, and President W. Bush signed the Act into law (January 8, 2002). The Congressional voting pattern was strongly influenced by the post 9/11 ultra-patriotic rhetoric of leaving no one behind, particularly the U.S. ruling class. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was up for reauthorization in 1998, but Congressional Republicans effectively filibustered until 2000, as to create a platform for the Bush/Cheney campaign team.

Corrective Action

The details of Corrective Action can be found in Title-I of NCLB, sec. 1116 “Academic Assessment and Local Educational Agency and School Improvement,” subsection (b) “School Improvement,” “(7) Corrective Action” (115 STAT. 1483). This

section presents the specific possibilities for what local educational agencies may enact (consistent with State laws) against schools that have failed to make AYP. Such sanctions from the local educational agency (State or District) against the identified failing school must:

(i) substantially and directly [respond] to-

(I) the consistent academic failure of a school that caused the local educational agency to take such action; and

(II) any underlying staffing, curriculum, or other problems in the school; and

(ii) is designed to increase substantially the likelihood that each group of students described in 1111(b)(2)(C) enrolled in the school identified for corrective action will meet or exceed the State's proficient levels of achievement on the State academic assessments described in section. 1111(b)(3). (115 STAT. 1483)

The ambiguity of portion (i-II) opens a space for the unjust targeting of anyone employed in the school, the selected curriculum, non-traditional methods and pedagogies, etc. Any school official who is unpopular, has few political connections or allies, those who employ teaching methods and techniques that are not mainstream, those who teach in the arts and humanities, or otherwise hold positions that are seen as non-essential or detrimental to meeting AYP goals are made vulnerable to removal from the school.

After one full year of corrective action, failure to make AYP may result in "restructuring" (or "reconstitution"). Section 1116, subsection (8), subparagraph (B) "Alternative Governance," presents five options for how a local educational agency may

deal with a “failing” school. This section is vital to the position of La Independencia MS, for this reason I find it necessary to quote it in its entirety:

(B) Alternative Governance. – Not later than the beginning of the school year following the year in which the local educational agency implements subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall implement one of the following alternative governance arrangements for the school consistent with State law:

- (i) Reopening the school as a public charter school.
- (ii) Replacing all or most of the school staff (which may include the principal) who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress.
- (iii) Entering into a contract with an entity, such as a private management company, with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, to operate the public school.
- (iv) Turning the operation of the school over to the State educational agency, if permitted under State law and agreed to by the State.
- (v) Any other major restructuring of the school’s governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms, such as significant changes in the school’s staffing and governance, to improve student academic achievement in the school and that has substantial promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress as defined in the State plan under section 1111(b)(2). In the case of a rural local educational agency with a total of less than 600 students in average daily attendance at the schools

that are served by the agency and all of whose schools have a School Locale Code of 7 or 8, as determined by the Secretary, the Secretary shall, at such agency's request, provide technical assistance to such agency for the purpose of implementing this clause. (115 STAT. 1485-1486)

The five options for restructuring a “failing” school bare striking resemblance to their corrective action predecessors in the ambiguity of key phrases and terms. The degree of discretion to which the local educational agency may exercise the options is limited only in that the actions must be in accord with State law. Consider the problematic nature of each option:

- Option (i), (amidst the plethora of recent literature challenging the supposed success of charter schools), has been upheld and is one of the more frequently exercised options.
- Option (ii) was the option exercised by Puesta del Sol ISD against La Independencia MS. The ambiguous wording, as mentioned above, presents the possibility for the termination or forced transfer of any school administrator, faculty or staff member who can be held culpable for the school's “failure.” In the distinct absence of any criteria for assessing the relevance of a school official to the supposed failure, a local educational agency is likely to focus on public schools serving students of color, immigrant students, and poor and working class students before it attempts to restructure more affluent, white schools.
- Option (iii) is a clear facilitation of the privatization of public education. A “demonstrated record of effectiveness” could easily be falsified or otherwise doctored for the purposes of market attraction. Districts desperate to meet AYP

are likely to spend much-needed finances on services from such education corporations.

- Option (iv) is potentially the most cumbersome for a district to implement because it suggests that a State has the capacity and/or willingness to staff and actually operate an entire school.
- Option (v) does not provide clear guidelines but rather a *laissez-faire*/ “anything goes” approach to school reform. The extreme ambiguity of option (v) is exacerbated by the uncertainty of an entire public school as an institution, as well as the professional futures of its faculty and administration.

Any public school that is undergoing the phases of corrective action (and particularly those being reconstituted) will undoubtedly have a more difficult time meeting AYP goals since the pressures and responsibilities have just increased. The disruptions and chaotic nature of corrective action impact the morale of faculty and administrators in such a way as to contribute to the transferring of experienced teachers and new teachers leaving the profession after only a few years. This internal turmoil prevents a stable roster of teachers for the students.

Educational corporations have found the reasons for the failing schools to be located in a variety of elements: curriculum, standards, textbooks, pedagogies, professional development, supplementary tutoring (made more attractive by claiming that it abides by NCLB standards). Such attempts to remedy the failing schools have been made, as the textbook publishing industry has grown in size, since the enactment of NCLB. Pre-packaged curricula and pedagogies ultimately deskill those teachers who use them, either because they have blindly turned over their own educational authority to the

textbook companies or they have been forced to implement such texts in their classrooms (Rodriguez, 2006). Freire (2005) aids us in understanding such materials, “The development of the so-called teacher-proof materials is a continuation of experts’ authoritarianism, of their total lack of faith in the possibility that teachers can know and can also create.” (p. 15) Such a denial of teachers as intellectuals is ultimately an assault on the students who fill their classrooms and their own budding intellectual development. (Giroux, 1988)

The curricular, pedagogical, and professional changes forced upon public schools constitute acts of violence and colonization against teaching, learning, and the process of becoming. Under these conditions school reform shifts reformers’ focus from what is effective for student learning to whom and what is most vulnerable in public education: principles (who frequently do not have the protection of a labor union), poor and working class communities (who cannot afford the protection of constant lobbying), communities who lack the necessary social capital to sway local educational authorities, schools with high populations of students of color and immigrant students (as mentioned above such schools frequently experience high rates of teacher turnover, teacher shortage, and teacher burnout). Thus, the schools seen to be “failing” and “in need of reform” are those schools that lack the resources of their more affluent white counterparts.

The possibilities embedded in Corrective Action and the later restructuring clauses of NCLB are not without critique. Mathis (2009) investigates five NCLB-sanctioned potential restructuring alternatives for “failing schools.” The five potential alternatives are: (1) turning school direction over to the state; (2) turning school direction over to a private company; (3) reconstituting a once-public school into a charter school;

(4) replacing some or all of the faculty and administration; (5) “any other” restructuring alternatives. This final possibility is an understudied area that is currently receiving much-needed attention. The most pertinent aspects of this article to my research are the findings on the impact of option (4), replacement of some or all of the administration and faculty. Mathis (2009) found that actual restructuring is quite infrequent, despite 28 states having laws permitting such changes that were unrelated to NCLB. Rather than help, reconstitution has proven to be chaotic and disruptive to schools. On the overall impact of restructuring, Mathis (2009) states that it is quite difficult to ascertain reliable data; principal transfers and teacher turnover frequently occur regardless of test scores. However, a study by the Center of Education Policy used a regression model to understand the impacts of restructuring upon schools in five states. The researchers concluded that none of the restructuring options were associated with gains in math and reading test scores. This relates to the research for this Dissertation since: the criteria used to impose the restructuring changes upon the middle school in my study included never having made AYP and having high truancy rates.

Darden (2008) provides a very clear outline of the details within the restructuring phase of Corrective Action. The timeline serves as a useful guide for understanding the increased pressure upon school faculty and administration. Having been written in 2008, it speaks to the justifiably high concern of school boards and administrations regarding the future of their schools. The most useful aspect of this article is the caution of impending increases in the number of schools that have entered (or will enter) Restructuring-II. Specifically, students in the Big 5 school districts will be amongst those reconstituted schools (New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers).

In a legal comment by Andrew Spitzer (2007) entitled, “School reconstitution under No Child Left Behind: Why school officials should think twice,” Restructuring (also known as “Reconstitution”), is analyzed for the myriad potential violations it may commit, as well as for the lawsuits it can invite. He astutely calls out the capricious nature of using students’ scores on high stakes standardized exams as a measure for teacher effectiveness, and the professional consequences facing those teachers deemed “relevant to the failure.” Written in 2007, Spitzer’s notions can be extended to include the professional damage done against the administrators of “failing” schools. Among his recommendations and conclusions is the following:

... the Act’s punishment of teachers, schools, and districts whose students fail to make AYP may leave the agencies responsible for the implementation of those corrective actions open to equal protection claims, given that those students affected seem likely to be disproportionately minority and economically disadvantaged. (p. 1383)

Had Spitzer been present in La Independencia MS during the 2008-2009 academic year he certainly would have seen this conclusion realized. As mentioned above La Independencia MS is located within a predominantly poor and working class community where 95 percent of the students identify as Latina/Latino, Chicana/Chicano, *Mexicano/Mexicana*, Hispanic, Spanish, or Northern New Mexican. Of all the schools in the Puesta del Sol ISD that fit the criteria for Reconstitution, (middle schools in the district did not meet AYP that year), La Independencia MS was the most vulnerable target for the aforementioned Corrective Action sanctions. An internal challenge within

La Independencia has been a high rate of teacher turnover and attrition, as will be discussed later in this dissertation.

On the issue of teacher attrition in the era of NCLB, Linda Darling-Hammond (2008) aptly points out that provisions within NCLB allow new teachers to bypass critical elements of teacher preparation and quickly enter the profession while very experienced, multidisciplinary teachers are deemed “not highly qualified” if they have not majored in or passed a state exam in their content areas. Darling-Hammond’s metaphor perfectly describes the situation: “In low-income schools suffering from even higher turnover rates, producing more teachers – especially through fast-track routes that tend to have high attrition – is like filling a leaky bucket rather than fixing it” (2008, pp. 157-158). I will discuss later in this dissertation the turnover suffered at La Independencia MS following the takeover which validates Darling-Hammond’s assertion.

The issue of teacher-turnover is a crucial element in a school’s downward progression into the advanced stages of Corrective Action. A constant shortage of consistent teachers from year-to-year causes an unsteady and ever-changing infrastructure within a school. The lack of consistent teachers results in students having to constantly re-adapt to a new teacher’s methods and pedagogies. As the standardized exams approach, schools are forced to focus on preparing new teachers for administering the exams (procedures for bathroom use, clarifying student inquiries about test questions vs. helping students find the correct answers, techniques for minimizing distraction throughout the exams, etc.).

I feel an urgency in interrogating the imposition of “failure” labels under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 since Secretary of Education Arne Duncan declared

NCLB itself to be “broken,” (Anderson, 10 March 2011). Indeed, Sec. Duncan’s statement speaks to the vast level of “failure” of public education to serve the national student body in general and the exploited in particular. Anderson (2011) cites Secretary Duncan’s speech to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce (worth quoting at length):

This law is fundamentally broken, and we need to fix it, and fix it this year. The law has created dozens of ways for schools to fail and very few ways to help them succeed. We should get out of the business of labeling schools as failures and create a new law that is fair and flexible and focused on the schools and students most at risk. (Anderson, ¶ 4)

With the perspective of ten years since its enactment, Secretary Duncan makes a lucid declaration with which I agree. Yet the question must be asked: is it possible to “fix” NCLB? President Obama believes so; he has also gone on record as declaring that if the United States continued under NCLB in its original form, over 80% of public schools within the United States would be considered “failing.” Edwards (2011) reports that in a press conference held at Kenmore Middle School on March 14, 2011, President Obama called for reform of the Education Policy. The President, “push[ed] for expedited reform after last week’s release by the Education Department that more than 80 percent of America’s public schools are labeled as ‘failing’ under the current standards” (¶ 2). Taking the President’s comment seriously, that 80 percent of public schools are labeled as failing, means that the conditions for such failures have been sanctioned and mandated by the federal government. A different means of critiquing the situation is in order if public education is to be transformed.

Enora R. Brown (2007) recognizes the impending built-in failure mechanisms within NCLB. The list of problematic consequences for public schools in the NCLB era is vast. She writes:

The imposition of formulaic, rigid curricular programs, test-taking drills, and watered-down curricula produced the narcotizing effects of students and teacher burnout, manifested in rising dropout rates and teacher transfers from low-performing schools. Title-I schools were bound to NCLB's mandates and sanctions, and forced to accept military access to student information for recruitment, disproportionately targeting poor communities of color. In contrast, some wealthy white schools avoided penalties through state-negotiated policy changes, and avoided the intense pressure experienced by poor schools of color. (p. 126)

Brown (2007) points out the problematic nature of NCLB and its oppression of the most vulnerable and over-exploited student populations in the country. The teachers employed in La Independencia MS were subjected to similar curricular and pedagogical surveillance, punished for failure to demonstrate "fidelity" to pre-packaged teaching materials and "scientifically-proven" instructional methods (Robert J. Marzano's, et al. *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement* (2001) was mandatory reading for all La Independencia MS teachers, with particular attention paid to the section "Scientific Applications"). The term "fidelity" was a commonly used term in the professional development sessions hosted by Puesta del Sol ISD. Teachers that did not demonstrate "fidelity to the scripted program" were publically

criticized and allusions were made that they were most culpable in their school's low achievement.

On a different note, NCLB came up for reauthorization in 2007. Darling-Hammond (2007) challenged the misidentification of the problem within public education, and in her words, “[NCLB] assumes that what schools need is more carrots and sticks than fundamental changes” (§7). Darling-Hammond criticizes the law for not paying attention to the constant financial and physical inequalities plaguing states. She also challenges NCLB for it has “actually made it harder for states to improve the quality of teaching” by narrowing the curricula, choosing simplicity over complexity in student understanding, turning out poorly prepared teachers, and restricting effective pedagogies. (§ 16)

Political Economy

Considering class analysis, McLaren (2007) focuses on how the No Child Left Behind Act's intentions are to further facilitate the privatization of public education and maintain asymmetrical relations of power. The author posits, “NCLB is an historical apparatus that serves to exert control over the largest and most vulnerable segments of the population in the interest of promoting capitalist consumption and the reproduction of the law of value and the value of labor” (p. 65). A class critique of NCLB situates the Act as a tool designed to continually entrench the privatization of public education and further exploit poor and working class youth through an inundation of the following: base curricula (mostly) absent of the arts and nearly devoid of the humanities; a large amount of testing that leads to dramatic losses of actual classroom time (Au, 2008); increased militarization of public schools through increased real-time surveillance and boosts in

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs, which according to Saltman (2003) result in just under half (47 percent) of participants going on to military service. Scant attention was paid to the “Texas-style” education situation that became the operating model for NCLB (Valenzuela, ed., 2004). McLaren (2007) writes that prior to NCLB, cities such as San Francisco and Portland had precedents set against military recruitment due to the U.S. military’s history of homophobic policies such as Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. These policies have only recently been reversed under President Obama (see W. Branigin, D. Wilgoren, P. Bacon, Jr., 2010 December 22).

McLaren (2007) aptly points out that Bush’s “Texas-style” plan for public education was ultimately a veneer for the failure of the state to meet the needs of its school children. Rates of dropouts and graduations were frequently manipulated to reflect improvements (in reality there were only working conditions) (see also: Valenzuela, 2004). President Bush and his advisors manipulated the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to insert a jingoistic agenda into the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and thus fill any openings within the school to military pipeline. The author (2007) notes that a “healthy educational system can only function in a post-capitalist, socialist democracy,” (p. 66), thus resolving the issue as to whether NCLB can actually be “fixed.” McLaren (2007) further posits that the constellation of Bush’s intention to become the “Education President” with his deficit/intervention “Reading First” initiative, the use of the post 9-11 resurgence in fervent U.S. patriotism, and the narcotic-like madness of capitalism’s need for expansion, exploitation, and conquest to further privatize any remnants of the public sphere, particularly education. McLaren (p. 377, 2011) challenges the ingratiation of capitalism in public education by

writing, “when education is designed to serve the entire society and is not narrowly conceived as the enhancement of social mobility within the larger capitalist social order, it cannot be articulated only or mainly in positivistic quantifiable standards.” We can extend McLaren’s statement to include those teachers who see value in the enticements of the privatization movement, namely merit pay, competition amongst schools as a means of gaining more dollars, closing “failing” public schools and reopening them under corporate guidance in order to “prepare” students for the future, etc.

As Louis Althusser (1970) famously noted, of all the Ideological State Apparatuses, it is the educational state apparatus (ESA) that is the most powerful for it captures the attention of youth for a longer amount of time than any other media for socialization. Thus conservative hegemonic control over the Educational State Apparatus inculcates youth with the values of the ruling class (in our times, the transnational capitalist class), and perpetuates a status quo consisting of perpetual war, destruction of the environment, increased consumption of natural resources, and attacks on collective bargaining and trade unions. Cole and Maisuria (2010) likewise posit, “‘education’ has become a key component in the profit-making process itself. ...Corporate global capital is in schools, both in the sense of determining the curriculum and exercising burgeoning control of schools as businesses” (p. 120). Cole and Maisuria (2010) further submit, an issue that highly impacted La Independencia MS, that Althusser’s ESA has since grown to encompass a worldwide social network that globally reduces the intellectuality of the curricula, conquers any school that indicates signs of progressive teaching, exploits the labor power of the teachers, and trains youth for occupations with varying certainty, certainty that is dependent upon the transnational dominant class. Thus to examine the

impact of NCLB upon La Independencia MS is to develop a metaphorical appraisal of the global interconnections between capitalism and education.

Throughout *Marxism and educational theory*, Mike Cole (2008) traces the foundations and challenges of Marxism in educational theory. Cole offers a useful analysis of Althusser's interpretation of the Educational State Apparatus; he suggests that Althusser considered ideology to be the most powerful and influential state apparatus. Further, Althusser contextualized the Educational State Apparatus within the obligatory school attendance policies adopted by numerous governments. No other apparatus was able to capture the attention and the physical body for as prolonged a time as institutional/formal education. Cole (2008) also draws from Dave Hill ("The National Curriculum, the Hidden Curriculum and Equality," 2001) in describing how changes to the curriculum subtly facilitate the consent of the masses through a means of ideological manipulation (the ESA); in Cole's words, such moves are "less messy than sending in the riot troops or police; and it is deemed to be more legitimate by the populace" (p. 31). Cole points out however that it is also within the framework of education that such oppression can be named, problematized, and overcome, making the struggle for public education more crucial than ever for the transformation of society.

In earlier work, Cole (2003) discusses the connection between Marxism and an oft-mentioned concept within education, social justice. Cole (2003, p. 491) writes that regardless of Marx's actual connection to a modern "*concept* of social justice, interpreting the world, for him, was less important than changing it." In the same work Cole (2003) writes, "Marxists look to history to understand both underlying assumptions with respect to social justice and *solutions to social injustice*" (p. 491). Viewing public

education as a vehicle for social transformation, Marxism offers us analytical tools for critically understanding the past, recognizing origins of racism and class exploitation, and then transforming those oppressive realities. As Terry Eagleton (2011, p. 68) writes, “The point for Marx is not to dream of an ideal future, but to resolve the contradictions in the present which prevent a better future from coming about.” There is certainly room for ontological optimism in discussions of a better society, and Eagleton’s summary is appropriate for its redirection on Marxist-orientation of improving and transforming society. Thus, for Marxists public education is a contested site that serves either to inculcate students into capitalist society or to challenge existing social and racial injustices.

According to McLaren (2007), under NCLB the daily academic quotidian is manipulated such that “little time...is left to examine the politics of social life and how the world is driven by the capitalist law of value,” (p. 39). It was not by accident that space for such a topic was blocked from the sanctioned curricula. Rather it was a function of ESA to cast a shovelful of dirt upon those who tear their ontological hands toiling and digging themselves up from the soulless bone-yard of base considerations and mind-numbing rote practice (John-Steiner, 2004) as they gasp for creative, relative, and radical thought. In contemporary social studies textbooks, particularly in the State of Texas, the term “capitalism” is quickly replaced by its euphemistic henchman-like misnomer, “free-market economy.” Public schools under NCLB, as McLaren reminds us, are active business partners in protecting such interests.

In Paul Willis’ (1977) *Learning to labor: How working class kids gets working class jobs*, he expounds upon the notion that labor power is “a commodity like no other”

(p. 130). Labor power is the most reliably exploitable commodity within a capitalist society specifically because, as Willis states, "... it is not a fixed quantity. ...It remains true that labour power is the only variable element in a capitalist system. It must therefore be the source of expanded capital and profit" (p. 130). Marx (1990) writes that since the proletariat is dependent upon the market to meet their basic needs, their labor power is effectively the only commodity that the workers can actually sell. We can extend Willis' astute description of the reliable exploitability of labor power from the subject of poor and working class youth of color to their teachers and administrators as well. I argue that in the fervent craze to privatize public education NCLB pundits have targeted, through unjustly established authority, the collective labor power of educators and redirected it to carry out the current interests of the transnational capitalist class. In this case, the inundation of "scientifically proven" pedagogical devices and techniques deskills the educator and intellectually shuts down both the learner and the instructor.

Furthermore, Willis' observation of the exploitability of labor power is useful when reflecting upon the contemporary increases in after-school remedial and test-prep tutoring (many of which attract "failing" schools by publicizing themselves as "meeting NCLB standards"); those targeted as potential tutors are frequently working class teachers and located within Title-I schools. They are offered higher per diem rates for their education and teaching experience. Alfie Kohn (2000) points out that the tutoring industry preys upon the desperation of educators, parents, and caregivers who, wanting their children's test scores to go up, will spend much-needed funds on costly test prep materials. Kohn writes, "...affluent families, schools, and districts are better able to afford such products – and the most effective versions of such products – thereby

exacerbating the inequity of such testing” (2000, p. 37). Kohn’s observation highlights the blending of the economy into the educational, and with the proliferation of high-stakes standardized testing under NCLB and the Corrective Action consequences that await “failing” schools, schools and families will spend what is necessary to increase their students’ test scores. La Independencia’s Title-I status validates Kohn’s argument in that supplemental tutoring and test prep materials inundated the school year after year, but to no avail. The economic, ethnic, and linguistic demographics of La Independencia MS lead me to develop a theoretical framework that blends political economy with Critical Race Theory.

The work of Gregory Meyerson (2001) serves to develop an understanding of the explanatory capacity within historical materialism that lacks in Critical Race Theory. For Meyerson (2001):

The primacy of class means that building a multiracial, multi-gendered international working-class organization or organizations should be the goal of any revolutionary movement: the primacy of class puts the fight against racism and sexism at the center. The intelligibility of this position is rooted in the *explanatory* primacy of class analysis for understanding the structural determinants of race, gender and class oppression. Oppression is multiple and intersecting but its causes are not. (¶4)

The crucial point for Meyerson is that historical materialism centralizes racism, sexism and class oppression. Meyerson views the origins of current forms of oppression as being rooted in the sordid history of capitalism. What is central for this dissertation research is the unification of the political economy and Critical Race Theory, for each

individual framework provides necessary tools for analysis. However, the takeover of La Independencia MS will be best understood when scrutinized through a hybrid lens of historical materialism and Critical Race Theory. Therefore I will draw from both fields and incorporate their explanatory and descriptive capabilities into one theoretical outlook that will help the manifestations of oppression and victimization of La Independencia emerge.

Critical Race Theory

Among the considerations for a Critical Race Theory (CRT) analysis of Corrective Action, the interviews from my participants, and the public statements is one of CRT's essential tenets. As Solórzano (1998) writes, "critical race theory recognizes that the experiential knowledge of women and men of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (p. 122). Applying CRT to the public statements of Puesta del Sol ISD school officials will expose subtle racist undertones and intentions in their actions.

Yosso (2010) draws from the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline as it is based upon 2000 U.S. Census Bureau information. The relevance of this framework is that it is generalizable and concurs with trends I observed within La Independencia MS. Yosso's discussion of the counter-storytelling methodology is an integral piece of my research, as the interviews I conducted contain aspects of resistance to imposed authority and defiance of stereotypes. The interviews I conducted with Christina Jojola, the former principal of La Independencia MS, revealed a significant amount of resistance and defiance. Her narrative also serves as a critical race counter-story when compared to the majoritarian opinion held by the Puesta del Sol ISD officials.

In their landmark work, *Critical race theory: An introduction*, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explain counter-storytelling as “writing that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (p. 144). Counter-storytelling can thus be a method for voicing reasoned but previously silenced resistance against oppression, challenging policies and practices that subordinate people of color, or advocate for those who are not in a position to do so. Delgado and Stefancic (2001, p. 43) elaborate on counter-storytelling. They write, “critical writers use counterstories to challenge, displace, or mock these pernicious narratives and beliefs.” In the case of this dissertation, counter-storytelling exposes the ways in which Corrective Action allows for racism and class oppression to be exercised on the grounds of seemingly “failing” status of a school.

Writing from a legal perspective, Lawson (1995) defends counter-storytelling. She writes, “Critics of this storytelling approach question its evaluative criteria and its merit. Notwithstanding this controversy, narrative and storytelling were conceived as a means to transform established belief systems” (1994-1995, p. 360-361). For those who embrace the power of effective storytelling, counter-storytelling becomes the crucial vehicle for advocacy and knowledge transmission. Critics of counter-storytelling either dismiss its inherent potential as a pedagogical tool or worse, recognize it and seek to disarm those who employ its use. Legal discourse is rife with storytelling. Yet it is precisely counter-storytelling that enables marginalized people of color to challenge oppressive practices and policies. Lawson’s statement is similar to that of Margaret Montoya (2000). She writes:

In the hands of Outsiders, storytelling seeks to subvert the dominant ideology. Stories told by those on the bottom, told from the “subversive-subaltern” perspective, challenge and expose the hierarchical and patriarchal order that exists within the legal academy and pervades the larger society. Narrative that focuses on the experiences of Outsiders thus empowers both the storyteller and the story-listener by virtue of its opposition to the traditional forms of discourse. (p. 522)

Montoya (2000) and Lawson (1995) share a common vision for the necessity of counter-storytelling in legal discourse. Laws are written by those in power and frequently written with disregard for the most vulnerable people in society. Thus, for purposes of exposing the dismissive, dehumanizing, and unjust implications of laws the stories of the oppressed must be brought into mainstream legal discourse. Professors and scholars of other fields who share similar concerns and experiences as Montoya and Lawson have brought critical race theory into their fields as a means of challenging oppressive practices.

Solórzano and Yosso (2009) further elaborate on existing research and literature in discussing the necessity and impact of CRT in education. The relevance of Solórzano and Yosso’s writing is that I will apply CRT in education to the faculty and administration that have been marginalized by majoritarian practices. My research question focuses on faculty and administration response to NCLB’s Restructuring II school takeover policy, an area that has been underexplored and under-researched. While studies of institutional racism are very common, this dissertation will focus on the subtle racism directed at school administrators under NCLB.

In earlier work, Solórzano and Yosso (2000) describe the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline (this time drawn from the 1990 Census Bureau data) while punctuating its detrimental impacts with critical reflection and insight into the details of how the Educational State Apparatus furthers the exploitation of Chicana(o)/ Latina(o) students. Such reflections and counter stories have appeared in the research conducted within the geographic location and wider demographic populations for this dissertation research study.

Yosso and Solórzano (2006) further elaborate the detrimental effects of the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline. They write, “Instead of cultivating the cultural and linguistic assets Chicana/os bring to school, educators often engage in processes of ‘subtractive schooling,’ assuming students have multiple cultural deficits rather than cultural advantages (see Valencia, 1997, 1999)” (¶5). Chicanas/os develop resilience to such oppression through community sharing. Yosso and Solórzano explain one approach to such development: “To survive a history of institutional neglect in U.S. public schools, Chicana/os draw on various cultural and linguistic skills, knowledge, contacts, and abilities nurtured in their communities” (2006, ¶13). Such networks are what allow increasingly more Chicana/Chicano students to experience educational success in public schools.

Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) illustrate a similar sentiment. They write that the social construction of reality is founded upon and held together by the stories shared from members of marginalized communities. These stories inform one another and help make more intelligent the resilience and steadfast perseverance of students of color. What Yosso and Solórzano (2006) share with Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) is the

necessity of community sharing and collaboration in facing racism in public and higher education.

Garrett Duncan (2006) discusses a similar line of thought as Yosso (2010). The use of critical race theory as an ethnographic method for research in education is compelling given that my research site is a school of primarily poor and working class youth of color as well as a diverse mix of faculty and administration. As Garrett Duncan (2006) writes, "...CRT is an especially useful tool for examining how socio-temporal notions of race inform the naturalization of oppression and the normalization of racial inequality in public schools and society" (p. 191-192). According to Garrett Duncan, one of the major criticisms of CRT, that it is too dependent upon narrative and storytelling, can be refuted when counter-storytelling becomes an integral component of critical race ethnography. The narrative/interview portions of my research included a significant amount of counter-storytelling. Indeed, Garrett Duncan's writing is validated in the experiences that emerged in the narratives present in this dissertation.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006) takes up the issue of color-blindness. For him, whites that maintain a color-blind ideology "can express resentment toward minorities; criticize their morality, values, and work ethic; and even claim to be the victims of 'reverse racism'" (p. 4). Color-blind racism is a departure from overt Jim Crow racism and allows for the white racist to continually marginalize (or indirectly support the marginalization of) people of color. Bonilla-Silva (2006, p. 2) connects color-blind racism to the stereotype prevalent amongst color-blind whites that "whites can attribute Latinos' high poverty rate to a relaxed work ethic ('the Hispanics are mañana, mañana, mañana – tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow')." I extend this notion of linking high poverty

rates to a “relaxed work ethic” to a common phrase throughout education today, that of “culture of low expectations.” Later in this dissertation, Cathy Wayne will frequently refer to a “culture of low expectations” in general reference to the La Independencia school community and particularly to the students’ families.

In writing from the perspective of CRT as it emerges in the UK, Gillborn (2008) documents the continued failure of educational policy to ameliorate educational practices that continue to damage students of color. I argue that Gillborn’s findings are applicable in a broad US context, particularly under NCLB. With the intensifying re-segregation of public schools, achievement gap measures growing wider, and the increasing pressure on the teachers and administrators, the racist practice of condemning primarily schools with high populations of students of color is a continued phenomenon that shows little potential for change. Gillborn’s work provide a useful means by which to generalize the conclusions in this Dissertation research.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

Guiding Principles

Six guiding principles inform my research. In *Scientific Research in Education*, Shavelson and Towne (2002) provide a synthesis of guidelines that lead to a coherent research question. Their work suggests several rounds of revision and tempering of each research question are necessary yet the underlying premise of investigation is the same:

- 1) *Pose significant questions that can be investigated empirically*: The research questions developed for this study are significant since Corrective Action has been the cause of many reconstituted public schools, high teacher turnover, and dismissed administration, to name a few. A study like this has the potential to inform policymakers about the ramifications of Corrective Action. During this dissertation research I relied on empirical support for certain aspects of this study however I also supported the study theoretically. Having been a teacher in this school, I have direct knowledge of issues related to the administration and the subsequent faculty response.
- 2) *Link research to relevant theory*: I synthesized a theoretical framework comprised of political economy and Critical Race Theory; this is necessary for highlighting the relevant class and race issues that surrounded the accelerated enforcement of Corrective Action on La Independencia MS (see below).
- 3) *Use methods that permit direct investigation of the question*: I conducted a critical case study of La Independencia MS, which included interviews. The interview process followed Irving Seidman (2006). I interviewed the former principal and two faculty members of La Independencia MS, as well as a former district official

central to the above mentioned takeover. Each participant was interviewed separately, three different interviews for each participant took place. The interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. The first round of interviews focused on the participants' life stories, how each one came into education, and the years leading up to the takeover. The second interviews focused on the takeover process itself, specifically on how the takeover was publicized by the district, the participants' roles during the takeover, their responses, and the impact of the takeover on the other faculty and administrators. The final interviews covered the years since the takeover (i.e. their perspectives on the restructuring since the 2008-2009 academic year).

- 4) *Provide a coherent and explicit chain of reasoning:* In this dissertation research study I wanted to understand how a school administration and faculty responded to being sanctioned by the parent school district using guidelines set under No Child Left Behind. The broadest assumption pertinent to this question is that the impact of the Corrective Action caused disruption to the daily life of La Independencia MS. An additional assumption is that there were race- and class-based motivations on the part of the district to enforce Corrective Action upon La Independencia MS, given its Title-I status and the presence of immigrant youth, youth of color, Native American students, and English Language Learners.
- 5) *Replicate and Generalize Across Studies:* My goal was not to generalize the findings but rather to give a detailed account of La Independencia MS and develop empirical and theoretical support to my conclusions considering the disruption of the lives of the students, parents and teachers. In doing so this study

provides a counter narrative to the justification for the district administrators' corrective action.

- 6) *Disclose Research to Encourage Professional Scrutiny and Critique:* Findings from this study will be publically available.

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above the theoretical framework guiding my study draws from both critical race theory and Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony as discussed within the critical educational tradition that includes critical pedagogy, revolutionary critical pedagogy, action research, and critical ethnography. In the critical race theory literature, I draw primarily from the work of Solórzano and Yosso, specifically their writing on the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline. From literature related to class analysis, I will be using the work of Peter McLaren (2007), Mike Cole (2008), Glenn Rikowski (2005), and Paul Willis (1977), among others. Each of these writers consider historical materialism to investigate how and why public education seeks to reproduce social class, foster class antagonisms, and perpetuate racism through class exploitation. I further elaborate the ways in which NCLB supports linguistic hegemony through the manufacturing of mass consent (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). In exploring this, I apply the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), Carl Boggs (1976), and James Joll (1977). Peripheral subtopics necessary to contextualize the site include: the economic impact of NCLB upon a working class community of color; community response to the imposed administrative changes; wider public support for and outcry against the actions of the district.

The work of Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso, particularly the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline, contextualize the educational and linguistic realities that are similar

to the geographical area of my site. Furthermore I discuss the school's Title-I status in order to contextualize the economic levels of the families that reside in the area. I draw from political economy to support a CRT analysis; in this case with what I view as class exploitation.

This investigation was conducted according to the principles of case study methodology, most notably from the work of Robert K. Yin (1994, 2006). The above theoretical framework guides and provokes a transitional analysis sharpened through my review of the literature. According to Merriam (1988), "theory permeates the entire process of case study research" (p. 60). The demographics of La Independencia MS and the surrounding community (high minority and immigrant population, overwhelmingly poor and working class) indicate that the tenets of critical race theory in education, as they exist in current form, are the most suitable for analyzing the impact of corrective action on the faculty and administration.

La Independencia MS was categorized as a Title-I school, reflecting some of the economic exploitation that pervaded the school community. Under NCLB, all "limited English proficient children, children of migrant parents, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance" warrant the label "disadvantaged" (NCLB, 115 STAT. 1440). It follows that a significant amount of the student population at La Independencia MS meets such criteria; the labeling is not without consequence to the public image of La Independencia MS and its students. An analysis using critical race theory in which students are deemed to be "disadvantaged" serves two purposes: one, it exposes the racial and ethnic bias of the authors of NCLB; second, it reveals the possibility of students entering the classroom

with prior knowledge gained through worldly experiences, linguistic diversity, and non-Western epistemologies that is dismissed. Instead, students of color and those students who have spent formative educational years in underserved and neglected schools are viewed through a deficit lens as lacking the cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973) necessary for social mobility, cultural capital afforded by early intervention reading programs and the experience of highly qualified teachers. Further, a critical race analysis of NCLB's labeling of "disadvantaged" youth reveals one inherent pitfall of such monikers: that the teachers and administrators of "disadvantaged" youth are also to blame for the students' educational conditions and "failures."

NCLB: A Gramscian Analysis

Those responsible for altering ESEA saw in its 2000 reauthorization an opportunity to create a dogma of educational imperialism. Changes were made to the law that limited the potential for critical education to take place. These changes include the standardization of literacy and math instruction through the inundation of scripted curricula, the unofficial elevation of English as the language of instruction (removing the word 'bilingual' from NCLB was a strategic move in the direction of monolingualism), and the punitive nature of Corrective Action.

The overarching agenda of the NCLB proponents was not actual 'reform' of public education but rather to accelerate its privatization. That is, the inundation of scripted educational materials and overly expensive standardized testing became a way of channeling public education funds into the hands of corporations like Pearson, McGraw Hill, Houghton Mifflin, etc. (Rodriguez, 2006).

Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony provides us a framework for analyzing the process through which NCLB creates and maintains ideological and political influence over those in public education, as well as the extent of this influence. In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1971) theorizes that a process takes place in which the ruling powers exert ideological influence that coerces subordinate classes to consent, conforming to the will of the state. Once subordinate classes have been consciously manipulated into complying with the ruling class' control, the population becomes ever more controllable, manageable and malleable. Consider the groundwork for the theory of cultural hegemony. Gramsci (1971) writes:

These two levels [civil society and the State] correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government. The functions in question are precisely organizational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government. These comprise:

1. The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
2. The apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This

apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed. (p. 12)

The application of Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony to the current educational climate uncovers much about the intentions of the authors of NCLB and the private corporations profiting from its enactment (Coles, 2005; Garan, 2006; Rodriguez, 2006). The following revelations uncover how the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 coerced the consent of the general citizenry and many in public education. As James Joll suggests, "the hegemony of a political class meant for Gramsci that that class had succeeded in persuading the other classes of society to accept its own morals, political and cultural values" (1977, p. 99). As we have seen the dominant political elite and educational and testing corporations have been as successful.

As the guiding federal education policy, the No Child Left Behind Act served as the 'legal' method by which political elites with close connections to private corporations (publishing companies included) exert a certain measure of influence over public education (Rodriguez 2006, 2008). Significant changes were made that prioritized and officially sanctioned various scripted programs, pedagogies, one language of instruction (English), assessment measures, and so on. Such changes normalize the notion that the teachers' critical nature, creativity, and organic pedagogies must increasingly be curbed and undermined so as to prevent the development of similar schools of thought amongst the students. Thus school life is altered in such a way that the agenda, as argued by Rodriguez (2006) and Gramsci (1971), of State level officials is revealed: education is to be directed at developing basic literacy and numeracy within the students. Connections

that could be drawn between family and school are eliminated. Critical pedagogy and transformational education are deemed to be outside the scripted curricula, unsanctioned, and thus punishable. (As will be shown in later chapters, even when schools abide by the NCLB mandates there is no guarantee that the faculty and administration will be protected from removal.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this dissertation research study, the quality and effectiveness of teachers is measured by their students' progress toward meeting the impossible benchmark known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). With an unattainable goal such as this in place, school districts bear the weight of spending on costly supplemental programs and tutoring services, further channeling funds from the public education system into private corporations. These changes notwithstanding every year schools must show improvement upon the previous year's scores or suffer Corrective Action consequences.

The threat (the reality for La Independencia MS and Ortiz HS) of losing faculty members and/or administrators is what helped to maintain coercion and complacency in *not* resisting NCLB mandates, despite professional experience informing them. Herein lies Gramsci's (1971) description of the "subaltern function" which punishes those who dissent while also serving as a warning to others. Boggs (1976) elaborates on the subaltern function here and directly links it to education:

... class domination is exercised as much through popular 'consensus' achieved in civil society as through physical coercion (or threat of it) by the state apparatus, especially in advanced capitalist societies where education, the media, law, mass culture, etc. take on a new role. (p. 17)

Boggs' (1976) assertion is poignant and can be extended to help understand the removal of faculty and administrators in a Restructuring-II takeover such as at La Independencia MS as a form of physical coercion of popular consensus. This consensus would ultimately manifest itself as conformity and decreased willingness to oppose and resist NCLB.

Ideology Critique

To proceed with clarity, it is necessary to operationalize (Rodriguez, 2006) the term "ideology." I therefore draw from the work of several noted scholars who have written extensively on the subject.

Paula Allman (2007) summarizes Karl Marx's conception of ideology in the following terms, "ideology serves to mask or misrepresent the real contradictions that make capitalism possible, and, therefore, by helping to perpetuate capitalism, it serves the interest of the dominant class (capitalist/bourgeois)" (p. 39). Marx believed that not every idea was specifically "ideology," but rather those ideas that served to mask the continuation of labor exploitation and the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Allman's (2007) description follows Marx's (1990) analysis in *Capital, Volume I*. Given that much of the underlying logic embedded in the NCLB rhetoric of "reform" is actually intended to reproduce exploitation and tracking of marginalized populations, Allman's writing therefore addresses the elusive but operational governing dynamics within the law.

Thus, when I refer to the ideological aspects of school takeovers I am referring to the embedded understandings that compel authority figures to concur with the utter "failure" of public schools. The ideological underpinnings in the Corrective Action

rhetoric permitting school takeovers immediately attempts to shift the gaze onto the shortcomings of school officials (teachers and administrators) instead of questioning the ways in which such schools have been neglected, underserved, or held to standards that are unattainable and nonsensical. The scrutiny must, I argue, be both reflexive and introspective. That is, school officials seeking to improve test scores (if this is the agreed-upon goal) must first ask what the test scores truly indicate, and secondly what factors have prevented students from succeeding. Are the exams disconnected from the students' lives? Is there consistent academic validity? Has the district and state been depriving the students of services in their attempts to raise achievement? Such questions implore us to look more deeply at the embedded inequalities of public education before negatively scrutinizing and judging students and their school officials.

It is further necessary to discuss ideology with method. That is, by analyzing the discourse of Puesta del Sol ISD officials, public rhetoric, and NCLB itself, we can illuminate the underlying ideological notions of educating specific populations for the needs of capitalists and entrepreneurs. In that sense, I use ideology critique in conjunction with discourse analysis to examine what was not explicitly spoken but still guided the actions. Discourse analysis will be discussed later in this chapter.

This study is not intended to present findings that will enable state educational and district administrators to more easily initiate school takeovers as a remedy for schools that have not met Adequate Yearly Progress for a successive number of years. The intention is not to aid those administrators and faculty members who believe that removing K-12 faculty and administrators are solutions to larger social ills but rather to demonstrate the ignorance that exists behind so-called "corrective" actions.

I concluded the research questions developed for this dissertation research study by conducting a case study informed by the work of Yin (1994, 2006) and those in critical ethnography (Carspecken, 2001; McLaren, 1999; Morrell, 2001). In the site chosen for this research, I focused on the factors that contributed to the removal of the administration, the responses of the faculty and administration, as well as the impact of the takeover itself (whether test scores improved, community reactions to the removal of the previous administration). In the course of this work, I make no apologies for my intimacy with the information surrounding La Independencia MS. It serves not as a hindrance to objectivity (if such a thing exists) rather it is an asset enabling me to tell a complete story and access the most worthwhile information. I also draw from literature in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. The following descriptions of research methods are based on the *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*, edited by Greene, Camili, & Elmore (2006). Each of the following chapters highlights aspects from different methods that I include in my study.

The Case Study Method

In this critical case study, I incorporate and apply elements and research techniques from several fields. Notable works in the areas of critical ethnography, critical race counter storytelling, class analysis in education, and studies into the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 shape and inform this study. Phil Carspecken (2001) discusses the differences between traditional and critical ethnography (as it has evolved since the postmodernist and poststructuralist challenges and Derrida's crisis of representation). Critical ethnography is not "critical" as a consequence of "epistemological principles and substantive concepts;" the research is based on rather

than the “values and purposes of the researcher” (p. 21). A major characteristic of the critical ethnography methodology developed in Houston is the attention given to the Power Claims, claims based upon norms, charm, contract, and coercion.

I did not envision using a critical ethnography methodology for my study, but having been an active participant in the school under review I found a need to explore the Power Claims that Carspecken discusses. Carspecken also discusses the internal connection between validity and meaning in critical ethnographies. On the issue of generalizability, Carspecken notes that while the site and activities studied cannot be reconstructed, the power claims can potentially be generalized. Herein lies the potential for generalizing such studies. Unfortunately, Carspecken does not address the interviewing process that is highly relevant to critical ethnographic work.

Robert K. Yin (1994) states, case study research “allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.” (p. 3) This description of case study approach to research is the best possible method for exploring the research question and sub-questions central to this study. To fully grasp the impact and responses of La Independencia MS faculty and administrators, it is necessary to illustrate the daily experience prior to the takeover. The case study approach thus allows for full contextualization of a school takeover within the broader Discourse of education reform and an explanation of its impact upon poor and working class youth of color. (I will explain the origin of and purpose for my use of “D”-iscourse instead of “d”-iscourse in a future section).

In his chapter “Case study methods,” Yin (2006) describes the merits and applications of case study methods. His first point is precisely why I will investigate my

dissertation research questions using this method: Given that the strength of a case study is its ability to extensively study a single case within its real-life setting and that no such study has been conducted in the Puesta del Sol ISD, this case study has the potential to inform progressive teachers and administrators in areas with similar demographics and at similar stages of Corrective Action. As described, the case study method is most useful for understanding the impact of a specific education policy on the professionals of one middle school (the subject of this dissertation research).

Given that the case study method is best applied when the researcher is seeking to answer a descriptive or explanatory question, this method is in line with the intention of my study. I am seeking to describe, in detail, the events that transpired within La Independencia MS that brought about the implementation of particular phases of Corrective Action, the impact of Corrective Action upon the faculty and administration, and the consequences of such changes for the larger district. That the researcher must be able to pursue a specific line of inquiry while involved in data collection serves as a cautionary statement. In moments when the researcher could potentially follow a new line of inquiry, the research question may become a lifelong project.

The fourth point of the case study method Yin (2006) mentions: a quality case study design should contain a clearly defined and well-justified case, and be guided by a clear theoretical framework. This is a crucial starting point. My case is clear and well justified: the option for a school takeover (exercised by the Puesta del Sol ISD against La Independencia MS) has been described in the literature as the most chaotic and disruptive of all possibilities; a school takeover under NCLB had never happened in the Puesta del

Sol ISD, that is until 2008. What then was the impact of this takeover upon the faculty and administration of La Independencia MS?

The fifth point that Yin (2006) makes, is to attempt triangulation/“converging lines of evidence” that will strengthen and validate the findings. I will conduct four interviews with people who experienced the school takeover. Each will bring a unique perspective toward responding to the research questions. As mentioned above, the protocol for interviewing will follow Seidman’s (2006) writing. Four interview participants are ideal for this study because it will cast the net wide enough to collect voice and experience without drowning in the individual stories and personal experiences of too many participants. From four distinct participants, I will build analyses from which to draw conclusions. My current understanding is that the takeover of La Independencia MS was highly disruptive and underscored by racist motivations within the district office. In my study, converging lines of evidence would resemble each of the interviewees expressing notions of depression, low morale, negative feelings toward the imposed lack of onsite leadership, or any other symptoms of resentment towards the breakup of the academic daily life. As such themes emerged, it became necessary to both connect and explore these connections.

Yin’s (2006) seventh point, that “case studies should present their data formally and explicitly, in a variety of data arrays set apart from the case study narrative,” is crucial if the audience is to accurately judge the researcher’s interpretation of his/her own data. The impact of the takeover upon La Independencia MS will be clearly presented for the audience to both critique and generalize in the succeeding chapters.

In Yin's (2006) eighth point, he describes various possible methods for analyzing case study data. Potential methods include (but are not limited to): pattern-matching, in which the researcher begins with a particular hypothesis then measuring it against the data collected; explanation building; time-series analysis; logic models; and cross-case synthesis. It is crucial for the purposes of this dissertation research study to understand the trajectory of events within the public school. If corrective action is to be problematized then NCLB clearly defines the events that mark the downward progression of public schools (failure to meet AYP for a successive number of years, failure to implement curricular/structural adjustments to remedy low test scores, etc.). Given the nature of this description, one of the most effective methods for presentation of the data collected is a chronological timeline of the events in La Independencia MS that caused or coincided with the distinct phases of corrective action. The chronological presentation of events, as related to the events at La Independencia MS, highlight the problematic nature of district responses to La Independencia MS educational achievements by demonstrating how AYP target goals become more and more unattainable as public schools approach the 2013-2014 academic year.

An expansion of the case study method comes from Bent Flyvbjerg (2006). Flyvbjerg (2006) challenges and clarifies five common misunderstandings regarding case study research. The misunderstandings have stemmed from heavy reliance on the qualitative/quantitative gap, ultimately leading many social science researchers into the false notion that case study research is unfruitful for generalizing or producing theory. The misunderstandings common among social science researchers that Flyvbjerg suggests are:

Misunderstanding 1: General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.

Misunderstanding 2: One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.

Misunderstanding 3: The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypothesis testing and theory building.

Misunderstanding 4: The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.

Misunderstanding 5: It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies. (2006, p. 221)

Flyvbjerg (2006) challenges these misunderstandings and oversimplifications. As related to the first misunderstanding, he concludes that all that researchers and people in general have to work with are “specific cases and context-dependent knowledge.” (p. 224) The search for predictive theories and universal truths is thus futile and potentially more harmful when overgeneralization is made. Second, that case studies can neither generalize beyond the individual case nor contribute to general scientific development is refuted on the grounds that a single case study *can and does* actually contribute to “scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods” (ibid). Third, Flyvbjerg (2006) notes that case studies are not relegated to only hypothesis generating but rather are capable of both generating and testing hypotheses. Fourth, the pervasive supposition of case study bias toward verification as a “tendency to confirm the

researcher's preconceived notions, that the study therefore becomes of doubtful scientific value" (p. 234) is wholly incorrect.

Citing the tendency toward confirmation of preconceived notions, Flyvbjerg (2006) finds this claim problematic. Skilled researchers using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods have displayed such a tendency; to claim that it is specific to or definitive of case study research underscores its presence in all fields of research. A core tenet of case study research is the likelihood that the researcher's preconceived notions will be disproven if the researcher presents the data and findings in complete and unabridged complexity. Fifth, Flyvbjerg (2006) agrees with the notion that case process is difficult to summarize but not the findings. However, he argues that case studies should be read like narratives, that the audience might establish and maintain the context of and circumstances in which the study was conducted, as well as to comprehend the parameters of generalization and applicability. Flyvbjerg's (2006) final clarification is well taken, for the researcher has great responsibility in honestly presenting the case process and findings. Numerous pitfalls, misuses, and abuses of findings are possible if the case process and outcomes are not presented ethically and responsibly. The overarching ethical imperative of the research, to do no harm, must be adhered to at all times. Thus avoiding reckless conclusions and hasty generalizations must become part of the researcher's ethical posture.

Units of Analysis

Baxter and Jack (2008) state that the "unit of analysis" is actually the case itself. In studying the school takeover, I want to analyze the impact of the takeover upon La Independencia MS faculty and administration (particularly two progressive teachers and

the former principal), the impact upon students' test scores (i.e. if the takeover was successful), and how the takeover impacted the larger district. Returning to the physical site itself is not an option for the researcher, however, the researcher is able to conduct off-site interviews.

Following Baxter and Jack (2008) the units of analysis in this study will ultimately be the impact of the school takeover upon faculty and administration of La Independencia MS. Peripheral interests are whether the takeover proved effective in increasing student test scores, and the school community opinions, perceptions, attitudes and responses toward La Independencia MS current administrators since the takeover. Thus D/discourse analysis will be a helpful tool for contextualizing the participants and illuminating the commonalities across interviews. Interviews will be open-ended.

Possible documentary information to be used in this study may include media publications related to the takeover, transcripts of district press releases and press conferences, and internal memoranda from La Independencia MS. The most important use of these documents is, as Yin writes, "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources." (1994, p. 81) The interview responses of La Independencia MS faculty and administrator are compared with the publicity surrounding the takeover and the community's reactions. This documentary information is in several forms: newspaper, web blogs, and televised news broadcasts.

Archival records in the form of publically disseminated school-wide test scores are referenced across the interviews to show the progression of La Independencia MS into the various phases of Corrective Action and what has resulted since the takeover. Another source of evidence in this study includes field notes from past participant-

observation. I reference my personal field notes as “archival records” and not as “participant observation” since they were composed during the takeover itself (2008-2009 academic year) but before I was actively investigating the takeover. I was an active faculty member at La Independencia MS from 2007-2009, the years in which the district imposed the harsh sanctions permitted by Restructuring-II. As the events leading up to the takeover and those shortly thereafter transpired, I took copious amounts of notes throughout all meetings and saved several pertinent memoranda and emails. Such documentation provides insider knowledge related to the disruptions and internal chaos from the takeover at La Independencia MS. Thus what will be presented below should be seen as minutes collected as the events transpired.

D/discourse Analysis

I will use D/discourse analysis (Gee, 1999; van Leeuwen, 2008) to uncover patterns across interview narratives. In re-presenting the responses collected from interview participants, Kristeva’s (1986) notion of intertextuality is likewise useful for understanding positionality, the re-telling of experience. Gee (1999) also invokes the notion of intertextuality for the purposes of analysis. He defines it as “the ways in which different sorts of texts and styles of language intermingle to create and transform meaning” (p. 41). Intertextuality punctuates the vocabulary necessary for clarity of expression in a particular Discourse. For the purposes of my study, the vocabulary specific to education reform Discourse will be engaged.

In *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, Gee (1999) presents the foundational notion of “D/discourse.” (p. 6) “Little d” discourse is distinguished from “Big D” Discourse in that discourse refers to the specific language-in-

use throughout any social interaction. Given that “activities and identities are rarely ever enacted through language alone” (p. 7), Discourse encompasses the wider terrain of a particular (yet not necessarily isolated) social interaction. That is, Discourse includes not only the “language-in-use” between actors in the scene but also the “clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, ways with things, symbols, tools, technologies (be they guns or graphs), and values, attitudes, beliefs, and emotions...” (p. 7). The relevance and implications of D/discourse analysis for interviewing former faculty and administrators of La Independencia MS is thus to tease out otherwise potentially dour patterns within interviewees’ responses, to uncover more subtle meanings embedded within the discourse (i.e. understanding the language-in-use through attention to the finer details of the bodily cues, interaction in the surrounding environment), and to contribute to the existing literature (scant as it is) on the impact of school takeovers upon poor and working class schools serving immigrant youth.

Bloome and Clark (2006) define the notion of “discourse-in-use” as focusing “attention on how people interact with each other, the tools they use within those interactions, the social and historical contexts within which they interact, and what they concertedly create and accomplish through those interactions” (as cited in Green, Camili, & Elmore, Eds., 2006, p. 227). Bloome and Clark (2006) elaborate upon the analytical filter developed by Gee (1999), a filter porous enough for less (but not ir-relevant phenomena to pass through) while still collecting the most fruitful and informative data.

The strength and relevance of D/discourse analysis cannot be understated when placed against the hegemonic rule of deficit model approaches in the public education of poor and working class youth of color. When taken as a co-constituent to critical race

theory and counter storytelling, D/discourse analysis becomes a potent device for uncovering, problematizing, and overcoming oppressive violence committed against highly vulnerable student and professional populations. D/discourse analysis thus is a necessity in critical race theory for exposing the underlying oppressive ideologies embedded in developing critical literacy for interpreting and refuting attacks upon public school teachers and students.

In *Language and Power*, Norman Fairclough (2001) posits the notion of Critical Language Study (CLS) in order to show how power and hegemony are asserted and reproduced through language-in-use. The “critical” is used “...in the special sense of aiming to show up connections which may be hidden from people – such as the connections between language, power and ideology” (p. 4). To advance Fairclough’s CLS in the area of racism and class oppression will ultimately be a significant contribution to the transformation of public education.

A significant part of analyzing the interview narratives for how the takeover of La Independencia MS was approved involves critiquing the “authority” under which it was carried out. Critical discourse analysis theorist and researcher Theo van Leeuwen (2008) discusses legitimation within discourse, and particularly the notion of Authorization. He defines authorization as “legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and/or persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested” (p. 105). Authorization, as van Leeuwen defines it, explains the rationale of the Puesta del Sol ISD’s justification in their takeover of La Independencia MS. That is to say, the Puesta del Sol ISD officials legitimated their takeover of La Independencia MS by invoking the power loaded in terms such as ‘reform,’ ‘improvements,’ and ‘educational success’ (as

the governing body for public education within the district) by NCLB to carry out Corrective Action against the “failing” middle school. The subsequent removal of La Independencia MS administration thus represented a justifiable action (or justified maneuver) by the district officials in their quest to meet NCLB goals (i.e. making Adequate Yearly Progress on high-stakes standardized tests). Thus, in seeking to legitimate the voice of the former La Independencia MS administrator, emphasis must be placed upon her status at La Independencia MS as an on-site expertise and as an educational authority.

