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COMMUNITY SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my students: those I have taught in the past, the students I see daily, and those I will have the honor of teaching in the future. This work is also dedicated to my colleagues in the education field as well as my family.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to work with countless students who have taught me that being a great educator is far more than the letters after your name. It is about the relationships you establish and the school environment you create. These students are examples of perseverance, resilience, and achievement. I am a better person because of the experiences my students have brought to my life.

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ABSTRACT

A community school model is one way that struggling schools can restructure under the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act. Schools operate under the idea that the needs of the whole child must be met before academic advancement can begin. Implementation of a community school model includes obtaining feedback from all stakeholder groups in a school community (students, staff, parents, and community organizations) and examining data to make collective decisions that generate shared responsibility and accountability. The four pillars of a community school (integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices) provide a skeleton for schools to begin implementation.

This project is comprised of a qualitative, single case study conducted in an elementary school in a city in the southwestern United States. The research site was in the fourth year of implementing a community school model as a turnaround measure to avoid closure. Collected data revealed how perceptions of student academic proficiency are impacted when shared leadership and decision-making in a community school model are adopted. Sources of data included individual interviews, student responses to a questionnaire, and information obtained from the school website, district website, and grant applications.

This research occurred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on the study. Findings include contributions from each stakeholder group, examples of the four pillars of a community school, and implications for current practice and future research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

Introduction

The implementation of a community school model is a way to improve schools that influences the whole child. It is not a program, but rather a way of running a school that involves the entire community. It is ongoing and based in long-term, systemic reform. This model is a way to meet students and families where they are and provide the support necessary for academic achievement. Part of the community school model is creating supportive and inclusive conditions where teaching and learning can take place in full partnership with families and the community. Although community schools are not going to solve the many social inequities that exist, "they are gaining attention as a strategy to create equitable education systems" (Daniel, 2017, p. 4). It is a proactive method of responding to student and family needs that promotes positive outcomes.

Background for the Study

Due to increased poverty and unemployment in American society, schools are being asked to do far more than teach students. Maslow (1943) noted that a person's basic needs must be met before they can move on to meeting psychological or self-fulfillment needs, including education. Due to a changing society, more and more students are coming to school without their basic needs being met. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the official poverty rate in the United States in 2020 was 11.4%" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). However, in the state where this study was conducted, this number jumped to 16.8%. In the county where the research site was located, the figure was 15.3%. Increasingly, schools are faced with students who are living with "food insecurity, homelessness, and many other difficulties... that impede their ability to learn" (Scully et al., 2019, p. 26). Additionally, some

families are mobile due to parent work obligations, leaving students to constantly adjust to a new educational environment (Scully et al., 2019). This means that students are coming to school without necessities such as food, clothing, and healthcare, which are significant socioeconomic issues that affect education and overall well-being.

Importance to Education and Problem Statement

The community school model is an approach that can improve a variety of academic and non-academic outcomes for students and their families. Over time, the makeup of a family has changed in both form and function (Scully et al., 2019). Schools need to adapt to new family characteristics. The community school model includes improved instructional programs and community partnerships that benefit the community as a whole. This has led community schools to be considered a strong "improvement strategy in high-poverty neighborhoods" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 3). Providing a variety of resources for students and families "address[es] the reality that children whose families are struggling with poverty… cannot focus on learning unless their nonacademic needs are also met" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 9). Jenkins and Duffy (2016) found decreases in grade retention and dropout rates as well as increases in attendance and math and reading scores because of implementing a community school model.

Benefits of a community school model extend to families and school staff. The Coalition for Community Schools (2009) outlined benefits to families as "increased family stability, communication with teachers, school involvement and a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning" (p. 1). The same report noted that "community schools enjoy… increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment and

greater community support," which are all positive effects on education (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009, p. 1).

A 2012 study by Galindo and Sheldon found that "students had greater gains in math and reading, on average, if they attended schools that provided more opportunities for family and school communications and interactions" (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012, p. 99). The researchers established that school outreach, as reported by principals "was associated with greater student's reading and math gains of the course of kindergarten" (p. 100). When schools are consistent in their messaging and share information with parents, students hear similar communication about the importance of learning. These strong, two-way relationships set the foundation for parents "to get involved at the school and students are more likely to make greater gains in reading and math" (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012, p. 101). Overall, community schools produce positive effects on students through "lower rates of absenteeism; better work habits, grades, test scores and behavior; high enrollment in college preparatory classes; and high graduation rates" (National Education Association, 2017, p. 4). This model is a systemic approach to address the needs of students so that they can be successful in their educational careers. By bringing together the people who have a connection to a school around a common goal, stakeholders "can develop creative solutions to meet the diverse needs of all young people" (Berg et al., 2006, p. ES-1). Entire communities are recognizing that by working together "deep community-school relationships combine insider expertise with outside resources and support" that can benefit all students and lead to a stronger neighborhood (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 4).

Additionally, implementing a community school model can be cost-effective. Research demonstrates that the return "on investments into schools providing wraparound

services and other community school supports, ranging from $3 (excluding economic benefits) to $15 in savings for every dollar invested" (Maier et al., 2017, p. 99). This can look like a community school coordinator partnering with a school to provide clothing, shoes, school supplies, or transportation vouchers for students. This return on investment may provide some of the funding needed to implement and sustain a community school model.

One of the biggest and most common factors in the success of a community school is having a full-time community coordinator as part of the school staff. The community school coordinator is the common link who brings "students, families, and community partners into the school decision-making process" (Public Education Department, 2021, p. 2). The community school coordinator differs from a family liaison in that the coordinator's primary function is to work with multiple stakeholder groups to address barriers students may face. Stakeholders include students, school staff, parents and families, and community organizations.

An increasing number of students come to school from poor socioeconomic conditions. As Maier et al. (2017) noted, "more than half of the nation's school children—approximately 25 million—live in low-income households and are often locked out of schools with high-quality curriculum, instruction, support and facilities" (p. 3). Living in poverty can create barriers to learning, such as housing instability, increased violence, and exposure to trauma, which can all have a negative effect on learning (Maier et al., 2017). In a 2017 report on school improvement, the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017a) stated that "engaging multiple stakeholders and listening to diverse voices furthers a deeper focus on equity" (p. 12). It provides the opportunity for adults to examine the root causes of the educational inequity and work together to find solutions within their own community.

Through increased communication and opportunities for leadership for all involved, the community school model can "minimize inequalities in power based on resources, race, and class" (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 9) and "represents the needs of the whole community, not just a few individuals" (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 16). Partners and the school community work together to leverage resources and reduce barriers.

A recent law demands that districts take action to serve students, especially those that come from impoverished, failing schools. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed. One of the requirements "maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). One of the ways this is being done is through community schools. Jenkins and Duffy (2016) wrote that community schooling is "used to describe schools that adopt a broad and varying range of services to address the comprehensive needs of students, families, and communities" (p. 2). Schools that have adopted this model recognize they need to strengthen the whole child by providing support for student needs outside of the classroom. This can include sending food bags home on Fridays that provide nutrition for families over the weekend, having access to clothing, before-and after-school care, and a school-based health center where students and families can receive physical and mental healthcare without missing school. The number of community schools has grown across the United States in part as a response to the ESSA legislation.

Numerous out-of-school factors contribute to the educational success of students. Daniel (2017) found that these factors "account for about 60% of the variance in student

achievement" (p. 4). Community schooling has now become a national movement for addressing out-of-school impediments that students face by creating school communities that "support student learning and build strong families and communities" (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 4). The school district where the current study took place has responded to these challenges and as a result has been nationally recognized as a leader in community school implementation. In a 2017 report, the Learning Policy Institute identified the school district as implementing community school models district-wide (Maier et al., 2017). The community school approach has been a way to meet the needs of students and their families by providing access to wraparound services that promote equity, leadership, and accountability. This study examined the effects that this model had on overall student achievement.

Context of the Study

In early 2017, the school site for this study—henceforth Pioneer Elementary School or Pioneer Elementary (a pseudonym)—was threatened with closure by the state Public Education Department (PED) for "chronic failure" under the state's ESSA waiver. As noted in the application that the school submitted in order to remain open, "If after four years of intervention within a Priority School, or school with an overall grade of F, the PED may consider other options such as school closure, reconstitution, or other external management providers to completely redesign a school" (PED, 2018b, p. 3). Facing this prospect, the school district submitted a Request for Application for More Rigorous Intervention to the state education department. Prior to submission, leadership within the school district worked with the school's surrounding neighborhood along with numerous community partners to prepare a response that would allow Pioneer Elementary School to remain open. Prior to this, Pioneer Elementary did not implement any type of community school model.

The community, school staff, and district leadership held community meetings to collect feedback about next steps for the school (Burgess, 2018). The response included a braided approach to transformation; one of the strands was implementation of a community school model. Included in the model was funding for a full-time community school coordinator. Part of the coordinator's job was facilitating "partnerships that support schools on various levels and are tailored to the needs of each school" as well as supporting professional development opportunities for school staff as written in the Request for Application submitted to the state education department (PED, 2018b, p. 36). Additionally, to align with the ESSA legislation, the application was specific in that the coordinator was specifically tasked with facilitating "the alignment of school, family, and community resources" and utilizing "data to determine service and program needs and gaps" (PED, 2018b, p. 44). In a response letter to the state education department, the school district cited use of the community schools framework as the model they would base implementation on as part of the overall school turnaround (School District Superintendent, 2018).

Research Question

This research was conducted through a qualitative, single case study that took place in an elementary school in an impoverished, older neighborhood in a large metropolitan district in the U.S. Southwest. Although located in a large city, the school neighborhood was largely rural and multi-generational. This research took place during the 2021 calendar year. The school had completed 3 full years of community school implementation and was going into the 4th year when the project commenced. This is significant to note because "full implementation of complex change efforts can take 5 to 10 years with schools generally achieving partial implementation in the first 3 to 4 years of these efforts" (Maier et al., 2017,

p. 80). Research during the last decade has shown that implementing a community school model has positive effects on student achievement as well as improved attendance and increased family and community involvement (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016). This led to the following research question: How is the perception of student academic proficiency impacted when shared leadership and collaborative decision-making in a community school model are adopted?

Conceptual Framework

I used five concepts to make sense of the literature and to further the idea that strong and sustainable community school implementation can combat negative neighborhood factors and bring individuals together around a common goal. The concepts are not isolated, as people may experience them simultaneously. These include the neighborhood resource theory, the collective socialization theory, safety, overlapping spheres of influence, and the ecological systems theory.

Neighborhood Resource Theory

Throughout my educational career I have heard the phrase "children are a product of their environment" from colleagues at several different schools. Neighborhood resource theory supports such a statement. This theory contends that "the quality of local resources available to families affects child development outcomes" (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 71). Local resources can include parks, recreation facilities, museums, childcare options, libraries, public transportation, and more. Children who live in poorer neighborhoods often do not have these facilities or have lower-quality facilities than children who live in more affluent neighborhoods (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Children who live in lower income neighborhoods also do not have access to the same opportunities as their more affluent peers,

which can lead to different developmental outcomes that manifest in school. Scully et al. (2019) demonstrated this in writing, "children who can visit zoos, museums, libraries, business establishments, parks, and other natural settings are better equipped to deal with the many mathematical, scientific, social, and language concepts discussed in schools than are children who can't" (p. 17). The community school model offers a means to bring together area resources at a school site so students can access all their neighborhood has to offer. This can also be a way to build connections among various stakeholder groups and promote sustainability.

Collective Socialization Theory

Children learn from the role models that surround them. These include family members, teachers, religious providers, neighbors, and activity leaders. These people all play an important role in the lives of children and can affect their development. Some of these role models have a positive influence and some can be negative. Collective socialization theory "argues that more affluent neighborhoods generally provide more successful role models," which has an effect on the adults in a child's life (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 72). Additionally, the theory suggests that children who grow up in low-income areas have role models who are less successful and may not value educational outcomes. It is important to remember that a school community "consists of the individuals and systems that influence the learning and development of the children in that school" (Dove et al., 2018, p. 49). Thus, numerous people directly or indirectly influence students throughout their educational careers and are the foundation of the school community. Children may receive differing communication from adults in their lives, "underscor[ing] the complexity of influences on children as they grow and develop" (Scully et al., 2019, p. 3). Community schooling can

change negative impacts from role models in any given neighborhood by bringing together multiple stakeholders around providing a quality, well-rounded, and child-centered educational experience.

Safety

Safety is another aspect of neighborhoods that "affects children's development and therefore their academic performance" (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 72). Safety can take on many forms and include students getting to and from school daily, access to play in the street in front of their home or in the park, as well as feeling safe to travel after dark to attend extracurricular activities (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). If children do not feel safe, it can inhibit their educational experiences. Additionally, "low-income neighborhoods not only represent increased risks for youth; they are also sites of more limited opportunities," which may have a negative educational effect (Gándara & Contreras, 2009, p. 73). When a community comes together under the community school model, partners can work with students and parents to relieve some of the safety concerns that may exist. Partners can provide transportation for students to attend after-school activities. The school can be open in the evenings and on weekends as a safe space for students to convene. Safety can be a resource to promote the positive development of young people when all stakeholders are involved in decisions that affect the school community and surrounding areas.

Overlapping Spheres of Influence

The overlapping spheres of influence theory states that there are three areas in which children learn and grow: home, school, and community. Children do not participate in these spheres in isolation, but rather through overlapping experiences at both the individual and institutional level (Epstein & Associates, 2019). This model describes the complexity of

overlapping relationships and the effects it can have on children. If these spheres are at odds, students receive conflicting messages about the importance of education. Community schooling brings all three entities together. This theory "identifies schools, families, and communities as major institutions that socialize and educate children" and can be brought together under a community school approach (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 33).

Ecological Systems Theory

In 1979 Urie Bronfenbrenner wrote a book discussing the theory that people evolve as a result of their environments. This is true of single settings as well as interactions between settings, such as home and school. He wrote, "a child's ability to learn to read in the primary grades may depend no less on how he is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3), which supports community school implementation, and more specifically, creating positive and consistent relationships between home and school as an integral part of a student's academic success and overall development. This also extends to third parties, which can include friends, family, and neighbors, such that these relationships in various settings, or lack thereof, play a role in the developmental process (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As a child grows up, their development continues to be impacted by their environments and the interaction, or reciprocity, between them. If a child and their family feel connected and heard at their school through the community school model, the child "becomes capable not only of participating actively in that environment but also of modifying and adding to its existing structure and content" (p. 47). Bronfenbrenner (1979) wrote that positive learning activities that extend to various stakeholders in the community, both inside and outside the school building, can provide a student with an ecosystem that extends beyond the school day.

Schools are one of the first places that children see their home environment interact with an outside environment daily. Social, cultural, and behavioral norms exist in a school setting that may or may not coincide with norms outside of school. Different settings call for different roles (for example, being a son or daughter at home and a student at school) and behaviors within these roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The environments that the student spends the most time in, home and school, "[serve] as a comprehensive context for human development" and can have both positive and negative consequences (p. 132). For example, "for youngsters from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, experience in a good quality day care center... tends to attenuate the declines in test scores frequently observed among preschool children growing up in high-risk environments" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 166). Part of this can be attributed to parent involvement early and often in a child's education and continuing as they grow and includes the school "reinforcing the parent's status as the key person in the child's life" and their first teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 199). When this happens, a partnership can be formed that supports the student in both environments, academically and socially through two-way interaction and communication (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A child's development is enriched when she participates in "task-oriented activities outside the home that brings her into contact with adults other than her parents" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 282). This underscores the importance of a strong relationship between home and school and its impact on a child's overall development.

My research addressed how community schooling reflects these five theories, especially when people from different aspects of the neighborhood work together to support students, regardless of their neighborhood or financial circumstances.

Limitations

As of December 2021, the school district containing Pioneer Elementary School had 82,000 students enrolled in 142 schools (School District, 2021a). Due to the size of the district, it is broken up into learning zones. Each zone has an associate superintendent and adjacent administrative support staff that specifically work with schools in a particular zone.

Limitations to this study included the possible lack of generalizability to other school sites. Pioneer Elementary School, like any school, is unique in terms of its location, demographics, enrollment, history, and culture. Therefore, the patterns and analysis that emerged from this study may not be easily applied to other schools. The study was designed to take place over a single calendar year. Even within the same school, or bounded system, circumstances can change from year to year, causing a decreased likelihood of generalizability (Creswell, 2013).

Time sampling affected the data collected. I was not able to be at the school site each day. As time goes on, the dynamics of a school may change. However, by keeping the bounded system of the school in place, I hoped to overcome this by sampling "widely from different times of the day, week and year" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 61).

Delimitations

One delimitation of this study was that I chose one representative school. I chose this school because of its success in implementing a community school model along with the willingness of the school principal to be studied. His experiences and personality made him a likely candidate to participate openly and honestly in the work of the school.

A second delimitation was the participants. In this relatively small elementary school, a large sample size was not needed to obtain a majority of people in a given stakeholder group. I collected data from students, school staff, a community partner, and parents. By working with these groups, I gained an understanding of how the people doing the day-to-day work implemented the community school model.

The third delimitation was the timeline. Although data could be gathered in any given amount of time, this study focused on a single calendar year. This allowed me to determine how the community school model evolved over time.

The final delimitation was the manner through which I studied collaborative leadership. I looked at leadership through the lens of the community school council and not another school leadership team, such as the instructional council or the instructional leadership team. Although separate committees existed in the school, they overlapped as they worked toward the common vision of the school community.

Definition of Terms

For a discussion on the definition of community schools, see pages 18–19.

For this study, I defined stakeholders as people who have an interest in the success of a community school. This includes students, parents (guardians, caregivers, or any adult a student lives with), teachers, school staff, administrators, district leadership, and community partners.

There are many definitions of collaborative leadership. Some come from business and others from education. In this study, collaborative leadership referred to all stakeholder groups having a voice in school-wide decisions that affect the implementation of community schooling. Maier et al. (2017) defined collaborative leadership as "emphasiz[ing] governance

structures and processes that foster shared commitment to achieving school improvement goals, broad participation and collaboration in decision-making, and shared accountability for student learning outcomes" (p. 65), meaning that all groups are aware of their role in making and following through with decisions.

The study site where I conducted this research was a dual language elementary school. For this study, dual language is defined as a 50/50 model of instruction, in which students in kindergarten through fifth grade received half of their instruction in English and half in Spanish. The intention was for students to be bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. Two-way communication between school and home occurred in both languages.

Positionality

I noticed the adverse effects that poverty had on students during my first year as a teacher. Students in the school where I taught consistently relied on the free breakfast and lunch served at school as their primary source of nutrition during the week. Throughout my years of teaching in various schools, I heard numerous stories from students about not having enough food to eat during extended school breaks. I observed students taking off their shoes because their feet hurt due to ill-fitting shoes. These circumstances made it difficult for some of my former students to come prepared to learn. As I transferred to administrative roles in schools, I quickly learned that many students could benefit from a community school model. As I have advanced in my career to a building principal, this work has become an integral part of my school improvement efforts. I firmly believe that community schooling has positive effects on student learning, attendance, and health and promotes a sense of belonging to a community. I also believe that establishing and maintaining mutually

beneficial relationships with community partners increases individual social capital and positive neighborhood involvement.

Although I am currently the principal of a community school, I did not research the school where I work. I did not want to have any conflicts of interest among employees I supervise or parents I serve. I felt that it was best to study a school where I am not a stakeholder and do not play an active role in the community.

The research site is an elementary school I have never worked in. However, it is located in the same school district where I am employed. Employees of the school are colleagues of mine, which possibly limited how much people trusted me with information or how honest they were with responses to the interview questions. The expansion of community schools is a passion of mine. I have seen many circumstances students bring to school that hinder their ability to thrive. In many cases, traditional educators may have not had the tools to combat the negative, external factors that are part of a student's life. Additionally, I have seen similar issues coming from students who attended community schools. Despite the fact that their circumstances are similar, the interventions that students received were very different. Schools with community resources can offer assistance to students and their families that they may not otherwise have, which can change the entire educational experience of a student. It has been my hope to expand my knowledge of community schools through this study.

Chapter Summary

Successful implementation of a community school model can have many benefits, including bringing together a variety of members of the school community around a common vision to increase positive outcomes for students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review is organized in the sequence of what a person or institution would need to know to have a starting point for implementing a community school model. It also covers benefits and sustainability. The foundation of the literature review includes a definition of community schools, a discussion of their history, and legislation affecting them. Each section of the literature review opens in broad terms and is then narrowed to specific examples from model schools across the United States.

