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A Magnet Middle School Longitudinal Case Study of Student Achievement, Attitudes, and Parental Engagement

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

in

Educational Leadership

by

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The Dissertation of José Manuel Villarreal is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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DEDICATION

To my son, Nathan Macario Villarreal, who was born February 25, 2007; two months after I was accepted into the doctorate program and hired as a Principal, you came into our lives. I dedicate my tenacity to you in hopes that you can see that with life constantly changing, you are never to give up, and most importantly come out of it with a smile.

To my son, Noah Manuel Villarreal, born December 1, 2009, I dedicate my resiliency, which will shape your understanding of how the world works, and that help you see simply being the smartest person in the room does not make you the most successful.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Magnet schools are public schools with a specific curricular theme. The curricular theme may be the arts, science or some other theme attractive to a potentially diverse student body. Since attendance at magnet schools is a matter of parental choice, school districts often use magnet schools as a vehicle for their mandatory or voluntary integration plans. The United States Department of Education has supported magnet schools through a national competitive grant until a recent Supreme Court ruling limited magnet schools' purpose by restricting admission

policies. Recently, the No Child Left Behind policy has provided parents some choice by allowing transferring from low performing schools to high performing schools, with this magnet schools have always been an option for families since the late 1970's. Yet, there is limited empirical literature focused on determining the effectiveness of magnet schools in affecting student achievement, student belonging and parental engagement. A case study of one magnet middle school provides the opportunity to identify the impact of these three components and their journey toward closing the achievement gap utilizing the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). This theoretical framework provided the foundation for an exploration of the overall effectiveness of one magnet middle school during its first two years of existence and the goal of evaluating students' sense of achievement, belonging and parental engagement. I hypothesized that there would be positive effects on students' attitude of belonging, academic achievement and parents' engagement. Results from statistical analyses indicated a statistically significant increase in: Latinos' perceived Scholastic (Achieve) and Social (Belong) Competence scores from 2007 to 2009 and males' Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 to 2009. Females also demonstrated a statistically significant increase in Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 to 2009. Other findings indicate that program improvement and other personal and school-level demographic variables yielded significant findings. Implications are offered for future research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted in 2002, became the mantra of the education world, and immediately brought pressure on schools to successfully provide their students with targeted and purposeful instruction. As part of the NCLB legislation, schools are now held more accountable in the journey to close the achievement gap and make sure all students achieve academic proficiency. Strict accountability leads to measurement of academic achievement each year, and schools that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must take corrective actions by providing supplemental services (e.g., tutoring and after school programming). If schools continue fail to meet the AYP after five years, they must make dramatic changes to the extent of restructuring the school by replacing all employees and engaging an outside agency to manage the day-to-day operations.

Along with this added level of accountability and strict monitoring of school sites' annual testing performance, NCLB has also given parents greater control over their children's education by providing them with "school of choice". School of choice empowers parents to select the educational environment they feel is best for their child. In other words, school of choice is parental choice. Bell, Okpala, and Tuprah (2007) describe school of choice as a major force in the American education system and since the 1970's as a means to implement voluntary desegregation plans. School districts have used the mechanism of choice to expand curricula and provide a choice of settings. Specifically, NCLB gives families the freedom to send their students to a

higher performing school within their district if they find that their home school has been designated as consistently under achieving.

Archbald (2004) states:

> The growth of school-choice policy over the past two decades has been a major new development in public education. While charter schools and voucher programs have garnered most of the attention recently, school choice using magnet schools remains the most common approach in relation to the number of districts and children involved. Magnet schools have programmatic specializations that parents can choose as an alternative to their children's regularly assigned schools. They are required to operate under racial-balance guidelines and are used, along with school-choice policies that open up choice to most or all schools within a district. (p. 283)

Though parents have options in selecting a school, the challenge is to find one that not only fits the student's interest but also provides a high level of academic achievement, encourages students to find belonging in a safe and welcoming environment and engages parental satisfaction.

Problem Statement

Magnet schools – one model of school choice – were designed to attract, rather than force, students to attend certain schools and to form a diversified student body. Hausman and Brown (2002) describe magnet schools as sharing four qualities: (1) a theme, (2) admissions criteria to facilitate voluntary desegregation, (3) choice of school by families, and (4) access to students beyond district attendance boundaries.

Typically, magnet schools are shaped by their mandates to reduce racial isolation of minority students as described by Archbald (2004):

> Although magnet schools are always part of school-choice programs by federal requirement, they use location, advertising, recruitment, and enrollment caps to enroll student bodies that are racially balanced

> within prescribed ranges. In this way, they differ from charter schools, which usually do not have an explicit aim of reducing racial isolation in their attendance area or host district (although they may have this effect or, indeed, the opposite effect). (p.284)

Hudgens (1973) explains that the court decision of Brown vs. Board of Education that was aimed at integrating schools by provided schools with the opportunity to integrate. This ruling allowed for flexibility in attendance of specific schools to more of choice but in this case, local districts were choosing for families. Though this was the first signal of a changing public school system, today the choice for public education has expanded for families.

School districts can then begin the process of creating magnet schools with specific curriculum themes and a proven record of accomplishment of meeting district goals for either mandatory or voluntary desegregation. With this, magnet schools have remained a popular schooling choice throughout the years to establish such diverse programs. Rossell (1979) wrote that schools should attempt to attract a diverse student population rather than have the district mandate groups of students to attend specific schools in order to facilitate desegregation. The trend has been for districts to design schools such as magnet schools to implement their plans. Magnet schools are then assigned a theme based on results from surveying the community about its preferences for various curricular topics. The funding of such specialized programs is then the obstacle by school districts to establish challenging parameters with financing, which is generally hard to accomplish due to the uncharted waters of establishing such a non-traditional program.

In 1999, a poll by Public Agenda Online asked parents whether they agreed with the statement, “Parents should have the right to choose the school they want their child to attend.” Results indicate that 91% did feel this way and 79% strongly agree that choice is an important factor in deciding on their child’s future academic experience. With the ability to select a magnet school, families today believe that they have more power and choice in their child’s education, and appreciate the privilege, through NCLB, of transferring their child out of a low performing school.

One district that demonstrates dedication to providing schools of choice for students through the NCLB mandate is the Portland, Oregon School District. Fusarelli (2007) describes Portland Superintendent Vicki Phillips as encouraging districts, which are slow to implement choice, to perceive this as a powerful approach for students and parents. While districts are continuing to establish magnet schools in their communities, research continues to evaluate magnet schools across districts or cities. Individual magnet schools are unique in their curriculum design, admissions process, student selection, personal and social student development and customer service approach toward parents. Given that magnet schools have a long and complex history and continue to be a choice for families desiring quality schooling for their children (Kafer, 2005), there remains a need for continued research to provide clarity about magnet school effects on student achievement, and to provide districts with a road map for creating and maintaining successful magnet schools.

A review of the existing literature shows a number of areas in which further research is warranted. One suggested research topic is the examination of the

educational aspirations of magnet school students compared to those of non-magnet school students. In addition, there is a consensus that future studies should control for increased self-esteem (derived from being a “special student in a special school”). Further, researchers advocate for an exploration of the emphasis on high academic achievement, the amount of money spent per pupil and the attraction of better-qualified teachers in order to attain an accurate picture of the impact of magnet schools on academic achievement. Another valuable addition to the body of research on the topic of magnet schools and their impact on student achievement would be a longitudinal study that examines the long-term effects of magnet schools on student achievement and the parents’ experience.

With great interest to find whether a magnet school can meet the expectations of all stakeholders, this dissertation represents a longitudinal single-case study aimed at better understanding the effect of the NMV Magnet Middle School (NMV) in the context of its motto of “Engage, Achieve and Belong.” on students. The Circle of Courage approach will be used to analyze the overall effectiveness of this one school on the students and parents’ experiences related to the school motto. It is expected that an analysis of trends and patterns will affirm the purpose of NMV in its initial conception and implementation of this program.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students’ attitudes of belonging?

Hypothesis 1: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' attitudes of belonging.

Research question 2: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?

Hypothesis 2: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

Research question 3: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect parents' engagement with the school?

Hypothesis 3: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school.

Personal Interest

The magnet middle school studied is NMV. In the fall of 2007, as principal, I opened NMV with approximately 200 sixth graders. The three-year growth plan targeted 600 students from sixth through eighth grade. The curriculum theme for NMV is math, science and technology. In the first year, students applied to attend the school from the surrounding communities, and their applications were selected through a first-come-first-served process. Sixteen staff members were hired who shared a common vision and mission to close the achievement gap and a passion for a math, science and technology focus.

As a basis for this study, it is important to understand the impact of magnet schools in education and the critical importance of establishing a school that would assist students and their parents. This school was planned to facilitate a sense of

identity for the students, initially through a marketing branding campaign. This was seen as crucial in order to set itself apart from the other local middle schools. As Hauge and Power (2008) suggest:

> Against this noisy background, companies are conscious of their need to differentiate themselves from competitors and of the consumers' needs—both for cognitive ciphers/navigation aids that help make choices easier and for identity kits that allow them to position themselves in socio-cultural worlds. Branding is an attempt to strategically "personify" products, to give them a history and a personality. However, these personalities have a tendency to have a life of their own, and in business terms, a value of their own. (p. 124)

The school created a motto to establish a philosophical foundation with three characteristics: engage, achieve and belong. The three characteristics as illustrated by Figure 1 were used as a lens to identify variables that potentially could increase magnet school effectiveness for students and their parents. The first characteristic of engage in this study was measured by parental satisfaction to understand perceptions of our campus through various topics related to their child's experience. The second, belonging, was identified through the perspective of students' changes in self-perceptions of competence during the longitudinal study. Finally, the characteristic of achieve incorporates the notion of the school's ability to provide students with positive academic outcomes.

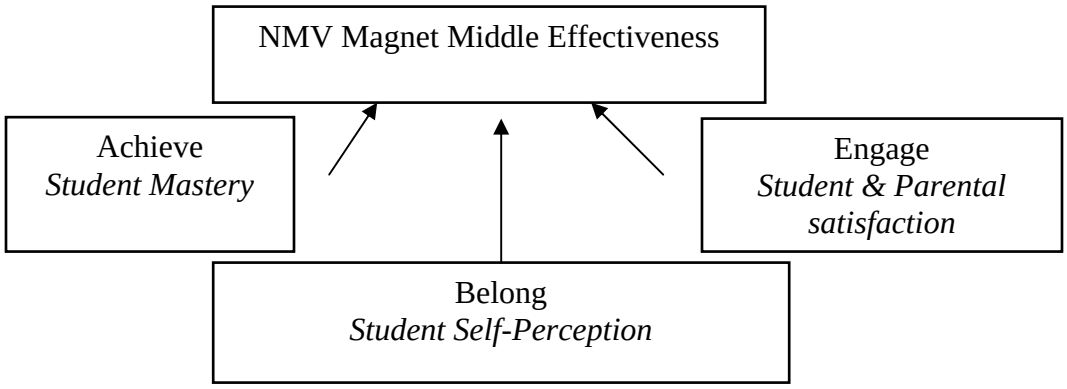


Figure 1. NMV motto and overall effectiveness are illustrated. The graphic shows the blend of both conceptual foundations and how they will be measured.

Significance of the Study

With the plethora of historic and challenging obstacles that magnet schools face, more research is needed to explore various structural and curriculum components that typify magnet schools. With the federal imperative to reach the goal of educational achievement for all students by 2014, as mandated by the NCLB policy by the United States Department of Education (2004), schools are required to ensure that all students achieve proficiency in math and language arts, but magnet schools need to provide further evidence of their worth. Schools such as magnets need to provide evidence of their worth. The opportunity to provide such evidence by collecting data at a new magnet middle school on student achievement, belonging and parental engagement will function as an important contribution to the current literature on the effectiveness of magnet schools. Further, the longitudinal case study magnet school design is limited and these data may help to shape the development of new magnet middle schools in their efforts to create a successful learning environment as

preparation for high student academic achievement. Providing students with a sense of belonging and engaging parents effectively are additional meaningful goals.

This study describes a possible method by which the magnet middle schools progress in meeting its developmental goals and benchmarks can be evaluated. In other words, a primary purpose of this study is to develop a measurement strategy to permit a determination of the extent to which a magnet school's progress is achieving the school district's goals for the school. Given the controversial and historic nature of magnet schools, NMV will evaluate its progress to provide evidence of its impact on the community it serves. If successful, a school district may decide to move forward in a cost-effective manner to replicate this type of school in the district during the current difficult economic times.

NMV was established in 2007, in the midst of slow economy and a predicted major budget crisis. The University of California Anderson Forecasts has provided forecasts on the future economies of California and United States. One contributing author (Mitchell, 2007) to these reports describes the state of the economy in California and the U.S. as NMV was under financial scrutiny with investments in curriculum development, facilities, technology, and staffing during the slowed economy:

> The new governor took office in the midst of a major state budget crisis. At the time he took office, it was unclear that state could pay its bills if drastic action were not taken. Yet the incoming governor was committed to a no-tax-increase program. Through borrowing, the state managed to surmount its budget crisis. As the economy recovered and resulting tax revenue flowed in, it even was able to engage in major construction projects. When he stood for re-election, the governor was overwhelmingly returned to office for a second term. Sadly, however,

> the economy began to slow during that second term. Fears mounted that the state could face a renewed budget crisis. (p. 1)

Hudgens (1973) explains that since the decision from the Brown v. Board of Education case, schools have faced a variety of community, social and political challenges. Immediately after the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, school districts experienced an exodus of white students, and were forced to realize that families were intentionally segregating themselves in reaction to the new integration policies.

Before school districts considered using the magnet school concept, districts such Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC acted upon the belief that changing school attendance boundaries would provide a more manageable acceptable structure to desegregation (Hudgens, 1973). The geographical attendance zones in this district, as reformulated, provided students with the freedom to transfer to schools of their choice. This district needed the support of the Supreme Court in 1971 with inclusion of busing as a support for desegregation as noted in McKay (1975). He further describes the impact of the North Carolina Board of Education v. Swann, 402 U.S. 43 (1971) which affirmed that is was unconstitutional for North Carolina to continue to prohibit grouping and busing of students based on racial assignment. Apple and Pedroni (2005) found this to be a supportive action, in the spirit of the Brown decision but pointed out "how difficult it is for educational policies to change a society so deeply rooted in racial inequality and segregation" (p. 2070).

The United States government additionally supported the idea of desegregation by providing financial support for schools and districts to improve the options in

providing their schools of choice. In 1971, the Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity evaluated the appropriation of $75 million through the Emergency School Aide Act. Unfortunately, misuse of the monies by local schools was declared in their report. Learning from this experience, a more refined process was established to provide magnet schools with added resources to bring about successful outcomes in reducing the isolation of minority groups in schools.

Most recently, the federal government has continued to support Magnet Programs by providing grants through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) monitored by the Department of Education (2010). President Barack Obama has provided $110 million dollars within this program for the funding year of 2011. This program provides recipients with an opportunity to fund magnet schools and strives to relieve the pressure on district general funds. Obtaining these funds is very competitive and once awarded the receiving schools is responsible for achieving three goals: the reduction of isolation pertaining to minority schools, the reduction of the percentage of minority students to less than 50% of enrollment, and the maintaining of minority enrollment below 50% (Goldring & Smrekar, 2000).

As the continued federal government financial support suggests, magnet schools have not experienced a decline in attendance or popularity over the years. Rossell (2005) suggests three reasons why magnet schools have remained an integral part of school districts: (1) whites support the positive outcomes of the Civil Rights movement, and support diversity in schools; (2) throughout the No Child Left Behind era, magnet schools are seen as potential choices for students from low performing

schools; and (3) parents like choice and its implications for their children's education. With the continued support and continued popularity of magnet schools, educational researchers have focused on determining magnet school program fidelity and student achievement outcomes.

Rossell (2005) believed that because of recent court rulings against the selection of students based on race, districts would be left to find alternative selection variables themselves. In 2001, the Federal Courts of Appeals covering Connecticut, New York and Vermont upheld the use of race in student assignments to magnet schools with voluntary segregation plans. These states proved that their intent was to support racial diversity. DeBray-Pelot (2007) describes magnet schools as able to foster racial balance on factors such as local geography, school capacity, politics and prior policies. One caveat to this description is that school of choice plans must be well designed in order to refrains from promoting more racial segregation and imbalance in diverse school campuses.

Perhaps school districts practicing race based admission policies were initially left with no other choice as they witnessed school population's change as the United States population diversified. The U.S. Census Bureau (2006) predicted that, since 1970 the U.S. Hispanic population would increase by 38.2 million by 2010. The non-Hispanic white population will increase more slowly than other racial and ethnic groups; whites will become a minority (47%) by 2050, as reported by Cohn and Passel in the Pew Research Center documents (2008). The challenge to bring diversity will become only more difficult for schools.

In 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a decision that outlawed the use of racial quotas at the University of Michigan. This ruling eventually had consequences in highlighting the long used practice of employing race as an attribute for admission to magnet schools. Yet, with all the changes of support of magnet schools and ultimately schools of choice as described by the courts, a local Chicago committee of financial, political and corporate leaders called for an expansion of 100 public charter schools that increased parent choice. One year later, an aggressive plan to renew and revive Chicago Public Schools through the Renaissance 2010 as announced in 2004 by Mayor Daley to provide more schools of choice. Haines and Lipman (2007) indicated that the Mayor's plan was to include closing 60 to 70 public schools and opening 100 new schools, two-thirds of which would be run by private organizations and staffed by teachers and school employees who would not be members of Chicago Public Schools. Though the cities and their school district officials continue to find solutions to continue schools of choice, the challenge remains to establish admissions criteria that can remain sustainable for these campuses.

Rossell (2005) understood that with this landmark decision, schools were no longer able to use race as a factor in the admissions process at most magnet schools. A bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court (October, 2006) issued what is likely to be another landmark opinion -- ruling that race cannot be a factor in the assignment of children to public schools. As this opinion came down, schools were at a loss as to whether they no longer needed to continue voluntary integration plans. Within a year of the previous opinion, the Supreme Court of the United States (2007) voted 5-4 to

require schools to discontinue the use of public school choice plans in Seattle, Washington, and Louisville, Kentucky, and ruled that racial criteria for student admissions as unconstitutional. This decision made an impact on districts and/or schools who were implementing voluntary desegregation plans using these same criteria as their mode of providing racial balance to their schools.

With all of the historic and challenging obstacles that magnet schools face, more research is needed with exploration of the various elements that can make a magnet school effective and contribute to the educational choices for parents. Magnet schools have established themselves as a formidable option for schools of choice. The various studies on magnet schools range from individual student success to overall program evaluation. Very few if any longitudinal studies exist that analyze student achievement, student belonging and parental engagement in a magnet middle school environment.

Conceptualizing the effectiveness of a magnet middle school begins with research on curriculum. Poppell and Hague (2001) suggests that school districts considering alternative learning environments such as a magnet school should consider a “best practices” approach, in which the impact of alternative environments on improvement initiatives is evaluated for how most effective a magnet school can serve different portions of a diverse student population (Reimer & Cash, 2003). These authors believe that the curriculum and instruction must be creative and flexible and include the following components:

> a) teachers who are caring and challenge the expectations of all students; b) each student should have a personal portfolio that will

> follow their success in and out of the classroom; c) career curriculum must be woven into the academic areas; d) hands-on coursework; e) limited class size; f) available computers and software for both student and teacher; g) integration of technology within each classroom; h) positive teaching environment; i) a mentoring program; j) differentiating instruction; k) extracurricular activities and l) distance learning opportunities. (Reimer & Cash, 2003, p. 26)

The pressure to establish a magnet school with researched effective school attributes is great and yet more investigation is needed to establish a generealizable approach for all magnet school programs. Magnet schools are still in their infancy of their outcomes and more data is to be gathered in order to measure effective teaching practices.

Engage.

As reflected in the NMV marketing campaign, engaging parents was a critical effort from the first recruitment presentation throughout the parents' experiences in the first and second school years. As a small school, the vision of NMV was to extend communication to the parents' that would exceed expectations. Parent engagement is the final component that was measured based on self-reported perceptions of how the campus engages them in their child's NMV experience. Parent engagement is measured by a parent customer survey in order to identify the various areas of strengths and weaknesses as a school (Tuck 1994).

Goodall and Harris (2007) state that "relationships between schools and parents are of the greatest importance for the future of education in this country." Parental engagement must be embedded across all areas of the school, ensuring that it is not a 'bolt-on extra' but rather is integral to all areas of school life" (p. 12).

Achieve.

The United States Department of Education (2004) stated that the major purpose of NCLB is to close the nation's achievement gap. This law shines a needed spotlight on the level of achievement of several categories of historically underserved students, including minority children, children from low-income families, limited English proficient (LEP) children, and children with disabilities.

NMV had the potential to begin with a new concept and understanding concerning the focus on closing the achievement gap as students completed their 6th through eighth grade experiences on the campus. Two major benchmarks were evaluated through the California Department of Education Accountability standards. The first was to evaluate students' overall gains year to year on their California Standards Tests. The second was the points earned through the Academic Performance Index (API). This is a single number, ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000 that reflects a school's performance level, based on the results of statewide testing (California Department of Education, 2009a). BT Middle School, which has earned the highest scoring API among all schools in California, including kindergartens to high schools. NMV established a goal to exceed BT Middle School's API score.

Belong.

NMV was dedicated to providing a positive learning and social environment as well as a safe haven to create a sense of student belonging. This was a challenge that began to be addressed immediately with the creation of the school; we asked students to apply from various elementary schools from throughout the city. As is common

with magnet schools, given the wide area from which students apply, students attending magnet schools do not necessarily attend with other students from their neighborhoods. Thus, a sense of belonging (as seen through the lens of students' self-perception) will be the dependent variable in this component. Magnet schools also have to monitor their attrition of their student body in quantifying their success.