In undertaking the study of the 2009 school takeover of La Independencia MS, D/discourse analysis is crucial to analyzing the interviews. The interview with Christina Jojola, the former principal of La Independencia MS, herself a socially conscious and progressive Latina, will serve as CRT counter-narrative to the dominant D/discourse manifested in the school district’s publically-disseminated rhetoric and subsequent administrative takeover. One reason for classifying her interview narrative as a counter-story is that she became the first Latina to become Principal of La Independencia, and the ongoing damage imposed upon her school reveals an institutional orientation toward racism within the larger Puesta del Sol ISD.

Data Presentation

The data collected in this study will be presented in the following forms: interview transcription; graphs of school AYP scores; reprints of local media stories; printing of field notes and internal memoranda.

Data Collection: The most pertinent sources of data for this case study are the interviews. The interviews will be the primary method for collecting data; I intend to

interview four different people: Christina Jojola, the principal removed during the takeover; two teachers still teaching at La Independencia MS, Kate Thomson and Martin O’Connell; and a former district official largely responsible for the takeover, Cathy Wayne. The interviews will be conducted separately and in locations physically removed from La Independencia MS. Beyond the interviews, I will be collecting information from documents (local news publications, internal memos), as well as experiences I recorded during past participant observations.

Guidance of Study: Yin’s (1994) three principles of data collection will guide my study of La Independencia MS. The first principle, Using Multiple Sources of Evidence, alleviates the narrowness and questionability of single-source information. Case study findings are actually strengthened through the use of multiple sources when evidence from distinct or otherwise separate perspectives merge and intersect to form a collective view. In studying La Independencia MS, I will gather data from interviews, past participant observations, public records, and archival information.

Yin’s (1994) second principle brings insight into creating a case study database. A case study database allows for both the clear organization of evidence and the openness/accessibility of said evidence to external researchers and scholars. Evidentiary databases that are well organized, according to Yin (1994), “[increase] the *reliability* of the entire case study” (p. 95, emphasis original). The evidentiary database for this study will be composed primarily of interview transcriptions. Some of this information is already accessible to the general public but the complete picture will not be painted (see Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 2002) unless the entire spectrum is arrayed.

Yin's (1994) final point is well taken, to increase reliability of information a case study researcher must "maintain a chain of evidence." (p. 98) This "chain of evidence" should include the logistical and content details of data collection while also making relevant links between what was collected and the research questions.

Proposed Interview Process

In *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, Irving Seidman (2006) presents techniques and suggestions for drafting, organizing, carrying out, and analyzing in-depth interviews. Seidman (2006) proposes two potential methods of analysis: one, that the interviewer find emergent themes within and across multiple interviews; two, that the interviewer draft "narrative profiles of participants' experiences and the meaning they make of those experiences" (p. x). While both approaches hold certain potential for my analysis, I follow the first as the commonalities across administrator and faculty experiences is a crucial element for describing more completely the impact of a school takeover. Seidman's (2006) first method of analysis is applicable to Yin's (1994) notion of triangulation. I sought out the emergent themes across the participants' responses, built a thorough understanding of their experiences, a general understanding of the faculty/administration's responses to the takeover, and the impact of the takeover upon the school and surrounding community.

The interviews are intentionally open-ended with guiding nudges and reorientations should the discussions shift too far from the central topic, with little indication that it would not be broached otherwise. Seidman (2006) writes that the most distinguishing feature of the interview process is that "in-depth, phenomenological interviewing involves conducting a series of three separate interviews with each

participant” (p. 16). The purpose of conducting three interviews was to build a relationship with the participant that allows the researcher to contextualize the subject’s behavior and actions. The first interview, what Seidman (2006, p. 17) calls “Focused Life History” covers the subject’s life experience up to the target event or topic. In the first round of interviews, I asked the participants to discuss their lives and how they came to be involved in education, eventually finding their respective ways to the Puesta del Sol ISD generally and La Independencia Middle School specifically. The first interviews did not directly approach the takeover.

The second interview, “The Details of Experience,” (Seidman, 2006, p. 18), focused on the subjects’ individual roles during the takeover year (2008-2009). I encouraged the respondents to discuss issues of publicity involving the takeover, their responses, their impressions of other faculty/administrators’ responses, and the impact of the takeover on the school. The interviews were intentionally left open-ended to allow for the respondents to introduce relevant issues I may have inadvertently overlooked or omitted.

The final interview, “Reflecting on the Meaning” (ibid), focuses on the subject’s reflections and perspective since the central experience of the second interview. In my study, I asked how the takeover has impacted the school, school community, and the faculty and new administration in La Independencia MS. I also inquired about how the individuals are today professionally and personally.

It is necessary to expand our understanding of the ethnographic interviewing. Mary E. Brenner (2006) writes, “the skill of the ethnographic interviewer is seen in the ability to ‘build’ the interview as it proceeds” (p. 359). While it is my intention to “build”

the interviews as they are conducted, I am not entering the interview without theoretical constructs. That is, my approach to the interviews is a blend of both the deductive and inductive approaches which Brenner distinguishes: inductive in that I looked for the emergent patterns across the interviews, and deductive in that I worked into the interviews supplemental questions that nudged the participants to discuss their personal and professional identities, the school identity, and how these identities relate to the district's takeover of La Independencia MS. One of the defining goals for the interviews was to ascertain the interviewees' professional, emotional, and psychological reactions to the imposed takeover.

In the text the interviews open with the interviewer setting the tone of the discussion. The range of topics focused on identity (not so much identity politics, but rather identity *in* politics, as mentioned above), the impact of the takeover upon La Independencia MS administration and faculty, their individual and collective responses to the takeover, and how NCLB potentially blocked attempts at progressive education in La Independencia MS. Deviations from these topics were expected, as some participants were understandably emotional in recalling key events. However, their emotional states during recollection and re-telling helped to contextualize the lasting impact.

Furthermore the interviews are semi-structured in that each of the three interviews with the participants had a particular theme of focus. Each of the interviews were open with an intentionally broad question, for example: "As a (teacher/administrator) of La Independencia MS in 2009, what were your reactions to the Puesta del Sol ISD takeover?" This question served as a wide enough umbrella to define topical limits. As the issues of personal and professional identity organically emerged, I pursued those as

lines of inquiry relevant to the participants' responses. Throughout the interviews, although open-ended I introduced topics but only if they had not already been mentioned, by asking the questions:

- Did the district officials communicate to you that La Independencia MS would be reconstituted? If so, how?;
- How did you perceive the general faculty reactions to the impending takeover/Was morale impacted by the announced takeover? If so, how?;
- Were there measures already in place for La Independencia MS to raise student test scores? If so, what were they?;
- What professional consequences have you faced since the takeover?

Those portions of the interviews that correlate with one another were transcribed into chapter four's summary of Data.

Plan for Analysis

The underlying assumptions that I entered the study with were that the data concurs with previous findings (particularly those of Mathis (2009), that this phase of Corrective Action is highly chaotic and detrimental to teachers and administrators) and that the larger purpose for such a takeover was to perform a trial run on a poor and working-class school community of color. Attention to Flyvbjerg's assertions (2006) is thus necessary, since one of my overarching goals for this study is to publicize educationally detrimental and adverse action taken against the faculty and administration of a public school serving an already highly vulnerable community.

Yin's (2006) discussion regarding the kinds of analyses possible with a case study is insightful. Two strategies for analyzing case study evidence are "relying upon

theoretical propositions” and “developing a case description” (Yin, 1994, p. 103-104).

Certain theoretical propositions influenced the development of the central research question and peripheral subquestions. The theoretical propositions included the following:

- 1) That the takeover of La Independencia MS, while legal and sanctioned under NCLB, resulted in highly chaotic disruptions to daily academic life and damaged the professional reputation of Christina Jojola;
- 2) The takeover was conducted in a school community comprised of mostly poor and working class families of color, many with undocumented residential status, and thus comprised of a population less inclined to file grievances against the Puesta del Sol ISD;
- 3) The takeover of La Independencia MS was motivated by three distinct intentions: one, the takeover was conducted as a sort of trial run to help determine how best to facilitate future school takeovers; two, the takeover served as a warning to the faculty and administrators of other “failing” schools within the Puesta del Sol ISD; three, the takeover challenged and effectively blocked progressive education.

The above theoretical propositions included those which I was already aware of, as well as what I anticipated finding.

It is necessary to incorporate the work of critical ethnographer Phil Carspecken. Carspecken (2001) discusses critical qualitative data analysis in terms of “meaningful action and lived culture” (p. 10). While Carspecken’s focus is on critical ethnography, he provides a useful adjunct for interpreting themes emerging from observed interaction. For

Carspecken, to construct the dynamics of a particular culture, a qualitative researcher must identify norms, patterns, values, and “identity repertoires” (p. 11). Once established, the researcher may then proceed to construct what Carspecken refers to as a “meaning field”; a meaning field is “bounded and not infinite in nature” (ibid). The utility of a meaning field is in locating and understanding a participant’s statement on his or her own terms, but also in vocabulary that is clear to the researcher and able to be reconstructed in data presentation. Meaning actions, when taken together, begin to form the identifiable and describable nature of a common culture. Carspecken (2001) adds:

...the method used to articulate the themes of a cultural group is hermeneutic-reconstructive. This just means that the researcher attempts to understand the meaning of typical acts in much the same way that the actors themselves do but to reconstruct or make explicit the cultural themes drawn upon in the construction of routines. Hermeneutic method involves position-taking with actors and local audiences. Position-taking is not initially the result of a deliberate effort but rather simply the way people understand each other in all situations. (p. 11-12)

Carspecken’s insights are well-taken and highly applicable to the case study of La Independencia MS, given that I possessed a certain amount of insider knowledge with the culture of the faculty and administration. In the data presentation, it was necessary to situate the actors (faculty and administration) within a well-articulated and tangible culture of working in challenging and oppressive conditions, as La Independencia MS had undergone consistent neglect from Puesta del Sol ISD for years. Carspecken states that among the tools in critical ethnographic methodology, attention must be paid to power claims. Locating and understanding power claims is essential to fully grasp the

relationship between actors (in this case, between Puesta del Sol ISD officials such as Cathy Wayne and La Independencia MS faculty members and administrators, Christina Jojola, Kate Thomson, and Martin O’Connell). For Carspecken, attention must be placed on:

... interactive power claims based on norms (reasons for the rightness of certain power relationships)..., charm (claims to deserve loyalty based on personality characteristics), contract (claims that a subordinate should follow the lead of a superordinate in return for a tangible reward), and coercion (claims that a sanction will follow disobedience of a demand). (2001, p. 19)

According to Carspecken’s characterizations, the power claims I emphasize most are those based on norms, contract, and coercion. While the removal of the La Independencia MS principal was justified under NCLB, the appearance of being directed toward a higher goal of educational transformation for the students of La Independencia MS was underscored by the reality that La Independencia MS already had in place mechanisms and norms designed to provide a quality education to the students.

Norm-based power claims also existed between the Puesta del Sol ISD and La Independencia MS faculty members. Statements made by district officials regarding the quality of La Independencia MS faculty indicated not only a lack of support from the district for the teachers but also a certain resentment toward their efforts to raise test scores and reach the elusive Adequate Yearly Progress. Consider the following statement, made by the Puesta del Sol ISD Superintendent in the local newspaper in reference to why La Independencia MS and the high school into which most of its students would enroll, “they (La Independencia MS and its high school counterpart) are the kingpins of

the [educational cluster]. We've got to get people feeling really good about the schools in the [area]" (Schoellkopf, 2009, ¶ 17-18). The use of the term "kingpin" invokes a particular sentiment in that the term is one applied to drug lords or other criminal mastermind. Thus for the Superintendent to use it in reference to the educational administrators of the East Mesa is slanderous; his statement is also overshadowed by a condescending tone and employed in a criminal manner. The ideology embedded in the Superintendent's statement is one of hostility toward the entire school community, and particularly the faculty of two "failing" schools. What the Superintendent failed to consider is the likelihood that within both schools, students were receiving support from their teachers and administrators that guided and facilitated positive intellectual growth and achievement.

Such accomplishments cannot be captured by a high-stakes standardized exam, but nonetheless hold significant importance in the life of a school community that faces marginalization and neglect from district officials year after year. To further illustrate the power claims between Puesta del Sol ISD and La Independencia MS faculty and administration, I turned to the work of those in D/discourse Analysis.

Gee's (1999; 2004) D/discourse analysis is used to analyze language "as it is used to enact activities, perspectives, and identities" (p. 4). Furthermore, his notion of "reflexivity," or reciprocity, (how language simultaneously reflects and constructs reality) is a crucial lens through which the administrator's and faculty members' experiences and scenarios were re-created. Gee (1999) presents six building tasks, each of which must be addressed if discourse analysis is to be considered complete (it is worth quoting at length):

1) *Semiotic building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about semiotic (communicative) systems, systems of knowledge, here and now relevant and activated.

2) *World building*, that is, using cues and clues to assemble situated meanings about what is here and now (taken as) “reality,” what is here and now (taken as) present and absent, concrete and abstract, “real” and “unreal,” probable, possible, and impossible.

3) *Activity building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what activity or activities are going on, composed of specific actions.

4) *Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building*, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and believing, as well as ways of acting and interacting.

5) *Political building*, that is, using cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various “social goods,” such as status and power, and anything else taken as a “social good” here and now (e.g. beauty, humor, verbalness, specialist knowledge, a fancy car, etc.).

6) *Connection building*, that is, using cues or clues to make assumptions about how the past and future of an interaction, verbally and non-verbally, are connected to the present moment and to each other – after all, interactions always have some degree of continuous coherence. (p. 86)

Gee (1999) further extends discourse analysis. He posits:

Essentially a discourse analysis involves asking questions about the language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language...” (p. 92).

One challenge in conducting discourse analysis lay in discerning the more relevant speech details from those less relevant. The interviews were audio recorded but not video recorded; thus, strict attention to the elapsed time at which anticipated behaviors occurred (changes in emotional states, fidgeting in demanding moments, eye movement, crying) were considered. To diminish or ameliorate the potential for missed visual cues when returning to the recorded interviews, I kept written records of the time elapsed and the changes in physical posture, facial expression, and any other significant and relevant bodily maneuvers *with recorded notes regarding the amount of elapsed time*. This is not to say that all physical movements were recorded, but I had to make on-site decisions regarding the relevance of body movements and physical adjustments. Such decisions were based on vocal patterns (intonation, stress change, hesitation, faster or slower pace, voice cracking, etc.), visual changes in emotional states, and deliberate or non-deliberate deviations from discussing the school takeover.

Part of drafting the interview narratives as Seidman describes involves making the participant’s voice the only one present. Thus it is necessary to turn to van Leeuwen (2008). Van Leeuwen (2008) presents some potential tools for conducting a critical discourse analysis. Most interesting is his distinction between two possible presentations of social actors; according to van Leeuwen (2008), “*activation* occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, *passivation* when they are

represented as ‘undergoing’ the activity, or as being ‘at the receiving end of it’” (p. 33). As I conceptualized this study, I anticipated either the Puesta del Sol ISD officials or the takeover event would be presented in the active, more aggressive state, while the La Independencia MS principal and faculty would be presented as the passive actors in the situation.

Across the interviews, I sought out the emergent themes and corroborating responses as to faculty and administration reactions, their perceptions about how the takeover impacted the school community, and how the takeover ultimately impacted the district. I also selected specific key words and phrases that emerged from each of the interviews and situated them within the contexts of their uses. These key words, phrases, and locations within the interviewees’ discourses were tabulated for frequency. Information, common understanding, and meaning were thus formed, extracted and qualified.

D/discourse analysis was applied to the interviews, but also served to unravel the public statements made by Puesta del Sol ISD officials regarding the takeover. D/discourse analysis was also utilized to interrogate the asymmetrical relations of power between La Independencia MS and the Puesta del Sol ISD officials. Key words and phrases related to district authority, punitive consequences, substandard scores on high stakes standardized exams, or other pejorative and demeaning references were similarly located, situated, and tabulated for frequency. Focusing on language used by Puesta del Sol ISD officials is crucial to unveiling how the racist undertow drove the takeover of La Independencia MS. Attinasi (1997) writes that, “several analyses of the linkages among

language and discourse, discrimination, and racism...” were undertaken in the late 1990s.

Citing Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk (1988), Attinasi (1997, p. 280-281) states:

Language and discourse are vital in reproducing racial oppression and control of Blacks and other minorities. Whether in informational or institutional contexts, whether among the elite or the public at large, racial oppression becomes structural, rather than individual or incidental, when its conditions are shared by the dominant group. Reasons, motivations, goals and interests must be communicated. They are linked with opinion and attitudes, and [receive] expression, verbalization and persuasive formulation in various types of talk and text. (Smitherman-Donaldson and van Dijk 1988: 17)

The manner by which Corrective Action phases are determined depend upon the scores a school has (or has not) achieved within a given time period (usually an academic year). As a secondary form of analysis, explanation building was the most likely option. Explanation building in chronological order was the most logical type of analysis since the events unfolded under a continuous progression of unmet goals clearly defined circumstances and consequences. Yin (1994) notes that explanation building has been an understudied approach but one that has proven highly fruitful for case study researchers, a well-built explanation is actually the sum total of a series of iterations that can include (but are not limited to):

initial theoretical statements or propositions (see above list);

comparison of initial findings against the said statements;

revision or correction of the statement;

comparing the revised statement or proposition against details in the case;

further revision;
additional comparisons of the revisions to more cases;
conducting as many revisions as necessary.

The researcher must be satisfied that a case has been clearly defined, the evidence has appropriately shaped the study, and the overall write-up is coherent, grounded in solid and completely explained (this includes contrary evidence). This list must be adhered to before the researcher may draw valid conclusions and release his/her findings.

An important component in explanation building is for the researcher to consider and present all major counterarguments and rival interpretations to the collected data. It is possible that compelling arguments can and have been made in favor of the takeover of La Independencia MS. Furthermore, it is possible that this researcher's theoretical propositions were based too heavily on insider bias and seeking to proclaim desired outcomes. Yet it is a very different thing to recognize a counterargument and refute it with evidence than to signal its existence but not provide a competing school of thought. What cannot be done with case study methods is generalize too broadly, regardless if the findings resemble those found within the existing literature. Still, the generalization of case study findings is the prerogative of the audience and readership but the generalization of the case process, as Flyvbjerg (2006) reminds us, is not considered wise for it can divorce the entire site from the findings.

**CHAPTER FIVE: DATA, OR
VOICES FROM THE FIELD: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS IN
THEIR OWN WORDS**

All names have been changed in the following interview narratives. Any similarities to actual people or locations are coincidental and unintended.

Kate Thomson

Biographical Information

Kate Thomson was born in Baltimore, Maryland and changed schools frequently as a result of her father being in the Air Force. She has lived in several states and earned several bachelor's degrees in the areas of counseling, administration, social work, and addictions. The pressure of constantly moving and changing schools led to her being unenthusiastic and disconnected from education. One very special teacher in her life taught by example the importance of relationships in education. This teacher used dialogue journals to communicate with students; Kate was finally engaged by a highly conscientious educator who sought to help her develop critical thinking and writing. Kate eventually became a Licensed Therapist in Maine and spent many years working in drunk-driving research, counseling, and therapy. Kate found her way into education in the early part of the 2000s. By this point the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was in full swing, and Kate began as an Educational Assistant in a middle school in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District. Her talent for education quickly blossomed, and before long she moved from working in the library to teaching Language Arts. Following particularly negative interactions with her first principal, Angel Tompkins, Kate and

Martin O'Connell (Kate Thomson's partner) transferred to La Independencia MS in July, 2007.

Interview Narrative

I was born in Baltimore, Maryland and my father was in the Air Force, so we travelled. I went to thirteen different public schools before the time I graduated high school. So I've lived in several states and even Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada. I liked it there. I never liked school, because either I was bored, or I was extremely shy so changing schools pretty much every year was just really difficult for me. I never cared for school; I just tried to hide. I didn't go to college until after I already had children; married, two kids, divorced, so I went part-time, off and on, raising my kids. (KT laughs) It took me eighteen years to get my graduate degree. So by the time I had finished, I had four majors, which was kind of cool because I kept changing my mind. So I had a major in Administration, Creative Writing was what I ended up with. I also had a major in Social Work, and Addictions. Because I spent like twenty years working in addictions, alcohol counseling and prevention, abuse. I used to be a therapist, and I was an educator but not in terms of being in a public school. I would go to universities and guest lecture, things like that. Then, I was appointed Licensed Therapist for the State of Maine and I did that for a few years. Later I left to work at a huge research corporation where I did research on drunk driving and alcohol use for several years. We had several grants from NIH, which were multimillion-dollar grants to do the research projects and actually it was cities. Two different cities were the research subjects, which was kind of cool. It was like a hundred thousand people that would complete our research instruments across the two cities. So after that my kids were grown, I moved out here for a while and worked with San Vicente Pueblo as the Director for Health and Human Services. Then I went to Florida for a couple of years to stay with my kids. I worked at a school called Women's Support Co. and it was an after-school program for girls that had some difficulties, at-risk. I had the opportunity to totally change the program because it was in danger of closing, going bankrupt.

One teacher. And I can't tell you her name, I don't remember. But I remember I was in the 9th grade, and petrified as usual because I had experienced all kinds of trauma growing up. So, that just went around with me. And (in this class) we had to do a journal every day, in which we had to do a creative piece. And she would collect them about once a month. Well, my writing was extremely dark because that's where I was in my life. (KT lightens voice) And she would answer me, she would say things like, 'doesn't your faith help you through this type of a thing?' I mean, *it was personal*. And I had never, ever, ever had a teacher do that. Well, actually, pretty much anybody in my life. So, it was just great and I remembered her and that got me through a lot of stuff. Actually it got me through some suicidal thoughts when I was in 9th grade. So she was great, just because of that personal connection just through a journal. We never talked face-to-face about anything. It was just through the journal. I felt like somebody cared.

So it was cool, because that is what I like to do, to create things. So I got to revamp everything and within two years we were bringing in 1.2 million dollars a year, totally in

the black. Which was great, and it's still in operation. But then I came back here in 2003, and I've been here since. And, I had a job working with Springtime Reflections. I was in charge of the Adult Day program. But then after about two years, Springtime Reflections went bankrupt and closed. So I was on unemployment. Putting out hundreds and hundreds of resumes. And I met Martin during that time, and he said that they needed an EA at Oak Hills. And I said, 'well, my unemployment's running out soon,' so I became an EA at Oak Hills and my job was to run the library, which was normally a job for licensed teachers, (KT smiles) or librarians. So I got to run the library, which was cool but I couldn't survive on an EA salary. So I only did that for one semester, and this was fall of 2005. Then I entered into Southwest University's Alternative Licensure program, because I thought, 'well, a teacher's salary, even though it's more than 20,000 less than I had been making it was more than an EA salary.' I couldn't find another job. So this is not very altruistic (KT laughs). I got into the licensure program and became licensed as an intern. That's where you begin as a teacher and getting a teacher salary. After winter break, January of 2006 was when I first began teaching, Language Arts.

So I had to get in contact with Library Services through Puesta del Sol ISD and work with them, go to their meetings, learn how to work the machinery to check out books, run Accelerated Reader which is a reading program that that school used. So it was a lot. Which I didn't mind. I was around books; who wouldn't like that?

They [the students] would come in and most of them would just kind of sit down at the tables and a small handful would look at the books, so I started having contests to try to get kids to use books. And being a little louder when someone would do better on their Accelerated Reader quiz. And other people would hear it, and then they would wander in and look at the books. So it really was just trying to encourage the kids to look at the books. And then there were books that I would put out and highlight, you know things that I thought they would like because they had dragons or vampires or things like that. And they loved it, because reading is reading.

I had started in October, by the time I got my internship license it was January before I actually got put into a classroom as a Language Arts teacher, which kind of flipped me out because I didn't do any student teaching. I didn't do anything, I'd never been in a classroom except when I was in school, and it wasn't a good experience so, ... this was my first experience. I took a teacher's students mid-year, and this was a teacher that was a nice person but he would read the newspaper and let the kids do what they want. So they weren't used to discipline, to being accountable, or doing work. In my very first day, one of the football players and his friends, who were all taller than me, bigger than me, they came up to me because I had said something to the one boy during class and gave me a lot of difficulty, and he came up to me and got right in my face and said, 'you outta be glad you're my teacher,' kind of like a threat with these other big boys standing around me. I thought, 'okay, I'm not in the juvenile detention center, because I've worked in there. I've been in prisons. This is just a kid who's testing me out.' And I said, 'you know, I am really glad you're my student.' And then they laughed and all that stuff, and I laughed. But that was my first day and I have to admit I cried probably that whole semester. It was just like, 'what am I doing?' It was just really, really hard with no

support. Because I would ask the Principal, 'what am I supposed to do?' I knew nothing about curriculum maps, any kind of programs, nothing. And she just said, 'get them to read and write.' So that's what I did. Which was kind of cool because by the next year I was able to develop what I wanted to do, and do it in my way. As a matter of fact, I asked the Principal, 'these kids have come so far, their DBA (District-Based Assessment) test scores from between winter and the end of the semester, 60% were proficient and in the winter 20-something was proficient.' So I said, 'I really hate to lose them, so can I go into 8th grade next year to work with the same kids?' And she said, 'Yes.' It was just a walking-through-the-corridor kind of conversation. And that was before I had ever heard of anything like 'looping.' I didn't know about it. I just thought that it would be great to work with the same kids, I didn't know people did, or didn't do, that.

Parent participation was virtually none. Virtually none. We tried, we tried to get them in and we made phone calls and wouldn't get calls back. We would set up a parent conference and they wouldn't show up, that sort of a thing. Many no-shows. I had chalk I didn't have a white board. There were textbooks there, and there was a book room with class sets of novels, biographies, whatever you might want, but most of them I really didn't care for because I thought, 'kids wouldn't be interested in these.' Or I thought, 'these are so elementary that it would be pretty much insulting,' so I would buy my own, my own class sets. I would ask the kids, 'what kind of things do you like? What are you interested in?' and they would respond; I would take that and choose class sets of books. They wanted to read Shakespeare, that's when I first started to do Shakespeare. They said, 'well, we know it's just for college.' And I said, 'well, you can totally do this. You're totally capable.' I said, 'there aren't many classes I would do this with, but yours is one.' (KT laughing) Before that we did *Lord of the Flies*, which is definitely a high school book but most of the kids didn't read well but if they could be engaged in the story, they might try. Which they did. A lot of reading out loud, like taking-turns. And I would have kids volunteer, and it would generally be the same kids volunteering, very few of them. So I started having kids call on each other, and the ones that were the most shy about reading or the ones that were the most uncomfortable actually started to improve. And the kids helped each other, so they would, say, if a kid got stuck on a word someone across the room would say what the word was. You know, that sort of a thing. It was really cool; they became interdependent. And I did the same thing [journaling] that my teacher did in 9th grade; I would read their journal entries and it started out once a week but over the years it's less now. (KT laughs) I would do it once a week and make sure that I responded at least once to every student.

The thing that was weird was, in that first semester of 2006, Angel Tompkins was really great. She seemed friendly, she seemed nice, everything was cool. Well, fall of the next year, everything changed. It really changed. We didn't know where she was coming from and there was a lot of fear. A lot of fearfulness. People becoming confused because all of the sudden she's trying to change things on us and moving teachers around. We knew that there were certain teachers that she had targeted because she had put them very uncomfortable situations or given them new positions that they didn't know how to do well or whatever it was to make them very uncomfortable. And then, throughout that year it got to be where no one trusted anyone. It really grew. Before the end of that year no

one was trusting anyone. So it was kind of like a divide-and-conquer strategy she had. Faculty morale was awful. It was just awful. Below the floor, and I was wondering, 'why did I do this? Why did I?' because I was just finishing up my Southwest University classes and taking all the tests to be a licensed teacher the next year, but now I'm stuck. I don't have another job, I couldn't find another job, and I just invested all this money and now I have a student loan (KT laughs). It would just be crazy to try to do something else. Yeah, and that was also the year she just went berserk and started picking on Martin, which also affected me, and then she would do things like walk into my classroom, come into my classroom, I would have students, and [she would] demand to know where Martin was (when) he had taken a personal day. That's not her business, he took a personal day. He did the proper things to take a personal day and she had the union rep with her and he said, 'let's take this out into the hallway,' and she was just demanding that I tell her where he is. And I didn't, so then of course I was on her list after that. So then it was, picking on him, trying to find fault and get him in trouble and to get rid of him, because you knew that's what it was, and because I refused her, then she started to do some similar things to me. Not as bad as with him until the one day I had signed out. She knew I was still finishing up classes, and they started at 4 so I needed to leave school during my, near the end of my prep. And she had okay'ed that. So this one day I sign out and start walking out and I hear her behind me, 'Miss Thomson! Miss Thomson!' and she grabbed my shoulder and spun me around. 'Where are you going!?' And I said, 'I'm going to class. I signed out.' She all of the sudden didn't like that and went back and docked me, for all those times I had signed out to go to class...she grabbed me and spun me around and docked me for all that time. You know, it was only like 15 minutes early but when you multiply 15 minutes times three days per week over like 6 months, that adds up, that she docked out of a paycheck or two. I wasn't a union member then. And I had since learned and believed that your prep is your prep and you can do as you choose with your prep but at the time even though I was being *told* that, I was too afraid to do anything. I was just too afraid. So I went from 'happy happy, joy joy' to absolute fear in well, a year in a half.

This was probably around March, 2007. I know that she had picked on people, but in terms of grabbing I don't know. I mean, that's how she forced people out, it was her constant being-at-you. So that was my wonderful introduction to teaching. I should have just been left blowing in the breeze being short term and no license, or interim license. So thankfully, when I went to La Independencia and interviewed I was on the must-hire list and so she (Christina Jojola) could take me.

I first heard about NCLB in that (2006-2007) year. At first I thought, 'well that sounds really good.' (KT laughs). It sounds great. We're going to make extra effort to help kids that have more difficulty or don't have the same advantages as other kids, I thought sounded wonderful. But it was rhetoric without any backup, no money, no supplies, no... we lost autonomy, we lost respect, everything. And I saw that trickle into some teachers' classrooms, because of how they were being treated. And I'm not saying they were terrible people who took it out on the students but if you're treated a certain way long enough, you just can't hide it. It comes across in your demeanor...I was just so grateful that I wasn't at Oak Hills and I wouldn't have to work with Angel Tompkins anymore. Before I went to La Independencia I just didn't even know where it was, nothing. So the

only thing that I knew was that it was also a Title-I school that was also in Restructuring, and by this point I figured that *most* schools were going to be in restructuring so it just seemed to be something that a lot of schools were in but I didn't know really what that could mean. But, it being Title-I I knew it would have kids who were economically disadvantaged and whatever. Which was fine with me because they were the population that I pretty much always worked with. And that was the only thing I knew or thought about La Independencia before I went there, before I met Christina Jojola. That was just like (KT snaps fingers), a total connection. She said, she said that there must be something about her karma being good and I said, 'Ooo, I like you.' You know, I said that and she laughed! (KT laughs). So it was just one of those that totally worked and I told her about Martin looking for a job and everything. She said, 'I need a science teacher.' And he had gotten his licensure in science so, I was very happy about that. Although, the school didn't look as nice as Oak Hills. I knew that just going into the office and then we got a little tour and immediately I'm thinking about what kind of things can I do or bring in to fix up where I am because I feel like the students need to be valued, need to feel important, and if you're in a really not-nice place, you can't help but feel like you don't matter. That always bothered me, which was another reason I would buy books. Because even if they would have the same books in the bookroom, they would be so ratty and used or pages missing. I just didn't want to give those to kids to use. So, they would feel good because they had a brand new book to open. But anyway, the school was not in great shape. But Christina seemed really, really nice so I didn't care. (KT laughs) It was like, 'I'll just do what I can do.'

Every year, actually every summer I would probably spend \$800-\$1,000 just on books. I can't now because I'm really poor, (KT laughs) it really catches up to you. I felt like if they [the students] didn't have anything to do with it then they would have no ownership. They wouldn't care. And it had to involve activities and projects that they would enjoy doing. So whenever I got new kids I would always ask them what it is they like doing. And they were usually like, 'I have no idea what you're talking about,' because they wouldn't be asked that. And I didn't believe in things like worksheets and 'let's go from chapter to chapter in the textbook.' So every year it was reinventing, and even throughout the year it was continually changing; if we started something we thought they'd like and then they really were turned off by it, it's gone. And then I would have those things where I would say, 'okay, this is one of those things we just *have* to do. Once we get through it, we can move on to something better.' So it wasn't always great, but because they got to develop so much I think they were very tolerant of the things that sucked (KT laughs). So, that was good. And mostly those things that weren't good were test practice. They didn't like test practice. And I didn't like test practice. Test-taking skills and test-taking strategies because everything, I was finally understanding, had to do with the SBA. Everything. It was like a giant funnel to the SBA. And I gave that kind of lip-service, because I just didn't believe in that. To me that was not the way to teach kids. So, I just had us skim over the surface of those things. And (the kids) would still do the DBA testing and all that would still be really good so I said, 'that's fine, that's good enough.' But of course as we know, it's been cranked up to the point of madness. [The DBA] is the District-Based Assessment. And they do it for math and language arts, basically to see how many kids are proficient in math and reading. It used to be called

A2L, 'Assess 2 Learn.' We called it 'Assess to Death.' And actually, the A2L wasn't so bad, I didn't mind that as much because they had it three times per year, just like the DBA, but it tested on the same skills and the tests were comparable. So you could see that in the beginning of the year... because it tested on, let's see... if they were 8th graders, they just started 8th grade well, let's test them (through) the whole 8th grade year materials so, if someone got a 34%, they're a beginning. It's okay, you're supposed to be a beginner, it's the beginning. Then in the middle, it's testing on the same stuff to see where they've gotten by the middle of the year. So you could see growth. And then at the end, you could see growth. It's testing on growth, over the whole year. That I could handle because kids would get excited at their improvement. The DBA (however) is three separate tests that do not compare, that does not show growth, at all. So they could get... it tests on a certain period of time, like the first one tests on the first couple of months of school, then the next one on the next few months of school, and then the last one on the last few months of school. So the kids could get a 50-something, a 60-something, and a 40-something. And that just does not feel good; so they changed how they work and I just don't like that. This is still three times a year. But I still can't find a redeeming quality about it because it doesn't show growth anymore. And to me that's pretty important. I lose two instructional days and with some kids a little bit longer. And then of course you have the kids who are absent while you are doing it, or they miss one day and then they have to make it up. So you probably don't have a normal class for a week-and-a-half to two weeks, because either you have too many missing because they're making up the test, or finishing the test, or whatever. So there's no point in conducting a real class until they're there because you will just have to do it all over again.

The SBA, that is about a two-week period of time. It's once per year, for about two weeks. We would only do it in the mornings, for example, on say, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. And then kids would be absent Monday and Friday. And then of course, there is the makeup exam afterwards, so you're losing chunks and chunks of kids so with the SBA there could be four weeks of completely disrupted class time. [I lose five to six weeks of] quality instructional time. That's a lot of time; I don't think people think about that. And then of course the time leading up to the SBA we are supposed to be teaching testing strategies and, everything we can do to make sure students do well. The kids have been tested so much because now we even have the Common Formative Assessments, called CFA's. This is the local school one. Each department has their own assessment, and that is five times in a year. There is a pre- and a post-, and then three others throughout the year. CFA. Common Formative Assessment. It's crazy. The CFA is required by the school. And all of that, the CFA and the DBA leads toward the SBA. It's only in place because of the SBA. So, by the time you get to winter, the kids don't care about testing. I totally experienced that this year. They don't care, and they'll say it right out loud, 'I'm tired of this. I'm tired.' Because by the time you get to January, they've had two DBA's and one, two, three CFA's,... so that's five of these doggone multiple choice, worthless tests. By about January, when they come back, they have had five. So, then they are doing their next DBA, and it's around the time of the SBA, but there are two CFA's before that and they are just *phhew*, so by the time they get to the SBA (KT rolls eyes) they are, they are just so tired of it. And of course, the SBA is what they use to measure everything, and now what they are going to use to grade schools, and what they

are going to use as a foundation with something else undefined to evaluate teachers. So yeah, this is just nuts.

At first, the only thing I was required to do was the A2L, at the time that's what it was called. Other than that, meeting with your department. How I taught was up to me, what I taught was up to me. I did a lesson on the Civil Rights Movement, they knew so little about it. They didn't know anything about Jim Crow. So they connected really well with that because of their own feelings of disenfranchisement, personally and community-wide. And then we went from that, it was a natural flow, but we went on to talk about Human Rights. The Universal (Declaration) of Human Rights, the 33 articles. We did a whole lot of work with that and people who fought for human rights, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, all kinds of people. Then we went into the novel 'Pay It Forward,' that took almost a semester. It was our theme, Human Rights and tolerance; it was great because it was also letting them know that they have rights but they weren't aware of them.

There wasn't a lot of talk about pressure on the administration that year. It wasn't until the second semester when Christina starting saying, as SBA was getting closer, about how her job depended on the SBA scores. And you could see she was so extremely stressed, so extremely stressed. I mean, during the announcements in the morning she would say things like, 'make sure you have breakfast, make sure you come to school, you do your best, so I can keep my job.' I didn't agree with that, 'I can keep my job' thing. But that is one of the ways I knew she was so extremely stressed, because that just seemed really out of character for her, to make it so personal because she had always been about the kids. There were assemblies, rah-rah-rah testing assemblies. And it always ended with, 'keep my job. Do you want me to stay here?' And I thought that was horrible pressure to put on kids, because a lot of them really liked her and I'm sure they would have wanted her to stay. So that was when I started to notice that it was really a lot of pressure for her. She, I didn't think there was pressure on me; I didn't feel pressure yet. A lot of the faculty had been there for years. I mean, 15 years, been there a long time. And a lot of them were really close friends, personal friends with Christina. So they were devastated, and they were reiterating, 'we have to kick butt on the SBA. We want Ms. Jojola to stay here,' all that sort of thing. So it was, there were a large number of teachers that kind of, supported that whole, 'do well on the SBA to keep Christina.' I didn't see other teachers panicking or lose morale, or anything like that at that time.

Besides the fact that through the A2L at the time I could see their reading was improving, through the data points (KT laughs), which is what everybody went by. It improved a lot, I mean about 40% more were proficient by the end of the year than at the beginning of the year. So, that was great but what I also look at were the intangibles; kids were developing more compassion, they were supporting each other, they were functioning as a team, working well together. They were self-identifying things they did well, things they needed to work on. So to me those things were all improvements. Not to mention they were feeling more confident in their ability to do the work. And oh, that was my first year there I had all but two, so I guess I would say 98% of the female students, they were 6th graders, decided that they couldn't wait till they got married and had babies. By the end

of the year they were talking about colleges and careers. That was huge, huge. I remember during a Language Arts Department meeting Christina asked if anyone had any ideas or anything that could help improve anything, to let her know. She was looking for something, and she was saying that to all of the department leaders. So, I was, I kind of definitely had developed a method, a way of teaching, and it was based on how I had worked with my whole career. And I was encouraged by Martin, because I wasn't going to do anything, he kept saying, 'you should do something with this, you should take it to Christina.' And I felt like, 'why? This should be common sense, everybody should be doing this. That's ridiculous.' But I did take it and, the concept of a team of teachers and teaching a certain way. (KT laughs) And she loved it! She was behind it one hundred percent. She loved it. I developed a manual so we could all be on the same page or use it as a resource, or whatever. So it was great; I was surprised that she said, 'yes, we'll do this.' We started next year, developed a team, and got it going. It was very cool. It was great. It stood for "Students Acquiring Intellectual Lifelong Scholarship." I had worked with people in prison, everybody, everything. I raised my children that way. To me, I think that it really comes from my stint as a therapist, that really started it.... In therapy everything is done through relationship. If you don't have a relationship you don't trust the person, you're not going to try the things they suggest. So it just made sense to me that if kids are going to learn, you need to have a relationship with them because they'll trust you.

Classroom dynamic came together a little faster, to have a group of kids that understood procedures and rules in the beginning of the year, because it was being reinforced by other teachers. It was kind of like me against the world, in the year before. Kids would come from a class where they were just shooting paper airplanes and then come into my class where they would have to sit down and do work. And of course it was great to have a team, I mean, that was just incredible. Whereas before, I was the only person who thought the way I thought. And in the department meetings, every time I brought something up I was shut down. So then I just quit bringing anything up. I felt pretty isolated.

The students and I talk about the test in advance. We talk about what the rules are and what to expect so they're not shocked when they come into the classroom and see all the, because I have them in groups or we're sitting in a half-circle, and when they walk in for the first day of SBA testing all of the tables are separate. Everything is spread around the room so nobody can look at anybody else's work. And of course the total silence they have to keep once they start, the strict rules. I've got a lot of rules, but they make sense. (KT laughs) The SBA has a lot of rules that don't make sense. For instance, during the SBA if a student says, 'hey, what...' as if they were going to say, 'hey, what do you think?' and you only catch them after 'what', you're supposed to send them to the office and all this were normally, *I wouldn't do that*. I would just be like, 'hey, shhh, quiet.' So it is very different, but the kids are great. I've never had anyone get sent to the office or break a procedure. But it's hard, and they say it's hard. And after we finish testing and we've got a lot of time before we go back to our regular schedule, we talk about how hard it was and then we'll play quiet games until the time is up. You know, Quiet Simon Says, or whatever, while we try not to keel over in laughing fits while decompressing.

And by the time the test is over, it's almost the end of the year. So the kids are in that, 'Ah it's over!' state of mind, which you totally understand because the following week the teachers are in that state of mind. So that last month of school is just kind of, it's tough. I'm not going to say it's wasted, because we do accomplish things, but they never get that momentum back. At least that's been my experience. No matter how hard I try, and how much I tempt them. We have Spring Break and then you come back and a few days after you start the SBA. So, you don't even have a chance to get them back in the swing of it after break because you've just got a couple of days and then, boom, here's the SBA.

In the 2007-2008 academic year, I was just doing my thing, really. And enjoying not being at Oak Hills, and feeling respected, and feeling like I was being treated like I *knew something* as a professional. That was awesome. That was my first year as a licensed teacher. This past year was my first year as a Level-II. Student behavior at that time was crazy. There would be rules but they wouldn't be reinforced by staff or administration. So, you kind of like (KT holds hands up, palms out) backed off of rules. For example, there was a rule: no sagging pants. Or chains hanging off pants. And kids would be wearing them all the time. And a teacher would send them to the office and the kids would come back with a smirk, like, Christina might say, 'don't do that,' and send them back to class. So, you weren't backed up with that type of a thing. Basically, I did everything I could in my classroom. Outside the classroom, I felt like I had no say. I sent somebody to the office once. Once. It was a nothing-happened experience, so I took care of everything in my classroom. And that was it. Whatever I was doing in my classroom, I was supported on.

At Oak Hills, there was one student in particular. He was an F student when I got him in the middle of 7th grade, and he ended 8th grade having a B+. He was reading well, doing great, going into high school. It was two years after that, we went to the movies and I saw him. He comes up, gives me a big hug and told me he was in 10th grade, was doing well and had a B average. And that was incredible to me, just awesome. And he was one of the kids who had been kicked aside. (Teachers had told him), 'you don't do anything. We're not putting effort into you.' And then I had another student whose teachers had told him that he was worthless. So, all he did was act out and cause trouble. Then I stumble upon the fact that he was a whiz at spelling, so he became the spelling helper in class. So he developed some kind of identity at being a spelling helper, and then he started applying himself at working. And then he didn't become an A/B student, but he did move from F's to average, C/B-. But, he felt like he could work and he actually started to work. He got in trouble a whole lot less. And that was great. It's things like that, that to me are just really important, when students find themselves, find their place and their comfort level and zone. So for me it's kind of like creating Maslow's Hierarchy in my classroom; making sure they feel safe, protected, so they could reach. To me, learning is self-actualization, for a lot of these kids that we work with. So these kids need to reach a place where that is even thinkable. And I can't do anything for them in their community or their home, but I sure can in my classroom. I used to feel bad because I didn't come from an educational background but over the years I've decided, 'you know,

I'm glad!' (KT laughs) because I think differently. I used to think it was bad, but now, I don't think that anymore. I can be quite opinionated at that, though.

I'll tell you how SAILS came into existence. I'd been hearing from a couple of people that I teach differently from other teachers. And since I didn't come from an education background, I had no clue as to how other teachers taught. As a matter of fact, I had never observed other teachers teach, I had no idea. So, my background being in social psychology and psychology, I came from how to motivate students rather than how to teach students. Rather than having to impart language and the content to them and trying to get them to swallow it and learn it, I was more coming from the angle of how to get them to want it, and to discover it. I wanted them to own whatever it was, because I know through ownership and discovery, you really *learn* something, and to *keep* it. So, I was coming from a different angle. When Christina had asked the year before, 'does anyone have any ideas?' I just said, 'hey, can we try this?' And I know teaming works, and I know looping works, and there's research on it, and I gave her copies of the research on it, on everything I had checked out just because everything I knew was in a psychology background, and there was a different language with education. So I had to go through ERIC and all that trying to find education research to back up what I was trying to do. So I just presented it to her, and it was a five minute discussion, 'this is what I'd like to do.' And she said, 'sure.' It was not difficult at all. She said, 'yes, you find the people for your team, and we'll do this next year. We'll get it set up, and we'll do it.' And it was everything from having a foundation that we were going to... teach in a similar way, the teaming, but also at the same time Social Studies and Science were being taught every other day at the school, and we were going to do it everyday. So, we even had a different schedule that year, so we didn't follow the bell schedule that year. We had different times that our kids moved around. That was how it started, I gave [Christina] a sample schedule. I gave her a copy of the accountability card we were going to use. I created a manual over that summer and gave her a copy of that. So she understood... if she ever needed to look she knew where we were coming from and that it was all based on research. To me it was just a normal way of doing things. I didn't think of it as anything different, until I was being told that repeatedly. I said, 'okay, let's try.' For someone to take something that you're trying to give to them they have to trust you. They have to want it. Otherwise they're not going to. And so that was the whole thing: developing relationships, developing trust, and creating a safe classroom environment where kids are willing to take risks. To me, it was like, 'well, of course!' Rather than my telling them, for example, all of the parts of a plot of a fiction story, have them try to discover it by reading the story. What happens first, what happens second, what happens third, and so they develop an outline of a story and ask, 'why is this important?' So they answer questions and they work with their peers. Then my job is, to me, is to be able to connect what they come up with to the academic language. So then they own it. It's kind of like, 'woah, I didn't know I knew that. That's a fancy word for what I already know!' And they remember it, they own it, and it *means* something. So to me, that is discovery. Rather than me standing there and saying, 'now you have the rising action, now you have the climax,' and explain what they are, that is so boring.

As the 2008 year began, I felt a couple of things. One, I was really excited that I was going to get to do the SAILS thing, so I personally was excited. I was looking forward to it. And looking forward to having time to get together and figure out how we were going to do things. However, there was also a division in the staff, a division in the staff that had always been there since I had been there. There were personal friends with the administration, and they were kind of separate from the rest of the staff. And now with the SAILS thing being started, people had heard rumors about it. They didn't understand it. They didn't know what it was. They made their own decisions about it. And I felt ostracized; you know, people just outwardly did not like it. They thought, 'who were you, to come up with something different?' So, that was not cool. That was not a good thing. Other than that, it seemed to be kind of, everything was normal at the beginning of the year. The beginning of the year is always tough: new kids coming in, old kids getting moved, roster changes. So the beginning of the year was tough, but that was normal. We didn't know what was coming. But I knew that the kids would be fine. So I wasn't going to change what I was doing at that point. The Assistant Principal, Alice Jackson, announced that SAILS had the fewest referrals in the school. It made it worse. Because it was like we were showing them up, or something. Of course, that was not the intent, not at all. We were just working with students as whole human beings, and dealing with other issues and helping them with other issues, behavioral issues, and all of that because it all affects how they are able to do well academically. So we were just treating them like whole people; it was like holistic teaching. And we dealt with issues in our classroom, and if it was really disruptive, I mean short of felony-type behavior, we would bring them into our team meeting and start to work with them. And if that didn't work, then we would bring the parent in to work with us. Level-II was pretty much unheard-of. I mean, it was so punitive, and it really didn't accomplish anything. It didn't change anything. It didn't help anyone change their behavior. They didn't learn something new, about how to change their behavior. So, that's why we were doing it the way we were doing it. The students responded well. I mean, they were nervous because they had never experienced anything like this. You know, here there's four teachers sitting there saying, 'hey, we're here to help.' And I'm sure their expecting to get yelled at, and we weren't doing that. So they didn't know how to take it at first. Then, over time, they slowly learned how to moderate behavior and ask for help. And to figure out where and how they needed help, because they didn't even know that. I mean, they're 6th graders. And sometimes when things got hard, because we had high expectations, in academics and in behavior. Sometimes when things got hard, kids would say, 'well, I don't want to be in SAILS.' But there wasn't that option, and they would change their minds. It was just because something was hard, but it was an identifier. It would let us know that this thing was hard, and we would work on it.

The takeover was announced in November or December of 2008. I was freaked out because I didn't know what was going to happen. You didn't know what it was until it was happening. By the time Christina... Christina started getting really tense about testing. She was making announcements to kids, 'focus in class, and practice, and do the work.' This started really before the takeover was happening. So, and there were assemblies; she gave testing assemblies and said, 'we have to make AYP or I'm going to lose my job.' That was our first hint that something was going to come. I did not agree

with that tact that she took; I thought it put pressure on students that shouldn't be there. I always tried to undo it afterward, after I would take my kids back after the assembly. I just didn't think it was right. You know, like, 'it's up to you to help me keep my job.' So I just didn't... no. So anyway, when we found out that she was definitely going to be leaving, I was pretty freaked out because here we had just gotten SAILS started, so there was a question about what was going to happen with that. What was going to happen to the school in general? Were we all going to be gotten rid of and have to re-apply for our jobs? We didn't know what was going to happen and what kind of principal are we going to get. You know, I liked Christina and I thought I worked well with her... and that was going to change. So, it was pretty scary. The students were very stressed and anxious because they liked Christina. They glomped onto her pretty fast, because she was approachable and friendly. The kids were really worried about that, silently, every time she would say something about her job in connection with these tests. I actually had students worrying if they didn't do well, it would be their fault. I would just try to explain that she was stressed out and everyone stresses differently, she doesn't mean to make you feel that way. I was trying to minimize it.

One of our activities was Curriculum Night. We gave kids credit for attending Curriculum Night. I know that one of our team teachers made it an assignment, and if a kid couldn't attend or didn't attend, then the kid would have to do an alternative assignment. It was like, this is important. This is important enough to do these things. We also had snacks and stuff. But I remember that first night we did Curriculum Night, Martin had his Science presentation out in the hallway. I remember how crowded it was; we were getting parents to sign in, and students to sign in, and that year we had 80% of our student population and parents come. It was just phenomenal. One of the things that the school always talked about was how parents don't attend anything. And they would get 10% of parents that show up, so this was unheard of. But it was because students felt engaged in this team; there was this sense of family beginning to happen. And in that community family is very important. We were just a different type of family. But they understand family. And the other thing is, too, I think it's mentioned earlier about the Hawkins-Catalano studies: one of the ways to increase protective factors for kids, to help keep them out of drugs, drunk driving and crime, delinquency, all those things, is to get them connected to school. And that's what we were doing, we were getting them connected to school. So there are a lot of benefits to what we were doing, besides just the academics. Family involvement in SAILS was pretty good. I mean, we had a few family meetings where we would talk about things like, getting kids connected to school, helping them with homework... quiet areas as a space to do homework. Parents would come. We would call parent meetings with students, and students would come. I think that sense of family that students felt rubbed off into families and it was great. They would attend things. We would send off letters every once in a while... we had a team newsletter. So I think they responded well to all of those things. Behavior and academics improved. In reading it really improved. In math, I don't know but I can talk about reading and writing. The DBA scores in reading for my kids are higher than the rest of the 8th grade, have been all the years. But in the 8th grade, the scores are higher than all the average, higher than the Ortiz [high school] average, and all the schools in the Ortiz section and just maybe 5% short of the district average. So SAILS did well. Absolutely.

There was also this sense of mistrust, and this tension building. And you could just feel it anywhere. I stopped going to the staff room, other than to get my mail and leave because it was palpable. Teachers were beginning to talk badly about students, maybe some of them did it before because I hadn't known them forever, but it was coming out in some not good ways. It grew exponentially, there was a lot of anger. I'm sure a lot was fueled by fear, because there was a lot of fear. Oh, gosh. It just, it changed the feeling of the entire school. The kids felt it; the kids behavior just tanked. Graffiti increased, I mean it was, you know say the last, February on, it just affected everything. Of course with the staff, morale was quite low. People talking about leaving, 'they can't make me do such-and-such,' I mean it was not good at all.

Regarding the implementation of the Professional Creativity Team, I remember there was an email to the entire staff; because there was no discussion of it over the announcements. It was through email. And the email came from Susan, to everyone, and this was after we knew Christina was leaving because there was no talk before that. That just created this canyon between factions of the staff: Christina leaving, and now this, which we didn't know what that was going to mean. It was Susan and Cathy, who took the lead on that. And it was also about that time that we found out about Richard [Rael]; he was introduced in a staff meeting, that he was going to be working, coming in on occasion to work with Christina. So, it was just a horrible set up. If you think about it, it's like if you have loyalty to Christina at all...she's on her way out... and she's introducing her replacement, and then the school is going to change in some way, and you're not sure however they're *saying* you can have input into it...it was just a nightmare. And I was pretty selfish because my biggest concern was what was going to happen to SAILS? I liked teaching that way, (KT laughs) so I was kind of selfish about it. I thought it was the best way to teach kids and I didn't want to let it go. We were doing such a great job together as a team, so that was my biggest fear. So that's why when they made the announcement about applying to be on the team, the Professional Creativity Team, that's why I applied. Of course everyone thought it was my undying love for the school, (KT laughs) but it was my undying love for the students. I was wanting to keep this going somehow. I didn't think I'd be picked, I was surprised. At first it was meeting with Susan on a weekly basis. We met with Richard, every other week, after school. Susan brought in a few books that we could read, and we were talking about what we wanted the school to feel like. When you walk in the front door, what do you want it to feel like here? What impressions do you want people to have? That's what we were talking about. And, we didn't talk a whole lot about research or any of those things. And then with Richard, we'd be repeating what happened with Susan. And then, we would just start throwing out ideas. I'm trying to remember, when did we meet at District HQ? That was when we start really getting into the nuts and bolts of the PCT work itself. We all had sections that we were responsible for writing, and coalescing. And then they were supposed to email it to me, and I was responsible for putting it all together. I remember my section: my section was the whole SLC (Small Learning Community) and PD (Professional Development). That was just...it was amazing we got what we got. It was all so intense. It was almost like a blur. I've got certain scenes in my mind, but I don't know what order they go in, I don't know what we were talking about specifically.

In the end, the final PCT plan was to have Small Learning Communities; teams of teachers working with the same students, and being based on teaching through relationships to empower students so that they become self-determined. And everything came from that, which meant that was increasing family participation. By then Christina and Alice had left and the staff is on tender hooks, barely holding it together. Not only do you have a new person in charge, but you have new rules. Well, we were all supposed to be the authority over the PCT work. I know there was a lot of animosity toward the Professional Creativity Team itself, and when we would get staff opportunity to get input they really would not. And [the faculty] didn't know the basis of the decisions, they didn't understand the research, know the research, so we would get things like, 'well, why are you going to do it this way? Why are you...?' Well, then you try to explain the research and its, 'well, what about this?' I'm like, 'if you wanted to be on the Professional Creativity Team, you could have!' (KT laughs)... or spoken up, or brought information in to the staff, whatever. And I know it was fear-based, everyone was just so afraid. And there was...that was when...it was the *height* of mistrust among the staff. At least I thought so. There was misunderstanding about the nature of the \$5,000 stipend. It's a differential, [we] get it just for working at La Independencia and following the PCT work. That's it. It's not for the extra time commitments. The Principal is having us do all this stuff after-hours with no pay. I mean, a lot. One month it was like 27 hours, after school, when it's not supposed to be more than 2 hours every 20 days. We're doing PD's and meetings, staff and Department Chairs and whatever else. Curriculum nights, and so forth. So that's been the tough part, and Richard will say, 'well, that's what the extra \$5,000 is for.' And it's not. And Susan has told him it's not. The \$5,000 is just because you exist in La Independencia, because it's a hard school to teach in. [The Principal] took real advantage of that, and staff of course didn't know. They were uninformed.