Purpose and Research Question

There is growing urgency for schools to address the overall well-being of students. However, schools cannot do it alone and "need widespread community support to fulfill their increased responsibilities" (Scully et al., 2019, p. 173). The community school movement is a reform strategy that attempts to do just that. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect that implementing a community school model has on student proficiency in an elementary school located in the southwestern United States. The study specifically focused on the fourth pillar of community schools, collaborative leadership and practices, which led to this research question: How is the perception of student academic proficiency impacted when shared leadership and collaborative decision-making in a community school model are adopted?

Defining Community Schools

There are many definitions of a community school. The Coalition for Community Schools (2009) wrote that community schools "purposefully integrate academic, health, and social services; youth and community development, and community engagement" in an effort

to improve schools and the surrounding communities (p. 1). Former U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan believed that community schools could "attack the in-school and out-of-school causes of low achievement" (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 1). In 2017, the Coalition for Community Schools wrote that "a community school is a public school—the hub of its neighborhood" (p. 1) and that "community schools are an evidence-based strategy" (p. 1). Additionally, the research emphasized that community schools are unique to the neighborhoods they serve and that they "align the assets of students, families, teachers and the community around a common goal—improving the success of our young people" (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 14). Community schools can produce positive outcomes for students by connecting the school, families, and the community.

The Coalition for Community Schools (2021) defined a community school as "both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources, [with an] integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement" (para. 1). It is an approach to remove barriers to student learning by engaging a variety of community stakeholders, holding high expectations for students, and creating a sense of shared responsibility and accountability for results. Community schools combine strong academic instruction and student engagement and motivation while meeting basic health needs through school and community collaboration (Jacobson et al., 2011). When specifically looking at school improvement, the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017a) noted that community schools are student-centered places where students and families have a voice and are empowered to make decisions while working with the community to enhance neighborhoods.

The term "community school" refers to a strategy and not a program. It is not a one-size-fits all approach, but rather a framework that can be customized to meet the needs of a specific community. It is a way to bring together public and private institutions to meet the needs of a given school community (Dryfoos, 1994). It must be unique to the school and carefully thought-out, implemented, reviewed, and sustainable for it to be successful; it must include a core instructional program, student engagement, recognition of the physical and emotional needs of students, and collaboration with the larger school community (Jacobson et al., 2011).

Transforming a school through the community school framework is unique from other reforms that have focused solely on instruction. Community schools take a holistic, comprehensive approach to students and families that removes barriers to learning and enhance stabilizing factors (Lubell, 2011). One superintendent described community school implementation as "a strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success" (quoted in Lubell, 2011, p. 1). It integrates instruction with student and family support through interwoven, intentional means and is meant to address the non-academic needs of students and families so students can have academic success through a wellness continuum.

In order to achieve the goal of schools serving as center blocks in the community, some schools stay open in the evening for after-school care and parenting classes with accompanying childcare. Weekends provide the opportunity for job, housing, and food assistance as well as access to healthcare through health and vaccine fairs (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016). Community schooling offers a universal approach to removing barriers caused by poverty and racism through continuous improvement and increased social capital while at

the same time providing the flexibility needed to meet the particular needs of communities. As of 2011, approximately 27,000 educational institutions on six continents had adopted some form of community school implementation as a result of increased immigration, poverty, and/or domestic conflict (Lubell, 2011).

One example of a completely integrated community school is the Harlem Children's Zone initiated by Geoffrey Canada at the end of the 1990s. He developed integrated programs that followed a child from birth through high school graduation. These included parenting classes for pregnant students, Baby College for kids who were not old enough to attend school, pre-K programs, tutoring centers, and after-school programs. He utilized talent in the local community to improve the overall neighborhood around the school (Owusu-Kesse & Canada, 2020). Through this work, his priority "was to create a safety net woven so tightly that children in the neighborhood couldn't slip through" (Tough, 2008, p. 5). These "place-based partnerships" worked with schools to target specific initiatives using data (Blatz & Canada, 2022). This provided a sustainable approach that could evolve with the neighborhood and was based solely in the community where the school was located (Blatz & Canada, 2022).

History of Community Schools

Although it is a whole school approach, the idea of community schools is not new. Oakes et al. (2017) wrote that community schools have been a part of the United States educational system since the early 20th century as a way to combat poverty and social inequity in which schools were seen as "social centers, serving multiple social and civil needs" (p. 7). Schools served as the center of the neighborhood where staff taught "wholesome community values" (Maier et al., 2017 p. 4). In Chicago, John Dewey and Jane

Addams worked with stakeholders to listen to the "concerns of churches and public opinion" in association with community needs and education (Min et al., 2017, p. 31).

Historically, education, community, and the church were linked to the success of a society, even with the passage of the First Amendment, which declared church and state to be separate. Along with the church, the school has historically been the hub of a village or town. Some of the earliest community schools grew in response to rising immigration in the United States, which was one of the reasons that John Dewey and Jane Adams brought additional social and health services into settlement houses (Lubell, 2011). However, these efforts were not sustained, as they did not fully integrate with the instructional mission of the school and were not part of a long-term political strategy (Lubell, 2011). As a result, the movement did not gain momentum in the United States until closer to the 21st century. However, one of the most important developments resulting from widespread poverty and little access to healthcare was the advent of medical and dental clinics in schools, which can still be found today (Dryfoos, 1994).

In the 1930s, the community schooling approach shifted to "preserve American democracy... through democratic, community-oriented approaches to education" as a response to the Great Depression (Maier et al., 2017, p. 4). Health screenings continued during this time and nursing services were established in schools (Dryfoos, 1994). Additionally, school buildings were used for year-round activities for the entire community and included legal aid and employment centers (Dryfoos, 1994). Community schools were also seen as a way to meet the needs of the larger community through coordinating the delivery of services using school facilities (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019).

In the 1970s, "low-income Black parents" used community schooling to hold schools accountable to high educational standards and anti-discriminatory practices (Maier et al., 2017, p. 5). Ferrara and Jacobson (2019) observed "the community being served began to have more power in the decisions being made about their services and education" (p. 5), which is a cornerstone for collaborative leadership. This was due in part to the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, when schools were provided with funds from the federal government because of serving disadvantaged populations (Dryfoos, 1994).

More recently, community schooling has been used as a turnaround strategy under the ESSA of 2015, according to a report from the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017a) focused on school improvement. It is a ground-up, community driven response to school reform (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019). The community schooling approach had historically aimed to connect students, families, school staff, and the larger community around a central mission of student educational and personal success, both inside and outside the school building. School-based health centers began to be seen in some high schools, with university students staffing the centers to fulfill internship hours, thus creating a community partnership (Dryfoos, 1994).

It is important to note that "shifting demographics and greater demands in public schools are likely reasons for the increased interest in community schools as a strategy to support students and families in need," as the strategy can provide integrated support for the evolving family (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 6). Attention to the relationship between home, school, and the community, as well as the influence it has on students and associated educational outcomes, are at the center of Joyce Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence theory (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

Current Law

The ESSA is a federal law that emphasizes educating the whole child while recognizing and attacking social, racial, and educational inequities as a way to reform and improve schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a). It is the latest revision of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was originally passed to "create equitable access to public education for all children" (Salazar Pérez, 2018, p. 1). The reauthorization also "codified community schools in federal law," which had not previously occurred (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 12). The community school model has the same goal of creating equitable access to education through strengthening the connection between school, families, and the community by building shared responsibility and accountability through systems that address the multiple needs of a student and their family. Sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that the community school model does meet criteria for evidence-based instruction under the ESSA (Maier et al., 2017). The ESSA allows for federal funds to be spent on community school initiatives (Maier et al., 2017). The Institute for Educational Leadership (2017b) found that parts of the ESSA offer support for community schooling efforts; these include "reporting on chronic absence, school climate, and safety; improving school conditions for student learning; well-rounded education; and school quality indicator for state accountability systems" (p. 3).

The ESSA outlines provisions that schools must follow. Many of these components are consistent with the community school framework outlined in a report from the Coalition for Community Schools (2017) and comprised of "integrated health and social supports, authentic family and community engagement in strategic community partnerships" (p. 13). In other words, the law requires that schools be held accountable for student absenteeism and

acknowledges the safety and climate of the school and the community school framework as a tool that can be used. Addressing these areas is necessary in order to provide an environment for student success. Many assets can be found in the community, such as experts in various career fields and funding opportunities. By establishing and maintaining partnerships with the community, a school expands its resources to meet some of the requirements of the ESSA.

Another example outlined in the same report from the Coalition for Community Schools (2017) presents the ESSA provision as "improving school conditions for learning" (p. 14). The community school framework supports this by including authentic family and community engagement, data-driven planning, and resource coordination as integral parts of the community school model. It requires all stakeholders to work together to create such conditions.

Overall, the community school framework offers a holistic, proactive approach to address many portions of the ESSA legislation. This includes providing for the needs of the student and family through community partnerships and collaborative implementation. A federal law entitled the Full-Service Community Schools Act was passed by Congress in 2009. It created a division in the U.S. Department of Education responsible for rewarding competitive grants to communities that implemented a community school model (Full-Service Community Schools Act, 2009; Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019).

State Law

Several laws in the state where this research took place address equity in education through some form of parent and community involvement. The Bilingual Multicultural Education Act of 1973 calls for "equitable and culturally relevant learning environments,

educational opportunities, and culturally relevant materials" for students who are participating in a bilingual program, regardless of the languages of instruction (Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, 1973). Students need to have access to materials and environments that reflect their culture. Numerous native languages are in use in this state in addition to Spanish and English, which can make it difficult for schools to find relevant instructional materials. However, communities already have many of the elements needed to meet this requirement. Through partnerships with local neighborhoods, schools can provide meaningful lessons in the home language of students through oral stories, artifacts, field trips, and guest speakers while enriching their learning in both home languages and English.

A similar approach can be taken to meet the requirements of the Indian Education Act of 2003. One of the purposes of this law was to ensure the preservation of native languages and "encourage and foster parental involvement in the education of Indian students" (Indian Education Act, 2003). Like the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act of 1973, cooperation among tribes, schools, and community-based organizations is noted as a way to "improve educational opportunities for American Indian students" (Indian Education Act, 2003). Many resources can be found in communities that can enrich the education of minority students through engaging and meaningful lessons derived from their heritage.

In 2010, lawmakers in this state responded to low graduation rates of Hispanic students by passing the Hispanic Education Act. Otherwise known as House Bill 150, the purpose of this legislation was to increase graduation rates and close the achievement gap among Hispanic students in the state. As part of the bill, numerous stakeholders, including the community, were mandated to "work together to improve educational opportunities for

Hispanic students" (Hispanic Education Act, 2010). The educational system was to be revised to specifically target Hispanic students through parent involvement and school-community partnerships.

Additionally, in 2019 the state legislature passed House Bill 589, the Community Schools Act. This legislation outlined how resources would be organized to meet the needs of students, including their cultural and linguistic needs. The focus was on the whole child, beginning with early childhood education through graduation and with support for transition between levels of school. It also includes definitions of key terms such as community school coordinator and site-based leadership team, which are both essential to implementing and sustaining a community school framework (Community Schools Act, 2019).

Instructions for implementing the community school framework incorporate research-based strategies and integrate all four pillars of a community school. Use of a site-based leadership team to assess progress and allow data to drive decisions is included in the legislation, along with school districts playing a role in oversight and funding. These developments are not funded by the state; instead, schools and districts are directed to apply for grant funds, use title funds, or obtain funds from the community (Community Schools Act, 2019). Each of the laws discussed here, from the federal to the state level, specifically mention that parental and community involvement is a necessary component to an equitable education. This mandate supports community school implementation as one avenue to meet the requirements of the legislation.

Components of Community Schools

Four Pillars

Each community school varies greatly in terms of demographics, needs, and resources available in each neighborhood. Oakes et al. (2017) describe in detail the four pillars that guide the comprehensive work of community school implementation. These pillars serve as a guide for schools to follow and offer a scope that can be applied in a variety of situations, which is crucial to the implementation and sustainability of the model. Each of the pillars is equal, in that one cannot exist without the other three. Each reinforces the others and has "emerged from a comprehensive review of community schools research" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 1, 5). The four pillars are: integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. A description of each follows.

Integrated Student Supports. The first and most foundational pillar of community school implementation is integrated student supports (Oakes et al., 2017). This is also known as providing wraparound services to students that directly address impediments to learning through partnerships with social and health service agencies. This pillar includes all aspects "of child development: academic, social, emotional, physical, psychological and moral" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 6). Addressing out-of-school health issues is important, as education and health are interdependent (Dryfoos, 1994). In order to provide these services, schools partner with local community health agencies to bring providers to students and families. In some schools, this can also include providing housing, transportation, and food assistance (Oakes et al., 2017). School staff receive professional development in the areas of conflict resolution, positive relationship building, and restorative practices to promote a safe and

healthy school culture (Oakes et al., 2017). Peer mediation, community service, and school attendance are emphasized, with community partners working as support for students and families (National Education Association, 2017). These programs must not be seen as add-ons, but rather as programs that "coexist with the educational system" (Dryfoos, 1994, p. 100).

Restorative justice practices such as teaching substitute behaviors and reflective exercises are emphasized in lieu of suspensions and other punitive consequences. This supports the whole child by providing academic, social, and wellness education to promote a safe and positive school environment. To maximize the effectiveness of this approach, it is recommended that one staff member at a school be charged with coordinating these efforts, such as a community school coordinator (Lubell, 2011).

An embodiment of this pillar would be a site-based school health clinic where students and families could receive physical and mental healthcare without leaving the campus. If a site-based health clinic were not possible in a given school, outside partners would work with the school to create a dedicated space like a mobile clinic or lab that can serve students on campus. Here dental clinics could provide exams and x-rays at little or no cost, and vaccine clinics and counseling services could also be offered.

At Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the Bronx, New York, support takes the form of career training skills, pregnancy prevention, and emergency relief when a family faces eviction (Jacobson et al., 2011). At Glencliff High School in Nashville, Tennessee, students attend an advisory class where they learn communication skills, study skills, and time management skills to support their success beyond graduation (Jacobson et al., 2011). School-based health centers are conveniently located on school campuses so students can see

providers without missing out on academics and have "led to improved health outcomes including the delivery of vaccinations and other recommended preventative services" (National Education Association, 2017, p. 86). At Roosevelt Middle School in Oakland, California, restorative circles take place during advisory class where students can apply social/emotional skills that they have been taught in a structured environment (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a).

Schools must provide a continuum of wraparound services that are specific to the needs of the students and to the talents and resources of the community in order to become sustainable and produce positive outcomes for students (Maier et al., 2017). When implemented correctly, this pillar can support students in overcoming the negative aspects of living in a low-resource neighborhood that are described in the neighborhood resource theory, as "integrated student supports help youth build strength and resilience, allowing them to come to class better ready to learn" (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 111).

Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities. The second pillar of community school implementation is expanded learning time and opportunities (Oakes et al., 2017). This pillar consists of learning extensions such as before-and after-school programs, weekend classes, summer academics, enrichment supports, and project-based or real-world application of learning. This can also include student transportation to events outside of the school day. This time is meant to provide individualized assistance, tutoring, mentoring, and learning opportunities outside of the school to connect students with their community and build on their interests (Oakes et al., 2017). Extended learning opportunities must "enable students to develop their talents, form positive relationships and connect with their communities" (Lubell, 2011, p. 8). Additionally, "experiences in interacting with adults in clubs, sports, and

art and music activities open up children to differences in communication styles and offer them a range of experiences" and relationships that create positive experiences for students at school (Scully et al., 2019, p. 18).

Community schools that are seen as models are often open for extended hours throughout much of the year. Partner organizations are able to offer extended learning activities outside of the school day and continue to hold high expectations for students while supporting a culture of learning and utilizing school facilities. It is not enough for partners to replicate activities; for this pillar to be realized, extended learning time must enhance the instruction received during the regular school day (Berg et al., 2006).

In Chicago, Illinois, an elementary school has introduced cooking classes and a "Girls in the Game" program that teaches students leadership and sports skills (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, p. 17). Other examples of this pillar could include a community garden, student government, and clubs based on student interest. After-school enrichment clubs offer opportunities for students to learn about their local culture through experiential and/or hands-on learning and real-world application of skills. Sponsors of extended learning opportunities could be school staff, partner providers, community members, and parents. Involving these stakeholders "expand[s] the number of knowledgeable adults from whom students can learn" and is related to the collective socialization theory, in which students are thought to learn from the adults they are exposed to (Maier et al., 2017, p. 37).

Family and Community Engagement. Student involvement with people outside of their school building is critical, as "the way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about children's families" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 11). Oakes et al.

(2017) describe the third pillar of community schools as active parent and community engagement. This pillar revolves around bringing all stakeholders together as equal partners in student success. This is where shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability are introduced, as "there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 13). Parents are seen as partners in their child's education and important stakeholders on the site-based leadership team (Oakes et al., 2017). To produce lasting results, "family engagement must not be treated as an incidental add on; rather, it must be understood as a shared responsibility in which families and schools play complementary roles in children's educational success… from birth through young adulthood" (Lubell, 2011, p. 8). Successful community schools offer mechanisms for parents to participate as leaders in their child's education on a regular basis (Daniel, 2017). Parents' engagement "is not related to a specific project or program but is on-going and extends beyond volunteerism to roles in decision-making, governance and advocacy" so they can be true partners in their child's education (National Education Association, 2017, p. 67). In recent years, authentic parent and family engagement is "shifting from a low-priority recommendation to an integral part of education reform efforts" (Mapp et al., 2013, p. 5). This demonstrates that schools need to include parents in the transformation of schools.

Sterling and Frazier (2006) offered an example of a collaborative partnership to support expanded student learning in the classroom. They described a science classroom in which students were tasked with building a model car that could withstand a variety of road conditions. The lesson included a local auto mechanic who brought a car to school and demonstrated how the parts of a car work together to make it function correctly. Students

were observed using "more authentic vocabulary" and applying that knowledge to build their car, ensuring that the parts allowed the car to run safely and efficiently (Sterling & Frazier, 2006, p. 30). The community police department also supported the lesson by sending detectives from the crash reconstruction unit to review data and evidence used after car accidents with students. Students applied what they learned from members of the community to "calculate the speed of their own model cars on various surfaces" (Sterling & Frazier, 2006, p. 31). In both instances, students were able to understand and implement knowledge in a real-world context, illustrating the success that can come from collaborative partnerships between a school and its community.

Expanding civic partnerships between schools and communities is also a way to promote democracy and prepare students for civic responsibilities they will have as adults (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Partnerships may be K–12 institutions and universities working together on teacher preparation programs that include community partnerships and advancement in civic knowledge (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). Although civics may not be a formal course taught in classrooms, building community connections is a way for this subject to be integrated into the curriculum.

To support students and families, "community schools often engage parents in a variety of activities focused on their own needs as well as those of students" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 12). In Washington D.C., families have participated in family field trips that "enable families to get to know each other in a stress-free situation and provide valuable experiences for the children" (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 25). Here a grandparent's group that is specific to the needs of grandparents who are raising children is offered, as well as Saturday workshops that

"engage parents in the school's academic program" and provide the tools necessary for families to extend learning at home (Jehl et al., 2001, p. 25). Adult classes offered on school campuses may include citizenship, GED attainment, English acquisition, literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, family budgeting, career counseling, and job training (National Education Association, 2017). At one school in Long Beach, California, parents wanted an exercise class. When the class was provided, both parents and teachers participated, which increased the number of times that parents came to campus and expanded communication between parents and school staff in a neutral space (Berg et al., 2006). Family engagement can take on many forms and must be nurtured whenever possible. However, a positive relationship between schools and families must be established before family involvement can be expected (Dove et al., 2018). Once this relationship is established, schools can view "families and communities not as constituents in need of assistance and services, but as assets without whom the school's objectives cannot be met" (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 90). It is a movement from doing *for* families to doing *with* families (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019). Schools must recognize that parents are a child's first teacher and can be constant, positive examples of the overall importance of education through their perseverance, advocacy, and by emphasizing education and demonstrating lifelong learning (Mapp et al., 2013).