As cited in Bouchey and Harter (2005):

> A substantial body of literature has demonstrated that interactions with parents, teachers, and peers affect students' achievement-related beliefs and academic outcomes (e.g., Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Berndt & Keefe, 1996; Eccles-Parsons, Adler, & Kaczala, 1982; Eccles-Parsons, Kaczala, & Meece, 1982; Luster & McAdoo, 1996; Schunk & Hanson, 1989; Trent, Cooney, Russell, & Warton, 1996; Wentzel, 1998, 1999). (p. 674)

The NMV students' experience will be measured through the self-perception of their competence in their overall self-worth including scholastic, social, athletic, physical and behavioral (Harter, 1985).

Theoretical Frameworks

Measuring a schools program through the lens of a theoretical framework can be plagued with limitations. Besides measuring NMV for its effectiveness for the purpose of this study, NMV needed to establish positive outcomes to demonstrate to stakeholders that its investment was for good purpose. In this high-stakes financial and academic environment, any school opening must measure its effectiveness in order to survive. Moreover, as Mattioli (2009) explains in her article that as schools began in the fall, as many as 100,000 of last year's teachers will be without their jobs which results in an overall drop in education jobs in the U.S., estimates Carmen Quesada,

director of field operations for the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union.

NMV needed to find a measurement to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Researched based best practices for designing effective schools, has brought forth various evaluation instruments. Several program evaluation instruments were established through state and/or local initiatives to measure schools with high performance. One example is from the California Department of Education (2010b) has collaborated with the Schools to Watch® (STW) program, which has created criteria to identify high-performing middle-grades schools. The organization believes that a truly high-performing middle-level school embodies the intersection of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure. Another instrument is also through the California Department of Education (2010c) which has also established, a highly sought recognition known as the Blue Ribbon School Program. Schools recognized as Blue Ribbon from the elementary and secondary levels are both academically superior and have demonstrated dramatic gains in student achievement, while serving an economically disadvantaged population of students. Schools recognized are considered national models of excellence. This distinction is often used as marketing and affirmation messages to stakeholders that their school is one that has meet or exceed state expectations.

Though the previous tools discussed may bring NMV some insight on components of the program, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the core values of NMV, which are, engage, achieve and belong. The work of Brendtro, Brokenleg, and

Van Bockern (2002) which discussed in Reclaiming Youth at Risk, Our Hope for The Future, provides a philosophy that draws parallels to NMV's purpose. Brendtro, et al. (2002) stated, "Native American philosophies of child management represent what is perhaps the most effective system in positive discipline ever developed. These approaches emerged from cultures where the central purpose of life was the education and empowerment of children" (p. 44). Moreover, they describe concepts to mend relationships with at risk youth through the Circle of Courage. The illustration, provided by Calgary Board of Education (2008), demonstrates a traditional Native educational practices (see Figure 2) shaped around four directions in the middle of the circle which are: (1) significance was nurtured in a cultural milieu that celebrated the universal need for belonging; (2) competence was ensured by guaranteed opportunities for mastery; (3) power was fostered by encouraging the expression of independence; and (4) virtue was reflected in the preeminent value of generosity (Brendtro et al., 2002).

The philosophy of the Circle of Courage provided an encouraging alignment with NMV's core values. The previous application of the Circle of Courage came from Peterson and Taylor (2009) who drew parallels between Brendtro et al. (2002) and the concept of Whole Schooling, which suggests creating nurturing and democratic learning environments. The authors proposed ways to enact and institutionalize the four areas from the Circle of Courage and established Eight Principals of what it would look like in a school setting, which are: a) Create learning spaces for all (Belonging), b) Empower citizens for democracy (Mastery), c) Include

all in learning together (Belonging), d) Build a caring community (Generosity), e) Support learning (Independence), f) Partner with families and the community (Belonging), g) Teach all using authentic, h) differentiated multilevel instruction (Mastery), and i) Use authentic assessment to promote learning (Mastery). As this concept of the Circle of Courage will be the lens through the analysis of data collected for student achievement, attitudes and parental engagement, Tharp (2005) reminds us, “educational research is widely critiqued, even internally, for its lack of cumulative knowledge, lack of a stable lexicon, and cyclic rediscoveries draped in new terms” (p. 355).

Figure 2. Circle of Courage illustrations provides a visual representation from the authors Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern. (2002) and describes the four components that NMV will be using to measure effectiveness.

Definition of Terms

Schools of choice are defined by four categories: charter schools, inter-district transfers, private/public vouchers, and magnet schools (Ogawa & Dutton, 1994).

Charter schools, sponsored by public districts, are private schools that have a high level of control and autonomy in making decisions on funding, instruction and theme design.

Caucasian is defined as of, constituting, or characteristic of a race of humankind native to Europe, North Africa, and southwest Asia and classified according to physical features; used especially in referring to persons of European

descent having usually light skin pigmentation (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

White is defined as being a member of a group or race characterized by light pigmentation of the skin of, relating to, characteristic of, or consisting of white people or their culture [from the former stereotypical association of good character with northern European descent] (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

Inter-district transfers allow students to attend neighboring public school districts upon approval by both their assigned district and their district of choice.

Private/public vouchers eliminate traditional district attendance boundary policies and provide students with the option to attend any school they choose. However, in the realm of public schools, only magnet school models encourage diversification of the student population.

Magnet schools are themed schools with a variety of curricular programs such as visual performing arts and math and science, and often boast technology-enriched classroom environments.

Hispanic is defined as of or relating to the people, speech, or culture of Spain or of Spain and Portugal or relating to, or being a person of Latin American descent living in the United States; especially: one of Cuban, Mexican, or Puerto Rican origin (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

Latino is defined as a native or inhabitant of Latin America or a person of Latin-American origin living in the United States (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

Branding is the promotion of a product or service by identifying it with a particular brand (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2010).

Summary of Study

NMV shaped the school with the motto of engage, achieve and belong. These three characteristics as illustrated by Figure 1 were used as a lens to identify variables that may or may not make this magnet school effective for students and their parents. The first characteristic, engage, was measured by parental satisfaction. The second characteristic, achieve, incorporates the notion of the school's ability to provide students with a positive academic outcome. Finally, belonging was operationalized by a two-year longitudinal analysis of the extent of change in students' self-perceptions of competence in several domains.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of this study is to examine the NMV Magnet School program in the SRV Unified School District (SRVUSD) in a 2-year period, which was deemed as critical for the future of the school. Moreover, to measure NMV's impact on students' lives in achievement, belonging and parental engagement within a single-case study. The research and data collected will be offered to SRVUSD for future planning in its decision-making about expanding such programs for students and families.

The theoretical framework of The Circle of Courage was the guiding, overarching lens by which NMV's core values were examined and defined for measurement. The Circle of Courage is a strictly theoretical conceptualization of values and attitudes that is grounded in Native American life perspectives. As such, it can be considered within the larger context of culturally congruent learning theory and school practice. The application of this framework is a departure from existing literature, which generally evaluates magnet school effectiveness in terms of programs.

With the overall school, effectiveness literature is minimal; a similar finding with the efficacy of magnet school programs has revealed mixed outcomes with regard to program effectiveness. Research on positive and negative effects on students attending magnet schools was explored in understanding how magnet schools affect students. One important factor that was considered was evaluating the success of magnet schools within their short history. Furthermore, the influence of parents and the community on these outcomes was also reviewed.

Bielick and Chapman (2003) examined the trends in parents' usage of the school choice option from 1993 to 1999. The vehicle for this report was the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) that provides information (from the 1993, 1996 and 1999 NHES administrations) about public schools of choice in relation to parent satisfaction and involvement, as well as students' postsecondary education plans. The report focused on students in grades 1-12; these data demonstrated that the percentage of children enrolled in public assigned schools decreased from 80% to 76% during the period of 1993 to 1999, while the percentage of children enrolled in public chosen schools increased from 11% to 14% during the same time period. This trend towards decreasing enrollment in public assigned schools and increasing enrollment in public chosen schools was most evident among low-income students and blacks.

Hadderman (2002) studied magnet schools to understand their effects on magnet-school high school graduates; results indicated that the social development and educational/occupational aspirations of these students were equal or better to their non-magnet school counterparts, and they frequently outperformed their conventional high school peers in math, reading, science, and social studies. One caveat to the results of this study is that when considering student ability in the evaluation design, magnet students performed at lower levels than non-magnet students. Hadderman (2002) concludes, "An ideal evaluation of magnet schools would include achievement and other outcomes of magnet and nonmagnet students; an examination of how a magnet school's leadership, staffing, policies, and curriculum influence outcomes; and in-depth study factors such as policies and access that affect the entire district" (p. 5).

Yang, Li, Tompkins and Modarressi (2005) accomplished one of the most rigorous studies conducted on magnet schools' program effectiveness. A quasi-experimental design was utilized, and multiple sets of matched samples were used to examine the extent to which students enrolled in elementary magnet programs experienced greater achievement than did those not enrolled in magnet programs. The results of the study indicated that only a French immersion program, which was a specialized curriculum for the magnet school, had a positive impact on students' reading or mathematic performance. This study highlights the importance of including the curriculum as a variable of study in future research. Moreover, these findings highlight the need for future research focused on other magnet program effects/outcomes such as gains in knowledge of modern technology and improvement in self-esteem.

The gap in research on magnet schools effectiveness is evident since the early 2000's. However, the most recent findings from the University of Connecticut found ongoing work in schools since the era of desegregation that shed light toward a change in magnet schools. Bifulco, Cobb, and Bell (2009) are the most recent comprehensive study to examine academic outcomes of voluntary magnet schools across the state of Connecticut. A 1996 ruling of the Connecticut Supreme Court held: "that as a result of racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, Hartford public school students had been denied equal educational opportunity under the state constitution. In response, the state has adopted a number of programs designed to provide students in the state's central cities opportunities to attend schools with students from suburban districts. The most

significant response from the state has been its efforts to support the establishment and operation of interdistrict magnet schools" (Bifulco et al., 2009, p. 326).

The research conducted by Bifulco et al. (2009) was significant for continuance of magnet programs in CT and in their particular district. The data analyses indicated:

> Our best estimates of the effects of interdistrict magnet schools on student achievement indicate that attendance at an interdistrict magnet high school has positive effects on the mathematics and reading achievement of central city students and that interdistrict magnet middle schools have positive effects on reading achievement. That interdistrict magnet schools, on average, succeed in providing their students more integrated, higher-achieving peer environments and that they also, on average, have positive effects on achievement suggests that they represent a promising model for helping to address the ills of racial and economic isolation. (Bifulco et al., 2009, p. 341)

In comparing other educational programs and their overall evaluation for structure and outcomes, Reimer and Cash (2003) provided results from a program evaluation undertaken by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) at Clemson University. Though the program evaluation was not for a magnet school, it provides an example of a school program evaluated with a systematic rating scale relevant to ten essential elements or categories, they are:

> The program evaluation uses the ratings of: Rudimentary (poor performance); Developing (below expected standard); Proficient (meets expected standard); Accomplished (above expected standard); or NA (does not apply). The ten categories are: (1) accountability measures such as benchmark data that can create a consistent baseline such as grades, attendance, state test scores; (2) administrative structures and policies that include well developed and written policies that should be regularly examined for fairness and aligned with the school's goals; (3) an innovative and flexible curriculum; (4) the selection of staff members that fit into the vision of the school; (5) a well maintained and inviting school grounds; (6) school leadership that reacts in time of

> crisis and deals with district and local decisions fairly and on time; (7) student support services that encompass a strong school counseling with parenting classes; (8) an open learning community which involves parents, community members and educators; (9) sufficient program funding that is adaptive to the local and federal political climate is an important; and (10) a positive and synergistic school climate. (Reimer & Cash, 2003, p. 25-30)

These ten categories are a good example of a school program being evaluated under the scrutiny of accountability.

Magnet Schools' Positive and Negative Effects on Students

Bank and Spencer (1997); Bell et al. (2007); Desiderio (1996); Hadderman (2002); Penta (2001); Plucker, Cobb, and Quaglia (1996); Poppell and Hague (2001); and Yang, Li, Tompkins, and Modarresi (2005), have reported evaluations of magnet school programs and their overall effect on student success. However, Bank and Spencer (1997) argue that while a number of studies have demonstrated that magnet programs have positive effects on educational outcomes, most of the outcome measures used in these studies are scores from tests taken during their magnet school enrollment. Thus, these authors attempted to expand the knowledge base concerning evaluation by using survey data provided by graduates of large and small, urban and rural school magnet and non-magnet programs. Their findings suggest there is not enough research to come to a consensus on the extent to which magnet schools have positive and/or negative impacts on students attending. The questions regarding students' achievement, belonging and parent engagement at a magnet school have not been answered by this research.

Crain et al. (1999) studied the effects of academic career magnet education on high schools and their graduates. Students in these programs were found to take more college courses, earn higher wages and engage in less reckless behaviors in their post high school graduate years.

Plucker et al. (1996) discussed the results of a survey that examined the educational aspirations and perceptions of students at a magnet high school compared to students from traditional high schools. Survey results indicated that the magnet school students reported higher levels of aspirations, achievement, motivation, general enjoyment of life, and perceptions of school climate. Given that the study was conducted with only eleventh and twelfth grade students at one rural, residential magnet school, the results might not generalize to a more urban, non-residential, magnet program.

In contrast to the supposition that magnet schools may have a positive impact on students, the New York City Board of Education (1994) conducted a report that details the evaluation of 12 magnet schools in the New York City Public School system. The evaluators found that the magnet schools did not lead to greater academic achievement (no increase in number of students who scored at or above grade level on citywide reading and mathematics tests) than did non-magnet schools. The evaluators hypothesized that this finding may be the result of the experimental nature of the magnet school curriculum. In an era of high stakes accountability resulting in the use of norm-referenced tests to measure outcomes, the lack of more positive outcomes is

disappointing for proponents of magnet schools, and also suggests the need to examine other potential outcomes.

Penta (2001) continued the discussion of the unsuccessful impact magnet schools have on students. In comparing student performance at program magnet, year-round magnet, and non-magnet elementary schools, the results of this study indicated that, when controlling for differences in race and socioeconomic status, there are no significant differences in student achievement outcomes (i.e., state's ABCs accountability program) between students in magnet and non-magnet elementary schools.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the equivocal nature of the results of studies investigating the effect of magnet schools on students' achievement and post-graduate experiences. One possible conclusion is that other variables influence the extent to which magnet schools compare with the effectiveness of non-magnet schools.

Other Effective Magnet School Variables

Additionally, other factors appear to contribute to the success of magnet schools. Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003) examined school leaders of various school designs including magnet schools to determine how school leadership varied across these designs. These authors concluded that the principals' primary roles in magnet middle schools are to assess school needs and plan to meet the identified needs. Moreover, the authors reported that: (a) leadership was needed in seven additional areas: instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development and micro political; (b) principals are responsible for ensuring

leadership occurs but do not necessarily have to provide the leadership; (c) the administrative/governance structure of a school affects the way leadership functions are performed; and (d) principals learn while on the job. Specifically, these researchers found that principals of public magnet schools are more active in the areas of instruction, culture, strategy, and human resources than are principals of traditional public schools.

Desiderio (1996) collected documents from magnet middle school evaluations and conducted interviews with former students of magnet middle schools. Examination of these documents and interviews revealed that successful programs had the following common traits: committed faculty and administration, parental participation, high expectations for student achievement and willingness to work, a desire to decrease school segregation, and school-wide implementation of the magnet theme. While the article refers to many other published research studies in its overview and literature review sections, the methodology of this study is mostly limited to the anecdotal evidence. Three former students obtained from unstructured interviews, and conclusions reached by the author appear to be mostly opinion/belief rather than conclusions drawn from systematic and rigorous data collection or study of other relevant research.

Hausman, Goldring, and Moirs (1997) attempted to compare the organizational capacities of magnet and non-magnet schools by examining data from a survey of 20 public school programs (10 magnet schools and 10 non-magnet schools) in the Midwest. Findings suggest that more positive organizational structures and greater

resources were characteristic of magnet schools compared to non-magnet schools. Furthermore, according to the researchers, the issue of resources is an external variable that should be controlled for if possible, or at least discussed in context of these results. However, the link between resources and/or organizational structures and greater student achievement or magnet school success is not established by this research study.

Hausman and Goldring (1996) examined differences in teachers' ratings of effective principal leadership in magnet and non-magnet schools, and examined the influence of student achievement and other variables on those ratings. Magnet school principals were rated as more effective leaders by their teachers than were non-magnet principals. However, these findings may simply reflect a selection bias in the assignment of principals to schools. Results also indicated that there was no relation between teachers' ratings and student outcomes. A methodological artifact of the study may have influenced this study-- an aggregated composite was used to measure achievement, and thus may not be reliable. In addition, analyses were conducted at the school site level and not at the classroom level, limiting a true determination of the relation between teachers' ratings and student outcomes/achievement.

Hunter (1994) concludes that a successful magnet school boasts community involvement, school leadership, clear goals, adequate parental information, and a fair admissions process. Moreover, the author states that proponents of magnet schools believe these schools bring choice, a better ability to address student interest, and greater professional satisfaction for staff and faculty. This is important to consider for

designing any new school that includes involving educator leaders who will shape the program from the macro to micro components. These three studies discussed above focus on the relation among principals, teachers and resources as they related to magnet school success. These findings underscore the need to consider variables such as school personnel that may arise and affect an impact on the design of a new school. NMV's challenge is to establish itself as a magnet school but most importantly as a middle school.

Crissman, Spires, Pope, and Beal (2000) explored community members' perceptions of change at an elementary school during the first year of implementation of the Accelerated Schools Project. Three themes emerged from this study: the importance of creating a school identity, experiencing a community of mind, and developing a sense of human agency. While not surprising, overall, educators found these three themes to be important in an effective school. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that organizational reform efforts could influence instructional practices, despite a generally held belief that they do not. According to this study, reforms can influence practices if leaders make instruction their primary focus within the context of creating a new school organizational structure. While establishing an effective school, educators understand that instruction is important but ultimately creating professional communities is the critical component. The discussion focuses on how the school community made these changes in a short time and the challenges they faced as they continued to work to make changes. However, this investigation

examined only one school with respect to these themes, and further research with larger samples of schools is necessary to confirm these findings.

Krueger and Ziebarth, in their Education Commission of the States brief (2002), focus on magnet schools in contrast to other types of public school choice programs, to investigate the extent to which parents that enroll their children in choice programs almost always report high levels of satisfaction. The authors believe this effect is the result of increased parent input into the management, instruction and curriculum occurring in magnet schools vs. other public school types. However, the research report also states that evidence of improved student achievement in schools of choice is unclear within studies.

Recently, magnet schools have lost their luster in the public view and Frankenbert and Siegel-Hawley (2008) address a review of magnet schools as a response to address the issue of magnet schools as lost in the midst of politicians trumpeting the use of charter schools and creating federal monies for such projects. In this context, magnet schools are being forgotten.

One evaluation component of magnet schools is positive outcomes of parental involvement with magnet school student academic results. The challenge in measuring their successes is described as:

> Methodologically, it is hard to assess the 'impact' of magnet schools due to issues of self-selection. Do the improved academic outcomes occur because of the magnet school itself or is there unaccounted-for variation in those families who choose magnet schools that explains the academic gains? Magnet schools require a certain level of parental involvement or motivation in order to access information and seek admission to a non-traditional school, but it is difficult to determine

> how that affects the academic outcomes of students in magnet programs (compared to regular public schools). (Balfanz, 2009, p. 13)

Closing the Middle School Achievement Gap

Though NMV is being studied for its magnet program, the purpose of the school is to close the achievement gap with middle school age students. In 2008, evaluations of 60,000 student transcripts from California were reviewed for course patterns from ninth grade through twelfth grade. This was to establish a trend in students taking college level preparation course work known as the 'A through G' which are a set of college preparation courses that are deemed to meet the minimum qualifications to be eligible to apply to California State University or University of California public universities. This exploration was critical to provide further findings on how schools can capture the point at which students begin to establish themselves down a path of not being eligible to meet minimum admissions requirements to the California public university systems. One significant finding was that about half of Asian and White students have completed at least four units of English by twelfth grade, compared with about a third of Hispanic and African American students. This ethnicity gap in completion appears in mathematics and laboratory science as well (Balfanz, 2009). Moreover, California Department of Education (2009b) reported two-thirds of fourth graders in the state scored proficient or advanced in mathematics in 2009, compared with only 43% of seventh graders; therefore, student achievement in mathematics in any given year is lower in the middle grades than in the elementary.