After Christina and Alice were dismissed, we began to ask who else was going to be dismissed, for one thing? People were afraid. They were afraid the new person was not going to like them, so that fear was there. There was also the commitment letter that we all had to sign, I think it was due the second week of May. Teachers had to decide whether to sign the commitment letter: do you want to be here, or do you want to be given the agreed-to preferential treatment for a different position in another school. That was hard. And people were signing the commitment letter just because they wanted the \$5,000 without really understanding the PCT work or having a heart-felt commitment to the PCT work. And they're still doing that, so that's no different.. The students didn't like Mr. Rael. 'I miss Miss Jajola, Miss Jackson,' so the kids were going through their own kind of a grieving process and not wanting to...well, they were feeling loyal to Christina and to Alice. If they even acknowledged Richard, it was like being disloyal. So they just really didn't gel with Richard very well, and they spent the rest of the year mourning for Christina and Alice.

Parents did not understand. And I don't know how much was communicated. Christina knew a lot of parents, so I don't know what she said to parents because I know she was very negative, understandably. So parents may not have come because they thought they already knew, but I don't know the reason. The kids were glad when we did find out that SAILS was going to continue and we were glad because we found out the school was

going to follow suit with the Small Learning Communities, so they were happy about continuing with SAILS into the next year. You know, with a few exceptions, 'Blah! I don't want SAILS next year!' 'Well, the whole school's going to do it.' 'Okay.' (KT laughs). So that was good, and I think we were kind of insulated from some of the problems because we had the team and the way we operated and the kids being able to stay in the same area to be able to go to their own classes, except for their elective. So they weren't going past the office, and going all across the campus. I think we protected them as best that we could. And I think that worked to a certain degree; not that they *didn't* know what was happening but they didn't get the brunt of it as other students may have. We were always looking at what was best for them. Which was one of the good things about the team, which the other teachers didn't have that luxury. And since we all agreed to the same rules, the same way of working with the students, it was reinforced. The appropriate behavior was reinforced. Everything was reinforced through each other. Not to mention the support of each other. Like, if I thought in my head, 'I can't deal with you today, please go to Matt's.' And we continued to do that. Kids didn't go to the office. We didn't send them to [In School Suspension].

La Independencia began working with the "bubble kids," calling them "La Independencia's standouts. It didn't. That didn't work. No. And of course all of that is just to target the SBA, that's it. Why else would you target kids that are so close to being proficient, as opposed to the kids that are in beginning steps, don't get it, and *really* need the help. Those kids were just under the radar, which was just horrible. It was abominable. So it was like, 'let's get kids pushed over into proficiency.' It's just really sad, the way all of that is structured now; it's not about the kids and what they need. But what we're told is the reason we work with the Independencia's Standouts, and not the lower achieving kids who have more issues and difficulties is: they'll never reach proficiency. So why work with them? I mean, that's just a horrible thing to say. Kids especially, but people are who they believe they are. And it's just like, oh my God. If you believe that, then you're acting that way. Kids will feel it. You don't have to say those words to them, it will come across in your behavior. But to say that lower achieving kids, 'well, they'll never reach proficiency, so we're not going to target them. We're going to target kids who are closer.' It's crazy, it's inhuman.

For the rest of the year, Richard was... it was really obvious he was trying to give positive reinforcement, positive strokes to students, staff. He went around to classrooms introducing himself the kids, being approachable, 'my door is always open,' so he was really trying to pull it together by the end of the school year. There were staff that were in their little hiding holes, staff who were still openly acrimonious. It was like, 'we can't wait for this year to be over. We are exhausted. Emotionally physically, and every which way.' Except for the Professional Creativity Team, we knew we were meeting over the summer! (KT laughs) But I think we felt better than a lot of other staff because we understood what was coming. Teachers are wondering who's going to leave, or if they're going to stay. I felt like the year in general ended with a lot of questions, staff-wise. But I was really thrilled because SAILS was going to continue the next year. I was fine. I was involved in the Professional Creativity Team, so I knew what was supposed to be happening. The [SAILS] program was going to continue. Yes, Richard and the

counselors were in charge of scheduling. And Cathy was doing a whole lot with the scheduling. Richard didn't understand scheduling or didn't know how to do it really well, so Cathy was taking the lead on that. But there were disgruntled staff because they were going to lose their ability to just work in their classrooms without having to share. There are teachers that just like to do their own thing and not go outside their room. And here they were going to have teams.

To summarize the 2008-1009 academic year, I have two differing opinions. Personally, it was the best teaching year of my career because of the SAILS program, working with the team, developing relationships with the kids and knowing I'm going to have the kids again. And within that, I could block out everything else that was going on. But, in terms of the school environment, which affects everyone, it was a terrible year. At least the second semester, it was absolutely horrid, because of the coming changes and how it affected everybody. It was bad. I don't think the district or the state knew how they were going to make changes; I think they were just like, 'well, we're just going to do this and see what happens,' because there didn't seem to be any sort of a plan. There really did not seem to be any sort of a plan. No one could tell you what was going to happen next. And if it was a big secret, it was wrong of them to keep it because it made things more chaotic. It was, it was done. Actually, it almost was a relief when Christina finally did leave, and Alice finally did leave, because at least you could take out the part of feeling like a traitor if you were trying to improve the school. Or to try to develop a relationship with the new principal. For me at least, that was the worst part of it; feeling like I had to choose sides. It was like 'if you're in the Christina camp, I don't like you. And if you're in the Richard camp, you're a traitor.' I remember I used to check in with Christina quite often before she left, just to try to see if, and this will sound so pathetic, 'do you still like me, because I'm on the Professional Creativity Team?' I didn't say that, just, 'how are you doing? Anything I can help you with?' That kind of stuff, just to get a feel for where she was, interacting with me. Oh, that was sad and pathetic but she was still my boss! And we had had a good relationship. I had liked her as a person and I was sad for her. I didn't want her to think that I didn't like her, or I didn't care, just because I was working on the Professional Creativity Team. I did it because I love the kids and I just really believed in the kids and I didn't want to see it go away.

I think a majority of the staff, by the time Christina was leaving that particular year, was more interested in keeping their status quo. Not to say that they didn't care about students, but still they were more upset about having [the status quo] altered than anything else. Promises were made to us by Cathy Wayne. We came up with the District responsibilities. While we [teachers] had our commitment letter, we had a commitment for the District and for the Union as well. So, the District was supposed to do whatever it needed it make sure we could have SLC's and team [prep], that was the primary thing, to support the PCT work any way we needed it to be supported. That was their \$5,000 commitment. And to work towards technology, like good computers for all the kids, good access. But the primary thing was to support the SLC's through teaching positions, which they did the first year, and then took it all away the second year. The first year they supported the teacher positions we needed. The Principal needed five more FTE's (Full-Time Employees) to be able to have SLC's all across the board with the core classes all

teaming. But then the next year we lost all five FTE's. And this year, not only do we not have those for next year, we're losing six more. So to have a fully, completely run SLC school, we need 11 FTE's now, because we have lost 11 positions since we had our first year of Small Learning Communities across the board, our first year of PCT work. We didn't have it this year, we did not have Small Learning Communities this year except for us. We still did the same thing. Yeah, but we weren't supposed to. I was told not to, but we did it anyway. We were little renegades this year. Richard told me that we were not allowed to mediate with students; we had to refer them all to the counselors. We had to do the PLC stuff, but we didn't. We did our stuff anyway. We also received the SIG Grant. It stands for 'School Improvement Grant.' And it was just slightly over \$2,000,000, in the [2010-2011 year]. And it has some strings to it; it has to follow certain categories. Richard just created his budget, what he was going to do with it, no input from the Professional Creativity Team, no PCT work-anything. We started the year with, 'we got the grant, now this is what we're going to do with it.' It bought textbooks. [Richard] didn't follow the PCT work. It's not going to affect the SIG Grant because it's already been approved for next year and it's still going to be the anti-thesis of the PCT work. [The SIG] is program-focused, it is 'textbook-as-curriculum,' 'let's have more staff to make teachers better,' ... And there is no money in it for supplies, for classes, for teaching materials. This past year we had no money for supplies, but we had a \$2,000,000 grant. La Independencia served about 700 this past year. Well, they're expecting a larger number this year.

The District was the one that said, 'this first year, all Language Arts teachers are going to be teaching this program called Just Words, in our advisory class.' That was a District mandate. And Richard said, 'Okay!' Last year they had to do Writing Aviator, but by the end of the year 'well that didn't work so we'll move on, and this coming year we'll use something else.' We have to have 13 hours of training to use Just Words, which is scripted. I mean, what kind of training do you need if you open a book and it tells you what to say? It literally says, "teacher, 'colon,'" and that's what you're supposed to say. Writing Aviator was scripted like that. I hated it so much. It was to help kids write better. The kids knew I hated it. I told them, 'I hate this. It tells me what to say. It says...' and then I would read it word for word. 'Then I would have to wait for a response when somebody here would say something like this,' and then a student would laugh and give the scripted response. So then I would say (KT laughing), 'all right. I did. Now I'm going to do it my way.' It's ridiculous. Absolutely, and the District is all about research-based practices. But they are not doing it. Like this 'Just Words' program, I told you on the U.S. Department of Education website it has 'Best Practices' and programs; Just Words isn't even on there. They have the top ten programs for learning vocabulary, reading, writing essays, but Just Words isn't there. You get something because it's put out by the same company that put out the textbook, so you get cut a deal, financially, and the textbook company says, 'we did research and this is how well it works.' That's not real research. It's not replicable, we don't know if it's valid. Nothing.

For the 2009-2011 academic years, I thought it was an awesome beginning, because I had gotten to work with the PCT work plan and Richard a lot. I felt like I knew him, I liked him, felt supported by him, and of course I knew Sharon, the new Assistant Principal,

from Oak Hills Middle School. So personally I thought it was great. SAILS was getting as many of the same kids back as we could, had a team, we were ready to go. Now there were...there was this underlying sense of tension because there were a lot of teachers that didn't have the opportunity yet to know Richard, or didn't know the new Assistant Principal, so there was some discomfort, which is normal because there are new people and the person you liked isn't there. People wondered, 'what's this going to be like?' I felt like I knew what it was going to be like, so it was going to be ok. So that was probably my best teaching year, ever. I was excited. I mean, there was an administration that was supportive, that would listen, that you could talk to, the PCT work is wonderful and I don't mean that from an ego...but I really believed in it, I believed in what I was doing with SAILS and it meshed with the PCT work perfectly. That was no small thing. We went into the PCT work knowing that this was the right thing and it was just a matter of getting other people on board, which we did, and that was cool. We kept 70% of the original SAILS kids, and they were excited to still be in SAILS. And the kids who were not in SAILS any longer were pretty upset. They would come by my classroom and say, 'why am I not there? Did you not want me?' Which just broke my heart; that's just the antithesis of what we were trying to do. So I was like, 'no. It wasn't up to us; it wasn't our decision. It was the Assistant Principal and the scheduling; that's how she scheduled it.' And we were getting kids back for a while. We (SAILS teachers) said, 'we don't care if we get more kids in our classes. Don't get rid of who we have, because we don't want them to feel rejected. We don't want the new kids to feel rejected. But we'll take more.' And they did a few and then, we were asked to stop so it was a scheduling problem, to make that many changes. So we kept in touch with a lot of the kids, and of course they would come and complain about their teachers. (KT laughs) Non-SAILS kids asked for SAILS meetings to complain about their teachers.

Not many of the other staff members understood the PCT work. That was a charge of the Professional Creativity Team and administration, Richard. And the staff were all given a copy of the PCT work. And of course they all signed a commitment letter to be there, but they just didn't get it. They just didn't get it. They understood that there were 30 additional hours of PD, that's black and white. But they didn't understand the whole concept of SLC's and teaching the whole child, and developing relationships. We needed to have PD's on that, to help people understand. I was very vocal about that, but we just didn't. We just didn't. I was allowed to have in mid-year a small workshop on the whole concept of empowering students and helping them to become self-directed. I got to work with 13 teachers and they said it was incredible. Some of them said that they changed what they were doing, the ways they were thinking about certain students. But that was it. It wasn't nearly enough of what we needed for people to understand that foundation of the PCT work. So all of the SLC's were kind of off on their own without any assistance. I came to the conclusion by the end of that year that not even administration understood that part of the PCT work. If they did understand we would have had PD's. But since they didn't understand they wouldn't even begin to know how to put together a PD on something like that. I even offered to do the PD's; it's what I did in my former life, to teach people this. I used to teach people how to work with others to accomplish these things. That didn't happen, so I was a little bit disillusioned by the end of the year. Actually, we had some meetings or open forums for teachers to come and ask questions

about the PCT work. Not many teachers would come. During some staff meetings we took some time to try to explain parts of the PCT work or answer questions. But there weren't that many questions asked, and when there were they were complaints about setting up an SLC structure because they were used to working on their own. They weren't used to working in a team. And if the whole team wasn't used to working in a team, they weren't working well. There were a lot of disagreements and personality conflicts within the teams, and everyone was doing it differently because there was no guidance.

From 2010-2011 there were no SLC's, except for SAILS. They let us have our last year. They went back to having PLC's, since that's a district mandate. Professional Learning Communities. That started this past year, and it was mandated. So what they did was they put people together as PLC's, and it could have been as many as 10 or 15 people but they had no students in common. So they were supposed to meet together once a week and grow as professionals, with whatever mandate came down from the District as to what we were supposed to do. It was like, 'okay, we want you to look at student work together.' (Teachers) said, 'well, what good will it do because we don't even share the same students? We don't even have the same content with everyone.' It was kind of a nightmare, so then it changed to basically what Richard wanted people to accomplish with data. It doesn't matter if you have the same students, the same content, you had to work with data. Look at your *data*, talk generically about your *data*, and how you can improve your *data*. That is what it became. SAILS did it differently because according to the negotiated agreement, with the PLC's you had to answer four questions. You could do whatever you chose, no one could tell you what to do as a PLC as long as you were answering four questions: what do the students need to learn; how do you know when they've learned it; what do you do when they haven't; what do you do when they have? At the time in 7th grade, the 2009-2010 year, everything was starting to be data-driven since only Language Arts and Math had DBA and SBA was only once per year. It was, you could do it on your own vocabulary tests in the classroom, whatever your own testing system was and how you wanted to do your own data. It wasn't until the 2010-2011 year that it became mandated that we were CFA-driven.

There was a sense of mistrust from the administration to the faculty. But that was another reason we got those three extra Instructional Coaches. They were supposed to quote-unquote help us, but really their job was to come in and observe us all the time. We had schedules where we were observed every week by someone, and it was all written out, all written down, and turned into the Principal. Instructional Coaches are not supposed to do that. They are not supposed to observe and make judgments. A couple were ex-teachers, one was an ex-principal. We never knew when we would be observed. It was just a walk-in observation. They watched the entire class. So it really was a 'being watched' kind of a feeling. And I noticed that things I tried to confide in with one of the new coaches would get back to Richard, and then I would hear about it. So I stopped talking. Things got really weird last year.

The Professional Creativity Team was still meeting regularly. However, it became the Principal's agenda. It changed from everyone feeling equal as team members, having

discussion, to the Principal coming in and giving us the agenda. And things he began to say were part of the PCT work were not part of the PCT work. So it was changing terribly in terms of how we functioned as a Professional Creativity Team. It became a dog and pony show for the District. The Principal would have an agenda; there would be anywhere from 6-8 district people there who represented different things like Linguistic Resource Department or someone would be there on behalf of Grey, and it was a show. It was a show, to say how wonderful everything was. We never had an opportunity to talk about issues. So I quit going to the Professional Creativity Team meetings until the end of that year. That is, I quit going. I started doing an after-school program and that was my excuse. I had a couple of different ones. I was doing a drama class, and I had a filmmaking class. And then eventually I stopped that because it was...we were told we had autonomy to create our classes. But then we were told we had to spend 20 minutes of an hour-long class writing to a certain prompt. And we had to collect data on the writing, no matter what you were teaching. And we had to do lesson plans. It became too top-down heavy to where it just was not enjoyable. So I stopped. I sound like a quitter! (KT laughs) This was, this was a horrible year, this last year. Terrible. The kids were really disappointed that I stopped doing the after-school stuff, but I was also trying to protect them from all the junk we were told we had to do as part of this and so they never had to do it. I would just say, 'sorry.' In addition on your own you have to have lesson plans for these things. Well, I wasn't doing lesson plans. It's an after school class! You know, you have a goal and then you just do what you do until you reach your goal. And you might take a detour. And if the kids want to change, they might change what they're doing. This was an after school class! That's why I quit the after school class. Between doing a writing prompt, gathering data on that, doing assessments on that, then on top of it lesson plans. So I said, 'no.' And this was targeted at the Bubble Kids. All these after school classes were targeted at the Bubble Kids. Other kids could go, but Bubble Kids had priority. What is this thing about, 'you're not supposed to track kids?' Well, they are tracked. They're just called Bubble Kids. 'Perform better for us on the SBA.' That's all it was for. The whole thing; all the after school programs. Anything that was done had to be SBA-focused, because there was a directive set that you could not just have a fun and games after school class. It all had to have academics, and the writing, lesson planning.

By this time the Professional Creativity Team is a dog and pony show. People were put into these PLC's, which did not have students in common. SLC's were gone. And in this coming year, we have no idea. It is all content oriented, so they are going back to what it was before Christina left. It is all content oriented, which of course is not in the original PCT work. The Professional Creativity Team, the District, and the Union President were charged with implementing the PCT work. The Union President basically admitted that she dropped the ball this year, because she was dealing with a whole lot of union issues. The District representative of course was not there. And the Principal ran the show. Of course the SIG Grant overshadowed everything, even though it is said, and it is in writing, that the SIG follows the PCT work. But it doesn't. And no one speaks up because the Principal has a temper, which we found out. And if you speak up in a public venue, like a staff meeting, he will call you in his office. He will let you have it, so no

one speaks up. The Professional Creativity Team members say nothing. It is very disheartening.

We kept about 60% of our SAILS students. And of course the cool thing was that the new kids were brought on board immediately by the old kids. We didn't have to do anything. If they did something that they weren't supposed to do, the other students told them, 'don't do that. Don't put your gum there.' So it was a positive peer group going on there.

This last year starts with coming into school for the new year and finding out that there are no more SLC's, and we have PLC's instead. Fortunately SAILS was intact. And then finding out that (the Professional Creativity Team) had no say over PD's; it was coming from the Principal. That the SIG Grant, rather than being used and there are ways to use grant money I mean it's a School Improvement Grant and saying we had a PCT work was part of the reason we got a SIG Grant, I mean this PCT work was touted all over the country as something great the District did, so the PCT work is supposed to be embedded in the SIG Grant and rather than getting the teachers that we needed to maintain or grow the integrity of the PCT work, we got extra Instructional Coaches. We got a Dean of Students to handle behavior. We got Language Arts textbooks. We got canned programs that we were supposed to use. Prepackaged programs we *had* to use. Many of them were scripted and we had PD where we gave like \$80,000 for this one guy to come four times, and he was horrible. But it was just to say that we got this guy because it was impressive. You know, so, it was horrible. Here we are, we have just lost all these teachers because of budget cuts, then the District was not supporting us in terms of the teachers. We said, 'we have the PCT work, we're supposed to be different, we're supposed to get help.' But then to have the SIG Grant undermine what we were doing and then just arbitrarily have scheduling set up in a way that was against the PCT work. See, at the end of the year, I had gotten permission from the Principal to do this program called Journeys in Film which has like five different films on children of middle school age that were made in different countries about different cultures. It would be a great way to work with the kids. And of course there were lesson plans that came with it that you could modify, and it would have been great interdisciplinary work with our team because they had lesson plans for every content area. It was going to cost me 800 bucks, and I got an 'okay.' What a wonderful thing to do. I got an 'okay' on the books I wanted to use. I purchased them myself; that summer I spent almost \$2,000 on books, purchasing these materials for the 8th grade year. I start the 8th grade year, the Language Arts Department gets these textbooks we didn't know we were going to be getting and I'm told I have to use the textbook as curriculum, and with fidelity. And no, I couldn't use this other stuff. I had to use [that] textbook. And I personally was told that I did not teach with rigor, which was so different than the last year when I was one of the best teachers in the school, that's what I was told. And since I don't teach with rigor, I need to use the textbook like everyone else. So my morale was gone; and this was September. This was in September. I was done, and there were so many reasons not to use the textbook. I was being checked on by Instructional coaches, to see if I was using the textbook. Our CFA's that we had to make were made out of the textbook, so if you didn't use the textbook your kids couldn't take [the CFA's]. If I changed my style of teaching, 60% of those kids would be lost because they had been with me learning it a certain way. We had been working in a

certain way, not to mention the textbook. Oh my God, it was a freaking textbook. It didn't have any connection to them whatsoever. They were looking forward to what we were going to do because they helped plan it at the end of the year before, which is why I got permission. They helped to plan it, they were excited about doing these things. So I was caught between a rock and a hard place, so I vacillated between pulling out the textbook and doing what I was going to do anyway. It was probably my worst teaching year, because I just felt so trapped and caught. And 'who's watching me now?' And 'am I going to get in trouble because the Instructional Coach walked in and everybody's reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* rather than looking at the textbook?' because I was told I couldn't do that this year. So it was just tremendously, absolutely horrible. The weird thing is at the end of the year I had my evaluation and Richard was the one who was going to be observing me and coming in to do the evaluation. I was doing Shakespeare, I was doing *Othello* with the kids. And I thought, 'should I just do something out of the textbook when he comes in? Oh, no. The kids are loving this.' So I just continued doing what we were doing. He came in, observed the entire time. And my evaluation was glowing. It was, 'I can't believe your kids were thinking critically. I can't believe they did this. I can't believe that they were working on their own in separate groups, and someone had a question, and someone else had an answer.' He said that they were just so wonderful; he sang my praises. But he didn't say anything about not using the textbook. So I gotta tell you, I kept that evaluation where I can pull it out this year! (KT laughs)

The Instructional Coaches were not helpful. I had this heart to heart with the new Instructional Coach who was there to help with stuff, and I told her the conflict I was having with the textbooks and doing what I do and she said, 'Oh great. Do what you do!' But then she went straight to the Principal, so I got in trouble. But I still didn't pull out the textbook. The only time I pulled out the textbook was when I was absent and gave it to the sub to use. That was it. That was it. I just couldn't do it; I couldn't function that way. Well, it sapped the people that were on the Professional Creativity Team, because they understood what we were supposed to be doing. The new teachers seemed to be okay, because they didn't know any different. And teachers who had been there for a very long time were doing okay because it was going back to the way it was. So this coming year they're going to be really okay because it's going back to the way it was, to content focus, not student focus. And our whole PCT work was supposed to be student focused and we're not. They say it was but it's not.

My non-scripted curriculum was terrific. I got these nonfiction books, biographies about really cool people. One was a biography written about these three guys from Harlem who used to be in a gang, but they all became doctors. The basic theme was they were all about people who had horrible circumstances and survived them and rose above them in a certain way. So I had purchased four copies of each of these different books so kids could be in groups of four, reading the same one, discussing working on it, then sharing it with the rest. It was awesome, oh my God. This whole nonfiction piece was just incredible. And then I did a book that was called *Hurt go happy*. It was a fiction book, but 95% of it was taken from a chimpanzee being taught sign language, so it was based on some real things that had happened. And then it was also about a little girl who was deaf and her mother didn't want her to learn sign language, so it got us into this whole big thing about

primates, sign language, communication, we watched stuff about Koko, so it was just amazing. And the kids were so into it, doing research on it, everything. And that was it. I wanted materials that would get them to go off, to explore on their own. And of course I was covering vocabulary and writing, all that. It was always in there, but I wanted them to be excited about what they did and not read a short story out of a textbook and answer questions. Blah! Like when we did *Frankenstein*, the kids had to do this poster project with a partner and one of the projects was electricity in the body. How is it used today? The defibrillators, and such. So they did research on that. And cloning. They were talking about cloning kids, and researching that. Their big thing was that an 18 year-old girl wrote this story, so then we also went off into gothic fiction. What is gothic fiction? The first Dracula story ever written, that wasn't even called Dracula. So there was so much, and it was so rich. I just wish that there hadn't have been this...well, I could have handled it differently, all that was happening externally, but I had a hard time dealing with it and not being stressed about always getting caught. This might sound silly, but this was a big deal to me. We were reading the one book about the monkey that learned sign language, actually she was a chimp and not a monkey. A couple of the kids were asking...they kept calling her a monkey, or a gorilla, or a chimp, or whatever...and I kept saying, 'she's not a monkey. She's not a monkey.' And in every class at one time or another, somebody finally said, 'what's the difference between monkeys and gorillas?' So I said, 'go to the computer and look it up.' And daggone, if that didn't become like a whole huge project the kids took on. They listed all the different types of gorillas, and all the different types of monkeys, I mean they discovered that. They looked it up. And so they're reading, they're writing. Even though it might be called a science thing, who cares? I mean, they were into it and doing really cool stuff. And that's how I like it to work, when it comes from them. It wasn't what I had planned, but it turned out better so (KT laughs) if they're excited, then they're doing work and they learn. This was the process of discovery I mentioned earlier.

Being in SAILS was the bright spot of the year. I have to tell you, if we didn't have that community, that team of teachers the way we had it and the way we worked together, I don't know if I would have stayed. It was the group of teachers and it was those students, because we were a family. That was what kept me there. The extracurricular activities were a way to connect more kids to school because in Hawkins and Catalano research, protective factors to keep kids from being high-risk, connection to school was one of the big ones, which was one of the things we were doing with SAILS. Kids don't necessarily learn the stuff you teach them. They learn by what you do, what you model. They learn what they investigate. They learn what they choose to learn. If you're trying to cram stuff down their throats, it's not going to work no matter what the situation is. That's what the whole relationship piece is all about in SAILS. If you don't have a relationship with the students, a positive relationship with the students and an appropriate one, then they're not going to care what we say and do. They would say, 'oh, miss. Do we have to do this thing?' And I would say, 'well, yes, we have to do this.' Or they would say to me, 'is this going to be a good textbook?' And they trust what I say, because it has an impact on what they learn, how they behave, not to mention their lives. Even outside lives, because then they bring their issues in to us, which impacted their learning.

At the end of the 2010-2011 year many teachers were happy because the school moved back to being content-oriented, like they were used to. There is absolutely no discussion of Project-Based Learning. No discussion about Small Learning Communities, or relationships with their students, or empowering them, or any of those things that they don't get.

I think one of the biggest tell-tale things was that the SAILS kids wanted to know if I was going back to 6th grade to start SAILS all over again with new kids. And I said no, because the school wasn't going to be set up that way anymore so they were the last, first and the last. And they were really upset by that. They thought it should happen again because it was so good, they felt so good and they got so much. And so just the fact that they were upset that it wasn't going to happen again I thought was the biggest testament to how they felt about SAILS. They wanted other kids to experience it.

I know that we're going to be following the PCT work faithfully, which I know we're not. We won't know if we have common students we any of our teachers that we're supposedly teamed with until the year starts, but we don't have the same prep as the teachers we are teamed with. So we could only meet after school. They told us we could meet after school to do the 'SLC' stuff if we want to, but then we don't have the students there. It's actually been arranged so that can't happen; we don't have enough teachers and we don't have the schedule set up in a way to allow us to team that way, working with our students. It's set up so we can team with our content person, for me to meet with my other 7th grade Language Arts person so we can develop lessons so we're teaching the same thing at the same time, being on the same page on the same day using the same materials. That's the focus. We're using the same chapters in the textbooks. That's what we're supposed to do. And we will have the SIG Grant again, we're getting the additional part-time people to help us help students learn to read. [They] are basically like the overseers, the additional Instructional Coaches. And we have lost more teachers than we lost last year...because of budget cuts and the SIG Grant is not picking up any additional teachers this year. It's getting new positions that are administrative. It was like teachers who left our school but did not leave the district. Then they changed around who was teaching what. And we are expecting larger class sizes. They have bumped up Language Arts to being 29 kids in our class. It used to be 20. There are still no supplies, there is nothing. And the PCT work is gone. It's just gone.

The testing schedule will get worse. It takes 2-3 days for a CFA, times 5, so that is 25 days of CFA. DBA, I would say about 3 days, so there are 9. And SBA is two weeks. So roughly 34 days lost to testing. Yes that is just the actual taking of the test. That doesn't include leading up to it. The kids are making up but still not fully teaching because half the kids are not there. None of this counts the NMELPA testing or any other type of testing. We were unable to get any of our Spanish Language Arts ex-SAILS students back. None of them. If they were ELL kids, none. They were put into Spanish Language Arts, a specialized class.

What has changed since Christina was removed and Richard took over: it's like they're trying to take away the professionalism of the teachers by telling us what to teach, even

how to teach, and when to teach. They talk about differentiated instruction however we are all supposed to be on the same page at the same time. You cannot do that if you are differentiating your instruction. So it's like all 8th grade Language Arts teachers are supposed to be teaching the same thing the same way, using the same CFA, giving it the same time, and it wasn't like that under Christina. So I think the biggest change is I'm not given any autonomy in my classroom and there is definitely not a nod to my being a professional teacher.

At first the students didn't like Richard. When he first started they didn't like him because they liked Christina. They never really said a whole lot other than at times being angry about a rule or something he said. During an announcement he would make, the students would roll their eyes or ignore it. But I never heard any outright love for him.... We protected them a lot from the stuff that was coming from the administration. The temperature in the classrooms is still horrible. And of course the kids are supposed to perform well on the tests when the classroom climate is unbearable. In reference to performance on testing, I actually looked at that data and overall the SAILS kids from 6th grade increased in their reading proficiency on the SBA 20% more. So 20% more were proficient by the end of the 7th grade. And the kids that were not SAILS in the 6th grade but were in 7th grade; I looked at their 6th grade and 7th grade [scores] and it was like they just caught up. 20% increase. They fell in line and did very well. For some of those kids it meant that they were making 30-40% gains so they could be in that 20% group. You know what I mean? SAILS students exceeded their grade-level peers and oftentimes the cluster [the surrounding elementary and middle schools]. It did that with the last DBA. [SAILS students] exceeded the cluster average and was only 4 points below the district average. When the parents would come in and meet with us about their student, or if the two parents were involved in the school they would tell this that this was an awesome program. We would get positive feedback from parents.

Recently we heard that there was an internal change in the grading of the SBA. That was the PED (Public Education Department). ... You know, 87% of New Mexico schools did not make AYP. There are a lot of reasons not to make it. But I'm just saying, on the surface of it all, why do they pick on certain schools? Why are they making us do the same thing as High Desert MS? Why are they trying to make everything the same? And it's curriculum by publisher. It depends on what publisher we have; all of the programs we have are put out by the same publisher as our textbook. That's why we have these programs. It's ridiculous. Kids don't have to read how they used to read. Things are now all in sound bites, and... it's not growing. It's not changing.

To summarize it all, from 2007 to the present, I would say that it was a grand dream. Let's put it that way. I don't think it was worth all the effort in the PCT work. I don't, because it's not being followed. It's given lip service. And in terms of changing principals, to be honest, the only things that have changed is behavior, really, and I think that's because of the accountability cards. That has nothing to do with the Principal. So I think if just a couple of different systems put in place, Christina wouldn't have had to have been removed. And I can say I think with some certainty, if she had been there through the whole SAILS pilot it would still be continuing and it would be spreading.

And it would be making changes, in more than just the students we had. It would have been better. It hasn't made the difference that they did all of this to make the difference for. It hasn't and it certainly not about our students and our family and our community, it's not. It's for uniform programming across the District. It's not targeted to our kids. And they're so anxious to want to close this education gap between the Anglo kids and the Hispanic kids, or however they have framed that. So, 'let's just teach everyone the same way.' But it doesn't work like that. So I just think that they're digging a bigger hole and it's just going to keep getting worse. I really do. I think the biggest mistake is, as long as they're looking at students as data points rather than looking at them as human beings who bring a whole lot into the classroom besides just whatever the teacher puts in front of them, until that changes I don't think it's going to improve.

Summary and Analysis

Kate Thomson came into teaching after having gained insightful experience in counseling, therapy, and youth outreach. Her work spanned several states and venues as diverse as the students with whom she worked.

Kate's development of the SAILS program reflects her commitment to youth but also her in-depth knowledge of social psychology, therapy, and intent to bring out the best in her students. Punitive measures were not employed as a means of dealing with challenging student behavior. Instead, students who acted out were seen as presenting opportunities for growth and a chance to own up to mischievous behavior and find positive solutions for issues or to connect with teachers with whom they had previously clashed. If what the teachers had perceived to be mischievous behavior had deeper roots or more far-reaching motives than what was previously understood, the team meetings became venues for addressing them and finding appropriate solutions.

When contextualized within the process of Puesta del Sol ISD's takeover of La Independencia, the importance of the SAILS program cannot be overlooked; in the midst of a chaotic ending to the school year the teachers in SAILS were able to shelter their students from an otherwise out of control situation. Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson

had been removed from La Independencia, and while Richard Rael and Sharon Stout had been announced as their replacements they were not actually working in La Independencia; Richard and Sharon had prior commitments that precluded them from coming to La Independencia until the close of the academic year. However, by maintaining a focus on student wellbeing, the SAILS teachers achieved a level of trust with the students and their families that facilitated dialogue prioritized students' personal growth and academic success above standardized test scores and failure rates.

The faculty and staff morale throughout the takeover plummeted from an already low level at the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year to general sentiments of anger, fear, and anxiety by December 2008. The initial climate of morale can be most attributed to the consistent public assaults on the school community, the rundown facilities, and neglect from the district. However, once the takeovers were announced a sense of shame befell the teachers, administrators, and students of La Independencia. The Puesta del Sol ISD officials and the Teachers Union announced the establishment of a Professional Creativity Team whose task was to redesign the entire school in a matter of roughly nine weeks. Such a task would be nearly impossible, as the future of La Independencia itself was uncertain, as were the teachers' own positions. Kate's responses indicate that the district intended to change out the La Independencia administration, yet lacked a clear vision for what the school would look like under new leadership. Apparently, the option of switching out administrators was not on the horizon. Public justification for the takeover was that La Independencia had never made sufficient progress on AYP exams. The problematic nature of such justification was that no middle school in the district had made AYP in the 2007-2008 academic year; La Independencia's

only distinction was that they had been the school with the longest-running record in Restructuring-II.

Martin O'Connell

Biographical Information

Martin O'Connell is a career teacher in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District. Martin received his primary education in the Puesta del Sol ISD and completed his secondary education at the Sunset Preparatory School. After completing college, he returned to Sunset Prep and taught Dramatics for several years under the tutelage of some of his former teachers. Martin was a small business owner who became a middle school technology and then science teacher. His teaching experience now spans approximately 20 years in private and public education. A tragedy early in Martin's life was eased by the connections and relationships he had developed and fostered with several of his primary grade educators, Martin brings such a perspective to teaching. His devotion to relationship development and teaching the whole child shows through in his pedagogy.

Interview Narrative

I was born here in New Mexico. I attended Open Hands Elementary, and then would have gone to Hollister Middle School but left Puesta del Sol ISD and went to the Sunset Prep for six years where I graduated. And then I spent one year at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and then high-tailed it back here to New Mexico because I couldn't stand the climate (laughs). It was an ok school, but I finished at Southwest University. I graduated in '72, by 1974 I was teaching full time at the Sunset Prep and completing my undergraduate degree at Southwest University. I finished that degree in '78, which was a Bachelor in University Studies with a focus in Theatre Arts and English. Um, I finished teaching at Sunset Prep in '70 – actually it was almost the same '78-'79 and worked for two years in retail and then began my own business for 20 years. I did not return to teaching until the year 2000, where I began at Oak Hills MS. That's when I went back to school for teaching. The Principal and the Assistant Principal knew me personally and asked me to start a technology program for them, so I started Puesta del Sol ISD in 2000 and then transitioned to La Independencia in 2006. And I taught technology there (Oak Hills MS) and ran the technology for the entire school. And I got to La Independencia in 2006, where I began teaching science. And to this date I'm still at La Independencia.

And I was the building supervisor for the Fine Arts Center [at Sunset Prep]. Sunset Prep had the greatest teachers in the world, they were clearly one of the reasons I thought about teaching. There were also very good ones at the Sunset Prep later on but they were just superb in elementary. They were very supportive; I lost my mother in elementary school. It was in the transition but it was pretty much in the 6th grade. So that was an important feature, you might say, in terms of that, support when your world goes apart and it was going apart for several years with the cancer she had so, what I remember best about it was the relationship to the teachers, between myself and those teachers. Some of those that carried off past that, I did things for some teachers after I left there. One quite a few years after – she had a student that she needed some help with. I did something for her and it was very minor to me, small, but for her it was major. And so that was one of those connections that didn't go away. Clearly they built relationships by personal knowledge and closeness. I was an enthusiastic student until my mother was really ill. I had some falling off there; it wasn't that I quit but that I wasn't as good a student during some of those years. But if you were interested, and it's a very, actually, it's one of the most progressive schools in this city still, and sought-after as an elementary school. It's been very stable and has some of the best teachers and the reputation... it's a university school. I mean, it's next to Southwest University so it's very much supported by them and they have the resources to visit the museums and to participate in the fine arts so it's really kind of an ideal position for a school.

I returned there to teach and many of those teachers were still there. The Theatre Arts teacher who, at that point was just running a drama club when I was a teacher there, who I then came back to teach with full-time and teaching Dramatics, and they had built a new Fine Arts building. His name was Mike Bohm, he has since passed. Very influential, he taught English as well; I never got to have him for English but he was very influential in terms of seeing theatre and producing it because I was the technology person for the Drama Club and in essence was the only person they had for those many years and did the sound and the lights and really, it's what got me into theatre and I was seriously into theatre. I thought I would do my *life* in theatre, technology of theatre, and ended up making a product for it which is those 20 years I was in business for myself. But I was very much connected with the theatre experience itself, and the creative dramatics we were teaching, and the theatre classes we taught. In the private school pedagogy, all the terms that we use, don't exist in private education. They don't need them, they don't use them. Interestingly enough, they survive on teachers that, quote-unquote, just teach well. I don't believe that's a model that we have to follow in public schools. I think there's a vast difference, which we can discuss later, as to teaching at that level as to the difference in motivating and sustaining students as we have at La Independencia because it's totally different. They have no idea what it would take, no more than the rest of the public understands (smiles and elevates voice).

I was running a recycling program for computers and a student I went to school with who was then the Principal at Oak Hills Middle School, Juan Campos, he and his Assistant Principal, who was Steve Norman who is now a Principal here. Juan's retired, but Steve was a close, close friend and the two of them were looking for someone to do technology and they had come to my recycling center to see what I was doing and it was folding.

And they didn't quite know that, and at the exact same time I knew that was happening they said, 'are you interested in a position? You probably aren't.' And I said, 'guess what, (MOC laughing) Bingo!' I just need to walk right away from this, and so I went and that technology *was teaching* but it was not classes, per se. And then I entered Southwest University [to get] an education degree concurrently with teaching. I was teaching full-time, receiving full-time benefits from the school, then I was observed and followed. Behavior and curriculum [neither] of them I didn't have a problem with. I had, when they hired me they forced me to take a contract a little bit different because it was a few days late and, they said, 'well, we'll get a substitute for the first five days' and I said, 'well, no. I'll just teach without getting paid, because those kids I know are going to be different if I get them after 5 days with a sub.' My Master's I did at Southern Rocky State University. It's a Master's in Educational Science, and then my subspecialty is Technology Integration.... And I completed that in the fall of 2009. So I got my Master's then. At the same time I was helping Billy the Kid Elementary, I was on their educational committee as a public person. Part of the neighborhood association helped them reopen and rebuild the school, and my daughter ended up going there as well. [I worked very closely with Cindy Kuhn and Mr. Gomez]. In any case, also Mike, no, Juan Campos. I worked with the Principal at Oak Hills MS, extremely fine administrator, both Cindy and he were the best people I could have had in Puesta del Sol ISD because they weren't super traditional. They knew their craft very, very well and they knew how to work with teachers. And they knew how to stay out of the politics. They were both extremely experienced so they were...less affected than new principals would be because they knew how to navigate the changes that were coming and how to mitigate the back-and-forth that Puesta del Sol ISD has always done in its quote-unquote solutions. They had both been teachers and then became principals and well, I would just say remarkable people. They were just marvelous and you could tell by the way people worked with them and how much they enjoyed working with them. Cindy went on to be the supervisor for all elementary teachers, then retired. But, he kept NCLB and of the powers that be across the state at bay because Oak Hills MS had been taken over before. Way back it had been totally rebuilt with a total failure; as the lesson learned, everything got worse as the state took it over and totally redid the school which is why Restructuring-II even existed. Because their one experience in the entire state certainly in this city as I understand it was Oak Hills MS. And they took it over and the end result was worse than what they had taken over so, they figured that was not the way to go, this was before I got there. And then when he (Juan Campos) came to revitalize the school. It took him a couple of years to really get started. I think it was the second or third year he came to the school and the stability was incredibly high at that school by the time he left it; he had to retire because of medical reasons. So he was just, he was superb and we went through, we were in Restructuring-II also, as any school in that condition was. I don't know about La Independencia before we got there but at that point Oak Hills MS was the worst, quote-unquote, in the city score-wise. We were the lowest and were always held up first in the news. We did get the focus and we got special, some special fundings for those reasons, not like they were massive or huge but, I've been through the Restructuring process now for well-over a decade, straight. So all my experience has been Title-I/Restructuring, actually. All in Puesta del Sol ISD.

I believe this was in the '80s. Actually, the State Department of Education probably has that. It would be more likely, because they were the ones who, as I understood it, now this was all heresy, that's why you need to research it because I don't know (chuckles) but it's probably one of those good examples of what they shouldn't have done. It really wasn't a takeover, it was being in Restructuring-II you had to come up with a plan of action. And at that point it was Professional Development. We did an hour a day, before school, had a 1.2 contract for the entire staff, extended our day, made it *longer*, but it started earlier so it really didn't feel too much different. It's not like an after-school thing. Um, and there was a focus by the Data & Development Department doing exactly the same thing that we did at La Independencia that doesn't work. But that was when they first came up with the idea of taking the Bubble kids, and working on those kids that were *close*. Now this didn't have to do with re-doing education in general; it had to do with trying to pass number games with the State standards and the tests. So in essence what they aim at is most often off-center of restructuring the entire school and how kids learn and how they get what they get by focusing on survival under the gun of Restructuring that you have to make certain gains or they are looking for those gains, and we didn't. That was with a great principal and a fairly good staff.

They did not change administration or faculty because that first time had been such a disaster. It was the echo of that that was in their ears. This was when NCLB was just, basically being imposed in New Mexico because [New Mexico] had taken so long to take part. [New Mexico] had ignored the federal government, and then the Bush Administration if I remember correctly, decided to start making it [a penalty] if you were, if you didn't follow and so the state had to seriously take action, which is how we then fell into, you know, what they call Restructuring-II. So really it was the first phase of it, in terms of New Mexico taking that on. The penalties for this were restrictions of access. I believe it was just the federal education dollars that were to be withheld, to my knowledge. But it was federal funding, federal funding was withheld. That's the bone, if you don't do *this*, we will do *that*. And, I guess that was it. To me it was the beginning and, and my principal said, 'there is nothing wrong with NCLB as an idea. Some of what it says, and what it's looking to do is positive.' He said, 'unfortunately it's number one, unfunded. And number two, is impossible.' So it's aimed at a goal which cannot be achieved, we *know* that. Especially with Special Ed. populations, that they cannot reach that level for the very definition of what they are doing, at least in that time frame. And he said, 'don't knock the initiative itself but rather how it's being implemented,' which was the point, was how it's being done as a, I won't say a carrot, what's the opposite? It's not a carrot, I guess it's a whip. Yeah, instead of a carrot and a stick it was now a whip. That's, that's probably the best image to relate that.

Oak Hills had great programs in place before. I had been involved in Oak Hills Middle School for years before I even got there and ran a quality after-school program. I had taken a hundred kids to the museum and stayed there over night. Kids went and saw "Jurassic Park" and then stayed there over in the museum. And this was an after-school program, we'd gotten funding from the city. The elements that had been brought for those kids were after-school programs and enriched programs, higher levels of technology, the Bubble Kids was what they focused on most, that I remember. I was in an elective area,

and there really was not a clear whip-like focus on language arts and math as there is now. So all of the content areas were beginning to get the pressure but this was a very slow windup. No teachers in Puesta del Sol ISD that I know of, certainly not in Oak Hills MS, were quite ready for that curriculum with the exception of just a few. The question of getting rid of bad teachers maybe was more of some of the issues that came up at that point. The difficulty in removing really bad teachers, one of which I witnessed. A science teacher who just gave straight-A's to everybody and clearly his students' scores were as bad as anybody's in the district in science so clearly they weren't achieving A's. And to move him out was a year-long thing, till they retired him out of Puesta del Sol ISD. I mean, they frustrated him into retirement, that's what the choice was. I was going to say, there isn't to date there still is not a way of qualifying bad teachers in Puesta del Sol ISD. So this isn't something they've ever come to, it's what they're now trying to talk about. But it's not just about bad teachers, it's about, I mean there's a system in the union where if there's a problem it has to be registered from the administration to the teacher, a plan of action has to be formed along with the union representation. There has to be people set in place to monitor and to judge what's going on and that teacher has to be given a chance to remediate what they're doing. That's the formal process. And that's probably been more developed in those years since NCLB, as that pressure has come up to try and move some teachers around but I don't know it's history. The belief being, if we get better teachers, all of this will change. There's nothing wrong with getting better teachers, without them those students won't have a quality experience in education. However, I could almost bet my life upon the fact that it will not alter the direction of a school in general. That isn't the issue: some of the best teachers still don't connect with students. And some teachers who present, not like I'm talking about, but have a presentation style that's very traditional but form a very clear and incredible bond with their students get the same, or similar, results. I don't think they get the same because I think they, there is a quality difference and a qualitative difference in what the students get with PBL and CBL when it's done right. But clearly a teacher who doesn't connect with their students gets nowhere compared with a teacher that might not to connect but if they're able to get these kids to connect to themselves, to put themselves in charge of their own education, the results are obvious. You don't have to have as fine-tuned a style to make that work. And it's very difficult for kids coming from the backgrounds that we have, for them to take it seriously. They don't really believe you're there to help them, and it's very easy for them to hear and have other people say (MOC deepens voice), 'well, you just have bad teachers.' (MOC lightens voice) Well, it's not that simple. Come, come join us. Experience this for a year and see what, see what you do and see what doesn't change and observe teachers who teach kids very well, students who *excel* with that teacher and test very, very well, but those same teachers have that, a majority of students who don't achieve that high, and well what's the difference? Why does a teacher who teaches a capable and interested, even moderately well-prepared student fail with students who come with no assets? And that's the, that's the point we haven't taken up yet is, given the difficulty that we face, how does anyone make up that difference? And what time will it take, and what are the chances for success? By no means have we reached the point in which we've done everything we can because that's not true. But we certainly haven't been making gains with Bubble Kids. That doesn't work. At least, it hasn't since I saw it in 2002, 2001, and here we're back to doing it again almost 10 years later. This is simply

a bean-counter's approach to how to solve NCLB. It's to try and play the numbers and legally squeak past, which is failing, and fails, in addition to the fact that we don't get the general or average or long-term gains. And there have been gains, and I think that's what Puesta del Sol ISD can probably show. There has been a slow, steady increase. But it's not achieving what *NCLB* wants, that's just not there. And I don't think it ever will be, unless they change some big, big things. We'll see.

I was at Oak Hills from 2000 until 2006. I was there six years, I've been at La Independencia now 5 years, which is... yes, 11 years. I didn't think La Independencia could be any worse than Oak Hills MS. I'm not sure it was worse, it was different. It's simply that I was unprepared for the lack of funding and the level of challenge. In other words, second language, poverty, very weak assets is how it can be described in a positive way. In the rural setting, our highest difficulty was kids that came from the East Mesa that have nearly nothing.... The kids that come from Mexico have a better education. They may have a language issue at first but that transition can be very fast. And they can be some of the best students as long as you can adapt to it and understand their plight, they can learn the English very rapidly. You just don't have the same expectations because they need seven years to do that and you're seeing them in a three-year block somewhere, and the kids who have, that you say, 'are you a second language...?' and they say, 'no, I've been speaking English for all my life. I went to elementary (school) and all this...' and their assets are *amazingly* bankrupt. And it's just...'how did you, how did they do all this? How did elementary miss that far?' Which I, I don't say I blame them because I realize there is a lot more complication to making up those assets and what resources and who's trying and who's recognizing that even here, but, anyhow.

My first impressions of the faculty were, I would say very traditional approaches is all that, and you know that they were willing to try. Probably most of them still are. Discipline was poor; that was the principal's major difficulty, I think. Let's say difference, because every principal is different. But she had a way of not dealing with discipline very well. And it was an issue in classes that was difficult. Now, maybe the reason she came to that was the anger I think I sensed in that first day with my 8th grade students, from sensing that they had very little and they were very angry because they knew it was so far out of their possibility. I don't think they knew it consciously, it was just instinctively. They are angry, they were angry that I was trying to do something when they had had nothing for two years, because these were the 8th graders that had been at the school. They were the product of those teachers, and some of them were great but then that first year I gave a bunch of those great students back to that teacher who said, well, he knew them well and could work with them. I thought, that's ok. I didn't realize I was giving back the students who would have been the only ones who could have led my classes. And then, well I had a few left who he didn't have before but I ended up having, in some classes, *no one* who could show them what a student could do. And that was fatal. That was a big mistake on me. I don't accuse the teacher of anything other than saying, 'well sure, I think I can handle these kids.' Oh, I had no idea. No idea. It was also burning hot, no ventilation, an empty room with little square tables like this (points to the card table we are seated at) and I mean, 'I'm going to be teaching you

science.’ Blank walls. Nothing to show, the only thing I had was a projection screen and a video projector because that was my one, ‘I gotta have this’, because I knew I could do something visually with them and I just did the best I could in that year. So, no budget, no resources, not a real science classroom, which was fine with me but there was nothing to deal with and even with the supplies that the other classrooms had they just looked like science classrooms; they didn’t have anymore, you know, they didn’t have some huge amount of equipment, they just have little black tables and gas spigots and sinks and black tables and it looked like a science classroom. They still didn’t have the resources in the school and we still don’t have them today. I have had to purchase all those... all of them are mine and they also don’t disappear and I can make sure they’re not disrespected and lost, which is what happens with most of the materials we do have. It’s just one of those things where if you’re going to do it, I just wanted to see what would happen if I did make some investment and if they did have access to that. It wasn’t the total changer, but it also means there wasn’t much to hands-on work if you don’t, so it’s a requirement, I think. I think every teacher is faced with that, in a real sense. We have to make up for what the district won’t or can’t pay for and now, it’s *really* can’t pay for and probably won’t ever pay for. Before it was probably some sort of a choice, and even with our special status, we got nothing. And to this day, even with millions of dollars given to the school but there’s still not a focus on materials or being able to supply these students what, the environment they should have. But, we don’t talk about that. We talk about ethereal, educational thoughts, policies, programs, that don’t often connect to the real classrooms. And that’s the problem is that we’re looking at changing the results for the Bubble Kids rather than the environment for all kids. So you focus on a few to get by, ultimately knowing you will not get by long with that but it’s, I guess it’s normal when your hand is put near the flame, you back it off as far as you can. Once you start getting burned you’ll want to back it off further. At the point the flame is put straight to your hand, you won’t have a choice in 2014. And that’s the way they chose to deal with it; it’s reprehensible in my mind but it’s, that’s the cheapest way to deal with it, that’s the least affronting, it’s a plus in the end. What is the magic bullet? What is the silver bullet? What is the way to cure all this? There’s no, one-size-fits-all, here’s how you redo a school. You have to look at those programs that succeeded and those that have failed. I think you need to do both and see what works, what’s common between both that works and what is missing from the ones that don’t succeed and maybe you’ll start to see the general trend which is where I *believe* they’re heading. Marzano is not totally off, but they’re all focused on test scores and at least more focused on test scores than some people; one that we’re going to work with is much more centered on the student experience and getting those students to think. And that’s the real question is that we don’t evaluate how we evaluate students is the question that we really are coming to: is that, standardized testing being the gauge, is that really the best gauge? And that’s the gauge they’re going to use for college entry exams so it’s kind of like, they’re going to have to. But is that, does that really measure students’ knowledge and should we be using different methods maybe earlier on to make sure kids cognitively know where they’re going and can do things for themselves, rather than filling in circles and saying they match, or don’t. But that’s the big question.

Oh, from the day we arrived we began hearing about Restructuring-II and the pressure on Christina. And that's one of the first discussions in staff meetings, what's going on and what we're going to do because of the pressure and the Principal telling us that she will lose her job if those scores don't get better. And we told students too. She wanted us to. She thought it might help. Take it whatever way you wish, she was right (MOC laughs). And do I believe that telling students was correct in the end? No. Did it make the difference? No. I don't think that anything could have changed what was already on the... she knew, she saw what was in the offing and was still doing a good job and was doing it without a vice principal to start with and I think given what happened to that Vice Principal I think it was just trying to limit the damage because ultimately they were going to take off the head of whatever was there and that was to include assistant principals. I don't think that she saw that, 'Oh, it's going to happen no matter what, it isn't fatal,' but she needed more help than she was allowing herself to get, especially with discipline. Christina was in charge of discipline. She was everything. There wasn't an assistant principal, there was a line of kids that would go to see her and to the detriment because one child I had that was brilliant, she was the most intelligent science student I had had in the entire year and she was a behavioral problem that was uncontrollable. Even to this day she got kicked out of Ortiz HS I don't know how many times. I had her sister in the SAILS program, Victoria, and she, she was just a wild kid and there was no reigning her in because the Principal would take her under her wing and say, 'that's ok.' And she would get by with anything that she did, until I was just the tired voice and the Principal was just saying, 'live with it.' So, no there wasn't help. That was a key, key problem which also led to what we did.

The first time I heard about the Bubble Kids was the year that Christina was leaving. I don't know whether they came to her. I can't imagine that she came up with this on her own and Data & Development had been doing this since 2002, that I'm pretty sure of, at Oak Hills MS. Now I'm talking about, about 5 years later, they're still attempting to do the same thing. So it, you know, did they see changes? Did they get Bubble Kid results? Maybe. Maybe there is some success with this; I'm unaware of that but I was at schools where it was not a solution. And you know, that might work for a school that's already at level, to take those kids that are just below it and punch them a little bit higher. But, it didn't work at La Independencia or at Oak Hills MS. We didn't get *nothing*, and we were looking at gains in behavior that were probably more overriding than, and in fact we did institute the cards that you're familiar with, Accountability Cards we did institute at Oak Hills MS the second year I was there. ... We instituted the Accountability Cards from another school, they came over and told us how they worked and we morphed that into ours. There was a complete change. I mean it just changed the way accountability for behavior was done, and had to because the Principal had kids knocking on his doors with no help you know, 'well, you have a problem, you go to the Principal.' Well, you do that times 20, 30 teachers and half the school is waiting to see the Principal. There was an improvement in both his administrative style, the way he dealt with students. Every lunch, everyday before school, everyday after school, he was out there walking with the kids. He was there with them; *that* makes a difference. I won't say Christina wasn't, although I don't think she took the lunch as a personal chance to get with kids and be eating in the cafeteria as Juan did. He would go down there and they, those kids and he

were like buddies. Not to them getting away with anything but when they came in he could have honest discussions with them and their parents about what was acceptable and what was not and why they're being disciplined in whatever way. And there was a respect he had with the parents and the students that was quite impressive. And again, it's that personal knowledge, it's that personal connection that probably is more important than in a teaching capacity ultimately in getting kids to accept and be willing to have you a part of their lives which is what you have to do if you're going to get somewhere. Faculty morale was very low. I think it's always been very low. The pressure has been on there for quite some time. Year after year, poor scores and the way in which the public and Puesta del Sol ISD deals with those only adds to that. Disillusionment, nothing new but the same old thing, continued.