Other examples of this pillar include ensuring the school has a welcoming and inclusive environment where information and signage are posted in all the languages of the community. Parent volunteering can be encouraged by funding background checks and creating committees that arrange specific opportunities for parents (e.g., library assistant, parking lot attendant, classroom helper for small groups, and food bag distribution). School-wide curriculum nights can be used to offer resources, tutorials, and take-home materials for

students and families as a way for parents to support student academic success at home. This connects parent engagement directly to learning and has "an impact on school quality" (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 94).

Collaborative Leadership and Practices. The fourth and final pillar of community school implementation that Oakes et al. (2017) described is collaborative leadership and practices. This encompasses the school culture of collaboration, professionalism, shared leadership, data-based decision-making, and continuous improvement (Oakes et al., 2017). This pillar also designates a central person to ensure there is a positive synergy among the components of all four pillars. In the state where this research took place, this person is known as a community school coordinator (Community Schools Act, 2019).

In model schools, teachers are engaged in collaboration and ongoing professional development, and the principal clearly explains why to all stakeholders. Data are used as the main tool to determine improvement measures and next steps. Relationships with students are positive and model respect and compassion while honoring diversity. All stakeholders are provided with opportunities to have a voice in decisions and a shared commitment to the success of the school, as "community schools seek to create these characteristics in communities where poverty and racism erect barriers to learning, and where families have few resources to supplement what typical schools provide" (Oakes et al., 2017, Executive Summary, para. 2). A community school provides personnel to actively seek parent involvement and engagement in school activities. Such shared decision-making has been connected to teacher retention and positive student achievement (Oakes et al., 2017).

Sufficient time and space must be provided to foster these relationships. Daniel (2017) found that "a collaborative culture with clearly defined responsibilities builds the

capacity for school and community resources to be better leveraged and aligned to meet student needs" (p. 6), which boosts student and community outcomes. This partnership is mutually beneficial. as it can reduce limitations and increase community integration into the curriculum. Collaborative decision-making has been found to strengthen trust and increase commitment among groups by emphasizing collaboration and dedication (Oakes et al., 2017). Additionally, "community engagement efforts are more likely to be sustained when leadership is shared" and there is common accountability (Berg et al., 2006, p. 31). Positive relationships with shared accountability and decision-making must be present in a community school model, with the understanding that generating resources and partnerships from the community "requires trust that the school is making the most of the resources that it already has" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 41). One way this can be done is having a site-based leadership team review existing school data and resources.

A site-based leadership team is made up of all stakeholder groups: parents, community partners, students, (in secondary schools) school staff, and administration. It is facilitated by the community school coordinator or another designated individual. The collective group is responsible for assessing a collection of data (both instructional and non-instructional) as well as current needs to inform school-wide decisions. This is a place where all partners can come together to share responsibility and accountability for the school community. Collaborative decision-making has been found to strengthen trust and increase commitment among groups. It emphasizes collaboration and dedication (Oakes et al., 2017). To successfully foster collaboration among stakeholders, a principal must set the tone and "acknowledge that his or her school belongs to the greater community" (Jacobson et al., 2011, p. 20). This is connected to the overlapping spheres of influence theory in that the

home, school, and community are all acknowledged to have a significant impact on the development of a child. The more closely these three entities work together, the more consistently that message is communicated to students. A school principal must foster communication, help align the goals and resources of the school and the community, and model the ability to learn from others.

Together, these four pillars "promote conditions and practices found in high-quality schools and address out-of-school barriers to learning," thus providing the foundation for community school implementation (Maier et al., 2017, p. vi). It is important to note that the connectedness among individuals provides increased opportunities for them to communicate with one another, which in turn sets the foundation for relational trust and collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 1996).

The Community School Framework

In 2017, the Coalition for Community Schools "organized the major components of a community school into a comprehensive framework" that schools could use as a tool for implementation and assessment (p. 5). The framework "puts students at the center" by providing numerous opportunities through collaborative practices, capacity-building support, and stakeholder engagement and participation (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 8). Three types of opportunities the Coalition emphasized are: powerful learning, integrated health and social supports, and authentic family engagement. Examples of powerful learning are "challenging and culturally relevant curricula" that are accessible to all students, including those learning English as a second language and those who have a disability, through real-world application, service-learning projects, and internships (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 8). In these experiences, the focus is on healthy

development of students (Lubell, 2011). The second opportunity entails providing students

and families with integrated health and social support. These can be administered through a

school-based health center, mobile clinics, and/or by providing transportation to another site.

Offering health, dental, and vision care along with social/emotional support to students and

families are examples of integrated health and social support. If students are healthy both

physically and mentally, they are better able to focus on academics (Lubell, 2011). Other

examples include teaching restorative discipline practices such as conflict resolution and

bullying prevention. The third opportunity is that of authentic family engagement. Here

families' knowledge and contributions to the school are recognized through parent classes,

workshops, and camps that are offered after school, on weekends, and during the summer.

This empowers parents to support students at home. School-sponsored family celebrations

foster partnerships and positive relationships between the school and families.

Additionally, providing a welcoming school environment and sponsoring programs specific

to parent needs intentionally teaches them how to be a part of their child's academic

development (Lubell, 2011). According to Lubell (2011), "community schools offer parents

an active role and a voice in their children's education. They also provide a place where

parents can improve their own lives" through collaboration with the school community (p.

9). This sentiment was echoed in a 2002 study by Mapp in which she found the "involvement

of the principal as key in creating a school environment and culture that supports family

involvement" (p. 14).

     Collaborative practices are the second component of the community school

framework and are defined as "shared ownership for results, strategies, community

partnerships, resource coordination, data-driven planning and inclusive leadership"

(Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 9). These promote a collective commitment from all stakeholders that represent diversity in a school community. This body of leaders has the autonomy to choose the accountability measures needed to determine progress, and it takes responsibility to implement the measures and review data to inform decisions. Partnerships among stakeholder groups are mutually beneficial and have an agreed-upon mission and goals (Lubell, 2011). All stakeholders have an equal voice, while the community school coordinator facilitates meetings and is the common connection among all role groups.

Capacity-building supports is the third component of the community school framework and supports leadership development within every stakeholder group. This makes the school stronger as a whole through strategic professional development that is unique to the needs of the school as well as by continuously revisiting data and the original needs assessment to determine progress and make changes. This process includes a designated individual to coordinate all community school efforts, such as a community school coordinator (Lubell, 2011).

This leads to the fourth component of the framework: stakeholder engagement and participation. It is one thing to get parents and community partners to the table. It is another level of work to engage all members in the common goal of developing the whole child. This requires including all parties who can offer varied perspectives; making participation accessible through language, location, and time; providing support for the sustainability of programs, regardless of who is involved; and a continued focus on results. Engaging stakeholders successfully means recognizing and publicly honoring their contributions so their work can be sustainable. It also consists of leveraging funds and resources to maximize

positive impacts on students, as "community schools gather many of the adults who are important in a child's life" (Lubell, 2011, p. 11). One example of doing so is interactive homework that requires the participation of the student and an adult in the home and is carefully developed by teachers (Epstein & Associates, 2019). Regardless of the activity, schoolwork needs to "address specific goals, meet key challenges, and produce positive results for students, families, and schools" as an extension of learning into the home environment (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 199).

The fifth and final section of the community school framework is relational trust, equity for all students, and continuous improvement. Relational trust "is built on four key attributes: respect, personal regard for others, competence and integrity" and must be the foundational piece on which the work builds if the true goal of community schools is to be accomplished (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 12). Creating conditions for learning by addressing in-school and out-of-school student needs means that all stakeholders must "believe in setting high expectations for every child and build on community strengths and embracing diversity" (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 12). There must be continuous engagement among stakeholders to create a respectful relationship, as "community school partnerships bring critical resources into schools in order to meet students' academic, health, family or emotional needs and to help free teachers to teach" (Lubell, 2011, p. 8). The community school framework, in conjunction with the four pillars, provides an outline for a school to follow when implementing a community school model.

Six Types of Involvement

To include parents as authentic stakeholders in their child's education, schools must reduce barriers to parent participation by promoting equal or dual-capacity partnerships between parents and school personnel (Mapp et al., 2013). Epstein and Associates (2019) outlined six types of involvement that can do just this and "are important for helping educators, parents, other family members, and the community work as partners in children's education" (p. 122; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Six Types of Involvement by Epstein & Associates (2019)
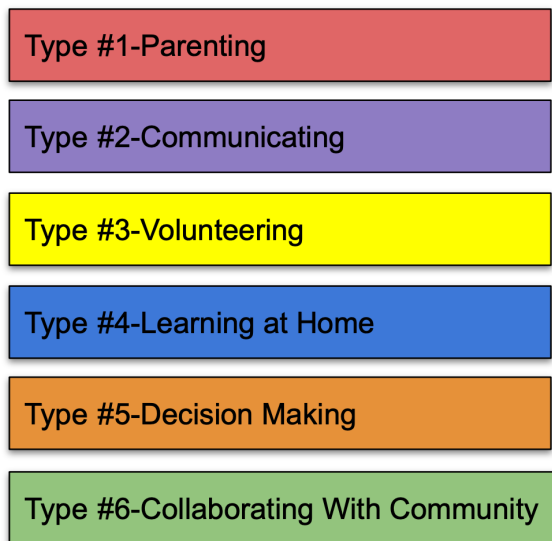
Parenting. The first type of involvement is parenting with an undercurrent of "helping all families establish home environments to support children as students" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 19). This involves a school providing parent education that can enhance parents' overall knowledge and may include classes in English, parenting, financial literacy, GED, and more. Exchange of information is two-way in these settings, in that

parents share information about their backgrounds, cultures, and their student's individual needs. Schools must keep in mind that this must be offered to all parents, and potential benefits range from improved student attendance to increased awareness of the importance of school when parents and students attend together. This aspect underscores developing positive relationships as "parenting also includes activities that help schools know their families," like home visits, interest surveys, and needs assessments (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 64). The resulting expanded consciousness and understanding of family diversity can lead to increased parenting skills and parent employment as well as increased understanding between teachers and families (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

Communicating. The second type of involvement Epstein and Associates (2019) described is communicating. This involves "designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress" (p. 1). This is especially important because it emphasizes two-way communication and does not put responsibility on the school alone. Communication must take place in a way that all parents can understand, with language translation as necessary during face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or written letters. This results in parents' increased understanding of their student's progress, parents learning specific actions they can take to improve student learning and make informed educational decisions for students, and increased positive two-way communication (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

Volunteering. Volunteering is the third type of involvement that Epstein and Associates (2019) outlined. In this area of involvement, the goal is to "recruit and organize parent help and support for the school and for students" that specifically meets the needs of students and the school (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 19). It encompasses removing

barriers that parents may face by offering communication, training specific to volunteering, and a school survey to determine where and in what way parents are able to volunteer. Results for students can include increased attention from volunteers in their classrooms and increased home-to-school connections during activities. Teachers can also benefit from this practice, as having another adult in the classroom can enable them to provide individualized attention to students who may need it. Schools can identify activities that interest families and capitalize on their talents (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

   Learning At Home. Learning at home is the fourth type of involvement and encompasses school personnel providing "ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 19). This practice can include regular, interactive homework that links students to their home life and/or community events, curriculum nights, and summer activities. Results of this type of involvement can include students' increased achievement and application of skills learned in school to other areas of their lives. Even parents who are themselves poorly educated can gain skills and tools necessary to help their students succeed through school workshops and events. Although parents and other family members can take advantage of multiple classes offered at a school site, one study found that they "were most interested in taking classes that were directly related to their child's academic success" (O'Donnell et al., 2008, p. 154). Families can support students in generalizing their learning to other settings when they put emphasis on education and schoolwork at home as well as discussing learning as it occurs organically outside of the school environment (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

Decision-Making. Decision-making is the fifth type of involvement and is defined as "including parents in school decisions [and] developing parent leaders and representatives" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 19). Some schools have active parent organizations with various committees that parents chair. Organizations should include parents from various backgrounds to serve as representatives who can act as a network to help other parents obtain information and have their voices heard. This type of involvement can lead to increased awareness that parents are part of the decisions made at a school. It can also lead to increased ownership among parents as they have a voice in school-wide decisions and become familiar with school and district policies.

It is important that schools make concerted efforts to reach all parents in this endeavor of decision-making, especially because "in general, poor parents typically do not have the educational expertise and skills that teachers have to help children learn. This imbalance in knowledge places a poor parent in a subordinate status with her child's teacher," which is not a condition where parents can practice decision-making (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, p. 16).

Collaborating With the Community. The sixth and final type of involvement is collaborating with the community, which aims to "identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 19). In this collaboration, a school provides information to students and parents on various community supports available to them and links learning to the community through before-and after-school programs, summer programs, local libraries, museums, and other agencies. An increase in community collaboration provides a collective responsibility for student success outside of the school

building and can match students and families with the resources they need. Community resources can also be used in the classroom to enhance lessons and provide an opportunity for students to generalize skills they are being taught. If this collaboration is implemented effectively, all stakeholders will have increased knowledge of available resources in their community to support students in their learning (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

Each type of involvement has specific attributes that can be combined to form benefits for community schools on a much larger scale. Epstein and Associates argued that students will achieve increased academic success when there are strong, consistent, and positive interactions among students, parents, and teachers (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Galindo and Sheldon (2012) studied the relationship among family involvement at home, family involvement at school, and parent expectations. They related their findings to previous research in stating "studies have shown that school efforts to communicate with and engage families is related to higher levels of student attendance, lower levels of chronic absenteeism, and lower levels of student behavior problems" (p. 91).

Since family involvement is multidimensional, schools must be the central facilitator of ongoing relationships with families, as doing so results in demonstrated positive gains in student reading and math (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Together these components can enhance a student's outcomes while attending a community school and promote safety in the surrounding neighborhood. These effects benefit both the school and the larger neighborhood.

Effectiveness of Parent Involvement

DePlanty et al. (2007) noted that parent involvement tends to decrease as a child gets older, both in the home and at school. These researchers found that parent conferences were

cited as the activity that parents engaged in the most. However, genuine communication between schools and parents cannot take place unless it occurs in a two-way fashion, rather than a teacher presenting information while a parent takes the more passive role of listening. Communication is an essential part of academic success, and "school personnel often cite poor communication as a factor in unsatisfactory school performance, but they implicitly define communication as a one-way process," which limits the relationship between school and home (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 253). Parents need the time and space to communicate with their child's teacher. This can also be expanded to include school-wide events. Unless parents have an active and ongoing role in school-wide communication and decision-making, genuine involvement cannot occur.

Parent involvement occurs both at home and at school. Sheldon (2002) defined parent involvement at home as "parent–child interactions on school-related or other learning activities [that] represents the direct investment of a parent's resources in her or his child's education" (p. 302). Examples of parent involvement can be as simple as having conversations about learning with their child, setting up a specific time and space for the child to complete homework, and/or emphasizing the importance of education on a regular basis. Not all parents may understand the important role they play in their child's education. If a school does not make resources such as parenting classes or specific communication available to parents on educational involvement in the home, parents may not have the tools they need to successfully promote the importance of school to their children.

Parent involvement at school can take many forms and may not necessarily occur on school campus or in front of school staff. For example, parents can provide encouragement to complete homework, demonstrate respect and support for education, and enroll their child in

outside activities such as sports, fine arts, church events, and community organizations (Mapp, 2002). These activities have an impact on a child's overall development and education.

At school, a physical environment that promotes parents as partners in education must be welcoming and can include bright colors, student work displayed on the walls, and overall cleanliness (Mapp, 2002). Communication must take place in the primary language of the parent. In addition to teacher–parent communication, schools can promote and create parent networks where parents can interact with one another and with the school (Sheldon, 2002). This helps build mutual respect, as it creates "personal recognition among the parties of each other's role in children's education" (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, p. 9).

Benefits of Community Schools

Community schools pose a number of benefits. They "contribute to children's academic achievement; social, emotional, and physical development; and preparation for participation in the arts and civic life" and are differentiated based on the specific school, stakeholders, and desired results (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 3). Instructional programs are enhanced through community schools and neighborhood partnerships that benefit the community as a whole. Community schools are considered a strong "improvement strategy in high-poverty neighborhoods," as they address family participation, academic improvement, community, and equity (Oakes et al., 2017 p. 3). Additionally, through collaborative leadership and practices, the community school model recognizes that all "adults responsible for children's education must learn and grow" together so that they can support one another when making decisions that are best for students (Mapp et al., 2013, p. 25).

Resources for Families

By providing support for students and their families, "community schools take a comprehensive and integral approach to improving services and to defining success" (Lubell, 2011, p. 16). Students who have regular access to physical and mental health services come to school prepared to learn, have increased attendance rates, and develop strong work habits that can carry them into adulthood (Lubell, 2011). Schools can provide resources for students within the school building, like counseling, which "relieves teachers of much of the social and behavior problem-solving that can disrupt a class" (Lubell, 2011, p. 22). The community school framework can support students and families starting with early childhood education, through the transition between school levels, and continuing to high school graduation and beyond (Lubell, 2011). It is a systems approach to school reform and community support throughout a student's academic career, regardless of their socioeconomic background, that includes preventing or treating health barriers that may exist.

Providing a variety of resources for students and families can "address the reality that children whose families are struggling with poverty… cannot focus on learning unless their nonacademic needs are also met. The goal is to remove barriers to school success by connecting students and families to service providers in the community" and is an example of the integrated student supports pillar of community schooling (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 9). Multiple studies have shown that community schools providing non-academic initiatives such as vision and hearing screenings, physical exams, vaccination requirements, and mental health care can "lead to improved student achievement" (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017a, p. 2).

Family Participation. The Coalition for Community Schools (2009) outlined benefits to families as "increased family stability, communication with teachers, school involvement and a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning" (p. 1). In essence, families feel welcome at their student's school, are able to find ways to involve themselves in their child's learning, and feel a mutual responsibility for their child's education. The same report noted that "community schools enjoy… increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment, and greater community support" (Coalition for Community Schools, 2009, p. 1). As parent engagement increases, so do their advocacy skills and self-efficacy. Parents become committed to lifelong learning and more aware of the advantages of education (Lubell, 2011). Both school staff and parents are mutually responsible for the education of their students. Although these benefits are not specific to academic achievement, they do lay the groundwork for success through positive relationships, improved school climate, and a supportive environment. Other benefits to parents include increased awareness of how to participate in their child's education through advocacy and appropriate home supports, enhanced self-efficacy, and exposure to the advantages of lifelong learning through various adult education classes (Lubell, 2011).

It is important to note that the more connected a family member feels to their school, the more likely they are to "actively participate in the school community," regardless of the annual income of a family or the grade level of the student (Dove et al., 2018, p. 53). Positive relationships between home and school can be a unifying element in a student's life and have lasting impacts on their education. This includes increased academic success "regardless of gender, social class and race–ethnicity memberships" (Dove et al., 2018, p. 51).

Connectedness between home and school can help mitigate the pernicious effects of poverty, inequity, and discrimination.

Academic Improvement. Galindo and Sheldon (2012) found that "students had greater gains in math and reading, on average, if they attended schools that provided more opportunities for family and school communications and interactions" (p. 99). This is an example of one of the four pillars, active family and community engagement. When schools are consistent in their messaging and share information with parents, students hear a similar message about the importance of learning at home and at school. Students ultimately benefit from an early partnership between school and home as "parents are more likely to get involved at the school and students are more likely to make greater gains in reading and math," (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012, p. 101).

Jenkins and Duffy (2016) found decreases in grade retention and dropout rates as well as increases in attendance, math, and reading as a result of implementation of the community school model. They noted that the longer a student was enrolled in a community school, the more improvement was recorded. Alignment and leveraging of resources maximized the results, especially when they were used to integrate academic and non-academic support services. Teacher involvement in school-wide decision-making is positively correlated with student achievement (Daniel, 2017). Improved quality of instruction and extended learning opportunities show promising results. Research has shown that long-term benefits of community schools include increased graduation rates, lower truancy rates, improved achievement in reading and math, and more positive behavior while at school. This is due in part to improved relationships among stakeholders. Oakes et al. (2017) noted that "as teachers understand the communities in which their students live, they are better able to

provide relevant instruction and support" through meaningful learning opportunities (p. 12). This understanding can lead to improved and consistent communication, building a collaborative culture, and increased parent involvement. There is "a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement," which is one of the reasons community school implementation can be used as a turnaround strategy for a school (Oakes et al., 2017, pp. 12–13).