Middle schools have recently become increasingly the focal point by educators as the critical time when schools and districts may be able to identify a pattern of

when the drop out and/or failure rates begin. This is especially important for various student groups, i.e. gender, socioeconomic status and free and reduced lunch recipients whom are often most at risk. Balfanz (2009) studied middle schools in high poverty neighborhoods and measured the varied levels of achievement gaps and their closing and widening in Philadelphia and later replicated across 25 other schools and found:

> As a result, the student (6th grade) continues to fail courses and may not achieve on-time promotion to the next grade. The student then enters high school, overage for the grade with a history of course failure. Lacking the skills, knowledge, and self-confidence to succeed in high school and feeling distanced from his or her peers, the student continues to fail, does not earn promotion to the 10th grade, and, at this point, may well have reached the legal age for dropping out. Similar trajectories can be seen for 11- and 12-year-olds who miss one, two, or more months of school or who receive poor behavior ratings from their teachers. Both clearly signal lack of engagement and participation in school. Absent successful intervention, these behaviors do not typically self-correct over time and lead to course failure, non-promotion, and ultimately, dropping out. (p. 4)

The challenge for NMV is identifying the obstacles that will face all middle schools in California in the journey of closing the achievement gap. Williams, Kirst, and Haertel (2010) embarked on measuring California middle schools longitudinally based on a sample of 303 middle schools. Those surveyed included 303 site principals, 3,752 teachers, and 152 district superintendents. The purpose of the study was to provide schools and districts with a renewed perspective with effective practices and policies in closing the achievement gap in predominately low or middle-income students. Their findings reiterated the need to revisit policies that schools and districts must review to establish sustainable and efficient systems. Of the policy implications for school sites, Williams et. al (2010) suggests eight general components:

> 1) Reconsider the configuring of a middle school (i.e. K–8, 6–8, or 7–8) for the purpose of improving student outcomes,
> 2) Superintendents and boards should discuss the priority they give to academic improvements in the middle grades,
> 3) Principals should engage their staff members and their teachers in conversations about their mission for the middle grades,
> 4) Prioritize strategies to support students making gains on standards-based exams in the context of the middle grades' to prepare all students to succeed in high school,
> 5) When hiring middle grade principals, districts should consider looking for skills and competencies found in principals of the higher-performing schools,
> 6) When hiring middle grade teachers, districts and principals should consider looking for skills and competencies those principals in higher performing schools report about their teachers.
> 7) Examine the extent to which their middle grade curricula, instructional practices, and assessments are tightly aligned with state academic standards and
> 8) Consider making improvements in middle grade student outcomes a part of professional educator performance evaluations. (pp. 57-58)

NMV instructional program

Student's achievement is measured and defined very differently from district to district and from state to state. The question to consider is, how did this magnet middle school affect student's achievement level? Students are tested yearly with local, state and federal exams; they receive grades on projects, homework and a grade point average. Hoy, Smith, Sweetland and Smith (2002) describe:

> In such schools, teachers set high but achievable goals, they believe in the capability of their students to succeed, the school environment is orderly and serious, and students, teachers, and principals all respect academic achievement and work for success. Academic press is a collective characteristic of the school; it refers to the normative and behavioral environment of a school. We postulate that teachers' beliefs about the faculty's capability to successfully educate students and the importance of academic performance constitute norms that influence the actions and achievements of schools. At the collective level, views about academic press are social perceptions. (p. 79)

Besides NMV establishing a magnet themed school in math, science and technology, the core of the instructional program, as illustrated in Figure 3, was designed around four main components, they are: (1) Professional Learning Communities (PLC), (2) Understanding by Design (UbD) and International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), (3) Action Research, and (4) Fail Fast.

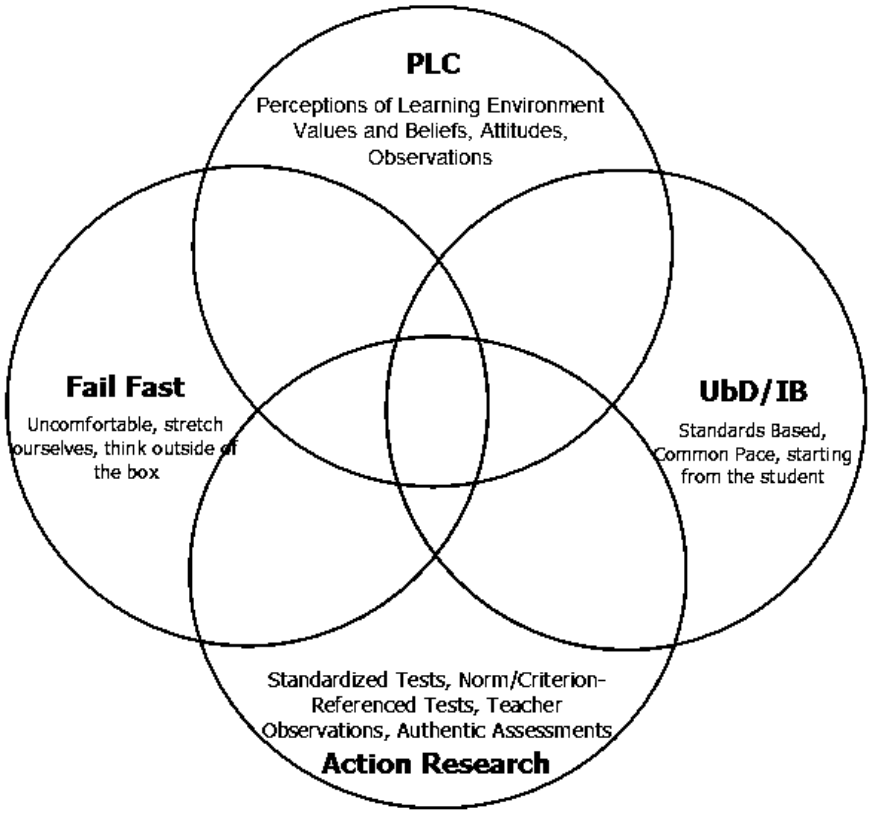


Figure 3. NMV's Instructional program main components are illustrated with a graphic organizer composed by me (school principal) since the opening of the school in the fall 2007. The sum of all parts is NMV's journey to reach sustainability.

The PLC's at NMV were established, with Dufour (2004) describing them as "a grand design—a powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the

practices of schooling. However, initiating and sustaining the concept requires hard work. It requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold itself accountable for the kind of results that fuel continual improvement" (p. 6). With each year since the opening in the fall of 2007 welcoming a new cohort of students and teachers until the fall 2009, NMV has been challenged to maintain such a continuity and targeted purpose to the PLC. In Appendix C, it illustrates the 4-week topic rotation of our PLC, which includes SMART Goal and Data Analysis, UbD/IBMYP units, Common Assessments, and Student Performance Data. This 4-week rotation of topics allows teachers to continue the discussion of a related item and feel confident it will be revisited again.

IBMYP (2010) is described as a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers. With IBMYP, NMV has established itself as a project based school that centers on student outcomes. In our short three year program design, lessons, units and/or projects are shaped around developing some if not all characteristics of the IB Learner Profile which are: (a) Inquirers, (b) Knowledgeable, (c) Thinkers, (d) Communicators, (e) Principled, (f) Open-minded, (g) Caring, (h) Risk-takers, (i) Balanced, and (j) Reflective. The IBMYP is student-centered and the implementation of UbD is teacher-centered.

UbD allows teachers to use common academic professional language around the idea of understanding. McTighe and Wiggins (2004) pushes educators thinking by asking: "What is understanding, and how does it differ from knowing? How will we

know students truly understand and can apply their knowledge in meaningful way? How might we design our courses and units to emphasize understanding and 'uncoverage' rather than 'coverage'?" (p. 274). UbD provides templates for curriculum unit design and each year teachers continue to expand their practice and refine their knowledge of the practicing with the end in mind.

In shaping a new era in education of data collection, NMV's third program component is being Action Researchers. Creswell (2004) characterizes action research as having: (a) a practical focus, (b) the educator-researcher's own practice, (c) collaboration, (d) a dynamic process, (e) a plan of action, and (f) sharing research. NMV teachers have been shaping their 21st Century teaching with measuring their practice through a research lens. Teachers use math and English language benchmarks to measure student understanding. Other subject teachers develop and implement common assessments to continue engaging students to have them close their gap into proficiency.

Finally, NMV has taken on an attitude of not waiting weeks or months to determine whether a student understands but to measure frequently, simply Fail Fast. The argument can be to be more positive with the concept but this approach to learning comes from years of experience as an educator witnessing students not engaged in classroom activities and/or lessons and not frequently assessed with multiple measures. Simply put, Fail Fast is the spirit of NMV and the instructional philosophy behind the program.

Circle of Courage – Implications for Schools

As noted earlier, the Circle of Courage provides a lens by which to examine the various components of the NMV motto and values. Since the Circle of Courage is grounded within the home cultural framework of Native American philosophy, it can be framed within the spectrum of culturally congruent learning theory.

The Kamehameha Elementary Education Project serves as an example of a research based application of culturally congruent learning theory to improve educational outcomes. Gallimore & Tharp (1988) describe KEEP "as a 15-year continuous research-and-development program for improving the cognitive and educational development of a group of educationally at-risk ethnic-minority children" (p.115). The KEEP project engaged in extensive anthropological research of native Hawaiian culture to identify the culturally patterned ways of learning used in the home culture that could be translated into school practices. The project redesigned classrooms and learning opportunities that reflected the identified home learning practices. Among the adapted classroom practices are independent learning centers, small direct instruction reading groups and some use of peer based learning groups. KEEP's program components range from the classroom setting, teacher support, Kamehameha Reading Objective System (KROS), performance centers, peer coaching and consultants providing feedback.

Gallimore & Tharp write:

> At the time of this writing, KEEP consisted of a laboratory-and-demonstration school in Honolulu enrolling about 500 Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian children in kindergarten through the sixth grade, and organization for exporting and supporting the program into the public

> schools of Hawaii, some 60 classrooms serving about 2,000 public school students of many ethnicities in five public elementary schools on three Hawaii's islands. In addition, schools on a Navajo reservation in Arizona and schools in Los Angeles were part of the research and program development enterprise, a strategy of inquiry that expanded the experience base to include students and faculties of many other cultures and settings. (p. 115)

KEEP demonstrated that they outperformed regular public schools when measuring their progress in reading levels and overall achievement.

Similarly, the Circle of Courage framework may serve as a link between home cultures and school cultures. In response to provide a possible explanation for lack of student success in traditional schools, Brendtro et al. (2002) aimed at providing a perspective of mending children's inner and outer circle that is often broken by various experiences that may appear to be too overwhelming for educators, therapists or parents understand. The authors provide possible explanations for the components of the Circle of Courage and how discouragement is courage denied. They further state that students who have lost courage demonstrate conflict and despair in upfront ways and camouflage their feelings with acts of pseudo-courage.

This idea of greatness comes from the early works of Vorrath and Brendtro (1985), who demonstrate positive and caring values through unrestricted opportunities and conformity. This is the cornerstone of Positive Peer Culture (PPC) that in the mid-1980's encouraged teachers and youth workers to demand of them a new perspective based on knowledge that conformity and obedience from children does not encourage in them a sense of control, and meeting their potential is not generally the outcome. The PPC theory does not encourage total loss of control by adults but rather it guides

students to an environment that lends itself to children learning values that will shape their future with consequences and rewards that are self imposed.

DeSalvatore, Millspaugh, and Pike (2005) evaluated their residential treatment programs, each serving adolescents with similar behaviors and treatment needs but using different behavior management systems. They found that the concepts of the Circle of Courage were used as a road map to create one brand new program for all of the clients.

Brokenleg (2005) heralds a call to action with his observations that contemporary culture is one in which many adults and youth are out rightly disrespectful to each other. He further states that adults must create environments that meet universal growth needs for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

> These four paths define the Circle of Courage: (a) Belonging - The child's longing for human bonds is nurtured in relationships of trust, so the child can believe "I am loved"; (b) Mastery - The child's inborn thirst for learning is nurtured by learning to cope with the world, so the child can believe "I can succeed"; (c) Independence - The child's freewill is nurtured by increased responsibility so the child can believe "I am in charge of my life"; and (d) Generosity - The child's character is nurtured by concern for others, so that the child can believe "I have a purpose for my life". (Brokenleg, 2005, p. 86)

Achieve.

Students' achievement is measured and defined very differently from district to district and from state to state. The question to consider is how the NMV magnet middle school affected student's achievement level. Students are tested yearly with local, state and federal exams; they receive grades on projects, homework and an average grade point. Hoy et al. (2002) describe this process: "In such schools,

teachers set high but achievable goals, they believe in the capability of their students to succeed, the school environment is orderly and serious, and students, teachers, and principals all respect academic achievement and work for success" (p. 79).

Belong.

Nyman and Styron (2008) argue that developing a productive environment conducive to learning involves establishing a school atmosphere that promotes cooperation, trust, loyalty, openness, pride, and commitment. Brown and McIntire (1996) compared the reported sense of belonging of students in a rural, boarding, magnet high school to the sense of belonging students in non-magnet high school. The study used an 18-item Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale, and revealed that the magnet school students demonstrated a greater sense of belonging than did the non-magnet school students. There were no significant differences attributed to gender. This study highlights the importance of considering other variables for study beyond academic achievement. Research has indicated that children's self-perceived competencies are related to their sense of connectedness (Harter, 1999). Therefore, for purposes of this dissertation, students' sense of belonging to NMV will be operationalized to connectedness as measured by self-perceived competencies (Harter, 1999). As noted above, a sense of belonging is a critical element that supports academic success and was evaluated in this study.

Engage.

Researchers have studied the importance of parent satisfaction in the determination of the effectiveness of schools. One example is work by Epstein (1995) and the U.S. Department of Education (2004).

Parental satisfaction is a vital component of providing success to any school and its students. The question of the extent to which a school that is the focus of this case study engaged parents and met their expectations, will provide one foundation to this component. The U. S. Department of Education (1994), through the No Child Left Behind Policy, required that all schools promote partnerships that will increase parental satisfaction and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children. More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act has made changes to Title I funding eligibility, requiring recipients of funds to have plans and activities that facilitate home–school collaborations (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Summary

Though conducting research with only one school, case study findings are still relevant and helpful, as Yin (2003) states: "case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a 'sample' and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)" (p.10).

Magnet schools have established themselves as a powerful option for schools of choice. The various studies on magnet school suggest that their effects range from

individual student success to overall program evaluation. A longitudinal case study is a research approach that analyzes student achievement, student belonging and parental engagement. The findings from this project at NMV will provide greater direction in how this school is progressing in these regards.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Overall Approach

This dissertation represents a longitudinal single-case study implemented to understand the effect of the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) School's motto of "Engage, Achieve and Belong". As a magnet school, the burden is upon the school to prove their existence through positive outcomes with stakeholders. Though opening a new school during the last two years has been financially challenging with the state and local budget crisis, NMV has had the task to prove that it can close the achievement gap. The theoretical approach will be the Circle of Courage that is utilized to analyze the overall effectiveness of this one school on the students and parents' experiences relevant to the school motto.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' attitudes of belonging?

Hypothesis 1: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' attitude of belonging.

Research question 2: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?

Hypothesis 2: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

Research question 3: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect parents' engagement with the school?

Hypothesis 3: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school.

Research Design – Longitudinal Single-Case

The design of this study was a quantitative longitudinal single-case. Creswell (2004) states:

> A longitudinal survey design involves the survey procedure of collecting data about trends with the same population, changes in a cohort group or subpopulation, or changes in a panel group of the same individuals over time…A cohort study is a longitudinal survey design in which a researcher identifies a subpopulation based on specific characteristics and then studies that subpopulation over time. (p. 357)

Creswell (2004) identifies quantitative research as "describing a trend means that the research problem can be answered best by a study in which the researcher seeks to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and to note how this tendency varies among people" (p. 45).

As the action researcher with a unique school campus, Yin (2003) provides the argument for single-case study design: "Overall, the single-case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions–when the case represents (a) a critical test of existing theory, (b) a rare or unique circumstance, or (c) a representative or typical case or when the case serves a (d) revelatory or (e) longitudinal purpose" (pp. 45-46).

Creswell (2004) describes two methods to analyze data: descriptive statistics that indicate general tendencies in the data (mean, mode, median) as well as the spread of scores (variance, standard deviation, and range), or a comparison of how one score relates to all others (z-scores, percentile rank). "Inferential statistics are used in

analyzing from a sample to draw conclusions about an unknown population" (Creswell, 2004, p. 181).

Research Design – Admissions

Due to the historic climate of uncertain legal or public challenges to the magnet school concept throughout the country, a school district attorney was requested to establish an application process for student admissions. In order to set the parameters, a two period application period was necessary, with period 1, February 4 through March 14, providing the math and science kindergarten to fifth grade admissions priority. Incoming students from the sister elementary magnet school were agreed to be automatically accepted. During the second period, April 1 through May 30, other schools were encouraged to apply to become magnet schools.

Research Design – Applications

Students wishing to attend NMV must submit a completed application packet to the Principal's office. Applications submitted during the applications periods listed above had first priority, subject to the space limitations and priorities explained below. Students submitting applications after the application periods were considered "late" and were placed on a waiting list in the order in which they were received.

Research Design – Allocation of Space

NMV established an admissions process that would allow having a balanced student population regarding gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geographic location from within the city. Approximately 200 sixth grade students were selected. A total of 50 seats were reserved for each of the four SRVUSD traditional middle

school boundaries (MS#1, MS#2, MS#3 and MS#4). Ten additional seats were reserved for out-of-district students, subject to space limitations.

Research Design – Enrollment Priorities

In the event that applications exceeded space during either of the Application Periods, students were admitted consistent with the priority to offer siblings of existing NMV students a place at the school. An application submitted after the application periods were treated like any other application. (*Siblings* are defined as a brother, sister, half brother, half sister, stepbrother or stepsister, living in the same household). Also prioritized were sister magnet elementary students, but only if the application was submitted during the first application period. An application submitted after the first Application Period was treated like any other application.

Research Design – Lottery

If applications exceeded available space, as described above, a lottery was conducted to determine placement. Numbers were assigned to completed applications, and a computerized random selection program was used to identify the applicants accepted for enrollment. Students not selected for enrollment were placed on a waiting list. The order of placement on the waiting list was determined by lottery. If, after the application periods, the 50 reserved seats for each of the middle school boundaries were not filled through the process outlined above, NMV filled them with students on the waiting list, regardless of place of residency.

Research Design – Two year enrollment

Over the two-year period of this study, NMV (see Table 1) maintained an overall student population that is balanced with ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender. Through the admissions process and recruitment of students across the city and within the county, NMV has held to the magnet definition through its population. In contrast, Frankenbert and Siegel-Hawley (2008), in an analysis of 4,000 magnet schools and nearly 4,000 charter schools from the Magnet Schools of America's directory, found that black and Latino students comprised a much larger percentage of magnet and charter school students than they do among public schools.

Table 1. Two-year NMV Enrollment Demographics

2007-2008 Year 1 (N=196)							
	White	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	Filipino	Pacific Islander	Asian	American Indian or Alaska
N=	70	112	4	4	3	2	1
%	35.7%	57.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%	1.0%	0.5%
Male	41	57	2	4	0	1	1
Female	29	55	2	0	2	1	0

2008-2009 Year 2 (N=383)							
	White	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	Filipino	Pacific Islander	Asian	American Indian or Alaska
N=	163	186	13	8	5	6	2
%	42.6%	48.6%	3.4%	2.1%	1.3%	1.6%	0.5%
Male	102	107	8	6	4	4	2
Female	61	79	5	2	1	2	0

Participants – History

The participants in this research were sixth and seventh grade students enrolled in the new NMV Magnet Middle School from fall 2007 until spring 2009. NMV's first challenge upon opening the campus was to manage a diverse population while at the same time avoiding becoming a neighborhood school where students from the surrounding area are the majority of the attendees. In 1991, SRVUSD implemented a voluntary integration plan, which became policy, that established schools within twenty (20) percentage points of the mean for minority students at any given grade level (elementary, middle and high school). As a result of this policy, two magnet schools were born, one kindergarten to eight-grade performing arts school and a kindergarten to fifth grade math and science school. Almost 20 years later, both schools have faced challenges in their magnet school diverse population and academic achievement however; the original policy has not been revisited. With the realities of what both of these magnets have faced, NMV was challenged to establish an admissions process that facilitated the recruitment of a diverse magnet population.

Participants – Students

Each fall, students are provided with a SRVUSD Parental Permission/Child Assent for a Research Study on the "Effectiveness of Magnet Schools" (see Appendix A) in both English and Spanish languages. With permission granted by their parents, they are then provided each fall and spring with Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children (SPPC) (Harter, 1985) (see Appendix C). The sample size for the possible pool of student participants for this dissertation was 195 sixth and 188 seventh grade

students from NMV Magnet Middle (see Table 1). Actual student participants from the pool of enrolled students (383 students) were 172 respondents. Of these 172 student respondents, the percent of participants from the sixth grade pool was 45% of the eligible sixth grade students and these students represented Cohort 1 (N=89). The percent of participants from the seventh grade pool was 44% of the eligible seventh grade students in the pool and these students represented Cohort 2 (N=83).

Table 2. NMV Cohort

Year	Cohort	#
07-08	1	89
08-09	2	83

With respect to students' gender, of the total 172 participating students, males (N=97, 56%) outnumbered females (N=75, 44%). Cohort 1 had 51 males and 32 females, and Cohort 2 included 48 males and 41 females.

Table 3. NMV Gender

Year	Cohort	#	Male	Female
07-08	1	89	51	32
08-09	2	83	48	41

The participating students' ethnicity (as recorded by the school district) is portrayed in Table 4. Cohort 1 (N=83) had Caucasian (N=30, 36%), Latino (N=53, 63%), African American (N=1, 1.0%), Filipino (N=1, 1.0%), and Other Asian Pacific Islander (N=2, 2.0%). Cohort 2 (N=89) had Caucasian (N=31, 36%), Latino (N=21,

23%), African American (N=4, 4.0%), Filipino (N=2, 2.0%) and Vietnamese (N=1, 1.0%).

Table 4. NMV Ethnicity

Year	Cohort	#	White	%	Latino	%	African American	%	Filipino	%	Other Asian Pacific Islander	%
07-08	1	89	30	36	53	63	1	1	1	1	2	2
08-09	2	83	31	36	21	23	4	4	2	2	1	1

Eight students (N=8; 5%) were identified as receiving speech and language (SL) support, and of these, two were in Cohort 1 and six were in Cohort 2.