We had a different tact because she was very receptive to the SAILS project. So that was a solution that was out-of-the-box. No one else was doing anything at the school proactively as teachers that could make a change. And to have a staff member come with a concept of an entire program with so much research and knowledge that Kate brought to it was, I mean, quite a gold mine for her because that just doesn't happen anywhere. I've not seen that happen anywhere in Puesta del Sol ISD to my knowledge; it always comes from the top down so to have something come from the teachers themselves was quite a thing and she had no better, I think she actually said, 'if you have any ideas for next year,' because she was at a loss for what to do. And I think that was that perfect moment, perfect storm or whatever you want to call it, where they were open to something that didn't come from above. Above had no better ideas and wasn't helping, and it had a research base and research examples and someone to run it and supervise it and (MOC lightens voice) they didn't have to pay anybody. I mean, again that's just the perfect storm for them because there's no funding in the first place, so there wasn't anyway to buy a program, there wasn't someone to come in and revamp the school; they don't do anything like that. It's always these ideas that come from somewhere else. We didn't even have the teachers by the time the end of the year rolled around, I don't think. It was just Kate and me. We couldn't get a math person to come on board with us I was trying to think because I didn't know you the very first year and I'm thinking, were you there? But you were, now I do remember because we did have you before the end of the year. We knew those three and it was still math that we were missing. I don't have a great memory (MOC laughs). I remember we were so lucky because of the people we had to choose from, and math being the difficult one. We went down the row. There were a number that were ok but didn't want to have anything to do with it. This is just not something that's done in Puesta del Sol ISD. I don't think that there's any understanding that teachers could support this because they just don't think about it. They don't think in this kind of a proactive 'Let's change this,' and that speaks to what Kate chose to do. And not coming from an educational background she was prime for it, (MOC laughs) because she didn't have any of the weight of 'everyone else knows what they're doing, you follow.' She was not the sheep, she was the shepherd. And, they don't exist in Puesta del Sol ISD much; they're trained out of it very well. There aren't master teachers at schools, there are people who are head of curriculum who get paid a little bit of extra money to do the paperwork but they're not educational leaders, they do not have a higher knowledge and a better level of understanding that I've encountered with the exception of

a few that I know of in Oak Hills MS. That just wasn't part of the deal because Puesta del Sol ISD didn't support it. Christina was the only reason SAILS happened. She could have made it or broken it and she was very receptive. That was the good part about her as an administrator. Much better than who we presently have, because he doesn't look for that to come from this level. It's got to come from him.

In terms of leadership, she was receptive, she didn't treat you as another, how shall I say, I guess I would say it was like a family environment, and sometimes painfully so. She didn't have the formality of many principals so it was very much... equality. It was equality. For her to allow this to happen was... she was a classroom teacher herself as well so she knew where you were coming from and I think she also knew that they didn't have a clue, and knew what we were doing was basically flailing our arms because no one knew what to do. There was no silver bullet and no one wanted to talk about the fact that there was no proof, there was nothing of anything that we were doing to value and that's, yeah, I guess that's the most I can say because I really didn't know Christina long enough to know her really, really well. I would also say that she supported teachers with some funding for materials and supplies, each year, which helped. It certainly wasn't a huge chunk to the science department or something, but every teacher got some supplies that they didn't have to buy themselves. 200 bucks. That's 200 bucks you didn't spend. I don't know what teachers spend; I'm guessing it's on the order of one thousand to two thousand bucks a year, directly or indirectly. And that's easy. So 200 may be nothing but it still was something. So, those were the two most positive things I could say. She wasn't a real person high on curriculum, which no one has been in Puesta del Sol ISD that I've witnessed. Any usual demands at that level yield poor teaching or poor relationships with teachers. There wasn't a feeling that there needed to be a change and that they knew what it was and why we would go in that direction. So to ask teachers to make changes was a really big assumption and there's still, to this day, a protective environment where they're *challenged* by having someone come up to observe them.

La Independencia had much poorer facilities. Less of everything, fewer classrooms that were up to snuff, and poorer funding for it. *It has been the neglected middle school of this city*, by all means. And others have had neglect as well in the East Mesa, I can't say it's the worst. There's a whole string of them up and down Turquoise Blvd. There were many schools that I visited down that road that are in equally as bad shape. I don't know that they have the same scores that we have. I would assume that they have the same based on what I saw. They may be warmer than ours, I don't know. They're older so they might be able to heat better than ours (MOC laughs). Ours was at, I guess, the worst time to be an adult at Puesta del Sol ISD. Nothing that I know of was in place to meet the students' needs. I did what I did after school and I was the only one that was doing it. I didn't do it with funding. There wasn't after-school; I mean, there was just the standard interventions if you want to call Title-I, free lunch, most of the time heated/cooled classrooms. The bare minimum was what La Independencia had. Why anyone would be surprised that they could do so little with so little, I don't know.

My impressions at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year, let's see. I was a science teacher, and that year I was teaching Science 8, (8th graders). It was my first year at the

school, so I was just getting into the type of students we had and the way things were working. Then once the takeover...mostly for Ortiz HS but then it was also going to be done to us, and they announced that Christina was going to be changed out at the end of the year. She went early, to her new position and Richard came in as the principal.

I was teaching 6th grade science with the initialization of the SAILS Program. SAILS as a program had started, so that was a little bit different. But the same thing occurred in terms of the takeover, I think the only thing that graced us was finishing that it was already in effect when they came to do the takeover. So they weren't going to necessarily upset that; it was a measure to try to help address the issues the school was facing. It did, as well as the PCT work was reached. So I don't think there was really anything they conceived of as throwing aside, we'd already had too good of results of behavior, academic growth is really hard to measure. We had no tools that were accurately measuring that. So it's hard to say what was going to be seen there.

When the 2008-2009 academic year began, I know what we were doing with the program was upbeat because we were doing something different and something that had a good chance of making a change. So for us, the three of us it was a good start. We had a little bit of a glitch with a poor math teacher to start our program out, but he rotated out halfway through and by time the takeover had happened he had been rotated out. It started upbeat for us, now I can't speak for the other staff members. I know Christina was, at that point still didn't know it was going to happen so she was still concerned. She may have had knowledge that we didn't, of what was coming that year. I have no idea. And it may have been made clear to all the principals that they (the District) was going to be making some changes if they didn't make AYP, which I knew she couldn't, so she must have anticipated some of what was coming because no one, no one in the district was making huge gains or had solved the problem as such, that I am aware of. And actually schools have been failing consistently more as NCLB rolls up in a higher level of compliance, we've been having *more* schools fail. And our distinction is that we've been on there longer. In that sense it wasn't an abusive change, suddenly. The mood when we came to the school was more like, 'challenge', at least from my standpoint. I don't know how seriously the other teachers took it, because in some ways they didn't worry as much because their jobs hadn't really been on the line with NCLB, it was more on the administrative and principal end.

Didn't Christina have Alice Jackson from the beginning of the year? I thought Alice Jackson started at the end of the 2008 year as Assistant Principal. I'm pretty sure the first year she was there she (Christina) took a lot of flak. I think [the District] even said that she needed to have an assistant. Alice came on because she had a lot to do with scheduling that year for SAILS. So, she got that help which she *did* need. In SAILS, we instituted an Accountability Card, which we had used at Oak Hills. We modified it there and it was simply something that we made sure the kids understood; there was an expectation of behavior that was going to be recorded and tracked. And I think that alone and almost any school, I mean we did that at Oak Hills when we implemented that... there was a major shift because kids know, other teachers know what happened that day. It carries with the students. The parents see it. We don't have enough parent interaction

for that parent-teacher connection to be that big of a deal. I think it was more of an effect on the teacher-student relationship than it was what the parents saw or wanted to see. I think most, no I won't say most but many of them were irritated by having to participate in it. 'Why do I have to sign something every night?' 'Well, what else are you doing with your student every night?' And that made the largest difference, I think, as we started out. And I think the other teachers' lack of familiarity with it probably added to them *not* having as much of a change, and they weren't really into, buying into the idea that *we* were that it's not just behavior but the relationship between the teacher and the student were of prime importance to the success of the program. And a lot of other teachers are there to preach what they do, say what they do, and be done with it. Kids get it or don't get it; I think to them the card was still a mystery, but we were familiar with it and within our team we were able to work with those teachers and those students to see its utilization completely.

Another major difference between us: we didn't have a punitive function. We developed the cards and made the cards to be something where the team would deal with what had happened. We tried to resolve the issue and solve the problem rather than have a punitive result, almost like our jail system that doesn't work and doesn't change the behavior of the people that come into it to any major degree. With kids, it's the same. If we want their trust, they have to believe we're there to solve the problem, not to punish them. And that's a major shift in difference between what we did and what the school was doing at that point. Or, up until the end we still didn't use lunch detentions and the rest of the teachers couldn't get away from that. They had their choice, and that's one of the problems. And we were fine with it, that's fine. But they need to have something that's school-wide. They need to really examine what they do with those, I don't know if they have any kids just, the kids that were the worst just have more and more of them and didn't come to them and confide in them and when you got to them there, what did you do to change any of their behavior? Nothing. And if you got them three times in the team and the same thing is happening, well, you say, 'we need to solve this,' it's a different thing, rather than trying to penalize them we're saying that we need to change their behavior, and not through compliance of some crazy lunch detention. The kids didn't make it to the referral level. That's the funny thing, we didn't need to turn them in for something and expect someone else to deal with their issues. We were dealing with that in team, where something happened in the classroom, it should be dealt with in the classroom truly. And referrals should be a last resort, or as they were probably for those four, whatever the figure was, they were for things that we couldn't control: weapons or drugs or really violent behavior that, well, we can't condone that and need to see that it go to a higher level. I don't have a problem with that. An example of how we would resolve an issue with a student. [The student] would come to team and they would need to confront that they had done that, and try to explain *why*. Whether it was triggered by something in an academic mode, most not likely, sometimes it was personality conflicts with kids or even with teachers. Or moreover as you know it, with our kids it was situational, something coming from the home. They come from a difficult day, or a difficult life, period. And as a result they would act out in school, as a result of what was happening in their lives, and with our kids that's probably the most common, at least I think it is. We even had kids in the 8th grade who were asking to have a team meeting so

they could talk about what was happening in their life. They were very openly saying, 'can I come to team, because I really need to talk about this.' You know, you know you've won when they want to talk to the four teachers they have.

Mr. Paz's death was a major thing but I guess in their world many of them had dealt with loss before that, because of the violence of their lives and what happens and I didn't see it as the biggest wrinkle in the year. Now, for those kids certainly that's more of a disruption and a problem, and he was so ill up until that point that to me it was not a big surprise. He was not the advisor any longer. And he was just going to be doing the one class, and they began putting the class off as a result of his health, and then he passed away. So the kids who were supposed to be in his class who hadn't seen him much, and then kids who had him before, it was like, it's not to say that it doesn't have an effect on you because it certainly has an effect on you as a human being, but for them I don't think it was as traumatic because of the kind of loss and shock in their lives. I won't say they're *used to* it, but they have become more accustomed to it. It was another one of the things in their lives. I don't think it really altered the work of students. It was handled really well in terms of memorializing him. When one of the students has died it's always worked out that way. I think that was one of her stronger points, was that she could meet those emotional needs, and recognize how powerful that was for kids. So they memorialized him quite well, and that's why I don't think it was that disruptive. Christina confronted it straight out. She didn't try to avoid it.

About this time was when the takeover was being announced. It was very inconsistent, what was coming out and what was being said. And we had meetings, I remember asking this direct question, I said, 'is she (Christina) going to be replaced before the end of the school year?' because they were not being consistent, and there was not an answer at that point. They didn't have the answer and didn't come prepared with that information (MOC laughs) which was like, 'why are you talking to us, because you have just enough to say that you don't know what you're talking about.' That was what the buzz was, 'this is going to happen, and she won't be here next year for sure.' And so the question was, 'well, how much are you going to disrupt this year?' And, they did not *force her* to change, she did choose to take her new position and go early. Now, at least that's what it was to us, as best we understood it. And I think she wanted, for the kids' sake, to have a transition before that next year, to make it smoother in that sense. I think clearly the district was inept in the sense that none of this needed to be handled until after testing, and if anything could be said about scores that year, it was, 'why should kids do better?' The district had just done what it had *threatened* to do, and the kids had been prepped to think, 'if I did this then I'll be hurting the principal.' Well, the principal is already hurt and it's like saying, 'they're a failing school,' well, they're failing students so they simply performed to what they've been told. And in SAILS we did not have a cherry-picked group. What we did have was fewer ESL, fewer than you would have, possibly, if they hadn't have done what they did.

Math was where we had a really bad start so we didn't expect and if I remember correctly, there was no gain. I don't think there was a drop, but we got a new teacher second semester. They were 6th graders and we didn't have a lot to compare it to, because

it wasn't like they gave us the 5th grade scores to see how it looked. We finally had 5th grade scores for those 6th graders when they got to 7th grade. I went to a conference in Arizona, and they have the same problem; their statewide test scores come after they are of any use.

At first I was going along with supporting Christina's message about doing well on the tests because you want to support the principal in what she says. So we discussed what she said but it didn't seem like it was encouraging kids, and Kate and I talked about it, and finally we came to the conclusion, which was what I told my kids, that they needed to worry about themselves. They needed to put themselves first. That if something happened to Christina, which it did, as it came up, I made sure that this wasn't being done *because of them*. I can't tell you that I would take a pulse on how it was. In no case have I ever had a kid who was non-compliant, even with the worst kids I ever had which was that first year. They take the test and, I will say that I don't think there was a great deal of focus or enthusiasm on the test. They would take it and get through it and put it aside as quickly as possible. So I don't think strategies for doing well were of any interest to them. They were pretty disheartened by the time the SBA's came about. They didn't tank it or throw it, that was to their credit, at least I didn't think they did. We've gotten so little data in any way that was useful that we've been able to look at, and confront, and even last year he (Richard) took the data and told us things that we could see weren't really beneficial. I mean, he's trying to say that we're not getting there, he's trying to be positive. And unfortunately we're the people that have to read the data, and know what's going on, and also the fact of the matter is you don't turn around a school within a year or two. That isn't a surprise, it takes a while to make a change, but that unfortunately goes to let them off the hook as much as it does... I don't think we have trends that are going up. I don't think there was anything that year that was positive. You could probably blame it on Christina, anyhow, when she was gone.

The question I asked earlier, 'is Christina going to be replaced by the end of the year?' was an after school staff meeting, I remember forcing, I mean, just saying straight out, 'can you guarantee that she will be here so at least the kids will have that consistency?' And they didn't answer that until the next time we met, it was a week or two later. I remember someone came down to talk with us, I cannot remember his name. I knew him, because he works for the district but I worked with him. He came down and, I won't say he tried to soften the blow; he tried to give us a reality check on the district. That second meeting was informal. Hector Bustamante, that's who it was. He had finished his doctorate and then explained how the district had totally ignored the work he did. (The district) was unwilling to look at what they were doing based on the research he did. And he was in a reality check, I think, trying to tell us what was happening, and he also let us know that the person they had picked, Mr. Rael, was the best we could expect to get, and was a good principal. That was the only thing they talked about because the solution for the high school wasn't even being talked about (MOC laughs) at that point. And I don't think at that point they knew it was Miss Tompkins. Hector was trying to deal with the upset because they had come to tell us something, not knowing at all what to tell us. I can only imagine the Superintendent saying, 'go down there, and put those people at ease,' while giving them nothing with which to put us at ease. So, it was disruptive, it was

damaging, it was uncomfortable for all of us. We thought, 'so, this is what you're doing, but you don't really know what you're doing. You don't have a clear plan. This is going to happen, but you don't know what's going to happen?' It was just so out there, that I think that was the most upsetting part of all of it, that they didn't *have* a clear plan to start with, and this thing went public. And that was the real problem. And maybe it got scapegoated out, I don't know, maybe someone else told someone in the media and they had to deal with it. I do remember we (MOC and KT) had heard it on t.v. before we heard it. It seems to me we didn't learn about it through the formal channels, we learned about it through public airways, that it was announced. I don't remember clearly.

We [La Independencia] were second fiddle anyhow so the focus wasn't on the middle school level; it was on what was happening at Ortiz. And Ortiz has always been reactive, even when something good may be offered there would be a huge reaction. It's really hard to gauge, and I didn't want to get involved. And if I went it was just to listen and just making sure I didn't put my hand up or say anything, it was just to... because, we were focused so much on trying to get the SAILS going and being the first year, and having to change my teaching, which was a process, that was enough of a change to where its just like, 'well, I can only handle so much. I want to focus on the kids and what's happening here. What the district does is not going to be changed by my going, so...' The District never make a decision that's changed afterwards, unless their hand is forced. It was the same thing when the new principal came in and she deleted the schedule and threw the whole school into a huge mess. They didn't deal with that until they were forced to, it was just very, 'wait until the wave hits' and they just supported her until the wave was too high. So you just don't get the feeling there is any point in going because the district itself does not listen to the staff or the teachers, or to the parents for that matter. The district wants, and makes sure, it controls what happens. That's why they got rid of the parent school board that had been going for 30 or 40 years, because when it got popular and lots of people were attending, parents got to pushing about what was happening with Special Ed, and the District, the School Board, did not want them to meet to talk about it. Their reaction to that was simply to shut it down, which was better than leading the parents into thinking that something was going to happen. But they wanted to go on maintaining control. That's one of the district's biggest shortcomings is that it cannot sense the importance of parental involvement. I just had a meeting at my son's high school, and a parent who just came in from an outside district, on the East coast, said he could not believe when he got to the school, how bad it was and how uninterested they were in fact, discouraging the parents from having a part in what was going on. He was just taken aback, shocked, because that was not his experience. I think that is where sometimes we don't even understand that that is the way other school districts function. They may function better as a result, I'm not saying this is an ideal thing but when you don't have parental input and validation, then you're going to have failure to connect with parents, which is fatal. And I think that's where we are now, and that's going to be the downfall of Puesta Del Sol ISD ultimately. Through the lack of parental involvement, they don't have ownership of what's happening. It isn't that they would control the teaching, controlling the environment or you know, the asset they bring to it or in the system is short circuited when they're not involved. And the district discourages that heavily; I think that's more than half of our battle is how parents see the school. At home

the reflection is, 'well, you're not doing well, it's a crummy school.' And they allow that, but if they were a part of it, involved, that wouldn't happen. In my estimation, over 25 or 30 years of involvement in Puesta del Sol ISD at various levels, they just don't want to hear from parents because they want to control them. That's where the charters have taken hold of so many people because they think, 'well, that's got to be better,' and unfortunately the charters aren't the solution either but it's the popular result.

Within SAILS, as the level of meetings escalated then family would be involved. Quickly, if necessary. Now if the student couldn't come to resolve the issue then we brought the family in. I remember that first year, a student we had particular difficulty with who was not in the program 7th and 8th grade and who continued to be a very difficult student. The parents were clueless that he was getting involved in gang-like activities and I think by the time he was done with 8th grade he was clearly doing gang activities. But very involved parents, they thanked us for the meetings, they said that they had never been in parent teacher meetings that were this positive. We were at the point of telling him that he was failing, we were not succeeding and the parents were afterward saying, 'thank you so much. We know there's a problem here and we're going to try to work on it.' And it was clear that the parents really valued that involvement. It was our expectation that the parents would come and try to do things that the kids would be proud to show the parents they were doing.

It was clear [the PCT work] wasn't going to have a lasting impression on how the school functioned. And I guess we have to give them the grace that they allowed SAILS to be a team through to the end. And maybe they took advantage and learned from it and adapted some of those things, and there is a behavior plan and there is a card system still in place for next year so some of that has spilled over and has not been lost completely. But I'm not sure in Puesta del Sol ISD that there is a way for them to admit that a group of teachers can come up with some solutions. I think they are unable to...they're not looking for true solutions. They're not looking for that from teachers. And when (a solution) comes to them they just naively don't want to give it credit because they feel like you've lessened their successes. There were only two people we asked for in the second year to be able to allow the whole school to do this and even despite that our additional \$5,000 in salary was paid by the State grant, the district refused to give us those two positions. It was nothing that they were putting into the school at all. They were making no financial commitment to the school at all. And when it doesn't work, and they start to talk about it, I am going to make it clear that it's because we had no help from the district. We were expected to do this with less, like everybody else, to implement programs and keep them functioning when we could not and it (the district) *purposefully de-funded* us. You got what you could expect, because you couldn't imagine a program that's engaged, prevent it from happening, how could you possibly make things work better. But they have no sensitivity to that because... nothing has changed, fundamentally, because La Independencia doesn't matter, the East Mesa doesn't matter because these are a bunch of dumb Mexican kids. I say that in the worst way, because I think that is how the district truly sees this. They have substituted a principal at a high school with the most difficulty, the most controversial takeover high school... (the district) offered that to a principal who had been *fired* from a high school. I don't know if

the idiot superintendent was aware of that, but they take that person, with no experience, put them in that position and expect a solution. It defies anyone saying, 'you do this for the right reasons.' You do it because it is expedient, because there's someone willing to do it, and has convinced you, not because you have a clear understanding that this is what you need to do to change the situation. You take the best principal you have in the city and put him or her in the midst of this admitted disaster, and try and find out what's been going on. And they *didn't do that*, and, I'm sorry but those white folk aren't that stupid. I accuse them of the worst prejudice, and of nonfeasance, misfeasance, malfeasance, whatever the -feasance because they just don't have a capacity to say we need to do the right thing here. I don't know why, I just don't know why because that's something I, ... this guy (the superintendent) came from the outside. He should have known better.

My sense of it was that the Professional Creativity Team was probably led by the Union, given that the school was going to be taken over. What form that would take? The Union pushed for the school itself to design its own reform. As I told you last time, their history of State takeovers was a disaster. The last thing the State wanted to do was to come in and take over the school, and the prior actions had been less difficult and this was where the district was given the order to make a change. I don't believe it would have happened other than the State telling the District, 'you have to make a change. You need to do this.' And when they went to redesign the two schools, since La Independencia was pushed into that, then the Union was pushing, 'well, then we need to have a committee that does this. And we need to have a look at best practices, and have a look at what needs to be there.' That's my understanding of it. It was difficult to get people to be a part of it. People were not falling over themselves to jump in. But then after it got started, there was even... it was hard to get people to fill in the positions. I guess, I'd just say they were skeptical to begin with. From what happened with the PCT work, I don't think they necessarily felt they could support it. Or that they even knew what it was which was my fear. Finally we were in apathy when some people resigned from it because the effort taken for it was pretty substantial. They couldn't get replacements easily; people didn't want to be a part of it and I think that's pretty much the way it always was until this year, when it's not going to be in effect anymore.

There was a young counselor. She was the most senior person there at that time. She had been there, been through all that, and had survived. As well as the secretaries. Brianne, the principal's secretary. (MOC laughs) She was probably more critical than were the counselors were because the counselors were no more now than a teacher. I mean, they are there to coordinate but they do not necessarily make decisions. They have their own union. It seems to me Christina left when there was less than a month after the thing began, when the transition was made. She said she had decided to take a position. I think if they had told us honestly because of the damage that would have been done if they had changed her in the year, I think it was her choice. I really do. And I think emotionally for her, it was too hard. She was very emotionally tied to the school and I think she wanted to break that, to make the transition. And what they did and how they did it was pretty nasty. I can't blame her. I can't say it would have made a difference if she had stayed. And there were awkward things. And that might have even gotten to her as well. People were having difficulty because they were having to deal with the change-over and

loyalties and who was still in control. It just wasn't handled well at all. We were all trying to do the right thing. [Richard] was positive about everything but to put it in a clear sense, it was handled improperly. The district should have said, 'there is a transition coming. We need to discuss it, then you need to discuss it with your staff. Then you need to finish out the year without minor, if any, variations. Then you need to work with the Principal one-on-one. The new principal needs to work with the staff, do what you need to do.' But it should have been something without our involvement. So, if [the takeover] had been done with clear knowledge... 'this is the way it's going to function, this is what's going to happen, this is what you need to do,' maybe with both the new principal and the outgoing principal present, to make sure that both pieces were included in it. But they [the district] don't know how to handle that. And I'm just saying that I will blame the District 100% that they do not know how to do what they did and, they don't have any experience with it. Not that it would help this district, it's too big. It has no memory except for legal entanglements that they've dealt with, and they've learned not to allow it to happen again. They don't do what's best for students, but rather what they need to [in order to] to minimize their exposure. The district does nothing but keep costs down and keep damage control. They need to maintain control, minimize damage, and control direction. And that's their most important point: the formula, I don't believe, truly involves whatever is best for the students. It involves what is best to keep the reins of power moving in the same way with the same control. They are so, (MOC exhales deeply) messed up.

The key problem was that the PCT work did not reflect what people were already doing. There was a fear of change, that I think in Puesta del Sol ISD or all of the teachers I have seen, that most of them, certainly older ones, have the greatest fear of having to do something different, in what they do. And make a change. And they are afraid of that. I didn't like what I was doing, I didn't think it was working very well, and I was open to change. They are afraid of the change, and just don't want to change. 'I don't know how to do it; I can't sleep at night if I don't do it that way.' I think that was a major part of their lack of time into it was that it meant they might have to change their practice. A well-handled shakeup could be useful, but, and maybe be a requirement, but not unless you hire the people that are going to effect the change, and implement it, and are comfortable with it. And if they found people that are willing to take what the PCT had put forth, or if they had taken the staff aside, and this was their failure, and said, 'if you want to stay, these are the things we're going to implement. This is what we need to see you are going to do.' If they had done that, and then said, 'you have an option of staying or moving on, and we will support you and you will be in the first choices,' then people would have had a reason to choose to stay or not to. And the district, or moreover the school, would have been able to say, 'you promised that you would be willing to implement these changes,' *and they never did that*. To me, that was ultimately the failure; that we signed a contract that said things that they never meant to enforce. And we can't, you can't implement that change unless you get the people who are going to implement it to accept it, then to train them...which is another step, 'okay you don't have to do this this moment but we will expect it by this time,' and then to evaluate people based on, 'did you implement this? What were your problems? What can we change to make that work, to see those goals achieved?' Because SAILS was going to make the change, it

isn't going to work because the SIG Grant isn't paying for it. The Principal is the one who is driving this, he is the one who is in control. And it's the CEO model, it's the business model; they drive the change, they control and say how to make a school better, and the Superintendent will guide that. He'll tell them the programs that are okay, and he'll accept those programs and then take it if they don't work, which they don't, and they never accept, and then come back and blame the teachers. They say, 'well, it's your fault.' It's a silver bullet image, as if there is going to be a solution. 'This is going to be the thing that changes it all.' And it just doesn't happen. In the school, I'm talking about this father who's coming from the East Coast. He's under just as much fire as we are, and is not meeting all the requirements of NCLB, despite that the parents are involved. And they're not failing either, but the whole NCLB problem is that it's aimed at a perfect result that isn't realistic. It assumes that all humans are widgets, and that's the problem. It's end result is unattainable. And I say, 'one size fits all, and all sizes fail.' Because if they aren't perfect in that silver bullet, then no one else has been able to describe yet, all of us will fail together because we're all being marched down the same road to uniform failure. So it's a model to me that's like, 'well, let's load the gun. Put six bullets in, one in each chamber, and aim it at our head.' The result is, it has to fail because you don't allow enough variation to be able to see positive differences and changes. People are making this statement that they know what will change, and I keep saying, 'where is your research that says where everyone is going is where we need to go?' They don't answer that; no one has a silver bullet. The most important thing that anyone has said is that there is no silver bullet and it takes 8-10 years to make a change in a big, big district. And none of that is discussed openly and public input and looking at research and what's going on it's... you know, for the SAILS Program all of the research was done by Kate. [The district] didn't come with anything else. The Union didn't bring in other research. The principal, the administration didn't have the basic things to work with, and I'm going to say therefore, 'well, why would they buy in?' but they didn't suggest the solution so they didn't buy into it. They're not going to support it, and that's the unfortunate part, that they said, 'let's do this process,' and then they didn't honor it. They've let the new principal morph it, and change it, and if they say the PCT work didn't work the first thing I'm going to stand up and say is, 'yes, but we haven't been following the PCT work, we've been following the grant. You can say we're put the two together and aligned them... there is always someone who will say we can match that... which is like the data, we can make it say anything we want... but we did not set out with students as the focus and really follow that. We did not put team meetings in place. We did not do the things that were necessary to make a fundamental change in how these students went about their lives and how they lived their education. And so, we were doing the same thing we'd always been doing. And how has it been working for us?' It wasn't. It has not changed in essence since we got there. We're doing the same... Which is why, for that school, a total change-out of staff could have been helpful. But it would have had to have the foresight and the understanding of who you're hiring, who you're asking to come down here. And indeed, in this district, I would bet that they couldn't get the teachers to come. It might even be the reality that if you did that, people wouldn't come. They would transfer. I don't know if that's really true. I don't know if the Principal would have supported it. He said that he was refused the two team members necessary, two more on staff, to implement it. Now if I was a person that was desperate to make something continue, I

would say, 'I'm missing two staff members so one grade has to be effected, but I can still implement this throughout the rest of the school.' It was their justification for, 'we can't do this anymore.' Then this last year, going into this next year, they offered it up as, 'well, how do you want to team? How do you want to have your prep? Do you want to have it shared by discipline or by the common students you have?' And they gave it as an option to choose, and then said, 'but know this: we don't have enough staff to do this.' So it was a non-choice offered. I even stood up and said, 'Do you understand what you're doing?' I didn't say clearly, 'you just phrased this in a way in which it isn't a choice and I think this needs to be deferred to a point where we can discuss it.' I should have just said, 'I object to what you presented. This should be done in a different way.' But I didn't and it wouldn't have changed anything. And I got called in next time I saw the Principal and I got questioned as to why I spoke up. He talks a game of staff being involved and until this next year when we're going to force it he has never had to deal with the union really following it. We were abandoned by the President of the Union this year. The President didn't come down at all this year. And she admitted herself that she didn't follow it and he [Richard Rael] was given *cârtte blâncbe* because no one was saying 'no' to him about the things he was doing and the way he was doing it. So next year with the Professional Creativity Team going away and Department Chairs being the driving force, it follows Union rules if we make it that she is half of the Union representation. There is another teacher who is pretty willing to put his neck out there, so my guess is that he's going to have to contend with the rules. And he follows them when he has to, when he doesn't he takes his liberties. The national acclaim that the PCT work received was only by a group of people who were lauding themselves saying, 'this is great.' And it's saying, 'we're doing great things,' meanwhile scores keep going down and we're not meeting AYP. And that's that game of playing against the government: 'well, look at all this acclaim, we're doing the right thing,' all of it just shielding the issues that never get confronted. They never sit down and say, 'why isn't this working? You're a teacher, interview us. What doesn't work? What *does* work?' Has anyone sat us down and said, 'what were the things you learned by this?' And with our school administrators in the school, 'did you notice this change? Did you know this changed or these things were different? Has anyone followed our data to see how different it is?' But we didn't have that support and truly if we had so much to do on our own, we bit off more than we could chew if we really wanted to get ourselves up there. And I don't really think that they would have helped us, I'm not saying they're wrong. I just mean that you reach a point at which you just can't do anymore. And this last year we were unsupported and we tried to support the students that we had and to end it well and then see if we can push out those things that didn't work well. This is not the last thing you're going to hear about SAILS from me. I'm sure they're going to say, 'well, that's over.' I'm going to say, 'I'm sorry, that's my experience. I learned from that, and you didn't listen. You didn't make an attempt to implement it.' But I'm going to talk about it, because I saw changes and differences which you can not acknowledge if you want to, but I'm going to talk about it a lot because this is where I change my teaching practice, and this is where I change the students, like she did. If it was bad PCT work there would be reason to ignore it. But it wasn't a bad job by the Professional Creativity Team, it is simply that it's been ignored. I don't believe that Puesta del Sol ISD ever had it in mind that they were really going to support this. It's lip service, because once again it's the East Mesa. They don't have the

parents behind it; if we had irate parents that were willing to go to the school board and say, 'you can't do this to my child' and not be afraid that the INS is going to be there, there would be a difference. The one active set of parents we did have in that school, one of our kid's parents couldn't get the support of the rest of the parents... couldn't get them to donate a dollar to a raffle, when they were coming to a parent teacher meeting... and they couldn't even give up a *dollar*, to give something *to* the school. They'll buy their kids a cell phone, but they aren't willing to help a set of parents in the school. You know, when you have the parents that are active say, 'we can't get any help.' Teachers can't get any help, we're standing out there on our own, and still \$2,000,000 later, at the end of this year, we're not going to be there.

There was no school community response to the takeover. They were there the first year, I don't think they were quite as active because it was the Principal who brought them on board as parents. We were getting all the parents involved, and they were truly interested but they didn't come in until the last two years, of being the most active parents. And they were doing great things: they were at every one of our field trips, curriculum night, you would always see them there, and they were always involved in the things the parents would be doing regarding making food, supporting them in doing this. It was always great to talk to them, they're great people, and we just needed 40 or 50 of those people, other schools had that much, but then in middle school a lot of its been turning back. Even in the schools in the Southwest, I think that's been a Puesta del Sol ISD failure. But still, those parents asking other parents, 'just give a dollar for a raffle,' just to promote the school and get parents involved, people would just say, 'no, no thank you.' They would be polite about it, but if you won't give up a dollar to a parent-run activity, then obviously you don't value parent-run activities in your school. Which is the case, *there is no parental involvement*. The parents are no more believing that schools are going to do what it needs to do... that the kids need what the school is offering, so they're not going to support it. They don't see a reason for it in the first place. They don't see a value in education. They'll tell their kids straight out, 'I didn't do well, you can stay home.' We had kids that had remarkably bad attendance this year, and parents that would just excuse their kids everyday for that. [Some kids] would be missing one-third of the year, and the parents aren't concerned about that. 'Well, she gets headaches.' 'Well, okay, can we work to change that? She can have medication here, if it's prescribable and/or authorized by you and she can go get it there like all the other students,' but a parent doesn't... there's no intrinsic belief by the parents that this is a valuable thing. Nor do the students believe that their education is a valuable thing, and that's what SAILS was aimed at. It was about students becoming self-motivated, believing in themselves, and believing that they deserved what was there, and that there was some value to it. And even I guess even the worst, quote-unquote, teacher of ours had something to offer, but it's hard to get our kids to open up because they're told by everybody, 'we're failing,' and there's no purpose. And they don't have a belief that their life will be better, and the parents don't expect that their life will be better, and only for the kids that see this, when you see their motivation do you see those kids going somewhere, and their parents being aware of it. Parents in poverty, and parents, are aware that you only get out of that poverty if the kids understand that, and they're going for it. So it's possible; it's not culturally impossible, it's not academically impossible, but that motivation... that statistic was, in all their

education I think it's less than 20 or 25% of our lives is in school. So the other 75% is, well you could take sleeping but it's still at home. Home is such a big portion of that, what chance do we have if the parents are not with us to change that paradigm that, 'the kids don't want to listen, the kids don't need to listen, there is no value in that.' And once they catch on in high school that this is important, because I've run into those kids and seen those kids, we're at a really bad place for kids to be turned off. When they get there and they finally key into this and I've met a few kids that have, *they're so far behind*. And they're embarrassed at the way they acted. I had a set of kids I ran into at Southwest University, they were now in high school, in a charter school, and they said, 'do you remember us?' I said, 'I remember your faces, but I've had so many kids because I was in the first year then,' and this was when I didn't have the kids everyday, and I said, 'I remember your faces,' and they said, 'do you still hate us?' And I said, 'look, I never hated you. I know it was hot, it was miserable. We had nothing to work with. You were bright students, and it was frustrating to me that I couldn't get you to see your own needs. How are you doing?' And they said, 'well, I've got a C in Science. I go to a charter school and I do the best I can.' But you can see there was a difference. And some of that maturity just isn't there in the 8th grade, and I don't think they see that until it's way, way too late, if they see it at all. For teachers that did not want to stay, they were actually given priority interviews with three principals and put on the must-hire list. Probably that priority interview was more important because three principals had to speak to the teacher so they had a chance of getting in. And they had to be hired, so if they could talk a good game about what they did at La Independencia then they had a good chance. No more than 20-25% of the teachers left. There wasn't a majority of people. There were some key people, and some I think were personal. We lost some good teachers there, but I don't think it was more than 20%. It wasn't a huge turnover; I think there might have been had there been, 'this is what you're expected to do.' Although that was printed on paper, it wasn't directly referenced to the PCT work. Those things weren't called out in the contract publication. I mean, specifically, in the contract. [The PCT work] was, well, it was also too rushed. There was no vision of being able to implement the change. You were just being told, 'you will do these things.' To the smarter teachers who had been through this before, 'make me, because if you don't provide the professional development you can't force me to do it.' And they didn't, there was nothing that really led... and to this day, [the Principal] still does not know what project-based learning or challenge-based learning is. We've had two professional developments on service learning and they *don't have anything to do with PBL and CBL classrooms*. He does not understand that it's a fundamental change, again being student-centered, being problem-based or challenge-based as the focus. The challenge is what's important; not that it's community-based, helping someone. And I only got this when we were set up for the second one this year, he still seems clueless. Nor have we had a presentation on it. I think that's actually his out. He admitted he does know but won't confront it.

The 2009 year began as such. It is typical, at least in my experience, for a principal to ease into a school. So their first year is always the least change and the most acceptable of anything. I won't say he did nothing, because that's not true. He was accepting of where we were, he let us finish that first year of the pilot and so the first year formally he was there, he was a kind of acceptance and, 'let's see where this goes.' So we were pretty

much undisturbed. That was probably the best year we had in terms of not having interference from the outside. He was trying to get a perspective as to where the school was going, so we could pretty much do what we needed to do. The SIG Grant was implicated, or imposed, or offered for the following year so that didn't take effect until the second year of the pilot that we did, 2009-2010. The only thing we had was the \$5,000 increment and, that year he was working for what was necessary to get that. The SIG Grant was offered for that following year, so we were...let's put it this way, he had no impetus to change anything. He just had to morph everything into what the state wanted. IT took effect in the 2010-2011 year and it just got re-offered for this year. It has a three-year possibility. The \$5,000 differential is just for being at a school that has that much difficulty. At least that was what was being offered as an incentive to stay, or as an incentive for new hires because in theory the administration would dissuade those from returning and ask those to leave who were not working toward the PCT work. That could be the theory behind it. And then, you would be able to get newer people, whether they were experienced or not. Hopefully they would be experienced by saying, 'well, this will be difficult, the kids are really difficult, but there is a \$5,000 bump in your salary.' So it's not quite a .2, it might be a .02 or something like that. In other words, it's an incentive and it goes on every year, thus far. In the 2009-2010 year Richard was observing and he's trying to get his feet wet. He's trying to attract the teachers to his style, he's trying to be very affable, and it's not like that's changed totally. It's not like he's ingenuine, or any different from who he really is but he wasn't having to try and change too much. There was an expectation that he had to although there was sort of implied in the PCT work but he had to figure out where the PCT work was and where to go with the committee and what they were doing. He had to work his way through that, to know where he really was. And there is so much that a principal has to handle and deal with, so much from above. And so much for what we were under scrutiny with, so it was not a surprise that's what a principal usually ends up doing to survive. The new Assistant Principal, Sharon, both Kate and I knew from Oak Hills Middle School. She was a teacher there. She was in training to be in administration. She went from there to High Desert MS, where she got most of her experience. She got to flex her muscle up there; very competent, very good scheduling. She's very thoughtful, she'll listen to you and she was the reason we got the Accountability Card in there; she was going to be taking over in regards to discipline. She knew that card was a very close duplicate to what we had at Oak Hills. But she knew the advantage it gave to manage student behavior and to track it; people can argue, 'well, it affects behavior.' I have strong beliefs it does. But she is very good, I won't say she's perfect but she's very good, very easy to work with. I won't say she understands SAILS really well. She did the best she could without any help from us; I know she had asked for some over the summer for scheduling but, she certainly did her best to adjust it into the schedule and...she wasn't knowledgeable about the PCT work plan yet but that wasn't really what she had to be involved in. Really, an assistant principal's role in most places is going to be scheduling and behavior. She did know the kinds of students she was going to be dealing with because of working at Oak Hills. So it wasn't like she was dropped into the fire from the frying pan; she had taught these kids directly at Oak Hills and although they're a step above the level of misbehavior and some of their intensity I guess is an echo from the difficulty they come from, but she was ready for that. I don't think she missed a beat in

how to work with kids. She knows enough Spanish to get through and she does announcements and leads the pledge. She works well with students, I'll put it that way too. We were lucky to get her.

SAILS had retained I think about 70% of the students we had before. That was where Sharon didn't show a real close scheduling and actually that fallout of putting all second-language students in a fairly high-needs status together, grouping them for a supposedly more effective instruction... which we think is backfiring but they're continuing it... that's their version of bilingual education. That reduced the number of students we had because they were just placed out of our reach. The 30% that we got that were new seemed to blend in pretty well, that's what we thought would happen. If we had a pretty good behavior, you know... our second year was a pretty good year. The second year showed a remarkable change in behavior; it seemed really... the new kids just modeled right after the old kids. They were the newbies, and the old kids were the cock-on-the-walk if you see it that way, and the new kids just morphed to their behavior. Rather than to bring out negative behavior, they just sort of adjusted and developed great behavior. And that was the whole intention. Everybody had the accountability cards, that was school wide. But yes, they did. They took to the class behaviors. There are always exceptions; we had our wild cards, the kids that are much more in need of help. We got some of those. But as in the same boat, the following year they worked in. Kids would complain that they really didn't want to be a part of this, but then they saw that it had significant advantages to it. They blended in pretty well. It's like anything: you have momentum, student behavior, it continues and if the momentum is horrible which is what we had at that school the first year when you were there...you can see what happens with that. Without a change, that is overall...and we had some pretty good changes, and we still have some challenges with some kids. That is one thing we don't do: everyone else does lunch detentions and punitive measures; that is one of the things we don't do. We don't have punitive reactions to difficulties with students; it is an opportunity for solving a problem for a student gaining an insight, or for an adult to say, 'that's one bad kid.' And that's a critical difference between the programs. Our number of Level-II's was so negligible that we had to go and find forms once in a while to actually do it, whereas other teachers had stacks of them and didn't have to bother to get others. In 7th grade it was pretty clear that I don't think I wrote one in the first semester. It was simply, there were better solutions and kids found better solutions. That may have taken them several levels of intervention; we might have had a lot of patience and not pushed them, where category by category they fall into that Level-II, we would do a lot to prevent that and see if there is one more time. Then there were those kids that needed to be handled, although some were a great success... those who had Level-II issues all the way through, there were maybe five of them in the 8th grade year. There was one young lady, she was running for student council, when she realized that...and she was taunted and taunted into (poor behavior)...she realized that that foreground of experience is very hard to step out of. When they come with that, and even when they find better ways to solve problems, they still have that gut reaction as well as family influences that really make it echo and we have to remind the administrators, 'well, yes the student did do this. But remember, she was raped by her father.' These are things that, considering what the students have gone through, *they've had a major change*, and you have to see that what they are going

through is part of the process of growing. And it's going to include Level-II's, but that's not something we did or were afraid we were trying to set the figures on that. And I have no idea if they kept good numbers, or what that comparison was because it was just so much lower as did our intervention times. It, we were meeting maybe once or twice a week at the beginning of the 7th grade and I think towards the end of the first semester it trailed off too infrequently to sense that we had just gotten over the hump. We were dealing with more intense issues for some kids, and with the others focusing much more on the academics than behavior, which is where we should have been as a school. A good chunk of SAILS students went into ESL, and there was also a good chunk that just weren't scheduled with us. There wasn't a real attempt to make that possible, and we did retrieve a few of those kids, but then were told, 'no more changes.' So it was the first feeling we had that the program wasn't totally accepted by the administration. It certainly wasn't going to be held out as we thought it would be. We needed to be intact to see what was going on with it. Which probably was a precursor for their not being clear about would happen to us. It wasn't their idea and it just doesn't put a feather in your cap, which is as they see it. It could be for an administrator who is able to say take what an educator has done and be able to sponsor that, or encourage it. But Puesta del Sol ISD attracts and promotes individual turf battles, knowing that to be in charge, to get people to do what you want to do, at least those are the people who rise to the top. And I've known numerous people in Puesta del Sol ISD who would make excellent administrators who had no intentions of ever going to those positions. Because I think they knew very well [the positions] were political or held by influence, 'where you go as you go,' you have to be one of the good ol' boys to get there, even the women had to be good ol' boys, and so playing that game to rise to the top.

I think that the end result of the ESL segregation that we seem to have seen through the last year as well as what I think started happening that year, was that those kids became more grouped together but also then segregated from the general population in the sense that they were probably more kids, not simply Mexican because there were a lot of New Mexican kids that didn't know English very well as well but, it tended to accentuate and they had more problems out of those classes. The kids that were difficult, and those classes were probably more difficult because of language issues, kids were feeling out of place and were not able to keep up, they were not having their needs met, from what we could tell. Now we weren't in those classes. But it echoed into a very clear indication last year that this shouldn't be continued, and it is going on. So it's a poor implementation of bilingual ed., as we saw it. And they didn't have enough funding to do it right the first year, and the last year it was even worse because of the RIF's, Reduction In Force, and with the loss of teachers it wasn't able to have the integrity it did before. The last thing is that the Linguistic Resource Department is furious about it, and has asked them to stop it. They replaced their Language Arts class with a Spanish Language Arts class, and those teachers supposedly were trained parallel with the English-teaching teachers, but clearly it was the grouping of kids and in a sense it might be a more programmatic failure, but a failure with the kids who ended up in those groups, that they just had a whole lot more trouble than they could handle in the classroom. If they had had a diffusion of those kids, and the more difficult ones, I'd say one or two in a class, but unfortunately... and the teachers that were involved in it that year were trying to give the kids feeling of latitude

and acceptance, 'it's okay,' and unfortunately it was an approval of the way they behaved and it only made itself worse in the last year. Not horrible, horrible stuff, but it was enough for everyone to conclude this wasn't the direction to be going in but we're still going in that direction. I think that's what the isolated ESL kids altogether miss; [the segregation] doesn't allow them to have that exposure to the kids who are good ways out of basic ESL education. They were quickly laid on to the early development, and they can be much more helpful to those kids than a bunch of kids like them. And that grouping and differentiation by like groups, heterogeneous versus homogeneous, makes such a difference but I don't think we have that sophisticated an administration right now. They are really not working at their highest levels of what can work well, not listening to what teachers say, let alone the Linguistic Resource Department district-wide say... I guess they can just bypass that.

In that 2009-2010 year, the Professional Creativity Team had just been hazardously and hurriedly been put together at the end of that last year, too quickly for even administration to understand the scope and depth. It was the first year of implementing the PCT work, and the new Principal, and it... that first year was going to be somewhat chaotic; sort of, 'wait to see what happens and what the results are.' Everything can be excused as, 'well, we're in a new phase with the PCT work. We need to get used to this.' There were things that didn't take place in retrospect and continued, that we see. This next year is going to be somewhat of a test getting those things back in place, pressuring them to do this. Yeah, and I was not on it. I had nothing to do with it. The Department Chairs that year [came together] towards the end of the first year. It became a nothing, basically. The Professional Creativity Team in the year we're talking about was in full control of looking at all the issues that came up, and [the Department Chairs came together] just pretty much in form, it was there but that's about it. Testing became more accelerated that year. CFA's are short-form assessments, school-wide. It is supposed to give the State a read as to what our progress is with our students, somewhat informally. Each department does one, so kids get 5 tests, 5 times per year. That's 25 tests. It's not wonder by the time the students get to the SBA in March, they're like, 'screw it.' They are exhausted, and it does not help this group of kids. It's too much testing. We did the Bubble Kids that year. They urged you to work with the kids to prepare them for the test, as in advice about multiple choice testing, that happens through your DBA prep. But it was hired to push for the money from the State, so I don't think it had quite as high of stakes. Now obviously it was the main thing that we were looking at, but I don't think his success at the elementary level had come from his approach to the test. So I think he felt like it was no big difference for us. The length of a CFA was different depending on what you did, and the way ours (science teachers) were implemented it took longer each time you took it because it extended in length each time you took it. It was, we were given the charge to come up with a CFA without the knowledge of how to come up with a CFA. We have just gotten that training at the end of this summer. And now that I see how much time it takes to develop a CFA... it is a huge thing that is not easily approached by us but we still have to do one. And now it's going to be the frustration of knowing what you're doing, how it needs to be approached, because it's almost a full-time job to come up with a CFA that is meaningful, and gives you information, and increases in depth of

knowledge, and through the year measuring their depth of knowledge. That's an incredibly interesting and in some senses a difficult thing to do.

In the 2009-2010 year a lot of people were still angry because Christina was pushed out. I don't think they took their anger out on him but I don't think they really bought into him replacing her yet; they were going to see how he was. His end of the first year was just kid gloves, 'do exactly what was there,' he wasn't really there. His first year, he was looking for their favor. I think, in my mind the question was more of 'did they buy into the PCT work?' Really, they were wondering how they were going to be judged against that PCT work, with the exception of those people that had just left. To me this would have been the year in which the Principal and the Professional Creativity Team look at what teaching styles we have, what were the same, what do we need to change, or unacceptable to meet the needs of the PCT work, and a reason at the end to say, 'go fish.' But that wasn't done, so at the end of that year and more this year was there a scrutiny and a statement of if you aren't implementing these things in your classroom then we are going to ask others to replace you and you need to find a job somewhere else. It's not that you're doing a bad job but you don't match the PCT work. That was what people I think were wondering about. So in that year when they didn't do anything, nor did they last year, really the PCT work wasn't used in the way it was conceived which was to try to get staff that were more into that design and to say, 'well, you may not want to change your teaching practice but that's what's expected because we're going to push toward PBL and all the other pieces that are in the PCT work. It hasn't been done and in fact there was no oversight by the Union that helped implement it and put it into existence. That's why hopefully Kate with the help of the Union will push to see more compliance with the PCT work, be it reality or more in appearance, we will find out. The PCT work was not subverted but it was ignored. Even the Professional Creativity Team fell apart, people could see they weren't really having input with the Principal. And that is what was important. He felt his job was on the line getting the Grant from the State, and that that had to be complied with above all. But really it became subservient to the Grant, to get the money, to keep the money, to get the money the second time around. They gave lip service to matching the grant to the PCT work but it was only lip service. That's going to be the issue here, is we are not doing what we said we are going to do. We need to do this. And I think it's going to be a total inconsistency with what we have to do. So we'll see.

It was the district that told Richard to go for the SIG Grant. It's paying our \$5,000 so the District did not want to have to pay that so understand that he had to do it otherwise the district would have to pay our \$5,000 which they still aren't paying, and they don't give us anything in benefits. We're not even given a few extra staff to complete our PCT work. The district doesn't have to pay that \$5,000; this is one of those things were the pay nothing but lip service to a change and they are letting the State pay for the difference. And the other problem is the monies are limited to: it cannot go to materials, they can buy some, they can buy assistants, they can pay for a Dean of Students, they can pay for the coaches, they can pay for visiting professional development people which we've paid enormous sums of money, the Grant gives us money to throw away, but the Principal cannot buy day-to-day supplies. It cannot enrich the environment that the

children see. We get nothing. This is like, 'you've won this, but you can't spend it on anything that will make a difference in the classroom.' And as a coach, they didn't hire extraordinary human beings that can work well with supporting other staff; in some cases, I think they've tried to be controlling or felt like they were in a position of knowledge and knew everything, full well us knowing that they didn't have that experience or knowledge. Supposedly, and this is where fidelity comes in, they were fidelity coaches, 'we're going to keep you on the math program. We're going to keep you on the language arts program.' And that's what it became, the Grant didn't mean that there was anything palpable for us, probably nothing we could see was going to help us. We're given more students, less time, more things to do, and you don't have the... we had no supplies that year. This year the Principal had given us \$60 worth of supplies, with Christina we would get \$200 to spend on whatever we needed. Now we get a box full of things we don't use; I'll never need so many paper clips. But that was their way of doing it last year. There was zilch last year, due to budget cuts. Not to blame them, everything is being paired down. The screws are put to NCLB, we're having to do with more students pushing harder and less to do it with, less staff to do it with, less trained staff to do it with, and it's like having the rug pulled out from under you when you're standing at the front of the room saying, 'we're ready to go at this,' and then woosh, you're on the floor again. Not only do you know it won't happen because NCLB is impossible, but you know that you're now being put in a position to where it is now impossible for you to see the gains. What we see is unbalanced, there have been some gains. I would say that in math there probably have been some gains...but it is not going to bring them up to the standards that we need, which is the SBA. What do we see now, nationwide? Cheating. Teachers are trying to give them what they want in data, data because data is everything, but it isn't, 'are kids actually ready?' The only measure is standardized testing. And I don't know, maybe we have colleges and universities to thank for that. That certainly is a conservative view, that maybe the only valid testing is standardized testing. The CFA was to keep the State thinking we were doing the right thing, the DBA's are to give them the hard data without more high testing conditions that should parallel what happens on the SBA. I was approaching science from a circular point of view: that is, if I could get kids interested in doing science I had to teach them the scientific method, that was primary. I had to teach them a particular order, it was unimportant anyhow. I was trying to get them sparked in science because they had none. That's the best I can do. Here is a question: Is assessment worth what we put into it? Does it take out the academic time, which I believe it does? Does it have value and tell you about kids what you don't know? Depends on how you do it. If you're in the classroom, actively tracking how your kids are doing, then you know how your kids are doing and if they're getting it. If it's like me, I really can't say that I want the kids to know all the planets if I can get them to understand how we go out and look at things that we can't touch, and develop scientific knowledge from it. If they figure out that there are orbits, planets, galaxies out there, major concepts, that's what I'd like to be able to say I know that I know this about my students. When they get to high school they're going to hit the content really hard, piece by piece, and that's where it's going to come down to, 'do you know all your cell structure, etc.' My kids do not retain, no matter how many times I repeat it, our little CFA throughout the year, we went over each question, lock, stock, and barrel, we talked about each question: a week or two later, it was amazing how many of them failed it. They could not retain

because they are not given that tool as they come through elementary. Is that information what we're after, or is it concept? They can pull in the information as they learn the concept, but what I didn't achieve was that I was not able to instigate or create that curiosity about science in all of my students. They came in not having it; they had been pretty much turned off in elementary school. 6th grade is kind of a pivotal year, I'm hoping to do more of this but when they come in with no reason to learn, no curiosity about it, they don't care that we land on Mars. They don't care that the cell phone is constructed that way, they only want a cell phone. They just want to get through school and have fun with their friends, which they see as having nothing to do with the kind of lives they want to lead. And it's not impossible, I'm faced with a lot of technical terms other teachers are not. Many students did not have any science in elementary school. None. And that's something that I didn't really know, and it's going to take me a lot of effort this year to see if I can change it. I should have known, I wish I had known that, but I didn't teach 6th grade before science. The pilot year was my first year teaching science, so I didn't quite understand that. Now after three years I can see that maybe 25% of my kids got interested in science, maybe 50% understood some basic concepts of science and had some knowledge about it, and then 25% are three sheets to the wind and don't have anything going for them. And that's my fault. I have to deal with that. All in all, if my numbers are correct, I have to be at least happy that I got that much done.

The problem is the content testing, and not all multiple choice testing is content, there is some long answer/short answer, multiple choice testing, but the content in my belief is that the content is the least important thing we would teach. It would come not necessarily perfectly, but if we were teaching scientific method and the basic concepts of science first, and that is actually what the national core standards are moving towards, is that science is now being created and the first step of it is complete framework and is talking about the concept of how science works. Its talking about planets and galaxies and content first, having to teach towards that content and the tests that they're going to take, there is no science in the SBA's. They just eliminated the science, except for 7th grade, from the SBA. So it's in my mind it's totally useless; one measure point in the 7th grade isn't going to make any difference. They won't be able to draw anything from what I did or if someone else did it. My thought is, forget it. All of the content requirements focus on what comes first, the scientific method, the core knowledge of science and a very basic stuff, and see if you can get the curiosity, the reading and math that comes with that which is what I'm going to do this year. This is what I'm doing this year, the reading and math through science. And hopefully, as they learn to read better and they learn to do problems, they'll learn to do problems with it. When it comes to that, standardized testing is a total waste of time. It is a vacuum of probably 20% of our teaching time; it reduces our ability to get things done. We take them in school, in college, in job applications, on the job, and then in this coming society we're told they have it even less. Somebody's complaining about people relying upon Google for knowledge; frankly, it's fine with me if they know what kind of knowledge they need to make a decision, to solve a problem. It doesn't matter where they get the information, they didn't have it in their heads. Go to any job and they have books and references for all you need to find. You go to your neighbor who knows more about that and you put it together as a team; it's not about knowledge and content, it's about concept and

approach. And that's what business says, they need team capable, people who can work together to solve problems. And problem solving is my focus! I don't care about the science content. If we really knew what we were aiming for in the SBA and had clear knowledge of it, and that's the problem: it's Stupid-Based Assessment. It's just not measuring knowledge but again it is the money or the currency of college applications and job applications. Until we change that and turn assessing kids' ability to think rather than, and I don't know what the ACT or SAT stuff is like, but it's not drill and kill its going through and solving problems. The unfortunate reality is that is if we're aiming these kids at college at we should be, that is the unfortunate result is that they have to get to a level of understanding how to do a Caucasian test. Frankly, I don't think there's much equity in those, I don't. I never read the research on that, but here we are, a multicultural country, strains of English-Only, and no, we need to be looking for something that really assesses people's thinking. We don't do that, and that is the whole failure of NCLB. If you get in a 6th grader who is at the 3rd grade level, and by the end of the 8th grade the student is at a 6th grade level, you've done an amazing job! That is totally ignored, totally thought of as a failure. And so, your gain for that kid is ignored, and the kids who had the pre-knowledge, and the pre-experience, and the home life and encouragement and focus, what I call the assets, those kids that came with the assets have them all the way through and they will have a chance. You're discouraged from doing what you've done because you've done all you can for that student, so the growth model is what they've talked about and if they're inactive then it's going to be even worse. I don't know how it could be worse; we've already been told we're going to do everything with nothing, and now we have even less than nothing. And this year, even less than less than nothing given the cuts in education. We're just turning our backs on education; the privileged class is controlling, and this is 1% of America, is controlling is ability of people to get medical care, to get education, and if you really look at it with pessimism, they are assuring that there is a group stupid people that can work for them at low wages for nothing and are going to be ignored in health care. And it's just mindboggling. It defies the belief that we could be allowing this to happen.