Community. Service learning can be part of a community school model and benefits both students and the partner organization. A service-learning project contains explicit academic instruction that capitalizes on student interests while providing a needed service to the community (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). These types of projects can provide a platform for teacher innovation and promote civic learning and engagement among students of all ages.

Further benefits of service learning to the community include a decrease in vandalism, less unsafe activity, increased engagement between schools and communities, and an increased school climate (Lubell, 2011). Cooperation between businesses, community partners, and schools "demonstrates commitment to the interdependence of community settings and the need for mutual support" so that the responsibility does not fall solely on schools (Scully et al., 2019, p. 174).

Equity. By providing all stakeholders with a voice and means to participate in decisions, a community school "is one way to dismantle institutional racism and remove obstacles that stand in the way of some students" (National Education Association, 2017, p. 99). Site-based leadership teams that work collaboratively bring stakeholders together and form a shared balance of power. Each stakeholder group has an equal contribution and

decision-making function (Jehl et al., 2001). A community school model "makes it possible for teachers to use a system of integrated supports" to meet the needs of their students, thus promoting equity (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 53).

Overall benefits of community schools include increased academic performance, student attendance, teacher attendance, school readiness, as well as parent and family engagement. These can be attributed, in part, to a positive school climate where families have access to mental and physical health resources (Lubell, 2011). Through the power of collective thought and commitment to a common vision, a "community can accomplish goals and impart new meanings to experience in ways that cannot be achieved individually" (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 191).

Implementation

Due to the unique nature of neighborhoods, no two community schools are alike. As a result, community schools must be responsive to the changing environments of the neighborhoods that they serve. Bronfenbrenner (1979) encapsulated this in his book *The Ecology of Human Development* when he wrote that aside from the home, the school plays an integral part in a child's development. Schools must know and understand the backgrounds of their students and make necessary adaptations to meet the needs of the child. This is what makes community schools so unique to their environment. Neighborhood populations are complex and diverse, so "individual schools must tailor their practices to meet school goals, families' needs and interests, and the ages and grade levels of their students" (Epstein & Associates, 2019, p. 26). The Learning Policy Institute found that "effective implementation [of a community school] requires an ability to adapt systemic structures and supports accordingly," as communities are ever-evolving (Maier et al., 2017, p. 93). Successful

implementation also requires time to build trust and engage stakeholders around a common vision as well as identifying the available resources in a community (Hauseman et al., 2017). Implementation can only occur with the knowledge that effective relationships take time and consistent communication. As the leader of a school, the principal "must play a crucial leadership role in developing school and community support" for reforms (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 78).

The first aspect of community school implementation that needs to be addressed early in the process is shared goals. All stakeholders must be aware of the status quo and participate in developing a vision for moving forward. The goals can be based on current school initiatives as well as the community school standards.

Community School Standards

To guide the functioning of community schools, the Coalition for Community Schools, in partnership with the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017b), published national community school standards. These standards provide guidance to schools as they work with all stakeholders through common language toward the overall goal of changing how traditional schools function through altering adult behavior. The standards are broken into two parts, comprising ten sections in total that complement the four pillars. Part one (community school structure and functions) houses the first six standards, and the last four standards are in part two (common opportunities in a community school).

The first standard is collaborative leadership, in which "interdisciplinary, cross-sector community partners share responsibility and accountability for school success" as opposed to this duty being solely with the school (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017, p. 5). Community partnerships are mutually beneficial and have a defined purpose. They are part of

the leadership council that meets regularly with posted agendas and meeting minutes. The

second standard is planning. This is where the school improvement plan is based, in part, on

the needs assessment and asset mapping that resulted in the implementation of academic and

non-academic programs. The site-based leadership team reviews data and makes decisions

collaboratively. It is important to align all school initiatives in a strategic plan in order

for them to be successful. The third standard is coordinating infrastructure. This standard

centers on a community school coordinator who facilitates communication among all

stakeholders. Part of the role of a community school coordinator is to "connect families with

teachers, resources, and services and connect the students and teachers with community

resources and opportunities" (Daniel, 2017, p. 8).

Student-centered data is the fourth standard and entails outlining specific protocols to

review student data. These data are then used to leverage resources, outline

academic plans, and improve school-wide programs (Coalition for Community Schools,

2017). The fifth standard is continuous improvement. This means that professional

development for school staff is based on data and measured outcomes of school programs.

Data must be analyzed on a regular basis by the site-based leadership team. Sustainability is

the sixth standard and focuses on long-term goals and partnerships that will outlast given

individuals through shared ownership of results.

The first standard of part two is standard seven, or powerful learning. All

stakeholders work together to represent student interests and input and ensure that learning is

aligned among content areas and occurs throughout the day, before and after school, and

during the summer (Coalition for Community Schools, 2017). The eighth standard

is integrated health and social supports, or ensuring all stakeholders are aware of the services

available to them. Services must focus on "prevention and treatment" and be "proactive and culturally and linguistically relevant" to maximize their effectiveness (p. 15). Standard nine is authentic family engagement, or "two-way, culturally and linguistically relevant communication between school and families that is proactive and consistent" in the home language of the family (p. 16). The tenth standard is authentic community engagement, in which the school building is at the center of the community and is open beyond the school day to include evenings, weekends, and summer breaks.

All ten of these standards can be used at the school level to review current practices and inform future decisions about implementing and sustaining a community school. Districts can have difficulty meeting the needs of diverse populations and unique individual schools. The community school model gives individual schools a roadmap to use for implementation in the context of their unique situations. Since a large indicator of success in community schools is a culture of shared leadership, ways in which the community school standards can be implemented are vast. Flexibility and responsiveness are crucial attributes of a community school necessary to implement, achieve, and sustain the desired benefits.

School-Based Team

Jenkins and Duffy (2016) laid out steps for implementing a community school model, beginning with "a strategic assessment that includes an inventory of current resources" (p. 10). Many schools already have resources at their sites that can be expanded or redefined to meet additional goals. Mapping out these resources is the starting point so future work does not duplicate or overshadow what is currently in place at the school. It is crucial to analyze "data from previous years" in order to determine the current status of the school and future goals (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 6). Getting feedback from all stakeholders through

interviews, surveys, and meetings sets the foundation for shared leadership and ensures that all voices are heard and represented. This can lead to the "creation of an action plan" to which all stakeholders can hold themselves accountable (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 6). Finally, "a transparent process for sharing findings and recommendations with the public" is important for continuous improvement (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 6). Parents and teachers need to see their ideas and suggestions being acted upon to feel they are part of a shared commitment. Jenkins and Duffy (2016) also outlined teamwork and long-term partnerships that are necessary for the effort to succeed. However, Epstein et al. (2011) argued that the commitment of principals to supporting partnerships is pivotal to the implementation and sustainability of the program; they wrote, "principals' support for partnerships consistently, significantly, and positively influences schools' basic program implementation and advanced outreach to involve more parents" (p. 488).

Part of the work of a site-based leadership team is creating an asset map facilitated by the community school coordinator. This begins by identifying local non-profit organizations, faith-based institutions, businesses, transportation routes, health centers, and recreational facilities. This map is meant to be a work in progress and can be adjusted based on trends in the community. It can also be used by school leadership when orienting new teachers to the school community.

Additionally, the site-based leadership team works with the community school coordinator to conduct a needs assessment by surveying all stakeholders to determine what the current needs of the school community are. This acts as "the blueprint of the program" so that data remain at the center of decisions (Lubell, 2011, p. 40). Based on the results of the needs assessment and asset map, the site-based leadership team can begin to form

partnerships and build programs to meet the needs of the greater school community. Ongoing

data collection in each program determines its effectiveness and overall benefit to the school

community. Along with the team goals, these data points can be used to inform school-wide

decisions by the site-based leadership team through their shared leadership.

The needs assessment and asset map can inform the site-based leadership team on

how to partner with parents in the school community. Epstein et al. (2011) found that

"schools that implemented more basic partnership program components were significantly

more likely to address advanced challenges to involve all families by improving the quality

of activity for the six types of involvement," which plays a critical role in implementation (p.

478).

Teacher Preparation

A crucial part of creating a community school is preparing teachers "who engage in a

holistic approach to education, understand students' worldview, and possess the skills to

influence the difficulties students face" in a community school (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p.

58). This includes teachers being able to communicate regularly with families about

academic and non-academic issues. Since this skill is not always explicitly taught in teacher

preparation programs, future educators "will be better prepared if they practice interactions

with parents," before they finish their credentialing (Epstein, 2018, p. 399). Having an

evaluation system in which teachers and educational administrators are assessed on their

ability to effectively communicate should be included in teacher preparation courses. Modern

research suggests that teachers "who understand that education is a shared responsibility of

home, school, and community" can evolve with the teaching profession (Epstein, 2018, p.

401). This perspective can help teachers see the family and community as entities vital to student success.

Once a teacher is in the classroom, professional development around community partnerships needs to be organized, meaningful, and ongoing to effectively implement the community school model. Teachers need ongoing practice in activities that include "creating welcoming school environments, collaborating with community-based organizations… and acknowledging parent and teacher leadership" (Sanders, 2014, p. 247). The professional training that teachers receive must progress as community school implementation progresses.

In order to ensure that all stakeholders understand how the community school model is being implemented, it is imperative that common vocabulary be shared, understood, and consistently communicated (National Education Association, 2017). It is also just as important that "schools and communities... foster accurate knowledge and positive messages about racial and cultural diversity" in order to honor all stakeholders (Scully et al., 2019, p. 71).

Sustainability

Schools and communities must work to create sustainability in their implementation models by following the community school framework and creating shared collective commitments among all school stakeholder groups. This includes consistent and regular review of data that go beyond academic test scores (Jacobson et al., 2011). Community engagement is the key to sustaining a community school beyond a given leader or group and "reduces the weight that many principals have traditionally carried alone" (Berg et al., 2006, p. ES-3). Community engagement also builds a system of collective responsibility that plays a critical role in sustainability.

Five Elements

Although implementing and gauging the effectiveness of the community school framework are extensive tasks, "five elements that are central to building a successful, sustainable systemic community schools initiative" aid in breaking the framework into smaller components (Lubell, 2011, p. 47). The first element is a shared vision and results framework in which all stakeholders have a voice in creating a mission/vision and goals for the school community that are accompanied by specific strategies and partners. Goals are strategic, measurable, and based on community needs. The second element is supportive policy and innovative financing. This entails holding all stakeholders accountable and braiding federal, state, and district funding sources to provide sustainability as allowed under the ESSA (Lubell, 2011). The third element is effective leadership. Leaders must be innovative consensus-builders who work across sectors and partners to "ensure continuity" (Lubell, 2011, p. 47). Principals must work to ensure that change in a school is systemic and based on a larger mindset and approach, instead of being connected to a specific individual. The fourth element is broad community support. Active participants from the community participate in the site-based leadership team, review the needs assessment, and help to create the asset map. These data are used to make decisions and engage necessary partners (Lubell, 2011). The fifth and final element is stable and flexible systems. These must be responsive to the changing needs of the community, but steadfast to the mission and goals of the school (Lubell, 2011).

Collective Commitments

All stakeholders must demonstrate their commitment to community school implementation in order to sustain the initiative (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016). This means that all

stakeholders must agree on a common vision and "develop various funding streams" to support sustainability (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 12). Use of school facilities and coordination with assorted community agencies are key factors that can support this cooperation since "relationships with corporations, foundations and university partners may all play a role in the development of ongoing financial support" (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 12). The relationships and commitment must be strong enough to withstand personnel and financial changes so that they are not reliant on a person but rather on the systems that have been built. Additionally, having the community school coordinator or lead agency come directly from the community can support sustainability which "means making permanent changes in daily practice and instructional arrangements... generating human and financial resources" that include the school, families, and community partners (Lubell, 2011, p. 4). When all stakeholders come together, their "collaborative efforts result in greater opportunities for students when the 'whole child, whole community' concept is adopted" as a way to meet the in-school and out-of-school needs of students (Scully et al., 2019, p. 316).

To sustain a community school model, parent involvement must not be the sole responsibility of the parent, but rather a shared responsibility of the school and community and part of a collaborative commitment between them. This collaboration allows resources from each entity to be leveraged for the benefit of the students (Epstein, 2018). Additionally, all stakeholders must be represented and included "to develop a shared vision... in their schools that will be more effective" (Dryfoos, 1994, p. 214).

Another component of sustainability is principal leadership and trust. In a 1994 study conducted in Chicago, "principal leadership was associated with the positive trust relations" (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, p. 28). If the norms of the school include social qualities such as

moral commitments and mutual obligations among stakeholder groups, then social trust can be used "as a resource for school improvement" and sustainability of those efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, p. 2).

Accountability and Measurement

Although there are no specific accountability measurements for a community school, there are numerous examples of how schools monitor the implementation and progress of their efforts. Rubrics and other tools can be found and used as self-reflection guides and checklists, including one from the National Center for Community Schools entitled "Stages of Development of a Systemic Community School Initiative" (Lubell, 2011, p. 54). The ESSA evidence tiers provide some guidelines. The community school model is most effective when "integrated services are targeted at transition points," as when students move from elementary to middle school and again from middle to high school (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016, p. 4).

Additionally, having a dedicated individual at the school site who can coordinate and leverage partnerships is important to the success of a community school. A dedicated coordinator also supports consistent implementation of the model among all stakeholders in that one person that is connecting the various parties and joining students and services. Reviewing triangulated school data provides a solid metric to inform next steps. These data can inform existing school structures and continue to move a school forward (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019).

Common elements of community schools that are successful in improving student achievement include: extending learning opportunities that are aligned with the school instruction for both students and families, providing childcare as needed, student-based

health centers that can provide physical and mental healthcare, and shared leadership (Jenkins & Duffy, 2016). Oakes et al. (2017) added that strong instructional programs that promote meaningful learning and focus on the whole child, a positive school climate, shared governance, and extended learning time create conditions for success. In addition, Oakes et al. (2017) wrote that "schools serving low-income areas can help foster increased social capital through genuine community partnerships and a shared sense of responsibility" between the school and community (p. 16). The researchers recommended a comprehensive approach that includes the four pillars and the "technical and cultural dimensions" of a school to provide meaningful connections for students (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 17) and encouraged readers to evaluate the quality versus quantity of such programs. Doing so can prolong the effectiveness of programs and increase exposure to students and families, as "the longer and more effectively a community school has been operating, and the more services a student receives, the better the outcome" (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 16).

Conditions of Learning

The Coalition for Community Schools (2017) developed key elements of community schools under six conditions of learning that include long-term and short-term indicators. The first condition centers around early childhood education and focuses on healthy development so that students are ready for school. This can include proper immunizations, vision/hearing/dental screening, parents reading to students at home, and students attending school regularly.

The second condition for learning focuses on instructional content that is challenging and holding high expectations for all students. To succeed, students must attend school on a consistent basis and on time. The school must provide a welcoming and nurturing

environment that fosters positive personal relationships and after-school programs for students and families.

Student motivation and engagement in learning is the third condition and looks like mutual trust, family attendance at school events, and parents being involved in the site-based leadership team that makes school-wide decisions. Not only should families be actively involved in students' education, schools must also be engaged with families. Teacher retention must remain high, and teachers must maintain regular communication with families and collaboration with colleagues.

Meeting the basic physical, social/emotional, and economic needs of students and their families helps students succeed at school and is the fourth condition for learning. Assessment scores and grades increase with this approach, leading to higher graduation rates and lower dropout and retention percentages. When basic needs are met, students can be healthy and families are better able to manage chronic health conditions, leading to increased attendance and improved physical fitness levels.

The fifth condition for learning is mutual respect and collaboration among all stakeholders. It is closely related to the sixth condition, which is an engaged and supportive school community. Students are able to grow and learn in stable home and school environments. Students feel safe when families are less mobile and have steady employment, and they are more likely to utilize positive problem-solving strategies to resolve conflict (Lubell, 2011).

No one specific tool can be used to gauge the success of a community school. However, there are tangible results that do have an impact. A community school must be

considered an integrated, continuous approach and not a one-time "extra," and it must have

embedded partnerships with parents and the community (Scully et al., 2019).

Sanders (2014) suggested that whatever accountability approach is used, it must

encourage buy-in, especially from building principals, and ensure that support and

accountability measures are present from the district level. Epstein et al. (2011) pointed out

that some monitoring tools can come from existing Title I compliance regulations for

receiving funding. Regardless of the tools used for assessing implementation, it is important

to collect relevant data from each pillar and make time to evaluate. Additionally, to be

successful as a community school, "transparent monitoring of structures, processes, and

outcomes must be continuous with a willingness to make mid-course corrections" based on

the needs of students and their families (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019, p. 175).

Overall, the components of any evaluation should encompass the following: program

development, family and community outreach, results for parents, results for schools, results

for students, and improvements on all of the above from year to year (Epstein & Associates,

2019).

What the Research Does Not Say

Insufficient research exists to determine how much implementing and sustaining a

community school costs, either per student or per school. Schools bear the costs of

maintenance, oversight, security, insurance, and rent on any facility used for community

school functions (Dryfoos, 1994). Unless federal or state funding is secured from year to

year, schools need to pull funding from a variety of resources to continue implementation

(Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019). When stakeholders engage in shared leadership and

collaborative decision-making, costs may be distributed among various entities involved so the model can be sustained and is not the responsibility of one party.

Community schools also need to maintain their relevance as a reform strategy that is flexible enough to work in any school yet rigorous enough to effect real change (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019). This includes developing leadership as a function and not an individual person in all stakeholder groups in order to promote sustainability.

At the heart of sustaining a community school is family and community involvement. Involving families and communities creates a sense of ownership, which is needed to provide momentum to community schools and can be accomplished through shared leadership and collective decision-making (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019).

Implications

This study contributed to existing research by furthering the exploration of the effects of community schools, specifically the fourth pillar of collaborative leadership and practice. This study included each of the stakeholder groups (students, staff, parents, and community partners) and was done to gain a comprehensive understanding of how each group contributes to and benefits from a community school model.

Chapter Summary

Community schools recognize a variety of factors contribute to a student's educational success and "the collaboration of parents and community agencies is essential if we are to succeed in educating young children for a rapidly evolving society" (Scully et al., 2019, p. 268). Schools must allot resources to meeting both academic needs and student well-being, as one does not outweigh the other (Ferrara & Jacobson, 2019).

Chapter 3

Research Design

Purpose and Research Question

Under current ESSA guidelines, schools identified as needing rigorous interventions can implement a community school model as a turnaround strategy (ESSA, 2015). This study examined the effects of community school implementation at Pioneer Elementary School to determine the effectiveness of this type of approach. As a result of receiving an F grade from the state PED in 2013, the school had undergone many changes under the ESSA (PED, 2018b). One of these changes was the transformation of Pioneer Elementary School into a community school. In keeping with the Coalition for Community Schools (2009) definition of a community school, Pioneer Elementary School brought together parents, school staff, and community partners to connect around a central goal of improving the lives of students inside and outside the classroom. This collaborative approach that puts students at the center is an intervention that can be used under the ESSA to produce positive outcomes for students. The purpose of this study was to determine how implementing a community school model influenced student proficiency. Specifically, it focused on the pillar of collaborative decision-making in the research question: How is the perception of student academic proficiency impacted when shared leadership and collaborative decision-making in a community school model are adopted?

Research Design and Rationale

I conducted a qualitative single case study of Pioneer Elementary School that focused on the implementation of shared leadership and collaborative decision-making as part of becoming a community school. The reason I chose a case study was to allow me to present a

narrative of the journey that the community of Pioneer Elementary School took on during implementation of a community school model. Since the data derived heavily from individual interviews, a case study was the research design that allowed me to provide anecdotal information. This approach combined processes developed by Merriam (1988) and Stake (1995). Harrison et al. (2017) described Merriam as a constructivist who "assumes that reality is constructed intersubjectively through meanings and understandings" (p. 8). In Merriam's (1988) book, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, she defined a case study as, "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or a social unit" (p. 21). Qualitative case studies can include "observations, interviews, focus groups, document and artifact analysis" (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 7). I also used a questionnaire to gather data from students. Assembling data from stakeholders directly connected to Pioneer Elementary School provided a bounded system where a case study approach was appropriate.

In general, "case study research is used to gain an understanding of the issue in real life settings" (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 10). Implementing a community school model is a real-world application of research. Conducting research with the people at the center of this study made this project conducive to a single case study.