Six students (N=6; 3%) were identified as receiving Special Education (SP) services, with zero of these students in Cohort 1 and six in Cohort 2.

Participating students' English language designations (EL) included English Only (EO) (N=110; 64%) and English Learners (N=62; 36%), whom were at various levels within the English Learner Development state identifying system, with 40 of these students in Cohort 1 and 49 are English Only and 16 identified as English Learners in Cohort 2 with 67 English Only. The range is from English Learner 1, someone who has no English Language attainment to English Learner 5, who is someone that has attained a significant amount of understanding in writing, reading, listening and speaking to move out of the program upon meeting several state benchmarks.

The total number of participating students that were identified as Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) were 96 (56%) and those who were not numbered 105 (61%); with the non-GATE students either not applying or not meeting the requirements. The group of students numbered 48 as GATE and 40 as non-GATE in Cohort 1 and 47 in GATE and 36 as non-GATE in Cohort 2.

The number of participating students who qualified through school district eligibility program that demonstrates financial need sufficient to be provided free or reduced fee (F/R) breakfast/lunch were (N=67: 39%) and those students who did not (N=105; 61%) based on not applying or not meeting the requirements, with 45 as F/R and 44 as non-F/R of these students in Cohort 1 and 23 in as F/R and 61 as non-F/R of these students Cohort 2.

Table 5. NMV Descriptions of Subgroups

Year	Cohort	#	SL	SP	EL	EO	GATE	Non-GATE	F/R	Non-F/R
07-08	1	89	2	0	40	49	48	40	45	44
08-09	2	83	6	2	16	67	47	36	23	61

Participants – Parents

At the end of both study years all parents whose children enrolled in the school were asked to completed Tuck's (1995) Parent Satisfaction and Information, which was utilized as a customer satisfaction survey to measure parent engagement and satisfaction with the school, either in Spanish or English (see Appendix B). Of the responding parents, 95 (42%) preferred to respond in Spanish and 133 (58%) preferred to respond in English. From 766 distributed parent surveys, a total of 228 parents

responded over the two-year period, representing a response rate of 30%. In Year 1, 79 of these surveys were completed and another 149 were completed in Year 2 of this longitudinal study. Due to design demands, all parent surveys were anonymous, and therefore, the number of parents completing parent questionnaires in both Years 1 and 2 cannot be identified.

Measures

For the past two years, data has been collected to measure the effectiveness of the school in positively affecting students' attitudes and academic achievement, as well as parental engagement and satisfaction. (see Table 6).

Pre- and post- student measures.

Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children (SPPC) (Harter, 1985). Research has indicated that children's self-perceived competencies are related to their sense of connectedness (Harter, 1999). Veerman, Brink, Straathof, and Treffers (1996) used the SPPC with children between 8 and 12 years of age and found that the SPPC has sufficient between-group invariance to be used in studies with children in a clinical setting. They further stated:

> A characteristic of Harter's approach is that she focuses on the development of the self-concept over the lifespan and presents it as a multidimensional personality construct. Regarding the multidimensional nature of the self-concept, Harter distinguishes a number of specific domains of interests. Some of these domains are important during all stages of development (e.g. peer acceptance, cognitive competence, physical appearance). Others play a significant role in specific stages (e.g. close friendships and job competence during adolescence). (Veerman et al., 1996, p. 143)

Therefore, for purposes of this dissertation, students' sense of belonging to NMV will be operationalized to connectedness as measured by self-perceived competencies in the Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children (Harter, 1985). The Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children measures students' perceived self-worth, and is comprised of 36 items, measuring self-worth in five specific domains with six items each: (a) Scholastic Competence, (b) Social Acceptance, (c) Athletic Competence, (d) Physical Appearance, and (e) Behavioral Conduct. This inventory is intended to determine how children between 10 through 12 years of age judge their own functioning in several specific domains. When a student fills out the SPPC, he or she first chooses which of the two statements applies to him or her and then chooses whether the statement is "sort of true for me" or "really true for me". Scoring is completed on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 4. The response most indicative of competence is scored 4, and the answer least indicative of competence gets a 1. This measure has been used successfully in prior research that examined the relations among children's perceived self-worth to such domains as academic, social, and physical competency (Veerman et al.1996). Other studies have demonstrated these scales' adequate reliability and validity with multi-ethnic students with Latino and other ethnicity students (Faria, 2001). The 36 items and 5 domains are included in Appendix C.

Measures – Parents

The parents also received a Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information, 28 questions, (D.C. Public Schools, 1994) at the end of each year (Appendix C) which

measured parents' satisfaction in six areas: (a) Quality of Staff, (b) School Climate, (c) Academic Program, (d) Social Development and Extracurricular Activities, (e) Parent Involvement, and (f) a general opinion about the campus.

Archived Student Data

NMV has archived quantitative data including student self-perception survey data, student test records and academic history from these students' fifth grade year. These data measure student's achievement levels and were measured with the results from the California Standards Tests (CST) math and language arts scores that are administered each May. The students' CST scores range from 150 (low) to 600 (high) and are reported each September (California Department of Education, 2004).

Measures – Student

California Standards Test (CST) is part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. This program establishes statewide assessments. Each spring, assessments in various subjects and grades are administered which measure how well students in California's public schools are achieving the California content standards. These achievement tests target English–language arts and mathematics in grades two through eleven. In addition, tests in science and history–social science are given in selected grades. (California Department of Education, 2009e).

Procedure

The campus opened in fall 2007 with 195 sixth graders and in fall, 2008 added an additional 188 students, yielding a total of 383 students by fall 2008. The goal of

the school was to establish the effectiveness of a magnet school as a function of its unique curricular approach. The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which the school successfully operationalized the three components of the school motto: Engage, Achieve, and Belong (see Figure 1). These results of this research will be critical to empirically demonstrating to all stakeholders the extent to which this magnet school is responsive to the results from recent controversial court opinions and hearings that have reshaped the purpose of establishing magnet schools among traditional schools. As previously stated, the lens through which the school was evaluated was through the three components of Engage, Achieve and Belong.

Table 6. Description of Participants, Measures and Administration

Participants	Measures	Administration
1.Students (Cohort 1 & 2)	S Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children, 36 questions, (Harter, 1985)	2007-2008 fall & spring 2008-2009 fall & spring
2. Students (Cohort 1 & 2)	Archived Achievement & Demographic Data	2007-2008 fall & spring 2008-2009 spring
3. Parents (2 years)	Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information, 28 questions, (D.C. Public Schools, 1994)	2007-2008 spring 2008-2009 spring

NMV opened its doors in the fall 2007 as the district's first stand-alone magnet middle school. One other middle school exists in the SRVUSD, a Kindergarten to 8th grade school.

Students were recruited for this study in the following manner. SRVUSD provided the approval for this research to evaluate the progress of NMV students as I

lead the school in my role as the first school principal. Beginning in fall 2007, I was authorized to collect data on behalf of SRVUSD to assess the school's progress in meeting its benchmarks and goals. SRVUSD had two informal simple goals: to demonstrate that the school can make an impact on student achievement and to ensure that all stakeholders are satisfied with the investment of this new concept. One year of archived data and two years of collected data from the dataset of this longitudinal study.

In fall of 2007, approximately 200 sixth graders were provided with a SRVUSD consent form. After receiving the forms, students were then given the Harter self-perception of competence survey in their first period classrooms. Each survey was distributed with a label on the right corner with the student's name and first period teacher to ensure an efficient distribution. Students who declined participation per the consent form were asked by the teachers to read quietly while the survey, approximately 10 minutes to complete, was being administered.

In spring 2008, the same students that previously completed the self-perception survey repeated the survey. Each survey was distributed with a label on the right corner with the student's name and first period teacher to make an efficient distribution.

In spring 2008, approximately 200 sixth grade parents were sent the parent satisfaction survey through their students from their first period class. Parents were identified through our database, AERIES, for their home language. Parents were

provided a Spanish or English survey. Students were given one week to return the completed survey to their first period class.

Following recruitment, participating students completed the following assessments in their classrooms as a pre-assessment during the fall months of school and a post-assessment during the spring months of school for each of two years. Teachers and aides in other activities engaged non-participating students during this time.

At the beginning of the second year of this longitudinal study in the fall of 2008, the consent forms were re-administered to the new cohort of approximately 200 sixth graders and the returning 200 seventh grade (formerly sixth grade) students. The same student self-perception survey was administered to all that returned the approval consent form. Each survey was distributed with a label on the right corner with the student's name and first period teacher to facilitate efficient distribution.

In the spring 2009, the same students that previously completed the self-perceived competence survey, received and completed the survey. Each survey was distributed with a label on the right corner with the student's name and first period teacher to facilitate efficient distribution.

In spring 2009, approximately 400 sixth and seventh grade parents were sent the parent satisfaction survey through their students from their first period class. Parents were identified through our database, AERIES, for their home language. Parents were provided a Spanish or English survey as appropriate. Students were given one week to return the completed survey to their first period class.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The existence of the NMV magnet program was tested through the theoretical framework of the Circle of Courage. In assessing the effect of the NMV motto, two cohorts at NMV completed a pre- and post-Self-Perception Profile for Children survey (Harter, 1985) to measure belonging (see Table 7). Student participants in each cohort also completed a spring state academic test, which provided a two-year sample of their achievement, as measured by this standardized achievement measure. Thirdly, parent engagement was measured with a parent satisfaction survey administered to parents at the end of each year. The parent survey was provided in English and Spanish. Trends and patterns that support the purpose of NMV were analyzed to examine fulfillment of its initial school concept and the potential for replicating this magnet program.

Three hypotheses were tested with student participants within their subgroups and their parents:

Research question 1: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' attitudes of belonging?

Hypothesis 1: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' attitude of belonging.

Research question 2: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?

Hypothesis 2: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

Research question 3: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect parents' engagement with the school?

Hypothesis 3: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school.

Hypothesis 1 addressed the extent to which NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) had a positive effect on students' attitudes of belonging. To test this hypothesis, results from the administration of the Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children (Harter, 1985) were analyzed.

Hypothesis 2 addressed the extent to which NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) had a positive effect on students' academic achievement as tested with the spring California Standards Test results (see Table 10).

Hypothesis 3 addressed the extent to which NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) had a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school, parents' engagement and satisfaction; this hypothesis was tested with the Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information (D.C. Public Schools, 1994).

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected to test each hypothesis overall and within student subgroups and parents.

Table 7. Description of Data Analyses to Test Study Hypotheses

Research	Hypothesis	Data Collection	Data Analysis
1. To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' attitudes of belonging?	NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' attitude of belonging.	Subgroups tested with CST data: Ethnicity, Gender, RSP, EL, GATE, F/R	Frequencies Paired-samples T-test
2. To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?	NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.	Subgroups tested with Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children (Harter, 1985): Ethnicity, Gender, RSP, EL, GATE, F/R	Paired-samples T-test Reliability Correlations
3. To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect parents' engagement with the school?	NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school.	Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information (D.C. Public Schools, 1994)	Independent-Samples T-test Reliability

Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children – Subgroups

The SPPC was administered to Cohort 1 in the fall and spring of 2007 (N=89) and the fall and spring of 2008. Cohort 2 (N=83) completed the survey in the fall and spring of 2008. Cohort 1 provides a 2-year data set and Cohort 2 only provides one full year due to the completion of this dissertation, which did not allow Cohort 2 to complete a second year. Returned surveys for both Cohorts were checked for errors

and only full sets were used. Data collected with the SPPC survey were tested for internal consistency yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .96 for the full set, which includes Cohort 1 and 2.

The SPPC measures five specific domains, utilizing 36 items that measure children's perceived self-worth in the domains of: (a) Scholastic Competence, (b) Social Acceptance, (c) Athletic Competence, (d) Physical Appearance, and (e) Behavioral Conduct. Each area was tested with paired t-test among ethnicity, gender, free and reduced lunch, GATE and Cohort.

As cited in Rudasill and Callahan (2008), most researchers believe that self-concept and achievement are reciprocal and interactive constructs, and that positive self-concept promotes achievement and achievement promotes a positive self-concept. Three of the five competences were found to have significant student findings within subgroups.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging –Subgroup – Ethnicity

Research question 1: To what extent did the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' attitudes of belonging?

Hypothesis 1: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) had a positive effect on students' attitudes of belonging.

With respect to the ethnicity of the students, only the Caucasian and Latinos students' SPPC data were analyzed due to their major ethnic representation at NMV; these ethnicities represent the majority of the student body. Of the five SPPC competences tested, Caucasian students' scores did not statistically demonstrate a

significant increase in any of the five competencies. Latino students' scores demonstrated a statistically significant increase over two years in two areas: perceived Scholastic and Social Competence (see Table 8). In short, Latino students gained confidence as they earned good grades and perceived that they were accepted socially. A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in Latinos over time in their perception of their Scholastic Competence. There was a statistically significant increase in Latinos' Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 (M=2.8056, SD=.41933) to 2009 [M=3.1667, SD=.52505, t(53)=--4.136, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.97) indicated a large effect size.

Perceived Social Competence among Latinos also changed. A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in Latinos' perceived Social Competence. There was a statistically significant increase in Latinos' perceived Social Competence scores from 2007 (M=3.0802, SD=.58969) to 2009 [M=3.2654, SD=.47087, t(53)=-2.744, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.93) indicated a large effect size.

Table 8. Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children Competence Scores - Ethnicity

Paired Samples Test(a)									
		Paired Differences							
Ethnicity		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Latino	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 - MeanSchoolPOST7	-0.36111	0.64163	0.08731	-0.53624	-0.18598	-4.136	53	0.000
	MEAN SOCIALPRE6 - MeanSocPOST7	-0.18519	0.49597	0.06749	-0.32056	-0.04981	-2.744	53	0.008

Hypothesis #1 –Student Belonging – Subgroup – Gender

Of the five domains tested with the SPPC among gender groups, Scholastic Competence data indicated a significant effect of gender over the two year period with cohort 1 (N=89) (see Table 9). A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in male and female students with respect to their confidence in Scholastic Competence. A statistically significant increase in males' Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 (M=2.8696, SD=.47129) to 2009 [M=3.1739, SD=.51395, t(45)=-3.099, p<.0005] was found. The eta squared statistic (.95) indicated a large effect size for this sample. Females also demonstrated a statistically significant increase in Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 (M=2.8659, SD=.38228) to 2009 [M=3.1138, SD=.61174, t(40)=-2.523, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.94) also indicates a large effect size for this sample. Both genders had an increase in their confidence academically within the two-year study. In general, they both felt that they

feel as smart, remember things easier than others and feel good about their schoolwork.

Table 9. Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children Competence Scores - Gender

Paired Samples Test									
Gender		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	MEAN ScholasticPRE6 - Mean Schol POST7	-0.30435	0.66602	0.09820	-0.50213	-0.10656	-3.099	45	0.003
Female	MEAN ScholasticPRE6 - Mean Schol POST7	-0.24797	0.62929	0.09828	-0.44660	-0.04934	-2.523	40	0.016

Student Belonging – Subgroup – Free and Reduced Lunch

Students who were not on free and reduced lunch (i.e., students who are from low socio-economic homes) did not show any significant change in the five areas across the years of the study (see Table 10). Yet, students who were on free and reduced lunch demonstrated change in the perceived Scholastic Competence scores. A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in free and reduced lunch students' perceived Scholastic Competence scores. There was a statistically significant increase in students on Free and Reduced Lunch and Scholastic Competence

perception scores from 2007 (M=2.8000, SD=.40452) to 2009 [M=3.0444, SD=.56676, t(44)=-2.904, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.95) indicated a large effect size. Students of low socioeconomic status who have a more challenging home life and generally demonstrated that over time they felt academically competent.

Table 10. Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children Competence Scores - Free & Reduced Lunch

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Lunch		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Yes	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 – Mean ScholPRE7	-0.24444	0.56475	0.08419	-0.41411	-0.07478	-2.904	44	0.006

Student Belonging – Subgroup – GATE

Among students in the GATE groups, of the five SPPC domains tested, Scholastic and Behavior Competence demonstrated statistically significant changes in both competences over a two-year span as a function of non-GATE status (see Table 11). A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in Non-GATE identified students with perceived Scholastic and Behavior Competence. There was a statistically significant increase in Non-GATE identified students in perceived Scholastic Competence scores from 2007 (M=2.9475, SD=.46088) to 2009 [M=3.1938, SD=.66908, t(91)=-3.858, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.94) indicated a large effect. In addition, GATE identified students' Scholastic Competence

scores from 2007 (M=2.8659, SD=.38228) to 2009 [M=3.1138, SD=.61174, t(40)=-2.523, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.94) indicated a large effect size. Both groups felt positive gains in their self-perception of their academic standing while on campus.

Perceived Behavior Competence also demonstrated statistically significant differences over a two-year span for students identified as Non-GATE (see Table 14). A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in Non-GATE identified students with Behavior Competence. There was a statistically significant increase in Non-GATE identified students in Behavior Competence scores from 2007 (M=3.0972, SD=.57511) to 2009 [M=3.2917, SD=.61383, t(35)=-3.5816, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.94) indicated a large effect size. Non-GATE students gained confidence in how they feel about doing the right thing, not getting into trouble and making positive behavioral choices.

Table 11. Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children Competence Scores - GATE

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Gate		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
No	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 – Mean Schol POST 7	-0.40417	0.66761	0.10556	-0.61768	-0.19065	-3.829	39	0.000
	Mean BehaP OST6 – Mean BehaP OST7	-0.19444	0.48387	0.08064	-0.35816	-0.03073	-2.411	35	0.021
Yes	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 – Mean Schol POST 6	-0.24638	0.61249	0.06386	-0.37322	-0.11953	-3.858	91	0.000

Student Belonging – Subgroup – Cohort

Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 were compared in perceived SPPC scores across all five competences. Cohort 1 demonstrated statistically significant change in perceived Scholastic Competence scores change over a two-year span (see Table 12). A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in Cohort 1 in perceived Scholastic Competence. Perceived Scholastic Competence scores in Cohort 1 showed an increase in their perceptions about their academic abilities from 2007 (M=2.8678, SD=.42918) to 2009 [M=3.1456, SD=.55963, t(86)=-4.012, p<.0005]. The eta squared

statistic (.94) indicated a large effect size. There was a statistically significant increase in the perceived Scholastic Competence scores in Cohort 2; from 2007 (M=2.7835, SD=.48821) to 2009 [M=3.0000, SD=.70192, t(76)=-3.939, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.95) indicated a large effect size. Both groups felt they were doing well in school, finishing their homework quicker and feeling smarter over time.

Table 12. Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children Competence Scores - Cohort

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Cohort		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
C1	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 – Mean ScholP OST7	-.27778	.64583	.06924	-.41542	-.14013	-4.012	86	.000
C2	MEAN Scholastic PRE6 – Mean ScholP OST6	-.21645	.48219	.05495	-.32589	-.10701	-3.939	76	.000

Hypothesis #2 – Student Achievement – Cohort

Research Question 2: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?

Hypothesis 2: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

As illustrated by California Department of Education (2009c), NMV students completed two years of the CST and received two API scores (see Figure 4). In 2008,

NMV students in Cohort 1 earned an API score of 875, and in 2009, both NMV students Cohorts 1 and 2 earned an API score of 892. The two-year API results are compared to the results of the students in Local Educational Agency (LEA), SRV Unified, and with the California state average.

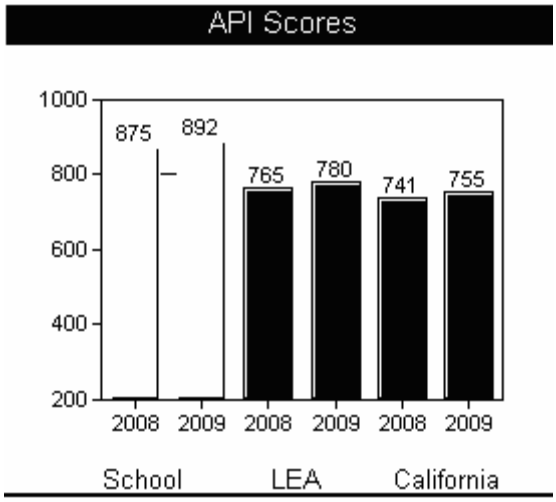


Figure 4. Academic performance index state comparison scores. This illustrates the gains by NMV over a two years period as presented by California Department of Education (2009a), which is the accountability organization of schools.

Though the API scores are encouraging, the No Child Left Behind policy requires that by 2014, all students will meet grade level proficiency rates. Thus, each year schools must continue to meet the yearly proficiency percentages increases. These federal guidelines are percentage benchmarks designated for Math and English Language tests. The next two year analysis is illustrated by (California Department of Education, 2009d), the 2007-2008 (N=193), federal math proficiency percentages. Cohort 1 met proficiency percentages, in relation to the NCLB baseline of 37% in all subgroups (see Figure 5).

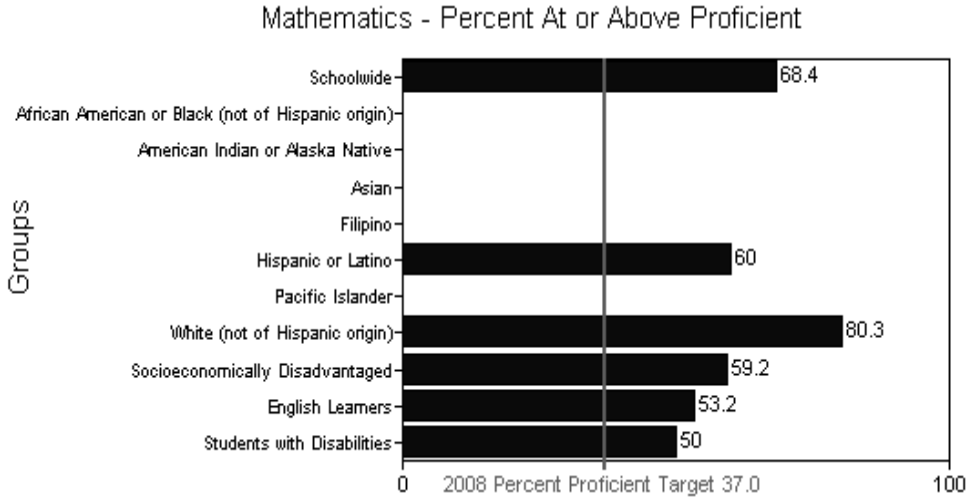


Figure 5. NMV 2007-2008 CST math proficiency percentage. This graphic as provided by California Department of Education (2009a) describes the first year NMV completed the Mathematics CST exam and illustrates the AYP percentages.