Richard is no more effective at getting the maintenance union to correct building failures than anyone. We still have heating problems to huge extents, cooling problems when it comes to that. We still have unacceptable classroom conditions that are ignored. I guess we've reached the limit to say that...it is a part that principals give up on first. And what Christina did to finally get us air conditioners for the rooms when we pleaded and pleaded and said, 'this is intolerable,' which it was. That didn't happen when things were too cold. Public statements of a revamp of our system made zero difference. Nothing was changed that I can see since I've been there. The effectiveness of the heating and cooling part of the plant is horrendous, even in certain parts of the building. The one time that they brought in an external contractor who actually stayed and did his job, I saw him several times at lunch and he said that the [maintenance union] told him that everything was fine. But he had a list of 30 things as to why things weren't functioning. In other words, [the maintenance union] doesn't have anyone knowledgeable to actually come in to the meetings. Add to that the PCT work failures, and nothing was replaced. Patches were put on, but no one came back and said, 'is it fixed?' It's just publicity; if you say it's

fixed, then it's fixed. If you say that people are free, people are free. The reality doesn't matter. No, the Principal has done no better.

I would say that SAILS has almost been excised. It is not in the District, it's not there, it's as if it never happened. There is no talk about it; there was resentment by other staff that we were doing anything so I don't know. I am going to talk about it until someone says I can no longer talk about it, but then I am going to continue talking about it. We have to talk about change. But the school has not...nothing has changed. The more things change, the more they stay the same. I changed my teaching practice so radically, but I don't think that many of the teachers there changed their teaching practice. It has been so small that there has been no method to change.

Summary and Analysis

Based on three in-depth interviews (collated here into one narrative) with Martin O'Connell, La Independencia MS is presented as a school long-neglected by the Puesta del Sol Independent School District. Martin's early experiences in education showed the importance of warmth and affection between teachers and students. Such experiences were highly influential in Martin's decision to enter the teaching profession and are clear in his current work with students. His teaching experience at Oak Hills MS served as an introduction to NCLB and Title-I status schools.

Upon his moving to La Independencia, Martin was faced with Restructuring-II and the impending takeover of administration. While the rhetoric and routine grind of teaching and assessing in a targeted school was not new, the facilities were far less accommodating. Certain parts of the school were laden with asbestos and required classes to be moved to the library until maintenance workers sanitized the classrooms. (While not mentioned in these interviews, it is important to note that the oldest building in the Puesta del Sol ISD still in use is located on La Independencia's grounds). Christina Jojola proved to be an effective leader in the sense of creating an accepting educational site for students and teachers. However prevailing antagonisms amongst faculty members that

had been relatively unaddressed were evident upon Martin's first day in La Independencia. Christina's ultimate shortcoming was her inability to effectively work with difficult student issues; frequently her methods for resolving student issues were to overlook the deeper causes of students' acting out and then return them to the classroom with little to no reason for improvement.

The tension that had grown amongst the faculty within La Independencia MS was not conducive to teacher communication, interdisciplinary lesson planning, and placing students' best interests at heart. However, this was only one tile in the entire mosaic.

Martin stated that La Independencia had been the most neglected school in the Puesta del Sol ISD. His claim is justified in that the facilities were rundown, dangerous, and ultimately not conducive to student learning. When compared to the resources Martin had at his disposal as a student in Open Hands Elementary and then as a teacher at Oak Hills MS, La Independencia was clearly short-changed.

The district announcement of an administrative takeover was not a complete surprise to the faculty and staff; such warnings had been made since La Independencia entered the Restructuring-II phase of Corrective Action, given that AYP was never met. According to Martin, the announcements were made via local news media, the reports were inconsistent at best. Mixed messages were disseminated to the public and attempts to appease inquiring minds only made the situation worse. Town hall meetings between East Mesa educators, community members, and Puesta del Sol ISD officials descended into open shouting matches. Articles concerning the takeovers, were published by local newspapers included slanderous quotes about the school community in general and La Independencia MS/Ortiz HS administrators in particular.

La Independencia faculty and staff responses initially took the form of concern, fear, and anxiety. Surprise was not a prevalent sentiment.

However, no middle school in the district made AYP, such justification thus became a double standard. If failure to make AYP justified the takeovers of La Independencia MS and Ortiz HS, why weren't other middle and high schools facing similar repercussions? The only answer is that the AYP scores were a veneer to cover what was a trial run of removing otherwise effective administrators. Martin stated that parental involvement in La Independencia was abysmally poor compared to surrounding schools. This shortage was well known to the district officials who intended to carry out the replacement of Christina Jojola with Richard Rael; the lack of outraged and vocal parents to challenge the district's intentions only accelerated the takeovers. However, the narrative with Christina Jojola presents a different perspective on the parents and school community.

When the Professional Creativity Team (PCT) was established and charged with redesigning the entire school (Ortiz HS experienced the same but I will maintain the focus on La Independencia's situation), the district officials' failure to adequately explain the situation made faculty members quite reluctant to join. As incoming Principal, Richard Rael was allowed to choose two faculty members from a competitive pool to be on the team. Susan Westfield, the Union President, was given four. Martin's reference to the hesitation of many teachers to join the PCT was clearly based on the District's inability or unwillingness to clearly answer teachers' questions or provide their own explanation as to why a Professional Creativity Team was the most viable solution for La Independencia's educational daily life.

Lost within the debates and district initiatives were the students, the focal point of the school. While Martin's take on Christina's approach to managing student behavior was precise (in my assessment), once they realized that there was a severe lack of institutional oversight following Christina and Alice's individual departures student behavior became increasingly more unruly. Many students who were siblings of older La Independencia graduates experienced a form of separation anxiety and melancholia following Mr. Paz's death and Christina's removal.

At present a certain tension exists between the work completed by the Professional Creativity Team and the School Improvement Grant. No additional teachers have been hired, but there is sufficient funding for Instructional Coaches to survail the teachers, a Dean of Students to work with behavior issues, and additional scripted programs. In a sense, the PCT work which the district officials verbally endorsed has been nullified if it is in contention with the School Improvement Grant. Richard Rael was encouraged by the district to apply for the SIG Grant, which was awarded in 2010. However, in the absence of Union supervision and lack of teeth in the Professional Creativity Team, Richard has been able to ignore the PCT work and instill those measures and changes that best suit him. The Small-Learning Communities that were student driven and dedicated to a common core of students (a PCT initiative the district endorsed) have been replaced with Professional Learning Communities that are data driven and in which the member teachers share few if any common students. The establishment of Professional Learning Communities was a district initiative, however, when it was announced PCT members voiced their opposition given that it would conflict with PCT work, Richard supported the district over his own teachers. The district's

commitment to pay teachers and administrators the \$5,000 differential simply for being at a school as difficult as La Independencia was taken over by Richard and now the differential is covered by the SIG Grant. Yet, Richard is justifying the \$5,000 differential by claiming that it is for all of the additional Professional Development that the teachers receive.

The most visible impact of the takeover is an increase in standardized testing. La Independencia students and teachers now face over 30 days of standardized testing: one set of exams, the Content-Focus Assessments (CFAs), mandated by Richard Rael, are intended to assess student learning of actual course content; the second set, the District-Based Assessments (DBAs), are mandated by the Puesta del Sol ISD and intended to streamline content to the SBAs; the SBAs are Standards-Based Assessments and are the single point, once per year, standardized exams mandated by No Child Left Behind. Taken together these exams account for over 30 instructional days per year (over six complete weeks of instruction), not including the required test preparation lessons or the make-up examinations for absent students. There have not been marked improvements in facility upkeep or additional full-time teacher hires.

Christina Jojola

Biographical Information

Christina Jojola was born and raised in New Mexico. She attended public schools in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District eventually pursuing undergraduate and graduate work at Southwest University. Her parents clearly instilled in her a sense of commitment and drive that carried into her teaching and administration. Christina became the first Latina Principal of La Independencia MS, the same middle school her father

attended. The events that transpired in her removal from La Independencia by Cathy Wayne are provocative, and her words raise further questions regarding the unchecked power and authority of district administrators to remove leadership based simply on unpopularity and vulnerability. Christina Jojola's *cariño* reverberated across the East Mesa community for 17 years and is still reflected upon as unparalleled amongst the education administrators of the area.

Interview Narrative

I was born and raised here in this city. I had very strong parents, always involved in our lives. So I always believed that they were our first educators and as amazing as it is, my mom only graduated with an 8th grade degree but at age 52 she got her high school diploma. She felt it was important to get that in her life but I never saw her as an uneducated woman, ever. My father dropped out of school, stole his brother's ID and took off to the Navy so he never completed high school either. But the value of education had always been important. Teaching for me came late in life. I was a good student all through school, but I really didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up. I knew I wanted to be happy, I knew I would go to college. Although my parents never forced us, they always had that... 'if you want to do that, as long as you feel happy that's your success in life.' So if we wanted to be plumbers or, I don't know, garbage people, if that's what made you happy that's what made them happy. So they knew the value of education but they always knew that it shouldn't define who you are because family was important, as well as other areas. I was the second to go to college. There is only five in our family. I had an older brother who went to the college of hard knocks; he went through the penal system. And so we always knew that we did not want to make those same kind of mistakes. My older sister graduated with her business degree. So I went into college without a plan (CJ giggles). She took me under her wing and guided me through college. So I started off as a business major, slash, pre-law. Because of my brother's situation, I thought law would be something that I would want to fight for those rights of people similar to my brother. Did not like any of the undergraduate coursework in business (CJ giggles) and realized very soon that that was not my passion. Unfortunately I was expelled from college twice because of grades. The second time I was able to petition and go back. And at that point I found my niche. There was something I really fell in love with and that was teaching. So at the time my boyfriend's mom was a teacher, and I would visit her classroom and just fell in love with the interaction and the compassion and the passion she had for her kids. And of the relationship she had, and I don't know, it just hit me that I've always been somewhat similar to her. So I went to talk to a teacher that I felt a great connection to in high school and in fact she was one of the teachers that helped my younger brother who was kind of going down a, a bad path in high school. And I saw the influence of her stopping her world in order to meet and talk with my brother and how much he changed his life to get more positively involved in school. And I realized the power of the teacher was so tremendous. And on the flipside, I

always wondered had my brother had more attention in school, maybe he would have not made those decisions that he did to go astray. So I knew the power of *not* getting involved in your students' lives. So when I went back to college I decided that education was my area, and I finished my degree finally of stopping and working. And I got into the master's program through Southwest University, so I got my master's in a year and that's when they placed me at La Independencia. And that was in 1992. In my first year I taught 6th grade math. And I was in charge of every committee that no one wanted (CJ giggles) and I was involved with any after school activity that nobody wanted, because I wanted kids to have that after school experience. I taught for two years, and then my brother who had gotten out of jail became a jailhouse lawyer, started his own business and opened up a second business in Tucson. So he asked me to run it. So I thought I was compelled to help out my brother in a time of need, and thought maybe it might be a good experience for me. And it was, it was amazing. I got the business of the ground and handed it back to him because I knew I wanted to be back here. And I wanted to be back at La Independencia. I knew I could get a job because 50 per cent of the staff left La Independencia every year. They didn't stay very long, they just got their foot in the door. But unfortunately there was no openings so I had to go and interview at other schools. At the very, very end Granite MS offered me a job in August and then almost days before that La Independencia offered me an elective position. They didn't know what elective it was, and so I was able to create my own class called Career Education. And at that time there was a national movement called School to Careers, so it kind of fit nicely with what I had thought about. And that I really truly think that at least in middle school, we really need to start talking to kids about after high school, and getting them ready, and seeing how high school credits affect their future. Again, I was a great student but I really didn't have a lot of guidance as to what I wanted to do when I grew up. And I thought, 'if someone can give that kind of guidance to a kid, then maybe they wouldn't flounder so much as I did in college. Waste time, waste money, waste energy, you know?' So I wouldn't trade my life for the world, but I just think that it would have been easier for some kids.

So I taught that for three years. Got very involved with the school, and decided that since I was a single woman with no kids, that I would apply to get my administrative license, with the intention of going straight back to the classroom. I did not have aspirations to move ahead in life, I just wanted to have something in my back pocket in case maybe later on down the road, I did want to try that avenue. So I did my administrative license in a year, got my administrative license in a year, and then I went back to the classroom. Out of all of my twenty colleagues, I was the only one who went back to the classroom, 'cause I loved it. I didn't have any reason to leave. And then in the following year, mid-semester they told me that the assistant had taken a principal's job and that I would be acting assistant for the remainder of the year. So from a Friday to a Monday I was from my classroom to my office. (CJ smiling) It was pretty fast and furious. So I was the assistant for three years, and I was very fortunate to have the principal I had because he trusted me enough. I was his intern but he trusted me to allow me to grow on my own, to do pretty much whatever I wanted to. Obviously I had to ask permission but he never gave me reins, he just let me fly. And so for an assistant I got more experience than most assistants at that time, which then allowed me three years later to go ahead and apply for

the principalship. So, I think I was like 34, 35. I was kind of like the second-youngest principal that was at La Independencia. And I was at La Independencia as a principal for seven years. I spent a total of 16 years at La Independencia.

As a teacher, I never had a control issue or a power issue. I just always believed that this was 'our classroom, not my classroom.' My first few years, especially your first year is always your craziest. I didn't feel out of control that first year. I just always felt very natural. So I was very fortunate. I don't know if it was because of good support systems or, you know, I was in my master's program, that kind of thing. Even in a difficult school I never felt unnatural in that classroom. I always set up my classroom with the students in mind. Always. My planning was always with the students in mind. I tried to meet every need, and so I would have for example a quiz every Friday to see how they were doing in math. And I would have 26 or 27 different quizzes because I would have 26 or 27 different levels within my 6th grade math. But I felt it was important that they were being challenged at the level they were at, not at the general middle level. And so I created assignments based on the gifted kids, the twice-exceptional, whatever it was to make sure that kids were engaged at their level. And then moved them as they could move up.

I did expect the same of my teachers which was kind of hard because it's a lot to expect of teachers in this day and age with No Child Left Behind and all the other regulations, but I just know that if you empower students you're going to see so much more come out of them. And your results, whether you're testing or whatever, you're expectations will be met tri-fold.

Amongst my accomplishments as Principal, well before I even got in the door I was the first Hispanic female at La Independencia. I didn't realize that until Mr. Paz pointed that out to me. I think the team concept, to have the department level teams meet by grade level and by department level to meet within the duty day was extremely important for teachers to be able to plan, cross-plan, horizontal planning, align to make them work smarter, not harder. Anyway I could try to get the teachers down to a complete science in their teaching was huge for me. I think moving the instructional counsel from that to a Department Chairpersons Team. And truly making them leaders within their school. Again empowering students and staff. Because I see a lot of schools don't have that and teachers are just kind of there to teach and nothing else and yet, they have so much to offer.

When I found out that I was the first Hispanic female Principal of La Independencia I was in shock. I was thinking, well, being from the East Mesa you would think that I would be like down the road, 5th or 6th. It was probably because my dad was one of the first kids to attend La Independencia so I always felt like La Independencia was my home. So obviously as a Hispanic person you would think there should have been so many more but.... And I think as a woman, I hate to say it but you kind of have to fight twice as hard because for a man some of these things are quite natural and acceptable and yet for a woman it's quite the opposite. But I knew that I got that job based on, well, my interview committee was 16 or 17 people on that committee, ranging from staff to parents to community members. So I knew that I got it based on a collaborative group, not just

one or two people picking me. And so obviously meeting those 17 expectations and desires and wants, told me obviously that I must have what it takes. There had been two other females [Principals of La Independencia], but they were from a different ethnicity. So I was the third one. But I believe I was the longest lasting too, as a principal. Most of them spent about 2 or 3 years, and then they left.

In terms of my successes as a Principal, I think moving the school...when I got there in 1992 it was a very hard core school. They were, they were young, not even young adults, they were adults on campus in many ways, even though they were in kid bodies. You know? And there was a level of fear at that school by adults; that's why they didn't last very long. And I think just moving that to kids, not perfectly, but moving that so that they were back to being middle school kids, and that that was ok, to be a silly middle school kid rather than trying to be an adult, or grow up so fast. So really just this shift of a thug school to a school where kids are there to learn. Because I think that I have heard a lot of people come in and say, 'you know, I'm pleasantly surprised because this is not what I pictured La Independencia to be.' And I'm always thinking, 'well, what did you picturing?' And most of them say, '*Lean on me.*' And I'm like, 'wow.' (CJ laughs). Because I don't ever think of La Independencia as the school in that movie. But yeah, at one time that school was run by those kids and in a negative way. And I think we moved that from a negative way to a positive way.

I never really looked outside to other resources and I think that was one of the things that [the district officials] faulted me on when all of this stuff happened, was that I didn't ask for help. And I told them, 'well, I don't know if it's because I'm Hispanic. Or if it's because I'm a woman.' Or if I looked for outside help, it would be a sign of weakness since I was hired to do this job and yet here I am asking for help. So I never really went outside my area. I just felt it was important to build what they I guess now call a community school and really...I always said, 'if the kids aren't buying what you're selling it's just not going to anywhere.' I always hired...I talked with my potential teachers and other staff members. Because I think in interviewing you can answer the questions, no big deal. But I like to have conversations with them because I think if what you're saying and what I'm saying gel, then you can tell it's a match. So it took a long time to hire people. There were some automatics, you know like you, Matt, you were an automatic. I knew right away. But for the most part I really took the time to hire staff because I wanted quality and not just a warm body. So I think it was just internally. I had a young staff that I started off with as a teacher, just had that passion and that commitment to wanting to make that school successful. And so I had the youth, the energy and the youth of a teacher, and at the same time that experience. And that's a very rare find! In most schools you have experience but I hate to say it but mostly stuck in their ways. So I do have to say it, I had the best of both worlds and I was very fortunate. I didn't have a lot of Union issues either. I think it has to do with the fact that people trusted what I was saying. I wasn't trying to do things that were undermining them. I think they knew I was doing things for the kids and maybe they didn't agree, but for the most part they knew that my number one priority was those kids.

For the new teachers I would definitely make sure that I had a strong support system. Not something that was here and there kind of stuff. But I did have the Instructional Coach that they knew they could come to me, that I was part of that system. That they had a one-on-one mentor that was meeting and really talking about what they needed to be successful, not just, again, dropping the bucket. So I think making sure that the new teachers were...new to the profession but also new to La Independencia. I think for the students, revamping not the curriculum but what was offered. And I think at one time we had Spanish I, Spanish II, Spanish III, and if you're in 6th grade you got Spanish I even though you may not be fluent or maybe you were completely fluent. It was based on grade level, not ability. And so to switch that out and really get the kids, in *mixed grades*, but by their ability so that maybe my level III kids can be trilingual in high school, not just bilingual. The teaming within the team, the small-school environment that you and Kate and Martin, what Kate created. Because I knew that some kids just didn't fit in a large middle school setting and that they would be more successful if they had a smaller, more intimate, group of teachers, similar to elementary. The looping was another thing. At least one teacher that they had every year, becoming like an advocate for them, that they could make sure that they had. To meet the needs of the ELL students who were not ESL, but who were born and raised in America, in the United States and did not master the language. To be able to have a teacher dedicated to just meet those students' needs, that didn't fit special ed, that didn't fit anywhere, but they did have academic struggles. A strong mental health team. Because with kids being in that population, you can't just look at the academics. You have to look at what's going on in their lives. And finally I think a strong community, parent liaison. Again, because sometimes they don't walk in the door perfectly ready to learn and we need to help, help solve some of the issues...the barriers, as they say, to education.

I didn't do a lot of PR with community members, organizations, or whatever. Looking back I realize it could have been a big asset. But in terms of families, I think the fact that not only myself but a core team had been there so long that they knew and respected because they had older brothers and sisters, so I think parents felt their kids were safe at that school. So I think at that level with parents, yes. But beyond that, I probably could have done better with the community part.

I had some challenges as Principal. I think with the teacher part, I think the revolving door in staff. You know, from teacher to principal. And so that was difficult to maintain any sort of stability or growth, you know when you don't have good leadership you have teachers that are upset or angry. Then you get groups and sides and again, not thinking about kids. So then either you get caught up in it, or you're on the outskirts and either way it's a lose-lose situation. So I think that was number one. I think as a principal, you know I never thought of La Independencia being a hard school, as strange as that sounds (CJ laughs). But now that I am outside of it, being an R-II school, it's, it's, it wears on people. As much as you try your best and teachers were doing phenomenal things, when those scores don't improve it is devastating. I think not knowing how to be savvy in...not manipulating but...moving around the Puesta del Sol ISD system. Yeah, you have to be very politically-aligned. You have to know the right people, and you have to do a lot more kissing-up than I did so (CJ laughs), I didn't do as much of that as perhaps I should

have. Again I don't know if it was pride or stubbornness or what. (CJ laughs). I had no time for schmoozing because I just always wanted to be with the kids. So, those are difficult things.

I think I really didn't have the support of the district. I had maybe one supervisor who was supportive, and not just supportive in the word but truly, if I needed anything, was there with whatever. Now they have a whole mentorship thing where you come in, attend a class, you know for new principals. They have support systems that I'm very happy... you know I'm glad that they realized you can't just put someone in a position and wish them good luck and expect, you know, results. So I think that was the biggest thing.

So many times people feel like if they pump more money into things it's going to make results or make it better, instead of just coming down and really analyzing, looking at the Public Ed Department reports which we got quarterly, seeing what we *needed* versus what they *thought we needed*, streamline those resources. For example, if they would have come down and seen that I didn't need another reading program, I have six in the makings...you know, that's a prime example. And yet they force me to rearrange everything to meet the fact that they wanted this program. Those are the kind of things...and then as I ask, 'what do I need?' since I have a little bit of money, what do I need long-term, nothing. And then all of the sudden I need this, and I need that, and there's no long-range planning whatsoever. My last three years or four years, there was, I hate to say it, no support. And yet (CJ slaps her desk) they were visiting us all the time but they had no clue. They really didn't.

As far as the amazing things teachers were doing, the streamlining of curriculum is one. They are barely doing that now at some of the schools. In fact one school...God, what did they say, I don't even know what they said and I was like, 'wow, you're barely doing that now.' (CJ laughs) ...That would be the biggest thing plus professional development during the duty day to revitalize, revamp. We were always doing research-based models, making sure we were looking at the kid, the student, individually, not just as a subgroup. Really delving deeper and deeper into the data than in comparison to other schools. So I think those are the two things that...and, and looking at what we got and not trying to make changes just to make change, but trying to make *systematic* change to meet those needs. Again, the school-within-a-school concept, the content preps, the mentoring class. Because again, it's not just all academics, but sometimes these kids are not academically successful because of what's going on in their personal world. I mean, you have a mentor. You just got to hit all aspects of the student.

Regarding my initial impressions of NCLB, I was very positive about it. Because I thought for the very first time, we would have some teeth with fledgling, non-productive, not pro-active teachers. I thought it would give us...you know, everyone wanted more money. Sure, I mean money will help with anything you do but, I just thought it would really bring up the level of accountability for everyone. Staff, students, parents, everybody. So I actually really embraced No Child Left Behind, and I still think it's good. I've seen a lot of changes in the district. They don't allow it to happen to schools of poverty. But I still think they allow it to happen in schools of affluence. My counterpart

for example, in the Southwest, has higher level scores by any means than La Independencia, but there's no growth. So that's, and by that I mean, why is she allowed to stay at her job if there's no growth? So pretty much, you can put a monkey in front of them and they will either stay the same or grow. (CJ laughs).

Around 2005-2006, for the first time they started saying that if we don't make improvements the first set of people that would be going would be leadership. And so, you know, I was very honest with the staff. I don't think staff ever thought that would happen; that they would somehow, miraculously change it. I noticed the more affluent schools were beginning to freak out, whereas when I would start going to middle school principals meetings and say, 'hey, can we start talking about this No Child Left Behind Restructuring-II thing?' They would always say, 'well, that's your school' or 'that's *those* schools,' and it wasn't part of their world. And so I think finally people realized, 'oh my God, I could be part of that world.' Especially when they started seeing some of the affluent schools get on the first level, people started, 'wow.' And so I had a school, East Bluffs MS, come to me and say, 'we'd like to see what you're doing so that A we can either copy it, or B, try not to get to that level. I said, 'great, I don't want anyone to go through what we're going through. This is hard. It's wearing on the staff.' I think that was when people realized it's not going away and the accountability level is going to be everywhere.

I don't think that at first the faculty really believed the takeover would happen. I think they thought, 'no why would they do that? It can't be all on your shoulders. When are they going to hold these kids accountable for their learning?' Right away, the finger was being pointed and I said, 'that's not something I can control, in many ways. Obviously I can control what's going on.' I guess if I was a, a hard-ass, for lack of a better word, I could have used some of this No Child Left Behind to ride out those bad teachers... and use that terminology. But just like a student, I always felt compelled to try to help a person become better or make a better decision to leave the profession, not really push them out. I don't believe in that. I think some, most people go into teaching with a good heart. It's just that somewhere, some way, some of them have lost their way and you need to have some guiders to help them. And there have been a lot of teachers that were like borderline and they really, with the right touch they were, they really flourished. You know, it's like watering a plant or a flower. Obviously there were some that were just digging their heels and saying, 'it's never going to change and I don't have to change.'

My characteristics of a bad teacher; I think, first of all, a lack of planning. If they're not readily prepared for their day or their week, and they just throw stuff together. You can tell that they don't care for their students. The people that actually refine and reflect on their practice, and then on the non-academic side, a true compassion for wanting to see those kids succeed, and do whatever it takes to make them succeed. And success is defined very difficultly but just even the smallest...but really, if they have that in their heart I think that other stuff will fall into place as well.

In general, our supervisors would tell us (Principals), 'we're not too sure what the superintendents would do, and that was the previous superintendent. Jan Wollenstock.

And there is always... before she left she did a major move, which is very controversial, but she moved 30 principals, with no reason, which she had the right to do. So that was very controversial, the spring before. There was no negative attachment to the move. They thought they needed change, 'let's move some people around. People are maybe beginning to stagnate,' that sort of thing. But she did move about 30, mainly elementary, and then she left. To shake [things] up, to get fresh ideas, rejuvenate some people, maybe to give some people a chance at a position. Tom Grey became Superintendent in 2008 to 2009, the same year. Which was kind of surprising, because at our annual conference he was very adamant about not doing anything major like that. In July we had an annual conference just for administrators and he promised that he was going to come in, analyze, and look at things. He wasn't going to make any major shifts because he was the new guy in town, that kind of thing.

When I was a teacher and an assistant at La Independencia, we were always at like 950 and the charter schools came into play. They took a lot of our population. And then No Child Left... became part of it because then parents were allowed to get paid to take kids to a better school. So we lost a lot of kids in that area. In 2006-2007, I thought faculty morale was still pretty good. I didn't have a lot of people upset about stuff. They just knew it was part of our daily life. I think the people that got upset finally just ended up leaving. I mean truly upset, there's always going to be bits and pieces. But I thought that we were finally in a position where we were rowing in the same boat. I finally hired a good, good, solid, dedicated Assistant Principal who had been a teacher at the same site. In fact we had started the same year. And that was always a hard thing to do, 'cause I could not keep an assistant for the life of me. I went through four assistants, and that was hard. Because, as much as I want to say I'm Wonder Woman, I couldn't be everything to everybody. And that was hard for them. So I think finally we started getting everyone in the same boat, and trying to row in the same direction. I think empowerment was getting good. I think teachers were realizing it's ok to relinquish their power with the kids. I think it was just at that budding level.

In the 2007-2008 year, the announcements from the district were the same. They never really called it 'the next level' but we went into the next level. We had more visits by the Public Ed Department. Obviously the expectations were great, or even greater. They didn't want to waste time: if they said this was an area of weakness we didn't have much time to change things. We had to, you know, research it, see what we got, and make changes. The nice thing is though is, or the good thing is, the Public Ed Department came back and went, 'wow. Wow! You guys did this already, you have data to back it up.' So they were very impressed that we were very resilient and could get things done without a lot of chaos or any kind of damage to the kids, and that the plans we used and created were researched and aligned. So for the most part they were happy. And we had a staff that was, I think for the most part, ready to make those changes. They knew we had to do it. I think they were realizing this could really happen.

If I remember correctly, it was from 2006-2008 that was when we started doing the content preps, and really focusing on aligning our professional development, streamlining our resources, really, again delving deeper into the data to see where we could target.

Um, yeah, I don't know (CJ breathes a heavy sigh). There was after-school tutoring for anybody who was interested. The craziness of all that kind of stuff was there really was no monitoring system so anyone who had a tutoring company had to be placed on the tutoring list. And so a lot of times in their description they would offer laptops and other nice novel things which never panned out. Or tutors would never show up. So I had kids wandering. So I don't think, by allowing everybody and their mother to be a tutor was a good thing because it was hard to manage. I mean to ask a student, a teacher to extend their day, expecting them to give their all in the six-and-a-half hours they give us and then to go another two hours and then do that for a kid...but that's the box. They give to you and you kind of have to sit in it and accept it. And I think what we struggled with was that I knew that these little bits and pieces of changes that they wanted were *good*, but it had to be a true paradigm shift in effect that, like, year-round schools, alternative schedules, which we fought for, should be a part. You know, our kids, no matter how much we pushed them and got them to a point, summer always kicked us in the butt. It always pushed us back. So it was like spinning your wheels. But nobody wanted to take that challenge on to the community too...I think and I know our whole cluster wanted it... parents, I know they voted for it, and the district went, 'no.' When you want to see great reform and change, to do something huge, you can't just do this little shot-in-the-arm kind of thing. I think for teachers, like I said if you're expecting them to give that one-hundred thirty-five thousand per cent, and for students, is that you have a little bit of a break sooner, you rejuvenate the kids, that's number one. You can use that time for those kids that maybe ... in inter-session, to do some of that tutoring time where it's lengthier, almost like a summer session...instead of that like two hours per day twice a week, kind of thing. And then of course you don't have that long break in the summer time. We're working off that farmer's model and none of our kids are farmers.

Another thing that would have been advantageous for a lot of our kids is a twenty-four hours school, almost going like two different schools, is what I wanted to do and I was turned down...was, there's a lot of kids that could probably go from like a 10 to a 4 o'clock or a 12-6 and have two schools. And I told them I wouldn't ask for extra pay but there's a lot of kids that don't fit the *normal* schedule anymore or the regular schedule, that could probably be successful if given a different situation. If our students have to take care of their younger brothers or sisters, then they could come into school and focus rather than *missing* school.

This was my approach to accepting students from other schools. I sat with every new kid, every new student that came into my school. Rarely did I miss a kid, but I would talk to them and their parents and I say, 'you know, we consider ourselves a family here. And you're more than welcome to our family and to become part of our family, well, you need to follow the rules. I could ask you to go downtown or uptown to get a transfer and that way it would be legal...if you want to that's fine but, if you transfer into my school you need to follow my rules. And the moment you don't, then we need to talk.' And I always say, 'I could kick you back.' I never do. I always follow through and take them to a hearing if I needed to, whatever the case may be. But again I always looked at all kids as if they were my kids and if they didn't find success at other schools maybe they would find success at ours, if given a second chance. I always think about, like I said, my older

brother and my younger brother. They were given second chances, and I really believe in that. There were a lot of students that came to La Independencia after being kicked out of other schools. Mostly gang members. Girls that fought a lot. And, the nice thing was I got a lot, not a lot but a good percentage of those kids that left the school, started to come back to La Independencia. So it was kind of nice to see that they realized we had made some good changes.

At the close of the 2007- 2008 school year, I still think we were finally rowing in the same direction. We felt good about some of the changes that we made. Students felt good about being at La Independencia but the backburner was always burning so brightly in our face. And it was almost taunting, you know? 'We're gonna do it. We're not gonna do it. We're gonna do it. No, we're not gonna do it.' So it was like, 'God, just either do it or stop saying that.' And then, just not knowing when that would be. 'Would that be at the end of the year? What does that look like? Would you come in and evaluate us? Would there be a formal evaluation process to remove a principal? Would, what would it look like?' And then not knowing, and then when you ask no one knew what. So even your top leaders had no clue or at least they didn't share with you, which was ridiculous. But I don't think they had a clue as to how this was going to roll out. So that question mark was always like, 'uh.' And I'm a very up-front kind of person, so I like to know what I'm dealing with and I think most people do.

At the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year, you heard the rumors or you talked to your supervisor and they always put it in the back of your mind that if you don't make gains, you'll be the first to be removed, but it hadn't happened yet. So then you kind of think it was, not bluffing, but that it wouldn't pan out. I do remember that we had gone to School Max, the new computer system for scheduling that year. And as all schools we had such an atrocious time with the schedules, and a lot of upset families and parents and it's the first day of school. And the day before, the state department notified me that they wanted to interview me at 9:00 on the first day of school, which I thought was a bit disgusting to think that they would pick a day such as that, and especially right in the middle of the first day of school. In all the chaos and craziness of the school scheduling I had to leave campus to come up to District HQ to interview and it turned out to be about 9 or 10 people from the state department that just drilled me for about 2 hours. And it was only me by myself; there wasn't any support system from the district. And they just went up and down, backwards and forwards. And again you're not thinking because you have your angry parents, you're trying to figure out how to solve *that* issue so you're not really thinking correctly or...I didn't feel I was very prepared not getting ample notice so I had my binder with me but I know I messed up a lot of the stuff they wanted to know and I think that kind of set the tone for them and obviously they probably provided that feedback to the higher-ups at Puesta del Sol ISD. The Public Ed Department just wanted to meet in person, a principal at this level of Restructuring, and talk to them about it. That it was far from a friendly conversation. They made it sound like it was a way to get data to support schools such as ours. And in fact it was quite the opposite. I believe two other principals went through it; Sierra MS and I think Painted Rock MS. Might have been a couple of elementaries but I can't remember for sure. I assumed every R-2 school. And the ones I did talk to said the same thing, that was not a support meeting or a support

interview. That was a very...almost attacking interview. I expected an open conversation. Something like, 'here's what we've done.' I got great reviews from the Public Ed Department when they came in. So I thought, just to make sure I'm on track with that. 'Here's maybe some things we noticed that we think could fill the gaps.' Yeah, I was not prepared for the straight-line shooting that they did. I was definitely intimidated by it. Yeah, it takes a lot to intimidate me, and so it was very disheartening to come back and you have to put on the smiley face with parents that are still mad at you about the scheduling, so it was kind of hard to switch gears. I thought it was very inappropriate for them to pick the date that they did.

We made some changes within La Independencia. We changed the schedule a bit. Two areas were we created a mentoring class which actually became our RTI for math on some of the students. We had gone to a conference of the Great Schools and learned about how important rigor, relationships, and relevance were. So that was one area where I felt like we had gone so far away from building relationships with kids. We had tried everything else to meet AYP, and I always felt that we missed out on a lot by going so far to the one side that we missed out on learning about our kids and growing with our kids and having a good connection with those kids, so we created that mentor class. We had also redesigned our ESL classes, so not only were they grouped by their English ability but then there was a large chunk of native, Hispanic, Chicano kids that have lived here all their life but never mastered the language. So we created an E-L-L class and really strategically looked at those kids because they had different needs than the students who were learning it as a second language. So we created that class. And I think those were the two areas that we made major changes in.

Losing Mr. Paz was very hard. Yeah, he had been there 36 years. And so he was a counselor to not just the kids but the great grandkids and of course the family. I think that really made a lot of kids feel obviously bad but at the same time just I think the...building relationships just became *more* evident. Not that academics got put on the backburner but they really felt that loss and it really hit that close to home. It was like losing a family member.

Around mid-October to November 2008, I had one supervisor who...I can't even think of the title but she oversaw the principals in R-2 schools so it was kind of like a specialist, special supervisor for our type of school and I remember she felt the need to meet with me and put me on a Professional Development Plan. Obviously since I didn't have the test scores. So we had to create this plan through Human Resources and I had to meet the needs of whatever she outlined, and one of them being that we had to meet on a weekly basis which was fine. But as I saw it progressed she missed a lot of her meetings and the meetings I did have with her she was constantly on the phone with other R-2 principals. So I felt like she was setting me up for failure, even though she said things like, 'I never have to worry about you, Christina. You have everything together. I see what you're doing,' blah blah blah. So I just felt little, little by little, that was going to hurt me in the long run. And I guess looking back I should have said more, complained about it. And unfortunately I think some of her notes were written as though she did meet with me and as though she *did* have conversations with me and as though she did fulfill her side of the

agreement, even though she didn't. And then all of the sudden, the Superintendent of Middle Schools decided to take over her role as my supervisor right around, I guess it was mid-November [2008], maybe? Yeah, mid-November. There was no reason behind it. There was no explanation. There was just that. The middle school superintendent was going to take over my supervisory role. But it never occurred. I never met with her. She never came to the school. She did come, I should say one time, and the end...before we went on our Christmas Break. I had met all the requirements. I had done whatever they needed me to do and technically I was off an intensive evaluation in my Professional Development Plan. So I left for Christmas Break thinking, personally, I'm on the right track and now we got to focus on all the other things. And during this time I'm still having Public Ed Department visit the school and roughly, about the same time in November they came out to visit and see what we had to present. They said we had one gap area and that was how we were going to incorporate that Math Strategies class. So that was the RTI intervention. So what we did was, within two-and-a-half weeks almost three weeks, we looked at every kid's test scores based on the latest A2L at that time, and figured out how many teachers we would need, scheduled them out of their mentoring class, and created a Math Strategies class for them so by the time they got back in January they had their Math Strategies class. So we revamped that, and again in February they were very pleased that we had done that. As soon as the State said we needed the Math Strategies, I was on it. Like I said, by about two-and-a-half weeks or three weeks we were doing that. And in fact when he came back he was surprised by that. But by that time he had already heard that I was going to be replaced, or going to be removed. I hadn't been replaced yet.

I first heard about the takeover early in 2009. We got back on a Wednesday, I think it was the 6th of January. And Cathy Wayne came out, my middle school superintendent, and said that tomorrow I would be having a meeting with Mr. Grey and that I would be most likely removed from the school. And the next day at 3:00 I had my meeting with Mr. Grey. January 7th. She advised me to talk to my Union President for Principals. We don't have, technically, a union but that's the next closest thing. So I made contact with them. I came to District HQ at 3:00 and pretty much Mr. Grey pulled me in along with the high school superintendent and the middle school superintendent, and that he wanted to make changes and that he had that right, and that if I wanted to continue with the district, I needed to play correctly. Play correctly. So, in which I said that I had been raised correctly and properly by my parents and that I would never disrespect my elders or my supervisors and I would play correctly but not for the sake of the district or myself but for the sake of my students. That I would not make a stink, that I would not put it through the media, because I did not want my kids to have to go through that kind of world and that La Independencia deserved more than to be run through the media in a negative fashion. That's about as much as I could get out before I was pretty upset. Some people had been talking that there had been rumors, that two schools were going to get taken over but they had not been listed yet. And then the 3:30 meeting was with the high school principal, so he got his information the following half-hour. I had informed some of the people on staff. I thought it was important for the people I knew who really cared about the school to know, and that I had their numbers and people who were part of the Department Chairpersons Team. I thought they needed to know before everything else. So some of

them already knew. I think Cathy came down that afternoon, but if I remember correctly word had gotten out about La Independencia. Somehow people *knew* about it and they would come and ask me about it and I was told that I couldn't say anything about it until Cathy had come, so I think it was that Friday that Cathy came down and explained what was being done to the staff. To this day I don't understand why Alice Jackson was removed. She really wasn't *at fault*. I mean, if you can place blame it would be on the principal level. So I really didn't understand why she had to be removed but... maybe it was one of the stipulations that the new principal asked, that he have a clean slate. I think her's was just guilty by association. I think they just thought that since I had mentored her and she had been there for so many years that that would be a hard person to maybe crack or have allegiance to the new administrator. So, that's the only reason I could think of. The district gave us a little bit of an indication regarding what would happen to La Independencia with the Union, that the Teachers Union leader, representative, whatever, she had already... it was obviously a plan that was already worked out because she had been able to work a deal with the new Superintendent that she would be able to try this new contract verbage agreement so that schools such as ours, her teachers could benefit financially from it. So she was able to put that, I mean that went fast. They must have been working on it for quite a while. I guess it was just or mainly to develop and incorporate more professional development. Almost incentive pay, just to give the teachers more money to work in a hard and difficult school. But unfortunately, the Superintendent, the Associate Superintendents, nor did the Union ever come visit the school to see if this is something that would be of an improvement. So that was hard for a lot of people to... 'you don't know what we're doing here and yet you're making these assumptions that since we're at this level and we're in the East Mesa...' a lot of hurt feelings about how they came in and did it.

The district is notorious for thinking that they know how to fix it from this, the ivory towers, rather than going out and looking at what's going on. Which is weird because I always say that the Associate Superintendent, she's never been in a Corrective Action school. She's never had to be in a school such as La Independencia. There were some racial comments that were made about the kids and myself, that I felt was inappropriate and not needed. I hate to say it but when you're ignorant on certain issues it's part of your nature. She told me when everything was happening that, 'you know, brown kids can learn, too.' Yeah. I was like, wow, I haven't been called 'brown' in years! She tried to smooth over things by saying she considers herself Hispanic because her daughter has a child by a Hispanic man. Just, things like that you're thinking, 'I don't understand why you have to make these comments.' I don't know if that made her associate with the community better or... yeah, little things like that. I guess she was just trying to smooth things over the situation. But when she said that all brown kids can learn, that was a hard thing for me because first of all I live and breath it every day. That's my... because I always preached that no matter where they come from, these kids are smart kids. So for her to tell me that it was kind of like a slap in my face. And then of course when you have a racial connection with it, it's even worse. But I never looked at the takeover as racist. I don't think she was a race-card use. I do believe it was a way for Cathy Wayne to show her new boss that she had the ability to go in and do the tough things. I think it was her way of showing that she could do this job, that she *just got*. That she had a backbone. I *do*

think because I wasn't part of her middle school crowd, per say, and I didn't play the game like probably I should have, that she used that to her, you know, benefit and advantage.

I think Cathy didn't know what to say because I think she didn't have her act together. You know, if I would have pushed it, she would not have any...I mean she had the data and test scores and whatever but, you know, if I pushed the idea that she's never been in the classrooms and never even remotely been past my office, that was part of my PDP, I think that's...she knew she lacked in that and so she was trying to make amends. Um, I don't really know... I never really thought of it being racial as more of...she was insecure and like I said, I think some of the other female principals were similar, like Prairie MS. Cathy knew she couldn't fight her because that principal had been, not at that school but had been a principal for 32 years and so she knew that she couldn't fight that battle. And the others were her buddies, so she really didn't want to do that. So...and of course the Southwest schools for the most part weren't at that level so I think she knew I would be loyal to the students and I wouldn't make a fuss. She knew that she could, I won't say attack a weak person, but someone that had morals and that sort of thing and that wouldn't do that kind of stuff. So I think she totally knew exactly how she could get me, like that.

I hate to stay negative, I always try to look at things half-full but as I look back now and talking to people, there were only like two instances where I can [remember] in my career as a principal. I did have one support from [an] associate at that time, he was my overall supervisor, he helped me get rid of a bad teacher, a pedophile teacher. So he helped me fight against that. The Union, who was supporting him, wanted me to keep him. And I had a pretty, I don't want to use the word awful, but a pretty bad Assistant and my supervisor helped me get rid of her, release her from her contract. And so those were probably the *only* two times ever that I can say that the District supported me. One of the things that the Associate Superintendent *and* the Board Member in our area told me that I never asked for help. And instead of looking at that as a *positive* thing, that was more negative. That I...I took it as 'you didn't know how to rub my back, scratch my back. Therefore...' because everybody else was using them and that promoted them and so I was not doing that kind of stuff. So I was not playing the game right. In 17 years there was nothing. Not at all. In fact it was always...for the most part they left the East Mesa alone. To be honest with you, in many ways it was great. We were part of a good system and I think had they looked to see what we were doing in the East Mesa the District as a whole would have been totally different, and better for it. But they looked with such negative eyes at the East Mesa, like, 'what could *those* people even know what to do with kids?' kind of attitude, and I saw it all the time. But I think they left us alone because they didn't know what to do with us. They didn't want to start the fire because if you get East Mesa parents upset, you're not going to have lawyers, you're not going to have that, but you're going to have some angry bees in the nest. They are not going to lay down and just roll over and die with it. Yeah, I hate to say it because I can't think of one other example that they...I had seen other schools where they knew they didn't have an assistant and they [the district] sent people to just act as an acting assistant. I never got that resource, even though I said, 'hey, I don't have an assistant.' When I had issues filling positions, which I didn't have too often because I think we did a good job of hiring

and talking to potential candidates that felt like, 'this is a place I want to be.' You know, I did have an issue with some interns at Southwest University. I asked, 'is there some guidance and some support to get them out of here,' and it was...it never happened. It just goes on and on. And like one of my colleagues said, 'from day one, you were never supposed to...'. When the previous principal left, that was in May, until the end of the school year he went to the high school, no one called and said, 'you're in charge, run the school.' Nothing, I mean, I just took over the school until I got hired in August. I mean it was just, from day one La Independencia was never on the radar whatsoever. And for the most part it felt good because I was thinking, 'I'm handling the school. I'm doing what needs to be done. Public Ed is happy with what's going on. You know, I use my resources very wisely.' I wasn't overspending; I wasn't spending frivolously. My budget was always intact. It wasn't perfect but I thought overall things were okay but, yeah, just not ever having really good support systems. And now they do, and I'm grateful that they have new principal cohorts, where they have to meet and they have a binder with outlines. 'You should expect this, you should expect this,' and I think that's great that someone finally realized that you can't just say, 'here's the keys to the building. Good luck. See you next year.' And that's pretty much what they did.

The school community was upset [about the takeover] for the most part. There were a few parents dancing but for the most part I think there were parents upset, wanting to take action, asking me how they should do it. And so, I asked them politely not to do it. I did not want to make a scene. Faculty morale, I think...I don't want to say 'chaos', because that sounds crazy but people didn't know what to think. They weren't too sure if it was us, why, Corrective Action, we're improving but...I think they were disheartened when no one had even been in their classrooms to make these decisions and you know, they didn't look at the Public Ed Department review on us. I think overall people were very upset about it. Maybe not, because they were losing me personally, but they just felt like we were finally rowing in the same direction and we got everybody going in a good direction at least. We had made some good improvements and we didn't even have the benefit of the doubt to see if those improvements could really pan out in our scores. You know, of the people that stood up I think a lot of them were just disgusted that they were throwing money at them. 'Technically you can't *buy* us to make us better,' kind of attitude. A lot of them were like that. A lot of them were very happy with this idea; you get \$5,000. That was huge, and I can understand it. I can totally understand that people have to feed their families.

The student response was devastating. Utter shock. They were crying. They were, (CJ's eyes water) you know, they don't understand politics as adult as they can. They don't understand what really goes on. And I think that's the worst thing to hear finally, when I was coming up to this job, was, you know, kids constantly telling me, 'I'm sorry I wasn't smart enough to keep you.' And I think that was the hardest thing for me to hear. I don't think any kid should feel that way, for whatever reason but especially to think that that's...they felt responsible for me not having my Principalship, because of them not knowing the curriculum to be able to pass that test. So that was hard, for me to hear that. I told them that they're the brightest kids ever (CJ smiles and cries). That life goes on and I have a different journey.

I don't think the district had a plan whatsoever. That's what's so hard to swallow sometimes because you think, 'okay, if you could at least lay out a plan that shows potentially how this will work out, you could accept it.' And I've always said, had they come in and said, 'you have 15 minutes and we're going to walk through this place. And if in 15 minutes you don't make the meet, I could understand.' Because even with that I would have had 15 minutes. But to never even do that, it's like, 'c'mon, you gotta be kidding.' No, they had no plan. They just, I think it was a domino effect. The Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools wanted to show her name and show what she could do to the new Superintendent. And the Superintendent wanted to do that to the Board, because a week later he got an extension and a raise on his contract. And it was on the, I consider, the backs of myself and Mr. Duran at Ortiz HS. Because he showed them what he can do. I talked to Mr. Duran immediately. 'God,' he goes, 'I kept telling him I meant to retire anyway and it was my 30th year and it was the 50th year at Ortiz HS and I told him that, just let me finish out the rest of the school year and I'll just, gosh, I'll just kind of slip away.' And then Mr. Duran says, 'and that bastard won't even give me that.' And I thought, you know, this hurts but as much as I knew Henry and he wasn't Mr. Curriculum but you know, those kids were overall very happy when he was there. He made kids feel alive. He made kids feel wanted. And granted, that might not improve test scores but it was in the right step and I know that his heart was in the right place. He did that at La Independencia. But to not give anyone the level of respect to even finish out such a milestone year, to go out on *his* terms, I hope that never happens to Mr. Grey. I hope someone is considerate enough to say, 'you gave 30 years of your life,' and [Mr. Duran] went way beyond job descriptions, the 9-5 kind of principal... to just remove, take that from him was just pretty shitty. It was Duran's 30th year and Ortiz HS' 50th. And it was going to be a big thing, to send him off on a high note. Because people knew that he was going to retire. And I think that Mr. Grey knew that so he figured he could just get him now. I was thinking, 'that's 3 months away. You could not wait 3 months? The school is not going to change that much in 3 months.' You're not going to hurt it anymore.

They asked me to finish out the year. They asked me to train the new person, continue the year out, and then I would...and he told the parents, that I would get a job as a principal somewhere else. I think the principal that is there now was probably the 6th or 7th person they asked to take that job. From what I remember from the people I talked to. They came to me and said, 'you know, Christina, I just want you to know. I don't want you to hear it secondhand, that they asked me to take over, to take that position. And I wouldn't,' for whatever reason they had, they wouldn't take that responsibility on. So I thought that was very kind of them, to have that respect. When they finally did get the person, that was, I think, going from elementary to middle school, is a raise in itself. No middle school is willing to laterally move for an extra [\$5,000]. The other thing I hear *now*, from pretty reliable sources, is that that Principal had applied for the Elementary Associate. I guess, somehow Mr. Grey felt bad for him so, since he didn't give him the Associate he gave him La Independencia as a token of his appreciation, I guess. And so he was able to get the raise, get a little bit more, he was able to work a deal that was beneficial for him. But he never showed up to work; he was always claiming that he was

here or there. And so, how can I train a new person if they aren't even willing to be here? And in my mind I thought, 'God, what a wonderful opportunity: to have that person who had been there for how many years, pretty much lay out the red carpet because that's what I would have done, show him the ins and outs, and have probably one of the smoothest transitions ever?' Make some introductions and sell him to the kids so that they would think it's almost like having a male Christina (CJ laughs). Sell him, and I knew that it would be helpful and show him the ropes and that kind of thing but he never showed up. Even though everybody thought he was supposed to be at La Independencia, he wasn't there. So I decided I needed to remove myself. I need the staff to decide if they want to be with this person in the following years, they needed to get to know him. I felt bad because the kids really don't have a choice. It's their school. But at least the staff could decide if they wanted to stay or not stay. But they still didn't get that. Not as much chance as I was hoping they would get to know their new Principal. So, it was just real difficult. It was like a band-aid, you just gotta pull it off and see how it ends. When this job opened, I thought, well, middle school and maybe it would be good for me to step away immediately. I had no trouble getting this position. They worked their magic and everybody signed off on the paper and I think the Associate Superintendent was very happy because I think she was having difficulty figuring out what she would do with me. And that was the other reason: I did not want to put my future in her hands. I didn't trust her, did not like her, did not have warm, fuzzy feelings that she would put me in the right place. I don't want to be at a school where I don't fit in...and so I was really worried that I might be placed in a Southwest school (CJ giggles) and I didn't... I'm sure that I could love the kids and I'm sure that I could do it but I knew that I would not have the same thing or even remotely the same thing as I had at La Independencia and that... I don't want to have a bad taste in my mouth. So I thought, 'ok, I'll go to the District for a couple of years and see what happens.' And she's not even working here anymore. She got fired. Cathy got fired. She yelled at the Superintendent, disrespected him, pretty much told him off. Took a leave and then he placed her at Ortiz HS as the Assistant [Principal] last year but she never showed up to that job. That was in July, last year. She never showed up though. She took a medical leave. She got a doctor's note, took a leave, and then ended up retiring. Yeah, but it was a big scandal, a scandalous thing, that he was a bully, that she was disrespectful to him. And I was like, 'wow!' So, what goes around comes around many times. Not that I wish that on anybody, but...

So, to replace Henry Duran the district went down to Oak Hills for a lady that has high respect in the Middle School. She supposedly runs a tough school. I personally knew when they announced it that it would not work. I knew the East Mesa very well, in terms of parents and students, and she is not one to meet in the middle. And so she has a mentality that it's her way or the highway. And for her community I guess it worked at the time. And then she made that big scheduling SNAFU where within three weeks she dumped all of the scheduling for the new year, even though she was told by everybody at the District not to, she was bravo-enough to think she could do it on her own. And there was mass chaos at the beginning of the year. Chaos. So they removed her. It got ugly. Parents were upset, the safety of their kids, kids were walking off campus, they didn't know where they were. When you don't have kids in some kind of schedule, you know...so that was another big controversy that here again, Mr. Grey can't just wife-

swap and think that it's going to work. So they brought in Paula Watson, second-in-command. She took over Ortiz HS and it was only going to be a temporary thing. Supposedly she fell in love with it and stayed the whole entire year. So she stayed there until just this past spring. I think she was Assistant Superintendent for like curriculum or something like that. But she's right underneath Mr. Grey. She actually competed, or applied for, the Superintendent's position but they picked Mr. Grey. Very knowledgeable, had been a principal for many years at a high school here so, everybody really liked her. So she cleaned up, got everything organized, I mean she had the whole Puesta del Sol ISD team, everybody was down there providing support, and then they got someone new this year. The first person that replaced Duran said that kids were not getting their right classes and that credits were not correct and that kids were going to be graduating without the right requirements, this is what she was saying. And I'm thinking in my head, 'she's never run a high school. How does she even really *know* that?' In three weeks you can't learn the system that fast. She said that all of them were messed up. Which then provided, you know...they had moved the Assistant from Ortiz HS to Summit HS; he's the Principal. And technically she's saying, you know, 'Eddie Montoya [the former Assistant] screwed everything up.' And it was a big controversy. He wrote a letter to the paper and the editor, and it was published, and he got reprimanded for it. He was just trying to say, 'look, no, no, no. I've been doing this for many years and I'm not saying it was a perfect thing, but...' And I always said, you know, if there's errors in it, and you know there's errors in it, keep it but then tell the District, 'I'm very concerned. I really need 50 bodies out here, and we need to manually go through every schedule to make sure these are correct. And as you find errors, you make corrections and you put the kids in the right place.' But to just scrap 1,600 or 1,700 schedules and not have any, you know, it's just ridiculous. So after she was removed she was placed here, at District HQ. But now she's a principal at an elementary school.

I left La Independencia at Spring Break. I figured that would be a good transition. It was before SBAs. They started SBAs after spring break, through April. End of March to April, I think they had a whole month that year. Alice moved out in the summer, they moved her to Mountaintop MS. Leadership got chaotic. Some thought the PCT had *all* the authority, others thought they had *some*. That caused some problems with teachers.