To address the research question of this study, I conducted individual interviews and gathered data from students in the form of a questionnaire. I wanted to identify and connect the lived experiences of individuals associated with the study site to the research question (Stake, 1995). Through the data collection in a qualitative case study, I wanted to understand the narrative around community school implementation as this was a complex, multi-faceted approach to education reform.

Although the bounded system of my study remained intact, "design decisions are made throughout the study—at the end as well as the beginning" to allow for flexibility and for the study to evolve naturally (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 50). The focus of this study began with the broad topic of community school implementation and moved toward the more specific subtopic of collaborative decision-making as the research became more directed; as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), "the researcher... will choose an organization, such as a school, and then focus on some aspect of it" (p. 55). Some of the questions asked during the individual interviews were: How do you participate in meetings related to decision-making and implementing strategic plans? Describe any leadership development opportunities related to community schools that have been made available to you. I anticipated that the topic would become more focused as the research unfolded.

Context of the Study

I conducted a single case study that focused on Pioneer Elementary School, which is located in a large metropolitan district in the southwestern United States. The study examined the potential connection that implementing a community school model, specifically collaborative leadership and decision-making, had on student achievement during the 2021 calendar year. The principal at Pioneer Elementary School put specific emphasis on creating a welcoming environment where the community could come together for the benefit of students. If people did not feel welcome at the school, it would be difficult to truly achieve shared leadership as prescribed by the community school model. I predicted that the research would provide responses to questions such as: When all stakeholder groups are involved in making school-wide decisions, what is the direct impact on students? Does the school have an inclusive environment where people feel welcomed and respected? When

all stakeholder groups come together, how are students affected? For this study, stakeholders were defined as people who have an interest in the success of a community school and included students, parents (guardians, caregivers, any adult that a student lives with), teachers, school staff, administration, district leadership, and community partners.

Study Site and Demographics

This study took place at Pioneer Elementary School, which was one of 53 community schools in the city (Community School Partnership, 2021). It served students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade with an enrollment of 241 students (School District, 2021b). The enrollment by grade level is listed in Figure 2.

Figure 2

2021–2022 Enrollment at Pioneer Elementary School by Grade Level
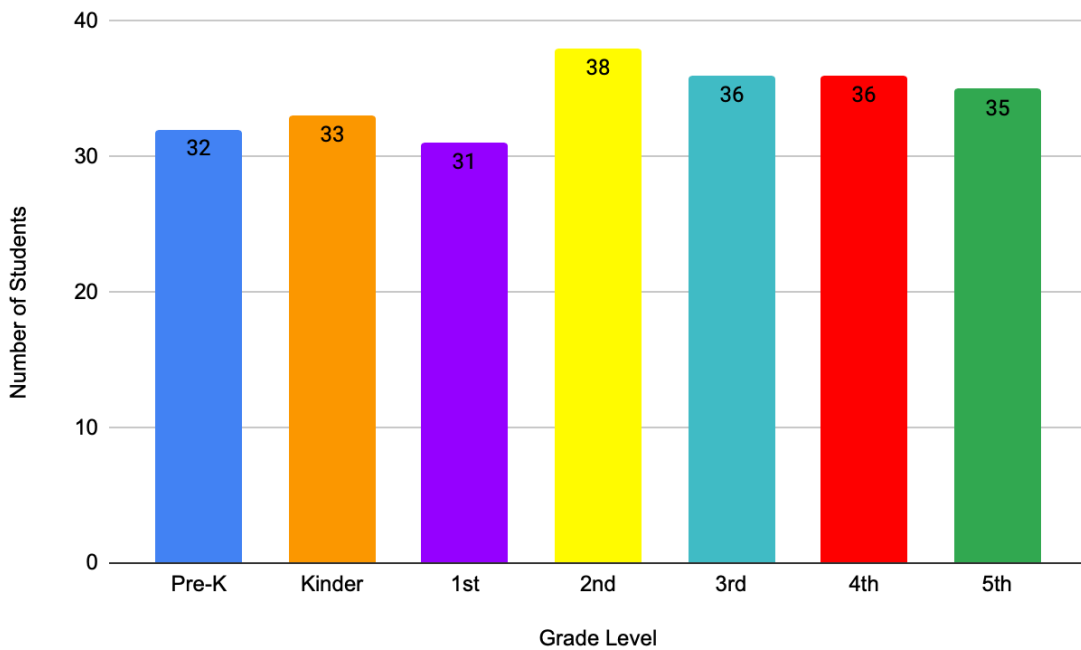
Of the 241 students, 48% were female and 52% were male. Ninety-two percent of the student population identified as Hispanic. Approximately 40% of the students were classified as English Language Learners, while 17% had a disability (School District, 2021b). The

average daily attendance rate increased during the 2019–2020 school year by 1.1% over attendance rates in the 2018–2019 school year, from 94.2% to 95.3% (School District, 2021c).

The school website stated that students participated in an extended instructional day as a result of needing more rigorous intervention under the ESSA. The parent handbook was published on the website in English and Spanish and had information for reporting student absences, dress code, and pick up/drop off procedures (School District, 2020a). This school was designated as 100% free or reduced-price lunch, meaning that it qualified for Title One status and the additional funding that came with this classification. Two-way communication between school and home was in both English and Spanish, as this was a full dual language school with instruction taking place in both languages in a 50/50 split; all students in kindergarten through fifth grade received half of their instruction in English and the other half in Spanish so they would be bilingual and biliterate.

The community school model was a part of the school mission statement displayed on the school website, along with outdoor education and rigorous bilingual education (School District, 2020a). These three facets are distinct yet intertwined. They build from one another to provide a well-rounded educational experience that includes various stakeholders. The three facets of the school mission statement are an example of the neighborhood research theory, in which a school site is connected to the surrounding neighborhood through community school implementation. Additionally, the three facets are overlapping spheres of influence within the school community that, when brought together, can provide a well-rounded experience for students.

Academics. Each school year in the spring, students in grades three through five participated in a summative statewide assessment in both mathematics and English Language Arts. Figure 3 displays the results of those assessments and corresponding trends for three different school years, arranged by average percentage of students who scored either proficient or advanced in third, fourth, and fifth grades (School District, 2021d). The first full year of community school implementation was 2018–2019. It is important to note that for the school year 2019–2020, the last data point reflects the second interim assessment, given in December and January, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing closure of schools in the state in March 2020.

Figure 3

Math and English Language Arts Proficiency at Pioneer Elementary School
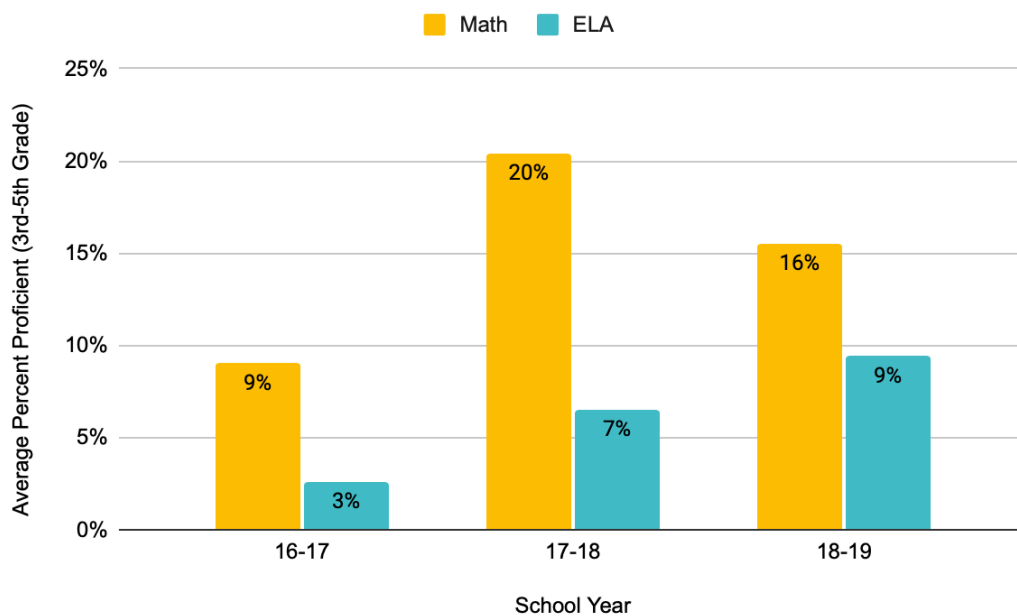
Participants

Participants in this study were volunteers from various stakeholder groups, including the school principal, school staff, members of the community school council, and students in

fourth and fifth grades. Participants on the community school council included parents, community partners, and school staff members who regularly attended these meetings. School staff who were not on the community school council were invited to participate to discover how their perspectives differed from the perspectives of those on the council.

The adult participant population was determined by the association that a participant had with the school as well as their willingness to engage in the study. Adult participants included school staff, parents/guardians of students who were currently enrolled, and representatives of community partners. As a result, the adult study population was a mix of males and females who varied in age and ethnic background. The purpose of the study was not to target a specific age range, gender, or ethnic background but rather to obtain information from those associated with the research site.

The research site was located in an area where the population speaks English and Spanish. As a result, all documents for the study were translated into Spanish. Participants had the option to select Spanish as their primary language when signing up for this study, in which case a translator would be present during the interview so adults who did not speak English had the same access to participate in the study. However, only participants who chose English as their primary language participated in this study, so a translator was not needed in any interview.

Students in fourth and fifth grades completed an anonymous, electronic questionnaire that asked questions about how their voice was included in school-wide decisions and whether they could identify home–school connections. These two oldest grade levels were included due to their reading ability and awareness of activities as they related to the community school model. The questionnaire was available in English and Spanish. Because

students are a stakeholder group that is affected by community school implementation, their feedback was needed to provide a well-rounded investigation of the research question.

The study sample was not random but rather representative, as it personified the intended audience of the study. By incorporating members of the community school council and staff who worked at the school, I wanted representation from various stakeholder groups. School staff are on the front lines of the community school effort. They are the people who see students and their potential needs daily. By virtue of the close relationship they share with students and their families, school staff can be privy to out-of-school barriers students face that adversely impact their academic and social/emotional growth. For these reasons, it is important that staff are aware of the personnel, systems, and resources that are available to their students within the community school model. It should also be noted that school staff are a valuable stakeholder group that is represented on the site-based leadership team and play an integral role in implementing the community school framework.

Time

This study took place over the course of the 2021 calendar year so that I could build a sense of trust with the participants and school at large.

Risks and Benefits

Participants could indirectly benefit by contributing to a body of knowledge and research about community school implementation. Additionally, participants could benefit from reflecting on their experiences at Pioneer Elementary School. Participants gave their time and did not receive any type of compensation. There were no known risks to any participants.

Data Sources

I collected data from a variety of sources, including individual interviews (see Appendices A and B), student questionnaires (see Appendix C), community school implementation grant applications, the school and district websites, and school artifacts that included student assessment scores. I conducted individual interviews with parents, school staff, and a community partner around a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit personal responses. General topics of the interview questions included examples of collaborative decision-making, how the participant initially became involved with the community school implementation, and their current connections with the community school council. This gave me a sampling of each of the stakeholder groups. Additionally, I conducted an individual interview with the school principal, in which I asked him about his leadership style and preparedness, the alignment of various school teams to the community schoolwork, and the types of communication he engaged in with each stakeholder group. The interview was completed virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lasted approximately 70 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for quality control.

One set of data came from students in the fourth and fifth grades. They completed an electronic questionnaire that included categorical and continuous response options as well as directions and the definition of a community school at the top. I also took into consideration that I wanted the instrument used to achieve consistent results about implementation of the community school model and how it affected student achievement, if at all. Carmines and Zeller (1979) noted, "The more consistent the results given by repeated measurements, the higher the reliability of the measuring procedure" (p. 12), which is what I strived for in

creating the instrument and interview questions. I included older students since they had the

ability to read and complete the survey. This provided a sampling of the student population

without having to create a second questionnaire for younger students. Providing a response

for each question was optional. No time limit to complete the questionnaire was given, and

students were able to use universal design tools on their school-issued Chromebooks to have

questions and responses read aloud to them as needed.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods included individual interviews, student questionnaires, and

document review. I began by interviewing the principal and followed with individual

interviews with parents, school staff, and a current community partner. In each interview, I

communicated that I would only be collecting the role of the person as related to the school

and not their name. This was also stated in the informed consent letters submitted to

the university's Office of the Institutional Review Board and the school district's Research

Review Board. All interviews were conducted in a virtual setting due to the COVID-19

pandemic. All interviews took place in English, as this was the preferred language of all

participants. Each interview was recorded and transcribed so I could accurately code words

and phrases and identify trends.

Additionally, I provided a questionnaire to fourth and fifth grade students. Data were

collected through an anonymous, electronic questionnaire distributed to students. The

questionnaire was administered through SurveyMonkey, and the identities of students were

undisclosed. I used SurveyMonkey to track the number of questionnaires that were returned.

This gave me the ability to see the number of surveys that were completed in real time. I

asked for the student's grade and gender but collected no other identifying information.

I calculated the descriptive statistics to summarize student responses from the electronic questionnaire. Since the data were categorical, I calculated percentages, counts, and proportions.

I reviewed archival records and physical artifacts consisting of student assessment data in both reading and math, school demographic data, and grant applications. Using a single case study method allowed me to delve deeply into the school culture by examining relationships, norms, and attitudes that were part of the day-to-day operations of the school (Creswell, 2013). Using this type of case study allowed me to focus the research on a specific school site and develop an in-depth analysis of the data using multiple sources and triangulation of evidence.

 After I obtained approval from the university's Institutional Review Board and the school district's Research Review Board, I collected data within the bounded system of a single school site during the 2021 calendar year. Information was gathered in accordance with the data collection procedures outlined in the Institutional Review Board approval letter, both at the university level and with the school district.

Once I transcribed all the interviews, I looked for common trends, words, patterns, and/or ideas that emerged between individuals and summarized those to explore the research question. On student questionnaires, I went through each question individually and organized responses so that I would be able to provide descriptive statistics around who had completed the questionnaire and whether there were common answers to each question. For the open response questions at the end, I again looked for common words or patterns.

Data Analysis

I began by transcribing all interviews. This included reviewing each interview three to four times against the audio recording for accuracy. Once each interview was transcribed, I summarized each interview one question at a time. This led to written lists, tables, and charts of repeated ideas, phrases, and words (see Appendix D). I then created concept maps of emerging patterns that allowed me to visually organize the patterns into themes (see Appendix E). As part of the triangulation of data, I took a numeric tally of words in the concept maps against the transcribed interviews from all participants who were not the principal by beginning with stakeholder groups and the four pillars of a community school (see Appendix F).

Standards of Quality

To ensure that I conducted quality research, I used a representative sample of school staff. Triangulation of sources can increase generalizability in future studies by duplicating "them with other samples drawn from other groups... [in] purposive sampling" (Vogt, 2007, p. 106). I followed the attributes for case study research set out by Creswell (2013) and used "multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts" to base my analysis on (p. 105). This triangulation of data allowed me to gain a more comprehensive picture of what the evidence was telling me (Maxwell, 2005). This increased the reliability of the study so it may be repeated in different schools in the future (Yin, 2003). I looked for patterns that emerged to determine possible relationships between community school implementation and student achievement (Creswell, 2013). It is important to triangulate data (e.g., interviews, artifacts, and anecdotal records) to ensure that the information is robust and reliable enough to ascertain themes.

Before interviewing participants, I did not specifically explain what I was studying. Instead, I provided a general synopsis, which was included with the interview questions. My overall goal was to gather accurate information that could lead to real results and elicit meaningful change.

I used Google Meet to conduct virtual, individual interviews. A feature within Google Meet allows meeting organizers to record the session. I used this feature during all Google Meets to capture an audio recording of the questions and responses, as mandated in the university's Institutional Review Board and the school district's Research Review Board approval letters. After each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings to ensure accuracy.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way this research was collected and interpreted. Ideally, I would have met with participants in person for interviews so I could have established a sense of trust and connection. Meeting in person would have also allowed me to make note of nonverbal body language while participants answered questions. Prior to the pandemic, in-person interviews (as opposed to virtual interviews) were the most desirable method of conducting research; however, pandemic circumstances required that I use a virtual platform to conduct interviews for this case study.

Chapter Summary

Although this study was conducted virtually due to the pandemic, it did answer the research question. Individual interviews with a sampling of each of the stakeholder groups provided insight into how school-wide decisions were made. Student questionnaires and school artifacts illuminated how shared leadership within the community school model can affect student proficiency.

Chapter 4

Findings

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the important role that schools have in addressing barriers to student learning that occur outside of institutions and in supporting the whole child to succeed academically. This role includes providing resources for food security, clothing, school supplies, transportation, and childcare to name a few. The findings presented in this chapter describe the role that shared leadership and collaborative decision-making played during the implementation of a community school model at Pioneer Elementary School, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Study

The original research design of this study included my attending community school council meetings as an observer over the course of implementing a community school model, a process that would take approximately 3 years. I intended to collect meeting notes and agendas to review who was facilitating the meetings and how information was shared. Additionally, this research was going to address how decisions were made at these meetings to connect to the research question regarding collaborative leadership. However, the pandemic forced all meetings to be held virtually during the time that research was conducted. Prior to the pandemic, all meetings at Pioneer Elementary School were held in person. The dynamics of in-person and virtual meetings are very different. As a result of the change to a virtual platform, I made the decision to focus the research on interviews so participants could explain how implementing a community school model looked before and during the pandemic.

The pandemic made the implications of my interview questions more intricate than I originally understood. The complexity of the questions grew as I collected and analyzed data from the interviews. Participants made clear distinctions about how Pioneer Elementary School functioned as a community school before the pandemic and how the model differed during COVID-19 when in-person interactions were extremely limited. As a result of the pandemic, the primary sources of data for this research became adult virtual interviews and an electronic questionnaire filled out by students in the fourth and fifth grades.

Study Site

History of Site

Pioneer Elementary School has deep roots in the neighborhood where it is located. It was established in 1965 and is the pride of the neighborhood (School District, 2020b). The overall history of the neighborhood is closely related to that of the Pueblo Indians, as Isleta Pueblo borders Pioneer Elementary School to the south. Generations of families have lived in this rural community and take pride in their mom-and-pop shops and farming areas.

In 1980, the original school building burned down. In its place, Pioneer Community Center was built to bring all people of the community together through educational classes, recreational activities/classes, and neighborhood meetings. The present-day school building was constructed a few blocks from the original site, putting it within walking distance to the community center (Padilla, 2012). The school also has "a five-acre, outdoor, experiential learning education facility" that is referred to as the sanctuary (Padilla, 2012, p. 19). The sanctuary was established in 1987, long before Pioneer Elementary School was designated a community school. The community was pivotal in establishing and maintaining funding for the experiential project, as it was viewed as a meaningful way to connect classroom learning

with the students' neighborhood. An example of community involvement was on full display during a community meeting in January 2018 in which input was gathered to determine the assets and needs of the school. The involvement of the community in the redesign of Pioneer Elementary School from years ago to the present day can be seen as an example of collective socialization theory in which children learn from their role models. The neighborhood has a history of coming together around the success of their school and the students.

Leadership

In February 2018, the current principal began his tenure at Pioneer Elementary School. He had worked with the school district for 24 years as an educational assistant, bilingual teacher, and administrator. He is fully biliterate in Spanish and English and has supervised high school bilingual programs that have been nationally recognized. Upon arrival, the principal worked with all stakeholders to begin the work of community schooling.

Population

During the time of this study, Pioneer Elementary School enrolled 241 students, 22 teaching staff, two special education teachers, nine educational assistants, one counselor, one health office worker, and one administrator (School District, 2021e). All students qualified for a free lunch. As a dual language school, half of the school day was taught in English and the other half in Spanish. Signage throughout the school was posted in both languages, and the majority of school staff are bilingual.

In the 2016–2017 school year, Pioneer Elementary recorded 17 suspension days due to discipline referrals. In the subsequent 3 school years, no students were suspended (School District, 2021f).

For the 2020–2021 school year, Pioneer Elementary had a student sustainability rate of 89%, meaning this percentage of students was enrolled at the beginning and end of the school year, indicating that the school had a mobility rate of 11% during that time (School District, 2021g).