2008-2009 (N=368), state math proficiency percentages were met by Cohort 1 and

Cohort 2, in relation to the NCLB baseline of 47.5% in subgroups (see Figure 6).

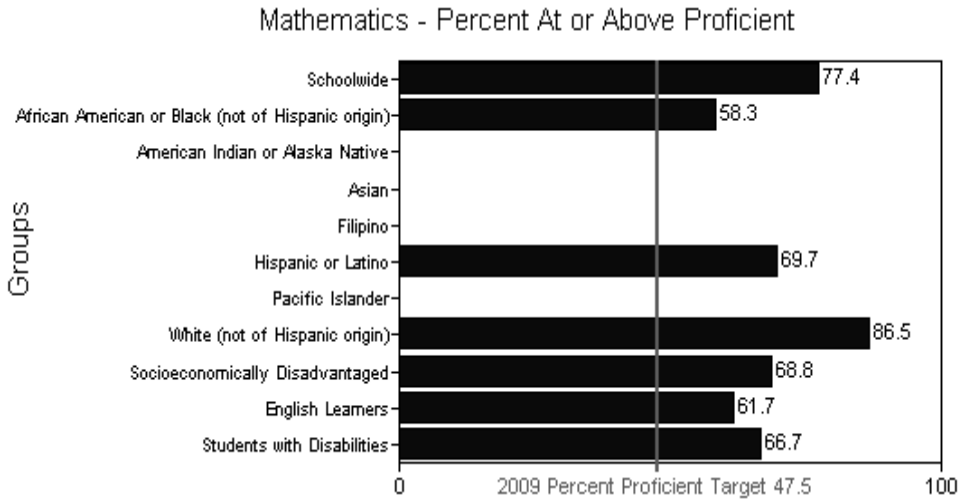


Figure 6. NMV 2008-2009 CST math proficiency percentage. This graphic as provided by California Department of Education (2009a) describes the second year NMV completed the Mathematics CST exam and illustrates the AYP percentages.

Students met the math proficiency, NMV school wide (N=193), federal English-Language Arts proficiency percentages. Cohort 1 also met proficiency percentages for the 2007-2008 school year, in relation to the NCLB baseline of 35.2% in subgroups (see Figure 7).

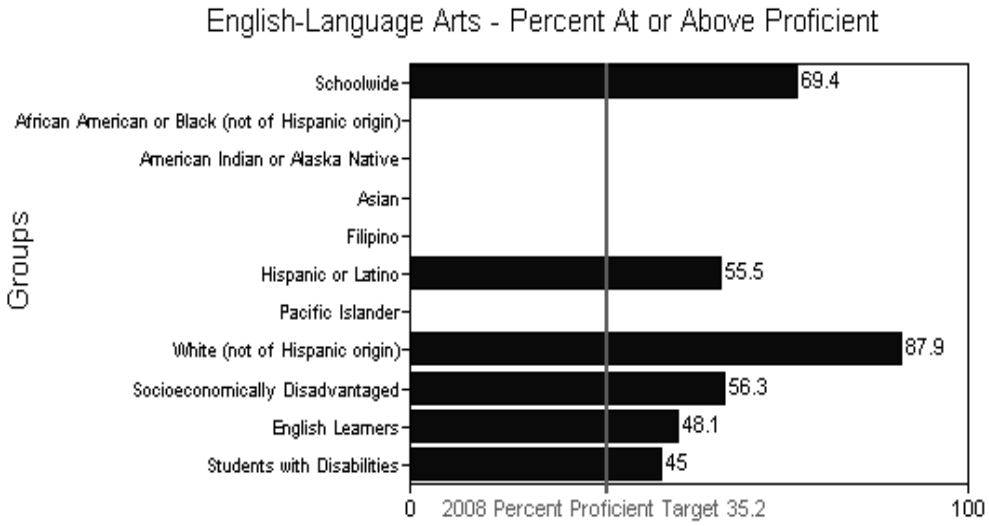


Figure 7. NMV 2007-2008 CST English language arts proficiency percentage. This graphic as provided by California Department of Education (2009a) describes the first year NMV completed the English Language Arts CST exam and illustrates the AYP percentages.

The 2008-2009 (N=368), state English Language Arts proficiency percentages. Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 met proficiency percentages in relation to the NCLB baseline of 46.0% in subgroups (see Figure 8).

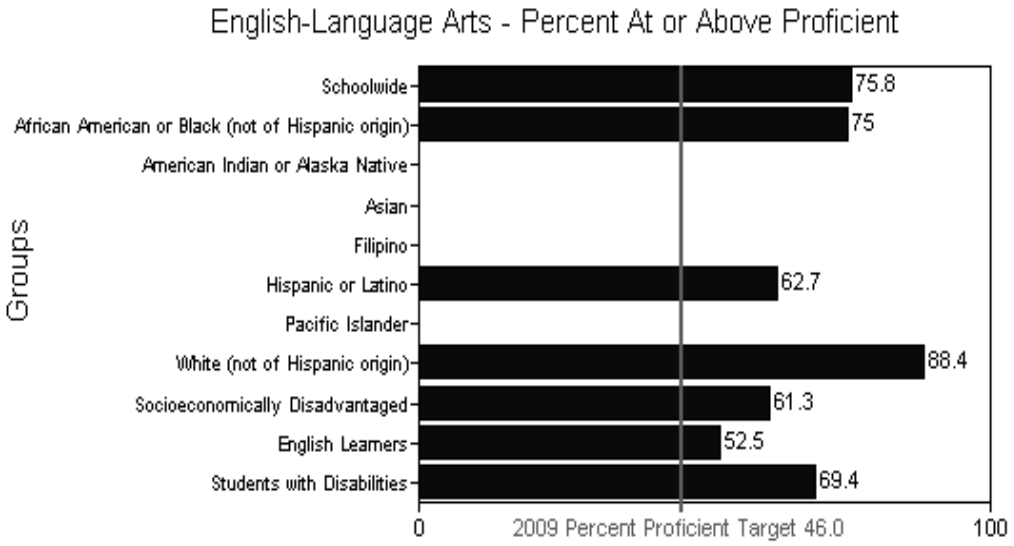


Figure 8. NMV 2008-2009 CST English language arts proficiency percentage. This graphic as provided by California Department of Education (2009a) describes the econd year NMV completed the English Language Arts CST exam and illustrates the AYP percentages.

Student Achievement – County wide

NMV's overall API score, as described prior, is a measure of success for the school and students. The top ten middle schools among the county can be measured with a two year sample from the CST results of 2008-2009 school year, which are compared with other county middle schools (N=102). Students at NMV (see Table 13) ranked as eight among 102 middle schools by API score alone. The demographics of the top ten schools are striking, with NMV as the most diverse, with more Latinos free, reduced lunch participants, and English Learner students.

Table 13. Academic Performance Index County Comparison Scores with Subgroups

#	County Middle Schools *SRVUSD	Enrolled	White %	Asian %	Latino %	Free & Reduced Lunch %	EL %	GATE %	RSP %
1	CVM	1359	63	30	5	3	4	56	7
2	EWM	627	78	8	11	6	6	45	11
4	RRRM	180	86	7	3	0	2	1	9
3	MVM	1352	54	24	7	8	3	19	7
5	OVM	1059	54	23	8	9	6	16	8
6	BHM	1408	61	15	11	10	8	15	10
7	MM	1460	63	16	12	10	3	49	7
8*	NMV	386	42	2	50	48	23	34	9
9	CM	750	72	3	16	7	1	18	11
10	SEM	1314	62	6	21	14	6	20	9

Table 14 illustrates the top ten middle schools and provides parental percentages of educational attainment. NMV has a higher percentage of Not High School Graduate parents and less amounts in Graduate School and College Graduate parents. This table is striking in providing parental personal educational background and whether they have been exposed to a level of educational experiences as challenging as a graduate school experience.

Table 14. Academic Performance Index County Comparison Scores with Parent Education

			PARENT EDUCATION PERCENTAGE				
#	County Middle Schools *SRVUSD	2009 Growth	Grad School %	College %	Some College %	HS Grad %	Not HS Grad %
1	CVM	962	58	29	10	2	0
2	EWM	935	52	31	9	4	4
4	RRRM	930	53	38	6	1	2
3	MVM	930	47	38	13	3	0
5	OVM	901	41	42	12	4	1
6	BHM	897	35	41	18	4	1
7	MM	897	32	41	17	7	3
8*	NMV	892	13	18	28	18	24
9	CM	891	45	30	20	4	0
10	SEM	890	26	39	22	8	5

Student Achievement – Paired Sample T-test – Subgroup – Gender

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in CST scores with males over a two year time period (see Table 15). There was a statistically significant increase in males English Language Arts (ELA) scores from 2007 (M=381.4667, SD=49.46560) to 2009 [M=396.2667, SD=40.76284, $t(44)=3.246$, $p<.05$]. The eta squared statistic (.96) indicated a large effect size. However, males did not have a statistical significant increase in their Math scores from 2007 (M=427.8667, SD=82.28459) to 2009 [M=426.6222, SD=56.93988, $t(44)=-.134$]. The eta squared statistic (.02) indicated a small effect size. Male's positive change in ELA demonstrates that their gains are pacing with the NCLB yearly benchmark. The ELA percentage requirement is lower than the math.

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in CST scores with females over a two year time period. There was a statistically significant increase

in their English Language Arts scores from 2007 (M=366.0976, SD=45.52626) to 2009 [M=401.1220, SD=53.20723, t(40)=6.952, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.99) indicated a large effect size. Also, females over a two year time period show significant increase in Math scores from 2007 (M=386.3659, SD=76.02031) to 2009 [M=411.4878, SD=59.57479, t(40)=3.129. p<.05] The eta squared statistic (.96) indicated a large effect size. Females have demonstrated a two-year gain in their CST English Language Arts and Math scores. This finding is relatively more powerful with the sample size of females smaller than that of males.

Table 15. NMV California Standards Tests Comparison Scores - Gender

Gender Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
Sex		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Male	E09 – E07	14.80000	30.58862	4.55988	5.61016	23.98984	3.246	44	0.002
Female	E09 – E07	35.02439	32.26026	5.03821	24.84180	45.20698	6.952	40	0.000
	M09 – M07	25.12195	51.41361	8.02946	8.89381	41.35009	3.129	40	0.003

Student Achievement – Paired Sample T-test – Subgroup – Ethnicity

The following tests continued to challenge the second hypothesis with a comparative analysis of Caucasian and Latino students with the CST results (see Table 16). A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in CST scores with Caucasian over a two-year time period. There was a statistically significant increase in English Language Arts scores from 2007 (M=397.8621, SD=39.66982) to 2009 [M=416.1724, SD=41.93964, t(28)=2.586, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.95)

indicated a large effect size. In contrast, the change in CST scores with Caucasians over a two year time period demonstrated no statistical significant increase in Math scores from 2007 (M=452.7586, SD=75.82456) to 2009 [M=435.6897, SD=75.8256, t(28)=-1.595]. The eta squared statistic (.90) indicated a large effect size.

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change in CST scores for Latino students over a two-year time period. There was a statistically significant increase in their English Language Arts scores from 2007 (M=360.7037, SD=48.29611) to 2009 [M=388.3889, SD=47.77716, t(53)=6.691, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.98) indicated a large effect size. Latinos also illustrated a statistically significant increase in Math scores from 2007 (M=384.0370, SD=69.23108) to 2009 [M=410.6481, SD=46.83417, t(53)=3.599. p<.005]. The eta squared statistic (.96) indicated a large effect size. Finding that Latinos are outpacing the Caucasian student in yearly CST gains in math, lends to continued support for a magnet theme with math as one of the foci.

Table 16. NMV California Standards Tests Comparison Scores - Ethnicity

Paired Samples Test(a)									
		Paired Differences							
Ethnicity		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Cauca-sian	E09 – E07	18.31034	38.13332	7.08118	3.80520	32.81548	2.586	28	0.015
Latino	E09 – E07	27.68519	30.40347	4.13739	19.38664	35.98373	6.691	53	0.000
	M09 – M07	26.61111	54.34218	7.39503	11.77855	41.44367	3.599	53	0.001

Student Achievement – Paired Sample T-test – Subgroup – Free and Reduced Lunch

Students on free and reduced lunch describe students who are from lower socio-economic homes. A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change over a two-year period in CST English Language Arts scores for students who are identified as recipients of free and reduced lunch (see Table 17). There was a statistically significant increase in their English Language Arts scores from 2007 (M=359.0682, SD=45.68721) to 2009 [M=383.8182, SD=41.68781, t(43)=4.936, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.98) indicated a large effect size.

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the two-year change in CST Math scores of students identified as recipients of free and reduced lunch. There was a statistically significant increase in their Math scores from 2007 (M=386.0227, SD=63.36223) to 2009 [M=407.8864, SD=41.91920, t(43)=2.387, p<.05]. The eta squared statistic (.92) indicated a large effect size.

Table 17

NMV California Standards Tests Comparison Scores - Free & Reduced Lunch

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences							
Lunch		Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
No	E09 - E07	24.11905	32.76092	5.05512	13.91002	34.32807	4.771	41	0.000
Yes	E09 - E07	24.75000	33.25736	5.01374	14.63884	34.86116	4.936	43	0.000
	M09 - M07	21.86364	60.76818	9.16115	3.38842	40.33885	2.387	43	0.021

Student Achievement – Paired Sample T-test – Subgroup – CST subject comparison

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change over two years in the CST English Language Arts scores. Students demonstrated that over a two year time period there was a statistically significant increase in their English Language Arts scores (see Table 18) from 2007 (M=389.9286, SD=45.64304) to 2009 [M=414.0476, SD=47.49632, t(41)=4.771, p<.0005]. The eta squared statistic (.41) indicated a small effect size.

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the change over two years in CST Math scores. This analysis did not reveal a statistically significant increase in their Math scores from 2007 (M=431.1905, SD=92.33165) to 2009 [M=431.4762, SD=70.19424, t(41)=.034]. The eta squared statistic (.00) indicated a small effect size. As a math, science and technology school, our focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening has made more of a positive change than our math curriculum over time.

Table 18. NMV California Standards Tests Two-Year Comparison Scores - ELA

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
E09 - E07	24.44186	32.82273	3.53937	17.40465	31.47907	6.906	85	0.000

Circle of Courage – Achievement & Belonging – Correlations

Further correlations were conducted to test whether there is a relationship between the five competences and CST subject tests (see Table 19) in students Cohort 1. The first comparison tested the perceived Scholastic Competence (as measured by the SPPC) and performance in the CST English Language Arts exam. This comparison was investigated using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical test. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables [r=.308, N=87 p<.004], with high levels of perceived Scholastic Competence associated with high CST English Language Arts scores.

The relationship between perceived Scholastic Competence (as measured by the SPPC) and performance of the CST Math exam was investigated using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables [r=.488, N=87

p<.0005], with high levels of perceived Scholastic Competence associated with high CST Math scores.

The relationship between perceived Behavior Conduct (as measured by the SPPC) and performance of the CST Math exam was investigated using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient analyses. Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables [r=.288, N=88 p<.05], with high levels of perceived Behavior Conduct associated with high CST Math scores.

Table 19. NMV California Standards Tests Cohort 1 Comparison Scores - ELA vs. Math

Correlations

		MeanScholPOST7	MeanBehaPOST7
E09	Pearson Correlation	.308(**)	0.196
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	0.067
	N	87	88
M09	Pearson Correlation	.488(**)	.228(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.033
	N	87	88

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis #3 – Parent Engagement & Satisfaction

Research question 3: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect parents' engagement with the school?

Hypothesis 3: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on parents' engagement with the school.

The Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information, consisting of 28 questions, (D.C. Public Schools, 1994) was administered to all parents at the end of each year for 2007, 2008 (Appendix C). This assessment measured parents' satisfaction in six areas: (a) Quality of Staff, (b) School Climate, (c) Academic Program, (d) Social Development and Extracurricular Activities, (e) Parent Involvement, and (f) a General Opinion about the campus.

The Parent Satisfaction and Information survey (D.C. Public Schools, 1994) was modified from its original form by eliminating certain questions but keeping the categories in place. In the School Climate section, the question for purposeful length and relevance "The principal in my child's school encourages teachers to try new ways of teaching and seems open to new ideas." was omitted, due to a question that already pertained to the school principal.

In the School Climate, section the question omitted is "Students in my child's school are friendly towards my child." This question was already asked under this section. Under the Academic Program section, "The books, materials, and equipment at my child's school are adequate.", "The guidance counselor at my child's school are very helpful to my child." A question was asked later in the survey regarding our guidance counselor, which did not apply for our campus during the 2-year study.

In Social Development and Extracurricular Activities, "My child's school emphasizes drug awareness and prevention education." The need to answer this question was not a focus of our purpose in measuring students belonging. The following questions in General Questions section were not included due to the

information we gathered through our archived data, “What grades does your child usually get at this school?”, “What is your highest level of education” and “What is the total yearly income of your household.” The modified survey has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient reported of .90.

Figure 9 illustrates parents level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with specific aspects of their children’s school were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 (5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=no opinion; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree). The mean parent (N=228) rating was 4.425 for Quality of Staff, 4.406 for School Climate, 4.447 for Academic Program, 4.2877 for Social Development, and 4.147 for Parent Involvement. This survey was completed by parents at the end of each year, 1 and 2, and provided in English and Spanish.

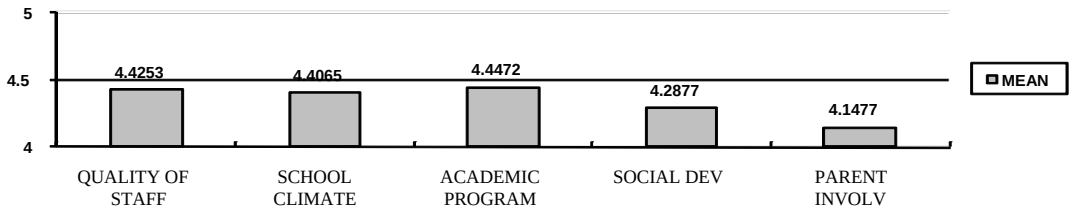


Figure 9. Survey of parent satisfaction and information mean scores. This illustrates the strength of each component from Tuck (1995) survey. NMV showed a consistent satisfaction with averages of 4 and above for each component.

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – Quality of Staff

The level of parents ‘satisfaction in the quality of NMV staff was found to be very high with mean ratings of 4.4253 on a 5-point scale, with 5 meaning high satisfaction and 1 indicating low satisfaction. Among the five areas, Quality of Staff was the second highest rated area of parent satisfaction (see Table 20). As illustrated

below, parents reported strong agreement in believing that their child's teachers were "committed to teaching my child" (M=4.4889), with 57.8% of the parents reporting agreement. Parents also felt that the principal and teachers at NMV seem to work together (M=4.44714), as indicated by agreement of 54.2%. Parents agreed that their child's teachers are up-to-date about things happening in the subjects they teach (M=4.3965) with 48.9 % agreeing. Finally, parents' belief that their child's teachers are able to make learning exciting and fun were also relatively high (M=4.3142) with agreement at 41.6% and 50%.

Table 20. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Quality of Staff

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Max=5.0)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1. The principal and teachers at NMV seem to work together.	4.4714	54.2	40.5	4.0	0.9	0.4
2. My child's teachers are up-to-date about things that are happening in the subjects they teach.	4.3965	48.9	42.3	8.4	0.4	0.0
3. My child's teachers are able to make learning exciting and fun.	4.3142	41.6	50.0	6.6	1.8	0.0
4. My child's teachers are committed to teaching my child.	4.4889	57.8	34.2	7.1	0.9	0.0
Overall Area Rating	4.4253	-	-	-	-	-

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – School Climate

Parents reported their high satisfaction with the school climate at NMV with average ratings of 4.4065. Among the five areas, School Climate was the rated as the third highest rated area of satisfaction (see Table 21). Specifically parents reported their perceptions that the NMV principal takes prompt action when problems occur (M=4.5066) with 61.7%. Parents reported perceiving that NMV is a safe place to learn (M=4.4890) with 54.2% strongly agreeing. The third highest rated question in this area was parents' belief that NMV is an orderly place (M=4.3767) with 47.5% agreeing. Finally, parents' reported beliefs that the buildings and grounds at NMV are neat and well maintained (M=4.2311) with 38.2% strongly agreeing and 50.2% agreeing.