I'm assuming teachers don't want to go beyond the job description. The good ones will always do that, but the questionable ones I think, well, for Alice it just sets her up for failure because they're looking at her and going, 'well, you're not going to be around anyhow. What kind of authority do you have?' Or others are like, 'well, you're the only thing we have. You've got to do everything,' which she probably did. I'm just really still surprised that, how things went, the fact that the new principal never showed up until probably summer or somewhere around the end of the school year, that so many people continued to stay with that, because to me that's kind of chaotic, in a word. And I guess the good people wanted to make sure that the kids were safe. I think that's what the really good ones wanted. I felt bad because Alice would call me and I would try to work through some of the things she was going through, and I would tell her, 'look at this as a learning experience. Take this with you and you will know how to deal and handle with, maybe similar situations and you will be better for it.' So, you know, I always try to make

that lemonade out of lemons. That must have been hard for her. And I felt bad for her. I felt bad because I had to just remove myself. I felt bad for her and for the teachers that were just hoping that I would stay through until the end of the year. I felt like, the kids of course, I felt like I had abandoned them. I really thought that people needed to get to know the new guy and make a choice if they wanted to stay. For me I think the hardest thing, not the hardest but hearing through rumor that the new guy was bad-mouthing me in public, and stuff like that when I thought, 'you know, you already got your cake. Just eat it and go on with life. There's no reason to rub, you know, bring my name through the mud in this. I don't know if you're trying to elevate yourself or what, but this...' it was just such a negative feeling amongst people that I thought, I think those kids hurt more and how do you sell SBAs after all that happened? Losing your counselor, losing your Principal, I mean, how do you even sell anything at that point, you know? I know that's hard for those good teachers out there who were trying and trying to *maintain* some kind of continuity and some kind of organization.

Overall it was a fairly easy transition for me into this new position, in a sense. I got to write the new curriculum for my new job. But I think what was hardest was that you don't know what people's perspectives of you are. If they think, 'oh, you're the girl from La Independencia. You're *that* Principal.' You know? You don't know what, but overall people were not upset, they were disgusted that that had happened to me because I think that people knew how much I loved La Independencia, how much I took care of that school, and how much it was a part of *me* and rather than... a lot of people would come up to me and say, 'wow, I remember you talking about La Independencia and it was like that was the love of your life. It saddens me that they took you from that.' So, I think overall I had a good reception, but you always have those people where you think, 'what do they know about me? What do they think about me?' and you try not to think that way but, you're considered the bad principal. And we always make a joke because summer school is where all the bad principals go to die, because we had another principal that had a situation where she was removed from the school, and different things like that, so we kinda joked around about it, that this is where we go to die. (CJ laughs)

Henry Duran and I, we're the only ones who have been removed. They must have learned their lesson. (CJ giggles) Other principals have been shifted around, but it didn't have such a negative connotation to it. You know, 'we need new blood here, let's try that.' And they've done that a couple of times. They didn't do it this past year but previous two years they did that, so it was more a norm kind of thing. I'm sure people weren't happy but it wasn't as ugly. It wasn't about corrective action, and test scores.

I've always said you can't judge students by one data point or two data points. And I don't think No Child Left Behind was meant for that. I've always said that, as a Principal, No Child Left Behind came out the same year I became a Principal, it gave me a little bit more teeth than in prior years. I could do some things, not just me but we as a team could do some changes in our school that unions would have balked at or teachers would have. So it gave a lot of leverage, and I think overall they want kids *not* left behind. I think it's a positive statement because I had been at La Independencia when status quo was perfectly acceptable and they're going to amount to this much. And to fight that was very

hard because that was set in their minds. So it did have a leverage to force people to think outside that box, as I always say. But I think, I don't know if it's educators or people in general, just, they swing that damn pendulum swing from one to the other way too far and then, you know no one ever stays in the middle anymore. People think, 'oh this is good! It must be better if we add more to it!' And I think it's great that they're allowing states to look at things a little bit differently, and it's always been like that. You can have the bar at a lower level percentage. I think Texas did that at one point, the bar was much lower. And, and, we'll we always say that you can't have people climb mountains for the first time and make it Mount Rushmore, you know, not big mountains! Okay, move it as people are getting nearer so that you learn to climb hills first, and then mountains, and then bigger mountains. You know, it has to be progressive. It can't be an all-or-nothing kind of thing. I think, had people done it that way, people had respected it more, had it not been so 'down your throat,' kids would see, 'oh I've reached a goal, hurrah!' And then go on to the next level, 'hurrah!' And...they just need those little baby steps to see the changes but, if you're telling them that they're here and they need to be up there, that's huge. That's daunting for any adult, much less a child! But now they're throwing in incentive pay, and I always say that teachers don't go into it for the money. There must be better ways, I mean granted money's good, but there must be other means, other ways to do honor to the profession, people that truly make students learners and not just test scores. I saw a big switch from the first few years that I was at La Independencia to the last where kids just became nerds; they wanted to learn, whereas before that really wasn't part of their world. They thought it was okay, but to survive in their world education was not even in their being. And so you saw it move little by little that, yes, this is a possibility. So when you're starting with a little bit different mindset, you've got to take little baby steps to even get to that point. Test scores are really not on the horizon, you know what I'm saying? (CJ laughs)

I hate to say it but once I left I never looked at scores, because I thought, you know, 'I have lived every day, breathed every moment, of test scores.' People have told me in the first year no scores, in fact they went down which is truly understandable. And then last year, no improvement. This year they did, their math scores improved tremendously. And the math department chair called me to tell me and she was very excited but it was bittersweet because she knew in the moment that it was going to be announced that it wouldn't be about the teachers, it wouldn't be about the kids, it would be about the fact that there was new leadership. And that's what they focused on, that it was new leadership that prided that increase. So it's another feather in his cap, based on those math scores. I don't know how much improvement there was, but it really upsets many principals because they made better improvements from what I gather.

You hear too many horror stories that people are going to do whatever it takes to get their scores up, and that could be beyond good teaching. And so I worry that, what if you had a teacher that's awesome, that's doing everything the right way, by the book, morally, legally, whatever you want to say, and she gets a batch of kids that just aren't moving forward, for whatever reason. Maybe there's mental blocks or they're just not making those gains. And then you got someone who got lucky, maybe had some gifted kids...people are going to fight for the gifted kids or the smarter kids, they're not going

to want these *other* kids. So, you know what, if they got lucky and got a few extra smart kids, I hate to say 'smarter' kids but smarter kids for lack of a better word, and they get the incentive but they didn't do anything to make the...it wasn't the teacher but the population they had in their hand. And it's luck of the draw. And then you have your support staff that are supposedly going to get the same kind of money, and so how do you say an instructional coach made that direct difference, you know? Why should they get that kind of...and again I'm not trying to take away money from anyone, but.... You know, when everything was happening one of the things teachers said was, 'we don't want the extra money per se, but make sure our buildings are safe. Make sure we have our basic *needs* being met, our heating systems, our cooling systems, our...different things.' I don't know, sometimes I think that if they had had the money at the end of the year, like one year we did this with the grant that we got, it wasn't much, like \$5,000, but teachers had to do a portfolio presentation that we outlined at the beginning of the year and for \$500 you had to show good practice, and at the end of the year you would have a panel to present it. We would ask questions, so they would have a peer, a student, and two administrators. And I just remember thinking that everyone hated me because I was the one who created the panel and I was the Assistant, everybody, 'oh, you're making me jump through this hoop.' And at the end of the year, there was such pride in those teachers' craft, and what they did, and the learning and the student achievement that went with it, that they were so grateful that they had done this portfolio that they got to showcase what they did all year long, and they could use it for other areas. Now if they did something like that, that would have been a great thing, for a bonus. But you know, how does a science teacher effect, I mean, they can't effect scores but it's like, who directly gets those scores up, and how do you know it was that person? How do you know it wasn't a counselor who gave that student some extra time that day? It's just so hard to try to measure that. Your PE teacher that maybe doesn't do anything, you know, why does he or she get that kind of money? I don't know, but then there might be a band teacher who did awesome things in their class with Math Strategies, incorporating math into it, so it's just so hard. And from what I understand there are just no systems to evaluate them, they don't have evaluation walk-throughs or whatever you want to call them so, everybody got it, just *carpe diem*, so straight out.

My take on SAILS was this: I think there's always an area of need and a lot of times kids transition from elementary to middle school and it's so, it's such a difficult time for them personally because of all the different things that are going on in their bodies and, and some kids just cannot maneuver middle school as easily as others so I thought it was a great avenue for those kids that could have a closer-knit of teachers and peers with them. And mainly to build personal and academic confidence. And that there would be more of a watchful eye for them. With anything you always think, 'well, it's good for the time being but can they transition successfully to high school?' when all of the sudden they're...I don't want to say thrown to the wolves but for lack of a better word but it's like, 'are you sheltering them *too* much to where they don't get prepared for high school?' But I think overall it was a great program to have at the school.

We were looking out for the students' best interests. If I remember correctly there were the accountability leaders, so we still had a discipline system that was at the right level.

They had obviously the accountability card. You had two strong counselors, even though you lost one, the other two I believe were very beneficial with the kids, very helpful. I think you had a Department Chairperson Team that was there for the right reasons. Strong in their curriculum, their decisions. You had the professional development time, built within the duty day. And so that was the block scheduling. You had the reading program, the math program, and the intervention program. And you had happy kids overall. I think you had people that kids felt were safe, I mean it wasn't a perfect situation but I know we talked about bullying, and there's bullying everywhere but I think there wasn't that outwardly, mean level that I think kids really wanted to take care of each other, take care of their teachers, I think it was a little small family in many ways but... I know I felt the love (CJ laughs). We had one of the largest tutoring programs. We had about 235 kids in tutoring, so that was about one-third of our population that was attending some type of tutoring, although we always complained that depending on the tutoring company that was always a catch. We were always big in sports, we were one of the first to have girls and boys soccer teams. We had Mr. Martin's program, Robotics. We had lots of science-kind of clubs. We had a lot, belly-dancing, clowns, we had a huge ROTC; so we had some things that most middle schools did not have. I wanted the kids to have an exposure to what they would get in high school, and feel a part of a team somehow, fill a niche in life. Still had our gangbangers and our gangs but it did seem, I don't want to say popular but it didn't seem as forefront as in past years. In the past the gangs ruled that school, people were fearful of them when I first got there as a teacher. The kids were a lot older, a lot bigger. I just remember them being, like, my size, and manly, (CJ laughs) I remember that and girls were not afraid to just throw it down right there in front of you. Little by little kids became more immature and I know teachers struggled with that because they were used to having these 'big man' conversations and all of the sudden kids were poking each other and spitting on each other and picking their noses and teachers had a hard time with that. I said, 'look, do you realize that they're finally acting their age? They're not acting older, they're acting their age.' And that's middle school, this is middle school and we need to enjoy it. They always want to act older, and there is still that pocket that does but I remember my 8th graders being goofy and not caring if someone is watching them. Finally they see that they can do whatever they want whenever they want and feel proud of who they are. What's the technical term, or the politically correct term, gay and lesbian transgender group? We had not a lot of them, but we had... people were not hiding or embarrassed of who they were. And that just shows you that they felt safe in being who they are.

I think that had a lot to do with when you have to do discipline, you talk through the discipline rather than just hand out the consequences and the punishment. I honestly think we're here to guide these kids and they're going to make bad decisions or wrong decisions but you have to sit down and say, 'wait a minute. Here are some other ways you could have handled this or done things differently.' I was very honest with my gang leaders every year. I would bring them in and say, 'I do not understand why you felt the need to join it. I'm not going to dog it, I just don't understand your need but I don't walk your walk. I don't live in your world so I can't say that's bad. I hope you know that it could lead down a line to worse things and scarier things but...'. I always kept them near because I thought, well, first of all I knew my gang leaders were gifted kids. I knew it. I

always had tried to get them tested. Three out of seven years I got them tested, and they were gifted, because I could see that the way they thought and the way they could maneuver through the school, and through life, and through their gang, they were very intelligent. But I kept them near because I knew they could also be an asset to the school. And so, especially when I didn't have an assistant my gang leaders would be my pseudo-assistant, and they would help me watch. I remember I had a kid, Jonathon, who would always come and say, 'Miss, there's going to be a fight. You got to watch out, there's going to be a fight at 3:00, I'm gonna tell you right now, and it's behind the barracks.' So I could move people to be there. Either we broke up the fight or we got there before it happened. And you know, normally that would be considered a snitch and he could have really got hurt over it but I explained, 'if you're snitching to get people in trouble, I can understand that. But if you're snitching to solve the issue without having to get violent, it's a totally different world.' So I think he finally, I think he realized, 'wow, that makes sense to me.' So I built a level of confidence and they trusted me that I was never going to do them wrong, and that when we talked in the office whatever was said stayed there, amongst the three of us that were there to mediate it. And again, trying to give them some options on how to deal with conflict because they only knew one way. Technically we were supposed to have one School Resource Officer every year. And we've had one every year, he just wasn't as active as most. (CJ laughs) Yeah, that's one area where...we had the cops in Puesta del Sol ISD, we've had the Sheriff, and most of the time the Sheriff didn't want to get involved they just kind of wanted to do their own thing until probably the final year. But to be honest, I forgot about that, because the final year, all of a sudden, when Cathy came on board I had two more Puesta del Sol ISD policewomen and I realize now that they were the eyes to get back to Cathy, so they were deployed for a reason, and it wasn't to help. It was to surveil me. So they were hired by the person in charge at the time. I see him all the time now, and he ignores me. I got no additional social workers, speech pathologists, nothing. Whatever they provided but nothing additional beyond that.

I wanted the best for La Independencia. I mean, there's nothing I could say that...there was never a bone in my body thinking that I wanted them to fail because they didn't have me. I always said throughout my career, because I think so many people continue and continue and they may not be doing the best service, but they don't see through the stuff that they're not doing well. And I always said, 'I hope I have either a good insight that I am not doing the right work to benefit the kids, or I have good friends around me that say, "Christina, enough's enough."' I truly didn't think I was at that point yet. And I'm a pretty tough person to appease, but I knew I had some other work that I had...I had finally got a good Assistant that I could trust and I could move forward. I had the Instructional Leadership Team that seemed like we were moving curricular-wise. We had good scheduling. We had kids finally realizing that education was the way to lead them out of the good and the bad; they had finally bought that piece of land in a sense. So I thought, you know, that next year we're really going to move mountains. But, no.

The position I came into was a new position for an Instructional Coordinator. The District had looked at the 8th grade math scores... actually, excuse me, the 9th grade math scores and realized that there was a need for a summer intervention program. So they called it

the Eighth Grade Summer Bridge Program. And it was going to be housed in the five Title-I high schools and their feeder middle schools. So that was pretty much all they had and so I was able to take that and create a program to service the students at those areas. My supervisor was very supportive of the transition. She had been aware and made aware of what happened to me, so she really took to using friendly-gloves with me, that kind of thing. Unfortunately she got sick so she had surgery that whole first summer. So I was kind of on my own trying to maneuver my way through the District and now being at the district level was a little crazy that first year. And then right before summer school opened up the person who was in charge of the traditional middle schools programs had a falling out, so they gave me middle school programs as well. So I was in charge of it for the entire district, in addition to my little, small Bridge Program. It's middle school summer school. So it's a reading and math program and we were housed in nine middle schools.

I never know and to this day still I never know when people look at me, if they look at Christina, 'there's-the-principal-that-got-removed-because-she-was-a-quote-bad-principal,' or if it's Christina, 'wow-she-really-got-taken-by-the-District-and-it-should-never-have-happened.' So I really never know. And it's kind of hard now to, to, to see people and they're not sure of who I am. I think, after three years, it's kind of died down and I've made my name here in the district. And in many ways it's sad because many people don't connect me to La Independencia anymore, so it's not really like that. So with my boss, she just talked to me. She made sure I was okay, and knew that it was going to be a grieving process for me. And [she] kept that door open if I needed to talk about it. But she pretty much said that life happens for a reason and that kind of guided me through that.

From what I heard the first year, the new principal pretty much scrapped everything and started new with his ideas. And I guess some worked and some didn't. They took away their content-prep teams the first year, because of course they gave the staff members money, so they had to justify the extra amount of money, so they had to extend their day. But I think it proved to weigh heavily on the teachers. It was getting hard for them to do that kind of stuff. So, then they worked it back in and figured a different way to extend their day or their contract. To be honest, a lot of the things that are in the media are very positive and very supportive of the new principal. Internally, it's a façade. But he has made...math [scores] went up. Can't necessarily say it was him but more of the strong teachers that are at the school. He pretty much had *cârté blanche* from the district so he was able to move through things a lot faster than I was. And the money was huge, so he could pretty much buy whatever they needed. Training. Resources. So that's good at the beginning, and it does buy a lot of time, in a sense. But I think from what I gather is people are starting to see that the burden of carrying the school is solely on the Assistant, because the Principal is not there. And so I think people are realizing this might be a big façade for him, as well as a stepping stone for him to go to higher levels. And I think more and more people are seeing it. People saw it in the first year but more and more are realizing it and seeing it in action. And so I think a lot of times the first year people thought that he had to be out and about, that he couldn't be on campus the first year. But

then the second and third years, it's kind of wearing on them because other systems such as discipline support is not quite there, because one person cannot do it all by herself.

I hear that the heating and cooling system is still an issue and that was one of the biggest pet peeves of everybody there. There was an organization that came out and did painting, campus beautification, and did a whole thing. And now they're going to revitalize the cafeteria, but that's been put on hold. But I think the new principal was better equipped to maneuver the system A) because he had that, and B) because he, from what I gather at his old school, he made connections with the District, and it's who you know in the world. And I think that's one of the areas I was lacking; I was I guess so site-based that I didn't do the typical...I don't want to say schmoozing for a negative way but making that connection, those connections that I could have made probably, sooner and better, because ultimately I think that would have helped the school more. So I see that he has that that I did not have.

I have friends that are still principals at middle schools and elementary schools and even high school. I worry for them, which makes me a little gun shy. The plate gets fuller and fuller for administrators and teachers. The accountability is so high and so overwhelming, which in many ways is good because again we went from no accountability and 'who cares if the kids are learning?' to [where] you had to pinpoint exactly where that kid was at that precise moment, and we're not robots. So for me I am kind of glad that I'm in this position because although I feel No Child Left Behind is a good thing in its essence, the interpretation is what's killing us and it's so against my grain of who I am and why I became an educator that I'm glad I'm not having to jump through those hoops that are created. I miss the kids the most. Kids. I mean, adults too and the parents. I just miss the liveliness of it, never a dull moment. I miss the conversations, with the kids and of course the adults. I miss the interaction and the direct...you can see directly you have made a difference, you know, the reason why people become administrators and educators. Here, I know I impact and I impact a larger group but it's so far removed that you really wonder sometimes 'is this really making a difference in anyone's lives?' There you knew you counted, because the kids let you know every time, every moment they saw you.

I've always said that I don't think a takeover is bad. I think everyone should know the pawns that are being played. I also think, and one suggestion I made to HR was, if there is a way to hire a principal and there is a system created to hire a principal, then there should be a system created to remove a principal if it's for...I mean, if it's straight out bad, then fine I can understand that completely. And I respect Mr. Grey that he has that authority to do it. My concern throughout this whole process was they never once walked in the halls. They never once walked in the classrooms. I don't know what data they looked at but to me HR was, you know we have a Student Service Center where students complain and it's pretty extensive, and nothing changes. That's a pretty good data point there, red flags. You know, certain things need to be looked at to get a bigger and better picture of that principal and that leadership. Even if they had interviewed my staff, even if they had interviewed my parents, if they interviewed students, I would have respected it and expected me to be removed, if that was the case. But to have no formal reason or grasping, because I heard the gamut of [reasons]: my books were not kept correctly to

[my] No Child Left Behind scores were not good to Mr. Grey just has the right to remove anybody he wants. So to this day I just really don't know what was the truth as to why I was removed. And that's kind of hard to swallow. And it's hard to try to tell your kids and your parents [that] you don't know why.

My opinion on why I was removed is this: I do believe it's probably because I was female. I don't know if it's, and maybe Hispanic, I think they decided to target East Mesa because I think they had heard from numerous people that the East Mesa parents don't care and that they wouldn't make a fuss, whereas other parts of the city you would have a bigger situation on your hands. And so I think this was a good way again to show people their teeth, that they could move people swiftly and without much blood, because I know Cathy told me, 'did you notice that parents did not fight for you?' And I said, 'that's because I asked them not to.' But her perception was, 'see, no one cares, no one's making a big fuss, blah-blah-blah.' And so I think they took the East Mesa for granted and kind of pegged them as uncaring parents. I think that's mainly the reason why they targeted it. The East Mesa parents wanted to do walkouts, they were ready to do the typical 'get your lawyer' attitude. Oh yeah, they were ready. They wanted to rally behind myself and Mr. Duran so, and some of the meetings he had with the East Mesa parents, they were very disgusted. But, you know, you can only fight a battle so long. He was pretty much set in his ways on that. That was for Mr. Grey, I think he had just heard that that would probably be an easy target, for lack of a better word. I think Cathy, as I look around the other middle school females and males, I think she knew that I would never hurt my kids and so she took advantage of the fact that I would not make a stink whereas other principals would have caused an uproar on it. So I think I was targeted in the fact that she knows I was so in love with my school that she took that and ran with it. I do think there was a percentage effect that when I did question Cathy, before this happened, about certain things, she could not answer these. And I think I told you, because I had that dual Cathy and the Corrective Action Principal person right, that was Dr. Stock, and I questioned Dr. Stock...I told Dr. Stock that I find it *appalling* that I'm going to my supervisor, the Associate Superintendent, to ask questions, and she can't even answer them. How is she going to lead me further, if she has no clue about Corrective Action and takeovers and No Child Left Behind, and that she has no experience and from what I *gather* no real desire to learn about it. So I think that got back to Cathy, and that was a questioning of her authority. And so I think that another...for her, personally, that was an issue she had with me. She could answer no questions about Corrective Action. Or, 'is this a good program? I'm looking at this to do this,' or 'I'm redesigning the school based on this book I read or some other insight. What's your idea?' And everything was just that Southern syrupy 'oh, it'll all be all right.' And I'm like, 'you know, I need an answer why the District is saying 'Read 180' and I need to provide this. Suddenly I need to provide a bigger gamut of resources, which I have no problems with, it's just that I spent that money and now all of the sudden I need it, and she had no answer, just 'go with the flow, don't make waves' kind of attitude and kind of just sugarcoat everything, which is fine if you've never been in Corrective Action and you've never had to. I understand that, but then, go do your homework so that you can provide support, go find someone that could support me. Find a mentor or somebody. Have me go visit a school, something. But no initiative, no...no real thought. I think that part about being female, and maybe

Hispanic, I don't know. She did make racial comments about Hispanics, so you know maybe looking back she did have an issue with that. Mainly I think it was targeting the East Mesa parents and me being female.

I think another area where I would have respected this thing was that if there was a plan and they said, 'here is our plan. Here is how we are going to roll it out.' At least you would have an idea of what you were going to do, post-Christina. But if you don't have a clue, if you can't answer even the most basic of questions, basic, then I think this was a shotgun kind of decision-making thing. And they really didn't think it out. I don't know if 'trial run' would be the best way, although they got their feet wet with it, but I really, in my heart of hearts feel like with a new administration, that Cathy had to show Mr. Grey what she was made of. I think it was a test for her, in her ability to manage and maneuver whatever. And then Mr. Grey, for the Board, because...and I'm not trying to be cad or anything, but technically he did get a raise and a contract extension a week later. So, politics and all happens for a reason. We just happen to get caught in the crossfire. And we were an easy target for the fact that she knew I would, I won't say fight because I would have fought but you know, I wouldn't make a stink, for my kids. So my area of weakness, I think she attacked it.

East Mesa has always been just that, the East Mesa. It's been part of the District, when it's making stink in the headlines, but other than that, 'it's flowing okay, there's no problem. It's really not a part of us.' We were the first cluster, when we worked as clusters, and this was like 1997, 1998, to embrace the whole Baldrige Theory, Continuous Improvement, the whole PDSA, and we were doing great things with it. When we would have a chance to show it off to the District, it was silly stuff that we were doing...just kind of *playing* kind of attitude, you know. No one took the East Mesa seriously, because we were from the East Mesa. Another cluster took it on like two or three years later and all of the sudden they are the cat's meow. They are put on a pedestal. There was lots and lots and lots of that. We were the first cluster that got enough signatures to go on a year-round calendar, because we knew we were losing gains in the summer. And nobody would take us seriously. They thought, 'no, it isn't fair that you guys get to do it and other places don't.' And even though we went through the formal process of how to get to an alternative calendar, they wouldn't accept our bid for it. So it's like, 'you know, when are you going to take us seriously? We've got some great things, great teachers...' We were thinking outside the box to the *n*th degree, because of where we were located we weren't taken seriously. It was very frustrating for teachers and administrators. The district in general, I think they thought they're poor, they're uneducated, they don't have the time to care. So I think they took advantage of that. For the most part I was there, how many years? The parents are in the community a lot, they're not going to make a huge stink unless they think you're hurting their kids, mentally or physically or whatever. They're not one to go and run to get their lawyers because they can't afford it. But I think some people equate that to non-caring or uncaring parents, when it's actually the opposite. They are like a cub with their momma bear. And when they get put into that corner and they need to protect, they will protect their kids. And they'll take whatever steps need to be taken. That was a prime example with the whole schedule change issue. Those parents were *livid* that this was allowed, and

that it was allowed at Ortiz HS but probably never would have been allowed at another school. And I wonder, were they directing that at the Principal per se, or the fact that the District did not say, 'you *cannot* change those schedules or dump those schedules. You do and it's your tail' kind of attitude. Because not only I think the Principal was wrong in making that decision, but she was given kind of a leeway because people that told her she shouldn't do that really had no clout over her. It wasn't her supervisor that told her that, it was the people that were in charge of the computer-based scheduling program. And so, as a Principal they're important but they don't tell you what to do. They *guide* you, but no one came and said, 'you can't do that. No way. We gotta figure out a better plan.' And so I think the parents looked to the District to say, 'you didn't even protect us from this decision-making person.' And I hate to say it, but when I did go to the board meeting, the higher-ups threw her under the bus. Yes, she should have been reprimanded. That was a bad decision. But there should have been a support system to say, 'no, we're not going to do that. Can you imagine the fallout if this should happen? Can you imagine the safety issues? Let's sit down and do a plan-B kind of situation.' So I think a lot of times site-based management was taken away from the schools when we got the new Superintendent, *but* given to principals if they don't want to be the bad guy or the fallout guy. When our cluster took on the PDSA Baldrige Theory, it was just like, 'oh, that's something fun to play with. That really doesn't help us move forward.' And we're like, 'look, when you empower the students to truly understand the material and why they're learning... we're talking about standards.' We created a lot of wonderful tools and it wasn't looked at because I think at that time the rest of the schools were thinking, 'we're not where you are. We'll *never* get to where *you're* at.'

These attitudes still prevail. And not just from the District toward the East Mesa. I think people are a little more culturally-proficient. I don't know. I think that whole drama at Ortiz HS really showed upper administration, and District HQ, and I guess the whole District, that Ortiz is not a cluster to push around. I was very proud of those parents for stepping up and standing up for the rights of their kids because they did lose three to four weeks of academics and it was a cost that could have been spared if you had had all the players at the damn same table to make a decision. [But] Title-I schools have to creative and think outside the box. That's because I think that their students don't necessarily learn the traditional way. They don't have the traditional home-setting, where they come home and they have a nice little area to do their homework and milk and cookies for when they've finished their work. There's not a one-on-one reader with them every night. So they have to be creative to incorporate that in, that kind of learning environment in the school day. And their approaches have to be unique as to parent-teacher conferences might have to run at night because parents work during the day. Or maybe we have to hold them on Saturdays or that kind of thing. So, they have to reach kids in the community differently.

My fondest moments of my life in education are just those years at La Independencia have to be. I know it sounds cheesy and sick but from the moment I walked in I just knew I was at home. Teaching was amazing. I never felt, I never had that first-year teacher blues or got sick. I never had that, 'oh God, I dread that.' They always say that first year is the hardest year. My first year was not hard and maybe because I was in a Master's

program so I had good support systems but I just always tried to teach with the kids in mind. And that has always helped me along the way. I always kept those kids in mind. And then when I finally decided that I was going to transfer into administration, again my number one priority was those kids and although I know it was hard for some of the adults on campus to swallow, I always just say, 'you know, teachers have a choice. They can go where they want. Kids don't.' And so, that's our bread and butter right there, that's who we need to service. That's why we went into teaching, because it's a service job. I knew that. Yeah, just those...those great times, those crazy times, from dressing up at Halloween to *Día de los Muertos* and seeing that for my birthday my Spanish club coming and singing *Las Mañanitas* to me every year. And I was inundated with cards everyday and well wishes and when my baby arrived, they were treating him like he was a new brother that they had. If I left school late, kids were making sure I got to my car safely. It was just never a moment that it was any ugliness. Even on the worst days there was never any kind of ugliness. I always said that I was blessed in that I didn't have a job for 16 years, I had a passion. It's expanded, it's expanded a little bit. There was some dead time, there was a couple of years where I was thinking, 'I've got figure out something or I'm going to whither away on the vine.' But this new addition has helped move me along and see that there was some benefit.

I was more proud when the kids acknowledged our hard work. To me, having the District acknowledge it was meaningless. It was superficial and to me it just didn't...to me, it didn't mean anything. Maybe there were some teachers who it did mean something to. I think for the most part teachers couldn't care less, in a sense. The kudos came from the kids; they were far more important. Knowing that they trust you everyday. It's a huge complement.

I hope through this that people will learn what not to do or learn how to do it more effectively and efficiently. I guess I could have gotten really bitter. But I said if they learned from this adventure of ours, and that nobody has to go through it and that there are systems created so that nobody has to go through it. Then I am, I guess I'm glad I was a guinea pig in many ways. But I think deep down, that's what's so sad. It's that there is the evolution is happening from that. I think they have learned, and I think you won't see that same situation happening again. And that makes me happy, because I don't think anyone should go through that. Especially kids, and hopefully they'll see them as human beings and not just as numbers on a test document. I think things happen for a reason and maybe...I've never been able to tell my side of the story. To anyone. Or my thoughts on this process. I've always kept my mouth shut. But maybe through my new job, my new actions, and what I have to do, maybe people will see I had some great talents. You know, I wasn't perfect but who is? And I learned from the mistakes that I made and I try to make those changes pretty rapid, that I wouldn't do it again. But hopefully they can say, 'wow, you did that at La Independencia too?' Maybe that through that I can show them what I did do and maybe change some peoples minds about me at the top. I never had a chance to have my day in court. Never. It's kind of frustrating because now you see that Cathy's gone and there were some major problems there, 'well, maybe we shouldn't have listened to Cathy.' That sort of thing. And so maybe, hopefully, I can share some of

the great things that I did that I think would be of great value to other schools and to other Principals. But that's all. (CJ smiles and laughs)

Summary and Analysis

Christina entered into education following difficult and disappointing starts to her college education. She quickly found a home at La Independencia MS, where teacher turnover was at or near 50% each year. After several years as a teacher, she moved into administration. Her mentor, Henry Duran, built his career in education. Once he was moved from La Independencia Middle School to Ortiz High School, Christina assumed his position and as mentioned above became the first Latina Principal of La Independencia Middle School. She took over his position without support from the District and immediately began to address the major issues confronting La Independencia: gang violence, high teacher and administrator burnout and turnover, low interest in academics. Year after year, Christina was able to move the school in a positive direction. Teacher turnover decreased. Student violence became manageable. Eventually general interest in academics grew. Family and school community involvement and support grew as siblings of La Independencia entered and found personal, social, and academic support in the administration and faculty.

Christina instituted several changes to the daily life at La Independencia: she adopted a Continuous Improvement model to scaffold teachers' various pedagogies. She implemented critical changes to the school's bilingual education model, allowing for students whose first language was English to further develop verbal and written fluency. Christina also pushed for after-school tutoring for any students willing to attend at least two hours per week.

Christina met the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act with optimism and saw in it the teeth her position lacked for expunging poor teachers from education. Unfortunately La Independencia immediately became a Title-I school, warranting scrutiny and a watchful eye from district and state officials. As Adequate-Yearly-Progress according to NCLB was ever-farther out of La Independencia's grasp, Christina felt the pressure from Puesta del Sol ISD officials to improve test scores.

Superintendent Tom Grey targeted the East Mesa; he took the stereotypes about Latinos as truth. He believed that parent involvement was low, when in actuality the opposite was true. It was to his (as well as Richard Rael's) advantage that the parents of La Independencia Middle School and Ortiz High School did not take their strife to the district. That Christina Jojola asked them to back down is a testament to her commitment to the school community. For her part, Cathy Wayne targeted La Independencia Middle School for somewhat similar reasons: career advancement. Cathy Wayne sought a way to demonstrate to the newly-hired Tom Grey that she was willing to facilitate the removal of established principals. Knowing that Christina Jojola would not openly fight the removal, Grey and Wayne strategically targeted La Independencia. Christina's response was to protect the students as much as possible in what she knew was an unjust and unnecessary takeover. Christina responded with her students' and faculty members' best interests at heart.

Grey and Wayne's blatant disregard for the positive implementations and reports from the New Mexico Public Education Department indicate a certain level of dismissal of the achievements and strides made by La Independencia administration, faculty, and students.

Jojola describes herself as ‘the first Hispanic female’ to lead La Independencia as Principal. In her 7-year career as Principal at La Independencia Middle School she provided the youth of the area an opportunity to attend a school in which their leader had significantly more cultural insight and connection into the their lives and ethnic identities. As a counter-story to the hegemonic practice of promoting majoritarian figures and interests, Christina Jojola’s commitment to the students showed through in her devotion to their needs and best interests. Her work was highly respected across the community. Jojola’s request that the parents and guardians refrain from acting upon their outrage and anger upon learning of the district’s intentions to remove her are further evidence of her *cariño* for the students, her selflessness and devotion to the educational wellbeing of her students. Had the outraged families protested the removal of the first Hispanic female principal of a mostly Chicana/o, Latina/o, *Mexicana/o*, Hispanic middle school, it is possible that the district would have rescinded its decision. However, out of concern for the students and faculty members, Christina Jojola asked the families to stand down. The battle to save her job could have led to more firings and public slander of La Independencia MS students and faculty. Jojola’s life narrative describes the power of critical teaching and learning; the absence of quality teachers in her brother’s life in my estimation contributed to his eventual incarceration.

A significant amount of negative comments and slander had already assaulted La Independencia Middle School and Ortiz High School. The comments were made by district officials that operated from a deficit lens and interpreted standardized test scores as indicators of substandard teaching, poor student learning, and inept leadership. While structural problems certainly existed within the school, the cause can be traced back to

the district itself. Additional funding was never made possible to repair leaky roofs and heating and cooling systems were likewise inadequate. As Jojola mentioned, there were two instances in 7 years when the district actually provided meaningful support: first to remove a pedophile teacher, and then to dismiss a malignant assistant principal. La Independencia MS had moved into a space in which the most reliable characteristic of Puesta del Sol ISD was that help from the District could never be expected. Jojola recognized the need to protect her students and faculty members from predators and hostile administrators. However the protection of the union and the binding nature of the Assistant Principal's contract subverted her authority and thus prevented her from dismissing either one without both district and union consent.

Should the district be praised for cooperating with Jojola's need for advanced authority in dealing with such issues? What else has gone ignored by the district? According to Jojola, the neglected issues were numerous and ranged from the physical structures to unfilled leadership positions and beyond. Recall that Jojola stated she was forced to take on an additional reading program while six others were already in place. This type of district mandate reveals much about its view of La Independencia. First, there is a lack of understanding about the nature of the school's actual needs. District officials, according to Jojola, did not tour the school, visit classrooms, or dialogue with teachers or students. Instead the negative majoritarian stereotypes of the La Independencia school community abounded and informed district actions against the school.

Yosso captures the above sentiment very well in stating "the majoritarian story asserts: if Chicana/o students perform poorly in school, then their parents probably do not

‘value’ education enough to inculcate academic excellence in their children,” (2006, p. 9). The district operated by such logic and assumed that La Independencia faculty and leadership engaged in a similar pedagogy of the underachieving. Thus, the remedy must be another costly scripted program equivalent to roughly two entry-level teachers. Second, the belief that flooding La Independencia with scripted reading programs would resolve the school’s educational issues represents a neoliberal strategy of mandatory austerity measures (albeit micro-level) that further draw resources from the school and into the publishing corporations. When the implied results do not come to fruition, the blame is placed onto the purchasers (in this case, leadership and teachers).

As the events come to light in the Cathy Wayne interviews, the Puesta del Sol Independent School District’s removal of Christina Jojola and the instituting of Richard Rael is an act of colonization. Rael enters the scene with a significant grant, strings attached, that entrench the methods fetish which Bartolomé (1994) and others oppose.

Cathy Wayne

Biographical Information

Cathy Wayne was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. Her life narrative involves firsthand accounts of the viciousness of racism and segregation in the South. Being the daughter of an influential judge and a well-educated family, Cathy understood the value in education and encouraged those around her to strive for educational access and higher learning. Eventually, Cathy Wayne found her way to New Mexico and ascended the ranks of the Puesta del Sol ISD, becoming Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools. She was to become a catalyst in the takeover of La Independencia MS, a move that put her at odds with the East Mesa community. Her decision to remove

Christina Jojola ultimately had little to do with the No Child Left Behind Act and was motivated more by personal disregard for Jojola.

Interview Narrative

My name is Cathy Wayne. I was born in Mississippi. The reason for that was that my dad was appointed to the Supreme Court in Mississippi and the capital was Jackson. We moved down there but he kept residence in Oxford. So we lived in Oxford in the summers and that's where my mom, Bonnie Wayne, went to law school. My father went to law school at UCLA, and then got his Juris Doctor at University of Chicago. He waited for a while to get that degree because while he was at Ole Miss he contracted polio. So he was in an iron lung for a year, and lived. He survived it, and was in a wheelchair all of his life. But then he ended up getting his degree in law and his advanced degree was the Juris Doctor. Then he went back to Mississippi because he was very committed to changing the rights of African Americans. And thus, that was the way we were all raised. It was a very difficult era; it was during the civil rights era. But it was such that his life was in danger, as was ours. There were a lot of court cases he dealt with. I went to public schools. My parents always kept us in public schools, even with desegregation. Even when most of my friends left to go to private schools. A lot of racism. In 1971, my father passed away. I ended up at Millsaps College, which is a small, liberal arts school, very highly regarded in Jackson, Mississippi. My brothers had gone there, and a couple of them had gone to Ole Miss. And I went into music, vocal performance. I did not go into law. My parents encouraged me to do what I loved. My father was dead by then, actually. But he always encouraged me to do that. And I worked full time and got scholarships and that kind of thing. At that point I did have a child, named Thomas. We call him 'Tom.' He was born in '71. And so there wasn't a lot of other students with children at that time, so I wanted to graduate. (CW laughs). So I finished my degree there. At that school we had written comprehensives, oral comprehensives, and two recitals that I had to do. So the education was very, very highly regarded and very rigorous at Millsaps. After Millsaps I remarried.... And then he got a job in New Mexico, at Sunset Prep. I got a graduate fellowship here, and a teaching assistantship here. So it worked out where we both moved here and in between all that I had another child, in '80. And then finished my graduate school, I think I finished my graduate school in '85 and then finished that in '88. [It was] a Master's in Vocal Performance. I ended up picking up a teacher certification just for job security. Although at that time I didn't really need it because I had a studio of about 30-35 students that I taught privately and I was singing all over the city. One day I got a telephone call; someone was interested in me coming and the principal had gotten my name from Southwest University. He just needed someone to come in. He had a music teacher who was dying. He needed someone to come in and fill in for him a little bit. The man who was dying was in and out. He was unwilling to take his leave, to quit. And the principal was trying to work with him. So I would just fill in whenever he just didn't feel like it. On that day he'd call me, the principal and/or that teacher, and I would say 'sure.' I was finished with my degree and so I had the flexibility. And most of my private studio students weren't until after hours, so I could do that. I remember the first couple of days: one time I looked up and I saw the Principal in the choir with all the other kids, I didn't even recognize him because he was so short! I mean, he looked like any

other student and I had so many in there, like 50 in the choir room. And it just started working out to where I was there more and more, and I fell in love with the kids. And they wanted me to stay and Mr. Vancouver, the now-deceased teacher, a wonderful teacher, ended up passing away in May of that year. So they didn't have another teacher for the next year, and with a lot of pressure from the kids and Mr. Jennings telling me, 'you can have any kind of instrumentation or technology,' like recording, different instruments that I would need for the different classes. And so I ended up staying there, and loving it. Built the music program, somewhat diversified it more than Mr. Vancouver had it. Mr. Vancouver, he was a great teacher but he had like a salsa band. He really focused on the second language learner, which at that time was really unusual. So we had a salsa band, we had all the instruments. So what I did in another class period was I developed a choir, another show choir. Other things where you're focusing on more traditional music and children's voices so you get more of a choir sound. So I stayed there for quite a few years. I filled in at a high school one year. And then I ended up at a middle school because I just love that age group. So my teaching career was mostly in the public schools anyway, except for one year, in middle schools which is 6th, 7th, 8th. At the middle school I was approached... Southwest University had what they called a 'CEIAP,' which stood for 'Cooperative Education Institute Apprenticeship Program.' I know it's no longer in existence at Southwest University, and I'm not sure anywhere else in the United States. But that program paid you to get your Master's, which was unheard of, in Educational Administration. So basically I got paid to go to school. And to keep my job but not only to keep my job, they paid for a long-term substitute to go into my class so that I could intern under an administrator. And I did not intern at my own middle school, I did not want to do that where I was teaching. I wanted to go somewhere different so I interned at Saguaro High School under Tim Jennings who was my first principal at Hollister Middle School. If you recollect that's where I told you the principal called me and wanted me to fill in for that dying teacher. So Mr. Jennings and I knew each other for a long time and he was at Saguaro which is a great high school here in Puesta del Sol. And of course I knew most of the Assistant Principals already up there. So I interned there and did some summer school internships at Morado High School, some at Saguaro, and then got a Principalship at Greenville Middle School. Well, excuse me, Assistant Principal. And I was Assistant Principal there for I think six years, and then Principal for four to five. So I was there and I was moving up through the ranks of Puesta del Sol ISD. I was in the paper as the person on the move. They would pick people out, different people, one in education, one in business, one in the political arena, and I was the one in education.

The district had a new superintendent come in in '08 and he actually called me on the telephone from Alabama, interviewed me on the phone. Then I went in and interviewed with him. He had some other applicants as well. And I got the job. Then after I started as Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools here in Puesta del Sol ISD. And they had never had a Superintendent of Middle Schools. They had had Regional Superintendents, various configurations of government within the district. It's like the 22nd largest district in the United States, there are about 94,000 students give or take. 27 middle schools. Middle schools were underperforming, as they were across the United States. And No Child Left Behind was knocking at the door and 2014 was getting close, close, close...I

always love working in high poverty schools, I am just drawn to high poverty schools. And I think that's directly [because] I saw so much poverty in Mississippi, I mean abject poverty. Horrible. My mom was from the Delta originally. My dad was upper class, but my mom's family was I would say... her mom and dad were poor because they were ministers.... But she came from an educated family. [They were ministers in the Appalachia Mountains. They didn't have any money in Appalachia. But their mom died when she was 11, then they moved back to Appalachia, and then she just eventually left home at 16 and went to college.... I just saw so much poverty in the Delta, and LeeLee, whose real name was Bessie Dewitt. I don't know how we got the name LeeLee, but mom hired her just after she got out of the penitentiary because you have to remember [her husband] beat her and she went to prison for killing him. Even though, the mom hired her, and of course she never beat any of us or touched, no, never. She was protecting herself. So I think just being raised around the values of those that have the most, much is expected of us. It was the Kennedy era. So I am a direct descendent, as probably many of your professors or others are. I was raised with that. Definitely. They knew them, they respected them, and so all of my values come from that. So I love working with families, I believe it is an injustice in the public school system. But I think that we need to be looking at paying teachers a professional salary, and paying teachers *more* to be at high poverty schools. I think we owe the least among us that. I've just always been attracted to tat, and just seeing the joy in students' faces when people care about them and that ish in the level of teaching and giving them what they deserve to have: an equal education.

I think moving here, one of the biggest changes was that there are not a lot of African Americans in this city. So, or and for me realizing that I had my own stereotypes too and realizing that none of us are perfect, including myself, about racial stereotyping. I think being more aware of that, more cognizant of that. Working on my approaches in teaching, as far as differentiating for those students. I didn't speak Spanish. But how could I, well, first of all I needed to let them know I cared about them. And then, having as much professional development, as much as I could in second language learners as I could to become a better teacher. Doing what I can or what I could do to communicate with their families. For example, at Hollister I would go down to Gonzales Flats to pick up the kids. I wasn't scared to go by myself. Many kids would say, 'Oh, Miss Wayne, I can't come to rehearsal, my family doesn't have a car.' I would say, 'well, is it okay if I come down and pick you up?' They would say, 'Oh sure, you'll come down to Gonzales Flats?' I'm like, 'Well, sure!' But nothing happened to me because those parents were out there making sure. I'd pull up in my van and they'd all get in (CW laughs). So a lot of professional development, learned some Spanish. I was pretty busy because music programs [require] a lot of after school things, just like any kind of teaching.

Some of my successes as a teacher, I think definitely having a degree in vocal performance rather than a degree in education, and I'm sorry, Professors, if you hear this but I really think the education colleges in the country have a lot to be desired. In other words I got my Master's in my art, whether someone's is journalism, mine is vocal performance. Well, I could teach those kids how to sing. They wanted to know how to sing well and they would go up against choirs in the Southwest, [where] parents would

send them to voice lessons [and] piano lessons. So, it wasn't [my students'] fault, they just needed to be exposed to it. I just needed to teach them what a good sound was. So I really think my vocal degrees helped with that, not any of my education classes. I would still have been the same teacher without any of those education classes. They were a waste of my time, here at this college [referring to Southwest University]. So my successes on the ground with students, developing relationships along with good strategies, high expectations...I always had high expectations, always...I just wouldn't settle for anything less. And they lived up to that! At Hollister I created a show choir and we took first place in the first year. And there were all sorts of kids in that program. Hollister is a great balance of ethnicities: you have a large Hispanic population, but you have a large Anglo [population], and you have a large Jewish [population], it's a great school to teach in. And Wilson, not so much. You had some Anglos, although even in my area, where I live down here a lot of the parents send their kids to Hollister. So Wilson was high poverty, largely Hispanic and African Americans, but I love teaching there. So that was my successes and I think just networking a lot [brought] a lot of successes. I worked with a lot of great people, I like being around people so it's easy for me to develop relationships. And those relationships help you get what you need for those students; for me, the side effect was that it also helped me to move up pretty quickly. You know, but if I got more for my students, that was... I picked up my certification after my master's and I was like the education student of the year there. And I'm not bragging about myself there. I'm just saying, there are a couple of good professors up there. And I would take a lot of classes that... the music courses that I took in education were good but many just didn't have any relativity or any relation to what you're actually doing in the classroom. You know, like statistics or a fundamentals of education...foundations...you just slept through it and you took the test. It was just...and they're still trying to keep themselves alive up there.

Here is what it means to me when I see students from a high poverty background take education into their own hands. Well, that they have high expectations for themselves and that they will meet it if they have encouragement and showing of the way. And that's why I brought AVID...well the Superintendent really brought AVID into the district but now all of the middle schools are doing AVID. And that was another way to address all these other issues that I brought up and to help those second language learners who don't have access but want it so bad. They want it. But they need to have a path, they need somebody to guide them. And if you've never been raised to read and you don't know a second language, you only know Spanish...you don't want them to get rid of Spanish but you want them to be able to learn all kinds of things and have access. Access is huge. And that hasn't been in our schools, access for those kids. It's changing now, I think. But still... But if I speak English and I only teach English, there's many teachers like that, and I have whether it's a Hispanic student or a kid from Afghan, well, they're not going to take it as well. It's just ingrained, ingrained in the culture. Now not all teachers are like that. But you'll see, obviously, the research and the statistics show that those kids are not performing well, it's not just their families. It's just they haven't had equal access and high expectations expected of them. And at a school like La Independencia or Ortiz HS, where are your teachers going to go unless they have the value system to where they want to go teach in a school like that. And it's tough to teach in a school like that.

I went from Principal of Greenville to Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools in 2008. Basically I was a Superintendent of all middle schools. [I was responsible for] hiring all principals, the principals hired all the assistant principals but frequently I was in on what was going on in that school, if there were a lot of troubles at that school; overseeing all the curriculum in all the schools, aligning all the curriculum. In fact I have a list on paper of what all the initiatives that we were doing. It's huge, but it's all on one page. That one page became fleshed out with timelines, who's going to do... course I had a team of like 5 people directly under me. Of course the departments worked with me and I worked with them. Again, it's about building relationships with people and getting what you need for your schools. And implementing all initiatives around curriculum and instruction, that's the heart of it. To make a better *life* for kids; to make a better classroom situation; to let principals know... I think that was a huge change, the accountability, operating in a different milieu. Teachers were still bucking the system, I think they still are but they're seeing the writing on the wall. You could speak to that. I've been out since last year but still you know, 'well, the union said we didn't have to do this.' Well, you're teachers who didn't want to move forward. You're teachers who wanted to close the door, not collaborate, not be innovative, feel defensive. And some of them probably rightly so because they are not meeting the expectations. What do we do with those teachers? The time is now so I really pushed a sense of urgency. You can write that down: a sense of urgency. I let the principals know because middle schools had been sort of, you know, 'I just want you to feel good,' and the kids weren't learning *anything*. And it was not everywhere and not in every classroom. But, they didn't know teachers didn't know how to teach second language learners. The list goes on and on. Special education. So within the departments, the Puesta del Sol ISD central office aligning all the initiatives, doing what we were doing... huge part of my job... taking all those initiatives, bringing all the departments in, so all the departments knew those initiatives we were doing in the middle schools, and supporting us in getting those initiatives implemented, and that was critical because when I came in and even when Tom Grey came in the departments just, everybody including the teachers, including the principals, you know, 'leave me alone. If we want to help you at so-and-so's school, we might, depending on how we like you.' Or, 'if we have time!' And I'm talking about Data & Development, Technology, Research, I mean those are huge, so teachers are becoming more accountable but still you have these departments over here going, 'you know, we don't have time to come to your school and work with your teachers on that, the data.' Well, that changed. We set it up so that they would come out to the schools, sit down with teachers, with departments, having that collaboration. And the end result was that student achievement and teachers loving what they do and teach, and not just be babysitters. You know, before it was just huge issues with behavior and discipline management... there always will be... but there will be teachers who just deal with discipline. They didn't even teach anymore. They were just sour. And then they didn't teach when you wanted them to teach. So it was just like a vicious cycle. I think a lot of those teachers had been moved out by the principals or had retired, that kind of thing. They feel like it's society expecting more, and it was a different time when they came into teaching, more parental responsibilities. Now we've just got more ethnicities, it's just a different time.

One of my main goals was to put in superior leaders. And I listen to 'Education Nation,' ... many teachers feel that you could just get rid of the principals and just have teachers do all the work. But even that teacher who spoke up at Education Nation who doesn't have [a principal], she's administratively certified and does administrative duties. So, 'what is she doing' would be my question. But I think leadership is critical. My number one job, since there was only so much I could do with the [Teachers] Union, was to put good leaders in there, and then to work with Susan. And just keep pushing. And the teachers that are really good teachers, they don't want to have bad teachers in their school. They just don't want to speak up, because they don't want to be black-balled especially if they're young. If you're on the low totem pole with the Union and they're making cuts anyway, it's sort of... who wants to do that? It's hard to come out and say, 'Cathy over there, she isn't doing anything.' And we all know those teachers. I remember who they were when I was a teacher. I remember those teachers who cried out so much and they wouldn't have any Hispanics in their classroom or they didn't like an African American student who was Special Ed. And maybe that kid was trouble, or maybe, but if you don't like me and I know you don't like me I'm going to act out even more.... And that was what was so neat about the Professional Creativity Team. I know we're going to talk about that later, but the Professional Creativity Team, what I found was that the more and more people got comfortable, people were speaking up.... They were able to talk about what was burning in their gut for so long, you know. 'What we have here are a lot of teachers who do not want to teach second language learners. What are we going to do about it?' But then take it to that next level and say, 'what are we going to do?' And the Principal needs to be a part of that, to make those teachers pony up. You know, 'you can't just do this anymore. You can't just be the teacher that doesn't have these kids. You have to learn how to differentiate instruction.'

Getting my team together. I had to get my own team together. So the first thing I was going to do in the 2007-2008 academic year was hire my own team. You have No Child Left Behind, what we all love about it and what we all hate about it. So what I did was I forgot about 2014, but what I did see was a sense of urgency. And because I had been around Special Education, and I had been around Gifted programs, because I knew the methods and the strategies that were out there that Puesta del Sol ISD was already doing I just applied them consistently to all middle schools and implemented that professional development. And we had to roll that out. And I had a Professional Creativity Team of Principals. So it wasn't just Cathy and her team; I had a Professional Creativity Team of Principals. Then if a department wanted to do a committee on Algebra I at 9th grade, we need to bring teachers in. And not just teachers from [one school], but a cross-section of the district. And we need high school teachers in on that, and we need 7th and 8th grade teachers.... I think of my, just the ability I think is from the music in me, just the ability to see an orchestra, and seeing all those instruments, and if you have voices, seeing all of them working together for an outcome. And that sense of performance, but where it's all just making beautiful music. But it's got to have all those arrows...going in the same way. You can't have a teacher over going this way and the other 6th grade teachers going the other way. So whose responsibility it that? It's the principal's. What part of the symphony do they have? They have a part in there. They should be part of that. If you've really got a teaching environment, it's a joyous process. You're having to work on things,

just like in a symphony but when you come together and you're making beautiful music, that's what it should be all about. That's a real high level. I mean you're taking about re-doing, paying teachers a professional wage and getting the best. And what does the best look like? The Gates Foundation is working on that. I think it's going to take us years to get there. Public schools weren't good when I was going through them, and I graduated in '71. I was bored. Except drama and music, where students and teachers could create. You could create. And you learned it, you learned it. You learned a lot. But the traditional classes, how many are still left? Think about the work world, it's not like that. Huge disconnect. I mean, we should be going to look at places like the Prep. But they get real resentful if you say that. But you pay them a professional wage, \$60,000, \$70,000, and you get the very best. Well, doctors make well over 100. Why can't the teachers get paid like that? And think of who you would get in the ranks. I mean, you would be able to, you would have people scrambling. You would get the best. And then demand high accountability. And that's what they do at some of those private schools. Not all, some of them are pretty bad.

As Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools in the 2008-2009 school year, one of the big things about when you set up a team at a central office like that, you need to describe your purpose. It came from the Superintendent, that we needed to increase academic achievement. And so in order to do that I created a team of people under me: one was Kimmy Middlestat, who was like an assistant to us. She was over the school improvement, the EPSS, Educational Plan for Student Success. She did some other jobs. Also had Sandy Upshaw. I eventually put her over America's Choice and AVID. I had administrative assistant Cindy Grijalva, who worked right alongside of me. And then within the leadership team and with quite a many departments we worked with those heads of the departments to make sure they supported our schools in whatever we needed to get done. So part of that team also was to create a Professional Creativity Team that included principals. I think it takes all of us working together. This job is way too big to do alone. It's not going to do any good to dictate, so one needs to work collaboratively. You could always pull out the mallet if you need to ... to make people work, but it's much better to work collaboratively. And most people want to do that. But there was a much different urgency with which the Superintendent had given No Child Left Behind and that all students had to be 100% proficient by 2014. We knew that that wasn't going to happen. We decided in this district, in the Puesta del Sol ISD, to create our own AYP percentages. So for instance where a school might need to increase by 20 or 30% or 40% just to be at where they need to be according to the federal government for say 2008, we created our own proficiency targets, which were 3% a year. We felt that if schools could increase by 3% a year, they were making gains. Now some of them we were putting a bit higher than 3%, but the average was 3% in both reading and math, generally. When I came in there was one, maybe two middle school that were making AYP. There are none now, course the bar just keeps raising higher and higher for schools to make that proficiency. But, we know that our students weren't doing well by *anyone's* standards. We knew that we weren't going to meet the 100% proficiency by 2014, but morally and ethically everyone can come to the table and agree that a student that only has a proficiency of 9% on the state test is...that's abysmal. And that's due to many different factors which in this country we're all still debating about. But one thing the research

does show is if you have an absolute streamline approach, specific to address the standards, the teaching, the pedagogy is directly addressed to the standards, those teachers are supported. And then along with that you have interventions. Then you have a much greater chance of reaching academic achievement for students. Now that sounds very simplistic, me saying that.