Pioneer Elementary School compiled data to apply to the state education department for the Community Schools Grant in both 2019 and 2020. The following information was taken from their applications. Responses from the Quality of Education survey indicated that "the school has increased overall parent satisfaction" from 89% during the 2017–2018 school year to 92% for the 2018–2019 school year, which was the year the school became a community school (School District, 2019). During the 2018–2019 school year, 2,338 family and community members attended school events such as open house, family science night, genius hour showcases, and family Thanksgiving lunch (School District, 2019). This number dropped to 2,109 for similar events during the following school year (School District, 2020c). Parents and community members volunteered 3,332 hours during the 2018–2019 school year (School District, 2019) and 2,206 hours during the 2019–2020 school year (School District, 2020c). It is important to note that data for the 2019–2020 school year span August through mid-March, when schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through community partnerships, Pioneer Elementary School secured $102,244 in donations during 2018–2019 for their students and families (School District, 2019).

The U.S. Census Bureau (2020) reported that the community demographics of the neighborhood surrounding the school are: population of 40,976 people with 80.5% identifying as Hispanic; 23% are below the age of 18; 17% are foreign born; the median

household income is $38,447; 26.7% of the population lives in poverty; and 52.5% speak a language other than English in the home.

During the second year of being a community school, Pioneer Elementary applied for and received the Community Schools Implementation Grant, which secured $150,000 from the state PED to specifically implement the community school framework (School District, 2020c). The money provided through this grant was used to fund a community school coordinator, host parent classes, pay for professional development for staff, acquire technology, and upgrade the parent room.

Participants Who Were Interviewed

I conducted 11 interviews in total: one with the school principal, seven with school staff, two with parents, and one with a community partner. One parent who was interviewed was a member of the community school council, and the other was not. Interviews averaged 30 minutes and took place virtually over Google Meet between May and November of 2021. All interviews were conducted in English, as that was the preferred language of each participant. I read each question aloud one at a time and repeated them when asked.

Although I transcribed the interviews with as much detail as possible, it should be noted that transcriptions were not word-for-word, as some parts were inaudible. Instances in which interviewees used "uh" and "uhm" were not included in transcripts.

The principal interview took place at the end of the 2021 spring semester via Google Meet and lasted approximately 70 minutes. I asked him 14 open-ended questions about the school and the implementation of a community school model (see Appendix A). The principal was not shy when it came to discussing his school. He was proud of all they had accomplished and regularly brought up the various people and groups that had played an

integral part of the implementation model since he arrived in spring 2018. One of the first lessons he learned, he reported, was that a leader cannot assume they know or understand the needs of the community. This is something that must be done through collective leadership, two-way conversations, and an updated needs assessment.

Results from the Interviews

In 2017, the state PED designated Pioneer Elementary School as a failing school in danger of closing, citing that it was in need of Most Rigorous Intervention (MRI) status (PED, 2018a). Consequently, district leadership and the community came together at three different meetings to identify priorities the school would take on to transform it into a thriving educational environment. This was called the profile of the school. The three priorities the community identified were: a strong dual language program, use of the wildlife sanctuary, and implementation of a community school model.

The principal stated that upon arriving at Pioneer Elementary School in the spring of 2018, these priorities had already been chosen, and his job was to implement the profile of the school while working with all stakeholder groups as a form of collaborative decision-making. The biggest priorities for the principal were welcoming parents and creating partnerships, both within and outside the school building.

One of the study questions asked the principal to describe his prior professional preparation for leading a community school (see Appendix A). He stated that he was educated in Mexico and by the time he was in high school, he had chosen education as his career path. As a result, the majority of his schooling from ninth grade through college was geared toward community service through education.

One of the first actions the principal took was putting up a fence with a gate between the main campus and the sanctuary so students were protected from wild animals while on the playground. This also included fencing throughout the campus to make it secure. As the principal put it, "I am putting up more fences, but at the same time, I'm keeping those fences open for the community to come in." This quote brought me back to the idea of safety discussed in this study's Conceptual Framework. Within their school and neighborhood, students needed to feel safe before being able to access academic content.

Academically, the first step in implementing the MRI plan was for the state department of education to provide the resources to fund a genius hour each day at Pioneer Elementary School. For one hour after the instructional day, students chose a topic or area they wanted to learn more about. Teachers and community partners sponsored different options. Every 6 weeks, the students showcased what they had learned to the community through performances, art galleries, video presentations, and more. Higher expectations were put on teachers to teach and students to learn since they had an authentic audience to demonstrate their learning to. Two-way home and school communication was emphasized to prepare students for the showcases. Teachers communicated learning standards and lessons a month in advance in both English and Spanish so families knew what was expected of their students. During the interview, the principal stated, "This model of a community school is something that I believe is the way to raise rigor on everybody."

The principal went on to describe a partnership that was established between the school, a community center, and a nearby rehabilitation center that created opportunities for intergenerational learning. The community center provided transportation for students to visit the rehabilitation center and participate in community service by performing and presenting

for the residents. These were some of the first things that occurred at Pioneer Elementary School in the beginning stages of community school implementation.

Themes

Although the data collected from the interviews are vast, three main themes emerged, as noted in Figure 4. The first theme was communication, which takes many forms both before and during the pandemic. The second theme was parent involvement. This too looked different as a result of the pandemic, as the interviewees pointed out. The third theme was leadership; this focused on the principal as a leader, his leadership style, and collaborative leadership at Pioneer Elementary School through its established culture and systems.

Figure 4

Three Themes from Individual Interviews

Communication	Parent Involvement	Leadership
• **In-person events** • **Virtual events** • **Other forms of communication**	• **Volunteering** • **Classes** • **Committees** • **Meetings**	• **Principal** • **Staff leadership** • **Parent leadership**

Communication. Upon reviewing the data, one theme that emerged from the interviews was communication between the school and the community. Although only question 12 was specifically about communication (see Appendix B), participants described the various ways the school communicated in their responses to other questions.

The very foundation of Pioneer Elementary School under MRI status is communication. The three priorities the community had identified (a strong dual language program, use of the wildlife sanctuary, and implementation of a community school model) remained key focus areas for the school regarding decision-making, personnel, and finances. Through ongoing, two-way communication, feedback from stakeholder groups informed decisions.

During the first year as a community school, data from parents indicated they wanted to participate in various parenting classes. As a result, community partnerships were formed, classes were established, and parents attended. This is an example of the community school council conducting a needs assessment and responding directly to that need through community partnerships.

All forms of communication, written and oral, took place in both English and Spanish, which reflected the home languages spoken in the community. Even at school meetings, as described by a parent interviewee, "they just did Spanish and English side by side" in lieu of a formal interpreter. The principal was bilingual and able to communicate in both languages, as noted by parents and school staff, which was viewed as an asset.

Having a bilingual environment provided the school community with access to all information in their native languages as it occurred organically through conversation, which broke down a potential barrier to participation in such events and valued the culture of the neighborhood. The school embraced bilingual education as part of the community culture.

Communication from the school to families was regular through ClassDojo (an online platform where school staff and parents can text one another without using their phone numbers), the school website, and events (both in-person and virtual). As a school staff

member reported, communication between staff and families was made personal and intimate by the data collection process for the needs assessment, meetings, and genius hour showcases. Relationships with parents were strong as a staff member stated, "the students grow when they see… when we meet parents. That's just, right away we have impact with the… student," noted a staff member. School staff were aware of students' home lives and their approach was more proactive than reactive. During meetings, the needs of families were discussed, so staff became able to work to meet those needs through community resources, such as the mobile food pantry. These types of conversations could only take place when mutual trust and respect between both parties was communicated in the family's language of preference. The community was empowered to be involved in the school. Staff felt they communicated with families and offered ongoing support. A parent described the environment as a family-friendly atmosphere, stating, "It's just natural for them." School staff stated that everyone was willing to help and collaborate, including community members, and having local, real people come to campus and share their experiences had a positive impact on students.

The principal detailed a variety of ways the school communicated with parents. His summary was simple: "anything and everything." Means of communication included parent-requested texting apps, the school marquee, robocalls, parent classes, the school website, Google Classroom, flyers, and even sticking reminders to student shirts using file folder tabs. The principal emphasized that communication took place in English and Spanish so it was accessible to all families. Although school staff members were able to provide specific examples of communication, they acknowledged that their efforts were not reaching all parents. A specific example that was mentioned several times included a decrease in parent

participation at community school council meetings. The reason that school staff provided for this was the virtual nature of these meetings during the pandemic and that parents may not have had access to technology and/or the knowledge to participate in the meetings through a virtual platform. If parents did not attend these meetings, they were not able to participate in decision-making or collaborating with the community, which are two types of involvement (Epstein & Associates, 2019).

According to the principal, "It's been proven that students cannot learn in isolation. So, you need to have the support... from the community, not just families." An example of this that he gave was communication with the students, parents, and the community about the learning expectations for students and the role that families and the greater community play in helping the students to learn. This is where the genius hour showcases came into play. Students were learning material for a meaningful audience and purpose, rather than to take a standardized test. Performing poorly for their family meant more to students than getting an F on an assignment. This demonstrates a way that community school implementation can be critical to student learning. The principal stressed that involving the community makes them partners in student success. Everything is "interconnected in a nice, fun way" through genius hour showcases, noted the principal.

When I asked the principal how he communicated with community partners who were not a part of the robocall list or did not have a student associated with the school, he described a phone tree that the parents created without his knowledge. When the principal needed volunteers or wanted to remind parents and/or community partners of meetings, he asked the parents to send out a message through their phone tree and group text. Correspondence also took place during community council meetings.

In-Person Events. School staff and parents described the various events the school hosted to promote communication between the school and the community. The biggest event that took place every 6 weeks was the genius hour showcases. Pre-pandemic, this was a time when parents and the greater community participated in gallery walks and performances and students were able to demonstrate their learning over the previous 6 weeks. The event lasted several hours and was viewed as a celebration of the students' accomplishments. Genius hour showcases brought students, parents, staff, and the community together around a sense of pride in student learning, and the community came together to show support for the students. Numerous school staff members expressed that no matter what the background of the parents and families, they were proud of their students and wanted to see what they had been learning. The principal encapsulated this when he said, "I haven't found yet a parent that don't want the best for their kids, for their own kids." A school staff member described the genius hour showcases as a place where "every family, community, anybody can come and see what's going on. Interact with students, interact with the teachers. It's awesome." This commonality was a result of the regular and consistent communication in which teaching and learning were the focus and an outgrowth of the school's foundation in meeting the needs of families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, genius hour showcases became primarily virtual events.

The principal described genius hour as providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate what they had learned and bringing the community into the school. He noted that it had positive results on grades, attendance, and behavior. He went on to highlight that at the end of each instructional day, students were able to choose their activity for genius hour. Another school staff member described the students as engaged during genius hour and

said, "it's student-led for the most part. It's student choice." Genius hour showcases made learning fun and were something for students to look forward to. As a result, students did not want to miss school and were able to investigate topics, create projects, participate in service-learning opportunities, or pursue a hobby, sport, or the arts. This sparked their creativity and real-world application of their knowledge. These presentations brought the community together and closed the loop between students and families, according to the school principal.

Other in-person events mentioned by parents, staff, and community interviewees were parenting classes, holiday festivals, campus clean up days, the volunteer-supported school store, curriculum nights, health fairs, and community school council meetings. One parent stated, "everybody greets me in the morning," and another noted, "they made me feel very welcome... You're immediately encouraged to go and serve yourself some food, you know, to join in on the conversation." Sporting events brought the community together. Parents, teachers, school administration, and the community were equals when supporting students. This all contributed to positive communication between families and the school.

Virtual Events. As a result of COVID-19, many events that were previously held in-person switched to a virtual platform. This included parent meetings, parent classes, weekly chats with the principal, community school council meetings, the drive-through mobile food pantry, parent–teacher conferences, and genius hour showcases. The school conducted surveys by phone, email, school messenger, and ClassDojo to get input from families. Newsletters and learning standards were published to the school and class websites in both English and Spanish, and staff were available as needed to keep communication a focus for all parties.

Forced upon the school by the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual events saw a decrease in participants, specifically parents. To participate, parents needed a device with an internet connection strong enough to support a live video feed. Additionally, they needed to have the technical knowledge to log in to a virtual meeting. One of the highlights of in-person parent classes had been building and maintaining a network of parents who were connected to the school. Even though parents could still attend parent classes virtually, the personal relationships they had formed did not easily extend online from a state of physical isolation. The same was said of genius hour showcases. Parents were still able to view their child's learning; however, they could not share in this with other parents as they were used to doing in-person before the pandemic.

Other Forms of Communication. Staff communicated with parents through Google Classroom and other web-based platforms, along with phone calls, emails, text messages, exit tickets for parents at meetings, and interactions before and after school with on-duty staff. A parent described school communication as immediate during the interview: "You can speak to someone within minutes if you need to, teachers too. So, the communication channels, they're really strong there." Staff interacted with each other in staff meetings, data discussions, and goal team meetings. Overall, school events had set a positive foundation with stakeholders, as school staff noted, and a range of support and partnerships contributed to the school community. One staff member described, "Being a community school is a beautiful thing." The environment of the school was very comfortable and welcoming. "It's the way they made you feel. I think they struck gold there," said a parent.

When a leader becomes familiar with the community, they have a closer relationship with the people that make up that community. This includes understanding community needs

and being responsive to social issues so that, in turn, students can succeed academically. As a principal, this means talking with understanding and not judgement. The principal described events that were directed toward adults. "We have done other stuff that has nothing to do with students, but more with adults," such as income tax support sessions. Through interviewing the principal, I realized that his leadership style has evolved to serve the needs of the students and families through community support.

Parent Involvement. A second theme that emerged from the interviews was the critical role that parents played in the success of Pioneer Elementary School. They were a valued and respected stakeholder group within the community. School staff described parents as "active," attending school events, and generally happy that the school has "turned around" with an open campus.

Parents and school staff described the school environment as open and welcoming for parents to participate in an informal way by offering suggestions or asking questions without having to be in a meeting. Parents were invited to school events and greeted when they came to campus. Communication was regular and in English and Spanish, and "parents feel that they are part of school."

Parents participated in numerous ways. One example was through community school meetings where information was disseminated, and parents were invited to provide input. Pre-pandemic, the community school council reviewed student assessment data and established a reading program where volunteers came to school and read to students daily in hopes of increasing their reading scores (in both English and Spanish). This program was mentioned more than once as an example in answer to question number 8 (see Appendix B).

Additionally, parents were encouraged to sign up for committees related to decision-making. An active Parent Teacher Committee met with the principal regularly and was facilitated entirely by parents. Another example was a weekly meeting of the principal, parents, and the community to discuss any questions or concerns they had. This was an informal, drop-in meeting where parents and community members could have an open forum with the school leader.

The principal enacted an open-door policy, in which visitors could stop by without an appointment to talk to him. The principal recounted parents describing the school as "my second home because you're actually listening to us." A parent interviewee noted, "It's a pretty open school environment. So, you can approach any teacher or administrator with issues or concerns or questions you have… [the principal's] open to any type of feedback or suggestions." Even though parents may not have participated in a formal group, they could communicate as needed with school personnel.

Parent classes were offered for parents as well as the general community. They primarily focused on teaching skills needed for advocacy so parents could meaningfully participate in the decision-making process of the school and support their children. One example included a community partner who offered classes on how to read the report card so parents could fully understand and take an active role in their child's learning. Other agencies sponsored GED classes, where participants had the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency diploma. Another option was English classes where members acquired and practiced the language.

Pre-pandemic, and as health restrictions allowed, parents were encouraged to volunteer on campus. This looked like participating in meetings, setting up for events,

assisting with campus clean-up, and supporting projects directly related to teaching and learning. A designated family room stocked with food was described as "comfortable" by a parent. A staff member noted that pre-pandemic, parents "came and they would have breakfast together, then they take a parenting class… they would walk down to the community center together and workout, and they'd come back, and they'd help set up the gym for genius hour showcase."

The pandemic brought on new challenges regarding volunteers on campus. One of the highlights parents and school staff mentioned was the open, welcoming environment of the school campus. However, if parents did not have the opportunity to physically be on campus to volunteer, the sense of collective ownership and responsibility for the school may have been difficult to maintain. Volunteering is one of Epstein's (2010) six types of parent involvement. The options for parents to volunteer virtually were much fewer than doing so in person. The school faced the challenge of determining how to encourage parents to meaningfully volunteer while complying with health orders brought on by the pandemic. Pioneer Elementary School had always relied on willing parent volunteers, as no policy mandated parent volunteer hours.

Leadership. A third theme, and perhaps the strongest that developed in the interviews, was leadership. The community partner, parents, and school staff noted that they were able to communicate with the principal via his personal cell phone in both English and Spanish. They described his commitment and advocacy for the students, staff, and overall school community through programs and resources. A school staff member said, "Leadership… they are always looking for good resources, always advocate for teachers, for the students, for families… and he [the principal] always looking for ways to advocate for

resources for the students." Words used to describe the principal and his leadership style included welcoming, approachable, and flexible. The principal invited and encouraged participation from parents and school staff. He was also present on campus by attending events and being a positive representative of the school in the larger community.

The principal described his leadership style as present. This looked like being in classrooms, greeting students, and attending after-school activities. He strove to involve all parents and had an open-door policy in which people did not have to make an appointment to talk with him. He communicated with all stakeholders and the larger school community. The principal cited several examples of this, including students going into his office to tell him they had lost a tooth or when visiting him sharing a concern. The principal also brought hot chocolate to parents on winter mornings when they dropped off their students to build a positive relationship with them.

It was clear that the principal listened to various stakeholder groups and worked in collaboration with them. He did not make decisions "top-down" but rather discussed and implemented them together with stakeholders through the original MRI plan. This suggested a deep trust between the principal and stakeholder groups, as they had each assessed "the intentions of another as extending beyond what is formally required" (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, p. 11). A school staff member stated, "I enjoy being at this school a lot."

During his interview, the principal said, "If you don't have a collaborative leadership, then you become authoritarian and that doesn't help anybody, nobody." This idea was echoed in interviews with school staff who reported that the principal made the school a comfortable place to work. The culture was respectful, and teachers had the ability to teach and not be intimidated. The focus was on students and their families. The school centered

95

around teamwork. A school staff member described the school environment in saying, "Here, everybody's willing to help everybody… So we're supporting each other." This started with the principal, who advocated for students, staff, and families by being open, listening, and welcoming others.

All parties benefit from great leadership. In schools, this can mean students are happy and engaged and get along with one another. According to an article published by Pioneer Elementary's school district (2021h), students enjoyed participating in genius hour, as they were able to choose the activities that were interesting and meaningful to them. The same article cited that negative student behaviors had decreased while the overall student population had increased. Staff were close with one another and were hard-working, professional, and productive. Pioneer Elementary School enacted an extended contract day. As a result, school staff made a specific commitment to work at Pioneer Elementary School and were focused on teaching and learning. Their strong effort to help and support one another through the collaborative environment extended to families. As a result of his own schooling, the principal was prepared to take on the role of a community school leader.

School leadership was shared among the principal and school staff through goal teams, leadership council, staff meetings, 90-day team meetings, and leadership team meetings. The school structure was set up in such a way that all committees contributed to school-wide decisions around instruction, community school implementation, and school culture. This was especially true with the goal teams. Pioneer Elementary School had four goal teams that each meet weekly. The facilitator of each goal team was also a member of the instructional council, so the contributions of the goal teams could be discussed school wide. Goal teams were mentioned numerous times in staff interviews as the main decision-making

avenue that all staff had access to. One staff member said they "make sure that what we're working on is, is aligned to what the community wanted us to work on." The facilitator of each goal team was also on the school leadership council, providing alignment for procedures, budget, sharing of ideas, and input that had a direct impact on the operation of the school.

When staff attended community school council meetings, they were sometimes asked to present what they were doing that included data, which they viewed as a leadership opportunity. Teachers participated in weekly collaboration meetings to review academic data as connected to the 90-day plan and to inform instruction. Staff had access to a hub, or online portal, for student data that included academic assessments, attendance, and data from the needs assessment.

The MRI plan was based on data, as were school-wide decisions, including the 90-day plan focus areas and professional development plans for teachers that reflected student growth and attendance. As part of these meetings, the school-based transformational coach helped teachers of all grades plan small group interventions that were connected to student data. All of this led to teachers being part of a team and not teaching in isolation. School staff stated that collaboration among staff, the principal, and the school district was strong and that staff were supportive of one another.