Table 21. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - School Climate

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Max=5.0)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
5. NMV is an orderly place.	4.3767	47.5	45.3	4.5	2.7	0.0
6. NMV is a safe place to learn.	4.4890	54.2	41.9	2.6	1.3	0.0
7. The Principal takes prompt action when problems occur.	4.5066	61.7	30.4	7.9	2.6	0.4
8. The buildings and grounds at NMV are neat and well maintained.	4.2311	38.2	50.2	8.0	3.6	0.0
Overall Area Rating	4.4065	-	-	-	-	-

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – Academic Program

Parents' reported high satisfaction with the academic program at NMV with a mean rating of 4.4472. Among the five areas of parents' satisfaction, Academic Program was the highest rated (see Table 22). Parents reported that NMV does a good job of teaching my child basic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics and science (M=4.6396) with a 66.7%. Parents felt NMV is "training my child to use modern technology (e.g., SMART boards, laptops, document cameras, internet, PowerPoint, Word, Excel)" (M=4.5773) with 63.2% strongly agreeing. Parents agreed with the statement "my child is challenged by his/her studies at NMV" (M=4.3899) with 51.4% strongly agreeing. Parents' perceptions that their child receives extra help at NMV when it is needed had a mean rating of (4.3484) with 53.4% strongly agreeing. Parent perceptions that "meaningful homework is assigned to my child on a regular basis" had a mean rating of (4.3453) with 45.7% strongly agreeing and 47.1% agreeing. Finally, responses related to NMV uses different ways to determine my child's performance reveled (M=4.2986) a 43.9% strongly agreeing and 44.3% agreeing.

Table 22. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Academic Program

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Max=5.0)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
9. NMV does a good job of teaching my child basic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics and science.	4.6396	66.7	32.0	0.5	0.5	0.5
10. NMV does a good job teaching my child thinking and reasoning skills.	4.5045	55.4	41.1	2.2	1.3	0.0
11. My child is challenged by his/her studies at NMV.	4.3899	51.4	39.0	7.8	0.9	0.9
12. My child receives extra help at NMV when it is needed.	4.3484	53.4	31.2	12.2	3.2	0.0
13. Meaningful homework is assigned to my child on a regular basis.	4.3453	45.7	47.1	3.6	3.1	0.4
14. NMV uses different ways to determine my child's performance.	4.2986	43.9	44.3	10.0	1.4	0.5
15. NMV is training my child to use modern technology (e.g., SMART boards, laptops, document cameras, internet, PowerPoint, Word, Excel)	4.5773	63.2	32.3	3.6	0.9	0.0
Overall Area Rating	4.4472	-	-	-	-	-

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – Social Development and Extracurricular Activities

Parent's satisfaction with social development and extracurricular activities at NMV were rated with a mean of 4.2877. Among the five areas, Social Development and Extracurricular Activities were the fourth highest rated areas of parent satisfaction (see Table 23). Parents strongly agreed that NMV "encourages my child to participate in community activities" (M=4.4489) with 51.6%. Parents also reported agreeing that NMV "teaches my child how to get along with other students" (M=4.3182) with

40.5% strongly agreeing. The belief of parents that NMV "teaches my child about people of different cultures" was strong, (M=4.2545) with 41.1% strongly agreeing and 46% agreeing. Finally, parents reported satisfaction with the item "their child's special interests and talents are developed at NMV." The item was rated satisfactorily (M=4.0848) with 37.5% strongly agreeing and 42.9% agreeing. The encouraging and unexpected strongest satisfaction was "NMV is training my child to use modern technology (e.g., SMART boards, laptops, document cameras, internet, PowerPoint, Word, Excel)" (M=4.5773) with 63.2% in total agreement.

Table 23. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Social Development and Extracurricular Activities

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Maximum =5.0)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
16. NMV teaches my child how to get along with other students.	4.3182	40.5	38.6	15.5	3.6	1.4
17. NMV teaches my child about people of different cultures.	4.2545	41.1	46.0	10.7	1.8	0.4
18. My child's special interests and talents are developed at NMV.	4.0848	37.5	42.9	12.5	4.9	2.2
19. NMV encourages my child to participate in community activities.	4.4489	51.6	42.7	4.9	0.9	0.0
Overall Area Rating	4.2877	-	-	-	-	-

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – Parent Involvement

Parents were found to be highly satisfied with Parent Involvement at NMV, rating the school on average 4.1477. Among the five areas, Parent Involvement was the lowest rated (see Table 24). Parents strongly agreed that they felt welcomed to

visit NMV (M=4.4292) with 52.7% parents agreeing. Parents felt that they are regularly invited to participate in activities at NMV (M=4.1416) with 38.1% strongly agreeing and 44.2% agreeing. Parents felt it was easy to get appointments to meet with the staff at NMV (M=4.1261) with 38.7% strongly agreeing and 39.2% agreeing. Parents felt welcomed to offer their opinion about programs and activities at NMV (M=4.0752) with 35% strongly agreeing and 42.9% agreeing. Finally, parents provided a mix of agreements with NMV being willing to accept their opinions and advice (M=3.9375) with 30.4% strongly agreeing, 36.6% agreeing and 29.9% having no opinion.

Table 24. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Parent Involvement

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Maximum =5.0)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
20. I feel welcomed to visit NMV.	4.4292	52.7	40.3	4.4	2.7	0.0
21. It is easy to get appointments to meet with the staff at NMV.	4.1261	38.7	39.2	22.1	3.2	0.9
22. I am regularly invited to participate in activities at NMV.	4.1416	38.1	44.2	12.8	3.5	1.3
23. I feel welcome to offer my opinion about programs and activities at NMV.	4.0752	35.0	42.9	17.7	3.5	0.9
24. NMV is willing to accept my opinions and advice.	3.9375	30.4	36.6	29.9	2.7	0.4
Overall Area Rating	4.1477	-	-	-	-	-

Parent Engagement & Satisfaction – General Questions

Parents were provided (see Table 25) a set of general questions about their overall satisfaction with NMV; ratings on average were 4.6278 with 65.5% rating NMV as excellent and 31.8% rating it as good.

Table 25. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - General Questions

Survey Items	Mean Rating (Maximum=5.0)	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	No Opinion (%)
25. How would you rate NMV overall?	4.6278	65.5	31.8	2.7	0.0	0.0

In addition, 95.2% of the parents surveyed agreed if given the choice of any school in the city for their child (see Table 26), NMV would be one of their top choices.

Table 26. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Parent's Choice

Survey Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
26. If you could choose any school in the city for your child, would NMV be one of your top choices?	95.2	1.8	2.2

Parents were also asked to rate (see Table 27) if NMV has lived up to their expectations up to this point with 89% rating it as yes.

Table 27. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Mean Scores - Parent Expectations

Survey Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not Sure (%)
27. Has NMV lived up to your expectations up to this point?	89.0	3.1	1.3

Circle of Courage –Parents Perceptions of Quality of Staff

During the two-year study, parents feared that as the school grew, the staff would begin to lessen its instructional and enthusiastic commitment. One challenge shared by Delagardelle, Meyer, and Middleton (1996) was in implementing a new math program. Parents did not trust the curriculum and they were concerned that their children were being used as a pilot study. This was hard for teachers to explain when they themselves had not had enough time and experience to be comfortable with the new program. As illustrated in Table 28, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the Quality of Staff area in a two-year period, 2007-2009. There was a significant difference in scores for Year 1 (M=4.3576, SD=.52278) and Year 2 [M=4.5519, SD=.50546; T(159.989)=2.690, p=.008]. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (Eta squared=.76). The positive increase indicated that parents were satisfied with the staff and our growth.

Table 28. Survey of Parent Satisfaction and Information Correlation Scores - Quality of Staff

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
Quality of Staff								
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
								Lower / Upper
Equal variances Assumed	0.896	0.345	2.663	219	0.008	0.19431	0.07297	0.05050 / 0.33811
Equal variances not assumed			2.690	159.989	0.008	0.19431	0.07222	0.05168 / 0.33694

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide insight into the effects of student's attendance of the school campus NMV, with its motto, "Engage, Achieve and Belong". Specifically, these data and analyses indicate that : (a) NMV reached its highest API score in 2008 and then in 2009 further increased their API to be designated as a high performing school; (b) females, Latinos, and students with the free and reduced lunch designation demonstrated statistically significant increases in scores on both the English Language Arts and Math CST's; (c) across all groups Latinos self-reported statistically significant increases in their Social Competence; (d) students-self reported statistically significant increases in their Scholastic Competence; and (e) parents self-reported statistically significant increases in their perceptions about the quality of the NMV staff. Using the theoretical framework underlying this dissertation, the Circle of Courage (Brendtro et al., 2002), these findings indicate the use of the longitudinal quantitative approach in this dissertation was valuable yet restrictive.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging

Hypothesis 1 addressed the extent to which NMV had a positive effect on students' attitudes of belonging. Students' sense of belonging was operationalized and measured as self-perceived competence in light of research documenting that self-perceived competence predicts student perceptions of connectedness and belonging (Harter, 1999). Students in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 were administered the Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Children to examine the extent to which these students changed in their overall self-worth including scholastic, social, athletic, physical and behavioral

(Harter, 1985). Due to time restrictions of the study, only Cohort 1 has completed two years of the survey and Cohort 2 completed one year. Therefore, Cohort 1 analyses of student individual difference factors including ethnicity, gender, free and reduced lunch designation and GATE were investigated for their effect on SPPC scores at the two time points, within and across cohorts.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging – Ethnicity

Cohort 1 Latino students demonstrated significant increases in perceived competence over the two-year study in the area of Scholastic Competence, tapping into their perceived competence or ability within the realm of scholastic performance (Harter, 1985). Latino students also demonstrated a significant positive gain in their perceived Social Competence. Feeling socially competent is measured by the degree to which students feel accepted by peers, feels popular, that he or she has friends, and feels that most kids like them (Harter, 1985). In contrast, White students did not indicate any change, either positive or negative in their perceived Social Competence. Thus, Latino students attending NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) experienced positive gains in their sense of belonging, as measured by the SPPC.

There may be various explanations for such an effect with Latino students; some may be related to the Principal who communicates to English and Spanish speaking homes through a mass calling system and the school's attempts to provide Spanish translations for Back to School nights. Deliberate procedures designed to connect with our various subgroups are used such as: (a) having classes scheduled to be mixed by abilities from special education to GATE students and having the English

Learner services embedded in all classes regardless of ethnicity or English Language proficiency, (b) students who are performing academically lower are partnered with other students who mentor them, (c) low academic performing students, which are often EL students, are required to attend learning labs that provide additional support in the morning for English Language, (d) afternoon math tutoring from teachers and (e) project based learning requires students to work together in classrooms to master academic achievement but also their social development.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging – Student Gender

Both male and female students demonstrated a significant positive change in their perceived Scholastic Competence across the two years. Both gender groups increased in the extent that they perceived themselves to have gained confidence in their scholastic competence. In both genders, this growth demonstrates a positive outcome for the NMV sample compared to a similar study measuring differences among students entering a rural middle school environment using a wide set of variables SPPC for self-esteem (Smith, 2007). The author of this study noted that the most examined interaction effect in these sorts of studies is self-esteem scores across time. Smith discusses results in previous studies revealed no interaction effects of self-esteem and gender. This is consistent with more recent studies of this effect; in contrast to older studies that have detected differences between genders, self esteem/perceived competence measure. NMV students of both genders demonstrated a consistent gain and no gap between genders existed. This is contradictory to the

stereotype and generally held belief that math, science and technology campus may be more attractive and bring greater success academic for males.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging – Free and Reduced Lunch

Students who receive free and reduced lunch services demonstrated significant increases in their perception of their Scholastic competence. Students who were receiving state funding for their daily food allowance and qualified based on a low household income increased in their self-reported scholastic competence over the two-year span. This finding was encouraging and one explanation for this finding may be the implementation of a dress code complements our high academic expectations. Students at NMV are to follow the three C's in our school attire: Collared, Corporate and Covered. This was established by a parent committee, which was represented equally by Spanish Speaking and English speaking parents, in the months prior to opening the school. Students are required to wear shirts with collars and have to be free of logos or graffiti type of designs. Students are also asked to follow the corporate approach that requires students to wear regular fitting pants. The parents and school held a common belief that collaboration was to establish a socially acceptable environment around the theme of clothing to encourage the students to remain focused on their academic pursuits rather than how they might fit in based on what they are wearing or not wearing. The intent of the required attire may have had the desired effect by focusing students on academic achievement.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging – GATE

Non-GATE students demonstrated a positive significant change in their perceived Scholastic and Behavior Competences. These same students also demonstrated significant positive change in their self-perceived behavior (i.e., do the right thing, act the way they are supposed to, avoid getting into trouble) (Harter, 1985).

GATE-identified students demonstrated significant gains only in their Scholastic competence. Cornell, Delcourt, Goldberg, and Bland (1995) analyzed achievement and self-concept with SPPC scores in 299 African American, 52 Hispanic and 595 White elementary school students. Minority students in gifted programs scored significantly higher on achievement measures than did minority students in regular classrooms, but lower than White gifted program students. Ward (2006) discussed that there were no minority group differences in self-perceived Scholastic or Social competence. He reviewed qualitative studies of Hispanics and African Americans, which had some significant themes relating to achievement and self-concept. The successful students credited mentors, role models, family support, extracurricular opportunities and gifted programs with contributing to their academic outcomes.

An explanation for the differences in Non-GATE students having Scholastic and Behavior competence significant positive changes may be that NMV does not have an honors program and regular program. The purpose of the school is to provide a rigorous academic program for all students. This is accomplished with

implementation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), which is for students aged 11 to 16, which provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers. The overall approach is to be inclusive of students from Special Education to GATE students in the IBMYP design, creating a common academic expectation across the curriculum.

Hypothesis #1 – Student Belonging – Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

Cohort 1, with two administrations of the SPPC, reported a significant positive increase in self-reported perception of their Scholastic Competence and Overall Competence. Students in Cohort 2, with only one year of administration of the SPPC, demonstrated similar significant positive findings in self-perceived Scholastic Competence. Based on the consistency of the academic program, the expectation would be to have Cohort 2 have outcomes similar to Cohort 1 so that their Scholastic competence growth would remain significant. One explanation for such a current finding for Cohort 1 may be the requirement of the use of Cornell note taking through the daily use of composition books in every class from Physical Education to math classes. In education, Cornell note taking has become the popular use of a student strategy in acquiring knowledge from a teacher lecture. Pauk and Owens (2005) illustrate the system that is widely used at NMV:

> The Cornell System, with its extra wide margin designed for jotting cues to use for recitation, has been around for more than forty years and served the test of time. However, over time, our thinking about exactly what belongs in this margin has evolved. Initially it was keywords or

> phrases, but with memory research demonstrating the advantage of recall over mere recognition, we began to suggest using questions as an alternative to keywords. Why? Because formulating questions requires more than extracting a word or phrase from a paragraph's main idea; it actually encourages students to think about what's truly important in each paragraph. (p. 192)

Hypothesis #1 – Circle of Courage – Belong (Belonging & Generosity)

Though the hypothesis that NMV students would report improved senses of belonging, over time tested with the SPPC perceived competences, some small yet significant findings in the areas of Belonging and Generosity (see Figure 10), Harter (1985) describes how she attempted to measure competences:

> The model underlying the construction of the Perceived Competence Scale for Children hypothesizes that children do not feel equally competent in every skill domain. We first sought to specify the major competence domains, which are relevant to elementary school children. The skills represented by items on existing scales included scholastic performance, peer relationships and a variety of physical skills. These competencies were consistent in our own observations of the mastery behaviors most salient for elementary school children and thus they provided an initial framework. Interviews with children were then designed to determine which activities within these domains were particularly important to children making judgments of competence. (p. 88)

One finding that was not predicted was that students would perceive an improved sense of belonging over time. The Circle of Courage definition of belonging is that students have a sense of community, loving others and being. The only group that demonstrated a significant positive increase over a two-year time period was Latinos, on the SPPC Social Acceptance dimension. Items in this scale were aimed at determining the extent to which students perceived themselves to be: (1) easy to make friends, (2) have a lot of friends, (3) easy to like, (4) do things with a lot of kids, (5)

most kids like me, and (6) popular with kids. This was the most unexpected finding among all groups, and sheds a new light on these findings and their possible confounding variables. Specifically, the results that indicated that Latino students gained perceived competence in their overall perceived Scholastic and Social Competence provides insight into their overall sense of belonging and connectedness to the school. One explanation may be the use of small learning communities known on the NMV campus as villages. These villages are comprise of less than 100 students who share the same three core subject, math, science and English Language Arts, teachers. This allows for a close monitoring of students successes and failures, around which then teachers can collaborate with parents and students and addressing any issues immediately.

Generosity is defined as looking forward to being able to contribute to others and being able to give cherished things to others (Brendtro et al., 2002). This finding is encouraging and may be attributed to the annual community service events that are required of all students through IBMYP. By asking students to participate in on campus events that will go toward fulfilling this requirement, allowed for more interaction with others on campus.

The Behavior competence was applied for both belonging and generosity related to scores on the SPPC, with a strong, positive correlation was discovered between two variables: high levels of perceived Behavior competence were associated with high CST Math scores ($r=.288$, $N=88$ $p<.05$). The items on which the students self-reported in this dimension were the extent to which they believed that they:

(1) like the way they behave, (2) usually do the right thing, (3) act the way they are supposed to, (4) don't get in trouble, (5) don't do things they shouldn't, and (6) that they are kind to others. One example of such a relation is that students perhaps feel that with our magnet school focused in math, science and technology, they have gained confidence in those subjects such as math, which is measured with high CST math scores. Though this was unanticipated, further research must be conducted.

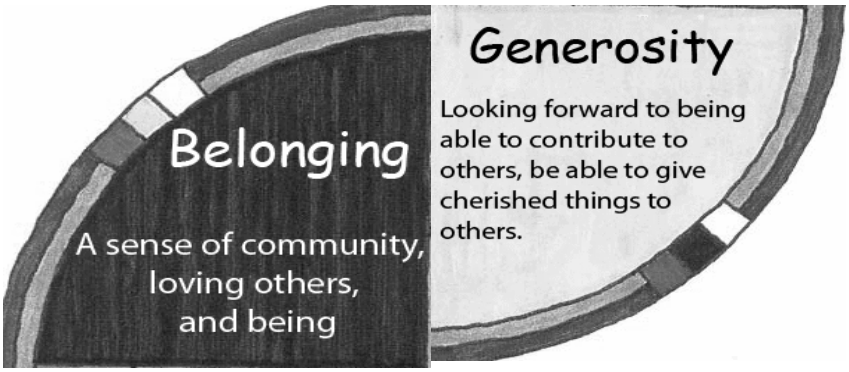


Figure 10. Circle of courage - belonging and generosity. These two components from Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (2002) were used to measure the student's perceptions during the two-year study.

Making connections between the Circle of Courage and the components of belonging and generosity in this study was an attempt to expand the ethnicity- based literature that Grahm (1994) found to be limited when she analyzed over 140 studies focused on African American students and motivation. The author postulates:

> In the personality and social psychology literatures, there are several lines of research indicating that the self plays a central role in motivation. For example, individuals often are motivated to maintain self-consistency in their actions; goal-directed behavior can serve both self-enhancement and self-assessment motives; self-efficacy has been related to the intensity and persistence of behavior, and individuals have both public (self-presentational) and private conceptions of self, to

> list just a few of the contemporary self-constructs that have well-established empirical findings. (Grahm, 1994, p. 104)

Seeking the sense of belonging on the school campus and applying, an educational theoretical framework within a longitudinal case study provided some significant results for the effectiveness of NMV, but they must be considered cautiously. The findings are relevant, but as Anderson, Burnham, Cherry, and Gould (2001) warn, finding effects during data analysis that are in fact spurious may be an artifact of the data set and not a characteristic of the underlying process of interest; if treated as a legitimate finding, these relations may ultimately skew the intentions of the hypothesis. A sense of belonging in magnet middle schools must continue to be investigated which will provide further understanding of connectedness.

Hypothesis #2 – Student Achievement – Cohort

Research question 2: To what extent does the NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) middle school experience affect students' academic achievement?

Hypothesis 2: NMV Magnet Middle (NMV) has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

NMV has taken advantage of receiving Title I federal monies, which support students who are of low socioeconomic status. The California Department of Education (2010) recognizes such a challenge and awards those schools who receive such funding for having over 50% of their students on free and reduced lunch for improvement and have demonstrated success in closing the achievement gap school wide. The California Department of Education (2010) further explains their purpose of the awards:

> The Title I Academic Achievement Award is given only to schools receiving federal Title I funds as authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title I is the single largest federal educational program for K-12 public education. Title I funds assist schools in meeting the educational needs of students living near or at the poverty level. Of the more than 9,000 schools in California, more than 6,000 of them participate in the Title I program. The criteria to qualify for the Title I Academic Achievement Award have become more rigorous in recent years. To meet the criteria for this distinction, the school must demonstrate that all students are making significant progress toward proficiency on California's academic content standards. Additionally, the school's socioeconomically disadvantaged students must have doubled the achievement targets set for them for two consecutive years. (p. 1)

Overall, both NMV Cohorts 1 and 2, when compared to other middle schools in the county, performed at a higher level based on the API scores: 875 and 892, respectively. Moreover, NMV, compared to the other middle schools in the county, outperformed schools that have substantially less diverse student and parent populations.

Hypothesis #2 – Achieve – Gender

Male and female students in Cohort 1 demonstrated a significant increase in their English Language Arts state scores. Females also demonstrated significant gains in math as compared from fall 2007 to spring 2009. The gender difference is later reflected in an assessment, Standardized Achievement Test (SAT), that high school juniors complete for admissions as reported by Marklein (2009), from the USA Today, from a 2009 report by The College Board. This organization oversees the administration, which provides graduating high school students with the challenge of earning a score significant enough to meet one of many colleges' entrance requirements. The 2008 SAT reported more females completed the assessment than

males. A spokesperson for the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, which is a critic of standardized tests, opines of the "widening gaps of all sorts – race, gender and income – at a time when the nation is spending billions of dollars allegedly trying to close the achievement gap." Males in the math section of the SAT are still outperforming female students.