There's many different best practices; differentiation of instruction. So, for example, one of our goals the Professional Creativity Team came together and decided *this* middle school over here was doing this. La Independencia was doing this. Hollister was doing this. High Desert MS, out in the far Southwest, was doing this, with math or reading or whatever. There was no consistency across the district regarding instruction. So if you're looking at mobility, we have a really high mobility, over 60% in this district. So if you're looking at students that are going from La Independencia to Hollister, more than likely La Independencia to High Desert MS, but they'll travel around. They could be on page...or learning the standard of multiplication in math at one school, then get transferred to another school because if their parents move, or they get kicked out of their apartments, or change jobs, or whatever, they just moved to where they're working on algebraic equations at High Desert MS. So there was no standardization of curriculum, and no curriculum mapping. So what we did was work closely with those departments to get the job done of having achievement. We first had to develop those relationships with the departments, and let them know what we wanted to do, which came out of the Professional Creativity Team of principals. And me, and myself working with the Academic Officer of the district, Paula Watson, all curriculum and instruction. So I worked with her as the Associate of Middle Schools, as did the Elementary and High School Associates. We knew... we mapped out what we wanted to do with her at each level. She worked with us in getting us to support our initiatives. We all had Professional Creativity Teams, which were those principals, so we had a representative...I probably had like 7 or 8. And those principals represented different quadrants of the city, and within that big overall umbrella, some initiatives I had worked with the Chief Academic Officer on, we started parceling them out with those principals and with my team, Kimmy Middlestat and Sandy. So what did that look like? What did that look like to math? What did that look like for language arts? What did that look like for science? What did that look like for social studies, and so on and so forth. Well obviously math and language arts were going to be the first two we looked at, because that's what gets tested. Although we know that if they learn specific best practices, those students are going to be taught in that and they're going to carry over into the other courses or curriculum. So, what does a good language arts program look like? And we were adopting a new program. So for about a year we went with old books, well we could still develop best practices. Like, what does differentiated instruction look like? Second language learners? And all of this training had been going on in the district for years, so we were really just aligning it. This is what needs to be taught in this year. And working with Data & Development and the short-cycle assessments, because schools have to give three short-cycle assessments a year. So they did curriculum mapping with those short-cycle assessments. So say from August to October, you would teach these standards from here to here during that time period. And how are you going to do that? What kind of tools and techniques do those teachers need? And then that way I could go back and work

with the departments and the Chief Academic Officer to provide that professional development for those teachers that they needed to be able to teach those standards. There was a lot of... Data & Development met with teachers a lot, I would always have one of my team members at those meetings when Data & Development would meet with a different kind of school. And they would look at standards, they would look at where those children or students, those teachers' students, who were last year they probably belonged to somebody else. But what standards weren't they meeting? What didn't they meet? And of course you're having to re-teach. So working with teachers and providing PD, and of course the next year they're having to teach new standards right? But you've got to re-teach, if they haven't learned long division it's going to be difficult for them to get into algebraic equations. So you're having to re-teach division, say, and that's just an example. So then what you really start doing is looking at interventions, which... students need those interventions. We had America's Choice for math and language arts. We had four schools that were intensive schools, and La Independencia was one of them. That was where the district, we put in \$100,000 each year for those interventions in that school. So the intervention of America's Choice, take for math, you have Ramp Up. So if you had students that were two or more years behind, those students, and based on your recommendation also, would go into Ramp Up. Now they can literally gain a whole year's time in Ramp Up pretty quickly, because it's ramped up. So it's really intensive for those students, and those students are pulled out of their regular math class and ideally, you would be working with that intervention teacher to make sure you know what those students are learning. Then there's a program on grade level which is Navigator, and that's for those students who are really have preconceived, erroneous notions of math. They might have learned it a wrong way. So Navigator you would teach, and it was on grade level. But many students have preconceptions, wrong ideas about division or what... multiplication, so it's really like re-teaching that they can move further along. There's a Ramp Up in language arts also and it's on grade level. So the same thing that would be happening would be happening in reading. We also brought in AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination.

So, going back to that Professional Creativity Team, what we did was we rolled out a plan for three years: all schools will have done this by year 1, schools will have done this by year 2, all schools will do this by year 3. That does not mean that we want a cookie-cutter box approach, which teachers are always afraid of. That was not the idea, and a lot of times the intervention programs teachers have historically balked at those. But we know with students that are really far behind, the need is immediate. So, and speaking of teachers that are working with those on-grade-level students, and working with those teachers in middle school to really know how to manage their classrooms. Being able to manage doing grouping, like doing elementary, looking at teaching very differently in the middle school. And what does that look like? And that takes tons of professional development. You've got to support those teachers, you got to bring people in, you can do peer coaching at schools. So, because of all the professional development and collaboration that needed to go on, we decided to put Professional Learning Communities in every middle school. Now we knew the high schools were having it, so all of this was very intentional as far as that three-year plan, working with the principals on my team and working with the Professional Creativity Team. On the side I was working with the

High School Associates, the Elementary Associates, and the Chief Academic Officer. So you didn't just want middle school out here doing their own thing and it had no continuity with the other grade levels. So there was a lot of conversation and a lot of connecting we did with the Chief Academic Officer going from Elementary to Mid to High. So in elementary they need to know and be able to do what in middle school... in 8th grade, and *before* 8th grade, we're getting them ready for high school in 6th what do they need to know and be able to do for high school? That doesn't lessen their experience in mid school, because they're not high schoolers they're mid schoolers. But making the curriculum a lot more, much more rigorous than it had been in the past. Our middle schools in Puesta del Sol in the past had been...we'd had teaming at different schools, depending on the school. In the Southwest schools didn't want to do teaming, so of the Southeast Heights didn't want to do teaming, just content. Teachers would go in, they wouldn't talk to one another, they were just doing so many different things in one school, many of which were not even approved by the district. That was huge. I mean, people were just doing whatever. I mean, surviving. It was just the way things were done. So we were just trying to get it all streamlined, so all schools were using *this* language arts textbook. All schools were using *this* math textbook, or *this* intervention, or *this* intervention, but not this intervention that we don't have any training for in the district. Not even approved by the district; it had just been there so long... and it wasn't necessary working. We would pull that research because if the program was working, we wanted to know what about it was working. A couple of programs a school was using for Regular Ed-II, and some Special Education students, which was fine! But what we figured out was that those Regular Ed students needed more of a quick intervention and that way they could get pretty much up to grade level, whereas some of our Special Ed students were much further behind than two years and that's why they were in Special Education. So it was an exciting time because a lot of things were going on in Special Education too. We worked very hard with that department on aligning their curriculum, the Special Ed curriculum; across the district it was like at one school it was one thing, at another school people were just teaching everything. So aligning that and making sure students got what they needed, like the basics. The basics, streamlined across the district. Then within that, of course a school like La Independencia you're going to have a larger population of Second Language Learners, you're probably going to have a larger population of Special Education students, just depending on what kind of programs, you know, if you had ISP... I mean, High Desert MS has huge ISP program. Intensive Support Programs. Those are for those students that might have severe physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. So even those programs we worked at, and you do that by making sure, you know my job was to work with the heads of those departments because I had to get them on board and to work with their staff. And the Chief Academic Officer aided me in doing that. And the reason I bring that up with the departments is that it is so critical, I think one of the issues in a big, huge district like we have is...you have to be able to work with those departments. Our district had done so many innovations in the last 25 years, like many districts did. They did decentralization, centralization, a combination of decentralization and centralization, but the bottom line comes back to curriculum and instruction and teacher and professional development. It really, and I know I'm repeating myself, it all goes back to the teacher in the classroom. But you've got to get those principals, and you know what? You got to get the Union working with you. I spent a lot

of time on getting the Union working with us, especially when we developed the new class schedule for schools. That was huge.

That was where we could have PLCs built into the day. That was huge. They had two options of which to go to, and but both of them had PLCs. Well, some of them didn't want to be in a PLC. So it meant working with the Union closely, it meant we pushing on those principals to make teachers accountable, that they had to do this. And to see the benefits of it. And for those teachers who did not want to do it, who refused to do it, they had to move them along in the evaluation process. Most teachers really came along; I would say 99% of them. And those that didn't I guess they just ended up retiring, and they were having trouble anyway. You know, being at La Independencia, you probably saw it. There was a lot of change. It was painful. It was painful. And the Union has really, in New Mexico, for one of the huge stimulus grants, there was another one that President Obama and Duncan put out...and because the Union fought it, Arne Duncan and President Obama just said, 'no.' (CW shakes her head left to right.) So New Mexico didn't get any money because they (the Union) were just unwilling to move forward. And I am not a person either that thinks you should just teach to the test. However I would say that on any test, by any measurement if a student is making 9%, so these were best practices that we were trying to implement, I think it's important for your professors to know that any, any, any programs, any best practices that we implemented across the district for mid school level education, were research-based. It's not, it wasn't going to be, I mean especially you're talking about dollars. Major dollars. And a lot of work for teachers, and you want it to be something that is meaningful for them. I would be interested in...and what happens when teachers operate out of a sense of paranoia. Then it would be interesting.... I think that's the problem all across the United States. We're seeing states, I just pulled up on Michigan where Michigan public education is becoming more and more privatized. And that way, they can privatize and give incentives to teachers, merit pay. They're moving toward that because what's happening is that the unions are becoming, they have been recalcitrant. It's out of fear and I can understand. But then what you have is, ok, society goes, 'ok, you're not going to move, then we're going to move you anyway. We'll leave you and we'll get done for our students what we need to get done for them, and you'll be out of jobs. And if you want to get hired, you can go with that private employer, and still you're going to have to do what they tell you to do.' It should be where people are coming together and I really agree though that the unions have held us back. And, even as a teacher, even as a teacher, I was a teacher I knew that it wasn't, I mean I was in a school where teachers just wouldn't teach or they went to another school and just taught it how they wanted to. And then I think it gets to the point where you're putting down teachers as a whole. So it's, what is the purpose of a union? And now it's all so mixed up with Wall Street, but we don't know which way we're looking. But there has to be some sort of change in our educational environment, and I think privatizing our... we *have to have* public education. Public education is at the heart of a democracy. So how can we have it where teachers understand that they are there, that it's not a given that your going to keep your job. I'm sorry. Now does that mean that we should have NCLB, and teachers should be graded on one test? No. But there also needs to be other accountability measures and if teachers are not making it, they shouldn't have tenure. It is a really tough pill for the unions to swallow. I understand

that but our kids can't wait and internationally we are just losing, losing ground. Now, does that mean that it's all the teachers' fault? No, it doesn't. It absolutely doesn't. And that is an example of what's happening in your school, and that is happening in every school. That's not isolated. But it can be very frustrating for teachers and I'm not sure what your stand is for a teacher who wants to have that collaboration, who wants to share student data, who wants to do a peer evaluation, and have it... what about it if you had a teacher come into your classroom and had a tool and you all talked and collaborated? We did that at my school all the time. We did that 15 years ago. I really worked with those teachers to lower the fear level, and some of them fought it. They fought it, especially really strong Union members did not want to do that, did not want to do that. And I just stood firm and most of the teachers, once they started doing it... and because of the Union with some of those teachers I just couldn't do anything with them. I just had to leave them alone. And that's a problem, that's a problem. I just had to leave them alone. They get their way, they don't have to be in a PLC, they don't have to observe.

So going back to that '08-'09 year, basically implementing and working with teachers through Susan, and by the way I put Susan Westfield on the schedule to develop PLCs. Because in order to have PLCs we needed to develop a schedule, a school schedule that would still give them enough prep time and where they could have PLCs too. Well as soon as you start messing with a person's prep time, you know, then you start having problems. We weren't trying to take their prep away from them; they were going to have their prep. We were reconfiguring their schedule; there was a lot of wasted time. Another thing I should note [is] that you teachers teach for 5 and one-half hours each day. Yeah, so I think that, I mean you all are out the door in a middle school at 3:10. I mean, the day is so short. In New Mexico, the day is really short nationally. So kids are not in school, I would argue, long enough in the day. So its like trying to get done what we needed to get done in that amount of time was incredible. It's almost impossible. And that's a whole other issue and it hasn't been changed in New Mexico.

For all schools, K-12, we called that the Superintendent's Targets. And teachers really liked that because they thought, 'ok. I can't do 14%, but I can get my classes up to where they're increasing. If we can get to it, and we do our goals and get our kids committed to this, we can do 3%.' Data & Development worked with us and that was what the Superintendents came up with. It was 3% annual growth, and I have to tell you, that was a big fight with our Superintendent and our Governor. Huge. Oh, I'm telling you. Because think about it. He wanted to create that model which now they're saying is the best way because we know they can't increase 10-14%, well you can but it's very difficult district-wide. But, in other words he was just shunning what NCLB was saying and saying, 'well, here are my targets.' Susana Martinez and Hannah Skandera, oh mercy, mercy. They did not like that. They did not like that. So they fought and fought with him on that. Because he was just out here doing his own thing. And they didn't get along anyhow, the Superintendent just didn't get along with the Governor. Hannah Skandera. I think it's better now, but it's just, muscling. They're all doing it. The Governor's position is, 'No Child Left Behind says you have to increase by this much. And this is what you gotta do. What are you going to do, violate the federal law for the whole district?' Skandera is head of the Department of Education. And the Unions don't like her because she comes out of... I think she's been a professor but I don't think she's

ever been a principal. And I don't know if she's ever or for how long she's taught. She's been on some key national committees, she's a Republican, and she's from Florida. So she's, so in this state they just looked at her as a rubber stamp for the new Republican Governor, who would just bring in Jeb Bush's policies, whose brother they all hate who implemented NCLB.

My understanding is that Puesta del Sol is still following the 3% target. That's what my friends who are principals have told me, and a lot of our schools and middle schools did not make AYP but they increased their achievement in different subgroups, sub-pops, and language arts and math overall. I think La Independencia did last year. For '08, when you get the scores back in '09, then they dropped. Once we got them in '09 they dropped. So I don't know about this year, I don't think they met...I know they didn't meet AYP but I don't know if the different subgroups increased. I know that certain schools did because the principals called me and told me they did. And a lot of it is really, so much of it is putting those best practices in, but it is also getting those principals to get into those classrooms. I started required observations by principals; they had to be in there. They had to know what was going on in those classrooms. So it meant a reorganization of their classrooms, with less money. I mean, this is hard work. Money is getting tighter and tighter. So who is going to do the discipline in the classroom? And Mr. Grey was cutting out assistant principals for middle schools. So, depending on their population. So, they had to really look at their time and look who was going to cover for them if they were in classrooms observing. They had to input their data into a computer from their observation. So raising that bar for my principals was huge. This was not babysitting kids anymore. We're here, we have a job; to teach. I mean, that being said we all know the reality of hunger and all the issues you're dealing with. Parental involvement in schools. And teachers are right: how can you hold us accountable when we don't control so many of these things? Which is true, that's true. The research is shown that students from very high poverty can, you know, once they walk in that door their achievement level can go up. This is done across the country. So you have to have an incredibly committed principal and staff who really believe that. Who really believe that, don't just say it. And I mean, you know, it's a lot of work with those communities. I mean, look at the Harlem model. Course some of that's privatized. Geoffrey Canada, and look at what he does. He will fire principals, he will fire teachers and he makes the parents accountable. That's really...I mean it can be done but it's a challenge. You can become so negative or, as an administrator you can throw your hands up and just go, 'oh my God.' I think it's a principal's responsibility and that is one of the things I was good at as a principal and an associate was developing those resources. I didn't wait for somebody to give them to me, I went out and got them. And then eventually people would call me and ask, 'do you want this resource at your school?' Course, you have to be careful of what resources you bring in: you have to make sure you can maintain that, fund it, that you're not just...after a year they go away and you have to keep funding it yourself. Well, you can't do that anymore. So you have to look at it, make sure it's aligned with your school's goals, the level goals, and the district goals and that kind of thing. So I think we've gotten a lot smarter, but there's still a lot of work to be done. Change is very difficult.

In the 2008-2009 school year, this was my plan for La Independencia. Ok well, in working with Paula Watson and the Superintendent we decided we wanted to pick two

schools that were going to get the School Improvement Grant, which is a huge amount of money. The Superintendent wanted to focus on the Ortiz cluster, and for the benefit of your professors you could probably get some research on the Ortiz cluster, but also Stanford has tons of research. We worked with Stanford. I would travel to Stanford with Henry Ibarra, the High School Associate many times and they would work with me because the high school got a huge amount of money from Stanford. So, we would trickle that money down to the middle schools that work. I could piggy-back off their work and I went out there quite a bit so they had people just designated at Stanford that pulled research and did professional development with principals and teachers. They would travel to Stanford and I would quite a bit. We piggy-backed on that and there's a lot of research and Ortiz HS has had every kind of initiative, every kind of assortment of principals, four principals at a time, two principals at a time, this configuration, that configuration, high poverty level in the Ortiz cluster, as you know, very underachieving, poverty [is] one of the highest in the city, predominantly Hispanic. So you get a lot of people feeling done-to, a lot of people feel like they're treated differently...racism... because they live in the Ortiz cluster. So anyway, we picked two schools in the Ortiz cluster, Ortiz High School and La Independencia Middle School. This is an opportunity that we can make those changes. With those changes come a different principal, which was not a difficult thing to do because there many things going wrong at La Independencia. Many things. It wasn't necessarily the Principal's fault; she'd been trained by the high school Principal that was at Ortiz HS. There were lots of agreements with gangs, that there was a lot of 'ranking-in' going on in the Principal's office, a lot of 'ranking-out/ranking-in' going on. There were strip searches. There was staff that were not held accountable. She had many of her relatives there. And so, remember I came into my job in '08, March of '08. So I had been there, and once I started seeing all those issues, it was not a difficult decision to move her. It was hard. It was hard on her; it really was. And it was hard on the staff, because things were going to change and it was sort of like the beginning of a major change. Tom Grey really, I think in fairness to him coming into the district, really had the intent on reworking our education here. It was just very, you know...like a lot of large districts there wasn't high expectations. So, I moved her out. We interviewed for the Principalship, and I put Richard Rael in there. He had been successful at the elementary level and had brought them up to AYP. I put him in at La Independencia and then Mr. Ibarra put in a principal [at Ortiz HS] who did *not* work out the first year. And I don't know why they put her in because I had interviewed her for another job and I didn't hire her for the other job. It was a mess. She lasted a year. From like March to May of the next year. Like March 2008 to May of 2009. She was replaced by Angel Tompkins in that summer, like June to August. She didn't last past August because of the massive scheduling debacle. They moved her out. Then Paula Watson was put in there for the rest of the year as acting Principal, last year, 2010-2011. Clarissa Gomez is now there. I wouldn't move her, she's good. That's a tough community though, and they've been done to. They did help select her, so the district did get a lot of input. I mean, they did have a lot of people from Ortiz HS on that committee to pick her.

I remember Stanford had come in and done a lot of work on the community level with Mr. Ibarra and his team. They came in and did some work with me but I was just fortunate. I don't know if it was because it wasn't a high school or what but I was just

able to work it. A high school is a high school, and Ortiz is Ortiz. And they had a lot of people there that didn't even have students there, anymore that were involved, very politically connected. And everybody calls racism, and everybody calls...you know...so the district is sort of 'darned if you do and darned if you don't.' Even if they were doing the best and they were doing the best for the school. So that was a difficult situation. I think they're on the right track now, but I don't know because I'm not there. I'm not hearing anything in the news.

That's huge. So, La Independencia. So we picked Richard Rael. And so, the things that we were...going back to the Professional Creativity Team. But Richard was a little bit different because he had that huge School Improvement Grant, which was a lot of accountability. So I put Kimmy Middlestat on that grant. In other words, I oversaw her of course and ultimately I was involved in all the meetings with the State Department, but the grant writing was huge. A lot of accountability, a lot of reporting to the State, had to be in on the State website, it was tied to their EPSS. It was tied to their EPSS but it was a huge grant. So everyone in Puesta del Sol ISD was instructed to Departments, 'you work with Ms. Wayne, anything she needs for that school.' I mean, ideally that's what should be in every school but... This was particular to La Independencia. And you did, you all needed a lot of support down there! So remember, going back to the Professional Creativity Team before I forget that, and all the initiatives, well we were going to do the same thing at La Independencia because they were good initiatives! They're based on best practices, it was just more intense. We could bring in more people from the district. We could bring in more people from outside and people to do professional development. We had Union people, Susan Westfield, the head of Teachers Union here, in Puesta del Sol, she'd go to the meetings. She worked with me very closely for your schedule. And she worked closely with Richard. And Paula Watson worked closely with me on what we were implementing at that school. So things were proceeding on. Teachers had a lot of questions, as you know, we had a lot of meetings. We decided in this district to keep the teachers but they had to sign a contract to let them know that they would implement the PCT work and go along with the grant. And if they didn't then they would be the first to be given a transfer in the district. First on the list, to be given a transfer to another school. And I think there was a turnover at La Independencia, of some teachers. Some of them Richard asked to go. They needed to go. They didn't want to do it, for various reasons. So that was good because you have to have everybody... you know, you've got this huge grant, over \$150,000, you want everybody on board. So, and then there was a process set...and all of this was done with the Union. And then there was a process set up for those teachers who did stay, who did sign it but then just did not implement it, for whatever reason. Or who decided right in the middle of it, 'I don't want to do this anymore.' And it was a fast evaluation process. It sped up the normal evaluation process faster. Most of those teachers, if that happened they were put somewhere else. At Ortiz HS, there were no teachers that were let go. That was where there should have been. And I'm not talking 10. And really what...the work we did with Stanford and I went to Austin with Stanford. I went to a lot of places with Stanford and I learned a lot with Stanford. I was all over the education department at that school. It is very high-caliber. It was a joyous thing, to work with them. I went to Austin for example, and they did quite a bit of this model. What they did was they let all the teachers go and could only hire back maybe

10% of them and they had to reapply. That's really what probably should have been done at both those schools.

At Stanford, they had research, like doctoral students, pulling all the data. I'm talking for as long as they could pull it. Linda Darling-Hammond, we worked with her. In-credible. In-credible. So we were given...Henry and I would go out there and the high school teachers, maybe some of his team would go. I would go, representing my group. Remember I wasn't part of that grant, but I was able to piggy-back my way on that. [I would] pay for my way to go, but I would get all this information which was incredible. It was like I was going back to school for a Ph.D. you know, it was just incredible. And they would have a topic on 'creativity,' and they would bring in professors from Stanford to talk about creativity or different initiatives in a school. Change. Just talking about the topic of 'change.' That would be three days at Stanford. I'm narrowing it down but there was so much there. What would change look like? A lot of collaboration when we were at Stanford, so we would meet and collaborate. They had incredible dinners and lunches for us. They would bring in the top people from across the United States to work with us. They would send us to places like Austin, to Denver, to...name it. Henry went to many of the high schools that were leading change in California, and many other places. I wouldn't even go to those because they would be particularly high schools. A couple of them I would, particularly in Austin, and go to their middle schools and see what they were doing. How were...how did the district support that change? So they would bring in people from the district. Like in Austin, they would bring in people from the district to talk to us about what that looked like. So there would be district people with us; we would bring people in from Data & Development. We would bring in the Head of HR. So, how would a district support schools that are moving forward to provide high academic achievement for all students. I mean, it's huge. So we would go and meet with them and all that's funded by Stanford. And that's still going on for the high school; I think it's a million-something grant.

So then Richard Rael comes in, and we're collaborating together. I'm working with Henry closely. We're taking them, we're going to California together. Richard is going with me; we're being trained by Stanford on leading school reform and change. We're given books. We're given professional development. We're given resources to analyze any data we need outside of our district. So I wasn't just dependent on the district, which was great. We were getting educated outside of our district and bringing back that knowledge. And Stanford's like a think-tank. It's phenomenal. The people we worked with, absolutely. All ethnicities. And Lorraine Turner, who's from here...I think she retired and moved back...was a person that we worked with very closely which was great because she knows Puesta del Sol. She used to teach in Puesta del Sol. She's a Stanford professor but she always kept her home here. And I don't know if she's retired yet, but she's always here and there. And the more I worked with her I always knew...we always knew that the educational system was not working here. But at the same token we know that one test shouldn't define a school. We also know...and she talked a lot about this, we read her books, going to different countries, the high standard of excellence, how teachers were paid and revered in other countries, so on and so forth...all that research which she's done we could utilize. The reality is that it's a national thing that needs to be done.

The Scandinavian countries are incredible, New Zealand, China. And they get paid. They're treated...they have more time to prepare and collaborate than they do with students, is my understanding. I mean, or they spend a lot of time collaborating, I'm not sure the length of their day with the students themselves. But we would spend a lot of time together, if you and I were teaching. A lot of time. And it's expected. But the whole culture of education is different. And that's where we need to be moving to. And then all of the sudden, the budget crisis hit here in the United States. And then I retired, so I don't know what's happening or how they're keeping these initiatives going with less. And you know they have poverty in those countries. So it's just a whole different cultural way of looking at education and we have to change it in this country. You and I can't do it alone, Matt. And your professors can't do it alone. It's going to take enormous, enormous funding and if you think about all those teachers over there they get paid, they're treated like a doctor. So think about it: you're not going to have just anybody go into teaching. You're going to have the very best. And they're revered, and they know what they're doing. And that doesn't mean that the people who are teaching now are bad people. It just means that the level, not just...I mean, myself. I went into education because I knew I was having children and I could do it and be home, right? That's kind of how we were brought up. Which makes it more of a vocation than a profession...which is something...we should be treated as professionals. It's not just that I'm a woman or you're a man and we just do it because we love children. We do it because we are at those skills necessary, very high skill level. And it had to change, because states are doing it anyway. I mean, there's been some good things about NCLB in the sense that it's pushing us to look at all these things. It's sort of like a force. It's sort of like, you know, it made us start looking at things that I think we just should have been looking at all along but...

internationally. That's why. Because internationally we're like, what, 22nd in math and I mean it's bad...Ranking, that's what really started to push it. Just all the outsourcing, corporations saying, 'our kids don't know.' The workers they're getting. And that's what happened. And then what happened? They just started bypassing the Unions and saying, 'ok, you keep walking out on us and saying you want higher pay and blah-blah-blah. So we'll just ship it overseas.' And now they're finding out the Chinese want more money and the work's not as good, so they're coming back. 'Cause now China's having problems, so maybe they'll come back...I saw that I think on CBS Sunday Morning, where China is having economic woes also. So, and the workers just don't do as good a job and they had interviewed an employer, a furniture maker, it was sent overseas. 'Course you're kind of snickering thinking, 'well, you never should have sent it overseas, but...' Now it's coming back. Now he's coming back to the United States. It's going to be interesting to see where it's going to go. But I guess, economically, it just has to be a huge investment. And our country does not...we do not take care of our schools. We do not, the way it's structured and everything. College is a different thing. I mean, obviously, guess where everybody from other countries is coming to get their college. And then they're going back. And we're losing our ground because we're educating other countries' students. And so, like, on television I heard like, I think it was Virginia Tech or the University of Virginia, because [American] parents are having such a hard time paying for their children's college, they're [the universities] are heavily recruiting from other countries, because those other countries have the dollars. They can pay like, 'here,

here's \$40,000 in cash, right now.' So those schools recruit pretty heavily. Our students are not prepared for college. The expectations are higher and then we have this huge budget crisis so I don't know. But as far as La Independencia, with Richard coming on, then he interviewed everybody. Then Christina Jojola moved out. She took a central office job, which she is great in. She told me, "you know, Cathy, this is really great. I get to..." I mean, she actually liked it. It was a new kind of job, she gets to work with a really great person. And we started working with La Independencia, started working with the teachers. The Professional Creativity Team was developed with just a great group of teachers. And then, so that started and you all were meeting with Susan. And then you were meeting also with Richard; you would meet at District Headquarters and I would come into those meetings for the final PCT proposal. You all had to come up with that final PCT proposal, which I know was stressful. It was stressful work. A lot of work on ya'll's part because we were in un-chart-ed territory. It was all uncharted. But we had to get it done because the grant had to be approved, well we had to do the PCT work to get all that done to get it into the grant, because the PCT work became part of the grant. So it was...it was...it was very exciting. I remember you all were working with Susan and doing some reading and...it was just uncharted territory. But it was hard because we were still having to work with the Union and there were still some roadblocks. She did work with us, she did but it was difficult because the teachers didn't know what to expect. And people were just scared, it was the fear of the unknown.

And Christina Jojola left. I remember because those things happened because there was the strip search, so we went ahead and moved her out. But then Richard was still in his elementary, and all...I mean, it was like, your Professional Creativity Team still worked through the summer some, and then the fall. They just jumped into it. I think that's why the scores weren't that good, because there was still so much work to be done. I mean, it was like the organization, the PCT work, the grant, even though I had Kimmy Middlestat writing the grant with me, with Richard. I mean, it literally took them two weeks. They hid out at District Headquarters. So we had to be away from the school. It was just, it was just a lot to get done. Because he couldn't delegate somebody...that's huge, that he knew what was going on in that grant, that School Improvement Grant. Part of that PCT work went into that Grant. The Grant was a PCT work fleshed out, even more, which is what it was. And then that had to be submitted to the State Department, and then it had to be approved. They were still meeting every week, the Professional Creativity Team was meeting every week. I would go down there. They would present, the Superintendent was down there, the media. Getting the changes embedded, the changes in culture. But I have to tell you, Richard changed the culture pretty quickly. Cleaning up the school. Having...he's great at building community partnerships, real strong community partnerships. Getting the Custodial Union, doing construction work. I got all kinds of stuff with Norman Twombly, Chief Operations Officer. He and Oscar Julio worked with me to get that campus nice. A lot of different community organizations we got to donate...Monique Angelica, who is head of the public relations. So all these people are working together. There's a lot to be done, and it's *good* but it was just like the first year was getting all that stuff like planting trees. Some group, I forget who was out there, did a one-day came in and it was a 'clean-up the campus'. They were planting trees. They painted different rooms. Beautifying, making the campus really work...the teachers and

the students knew they were appreciated in that community. I'll give you a good example: copper wire was stolen all the time. So they put in a system where they...you can't steal it. They were stealing the swamp coolers, that kind of thing. Clean up the bathrooms; there was graffiti all over those bathrooms. It was hideous. So changing that culture of the way it was before. It takes a village, literally. It took a whole district coming together, really, and that's why we picked that school. There was so much work to be done, but it was totally worth it. And if we can do it at La Independencia we can do it anywhere. We put more security in there. We put security, we sent a strong message. Because at the beginning of school, there was some gang fights. And this is 2009, even after Richard was there and there were the Sheriff's [deputies]. So it just wasn't working. So what did we do? It wasn't working. It hadn't been working. So we went in, and we changed that. We worked with the Sheriff's Department, since you all were in the county. We put more security down there from our police department in Puesta del Sol ISD. Changed it. The Assistant Principal let the students rank each other out in her office. They could rank out. I mean... could you see my face? I was like (Cathy's jaw drops), I couldn't believe it. And she was gone. I pulled her out. And she did a strip search of two different kids. Strip searches. And admitted to it. Where is your head? And I worked with those parents, and they didn't sue the district. They could have sued the school district. And didn't. I just worked with them. I worked with them and they were reasonable. I couldn't believe they were reasonable. I don't know that I would have been reasonable. We moved their children out. We moved one student to Hollister, and one went to another school. We bypassed the transfer and just got them into other schools. They just were humiliated, those students. They didn't want to be in there anymore. And moved the Assistant Principal out. The Principal knew it was going on, so she got moved out. I was going to keep her there until the end of '08, May of '08, but that's why we had to move her out quicker. And Richard was over there. See, he was doing two jobs. Crazy. And then we moved some...I worked with the elementary associates and we moved somebody over to his school, the elementary school. Which actually worked out, so he could get in there. But it just, it upped the schedule on the teachers and it was just a lot of changes. I can't talk with the teachers about, 'well, your principal was allowing ranking out and doing strip searches.' Telling teachers that would be unprofessional of me to do. But we worked with her. It's difficult, because you're working with people. And like I said, in fairness to her not all of that was her fault. Because the way things were going, it was kind of like a gang mentality: very rough, education wasn't a priority...I think they tried some times but it was just, well you know. You were there. It was a priority for some teachers, I know that.

There were financial issues. There were, all of the Principal's family worked there. So you had just layer after layer after layer. But when you're moving somebody like that, because it's confidential, and the teachers see it, you can't go, 'well, we're moving Christina Jojola because blah blah blah blah blah.' That wouldn't be fair to her or anybody. That wouldn't be right. But it still upset teachers and kids. And then your counselor died. They have a whole different environment. It's like a different...I have to say, to Richard...because I was going down there all the time. I was walking down there in August, the whole front August had been painted, re-done. Very professional. There was a t.v., with the events. You all have a new marquee down there; the campus looks

good. So you see what I'm saying? And the students came in expecting that, that culture. They knew it. But it took time. They're going to get there in one year...It takes, just so you know, it takes three years at least. You can see some in achievement, since there was such a big change there with everything: schedule, change, leadership, teachers, contract, you name it. Richard is fabulous in that area. And when you go into the school there, you'll see, I mean, difference. Number one, it's clean. Number two, there's posters about achievement, about learning, kids are in their uniforms, there's an expectation. Course Richard has always been in elementary and really middle school is just...he knows how to work with kids and stuff like that. That's the kind of stuff that was going on. And she [Christina Jojola] wanted to be everyone's friend, which is important but I just don't think that she knew what to do. Richard is really nice, but his expectations were, 'this will happen.' And he meets with the parents every time. He had a big cadre of parents; I would come to those meetings. He's got parents following him. Richard is working himself to death. So he's got that community, he's really good at that. The community has bought into it. And of course they want their kids to be successful. And then when they start seeing that everybody else cared about them, they're like, 'ok.' They started getting more involved. I don't know where they are in those steps now, but I'm sure it's just moving along.

Sharon Stout came in about May 2009. She is incredible. I brought her in from High Desert MS, which is a Southwest school. But remember, she had taught at Oak Hills Middle School. So here's this blonde-headed, very athletic, young woman, committed to kids, who could work a schedule...I brought her in to work a schedule...and she could do all of that and she had worked at Oak Hills and it was so good to bring her in. Because again, it's showing the children, it's showing the East Mesa, you don't all have to be Hispanic to work here. I mean, everybody loves kids. And Sharon and Richard made a great team because they're very different, but they're very high achieving administrators. Leadership makes a difference. It's top. You have to get a good leader in the school, going back to Ortiz HS. Richard and Sharon had expectations. Teachers knew it, they stepped up to the plate. But they also work with teachers very well, too. I had to work with Sharon a bit initially. Course they got the increment too. Remember, all teachers got an increase in their salary to come down there. The principals got that, too. Same thing, nothing more. And that is just for being in that particular school. And we did the same thing at Ortiz HS. That's why we went to Austin and some other cities. They're doing that across the country. Schools that had been low-performing for years, R-II designated, you go in and you just got to turn it inside out. It's not enough to just...Arne Duncan calls it 'tinkering around the edges.' You gotta make significant, systemic change. Tinkering around the edges is just not going to work. Especially for high poverty, we know that. We know that. The research is all there. But I do keep saying that leadership matters because I do believe in strong administrators. Incompetency rises in education. And that's what really worries me. That's one of my biggest concerns; these people that are coming to the top that do not really care and don't...I mean, I have a master's in opera and then I have an Ed.S. I have not gone back for my Ph.D. in education administration, but I felt that with two masters I don't, I mean I could but I knew that I was good at what...you have to have the knowledge and the intellect, but you have to be able to work with people. And teachers want it. They want to be able to have good

principals that they can work with. It's hard, I have principals calling me all the time [saying], 'we miss you, Miss Wayne. We really need that leadership. We need you. There's not anybody else that cares about us like you do.' Which makes me feel bad, but I know what good leadership looks like because I was a good teacher too.... Education and politics go hand in hand. Always remember that. You cannot... it's federal monies. So it's always political. You have to work with people.

So yeah, at the end of '09, things had been pretty much in place. Richard was exhausted. The teachers were exhausted. Absolutely exhausted. They did take a break over that summer, they met every once in a while. They came back in '09-'10 and kept in going. But that '08 was the year of change, '08-'09. And [in 2009] we were still running. We were still running to get everything in place. It was a big scramble, but a lot of excitement. Because things were beautiful, beautifying the campus... everything looked great. Kids were excited about school. Expectations were set high. Teachers were scrambling. And 2010, everything was going very well. After '09 all the changes, it's really getting everything embedded into the curriculum, getting them in line, getting them consistent with data. Addressing those short-cycle assessments. And I'm sure they did all that, getting things embedded and quieted. So the expectations are there. So there's not much change, there's just... it's like moving into a new house and still getting everything settled in. So I would imagine that this year is a much more settled year. That being said, I'm not there so I wouldn't know. I have heard anything *au contraire*.... I do think you couldn't ask for a better principal. He's very good and committed. They have a lot more success right now than Ortiz HS just because there's been more continuity with leadership. And they didn't have that big scheduling debacle either and all that kind of stuff. And the teachers at La Independencia, even though there was some fear and some hesitancy, overall, the teachers there are really... I found them and still find them just to be open, realistic, critical thinkers, but open to improving the lives of kids. And I think that that School Improvement Grant gave and is still giving everybody the opportunity to gather and figure out what works and what doesn't work. So I think this is like new ground for everybody. I mean there's research done out there that's like ongoing research right here in Puesta del Sol ISD and in the East Mesa, in the very low-performing schools they've always been... and not to anybody's fault, that's just the way it's always been. High poverty. Second language learners. A culture, the culture of low expectations, was there. And that's one of the things you've probably learned, when you're trained in AVID, one of the things that is quickly brought up is a culture of high expectations. That's the way it is for me now, I'm not sure for you. If nobody expects anything from you, you know you're not going to do it. And so you take all of those best practices from AVID, what is really geared to those kids in AVID, but you start moving it into all the classes so it's good, best practices for all kids. If it works for that group, just because everybody else isn't in it doesn't mean it doesn't work for them. It's that theory.

The Principals Professional Creativity Team was *the guiding document*. And that became my evaluation, really. Because this being implemented, and you can imagine when you go through this more with a fine tooth comb it involves all sorts of different departments in here. So this is a lot of work, you know, at first glance it looks like, 'oh well.' But you have to involve all these different sorts of departments.... And I did a lot of backwards

planning from the high school. Henry got that... Stanford is doing... the district got like a 1.2 million dollar grant and most of it went to Ortiz HS. And then they trained other high schools at the same time. So as you see, 'ok, what are they doing with the high school? First of all, what do I know about middle school? What do they need to know and be able to do?' But you can't know that without knowing where they came from. i.e. the elementary. And the ultimate goal is graduation, and if not college they should at least be able to graduate with 21st century skills, whether they go into the trades and go into Sunbeam Community College and stay exclusively at Sunbeam CC and develop a trade, or whether they finish a 4-year and go into graduate school. Whatever that student decides, we know there are certain skills that all students need to be able to know and do. And that's been the problem in the United States is that... I think one of the reasons they've outsourced is that is because of the lack of skills. And you will hear people from large laboratories across the United States saying they cannot recruit hires. They have 50 or 60 positions but they don't have people with that knowledge and skill base. And when they do they have to hire them, they're having to train them or re-train them. So, there's a huge push and in fact, it's the international standards we're looking at. They've developed national standards now, which is great. It's not like Mississippi has one set of standards and New Mexico has the other. Now I'm sure not every state's there, but it's nice to get there because the push has been under NCLB, which is good. There have been some good things that have come out of NCLB, you know. There's always been this 'states' rights vs. federal rights' kind of thing, and so more states are having to, because of NCLB, use common core standards. And if a superintendent doesn't know about those, they got their head in the sand. You know, anywhere in the United States. And the common core standards like in math and science, they're people nationally that have been working internationally, gathering what those students, because it's like the brain power... And what are they teaching their students? Our students are lagging. We're getting farther and farther behind in this country, which is our economy, which is everything. Currency and everything. So what do our students need to know and be able to do, not just based nationally here, but based internationally? I mean, they do meet internationally, probably from the federal government level. I think in Japan, the teachers spend almost all of the afternoon together. Well that's what needs to happen *in* the schools, and then *between* the schools. Particularly with that 8th and 9th grade, there needs to be that (inaudible). Think of how much you would address there. But again, it's got to be built in. You've talking about a different length of day. You really are. And the whole way our educational system works. But I guarantee you if we could do those kinds of things, and have it very structured... if you're going to have teachers structured it needs to be something of value to them, and you have to have that value to them... well math, reading, history, I mean look at how many people don't know history, adults included. Getting the teachers together from the different levels... and I think that is one of the reasons that private schools and charter schools become popular to an extent because there you're not bound by the... and I'm not putting unions down, I'm not. I was in a union. *But*, there are so many barriers. You know, my thing is pay your teachers well and have high expectations. But like, if you're in a charter school or you're in a private school and say, it's a private school 6-12 [grades], that private school or charter school... because the charter school is not bound by the union... can expect their teachers to artik with each other. You know, the 9th grade teachers in their school talk with their

8th grade teachers, and we just don't have it built in like they do. Because we're so sep-ar-a-ted. There's just not enough hours in the day. And then you have the contract. Basically, if you look at the contract, it is 6.5 hours, take 30 minutes off for lunch, the prep, you're teaching 5 hours. And kids are there for 6, because they have lunch. I mean, we really need to have a longer day. But it needs to...you can't just put in a longer day and not have creative things to do like other countries do. I mean, just putting up a longer day is not going to do anything new.

There are so many parties involved, and it is so political. Education is all political.

Merit pay. There's quite a few theories out there but I think one of the theories is that if I bring to the table all of my skills and I'm an exceptionally good teacher and I have a pretty good comprehension of what kids need to know and be able to do, and I know how to do it...and there are teachers out there that can really bring test scores up for kids. You know, it's amazing. You know, their poverty or whatever. And they've got what it takes. Then it's merit pay. In other words, it's just not I get 30 and you get 50,000, based on the three-tier. Because say, what if I'm in tier one, and all my kids are like kicking it...or maybe they just didn't come the same way. I mean, at the school you are, or vice-versa: you're a first-year teacher and your kids did well on the SBA, you just got the gift. You know what it takes to...you know, you're doing what it takes as a teacher to make it happen. They want to know what you're doing and you can, follow that along and see what you're doing, well then you get that merit pay based on that kid's achievement, based on other things other than just the SBA. Which I think is fair. Arne Duncan and the President been talking about that. They're going to look at your kids' SBA scores, they're going to look at their short-cycle assessments, they're going to look at their student learning goals, and your goals for your class, and their performance, maybe some other criteria they would use. And then they...in addition they're going to figure in their poverty so that's going to help you a little bit. There poverty and whatever else, I can't remember. I would probably sign up, because I thought I was a pretty good teacher. And what do I have to lose? Say if I was at those schools and I was doing the SIG Grant. I'm connecting with them. I'm putting in the hours anyway. 'Cause teachers put in so many hours. If elementary teachers have been doing groupings, all those best practices, so you know, they're used to doing all this stuff. Secondary, middle, and higher are not used to doing a lot of these things and there's no silver bullet that we know what makes it better or that we know what makes the best practices that really help, but the poverty thing is still out there for teachers, and it should be. Absolutely. Parent involvement. So the unknown is scary.

Removing Christina and Alice was a top-down thing, all the way. Well, and La Independencia was too. That came in collaboration with the superintendent, myself, and the board knew about it. But teachers can't just get moved out, because of the Union. I mean, I think teachers need to realize that the Union does protect them. I mean, I admire Susan for taking a step. I think Susan is taking a precarious position. Remember, we talked about this last time? We really lost that huge, Race to the Top money. I mean it was in the newspaper and everything, because she balked. I mean, I think it was huge. She just balked at it. And Arne Duncan and the President just went *phhtt!* (CW gestures with a thumb extending toward her back). Whatever. And then, you know, fine. If you

want more work, well guess what: everybody's poor, right? And I think Susan saw and, I think she looks nationally and she's nobody's dummy. She looks around at all these national meetings and she figures, 'I gotta move a little bit.' I mean, that's a pilot, but the teachers here are here. So they're not out there seeing all this. When they see it, theirs is to just hang low and, just... And the big thing to is that they could vote her out. It's just, when is it going to happen here? You know, when our budget is so bad or what Wisconsin. And you know what's happening? It's coming down to... a lot of those states, it's coming down to money. They are so broke. And that's what's going to happen here. They have Republican Governors. So, you know, your state gets broker and broker and no one has any money and they start, you know like in Alab... 'we just won't pay your retirement.' It's a money thing. So people can yell and scream and balk and all of that. That's what the thing is; it's a confluence of everything. You got us not achieving educationally, but then you got this huge economic issues nationally. I mean, just banks and everything. But then it just happened, everything just came together.

La Independencia's gotten a lot of money. And Ortiz HS. Which is really good but, you know, the Superintendent is going to expect results too. When you're getting that much money and so much community support, especially when there's not that much money around so. So, for the other schools I know that for a fact 'cause even when I was there they were cutting back on things. How do you what is right for kids, and for teachers, for teaching? I mean, mostly for teaching. If you don't have money to do it with, you're not going to be able to get done what you need to get done for your students. My view on Richard's first year at La Independencia was well, he was...ok, so the SIG Grant had been written. It had been approved. It had been blessed. There were a lot of people in the district that had been working on it. It was known publically. There was a lot of people stepping forth or coming in wanting to beautify the school, wanting to donate money, all these kinds of things going on. So people were coming together. But it was like this huge puzzle where all the pieces are, in that first year, just running. Plus he had to be everywhere. That's another thing: the principal, you know, he has a good, he has, Sharon, is his assistant. But Richard was having to do the proposal with me and my...Kimmy Middlestat, my assistant. He was running everywhere to do the PR work for it, so it was just crazy! It was just nuts! All these different pieces of the puzzle. Plus, remember he had never been Principal of a middle school. So he had all this stuff he was doing, so that '09 it was just putting all those pieces together. And it's not like it's ever set, because they keep reevaluating the SIG Grant based on those test scores obviously. And where students are achieving or not, where they need to focus...which are probably the same places but where do they maybe need to focus a little bit more and put more money in here rather than over there from the SIG Grant. So it's that tweaking of it, but I'm sure it's calmed down somewhat. So I think on that '09-'10 year, looking at embedding, I mean that's sort of a word that's used commonly, but I'm trying to find another word but just trying to use that SIG Grant and getting the strategies embedded across the curriculum. Making sure everyone is doing it, because that's another issue: you could have this high level of expertise with some teachers but not with others. That's a challenge.

I think through 2009 they had their SBA and the scores did not come up. And Richard was furious. And the teachers were upset, but I just kept reminding them that, 'you guys, this is like march, get ready, go.' They were running and I was like, 'give yourselves a break.' 'Cause they were working really hard. I mean, incredible. And so then, '09 and '10 they just continued on embedding it. And, let's see, '09-'10, and then 2010 I left at the end of November and they were off to a great start. Again, they had had a year of just running 90 miles an hour. I mean, there was so much accountability built into that SIG Grant, the Professional Creativity Team. So you're creating as you go along. They were meeting all the time, different people were meeting. So maybe they were able to refine it more and settle down. I know at the end of that year I saw where just people were just exhausted. And I saw where one teacher was posting on facebook that she just couldn't do it anymore. And I think, I think she just didn't have the skills necessary to move it forward, as an Instructional Coach. They needed somebody with, I think, that's all. I mean, she's a great person. She just didn't, but I know that the teachers there were very tired and they needed a break. And I told Richard that they needed a break. Just tell them they needed to take off. Because the year before they met during that previous summer. That Professional Creativity Team met some. So I think '08, '09, and '10, sort of just getting, just getting it embedded, getting it going, running at 90 miles an hour. And then 2010 started calm. They were working hard but it was just more settled. It was much more settled, so I think refining it and seeing just which teachers were going to make it, making sure who was going to stay stays, and that kind of thing.

Summary and Analysis

Cathy Wayne simultaneously blames but excuses Christina Jojola for the situation at La Independencia MS. In the above, Cathy alludes to how the Puesta del Sol ISD has neglected and underserved the East Mesa; she concretizes La Independencia MS' dilapidated conditions to justify the takeover but then attempts to clear the district of any responsibility for such conditions. In the same breath Cathy essentially acknowledges and dismisses claims of racism in the East Mesa. Her upbringing in segregated Mississippi and the violence of the ku klux klan (lower case intentional) and Citizen's Councils have left her with the impression that the only racist actions are the more obvious, overt, and direct forms of violence and discrimination. To not recognize systematic neglect as an act of institutional racism implies her consent with it, as well as her willingness to distance

herself from racism while still carrying on a white supremacist/deficit view of the East Mesa.

Cathy's claims of abuse by Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson were unsubstantiated. None of the other three interview participants referenced or mentioned such abuse. Despite Martin O'Connell and Kate Thomson not being in a position to have known of such abuse, Christina Jojola's interviews stand in stark contrast to the claims made by Cathy Wayne.

A sharp difference exists between Cathy and Christina in terms of conflict mediation. Christina engages gang issues with a pedagogy of dialogue and willingness to create a safe space *before* school violence occurs. Cathy sought to reprimand and punish those students suspected to be either associated or fully involved with gangs. The dialectic of Dialogue (Christina) vs. Repression (Cathy) thus begs exploration. Christina may be criticized for conducting open dialogue with gang members, yet the 'discipline and punish' (Foucault, 1995) approach accomplishes very little in helping troubled youth make different decisions or see other possibilities for their lives.

Cathy sees the submission of public education to market demands as a normal progression, almost as though it is how things must be. Her numerous references to international competition in education reveal a jingoistic, capitalist desire for U.S. domination. The takeover of La Independencia MS was thus the neoliberal colonization of a school serving a vulnerable and already exploited student population. Cathy sees benefits in using market demands to inform curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education. In the above profile she pines for privatizing public education in her advocacy of merit pay, mass teacher firings, and charter schools modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone,

while claiming that we *'have to have public education'* (emphasis mine). Recall that in several instances, Cathy attacks the worth of Colleges of Education in claiming that they offer little to nothing applicable to actual classroom practice. A macro level assessment reveals that Cathy advocates for mass teacher firings, school takeovers, merit pay, and prepackaged knowledge programs while stating that public education is essential. She invites the presence of private business practices into the public arena, subtly pledging allegiance to the superiority of corporate methods as the remedy for public education's ailments. On a micro level, Cathy's racial references to La Independencia students and the East Mesa population in general reveal her deficit view: stereotyping, belief in low expectations amongst the families, teachers, etc. She generalizes significantly negative stereotypes of poor and working class communities of color to the entire East Mesa area and attempts to locate them in La Independencia MS.

Cathy's ontological vision of public education is thus a quest for a semi-educated population in which the student is trained to uncritically meet market demands. The takeover of La Independencia is what she would enact for public education entire. For her, accountability is nothing more than a buzzword for removing local school administrators who neither support nor concur with her ideology. At this point, La Independencia's takeover serves the Puesta del Sol ISD as a permanent reference for how to smoothly remove a principal and replace her/him with a more ideologically promiscuous one. The takeover is also a warning to those administrators who dare prioritize critical education above standardized exam scores.

In reference to Sharon Stout arriving as new Vice Principal, Cathy's statement, 'you don't all have to be Hispanic to work here' demands investigation. A CRT analysis of the situation reveals more about Cathy's perspective on the East Mesa:

- 1) East Mesa residents have traditionally accepted only Hispanic teachers;
- 2) East Mesa students and families implicitly dismiss non-Hispanic teachers;
- 3) Cathy dismisses culturally relevant pedagogy for the pedagogical imperialism of 'best practices';
- 4) Cathy's statement implies that non-Hispanic teachers are more well prepared to teach Hispanic students.

Cathy's statement also indicates the assumption that since she and I are of a similar complexion as Sharon Stout there would be an ideological agreement amongst us. While I see myself as a man of European descent, ancestors from France, Germany, England, and the direct third-generation descendent of French-Canadian immigrants, Cathy's search for an ideological agreement based on our mutual skin color led her to a dead end. I chose not to engage her comment and use it as a point for dialogue because I wanted her to continue sharing her perspectives on racism, the economy, and education. Installing Sharon Stout as Vice Principal of La Independencia was a traditional missionary move for the rescuing of students of color from themselves and the conditions in which they live. Cathy frames the situation as though it was the East Mesa who needed to change the perception and attitude of the Puesta del Sol ISD. Her statement 'you don't all have to be Hispanic to work here' shifts an onus of ideological conformity to the La Independencia faculty and students. Cathy's perspective of La Independencia students is that *they* must not possess a racial or ethnic preference for classroom teachers. This is the

kind of paradox (that of seeing-but-not-acting-on-color) that defines liberal (“colorblind”) racism. The liberal defense of “I see color but I don’t ever act on it” is a weak defense for refusing to let go of white supremacy.

It is here that Cathy herself fails to recognize a glaring problem with this situation. Cathy falls victim to her own argument in that she installs a white vice principal to prove that race and ethnicity should not matter. To claim that one recognizes race but does not act upon it is a disregard of opportunities for serious anti-racist progress. To insist that Cathy Wayne take responsibility for this ideology would be to demand that she explore the subtle but prevalent racism in the following ideologies: whiteness as a pedagogical tool; instituting ‘best practices’ in place of culturally relevant pedagogy; deficit model lens and references to a ‘culture of low expectations.’

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT THEMES

When I began this Dissertation research study, I never claimed a position of objectivity. Instead, I sought to promote an ethical posture that prioritizes critical education and student learning ahead of high-stakes standardized test scores, the influx of prepackaged curricula, and ongoing depreciation of the lived experiences and cultural assets of our students. My intentions in conducting interviews with Kate Thomson, Martin O’Connell, Christina Jojola, and Cathy Wayne were to understand their perspectives as to why the administration of La Independencia Middle School was removed, how the takeover impacted the remaining faculty and students, and if the takeover actually had any positive benefits for the school. While the interview participants were open and I believe candid in their words, it must be said that at times they did disclose information which could be taken as contradictory and slanderous. Rather than treat such moments as opportunities to take sides, I felt that it was most important to grasp and understand the substance, motivations, and consequences of their statements, to interrogate a speaker’s words will give insight into his or her personal theoretical framework whether the speaker is aware of the framework or not. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the work of Seidman (2005) served as the guiding operational protocol for the interviews. I have condensed the interviews to focused units, profiles, yet the complete interviews are available in the appendix. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed by me, Matthew David Smith.

I analyze the interviews with the theoretical framework detailed above. That is, in listening to the stories of the interview participants I draw from the critical race theorists (Solórzano, Yosso, Delgado, Stefancic), Marxists (McLaren, Willis, Hill, Althusser,

Allman, Cole), Gramscians (Boggs, Joll) and others who have offered their astute critiques (Rodriguez, Morrell, Mathis, Spitzer). The process of interviewing each person involved observing his or her motions, facial expressions, hand gestures, verbal intonations that indicate stress, anxiety, and joy. I draw from the work on D/discourse analysis (Gee) and Critical Language Study (Fairclough). I put extra attention to any mentions of race, racism, class exploitation, and other oppressive manifestations. Once an interview participant mentions any such topic, I wait to see the foundation of the comment, then ask for an elaboration or extension of their idea.

Three salient themes have emerged from the nine interviews I conducted with Thomson, O'Connell, and Jojola (individually). The three participants shared rather similar sentiments on the issues of motivations for and process of the takeover, the impact of the takeover on the remaining faculty, and on the importance of building relationships between teachers and students.

- **Theme One:** Collective Disagreement Regarding the Motivations for and Process of the Takeover
- **Theme Two:** Impact of the Takeover on the Remaining Faculty Members
- **Theme Three:** Importance of Building Relationships with Students

Theme One: Collective Disagreement Regarding the Motivations for and Process of the Takeover

Martin O'Connell

Martin O'Connell, Christina Jojola, and Kate Thomson each voiced a position about Puesta del Sol ISD's declared reasons and justifications for taking over La Independencia Middle School. District officials declared that removing Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson was necessary to improve the educational experiences of La

Independencia's students (i.e. raise the test scores on standardized exams). The district's proposal was a deliberate and concerted effort intended to blame La Independencia's leadership for the school never having made Adequate Yearly Progress (i.e. receiving substandard scores on high-stakes standardized tests).

Below are Martin O'Connell's responses to the announced removal of Christina Jojola:

[The announcements were] very inconsistent, what was coming out and what was being said. And we had meetings, I remember asking this direct question, I said, 'is she (Christina) going to be replaced before the end of the school year?' because they were not being consistent, and there was not an answer at that point. They didn't have the answer and didn't come prepared with that information (MOC laughs) which was like, 'why are you talking to us, because you have just enough to say that you don't know what you're talking about.' That was what the buzz was, 'this is going to happen, and she won't be here next year for sure.' And so the question was, 'well, how much are you going to disrupt this year?' And, they did not *force her* to change, she did choose to take her new position and go early. Now, at least that's what it was to us, as best we understood it. And I think she wanted, for the kids' sake, to have a transition before that next year, to make it smoother in that sense. I think clearly the district was inept in the sense that none of this needed to be handled until after testing, and if anything could be said about scores that year, it was, 'why should kids do better?' The district had just done what it had *threatened* to do, and the kids had been prepped to think, 'if I did this then I'll be hurting the principal.' Well, the principal is already hurt and it's like saying, 'they're a failing school,' well, they're failing students so they simply performed to what they've been told. ... I can only imagine the Superintendent saying, 'go down there, and put those people at ease,' while giving them nothing with which to put us at ease.