To gain credibility and demonstrate collective leadership, the principal began his tenure by not assuming he knew what the community needed and accepting that there were things that he did not know and would have to learn along the way. He began by opening a dialogue with the community and asking them what they wanted. He followed up by being responsive to their requests. One example of this was providing GED and English as a

Second Language classes to parents. He described his approach this way, "I tried never to use the word 'no.' I tried to say, 'fine, but how are we going to do it?' And that invited them to be part of the solution." As parents and community members saw their suggestions turn to actions, they began to regularly participate in meetings and advocate for additional programs. The principal added, "they knew that if they mentioned something, Pioneer Elementary School as a school, not just me, was going to hear them."

Additionally, the principal hired the right personnel for the right positions to support the sustainability of programs that were an integral part of the school culture, such as dual language education and community school status. When asked what was working well, a staff member responded, "the school culture that we've created. And I think that what has happened is that there's respect here." A second staff member described the school culture as "a mentality of unity."

As the community continued to suggest programs and interventions and voice their opinions in school-wide decisions, the principal and leadership team came up with a decision-making flowchart that included parents. The principal emphasized that the community coordinator was a part of almost all school decisions, including financial decisions, and acted as an assistant principal in some respects by always making sure that parent and community views were included. In addition to the community coordinator, the bilingual coordinator and naturalist teacher sat on the leadership team so that the three priorities of the community were represented. A large part of including parent and family voices was accomplished by conducting a needs assessment with individual families. A staff member described the process as teachers calling families and going "through the steps so that we kind of have a good picture of what they need… and that way, we can kind of all

work together for these students." Assessments were done on a regular basis. Data derived from them was shared with the community school council so the school's programs could reflect the needs of families.

During his interview, the principal stated that if collaborative leadership did not exist in a school and decisions were not made by the group, then the support would not be there to carry them out. This held true for all four pillars of a community school. The principal used the example of creating an after-school program when he first arrived at Pioneer Elementary. He assumed that a program was needed and made the decision to add one without consulting anyone else. The program was not utilized. As a result, the principal learned to ask questions and provide the opportunity for other stakeholders to communicate their needs, thus leading to the collaborative leadership structure that was established at Pioneer Elementary School. If he had not adapted his leadership to be more inquisitive and listen to members of the school community, the collaborative leadership pillar of the community school model would not have been as successful.

Summary of the Interviews

Collectively, interviewees from each stakeholder group recognized that Pioneer Elementary School was currently in the beginning stages of community school implementation and had lots of work left to do, including increasing teacher involvement. As one school staff member put it, "It's a process." However, everyone embraced the community schoolwork as a part of a positive change and a continued forward motion. A second staff member stated, "I think the school was very much in need of change and the community school model has provided a structure for bringing about change that focuses on success in all aspects of the school climate." The principal summarized the efforts that had

been made because of community school implementation when he said they "have been so far beyond my expectations."

Student Participants

Students were given the opportunity to participate in this study by filling out an electronic questionnaire (see Appendix C) that consisted of 16 questions relating to the community school model. Some of the questions were taken from an established student questionnaire written for students in elementary school (California Department of Education, 2007). A total of four students participated in the survey, which is a relatively small sample. As a result, broad generalizations to the rest of the student population cannot be made. All the students were in fourth grade, had a preferred language of English, and completed the questionnaire in December 2021.

Summary of Student Results

Although only four out of 71 students in the fourth and fifth grades who were eligible to participate in the study completed the questionnaire, there were similarities among their responses. All respondents felt connected to people at the school, enjoyed coming to school, and were proud to be a student at Pioneer Elementary School. Additionally, all participants responded yes when asked if their school wanted them to learn a lot and whether their teacher would notice if they were absent from school. These results, although representing a small number of the target population, indicated that students are generally happy at Pioneer Elementary School and have developed a positive relationship with staff through a sense of belonging. One question highlighted this observation. When answering the question, "Do the teachers and other grown-ups at school listen when you have something to say," three of the four students responded, "Yes, most of the time." One student responded, "Yes, some of the

time." Another trend that developed was a sense of pride among students. When asked "Do you do things to be helpful at school," three of the four students responded, "Yes, most of the time," while one student responded, "Yes, some of the time."

Part of the community school model is extending lessons taught at school to the home and greater community. Students were asked to respond yes or no to the question, "Does what you learn in school help you outside of school?" All four students responded yes, which can be interpreted as students continuing their learning outside of school.

Parent involvement is another indication of successful community school implementation. From the students' perspective, their parents were involved. Each participant responded yes when asked whether their parents talked to them about their schoolwork. This could be a result of parenting classes, a welcoming campus environment, providing parents with the opportunity to see their child's learning through genius hour showcases, or a combination of these. Students who participated felt their learning was connected to their lives beyond the classroom.

Summary of All Data

By including student input, a fourth theme of student participation emerged, as seen in Figure 5. Through genius hour, students were provided an avenue to share what they learned with a meaningful audience. A staff member described genius hour by stating, "It's just become part of what our school offers to families." During genius hour, students had the opportunity to learn from a teacher who was not theirs and to be grouped with students who were not in their day-long class. Learning was hands-on and project-based and included exposure to the arts. Another staff member said, "it fuels them… to give them an opportunity

101

to be with other teachers who are sharing art, or a talent, or a skill and having an opportunity to learn outside of the school environment is incredible."

Figure 5

Four Themes from Overall Data Analysis

Communication	• Events, surveys, meetings, and genius hour showcases. • Personal through needs assessment and cultural representation.
Parent Involvement	• Volunteering, communication, contribution to school-wide environment. • Leadership through representation and advocacy.
Leadership	• 2-way communication in home language. • Advocation, positive representation of school, and available to stakeholders.
Student Participation	• Generally happy at school with a sense of belonging. • Connected learning to outside lives and through parent participation in their education.

Areas of Growth

While most student responses indicated positive relationships to school, a few areas emerged as opportunities for staff to enhance community school implementation from the students' perspective. The first was a sense of ownership for individual and school-wide decisions. According to interviews with school staff, students were able to choose their genius hour class every 6 weeks and were included in reviewing positive behavior expectations in different areas around campus. However, when asked "Do you help make class rules or choose things to do at school," three of the four students responded yes, and one responded no. One of the respondents did not agree that they had a voice in choosing things to do at school. This may be because the student did not recognize that they were able to choose a class for genius hour, or maybe the student wanted a class that was not offered at genius hour. Because the student participants represented only a small portion of the target

student population, it is not known how widespread this feeling was among students. Whatever the reason for the participant's feeling, school staff could focus more on communicating with students when they do have choices over things they do in school, both individually and as a class. Students are an important stakeholder group and should be included in collaborative decision-making to maximize the effectiveness of a community school model.

Another result that stood out was that half of student respondents said no when asked, "Does your teacher ask you about your life outside of school?" Although teachers may ask students this question, students may not feel that their teacher asks them enough and/or knows about their life outside of school enough to make a genuine connection with them.

The last survey question prompted students to type in an open-ended response to "What could your school do better?" Responses centered around genius hour and field trips. One respondent stated, "More arts and crafts Genius hour [*sic*]." Another said, "doing more of the genius hour because it is a fun time were [*sic*] we can make friends with other people." And a third typed, "more field trips." These responses illustrated that genius hour and experiential learning in the community were things that students would like expanded.

The other open-ended survey question asked students to highlight a positive thing about their school by responding to the prompt, "What is the best thing about Pioneer Elementary School?" Student statements included "That people are nice" and "friends are fun and lots to play with." Students recognized the school was a fun place to be where people were friendly and there were activities to participate in. A third student added, "the best thing about Pioneer elementary school [*sic*] is that they are nice." This is a theme repeated in student responses and an area where adults and students agreed. Many reported that campus

was full of nice people who greeted students and provided them with resources to succeed in and out of school. This could only be done through building and maintaining positive relationships across the campus with the entire school community.

Students and adults also agreed that genius hour was popular and provided an extension to learning by facilitating interactions with students of different ages and teachers of different grade levels. This created a sense of community and belonging outside of students' homeroom class.

Limitations

This study took place in one elementary school over 1 calendar year in an unprecedented global pandemic. The interviews reflect the experiences of the 11 participants and cannot be generalized to other people in different communities. The professional preparation that the principal had was specific to him and not a standard that can be extended to other school leaders.

The number of participants in this study in all stakeholder groups is relatively low and cannot be generalized to the entire school community. Not all school staff participated in the study. As a result, the data do not represent the views of the staff as a whole. Two parents chose to be included in the study. This means that the parents of 239 other students chose not to participate, and their input was not gathered. Although four students did participate, there were 97 eligible students that did not. This must be considered when analyzing their data. One community partner opted to participate, which is not indicative of the work or information from other community partners.

Chapter Summary

       Positive relationships among various stakeholder groups at Pioneer Elementary

School and the development of learning in genius hour are strong foundations of community

school implementation. Both were included in responses by students, staff, parents, and a

community partner. Additionally, participants described strong leadership and various

ways that regular communication takes place among stakeholder groups to keep everyone

informed.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the importance of relationships to the surface during this study. This included the important role that schools have in a community, as they are the center point between students, staff, parents, and community partners. These relationships are at the heart of the community school model.

Discussion of the Results

Communication

Parents at Pioneer Elementary School had developed positive relationships with school staff but may not have felt they were a part of the decision-making process. This may have resulted from a decrease in participation due to COVID-19. Additionally, events and meetings were held virtually, which may have limited the quality of participation from parents. Bi-weekly community school council meetings were held at 9 a.m. on a weekday. As some school staff members pointed out, this may not have been the best time to obtain input from parents who were working and unable to take time off or from staff who were teaching during that time.

Parent and staff interviewees mentioned that communication from school to home was strong and in both English and Spanish. However, no respondent indicated that current communication methods were used specifically for decision-making purposes. Families had a voice but may not have been directly included in collaborative decision-making. Parents had the motivation to contribute, as evidenced by their participation prior to the pandemic, but they may not necessarily have had the means to do so virtually.

Another item that was brought up in relation to communication was data. School-wide data were not published where parents or the public were able to view them on a regular basis. The school staff reviewed data weekly during collaboration meetings; however, these were not shared with the public. Parents only had access to their own students. As discussed earlier, data are vital to decision-making in community schools. Sharing data, both the good and the not-so-good, with a community supports collaborative decision-making and moving forward on a platform that all stakeholders have access to.

Another way a lack of visible data may be remedied is by providing more opportunities for adults to make decisions by having highly attended events extend into other events. For example, community school council meetings could be held after genius hour showcases, as stated by a staff member, "making our events stem into different things." This would promote discussion and decision-making and reach more families in general. Another recommendation is to move away from community school council meetings as report-out sessions and instead frame them as a review of data and next steps. This would maintain the community school council as a primary decision-making body of the school. Part of this work would involve establishing a stronger, more robust community school council with decision-making responsibility as well as a clear process for analyzing data and existing programs that includes communication and feedback from all stakeholder groups.

Parent Involvement

The parent teacher council was mentioned as a body that met with the principal, although it was not clear how staff participated with parents during this time. Parents did participate in community school council meetings where data were reviewed. However,

107

these meetings had not yet evolved to a stage in which they comprised a regular decision-making body.

Interviewees stated that responses to the school's annual quality of education survey were reviewed to determine parent satisfaction and next steps. However, it was not clear who reviewed the surveys nor how the data were shared or used to inform decisions. Moving forward, finding a way to increase the number of family events and opportunities to volunteer (with attention to COVID-19 health orders) is an area to focus on. Numerous staff mentioned this specific challenge in their interviews. One staff member said, "I think another thing that could improve this year, that we could get back to, is inviting parents."

Leadership

During the initial MRI transition, a community partner provided training for all school personnel about community schools. Staff would benefit from continued professional development sessions in this area, as both the implementation and individual staff members have evolved. According to the staff interviews, staff-wide professional development with a community school focus had not occurred recently, and members felt they could benefit from a refresher. This is an area for growth; four staff interviewees could not recall any professional development opportunities specific to community schools. It is critical to implementation that the entire staff fully understand the four pillars of a community school and how they are implemented at Pioneer Elementary School.

Although academic data were mentioned in all interviews, a theme did not emerge around how they are specifically used, with the exception that assessments drove individualized instruction. More social/emotional data needs to be included in conversations with a focus on identifying and addressing barriers to learning, especially since the needs

assessment is conducted at the beginning of the year and reviewed again at conference times with individual families. Putting as much emphasis on social/emotional data as academic data would extend the academic effort to meeting social and emotional needs. Additionally, including elective teachers during weekly collaboration meetings would enhance the data discussions, as these teachers see students in a different setting and can offer another context for reviewing data.

Having a way to continually assess whether programs are effective (part of the community school standards) is another area for growth. Some school staff members mentioned in interviews that the school had made great progress initially after the MRI plan but had since become somewhat stagnant. The school is doing a lot of great things but not continuing to raise expectations. During the interviews, not one participant identified a specific process to review data and monitor progress. It was not clear who sets instructional goals for students. Although the community school council reviews survey data, creates a goal, and sets a plan to meet the goal, a potential disconnect exists between the data that is shared at community school council meetings and those shared with school personnel. Staff and parent interviewees who were not on the council did not reference data at all.

Summary of the Results

Students

As seen from the data in this study, students have a lot to contribute. They want to enjoy their time at school and take pride in their community. Their feedback can be used to contribute to assessing a current initiative or reviewing options for new programs. Students are directly impacted by any and every school-wide decision. When they are able to have a voice, it is important for adults to encourage and listen to them.

School Staff

To enhance the community school model, Pioneer Elementary School could coordinate meaningful professional development for staff on a regular basis. This could include providing appropriate training on community school implementation for new staff hires, both in a general sense and for their specific role in the implementation plan. It could also include ensuring that all staff members understand the basics of what it means to be a community school, with special focus on the four pillars, parent involvement, and making data-driven, collective decisions. Grant dollars can be a funding source to leverage for targeted, consistent, and high-quality professional development.

The inclusion of elective teachers and support staff in data discussions with grade-level teachers would promote the decision-making process for school staff through analyzing student data. These staff members have valuable input to contribute during these meetings, which can lead to an increase in the amount of leadership opportunities for school staff.

Parents

The data presented in the interviews suggested that the time-of-day community school council meetings were held may be a barrier to participation for school staff and parents. Changing the time of the meetings to later in the day may allow for an increase in staff and parent representation. During all parent meetings, school staff need to present information using terms and a process that parents are familiar with and in parents' preferred language. School staff must continue to speak in the language of the community as well as provide resources so language is not a barrier to information. This includes classes, translation services, and information in both English and Spanish. Capitalizing on parent participation in genius hour showcases to survey parents about classes they would like

offered may yield more responses from families. Their input can also be collected on other issues as needed.

Community School Council

The community school council can collectively determine a process for monitoring and assessing school-wide initiatives and decisions. This will support a climate of ongoing reflection and improvement in which the council is utilized to make data-driven decisions that are sustainable rather than decisions for one-time use. Council meetings need to include academic and social/emotional data such as attendance, discipline, and family input from the needs assessment.

Leadership

It would be very difficult for a principal without any experience or background in community school implementation to run an effective community school. The principal of Pioneer Elementary School had the educational background and practical career experience to make him a successful leader. He also had an open mind and listened to the community. Current and future school leaders must be adequately equipped with the tools necessary to lead collaboratively.

General Recommendations for Community School Staff

Get back to your roots! Invite parents to events, meetings, classes, and to the school campus. Do not underestimate the power of a welcoming environment, as this is the foundation for community school implementation. Use common vocabulary terms that everyone can understand and use to communicate. This includes titles of school staff, acronyms, and data terminology in English and Spanish. Disseminate school-wide data to the community on a regular basis in a reader-friendly format. This promotes transparency and a

sense of shared responsibility and accountability for student learning that will extend from the school to the community.

Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature

The results of this study demonstrated a variety of ways in which Pioneer Elementary School has included each of the four pillars of community schools into an implementation that is specific to their site. Each of the pillars reinforce one another and work together to provide the framework for an effective community school.

Integrated Student Supports

Through the interviews, the community partner, school staff, and parents made it clear that Pioneer Elementary School worked to provide a range of resources to students and their families that included a mobile food pantry, dental appointments, a health fair, haircuts, and school supplies. Although this work took on a different form during the pandemic, all of these services were established prior to COVID-19. The food pantry was a resource for the community, not just students at the school.

Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities

Genius hour was the shining star of Pioneer Elementary School. It was one of the first initiatives to be included in community school implementation and continued to be a highlight, as mentioned by each group of stakeholders. Extending the school day by 1 hour to provide enrichment activities for students capstoned with a showcase has had positive results on attendance and school behavior (School District, 2021h). Additionally, after-school activities such as soccer and basketball brought the stakeholders of the school together over a shared sense of pride in their students.

Family and Community Engagement

Through obtaining feedback from stakeholders, Pioneer Elementary School has instituted an array of opportunities to encourage family engagement, including parent classes, volunteer opportunities, family nights (relating to cooking, science, and holiday festivals), campus clean-up days, genius hour showcases, various meetings, and regularly updated communication in English and Spanish. Neighborhood sites are used to foster student involvement, and the community center provides transportation to the nearby nursing home. Stakeholder feedback is welcomed and used to assess current initiatives and explore new ones.

Collaborative Leadership and Practices

For community school implementation to be successful, collaborative leadership must exist and evolve with the school. The culture and systems of the school must foster stakeholder input and representation in decision-making. Through consistent and regular community school council meetings, ongoing needs assessment collection and analysis, school leadership structure (including goal teams and the instructional council), and professional development, Pioneer Elementary School has a foundation in place for collaborative decision-making.

Recommendations for the Research Site and Future Research

There are many opportunities for future research in the area of community school implementation, especially given the role schools have played during the COVID-19 pandemic and that each school and community is unique. These recommendations for research also extend to action steps that can be taken at the research site.

Students

Future research should include students' perspectives on the effectiveness of community school implementation, specifically their perceptions of differences between communities in the same school district and among school levels (elementary, middle, and high). Students should also be asked what they would like to continue or change at their school. Collaborative leadership means eliciting feedback and making decisions with all stakeholders, including students.

School Staff

If school staff are not clear in their understanding of a community school, they may confuse parent involvement with time for collaborative decision-making with parents as a stakeholder group. A professional development session that would address this could center on Epstein and Associates (2019) types of involvement. Looking at specific professional development sessions that staff receive can shed light on the readiness of a given school site to begin community school implementation. This can include who facilitates the professional development, how often it needs to occur, and how it will evolve over time as implementation becomes a natural part of the school culture. Research should also examine how professional development is differentiated for staff based on their roles and experience.

Parents

Parents play a critical role in the education of their child and bring a unique perspective to community schools. They have many assets that can be used as resources in a school community. They also have ideas that can enhance initiatives and existing relationships with community partners. Future research should examine how parent input is elicited and what role parents play in school-wide decision-making.

Community Partners

Each neighborhood has a wealth of local resources in close proximity to a school. These include non-profits, religious centers, businesses, higher education institutions, and government assets. Schools can work with these entities to create mutually beneficial partnerships. The local community should be used as a tool to support the school in educating students.

Data Collection

Some community school models put emphasis on parent and community involvement, while others focus on data collection. Both are integral components of an effective community school and must be included in any definition a school adopts for itself. Additionally, data need to be collected academically as well as through a social/emotional lens to provide a well-rounded picture of the needs and assets of a school community. Personal, unplanned interactions are powerful data collection opportunities for staff to understand the needs of a student and/or family. Surveys, questionnaires, and formal meetings are not always necessary to gather data.

COVID-19 Impact on Implementation

Future research should examine the impact of COVID-19 and how it changed the way schools operate to reach beyond the student to families. The role communities play in partnering with schools to support the larger neighborhood should be examined, and a needs assessment should be conducted at least once a year to determine the evolving needs of stakeholder communities.

Results and the Research Question

The research question for this study was, "How is the perception of student academic proficiency impacted when shared leadership and collaborative decision-making in a community school model are adopted?" Although the study was unable to draw from student assessment scores due to COVID-19, the narratives provided by the adults and students who are part of the Pioneer Elementary community describe a welcoming environment where students enjoy coming to school and adults work together to support the mission of the school. Genius hour showcases were mentioned repeatedly as something that is working well at Pioneer Elementary. The principal described genius hour as "doing something fun at the end of the day for 1 hour" for both students and staff, while a school staff member said that student attitudes overall "have become a lot more proactive in the classroom." Through genius hour, students are leaving school at the end of the day doing an activity they chose and having fun.