Hypothesis #2 – Achieve – Ethnicity

White and Latino students demonstrated significant gains in English-Language Arts over the two-year period. Latino students were the only group to achieve significant gains in math at NMV. This is encouraging after a report by the State Superintendent (O'Connell, 2008), that illustrates nearly two-thirds of Asian students and more than half of White students were proficient in mathematics in 2006, only about 5 of every 20 African American students, 6 of every 26 Hispanic/Latino students and about 3 of every special education students met the performance standard. The result for Latino students having significant gains in math is encouraging and may be explained with the school seeing predominately Latino students attend intervention programs live that typically offered during spring break intersession is, providing a one-week additional academic session. With the achievement gap being predominately between Latino and White students in 2007, low performing students, i.e. some Latinos, were targeted with additional support in both math and Language Arts each of the two years during this study.

Hypothesis #2 – Achieve – Free and Reduced Lunch

All participating students, regardless of whether they received Free and Reduced lunch services or not, achieved significant gains in English Language Arts over the two-year span. In addition, students qualifying for the program, in contrast to students who did not qualify for the program achieved increases in math test scores. Milne and Plourde (2006) state that nearly all researchers agree that SES does affect students' overall cognitive development and academic achievement. However, questions about what needs are being met of students who come from low-SES homes that tend to have high academic achievement, is still unanswered.

Hypothesis #2 – Achieve – CST over 2 years

NMV is a themed school in math, science and technology and the question often posed by parents who are interested in applying is “With NMV having these three themes, how is your English Language Arts program?” An unexpected result was that the English Language Arts was the only state test that revealed significant increase in scores for students in both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 over the two-year case study. Due to the specificity of this study, research on Cohort differences in students’ tests scores could not be matched, yet the result is encouraging.

Hypothesis #2 – Circle of Courage – Achieve (Student Mastery & Independence)

One component of the Circle of Courage theory is Student Mastery, defined as competence in many areas; cognitive, physical, social, spiritual, having self-control, responsibility, striving to achieve personal goals rather than superiority (Brendtro et al., 2002). The hypothesis that NMV had a positive impact on students’ achievement

levels could be illustrated by the yearly increases on students' API scores. NMV earned an overall API score that was the highest in the school district for two consecutive years. Females, Latinos and students receiving free and reduced lunch services demonstrated an increase in their API scores. Austin, Hanson, Bono, and Cheng (2007) summarized that academic performance may explain this result with a report that 'school well-being' varies racial/ethnic compositions of California schools even when controlling for socioeconomic status and other school demographic characteristics.

NMV may explain the overall API attainment based on a balanced school setting that was designed through the admissions policy and flexible groupings within the school day. Furthermore, WestEd found that in a studying of 4,489 public elementary schools, 620 K-8 schools, 1,165 middle schools and 974 high schools:

> When schools were grouped into quintiles based on SES, students in low-income schools, the majority of whom are Hispanic and African American, exhibited substantially lower academic performance than their counterparts in other schools. Students in schools serving the most low-income students also reported relatively low levels of school support and meaningful participation, school safety, school connectedness, and the highest rates of truancy, although the differences were not as large as for academic performance. Socioeconomic status was also related to violence and victimization at school. (Marklein, 2009)

Figure 11. Circle of courage - independence and mastery. These two components from Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (2002) were used to measure the student's perceptions during the two-year study.

The students' responses on the SPPC did reveal a consistent significant increase for some groups on the perceived Scholastic Competence dimension, but some groups, specifically Whites, males, and students who did not receive free and reduced lunch services did not demonstrate these increases.

The second component of the Circle of Courage is Independence, which is defined as making one's own decisions and being responsible for failure or success, setting one's own goals and disciplining one's self superiority (Brendtro et al., 2002). NMV strives to provide a student-learning environment that promotes high academic expectations. Middleton and Midgley (2002) describes the idea of high student expectations:

> Conceptualization of academic press goes beyond teacher beliefs (such as expectations) to consider techniques that teachers use to probe, to check for, and to ensure understanding by individual students during the instructional process. That is, students may be aware that their teachers provide challenging tasks to the class, articulate high

> standards, and expect high effort, without perceiving that the teacher expects them personally to explain why an answer is correct, will not allow them to get away with doing easy work, and will give them harder problems to do when they have mastered the work they are doing. (p. 377)

With the SPPC, significant relations were found between self-perceived Scholastic Competence and test scores on the API. Thus, NMV has empirically demonstrated to stakeholders that students who enroll at NMV do in fact achieve at increasing rates. Though the API score is not the single indicator of a student's, school's or district's success, NMV should be encouraged with the first two year's results. Thum (2002) studied the major features of the API, which appears to the author to seek only to depict normative status. He further argues that API scoring scheme is not an accident of design but a deliberate template to facilitate, by extension, the 'rolling in' of other tests and indicators. Moreover, a school's API is a significant figure to the school and the state that uses this measure yearly to determine success or program improvement.

NMV has demonstrated that students have gained self-reported confidence in their scholastic competence and feel connected to the curriculum, which allows them the ability to score well on the state exams each of the two years. Though students are showing growth in their exam results, it is an encouraging sign that they are not simply being taught to become efficient and effective test taker is rather that they may be building an enduring understanding as evidenced in their increases over time in both subject areas of the CST. McTighe and Wiggins (1999) describe this concept as to have students bring that knowledge with them to each class regardless of the

subject. A sense of understanding is not something remembered for 40 days, 40 months but for 40 years.

Hypothesis #3 – Engage – (Parent Satisfaction)

Elmore and Fuller (1996) state that parent involvement and achievement ideology were closely linked because students tended to adopt their parents' ideology with regard to achievement. At NMV, a significant difference was found between parents' first and the second year the strength of their agreement on the following questions: (1) The principal and teachers at VMMS seem to work together, (2) My child's teachers are up-to-date about things that are happening in the subjects they teach, (3) My child's teachers are able to make learning exciting and fun, and (4) My child's teachers are committed to teaching my child. As predicted, NMV parents reported that they felt engaged and that the school had met their expectations in five primary areas: (1) quality of staff, (2) school climate, (3) academic program, (4) social development and extracurricular activities, and (5) parent involvement.

One of NMV's challenge is to establish a consistent pattern of parent and student satisfaction while expanding the school each year by adding a new grade level over a three year period. Parents overall satisfaction is critical to NMV's success. It is encouraging to find that parental involvement and engagement was supported positively. Elmore and Fuller (1996) point out that past research has illustrated that magnet schools tend to have family participation due to their higher socioeconomic status. However, NMV parents' educational levels and free and reduced status has challenged these authors hypothesis.

As NMV opened during the past two years under financial constraints, the one theme of technology in the magnet focus was in question. Despite having less monies than expected and being unable to provide all students with their own laptops as was heavily promoted during early recruitment efforts, the unexpected satisfaction by parents over two years is encouraging. It also reinforces the overall purpose of the school to hold instruction as the primary focus and technology as an effective and innovative teaching tool.

As described by Schaffhauser (2009), the number of growing amounts of electronic equipment being replaced by schools and simply discarded has been estimated in the range of 47.5 million computers per year. NMV's purpose was not allowing waste to occur and fiscal responsibility was highly encouraged throughout the school. In short, with new teachers to the school and new to the magnet theme, time was our friend to benefit our development with technology integrated into our daily instructions. In now ending the third year of NMV's existence, teachers and students have found specifically the technology equipment and software that will enhance students hook to learning.

Conclusion

NMV began as a school with the mandate to prove its worth both inside and outside of the classroom. To support the program, NMV began collecting data to fulfill an immediate need of demonstrating that the school should remain open while at the same time trying to design and build a school that was sustainable. NMV immediately established a foremost place among all schools across the state with

extraordinary API scores. Therefore, other types of change were important to measure, including students self-concepts related to a sense of belonging. The magnet school concept must be empirically assessed to determine its success in a number of ways, not just in student achievement scores. Examining a current educational setting such as NMV provides an opportunity to evaluate its effects through quantitative analysis with empirical information concerning its effectiveness on student achievement, student perceptions of belonging and parent engagement with the educational program.

Using the Circle of Courage as the theoretical framework was productive by applying a best practices approach to an already existing theoretical perspective on magnet schools. It is especially encouraging to note that some of the underrepresented groups demonstrated statistically significant improvements in the outcomes. Moreover, the results also create an imperative to examine why other groups of students did not reveal improved outcomes. Finally, questions remain concerning why other types of perceived competencies did not demonstrate change, such as the Physical Appearance and Athletic Competence within any variable or as a Cohort.

Limitations of Study

The most salient limitation is the role that I serve as the campus principal. While collecting the archived data with student and parent surveys, both groups of participants may have responded in the context of a need to please the school or teachers in providing favorable responses.

Though these data are longitudinal, with a response rate of over 40%, the power of these results would have been enhanced had more students and their parents

participated. The return rate was higher but because of errors on the surveys, many had been withdrawn from the final count in order to provide an accurate data set. With larger samples of children and parents, stronger results may have been revealed in the paired sample t-tests, descriptives and frequencies analyses. A substantial loss of both student and parent data was due to untrained and unseasoned teachers and office staff who were not clear in the protocol and overall data collection process.

The use of the school motto allowed for a first step in using as a lens to measure effectiveness. Though not all components of the Circle of Courage, as the theoretical framework, were measured independently, it did provide a base for future discussion with the staff on how they can see their overall professional and personal approach. Moreover, the concept of Mastery and Independence needed to have a more targeted survey or better controls for the SPPC for such definitions and language of the Circle of Courage. Though the intent of the original study was to conduct focus groups, due to the complex nature of such a framework, merely interviewing a handful of students and/or parents would not serve the overall purpose and improve the power of the results. As with the study by Williams et al. (2010), in using CST scores as their only measure of achievement, the study results need to consider “although the analyses found correlations between some practices and student outcomes on the CST, the estimated relationships should by no means be interpreted as causal. No non-experimental study of this kind can claim to identify causal factors between schooling practices and achievement outcomes” (p. 30).

The parent survey was provided to parents without a required name or signature to minimize the attrition rate. Anonymity for both students and parents prevented correlating individual students' demographic data, CST scores or results in the SPPC across the two years. Though this was a longitudinal case study, the results are difficult to stand on their own with the study not controlling for confounding variables by using control groups of a traditional school or NMV students who were admitted compared to those that were not. One other shortcoming was due to timing of the completion of this study, in order to measure Cohort 2 for one solid year, another six months was needed to get a complete two-year analysis.

As a new school, NMV continues to transition through its first three years with adding new grade levels, hiring new staff, coping with a professional achievement gap and attempting to control for attrition of teachers due to budget cuts and other circumstances normal for contemporary schools. Though NMV has achieved a successful first two years, the limited data collection in this study should be replicated or followed through for a third year, to determine the extent to which the concept of a magnet middle school can achieve sustainability in order to fully capture the school's effectiveness.

Recommendations for Further Research

Though this was a case study, some relations did become evident with the impact of NMV overall on the three components, Engage, Achieve and Belong. Future research on this school would be warranted to study students who have been accepted to the campus in comparison to those that have not been accepted to the school and

remain on a waiting list. By isolating cohorts, it will allow the comparison of two sets of same grade students that attended a traditional school versus NMV. A longitudinal approach would be very appropriate with NMV in managing the outcomes with on- and off-campus data.

Sustainability

NMV has used the concept of sustainability during its third year of existence in order to define the components that have brought success in the first two years of serving its students, especially with regard to engaging students. The results of this study provide further insight to the journey involved in closing the achievement gap. One other step for further investigation of these tested cohorts would be to engage in final interviews of the first promoting student body from eight to ninth grade, to ask questions regarding belonging and meeting students' goals for academic achievement. Data that are more interesting can come from parents' feedback on their experience as their students move to high school.

Action Research

Further action research is encouraged although there are some clear limitations to research evaluating one's own campus and its students. Further research can focus on the immediacy of the change from fifth to sixth grade or, in other words, simply the change from elementary to middle school and the extent to which this magnet middle school experience served as an impact in students' scholastic competence or should be attributed to variables not yet measured. One other perspective for continuing this line of research would be to recruit individual student and parent samples to provide

insight into a holistic view of their experiences at NMV middle school. Further indications that magnet schools may have more effect on certain populations, i.e. females and Latinos should be explored on the NMV campus.

School Leadership

As the Principal of NMV, I began the doctorate of educational leadership and found that the program can be described as a three-year professional development session. With discussions, lectures, exemplars and professor leadership in research and data collection, NMV benefited from such a well-timed development of the Principal. Opening a school in these current financial and academic high stakes era takes special skills that can lead to closing the achievement gap. As a magnet school needing to recruit a diverse population, being a bilingual Principal has provided an advantage in providing access to two home languages and encouraging more communication with the school and its teachers.

Current District Implications

SRVUSD is currently in the process of opening a new dual magnet high school. Though the NMV findings may not be generalizable to other schools, these data do provide ideas for measurement that may be used to monitor student attitudes and parent satisfaction. Though the effects of NMV's small learning communities, student villages and its IBMYP or the size of the school was not independently measured, the school is poised to provide the district with a school that can be a model for the district within the city, the county, the state, and possibly beyond.

APPENDIX A: Parental Permission/Child Assent for a Research Study on the "Effectiveness of Magnet Schools."

Your child is invited to participate in a research study to examine the relationship of one magnet middle school experience with individual student's differences in attitudes, academic achievement and satisfaction. The objectives are to describe the magnet middle school experience through the eyes of individual students and determine how the magnet school program affects students' academic, personal, social or career outcomes. Your child was selected as a possible participant because he or she is a student at Vista Magnet Middle School. Since your child is age 18 or younger, we must have your permission to include him/her in the study.

What will be involved if your child participates? If you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, your child will be asked to periodically complete brief surveys and interview with VMMS and VUSD staff. Your child's total commitment time will be no more than 15 minutes each month from August 2007 to July 2008.

Are there any risks or discomforts? There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

Are there any benefits to your child or others? If your child participates in this study, your child can expect a small gift for their participation.

Will your child receive compensation for participating? No.

Are there any costs? No.

If you (or your child) change your mind about your child's participation, your child can be withdrawn from the study at any time. Your child's participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw your child, your child's data will be withdrawn. Your decision about whether or not to allow your child to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your child's enrollment at VMMS.

Your child's privacy will be protected. Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous and confidential. The data collected will be protected by using their student school identification only – no names. Information obtained through your child's participation may be used by the VUSD staff to identify strengths and weaknesses of a magnet program, used in an educational journal, used for further research or presented at a professional meeting.

If you (or your child) have questions about this study, please ask them now or contact Mr. Villarreal at XXX-XXX-XXXX or at XXXXXX.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, PLEASE DECIDE WHETHER YOU WISH FOR YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE.YOUR CHILD'S SIGNATURE INDICATES HIS/HER WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

_____

Participant's (Student's) signature Date

_____

Printed Name

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____

Printed Name

Permiso para un Estudio de Investigación de
"Eficacia de Escuelas de Imán."

Su niño ha sido invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación para examinar la relación de una experiencia de escuela secundaria de imán con las diferencias del estudiante individual en actitudes, logro académico y satisfacción. Los objetivos son describir la experiencia de escuela secundaria de imán por los ojos de estudiantes individuales y determinar como el programa de escuela de imán afecta académicamente, personal, social o resultados de carrera. Su niño fue seleccionado como un participante posible porque él o ella son parte de una escuela imán. Como su niño es menor de 18 años, necesitamos su permiso para incluirlo en este estudio.
¿Qué estará implicado si su niño participa? Si usted decide permitir que su niño participe en este estudio de investigación, a su niño le pedirán completar periódicamente breves revisiones y entrevistas con Vista Magnet y personal del distrito escolar de Vista. El tiempo de compromiso total de su niño será no más de dos veces no más de 20 minutos cada vez desde octubre 2008 al junio 2009.
¿Hay algún riesgo o incomodidad? No hay ningún riesgo asociados con la participación en este estudio.
¿Hay alguna ventaja a su niño u otros? Si su niño participa en este estudio les daremos los resultados del estudio.
¿Recibirá su niño la compensación para participar? No
¿Hay algún costo? No
Si usted (o su niño) cambia de opinión sobre la participación de su niño, su niño puede ser retirado del estudio en cualquier momento. La participación de su niño es completamente voluntaria. Si usted decide retirar a su niño, los datos de su niño serán retirados. Su decisión sobre si permitir a su niño para participar o dejar de participar no pondrá en peligro la inscripción de su niño ante VMMS.
La intimidad de su niño será protegida. Cualquier información obtenida en relación a este estudio permanecerá anónima y confidencial. Los datos coleccionados serán protegidos usando su identificación escolar – ningunos nombres. La información obtenida por la participación de su niño puede ser usada por el personal del distrito escolar de Vista para identificar fuerzas y debilidades de un programa de imán, usado en un diario educativo para la investigación adicional o presentada en una reunión profesional.
Si usted (o su niño/a) tiene preguntas sobre este estudio, puede contactar a el Sr. Villarreal al XXX-XXX-XXXX o a su correo electrónico XXXXXX.
AL HABER LEIDO LA INFORMACION PROVEIDA, FAVOR DE DECIDIR SI DESEA QUE SU HIJO PARTICIPE EN EL ESTUDIO. SU FIRMA INDICA SU PERMISO PARA QUE SU HIJO/A PARTICIPE. LA FIRMA DE SU HIJO/A INDICA SU DESEO A PARTICIPAR.

- ☐ **¡Sí, quiero participar!**

- ☐ NO, no deseo participar

_____

Firma del participante (alumno) Fecha

_____

Nombre en letra molde

_____

Firma del padre/tutor Fecha

_____

Nombre en letra molde

FAVOR DE REGRESAR ESTA FORMA ESTE JUEVES, 16 de OCTUBRE 2008 EN EL PRIMER PERIODO DE SU ESTUDIANTE

APPENDIX B: VMMS Parent Satisfaction Survey 2009

Return by Monday, June 15th to 1st period

The purpose of this survey is to obtain your input on your experience at Vista Magnet Middle School. We have continued the effort to obtain from students, teachers and community members some feedback.

Now it is your turn!

Circle only ONE choice which bests describes how you feel about VMMS
If you circle more than one, then the answer does not count.

Quality of Staff (CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

1. The principal and teachers at VMMS seem to work together.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

2. My child's teachers are up-to-date about things that are happening in the subjects they teach.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

3. My child's teachers are able to make learning exciting and fun.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

4. My child's teachers are committed to teaching my child.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

School Climate (CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

5. VMMS is an orderly place.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

6. VMMS is a safe place to learn.

5 Strongly Agree 4 Agree 3 No Opinion 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

7. The Principal takes prompt action when problems occur.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. The buildings and grounds at VMMS are neat and well maintained.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

Academic Program (CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

9. VMMS does a good job of teaching my child <u>basic skills</u> such as reading, writing, mathematics and science.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. VMMS does a good job teaching my child thinking and reasoning skills.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. My child is challenged by his/her studies at VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. My child receives extra help at VMMS when it is needed.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Meaningful homework is assigned to my child on a regular basis.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. VMMS uses different ways to determine my child's performance.

5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. VMMS is training my child to use modern technology (e.g., SMARTboards, laptops, document cameras, internet, PowerPoint, Word, Excel)

5 4 3 2 1

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. VMMS teaches my child how to get along with other students.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. VMMS teaches my child about people of different cultures.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. My child's special interests and talents are developed at VMMS.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. VMMS encourages my child to participate in community activities.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

Parent Involvement (CIRCLE ONLY ONE)

20. I feel welcomed to visit VMMS.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. It is easy to get appointments to meet with the staff at VMMS.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. I am regularly invited to participate in activities at VMMS.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. I feel welcome to offer my opinion about programs and activities at VMMS.
5 4 3 2 1
Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

24. VMMS is willing to accept my opinions and advice.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

General questions (CHECK ONE)

25. How would you rate VMMS overall?
    - ❒ Excellent
    - ❒ Good
    - ❒ Fair
    - ❒ Poor
    - ❒ No Opinion

26. If you could choose any school in the city for your child, would VMMS be one of your top choices?
    - ❒ Yes
    - ❒ No
    - ❒ Not sure

27. Has VMMS lived up to your expectations up to this point?
    - ❒ Yes
    - ❒ No
    - ❒ Not sure

28. Which grade is your student CURRENTLY in?
    - ❒ 6^{th}
    - ❒ 7^{th}
    - ❒ I have two in each grade

Comments:_____

_____

Encuesta de Satisfacción de VMMS 2009

¡DEBIDO EL Lunes, 15 DE JUNIO en Primer PERÍODO!
¡Queremos oír su voz!