The anxiety generated by the ambiguous and inconsistent announcements made from the Puesta del Sol officials aggravated what was already a difficult professional climate. The district officials' labeling of La Independencia as a substandard school marred by low test scores and perpetuating a culture of low expectations had already turned much of the public's opinion against the school leadership. In this way, leadership became a scapegoat and held responsible. The standards set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provided the district with the means to morph school conditions

(which truly are detrimental to student learning) into crises that are attributable not to those in power at the District, State, or Federal level but rather the classroom teachers and leadership. McLaren's statement, that under NCLB "little time...is left to examine the politics of social life and how the world is driven by the capitalist law of value," (2007, p. 39), is directly echoed in the experience and testimony of Martin O'Connell. La Independencia had no opportunity to consider what was happening and plan a course of action. Rather, the school was ordered to redesign itself, with scant time and no real input from the incoming leadership. Thus, when the time comes for "improvement" it is the classroom teachers and principals who bare the brunt of the criticism and face professional consequences. Martin's analysis is based on such an understanding: the District effected the removal for the sake of change, but lacked any measure of logistical planning. The faculty and administration of La Independencia was publically slandered, presented with an overly daunting situation, and then asked to redesign the school while adjusting to new leadership.

Christina Jojola

Consider the comments below from Christina Jojola. Here she discusses how certain officials of the Puesta del Sol ISD misled her into a position of support and professional comfort and then became the very people to criticize and remove her.

Well, I had one supervisor who...I can't even think of the title but she oversaw the principals in R-2 schools so it was kind of like a specialist, special supervisor for our type of school and I remember she felt the need to meet with me and put me on a Professional Development Plan. Obviously since I didn't have the test scores. So we had to create this plan through Human Resources and I had to meet the needs of whatever she outlined, and one of them being that we had to meet on a weekly basis which was fine. But as I saw it progressed she missed a lot of her meetings and the meetings I did have with her she was constantly on the phone with other R-2 principals. So I felt like she was setting me up for failure, even though she said things like, 'I never have to worry about you, Christina. You have everything together. I see what you're doing,' blah blah blah. So I just felt little,

little by little, that was going to hurt me in the long run. And I guess looking back I should have said more, complained about it. And unfortunately I think some of her notes were written as though she did meet with me and as though she *did* have conversation with me and as though she did fulfill her side of the agreement, even though she didn't. And then all of the sudden, the Superintendent of Middle Schools decided to take over her role as my supervisor right around, I guess it was mid-November, maybe? Yeah, mid-November. There was no reason behind it. There was no explanation. There was just that. The middle school superintendent was going to take over my supervisory role.

In the above Christina discusses the methods used and extent to which district officials went to both lull her into docility and create a false sense of job security. I say 'false' here because the intention from the beginning, on the district's part, was to remove Christina from La Independencia. Puesta del Sol officials, particularly Cathy Wayne, verbally acknowledged Christina's competence as an administrator, her efforts at raising test scores, and the praise she received from the Public Education Department.

Ultimately this was an exercise in deception, for the very officials who made these statements enacted plans to advance themselves in the district ranks by making an example of Christina and La Independencia. Christina's statement describes the set-up: "So I felt like she was setting me up for failure, even though she said things like, 'I never have to worry about you, Christina. You have everything together. I see what you're doing,' blah blah blah. So I just felt little, little by little, that was going to hurt me in the long run." Christina recognized in advance that the situation was a set-up. Christina engages in a D/discourse analysis (Gee, 1999) of the supervisor who deliberately put her at ease and then turned her over to the Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools. Drawing from her experience as a principal, Christina knew that the supervisor's actions were less than honest; if it was true that the supervisor "never [had] to worry" about her, why was Christina there in the first place? In the overall trajectory of these events, Fairclough's (2001) notion of Critical Language Study connects the deception of the

supervisor to the hidden agenda of Puesta del Sol ISD; the passing expressions and false security of the superintendent in fact negate the reasons for Christina's need to meet with her. The supervisor's inattentiveness to Christina's needs and lack of a purposeful and constructive agenda actually made the conditions of La Independencia worse and then seized the opportunity to hand Christina over to Cathy Wayne.

However the overwhelming burdens of school administration and the already apparent lack of district support tied her hands in terms of being able to challenge the district and protect her position. Although all the major players involved were associated with public education, the glaring difference between Christina Jojola and the Puesta del Sol ISD officials is that the former operated with the students' best interests at heart while the latter danced sycophantic ballets in promotion of each others' professional interests.

Kate Thomson

In the following excerpt from the profile, Kate Thomson describes her understanding of the rationale for removing Christina Jojola. She describes the anxiety Christina experienced and how it manifested during morning announcements and special assemblies.

Well, I was freaked out because I didn't know what was going to happen. It was like, you didn't know what it was until it was happening. By the time Christina... Christina started getting really tense about testing. She was making announcements to kids, 'focus in class, and practice, and do the work.' This started really before the takeover was happening. So, and there were assemblies; she gave testing assemblies and said, 'we have to make AYP or I'm going to lose my job.' So, that was our first hint that something was going to come. And actually, I did not agree with that tact that she took; I thought it put pressure on students that shouldn't be there. I always tried to undo it afterward, after I would take my kids back after the assembly. I just didn't think it was right. You know, like, 'it's up to you to help me keep my job.' So I just didn't... no. So anyway, when we found out that she was definitely going to be leaving, I was pretty freaked out because here we had just gotten SAILS started, so there was a question about what was going to happen with

that. What was going to happen to the school in general? Were we all going to be gotten rid of and have to re-apply for our jobs? I mean, we didn't know what was going to happen and what kind of principal are we going to get. You know, I liked Christina and I thought I worked well with her... and that was going to change. So, it was pretty scary.

In the above according to Kate, the tension and anxiety Christina experienced led her to overly promote the upcoming standardized exams and position the students as those who would "save" her position or not. In Kate's opinion, this was an unfair burden to place upon the students. A legacy of low scores on standardized exams, in any school, cannot generally be attributed to the students who currently study there; the exams have taken so long to be graded that the scores belong to students who have already left the school. Christina certainly did not hold the students responsible for her professional situation but the pressure she was placing on them to score highly was resulting in excessive stress on the students and faculty.

For Kate, celebrations and pep rallies that promoted standardized testing were a source of stress and discomfort in that the fledgling SAILS program was already yielding high success: students were constantly engaged in academics, behavior was civil and manageable, the students had a cohesive set of teachers who advocated, mentored, and mediated for them when issues arose. The possibility of ending SAILS concerned Kate that the arduous and positive steps she had taken would be undone. This concern is quite founded if Martin O'Connell's statement that Puesta del Sol only has a memory for the legal entanglements in which it has found itself for so long.

Theme Two: Impact of the Takeover on the Remaining Faculty Members and Students

The takeover had a tremendous impact on the remaining students and faculty at La Independencia. The mere announcement of a removal of Christina Jojola and Alice

Jackson resulted in fear, anxiety, and upheaval. Below Martin, Kate, and Christina share their perspectives on the takeover and its effect on the school.

Martin O'Connell

Martin O'Connell continues his above comment, assessing the impact of the takeover on the remaining faculty members and the actual process of the restructuring.

So, it was disruptive, it was damaging, it was uncomfortable for all of us. We thought, 'so, this is what you're doing, but you don't really know what you're doing. You don't have a clear plan. This is going to happen, but you don't know what's going to happen?' It was just so out there, that I think that was the most upsetting part of all of it, that they didn't *have* a clear plan to start with, and this thing went public. And that was the real problem. And maybe it got scapegoated out, I don't know, maybe someone else told someone in the media and they had to deal with it. I do remember we (MOC and KT) had heard it on t.v. before we heard it. It seems to me we didn't learn about it through the formal channels, we learned about it through public airways, that it was announced.

In the above O'Connell reveals the lack of foresight and planning by the district regarding the announcement, initiation, and logistics of the removal of Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson. The push to remove Jojola and Jackson was poorly thought out and involved no consideration for the La Independencia community. Clearly, the lack of input and actual potential to effect change or have an opinion heard by district officials fueled the confusion and anxiety that Kate Thomson discusses below.

Kate Thomson

Below, Kate Thomson shares her perspectives as to how the announced removals of Jojola and Jackson impacted them as well as the faculty and students.

It wasn't until the second semester when Christina starting saying, as SBA was getting closer, about how her job depended on the SBA scores. And you could see she was so extremely stressed, so extremely stressed. I mean, during the announcements in the morning she would say things like, 'make sure you have breakfast, make sure you come to school, you do your best, so I can keep my job.' I didn't agree with that, 'I can keep my job' thing. But that is one of the ways I knew she was so extremely stressed, because that just seemed really out of character for her, to make it so personal because she had always been about the kids. ... Personally, [2008-2009] was the best teaching year of my

career because of the SAILS program, working with the team, developing relationships with the kids and knowing I'm going to have the kids again. And within that, I could block out everything else that was going on. But, in terms of the school environment, which affects everyone, it was a terrible year. At least the second semester, it was absolutely horrid, because of the coming changes and how it affected everybody. It was bad. I don't think the district or the state knew how they were going to make changes; I think they were just like, 'well, we're just going to do this and see what happens,' because there didn't seem to be any sort of a plan. There really did not seem to be any sort of a plan. No one could tell you what was going to happen next. And if it was a big secret, it was wrong of them to keep it because it made things more chaotic. It was, it was done. Actually, it almost was a relief when Christina finally did leave, and Alice finally did leave, because at least you could take out the part of feeling like a traitor if you were trying to improve the school. Or to try to develop a relationship with the new principal. For me at least, that was the worst part of it; feeling like I had to choose sides. It was like 'if you're in the Christina camp, I don't like you. And if you're in the Richard camp, you're a traitor.' I remember I used to check in with Christina quite often before she left, just to try to see if, and this will sound so pathetic, 'do you still like me, because I'm on the Professional Creativity Team?' I didn't say that, just, 'how are you doing? Anything I can help you with?' That kind of stuff, just to get a feel for where she was, interacting with me. Oh, that was sad and pathetic but she was still my boss! And we had had a good relationship.

Here, Kate Thomson's statements are directed at the stress under which Jojola was placed following the announcements of her (potential) removal as well as the actual process of the leadership's removal. Thomson expresses both elation over being in a team of committed teachers who share a common group of students, as well as the extreme frustration she experienced at the utter ambivalence and lack of planning on the part of Puesta del Sol ISD. What becomes clear is that once the district had decided to remove Jojola and Jackson, action was taken that precluded any kind of planning or development. Tom Grey issued public announcements and Cathy Wayne began holding faculty meetings at La Independencia to discuss the removal, yet substantially Grey's and Wayne's statements were circuitous and misleading. Their statements appear to have taken place before the district had actually refined the logistics for how the removal

would be done. Had such plans existed, Puesta del Sol officials never made them clear to the La Independencia faculty.

Throughout the takeover, morale amongst the faculty and staff plummeted from an already low level at the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year. Emotions ranged from general anger, fear, and anxiety by December 2008. The initial climate of morale can be attributed to the consistent public assaults on the school community, the rundown facilities, and neglect from the district. However, once the takeovers were announced a sense of shame befell the teachers, administrators, and students of La Independencia. The Puesta del Sol ISD officials and the Teachers Union announced the establishment of a Professional Creativity Team whose task was to redesign the entire school in a matter of roughly nine weeks. Such a task would be nearly impossible, as the future of La Independencia itself was uncertain, as were the teachers' own positions. Kate's responses indicate that the district intended to change out the La Independencia administration, yet lacked a clear vision for what the school would look like under new leadership.

Apparently, the option of switching out administrators was not on the horizon. Public justification for the takeover was that La Independencia had never made sufficient progress on AYP exams. The problematic nature of such justification was that middle schools in the district had not made AYP in the 2007-2008 academic year; La Independencia's only distinction was that it had been the school with the longest-running record in Restructuring-II.

Christina Jojola

Here Christina provides insight into the impressions of Richard Rael in his first year as full time Principal of La Independencia. She first notes his disregard for the

Professional Creativity Team work as he implements his own initiatives; Christina then discusses the impact Richard's methods have on remaining La Independencia faculty members.

...from what I heard the first year, the new principal pretty much scrapped everything and started new with his ideas. And I guess some worked and some didn't. They took away their content-prep teams the first year, because of course they gave the staff members money, so they had to justify the extra amount of money, so they had to extend their day. But I think it proved to weigh heavily on the teachers. It was getting hard for them to do that kind of stuff. So, then they worked it back in and figured a different way to extend their day or their contract. To be honest, a lot of the things that are in the media are very positive and very supportive of the new principal. But you get...internally, it's a façade. But he has made...math [scores] went up. Can't necessarily say it was him but more of the strong teachers that are at the school. ... What I gather is that the first year they [faculty members] really felt confident in what he can do. He pretty much had *cârté blanche* from the District so he was able to move through things a lot faster than I was. And the money was huge, so he could pretty much buy whatever they needed. Training. Resources. So that's good at the beginning, and it does buy a lot of time, in a sense. But I think from what I gather is people are starting to see that the burden of carrying the school is solely on the Assistant, because the Principal is not there. And so I think people are realizing this might be a big façade for him, as well as a stepping stone for him to go to higher levels. And I think more and more people are seeing it. People saw it in the first year but more and more are realizing it and seeing it in action. And so I think a lot of times the first year people thought that he had to be out and about, that he couldn't be on campus the first year. But then the second and third years, it's kind of wearing on them because other systems such as discipline support is not quite there, because one person cannot do it all by herself.

In the above Christina states that Richard was given "*cârté blanche*" from the district and therefore was able to make changes and maneuver in any way he saw necessary. His persistent absences from La Independencia throughout the first year were originally accepted by the teachers but have since come to be a problem in that the daily responsibilities have shifted almost completely to Sharon Stout, the Assistant Principal. Certain indications have also surfaced that Richard will not carry out his obligations to the school beyond the duration of the SIG Grant. Despite its prestigious reputation, when the funds are exhausted Richard may use his time at La Independencia as a bargaining

token for advancement in the Puesta del Sol ISD. Such a maneuver would not be anything new or surprising to the East Mesa community; the legacy of “reform” and then abandonment would merely continue with Richard’s departure once the SIG funding evaporates.

Theme Three: Importance of Building Relationships with Students

A common theme across the La Independencia faculty and administration was recognition of the importance of building sound relationships with students. O’Connell, Thomson, and Jojola all discussed the importance of such relationships.

Martin O’Connell

For O’Connell, the relationships he had with teachers following the tragic loss of his mother during the 6th grade helped him immensely with coping as well as maintaining academic interest. Consider his reflection:

I lost my mother in elementary school. It was in the transition but it was pretty much in the 6th grade. So that was an important feature, you might say, in terms of that, support when your world goes apart and it was going apart for several years with the cancer she had so, what I remember best about it was the relationship to the teachers, between myself and those teachers. Some of those that carried off past that, I did things for some teachers after I left there. One quite a few years after – she had a student that she needed some help with. I did something for her and it was very minor to me, small, but for her it was major. And so that was one of those connections that didn’t go away. It was clearly by personal knowledge and closeness that they built those relationships. I was an enthusiastic student until my mother was really ill. I had some falling off there; it wasn’t that I quit but that I wasn’t as good a student during some of those years. But if you were interested, and it’s a very, actually, it’s one of the most progressive schools in this city still, and sought-after as an elementary school. It’s been very stable and has some of the best teachers and the reputation... it’s a university school. I mean, it’s next to Southwest University so it’s very much supported by them and they have the resources to visit the museums and to participate in the fine arts so it’s really kind of an ideal position for a school.

Martin’s response illuminates the importance of personal knowledge and compassionate relationships between teachers and students. In Martin’s case, the teachers

in his life became central to his wellbeing following his mother's death. They were able to work effectively with him because they were aware of his personal struggles and could adjust to meet his unique needs. As a teacher, he also seeks to humanize the curriculum by establishing positive relationships with his own student. This is a central component in not only his own pedagogy but the SAILS program as well.

Kate Thomson

Kate Thomson expresses a similar notion. During her ninth grade year, she was finally able to connect with a literature teacher through the use of dialogue journals. Dialogue journals serve as a vehicle for written correspondence between the teacher and student such that the student initiates a topic and the teacher responds in such a way that encourages the student to develop his/her written literacy skills but also that overcome a separation between academic and personal interests. The student and teacher find common ground that lowers the student's affective filter while helping to overcome the academic/personal dichotomy. In Thomson's response, she recalls how important this relationship was during a tumultuous period in her life:

One teacher. And I can't tell you her name, I don't remember. But I remember I was in the 9th grade, and petrified as usual because I had experienced all kinds of trauma growing up. So, that just went around with me. And (in this class) we had to do a journal every day, in which we had to do a creative piece. And she would collect them about once a month. Well, my writing was extremely dark because that's where I was in my life. (KT lightens voice) And she would answer me, she would say things like, 'doesn't your faith help you through this type of a thing?' I mean, *it was personal*. And I had never, ever, ever had a teacher do that. Well, actually, pretty much anybody in my life. So, it was just great and I remembered her and that got me through a lot of stuff. Actually it got me through some suicidal thoughts when I was in 9th grade. So she was great, just because of that personal connection just through a journal. We never talked face-to-face about anything. It was just through the journal. I felt like somebody cared.

Above, Kate Thomson reveals how a personal connection with a teacher helped her to feel important and cared about during a very difficult time. Any honest teacher will

state that the worst days of teaching are those dark days in which a student dies, when a whole is left in our hearts that never fully heals. As a teacher, I have lost two students in five years. The pain never actually goes away. A student who commits suicide brings about some of the worst possible moments teachers will face. It is possible that Kate's ninth-grade teacher never fully realized the extent of her use of dialogue journals, yet the impact of a positive relationship on Kate meant the world to her. Like Martin O'Connell, Kate Thomson makes relationship-building a central part of her pedagogy. For Kate, when students develop a positive self-image they become more involved in their education and more likely to reduce risky behavior.

Christina Jojola

As a teacher first and a principal second, Christina Jojola shares how she would tailor academic assessments to fit the individual needs of her students. Both her confidence in the classroom and her compassion for the students energized her to develop numerous forms and types of assessment for her students. In her response below, Christina discusses how she was able to ensure that students were being challenged and encouraged to understand more sophisticated concepts.

I just always believed that this was 'our classroom, not my classroom.' My first few years, especially your first year is always your craziest. I didn't feel out of control that first year. I just always felt very natural. So I was very fortunate. I don't know if it was because of good support systems or, you know, I was in my master's program, that kind of thing. Even in a difficult school I never felt unnatural in that classroom. I always set up my classroom with the students in mind. Always. My planning was always with the students in mind. I tried to meet every need, and so I would have for example a quiz every Friday to see how they were doing in math. And I would have 26 or 27 different quizzes because I would have 26 or 27 different levels within my 6th grade math. But I felt it was important that they were being challenged at the level they were at, not at the general middle level. And so I created assignments based on the gifted kids, the twice-exceptional, whatever it was to make sure that kids were engaged at their level. And then moved them as they could move up.

Here Christina maintained the students' needs and best interests at the heart of her lesson planning and assessment. In a sense, this is a more humanized form of assessing student learning that although time consuming for the teacher effectively meets the student at the student's cognitive experience. Jojola operated from the understanding that students learn at different rates and therefore cannot be accurately assessed using a standardized instrument. This framework would eventually become part of her critique of high-stakes standardized testing and the judgments that followed regarding student learning and quality of teaching.

Kate Thomson, Martin O'Connell, and Christina Jojola all share a similar pedagogical obligation: to make the classrooms places that the students desire to be (Rodriguez and Smith 2011). This facilitates the development of positive relationships and what Foucault (1988) refers to as "care for the self."

The interviews with Cathy Wayne yielded responses and opinions that contradicted and refuted those offered by Thomson, O'Connell, and Jojola. At the time of the takeover, Wayne's position with the Puesta del Sol Independent School District was that of Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools. As such, her perspective was one of removing what the district saw as hindrances to higher test scores and replacing this element with one who could better perform. Wayne's explanations oscillate from the neoliberal to the neoconservative and back. Two themes emerged from my interviews with her.

**Theme Four: Advocacy of Neoliberalism in Education/Privatization of Public
Education**

Cathy Wayne

Cathy Wayne served as the Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools in the Puesta del Sol Independent School District. In her statements below she discusses changes that she instituted across the district and reasons for her advocacy of privatizing public education. Her rhetoric changes from a description of economic and social difficulties facing public schools to her willingness and unflinching use of firing principals she considered to be uncommitted.

And a lot of it is really, so much of it is putting those best practices in, but it is also getting those principals to get into those classrooms. I started required observations by principals; they had to be in there. They had to know what was going on in those classrooms. So it meant a reorganization of their classrooms, with less money. I mean, this is hard work. Money is getting tighter and tighter. So who is going to do the discipline in the classroom? And Mr. Grey was cutting out assistant principals for middle schools. So...depending on their population. So, they had to really look at their time and look who was going to cover for them if they were in classrooms observing. They had to input their data into a computer from their observation. So raising that bar for my principals was huge. This was not babysitting kids anymore. We're here, we have a job; to teach. I mean, that being said we all know the reality of hunger and all the issues you're dealing with. Parental involvement in schools. And teachers are right: how can you hold us accountable when we don't control so many of these things? Which is true, that's true. The research is shown that students from very high poverty can, you know, once they walk in that door their achievement level can go up. This is done across the country. So you have to have an incredibly committed principal and staff who really believe that. Who really believe that, don't just say it. And I mean, you know, it's a lot of work with those communities. I mean, look at the Harlem model. Course some of that's privatized.... Yeah, and look at what [Geoffrey Canada] does. He will fire principals, he will fire teachers and he makes the parents accountable. That's really...I mean it can be done but it's a challenge. You can become so negative or, as an administrator you can throw your hands up and just go, 'oh my God.' I think it's a principal's responsibility and that is one of the things I was good at as a principal and an associate was developing those resources. I didn't wait for somebody to give them to me, I went out and got them. And then eventually people would call me and ask, 'do you want this resource at your school?' Course, you have to be careful of what resources you bring in: you have to make sure you can maintain that, fund it, that you're not just...after a year they go away and you have to keep funding it yourself. Well, you can't do that anymore. So you have to

look at it, make sure it's aligned with your school's goals, the level goals, and the district goals and that kind of thing. So I think we've gotten a lot smarter, but there's still a lot of work to be done. Change is very difficult.

In the above statements Cathy Wayne never fully describes her criteria of a “committed” principal or teacher, yet clearly demonstrates that she was supportive of firing those deemed uncommitted. What is problematic here is that in the process of firing Christina Jojola, Cathy Wayne revealed that she was willing to prioritize test scores over committed administrators. In essence, Cathy Wayne's actions revealed her lack of willingness to supporting committed administrators. She removed the first Latina Principal, a woman who had been dedicated to the La Independencia school community for 16 years, serving as teacher, Principal, and at times surrogate mother to many East Mesa youngsters.

[Cathy Wayne on privatization and merit pay]: I just pulled up on Michigan where Michigan public education is becoming more and more privatized. And that way, they can privatize and give incentives to teachers, merit pay. They're moving toward that because what's happening is that the unions are becoming, they have been recalcitrant. It's out of fear and I can understand. But then what you have is, ok, society goes, 'ok, you're not going to move, then we're going to move you anyway. We'll leave you and we'll get done for our students what we need to get done for them, and you'll be out of jobs. And if you want to get hired, you can go with that private employer, and still you're going to have to do what they tell you to do.' It should be where people are coming together and I really agree though that the unions have held us back. And, even as a teacher, even as a teacher, I was a teacher I knew that it wasn't, I mean I was in a school where teachers just wouldn't teach or they went to another school and just taught it how they wanted to. And then I think it gets to the point where you're putting down teachers as a whole. So it's, what is the purpose of a union? ... Schools that had been low-performing for years, R-II designated, you go in and you just got to turn it inside out. It's not enough to just...Arne Duncan calls it 'tinkering around the edges.' You gotta make significant, systemic change. Tinkering around the edges is just not going to work. Especially for high poverty, we know that. We know that. The research is all there. But I do keep saying that leadership matters because I do believe in strong administrators. Incompetency rises in education.

Cathy's linking of public education to current economic troubles reflects her neoliberal outlook on their mutual reliance. She sees benefits in having economic needs

(think: carnivorous nature of capitalism) inform curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education. She simultaneously champions the privatization of public education through advocating for merit pay, mass teacher firings, and charter schools, as mentioned previously, such as the Harlem Children's Zone, while claiming "we have to have public education."

Her references to international competition in education indicate a jingoistic appetite for American supremacy. This can be juxtaposed with her frequent calls for collaboration and cooperation in education. In these ways, the takeover of La Independencia MS can be seen as the (anglo-) neoliberal colonization of a brown school.

On the issues of neoliberalism and the privatization of public education, Cathy Wayne's opinions can be viewed: at the macro level Cathy advocates for mass firings, school takeovers, merit pay, scripted programs while stating that public education is essential. This makes it possible for educational publishing companies and state/district level education officials to address economic exploitation and racist inequalities as crises whose causes can be attributed to low expectations and poor educational leadership. Thus, the only possible remedies are to restructure schools and/or inundate them with expensive, scripted programs.

Furthermore, at the micro level, Cathy Wayne's racial references to La Independencia students and the East Mesa population in general reveal deficit model theoretical outlooks, stereotyping, and a belief that low expectations amongst the families, teachers, and administrators abound. Her praise of the new La Independencia Vice Principal Sharon Stout for "showing the children... showing the East Mesa, you don't all have to be Hispanic to work here" reveals the following two assumptions: 1) the

East Mesa has only been accepting of Latina/Latino teachers; 2) East Mesa students and families implicitly dismiss Anglo teachers. Cathy's statements also imply that Anglo teachers are more effective than Hispanic teachers.

Throughout the interviews, Cathy Wayne frequently referred to the implementation of similar best practices across Puesta del Sol middle schools. But, best practices for whom? Acknowledging the existence of various pedagogical devices, diverse realities in education (McLaren & Smith, 2010), and a teacher's ability to alter his/her instructional methodology as it becomes more appropriate to the specific community of learners overcomes any argument for imposing best practices in schools. The above quote can also be taken to mean that Anglo teachers are more apt to implement such practices. Cathy's advocacy of implementing best practices as pedagogical devices would result in experienced teachers having to end certain practices they have developed and honed over the years that actually better reach their students.

Cathy Wayne's views on school reform give credence to what Delgado and Stefancic refer to as "racism that takes the form of indifference or coldness," (1991, p. 25). I invoke the term "indifference" here because it is most appropriate for describing the dismissal of culturally relevant pedagogy fostered amongst experienced teachers of La Independencia as a means of pushing back on the pedagogical imperialist notion of Eurocentric best practices. However, on the issue of race in education, her reference to the implicit message that Sharon Stout's being white sends (i.e. "you don't all have to be Hispanic to work here") is both an example and an extension of what Kenneth B. Nunn describes in his essay *Law as a Eurocentric Enterprise* (1997, pp. 433) when "the law...sets the boundaries for acceptable forms of resistance to white oppression and

dominance. ...Law organizes white society; then it helps maintain that society through both physical and ideological coercion.” Although Nunn specifically refers to black resistance against white dominance, here I seek to extend his astute notion to Chicana/Chicano resistance against legitimated, white dominance. Cathy Wayne replaced Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson with Richard Rael and Sharon Stout.

Though one may argue that La Independencia is still under the leadership of a Latino Principal, the interviews with Thomson, O’Connell, and Jojola all reveal that his leadership and ethical principles are more in tune with meeting white ideological interests. All concur that Rael disregarded the Professional Creativity Team’s work, thus showing a lack of commitment to Puesta Del Sol ISD agreements. Additionally, his allegiance to bringing in grant money rather than encouraging the district to increase funding to La Independencia shows dedication not to the improvement of the school but the *appearance* of such changes. The façade of having made improvements to schools like La Independencia Middle School is what allows those dedicated to accelerating white racist ideological interests to deflect charges of racism, negligence, and cultural/linguistic attack.

Theme Five: Cathy Wayne’s Motivations for Removing Christina Jojola and Alice

Jackson from La Independencia

Cathy Wayne

In the months and weeks leading up to Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson being removed, Puesta del Sol ISD officials had sent mixed messages regarding why the takeover would happen. The most common denominator was that La Independencia had been in Restructuring-II for a significant amount of time and had never made Adequate

Yearly Progress (AYP) on the standardized exams. However, Cathy Wayne indicated different reasons for removing Jojola and Jackson. The following statements from Cathy paint a different picture:

...there's a lot of research and Ortiz HS has had every kind of initiative, every kind of assortment of principals, four principals at a time, two principals at a time, this configuration, that configuration, high poverty level in the Ortiz cluster [inclusive of La Independencia], as you know, very underachieving, poverty [is] one of the highest in the city, predominantly Hispanic. So you get a lot of people feeling done-to, a lot of people feel like they're treated differently...racism...because they live in the Ortiz cluster. So anyway, we picked two schools in the Ortiz cluster, Ortiz High School and La Independencia Middle School. This is an opportunity that we can make those changes. With those changes come a different principal, which was not a difficult thing to do because there many things going wrong at La Independencia. Many things. It wasn't necessarily the Principal's fault; she'd been trained by the high school Principal that was at Ortiz HS. There were lots of agreements with gangs, that there was a lot of 'ranking-in' going on in the Principal's office, a lot of 'ranking-out/ranking-in' going on. There were strip searches. There was staff that were not held accountable. She had many of her relatives there. And so, remember I came into my job in '08, March of '08. So I had been there, and once I started seeing all those issues, it was not a difficult decision to move her. It was hard. It was hard on her; it really was. And it was hard on the staff, because things were going to change and it was sort of like the beginning of a major change. Tom Grey really, I think in fairness to him coming into the district, really had the intent on reworking our education here. It was just very, you know...like a lot of large districts there wasn't high expectations. So, I moved her out. We interviewed for the Principalship, and I put Richard Rael in there. He had been successful at the elementary level and had brought them up to AYP. I put him in at La Independencia and then Mr. Ibarra put in a principal [at Ortiz HS] who did *not* work out the first year. And I don't know why they put her in because I had interviewed her for another job and I didn't hire her for the other job.

The above statements from Cathy Wayne reveal that she did not remove Jojola and Jackson due to incompetence, low test scores, or for academic improvement but rather out of concern regarding nepotism and their approaches to dealing with gang issues. For Cathy Wayne to have removed the leadership of La Independencia under the guise of school reform represents a misuse of federal education policy, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, *the very same policy Cathy Wayne claimed to be following*. Thus the East Mesa school community was deceived into thinking that the leadership was to blame

for the low academic performance. Recall the months leading up to Christina Jojola's removal: artificial hoops created for her to jump through in order to retain her job as Principal. She met every new expectation Cathy Wayne created as well as received high praise from the Public Education Department of the State of New Mexico. In essence there was no fault in her ability to lead La Independencia or to meet higher expectations. She was simply removed due to Cathy Wayne's disapproval of her having employed family members and engaging in open dialogue with gang members.

Invoking claims such as "the research is there" and "we all know _____" represent a certain disposition to treat research merely as a battle of words without delving into its substance or conclusions. Any study or research article can be located which will provide support for any argument or intended action. What is lost however is the possibility for cognitive growth when seeking out only the research that supports a pre-drawn conclusion.

Cathy simultaneously acknowledges and dismisses claims of racism in the East Mesa. This dismissal poses a complex dialectical relationship, that of recognition and non-recognition as discussed by Gotanda (2000, p. 39). The two dialectic halves are the recognition of racism and the dismissal: on the one hand, she acknowledges that racism not only exists but is in the collective consciousness of East Mesa families. On the other hand, she diminishes racism's ongoing impact by stating that, "you get a lot of people feeling done-to, a lot of people feel like they're treated differently...racism...because they live in the Ortiz cluster." Her statement is compelling for it calls into question her commitment to undoing or challenging the racism she herself has acknowledged. This is

an unfortunate consequence of Wayne's upbringing in Mississippi during segregation and desegregation.

Cathy Wayne's family fought arduously for the advancement of civil rights and endured immense pressure from white supremacists throughout Mississippi. However, Wayne's growing up and coming of age in segregated Mississippi and the violence of the ku klux klan and the Citizen's Councils has left her with the impression that the only truly racist actions are those obvious, overt, and direct forms of violence. To recognize racism and then not act against it is passive complicity. On a grander scale, to not recognize Puesta del Sol ISD's systematic neglect of La Independencia MS as an act of institutional racism also implies consent with discrimination. Furthermore by attempting to distance herself from East Mesa residents who charge the district with racism while still operating from a deficit lens of the East Mesa is itself an act of racism.

[Cathy Wayne referencing mass firings and what she feels should have taken place at La Independencia MS and Ortiz HS]: At Ortiz HS, there were no teachers that were let go. I mean, that was where there should have been. And I'm not talking 10. And really what...the work we did with Stanford and I went to Austin with Stanford. I went to a lot of places with Stanford and I learned a lot with Stanford. I was all over the education department at that school. It is very high-caliber. It was a joyous thing, to work with them. I went to Austin for example, and they did quite a bit of this model. What they did was they let all the teachers go and could only hire back maybe 10% of them and they had to reapply. That's really what probably should have been done at both those schools.

By stating that both La Independencia Middle School and Ortiz High School should have undergone mass firings, Cathy reflects that she had little actual concern for the professional fates of the teachers in either school. Cathy Wayne's claims are also inconsistent when considering what she had expressed as the reasons for removing the La Independencia Middle School leadership.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Conclusions

When I began this study what I anticipated finding is ultimately not what I uncovered. I expected to see that the process of Puesta del Sol ISD removing Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson from La Independencia Middle School would be the result of the application of Restructuring-II consequences as set forth. I had been more optimistic that those involved in the takeover would have kept La Independencia's students' best interests in mind. This would allow for a critical race analysis and critique of the hegemonic neoliberal state of U.S. public education. What I have since uncovered through the interviews is entirely different.

In this dissertation I established the hegemonic nature of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 federal legislation. Gramsci's (1971) theory of cultural hegemony holds true, particularly when the State marries federal legislation that has been inspired by private corporations to the public education system. In this sense, public education becomes "public" only in that it reaches a mass audience but is "private" based on who owns and operates the apparatus. NCLB enacted a set of assessment techniques, standardized exams, prepackaged reading programs, and other supplementary services that 'legally' resulted in schools being deemed failures, thus in need of dramatic reforms that had to be bought with public education money. In this way, public education becomes a puppet for private corporations to maintain monstrosities such as the school-to-prison pipeline, school-to-military pipeline, and reproduction of social class. The craze for more standardized testing, privatizing public spaces like schools, and firing those

most committed to teaching and learning solidifies the grasp of neoliberal capitalism on public education. An example of this comes from La Independencia: Richard Rael was praised for bringing in the SIG Grant, yet nothing in it could contribute to what teachers actually need.

The damage wreaked by NCLB is not contained to the fiscal level. In the area of ideological conformity and base education for the masses, NCLB became a vehicle for ensuring that the school-to-prison and school-to-military pipelines would not be disrupted. Likewise, students who enter school speaking languages other than English are essentially fast-tracked out of their cultural and linguistic realities. For such students the disconnections between school and home are thus more rigid and difficult to overcome.

Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson were not removed for incompetence, ineptness, or any other professional shortcoming whatsoever. Instead, Cathy Wayne revealed that she removed Christina and Alice due to claims of making agreements and having arrangements with local youth gangs, nepotistic hiring practices, and financial impropriety. None of these claims were substantiated in the interviews with Jojola, O'Connell, or Thomson. Yet under the guise of reforming La Independencia MS, Cathy used the students' historically low test scores, the school's Restructuring-II status, and the ongoing negative opinion throughout the district to justify removing the leadership. Local media outlets disseminated statements from Puesta del Sol ISD officials that contradicted information that the La Independencia teachers and administrators received. Ultimately, Cathy Wayne facilitated the takeover in order to demonstrate to the newly-arrived Superintendent Tom Grey that she would be willing to remove principals, in a sense that

she would not hesitate to make a significant change even if that change proved to be detrimental.

Cathy Wayne and the Puesta del Sol ISD officials disregarded the positive reports that the Public Education Department had written about Christina Jojola and the La Independencia faculty. The removal of Christina and Alice was facilitated by several key factors: unpopularity within the district; serving as administrators in a school long victimized by the district through neglect and slander; never meeting NCLB's AYP standards. While NCLB has created an effective hegemonic grasp over many public educators, voters, and families, in this situation it was merely the guise that shrouded an unjust *coup d'essai*, a trial run for how to smoothly overtake a school. Cathy Wayne asserted power over Christina Jojola and replaced her with an experienced principal who used a sizable grant to help bolster his rating amongst the remaining La Independencia teachers. Nothing in Cathy Wayne's explanation as to why La Independencia was targeted for the takeover actually connected to seeking improvement or reform of the school. Essentially, Cathy saw in Grey's arrival to the Puesta del Sol ISD an opportunity to gain his trust and demonstrate a willingness to fire principals. Jojola's assertion that Tom Grey's motive for taking over the school was that it would be a bargaining chip proved accurate: the week following Grey's announcement of the La Independencia MS and Ortiz HS takeovers, he received a one-year extension on his contract as Superintendent. The Corrective Action phases of NCLB allowed for the racist, prejudicial, and interpersonal conflict to be exercised against school officials but can be shrouded in the guise of educational reform. In this case, La Independencia's targeting was a natural step in Puesta del Sol ISD's ongoing abuse of the East Mesa schools. Cathy

Wayne and Tom Grey both seized on the meritocratic opportunity to advance their positions at the expense of the greater East Mesa school community.

According to both Thomson and O'Connell, nothing improved with the arrival of the new Principal, Richard Rael. The work performed by the Professional Creativity Team was done with the understanding that it would become the guiding procedural manual for school operations. Instead, it has been completely ignored; the accepted SIG Grant proposal (authored by Principal Richard Rael) actually undermined the arduous and intensive labor members of the PCT performed. It is not that the PCT work and the SIG Grant are necessarily antithetical merely that Rael has opted to make the SIG Grant the priority. This move was unpopular with the remaining La Independencia faculty; many teachers passed up the opportunity to transfer to a new school within the district and gave their consent to the details of the PCT work. Internal organizational changes to the teaching day have been neglected, the SAILS program has been all but eliminated, and the structural issues within the school (leaky roofs, poor heating and air conditioning systems) have gone unaddressed. In this sense the takeover of La Independencia was an act of colonization. Consider the characteristics of La Independencia that were used against it by the Puesta del Sol ISD:

- Puesta del Sol's target was a school with a high percentage of vulnerable students (high economic exploitation, various levels of citizenship, constant fear of deportation, police brutality);
- La Independencia's leadership was already unpopular in the district and thus lacking in allies;

- Options set out in NCLB’s punitive Corrective Action phases were used to mask the takeover which was actually motivated by the opportunity for Cathy Wayne and Tom Grey to advance their statuses in the Puesta del Sol ISD.

Essentially this is a two-pronged situation in which educational goals that are unattainable for the majority of public schools were imposed upon La Independencia, a school that was already under economic, racial, and physical assault on different levels. Removing Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson constituted a form of what I will loosely borrow the phrase “blaming the victims” from Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens (1988) to illustrate Puesta del Sol ISD’s logic in holding Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson responsible for the “failure” to raise La Independencia’s scores on the standards-based assessments. Cathy Wayne’s statements reveal her own interpersonal racism and the prevailing ideology of the Puesta del Sol ISD. Unless Puesta del Sol ISD undergoes an inclusion of East Mesa voices and takes pro-active steps to halting racist practices within the district, schools in similar situations to La Independencia (and Ortiz HS) will continue to be exploited and underserved. A further conclusion is that until NCLB either finishes running its destructive course or school officials resist it, the monopolization of daily academic life by private companies will continue on as business as usual.

Recommendations, Need for Further Research

While expectations were much higher that the Obama Administration and particularly Secretary of Education Arne Duncan would bring about the change many had hoped for in education, it is now reassuring that states are receiving waivers from specific tenets of No Child Left Behind (see Press Office article from US Department of

Education “26 More States...”). Although this does little to alleviate the pressures imposed by Race to the Top, the symbolism of the federal government granting waivers to states from following NCLB requirements indicates a certain acknowledgement of the failure of NCLB to reform public education while worsening an already failed policy. For the federal government to allow states leeway around NCLB provisions, describes NCLB itself, Race to the Top, and future educational policy that seek to rely on punitive measures as a route to education reform met with coordinated, informed, and unrelenting opposition. The agenda of those oppositionists must be to rescue public education from rudimentary instruction that funnels students into the school to prison pipeline, end the costly and pedagogic practice of high stakes standardized testing, the English language imposition, and the increased privatization of public education.

The Puesta del Sol ISD officials who took part in the removal of Christina Jojola and Alice Jackson have left their boot print upon the school community. The damage inflicted upon La Independencia MS has been done, and the district does not have plans to accept responsibility and offer necessary reparations. Removing Jojola and Jackson for Rael and Stout ultimately served as a detriment to the school. To that end, the clearest recommendation necessary is that the Puesta del Sol ISD (and any other school district) *not* seek to perform another takeover under the NCLB guidelines, particularly when that takeover is motivated by meritocracy and individual promotion. The takeover was also a damage control maneuver, a subtle shifting of blame from the Puesta del Sol ISD to the La Independencia leadership and faculty.

I will not postulate a number of policy recommendations for the No Child Left Behind Act; to do so would be akin to designing a more efficient electric chair. What is

needed instead is a reinvention of our collective view on education, its purposes and possibilities. Priorities of the No Child Left Behind Act have been essentially streamlined into Race to the Top, and each discusses educational excellence as the goal of education (“excellence” as an educational goal implies the imposition of some standardized measure or assessment instead of focusing on knowledge or societal improvement). Under NCLB, failing schools lost leadership, finances, and suffered enrollment declines. Now with Race to the Top impacting the decisions of states and local districts, funding is withheld from states that do not participate in initiatives they know to be detrimental. Therefore, rather than make such policies more intelligent by suggesting internal adjustments, what I propose instead are three principles for educators and administrators to consider.

First, educators should embrace Freire’s notion of *conscientização*, which Freire (1970, p. 19) defined as the process of “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.” *Conscientização* is thus the antithesis to the NCLB curricula (and subsequent Race to the Top mandates) in that *conscientização* orients the purpose of education from one of mastering basic print literacy and numeracy to one of questioning, problematizing, and overcoming the dehumanizing factors that mar our schools, communities, and world. Under both the former and the current federal education policies there is neither room nor tolerance for problematizing the racism, class exploitation, and other forms of injustice. Yet orienting education to such a process demands interrogation of value production and the historical legacy of racism that have been central in the formation of asymmetrical relations of power.

Second, critical literacy must take precedence over technical literacy. Critical literacy is a direct and concrete facilitation of *conscientização*. Ira Shor writes that critical literacy “challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development” (2009, p. 282). For critical literacy to become an educational reality, educators must first recognize not only the limitations of the base literacy instruction methods that pervade education today but also the importance of bridging life and school such that the oppressive situations withering society come through in the students’ written expressions and thus become concrete problems to which solutions can be discovered or co-created. For Shor (2009, p 287), “critical literacy is a pedagogy for those teachers and students morally disturbed by the... ‘savage inequalities’ as Jonathan Kozol (1991) named them, for those who wish to act against the violence of imposed hierarchy and forced hunger.”

Three, a sustained interrogation of the on-going horrors of class exploitation and racism must be the cornerstone of any counterhegemonic struggle in today’s world. This will compel teachers to evaluate and take responsibility for their ideologies, yet such examination is necessary if change is possible in our social reality. Placing the struggle against class exploitation and racism at the center of a collective educational struggle is thus to structure its ethical posture in such a way that the politics of becoming more fully human as Freire (1970) argued, become unapologetic and uncompromising. Beyond examining the process of dehumanization educators must collectively resist cynicism and transition into optimistic, active, and organized futurists.

Looking to the Future

As this dissertation research study draws to a close, I am reminded of a statement from Prof. Ernest Morrell. Prof. Morrell quoted Paulo Freire in stating, “hope is an ontological necessity.” (E. Morrell, personal communication, May 4, 2011). There is simply no more appropriate statement for the times in which we live. Much is invoked in such a declaration, for it marries three key dynamics that critical educators embrace: 1) hope, the optimistic orientation to recognize that current social, political, environmental, and educational malignancies and crises are not how life has always been and can be overcome; 2) ontology, the possibility of ascertaining and creating knowledge regarding the purpose of being, existence, and life; when linked to Hope and Necessity, Ontology opens doors of possibility for transformational education to be realized; 3) necessity, the opposite of a superfluous desire, becomes the cornerstone of human action. Viewed as a constellation amidst a dark sky, to recognize hope as an ontological necessity inspires critical educators to remain dedicated to embracing and developing counterhegemonic pedagogies.

Yet it is not enough for educators to simply remain dedicated to their practice if their dedication is not also guided by a sincere optimism for what the future will be. The collective power of united students, educators, administrators, and greater school communities is as strong as ever. Being an optimistic futurist compels the common educator to develop herself or himself into an organic intellectual in every Gramscian (1971) sense of the term. The collective educational community must retake the public spaces in which aspiring teachers are trained and transform that space into one of humanization, a critical pedagogy that eliminates market demands for what type of

student a school should produce. Rather, teacher education can become a place where aspiring teachers grow as intellectuals, decolonize the harsh pedagogies under which they were instructed as youngsters, and dedicate to their communities everything they would provide for their own children.

In these times the need for educators to serve as optimistic, action-oriented futurists is most urgent. For those of us who commit ourselves to confronting and defeating hegemonic oppression and dehumanization, our work is never done. And in that way there is no distinction between an educator's personal life and his or her professional experience. Our life's work becomes written in the pages of history, and we go down as educational freedom fighters, de-colonizers that denounced the exploitation of the masses and challenged it with an informed and humanizing vision of a better society, enacted by students, educators, activists, and participants of all walks of life and from all fields.

REFERENCES

- Allman, P., McLaren, P., Rikowski, G. (2005). After the box people: The labor-capital relation as class constitution and its consequences for Marxist educational theory and human resistance. In: *Capitalists and conquerors: A critical pedagogy against Empire*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Allman, P. (2007). *On Marx: An introduction to the revolutionary intellect of Karl Marx*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Althusser, L. (1970). Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (Notes toward an investigation). In “*Lenin and philosophy*” and other essays. Retrieved from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>.
- Anderson, N. (2011, March 10). Most schools could face ‘failing’ label under No Child Left Behind, Duncan says. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/09/AR2011030903089_pf.html.
- Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Attinasi, J. J. (1997). Racism, language variety, and urban minorities: Issues in bilingualism and bidialectalism. In A. Darder, R. D. Torres, & H. Gutiérrez (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Au, W. (2008). *Unequal by design: High-stakes testing and the standardization of inequality*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bartolomé, L. I. (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 173-194.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, P. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>.
- Bloome, D. & Clark, C. (2006). Discourse-in-use. In J. L. Green, G. Camili, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (227-241). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Boggs, C. (1976). *Gramsci’s Marxism*. London: Pluto Press.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. (2nd ed.). New York: Sage Publications.
- Branigin, W., Wilgoren, D., & Bacon Jr., P. (2010, December 22). Obama signs DADT repeal before big, emotional crowd. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/22/AR2010122201888.html>.
- Brenner, M.E. (2006). Interviewing in educational research. In J. L. Green, G. Camili, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (357-370). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brown, E. R. (2007). The quiet disaster of No Child Left Behind: Standardization and deracialization breed inequality. In K. J. Saltman (Ed.), *Schooling and the politics of disaster*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carspecken, P.F. (2001). Critical ethnographies from Houston: Distinctive features and directions. In P.F. Carspecken & G. Walford (Eds.), *Critical ethnography and education* (pp. 1-26). Oxford, United Kingdom: Elsevier Science Ltd.
- Cole, M., & Maisuria, A. (2010). Racism and islamophobia in post 7/7 Britain: Critical race theory, (xeno-)racialization, empire and education – a Marxist analysis. In D. Kelsh, D. Hill, & S. Macrine (Eds.), *Class in education: Knowledge, pedagogy, subjectivity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cole, M. (September, 2003). Postmodernism and poststructuralism in social change and social justice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 24(4), 487-500.
- Cole, M. (2008). *Marxism and educational theory: Origins and issues*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Crawford, J. (2004). *Educating English learners: Language diversity in the classroom*. (5th ed.). Bilingual Educational Services.
- Darden, E.C. (February 2008). Restructuring: NCLB's final solution. *Forecast: Emerging issues in public education*, 6(1). Retrieved from <http://www.nyssba.org/clientuploads/forecast%20pdf/forecast0208.pdf>.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007, May 21). Evaluating 'No Child Left Behind.' *The Nation*. Retrieved at <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070521/darling-hammond>.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2008). Improving high schools and the role of NCLB. In G. L. Sunderman, (Ed.), *Holding NCLB accountable: Achieving accountability, equity, & school reform*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

- Darling-Hammond, L, & Marks, E. L. *The New Federalism in Education: State Responses to the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act*. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/2006/R3008.pdf>.
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dukakis, M. (1988). The Dukakis strategy for excellence in education. *Phi Delta Kappan* 70: 115.
- Duncan, G.A. (2006). Critical race ethnography in education: Narrative, inequality, and the problem of epistemology. In A. Dixon & C. Rousseau (Eds.), *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song* (pp. 191-212). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Eagleton, T. (2011). *Why Marx was right*. New Haven: Yale University.
- Eidenberg, E., & Morey, R. D. (1969). *An Act of Congress: The Legislative Process and the Making of Education Policy*. Norton and Company: New York. 247.
- Edwards, J. (2011, March 14). Obama presses education agenda. *The National Journal*. Retrieved from <http://nationaljournal.com/whitehouse/obama-presses-education-agenda-20110314>.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power: Language in social life*. (2nd ed.) New Jersey: Pearson ESL.
- Fairclough, N. (2009). A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Foucault, M. (1988). *The history of sexuality, Volume 3: The care for the self*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. (2nd ed.). New York: Vintage.
- Freire P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

- Freire, P. (1998). *Politics and education*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Latin American Center Publications.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare teach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Gee, J.P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gee, J.P. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gee, J.P. (2006). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology and discourses*. (3rd Ed.) New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gillborn, D. (2008). *Racism and education: Coincidence or conspiracy?* London: Routledge.
- Giroux, H.A. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith. (Eds.). New York, NY: International Publishers.
- H.R. 1: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Roll Call Votes. Retrieved at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h107-1&tab=votes>.
- Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. (2002). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon.
- John-Steiner, V. (2004, February 10). *Art in education*. Paper presented at University of New Mexico's Colloquium on Key Issues in Education and the Arts. Retrieved from <http://edartsinstitute.org/pdfs/ArtinEducation2004.pdf>.
- Joll, J. (1977). *Gramsci*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons and Co.
- Kohn, A. (2000). *The case against standardized testing: Raising the scores, ruining the schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kosik, K. (1976). *Dialectics of the concrete: A study on problems of man and world*. Boston: D. Reidel Books.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate IV, W.F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.

- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Hoffmann Davis, J. (2002). *The art and science of portraiture*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass.
- Lawson, R. (1995). Critical race theory as praxis: A view from outside the outside. *Howard Law Journal*, 38(2), 353-370.
- Macedo, D. (2000). The Colonialism of the English Only Movement. *Educational Researcher* 29(3), 15-24.
- Macedo, D. (2006). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Marx, K. (1990). *Capital, Volume I*. New York: Penguin.
- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: McREL.
- Mathis, W. (2009). *NCLB's ultimate restructuring alternatives: Do they improve the quality of education?* Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved 29 January 2011 from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/nclb-ultimate-restructuring>.
- McLaren, P. (2005). *Capitalists and conquerors: A critical pedagogy against empire*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.
- McLaren, P. (2006). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. (5th Ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- McLaren, P. (2011a). The death rattle of the American mind: A call for pedagogical outlawry. *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies*, 11(4), 373-385. Doi: 10.1177/1532708611414669
- McLaren, P. (2011b). Education as class warfare. *Socialist Webzine*. Retrieved at <http://socialistwebzine.blogspot.com/2011/09/education-as-class-warfare-interview.html>.
- McLaren, P. & Jaramillo, N. (2007). *Pedagogy and praxis in the age of empire: Towards a new humanism*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Merriam, Sharan B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Meyerson, G. (2001). Rethinking Black Marxism: Reflections on Cedric Robinson and others. *Cultural Logic*, 3(2). Retrieved from <http://clogic.eserver.org/3-1&2/meyerson.html>.

- Montoya, M. (2000). Máscaras, trenzas, y greñas: Un/masking the self while un/braiding Latina stories and legal discourse. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (2nd ed.) (514-524). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Morrell, E. (2001). Transforming classroom discourse: Academic and critical literacy development through engaging popular culture. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of California, Berkeley.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (Retrieved from <http://millercenter.org/president/reagan/essays/cabinet/660>).
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C.A. §6301 *et seq.*
- Orozco, C. E. "DEL RIO ISD V. SALVATIERRA," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrd02>), accessed February 13, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- Rees, N. A. (2001). Improving education for every American child. In *Priorities for the President*, ed. Stuart M. Butler & Kim R. Holmes, 53-69. Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation.
- Rodriguez, A. (2006). *Borderlands, entre dos culturas: Teaching in the age of No Child Left Behind: Literacy, pedagogy and transformation*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). New Mexico State University: Las Cruces, New Mexico.
- Rodriguez, A. (2008). Toward a transformative teaching practice: Criticity, pedagogy and praxis. *International Journal of Learning*, 15(3) 346-352.
- Said, E., & Hitchens, C. (Eds.). (1988). *Blaming the victims: Spurious scholarship and the Palestinian question*. New York: Verso.
- Saltman, K. J. (2003). Introduction. In K. J. Saltman & D. A. Gabbard (Eds.), *Education as enforcement: The militarization and corporatization of schools* (pp.1-24). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sander, B. R. (2010). *School leaders and the challenge of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 1965-1968*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Deep Blue, University of Michigan. (2027.42/77841/1/bsander_1.pdf).
- Schoellkopf, A. (2009, January 13). School shake-up. *Albuquerque Journal*. Retrieved at <http://www.abqjournal.com/news/state/131027544417newsstate01-13-09.htm>.

- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. (3rd ed.) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shor, I. (2009). What is critical literacy? In A. Darder, M. P. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2nd Ed.), (282-304). New York: Routledge.
- Smith, M.D., & Rodriguez, A. (2009). *Freirean possibilities in a post-No Child Left Behind classroom*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the California Association of Freirean Educators. Los Angeles, California.
- Smith, M.D. & Rodriguez, A. (2011). A Critical Foundation for Bilingual Education. *Journal of Critical Educational and Policy Studies*. 9(2).
- Smitherman, -Donaldson, G., & van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *Discourse and discrimination*. (Eds.). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Solórzano, D.G. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 121-136.
- Solórzano, D.G., & Yosso, T.J. (2000). Toward a critical race theory of Chicana and Chicano education. In C. Tejada, C. Martinez, & Z. Leonardo (Eds.), *Charting new terrains of Chicana(o)/Latina(o) education* (pp. 35-65). New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Solórzano, D.G. & Yosso, T.J. (2009). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for educational research. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (pp. 131-147). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Spitser, A. (2007). School reconstitution under No Child Left Behind: Why school officials should think twice. *UCLA Law Review*, 54, 1339-1383.
- Spring, J. (2009). *Decolonization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Towne, L. & Shavelson, R.J. (2002). *Scientific research in education*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.
- United States Bureau of the Census. 2000 data. Retrieved at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=86000US87106&_geoContext=01000US%7C86000US87106&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=&_state=&_zip=87105&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=860&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=DE

[C_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&q_r_name=null®=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=](#).

- United States Department of Education. *Press Office*. "26 More States and D.C. Seek Flexibility from NCLB to Drive Education Reforms in Second Round of Requests." 29 Feb. 2012. Retrieved at <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/26-more-states-and-dc-seek-flexibility-nclb-drive-education-reforms-second-round>.
- Valenzuela, A. (2004). Introduction: The Accountability Debate in Texas: Continuing the Conversation. In A. Valenzuela (Ed.), *Leaving children behind: How "Texas-style" accountability fails Latino youth* (1-32). New York, NY: State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Vinovskis, M. (2009). *From a nation at risk to no child left behind: National education goals and the creation of federal education policy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Yin, R.K. (2006). Case study methods. In J. L. Green, G. Camili, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (111-122). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yosso, T.J. (2010). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yosso, T.J., & Solórzano, D.G. (March, 2006). Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano educational pipeline. *Latino Policy & Issues Brief, 13*. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.
- Zizek, S. (1999). *The sublime object of ideology*. New York: Verso.