A staff member said the community school model has helped to build respect between staff and families, stating "The respect is there for the school… and we respect their parents as well." Parents are a valued member of the school community. One parent described meetings as open "for comment, discussions, questions, clarification" and said staff went out of their way to make parents feel comfortable by "sitting at the same table together."

Data collected from the needs assessment demonstrated a need for food assistance. Working with a community partner, Pioneer Elementary School set up bi-weekly food pantries for the school and the larger community. A parent noted that this was "really strong"

and "pretty consistent." A staff member reflected on the journey so far when they said that "all the schools deserve these things."

Implementing a community school model is more than a one-time program. It involves seeing students as more than individuals—as people who bring with them their unique families, cultures, languages, and lived experiences. Schools are a safe space where socialization can occur and students receive meals, rather than mere brick-and-mortar buildings. And neighborhoods have resources and assets that can be utilized to support student growth and learning. Based on this synopsis, student proficiency is measured beyond student assessment scores; proficiency hinges on a school environment that is conducive to authentic learning and corresponds to student talents and interests, where parent input is actively sought out, decisions are collaborative and based on data, and the responsibility of schooling is enhanced by the community. Pioneer Elementary School encompasses these values and puts students at the center of the school's ongoing work. This is one of the reasons that Pioneer Elementary School was not closed by the state education department. It remained open and is a school that the community is proud of.

Conclusion

The data in this study revealed that the stakeholders at Pioneer Elementary School were proud of the work they had done to transform their school into a community school. Although the site had been a community school for 4 school years and many positive changes had come as a result, participants realized there is still work to be done. Shared accountability and responsibility for student learning, continued community partnerships, and overall student, family, and staff well-being remained a focus of the continued work of Pioneer Elementary School.

There is no clear-cut, specific end point when a site is working toward being a successful community school. Instead, implementation is a moving target, constantly evolving with the community. Being an effective community school is not necessarily about how many donations are received or the number of community partners a school has. Rather, being an effective community school is dependent on the school and community working in tandem to assess and address the needs of the students and their families through a shared goal. After all, students are the future. And based on the work at Pioneer Elementary School, the future is bright.

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Appendix A

Principal Interview Questions

<u>Individual Interview with the Principal</u>

Thank you for participating in this study. As part of my research, I will be asking you questions about the implementation of a community school model at Pioneer Elementary School. I will be recording this session as a quality control measurement.

1) What makes Pioneer unique from other community schools?

2) How has Pioneer evolved over time into what it looks like today?

3) What is your definition of collaborative leadership? Have you shared this definition with stakeholders at Pioneer?

4) What professional preparation did you have in leading a community school?

5) How do you prioritize community school implementation?

6) Describe the types of communication that you utilize with various stakeholders:
   -staff
   -students
   -parents
   -community partners (examples: non-profit agencies, businesses, politicians).

7) How do you work to align the work of various teams to the central mission of the school?

8) What would the school community say about your leadership style?

9) How has your leadership approach changed since coming to Pioneer?

10) How does the community school coordinator contribute to collaborative leadership?

11) How does collaborative leadership complement the other 3 pillars of a community school?

12) Do you see a connection between collaborative leadership as a pillar of a community school and school climate?

Individual Interview Questions

1

Interview Questions

Thank you for participating in this study. As part of my research, I will be asking you questions about the implementation of a community school model at Pioneer Elementary School. You will remain anonymous. I will be recording this session as a quality control measure and to help me accurately capture your responses.

Have you read the consent form for this research project and do you agree to participate in this study?

1. What is your connection with Pioneer? Staff member, parent/guardian or a community partner?

2. Are you a member of the community school council? If so, for how long?

3. How would you describe the overall school climate?

4. What opportunities have you been given to contribute to the school-wide rules, norms, and expectations?

5. How do you participate in meetings related to decision-making and implementing strategic plans?

6. Describe the designated time and space for staff and families/community members to collaborate for the purposes of decision-making related to school policies and practices.

7. Describe any leadership development opportunities related to community schools that have been made available to you.

8. What school-wide decisions have been made a result of data? What was the data that was used?

9. How is data disseminated at Pioneer?

10. What are the processes and procedures for monitoring and assessing improvement initiatives at Pioneer?

11. Describe the events that Pioneer provides that are designed to connect families, community members, and educators.

12. How do you communicate (2-way) with school staff, parents, or community partners?

13. How often do you participate in community events and activities as a representative of Pioneer?

14. What is something that is working really well at Pioneer? Why do you think this is the case?

15. What is something that Pioneer can improve upon? Why do you think this is the case?

16. Is there anything else about the community school experience at Pioneer that you would like to share with me?

Appendix C

Student Questionnaire

Community School Implementation

Assent to Participate in Research

Spring, 2021

You are being asked to join a research study by _____ **and** _____ **from the Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy Department at the University of New Mexico. This project will examine the implementation of a community school model at Pioneer Elementary School.**

If you join the project, you will be asked to complete one survey about your school experience at Pioneer. The survey is electronic and can be taken with your chrome book during class in the spring 2021 semester.

There may be some risks such as you may feel that the answers to some of the questions are private. If you feel this way, you do not have to answer those questions. There may also be some benefits, or good things that happen. For instance, your contributions will be shared with adults who may use them to make decisions at Pioneer Elementary School.

If you do not want to join the project, you can choose not to fill out the survey. Your participation is optional.

Any information about you will be kept secure by the researchers by your responses remaining anonymous and not connected with you. The researchers do not know who you are.

We would like you to talk with your parents about this before you decide to join or not join this study. We will also ask your parents if they want you to be in this study.

If you have any questions at any time, please call or email _____
_____ **If you would like to talk to someone else, you can call the Office of the IRB at** _____ **or email at** _____

You do not have to be in this study. If you do choose to be in the study, you can change your mind at any time. The researcher won't care if you change your mind or if you don't want to join this study.

Entering your information into this form means you have read this form and all of your questions have been answered. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form.

* 1. First Name

[   ]

* 2. Last Name

[   ]

* 3. Date

Date

Date

MM/DD/YYYY

    * 4. I agree to join this study.

       ☐ Yes

       ☐ No

Copy of Community School Implementation

Community School Implementation Student Survey

Students, we would like to know how you feel about your school. It is important that your voice is heard. You are not required to fill out this survey. It is completely voluntary. Your answers will not be graded or connected to you.

5. What grade are you in?

[▲▼]

6. Do you feel connected to people at school?

◯ Yes

◯ No

7. Do you help make class rules or choose things to do at school?

◯ Yes

◯ No

8. Do the teachers and other grown-ups at school tell you when you do a good job?

◯ Yes

◯ No

9. My school wants me to learn a lot.

◯ Yes

◯ No

10. My teacher would notice if I was absent from school.

◯ Yes

◯ No

3

11. I enjoy coming to school (remote learning or in-person).

◯ Yes

◯ No

12. I am proud to be a student at Pioneer Elementary School

◯ Yes

◯ No

13. I feel like I belong at Pioneer Elementary School

◯ Yes

◯ No

14. My parents talk to me about my schoolwork.

◯ Yes

◯ No

15. How well do you do in your schoolwork?

◯ I do better than most students.

◯ I do about the same as others.

◯ I don't do as well as most others.

16. Do the teachers and other grown-ups at school listen when you have something to say?

◯ Yes, most of the time.

◯ Yes, some of the time.

◯ No, never.

17. Do you do things to be helpful at school?

◯ Yes, most of the time.

◯ Yes, some of the time.

◯ No, never.

18. Does what you learn in school help you outside of school?

◯ Yes

◯ No

19. Does your teacher ask you about your life outside of school?

◯ Yes

◯ No

20. What is the best thing about Pioneer Elementary School?

21. What could your school do better?

Appendix D

Lists of Repeated Ideas

Leadership
- Always listens
- Available, listens
- Great leadership is not just the principal but the team. Finds resources and advocates for students, staff and families. The focus is on teaching and learning.
- Open
- Flexible
- He hears us
- Open door policy.
- Does not say no. Always says yes, let's find a way.
- Transparent, welcoming and keeps things light.

Events

Prior to COVID-19	Currently
Family Night	Virtual parent meetings
Aloft	Mobile food bank (drive-thru)
Soccer	Open House
Clean up sanctuary	Meet the Teacher
Genius Hour	Conferences
Health Fair	Dental Appointments
Parent Room	Hair cuts
GED Classes	School Supplies
Parenting Classes	Virtual Science Night
Volunteers	Science Fair
Food bank	Genius Hour (Virtual)
In person pick up/drop off	Online cooking nights
Basketball	
Parent Teacher Council	
English Classes	
Science Night	
Holiday Festivals	
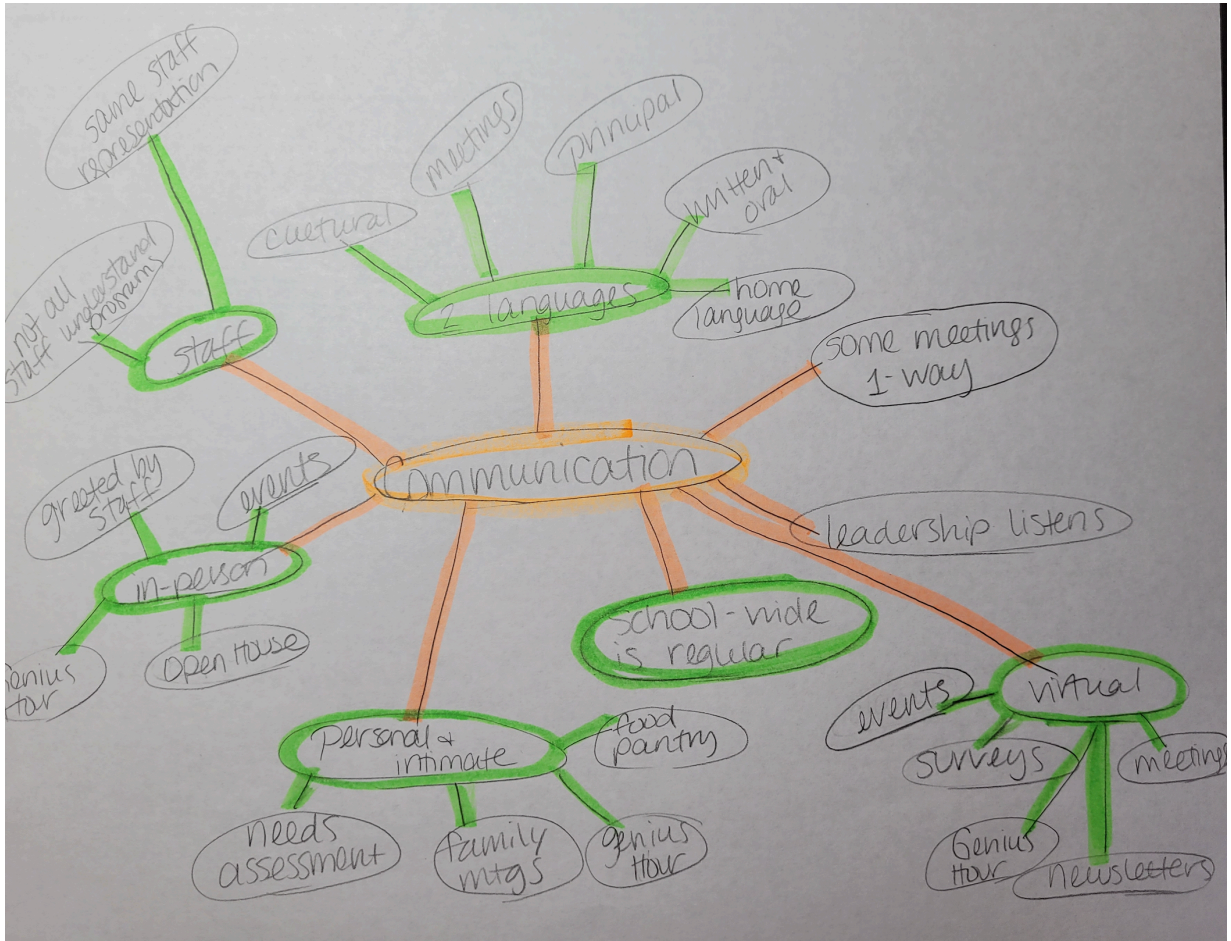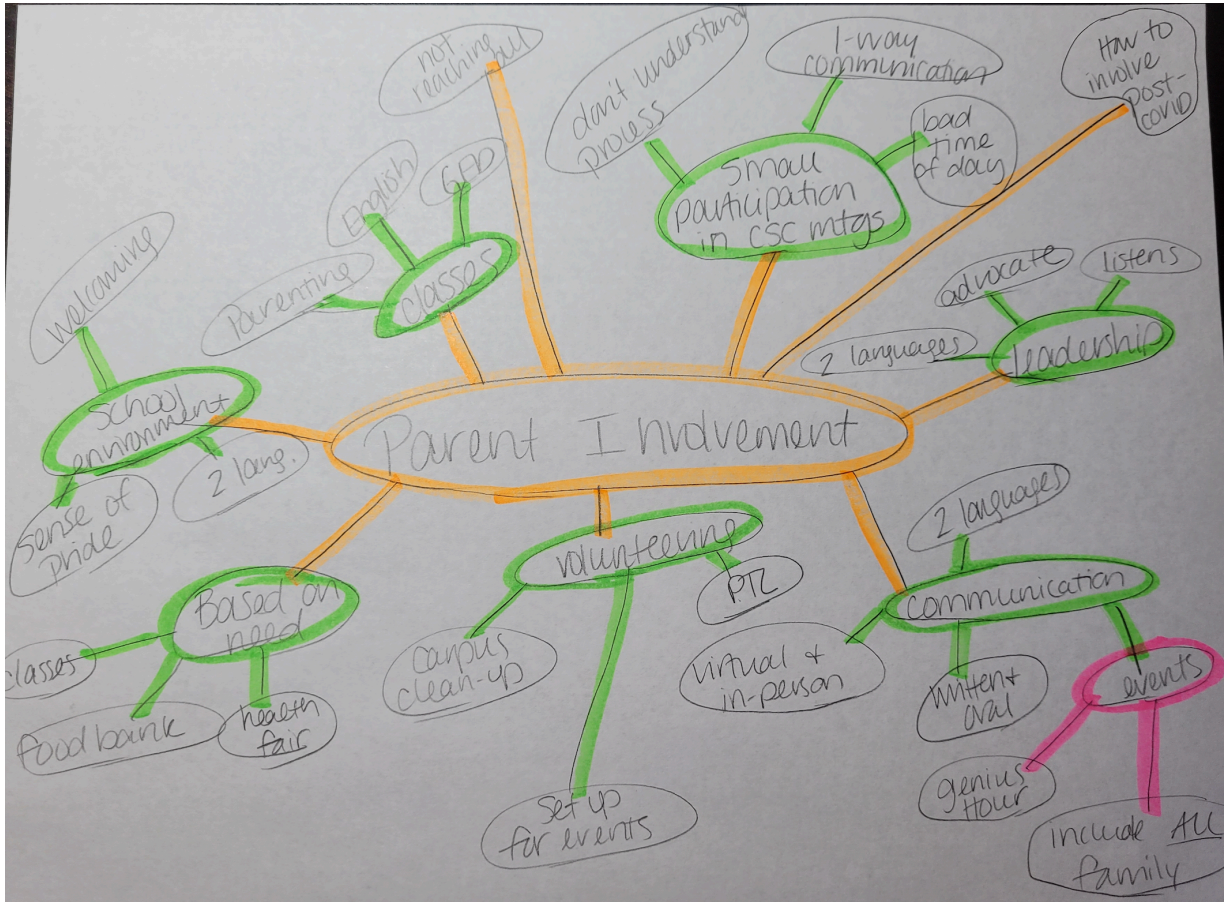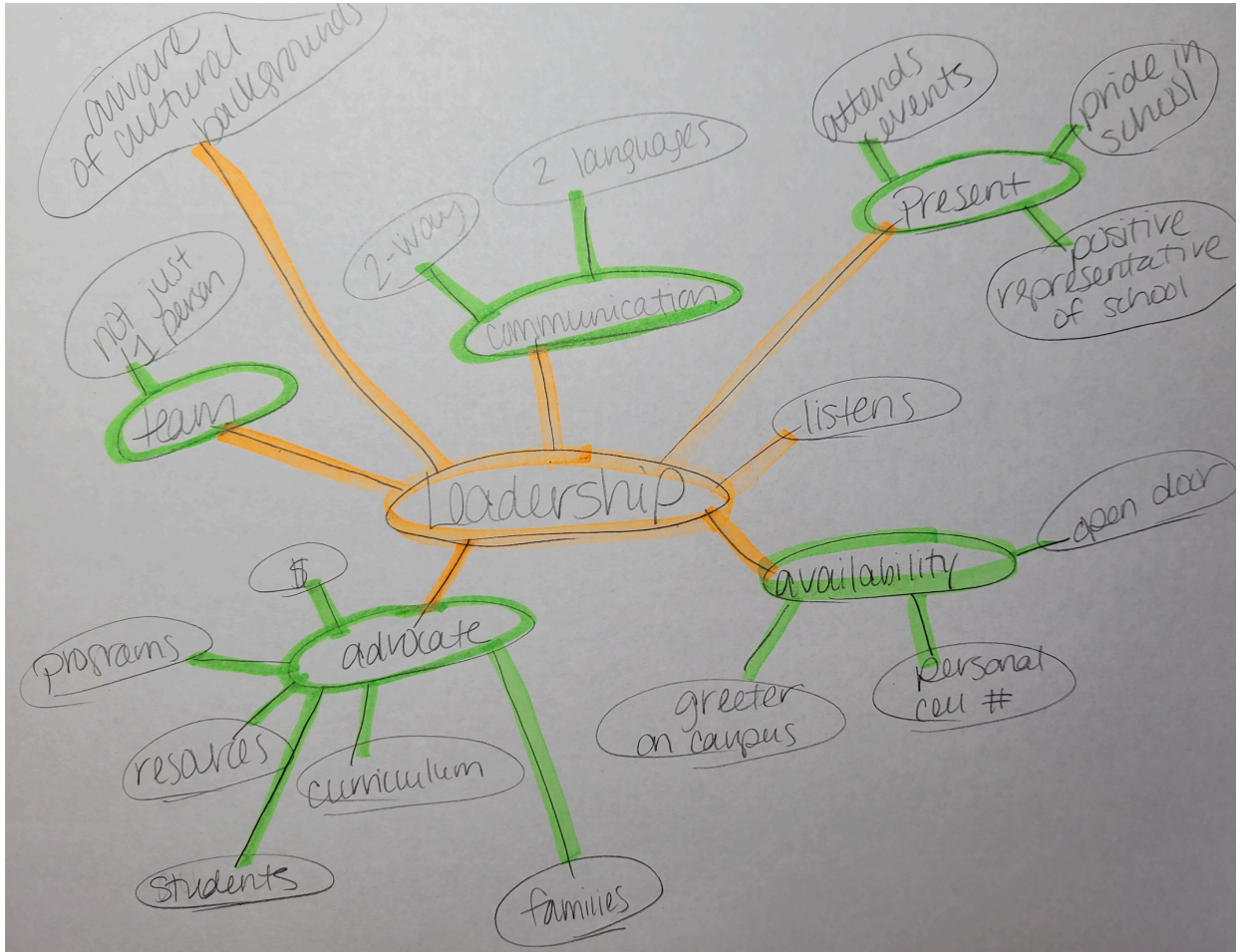
Word Tally

This chart represents the number of times that words appeared in interviews, excluding the principal interview. Green represents stakeholder groups. Blue are examples of the four pillars of a community school. Orange represents communication and red includes COVID. The word count excludes any words that were in the questions.

Leadership		Communication		Team
30		9		12
Availability		Spanish		Classes
1		13		29
Present		Staff		Environment
5		85		3
Advocate		Personal		Volunteer
3		7		19
Communicate		Schoolwide		Parent(s)
26		3		251
Goal Team		Virtual		Family(ies)
6		7		118
Data		Genius Hour		Principal
94		22		26
		Pandemic		COVID/COVID-19
		24		20