Marque con un círculo sólo UNA respuesta que describa como usted siente

Si usted rodea más de un, entonces la respuesta no cuenta

Calidad de Personal (CÍRCULO SÓLO UNA)

1. El Director y los profesores en VMMS parecen trabajar juntos.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

2. Los profesores de mi niño son actualizados sobre cosas que pasan en los sujetos que ellos enseñan.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

3. Los profesores de mi niño son capaces de hacer el aprendizaje con excitación y diversión.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

4. Los profesores de mi niño son cometidos a la enseñanza de mi niño.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

Clima escolar (CÍRCULO SÓLO UNA)

5. VMMS es un lugar ordenado.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

6. VMMS es un lugar seguro para aprender.
5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

7. El Director toma la acción inmediatamente cuando los problemas ocurren.
5 4 3 2 1

totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

8. Los edificios y las tierras en VMMS están ordenados y bien mantenidos.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

Programa Académico (CÍRCULO SÓLO UNA)

9. VMMS hace un trabajo bueno de enseñar las capacidades básicas de niño como lectura, escritura, matemáticas y ciencia.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

10. VMMS hace un trabajo bueno que enseña a mi niño habilidades pensadoras y que razonan.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

11. Mi niño es desafiado por sus estudios en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

12. Mi niño recibe extra ayuda en VMMS cuando es necesario.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

13. Le dan tarea significativo regularmente ha mi hijo(a).

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

14. VMMS usa varios diferentes modos para determinar el aprendizaje de mi niño.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

Desarrollo Social y Actividades Extraescolares (CÍRCULO SÓLO UNA)

15. VMMS entrena a mi niño usar tecnología moderna (como…SMARTboards, ordenadores portátiles, cámaras de documento, Internet, PowerPoint, Palabra(Word), Excel)

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

16. VMMS enseña a mi niño como llevarse con otros estudiantes.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

17. VMMS enseña a mi niño sobre la gente de culturas diferentes.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

18. Los intereses especiales de mi niño y los talentos son desarrollados en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

19. VMMS anima a mi niño a participar en actividades de la comunidad.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

Participación Paternal (CÍRCULO SÓLO UNA)

20. Me siento bienvenido(a) en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

21. Es fácil conseguir citas para encontrarse con el personal en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1
totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

22. Soy con regularidad invitado a participar en actividades en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1

totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

23. Me siento bienvenido en ofrecer mi opinión sobre programas y actividades en VMMS.

5 4 3 2 1

totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

24. VMMS acepta mis opiniones y consejos.

5 4 3 2 1

totalmente de acuerdo de acuerdo No tengo Opinión en desacuerdo totalmente en desacuerdo

Preguntas Generales (Marque UNA)

25. ¿Cual marca le da a VMMS en general?

- ❒ Excelente
- ❒ Bien
- ❒ Mas o menos
- ❒ Mal
- ❒ No tengo Opinión

26. ¿Si usted pudiera elegir alguna escuela en la ciudad para su niño, VMMS será una de sus opciones superiores?

- ❒ Si
- ❒ No
- ❒ No estoy seguro(a)

27. ¿Ha cumplido VMMS con sus expectativas hasta este punto?

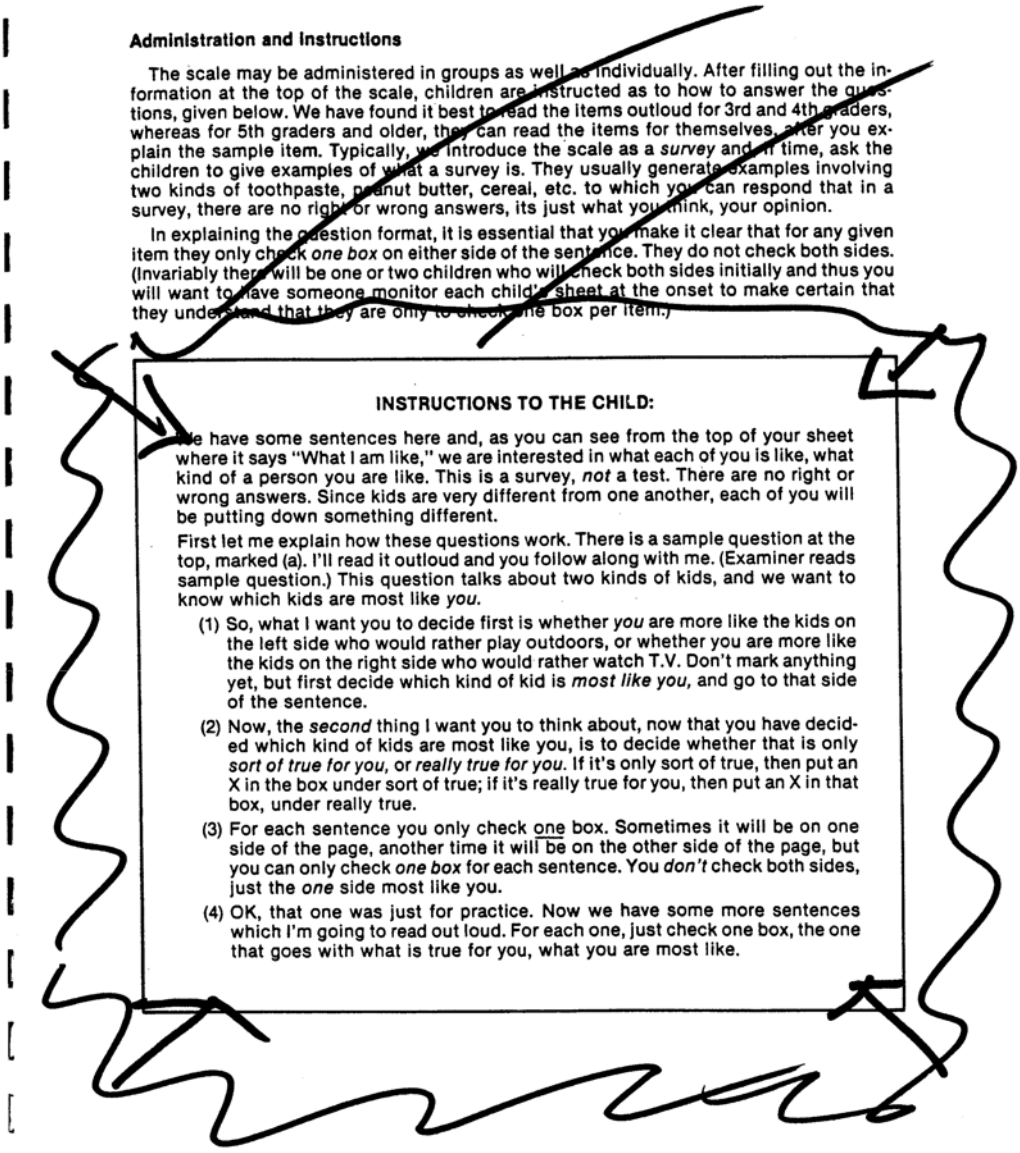
- ❒ Si
- ❒ No
- ❒ No estoy seguro(a)

28. ¿En cual grado esta su hijo(a)?

- ❒ 6
- ❒ 7
- ❒ Tengo dos en diferente grados

Comentarios:_____

_____



Administration and Instructions

The scale may be administered in groups as well as individually. After filling out the information at the top of the scale, children are instructed as to how to answer the questions, given below. We have found it best to read the items outloud for 3rd and 4th graders, whereas for 5th graders and older, they can read the items for themselves, after you explain the sample item. Typically, we introduce the scale as a *survey* and at this time, ask the children to give examples of what a survey is. They usually generate examples involving two kinds of toothpaste, peanut butter, cereal, etc. to which you can respond that in a survey, there are no right or wrong answers, its just what you think, your opinion.

In explaining the question format, it is essential that you make it clear that for any given item they only check *one box* on either side of the sentence. They do not check both sides. (Invariably there will be one or two children who will check both sides initially and thus you will want to have someone monitor each child's sheet at the onset to make certain that they understand that they are only to check one box per item.)

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CHILD:

We have some sentences here and, as you can see from the top of your sheet where it says "What I am like," we are interested in what each of you is like, what kind of a person you are like. This is a survey, *not* a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Since kids are very different from one another, each of you will be putting down something different.

First let me explain how these questions work. There is a sample question at the top, marked (a). I'll read it outloud and you follow along with me. (Examiner reads sample question.) This question talks about two kinds of kids, and we want to know which kids are most like *you*.

(1) So, what I want you to decide first is whether *you* are more like the kids on the left side who would rather play outdoors, or whether you are more like the kids on the right side who would rather watch T.V. Don't mark anything yet, but first decide which kind of kid is *most like you,* and go to that side of the sentence.

(2) Now, the *second* thing I want you to think about, now that you have decided which kind of kids are most like you, is to decide whether that is only *sort of true for you,* or *really true for you.* If it's only sort of true, then put an X in the box under sort of true; if it's really true for you, then put an X in that box, under really true.

(3) For each sentence you only check one box. Sometimes it will be on one side of the page, another time it will be on the other side of the page, but you can only check *one box* for each sentence. You *don't* check both sides, just the *one* side most like you.

(4) OK, that one was just for practice. Now we have some more sentences which I'm going to read out loud. For each one, just check one box, the one that goes with what is true for you, what you are most like.

11

What I Am Like

Name _____ Age _____ Birthday _____ Group _____
Month Day

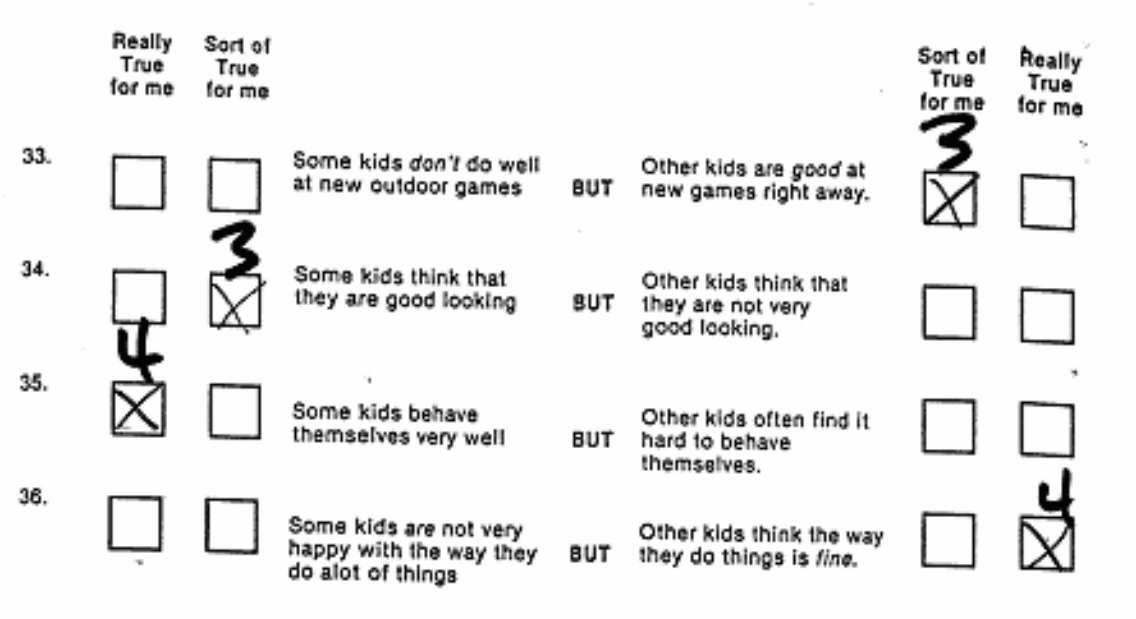
Boy or Girl (circle which)

SAMPLE SENTENCE

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
(a)	☒	☐	Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time	BUT	Other kids would rather watch T.V.	☐	☐
1.	☒	☐	Some kids feel that they are very *good* at their school work	BUT	Other kids *worry* about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	Some kids find it *hard* to make friends	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty *easy* to make friends.	☐	☒
3.	☒	☐	Some kids do very *well* at all kinds of sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.	☐	☐
4.	☒	☐	Some kids are *happy* with the way they look	BUT	Other kids are *not* happy with the way they look.	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	Some kids often do *not* like the way they *behave*	BUT	Other kids usually *like* the way they behave.	☐	☒
6.	☐	☐	Some kids are often *unhappy* with themselves	BUT	Other kids are pretty *pleased* with themselves.	☐	☒
7.	☒	☐	Some kids feel like they are *just as smart* as as other kids their age	BUT	Other kids aren't so sure and *wonder* if they are as smart.	☐	☐
8.	☒	☐	Some kids have *alot* of friends	BUT	Other kids *don't* have very many friends.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
9.	☐	☐	Some kids wish they could be alot better at sports	BUT	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports.	☐	☒
10.	☒	☐	Some kids are *happy* with their height and weight	BUT	Other kids wish their height or weight were *different*.	☐	☐
11.	☒	☐	Some kids usually do the *right* thing	BUT	Other kids often *don't* do the right thing.	☐	☐
12.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* like the way they are leading their life	BUT	Other kids *do* like the way they are leading their life.	☐	☒
13.	☐	☐	Some kids are pretty *slow* in finishing their school work	BUT	Other kids can do their school work *quickly*.	☐	☒
14.	☐	☐	Some kids would like to have alot more friends	BUT	Other kids have as many friends as they want.	☐	☒
15.	☒	☐	Some kids think they could do well at just about any new sports activity they haven't tried before	BUT	Other kids are afraid they might *not* do well at sports they haven't ever tried.	☐	☐
16.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their body was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their body the way it is.	☐	☒
17.	☒	☐	Some kids usually *act* the way they know they are *supposed* to	BUT	Other kids often *don't* act the way they are supposed to.	☐	☐
18.	☒	☐	Some kids are *happy* with themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids are often *not* happy with themselves.	☐	☐
19.	☐	☐	Some kids often *forget* what they learn	BUT	Other kids can remember things *easily*.	☐	☒
20.	☒	☐	Some kids are always doing things with *alot* of kids	BUT	Other kids usually do things *by themselves*.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
21.	☐	☒ 3	Some kids feel that they are *better* than others their age at sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel they can play as well.	☐	☐
22.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their physical appearance (how they look) was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their physical appearance the way it is.	☐	☒ 4
23.	☐	☐	Some kids usually get in *trouble* because of things they do	BUT	Other kids usually *don't* do things that get them in trouble.	☐	☒ 4
24.	☒ 4	☐	Some kids *like* the kind of *person* they are	BUT	Other kids often wish they were someone else.	☐	☐
25.	☒ 4	☐	Some kids do *very well* at their classwork	BUT	Other kids *don't* do very well at their classwork.	☐	☐
26.	☐	☐	Some kids wish that more people their age liked them	BUT	Other kids feel that most people their age *do* like them.	☐	☒ 4
27.	☐	☐	In games and sports some kids usually *watch* instead of play	BUT	Other kids usually *play* rather than just watch.	☐	☒ 4
28.	☐	☐	Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their face and hair the way they are.	☐	☒ 4
29.	☐	☐	Some kids do things they know they *shouldn't* do	BUT	Other kids *hardly ever* do things they know they shouldn't do.	☐	☒ 4
30.	☒ 4	☐	Some kids are very *happy* being the way they are	BUT	Other kids wish they were *different.*	☐	☐
31.	☐	☐	Some kids have *trouble* figuring out the answers in school	BUT	Other kids almost *always* can figure out the answers.	☐	☒ 4
32.	☐	☒ 3	Some kids are *popular* with others their age	BUT	Other kids are *not* very popular.	☐	☐



	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
33.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* do well at new outdoor games	BUT	Other kids are *good* at new games right away.	3 ☒	☐
34.	☐	3 ☒	Some kids think that they are good looking	BUT	Other kids think that they are not very good looking.	☐	☐
35.	4 ☒	☐	Some kids behave themselves very well	BUT	Other kids often find it hard to behave themselves.	☐	☐
36.	☐	☐	Some kids are not very happy with the way they do alot of things	BUT	Other kids think the way they do things is *fine*.	☐	4 ☒

APPENDIX D: PLC Action

Date(s)	PLC Action
August 22nd	UbD Review
August 29th	SMARTboard Training
September 5th	ABI Gradebook Training
September 12th	Vantage Writing Software Training Day 1 2:30pm to 6:00pm (in lieu of a Staff Meeting)
Tues, Sept. 18 **Wed, Sept. 19** Thurs, Sept. 20	UbD Reflection & Pacing **Buy Back Day** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Sept. 25 **Wed, Sept. 26** Thurs, Sept. 27	SMART goal and Data Analysis **Grading Policy Consensus-Stu Lead Conf.** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Oct. 2 **Wed, Oct. 3** Thurs, Oct. 4	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** ***(ABI Grading Closes 1st Trimester Progress Report)*** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, Oct. 8 **Wed, Oct. 9** Thurs, Oct. 10	Common Assessments (Oct. 5th Benchmark #1) **VUSD MS Staff Dev.-Students released @ 12:06pm** Common Assessments (Oct. 5th Benchmark #1)
Tues, Oct 16 **Wed, Oct 17** Thurs, Oct 18	Lesson Study-Student Work **S. Barnes Literacy 2:30-3pm & Lesson Study & Student Work** Lesson Study-Student Work
Tues, Oct. 23 **Wed, Oct. 24** Thurs, Oct. 25	SMART goal and Data Analysis **SMART goal and Data Analysis** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Oct. 30 **Wed, Oct. 31** Thurs, Nov. 1	IB MYP-UbD Unit (Nov. 1st Science Benchmark #1) **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, Nov. 6 **Wed, Nov. 7** Thurs, Nov. 8	Common Assessments (Nov. 9th Benchmark #2) **Parent Conference Prep Staff Mtg. till 5pm** Common Assessments (Nov. 9th Benchmark #2)
Tues, Nov. 13 **Wed. Nov. 14** Thurs, Nov. 15	Lesson Study-Student Work ***(ABI Grading Closes 1st Trimester Report Cards)*** **Lesson Study & Student Work** Lesson Study-Student Work
Tues, Nov. 27 **Wed, Nov. 28** Thurs, Nov. 29	Parent Conferences-school releases @ 1:00pm (conference begin at 2:00pm) **Debrief Student-Led Conference & Benchmark #2 Results** Parent Conferences-school releases @ 1:00pm (conference begin at 2:00pm)

Date(s)	PLC Action
Tues, Dec. 5 **Wed, Dec. 6** Thurs, Dec. 7	SMART goal and Data Analysis **SMART goal and Data Analysis & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Dec. 11 **Wed, Dec. 12** Thurs, Dec. 13	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, Dec. 18 **Wed, Dec 19** Thurs, Dec 20	Common Assessments (January 23rd Benchmark #3) **Common Assessments & HOLIDAY POTLUCK** Common Assessments (January 23rd Benchmark #3)
Tues, Jan. 15 **Wed, Jan. 16** Thurs, Jan. 17	Lesson Study-Student Work **Lesson Study & Student Work Staff Mtg. till 5pm** Lesson Study-Student Work
Tues, Jan. 22 **Wed, Jan. 23** Thurs, Jan. 24 ***Friday, Jan. 25***	SMART goal and Data Analysis **SMART goal and Data Analysis** SMART goal and Data Analysis ***(ABI Grading Closes 2nd Trimester Progress Reports)***
Tues, Jan. 29 **Wed, Jan. 30** Thurs, Jan. 31	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, Feb. 5 **Wed, Feb. 6** Thurs, Feb. 7	Common Assessments **Common Assessments** Common Assessments
Tues, Feb. 12 **Wed, Feb. 13** Thurs, Feb. 14	Lesson Study-Student Work **Lesson Study & Student Work & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** Lesson Study-Student Work Staff Meeting 4pm to 5pm
Tues, Feb. 19 **Wed, Feb. 20** Thurs, Feb. 21	SMART goal and Data Analysis (Feb. 22nd Science Benchmark #2) **S. Barnes Literacy 2:30-3pm & SMART goal and Data Analysis** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Feb. 26 **Wed, Feb. 27** Thurs, Feb. 28	IB MYP-UbD Unit (March 7th Benchmark #4) **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit (March 7th Benchmark #4)
Tue, Mar. 4 **Wed, Mar. 5** Thurs, Mar. 6	Common Assessments ***(ABI Grading Closes 2nd Trimester Report Card)*** **Parent Conference Prep & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** Common Assessments
Tue, Mar. 11 **Wed, Mar. 12** Thurs, Mar. 13	Parent Conferences-school releases @ 1:00pm (conference begin at 2:00pm) **Debrief Student-Led Conference** Parent Conferences-school releases @ 1:00pm (conference begin at 2:00pm)

Date(s)	PLC Action
Tues, Apr. 1 **Wed, Apr. 2** Thurs, Apr. 3	Lesson Study-Student Work **Lesson Study & Student Work & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** Lesson Study-Student Work
Tues, Apr. 8 **Wed. Apr. 9** Thurs, Apr. 10	SMART goal and Data Analysis **SMART goal and Data Analysis** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, Apr. 15 **Wed, Apr. 16** Thurs, Apr. 17	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, Apr. 22 **Wed, Apr. 23** Thurs, Apr. 24	Common Assessments **Common Assessments *(ABI Grading Closes 3rd Trimester Progress Report)*** **VUSD MS Staff Dev.-Students released @ 12:06pm**
Tues, Apr. 29 **Wed, Apr. 30** Thurs, May. 1	Lesson Study-Student Work **Lesson Study & Student Work** Lesson Study-Student Work Staff Meeting 4pm to 5pm
Tues, May. 6 **Wed, May. 7** Thurs, May. 8	SMART goal and Data Analysis **CST Training & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, May. 13 **Wed, May. 14** Thurs, May. 15	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, May. 20 **Wed, May 21** Thurs, May. 22	Common Assessments (May. 30th Science Benchmark #3) **Common Assessments** Common Assessments
Tues, May. 27 **Wed, May. 28** Thurs, May. 29	Lesson Study-Student Work (June 6th Benchmark #5) **Lesson Study & Student Work** Lesson Study-Student Work (June 6th Benchmark #5)
Tues, June. 3 **Wed, June. 4** Thurs, June. 5	SMART goal and Data Analysis **SMART goal and Data Analysis & Staff Mtg. till 5pm** SMART goal and Data Analysis
Tues, June. 10 **Wed, June 11** Thurs, June. 12	IB MYP-UbD Unit **IB MYP-UbD Unit *(ABI Grading Closes 3rd Trimester Report Cards)*** IB MYP-UbD Unit
Tues, June. 17	Last Day of School Students released at 12:06pm

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