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Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study Examining the Role of Applied
Critical Leadership in Promoting Latino Parent Engagement

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

in

Educational Leadership

by

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Committee in Charge:

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2013

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This Dissertation of Patricia Magaña Gil is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego
California State University, San Marcos

2013

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband Oscar, who has sacrificed so much to allow me to follow my dream. To my daughters Paloma, 20 months, and Vida (on the way), who bring meaning, wonder, and happiness to my life. To my family and friends who've cheered me on along the way. To my dear, sweet Zoey, who taught me the meaning of unconditional love. Finally, to God, who has revealed his grace and presence all along this amazing journey.

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Abstract Of The Dissertation

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study Examining the Role of Applied
Critical Leadership in Promoting Latino Parent Engagement

by

Patricia Magaña Gil

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2013
California State University, San Marcos, 2013

Professor Alice Quiocho, Chair

This study examined Latino parent engagement through the lens of parent leaders in order to identify factors that mediate Latino parental engagement at the leadership level. Based on current research there is need to explore Latino parent leadership due to a small body of literature on this topic. This study explored the possibility that parent leaders can serve as catalysts for improving the school system and work collaboratively with district leaders to close the achievement gap for Latino students. The purpose of this study was to identify and examine why and how Latino parents have become engaged in leadership roles in a District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) in one highly successful district. This case study engaged in interviews of district leaders, parent leaders and observations taken at DELAC meetings led by parents to explore the

following question: How do district leaders support or constrain the engagement of Latino parents in leadership at the district level? This study reviewed district documents as an additional data source to identify the conditions and structures that allow parents in the one target district to be intricately engaged in DELAC leadership that led to district reform efforts with the goal of increased student achievement. Latino parent progression along a developmental continuum from volunteerism to engagement was analyzed to describe optimal conditions that support parent engagement.

Results of this study indicate that district commitment, dedication of resources and funds, as well as a focus on developing parent leadership skills can support and nurture the leadership skills of parents to transform them into critical leaders.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Research overwhelmingly states parent participation positively impacts a student's educational experiences (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Rolon, 2002). It leads to better school attendance reduced dropout rates and increased achievement; regardless of economic, racial or cultural background differences (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Students who have parents that actively participate in school have higher levels of self-esteem, better behavior and increased motivation to do well in school (Epstein, 1995). Although the participation of parents in their children's education is widely accepted as desirable and even essential to effective schooling (Comer & Haynes, 1991) the reality is that very few Latino parents become active in their children's education. Research consistently posits that parents play a critical role in a child's education which has led to state, district, and school leaders searching for novel and effective approaches to bring Latino parents into the school community in a meaningful way.

Although efforts are being made to increase Latino parent participation the development of Latino parent leadership has been given minimal attention with Federal and State mandates. Mandates such as District English Learner Advisory Committee and Section 1118 of the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) requires all schools and districts convene a parent committee when there are 51 or more students in a language group (California Department of Education, DELAC). Section 1118 of the NCLB law requires that Title 1 schools with a large number of culturally, linguistically and economically diverse students implement procedures; plan programs and activities with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children (U.S. Department of Education). The

NCLB law requires districts and schools provide parents the opportunity to collaborate on programs that will assist in managing the education of students. This collaboration should be documented in the development of a pact that is agreed upon by all the stakeholders. However, when parent involvement is minimal, or absent, these programs often become ceremonial, and hence do little more than pay lip-service to the pressing goals of truly engaging Latino parents in their school communities. One such mandate is the District English Learner Advisory Committee, otherwise known as DELAC.

Definition of a District English Learner Advisory Committee

DELAC is a district sponsored parent committee mandated by state and federal governments in the hope to provide a platform for Latino parents to actively engage in their child's education. It is a requirement that each California public school district, grades kindergarten through 12, with 51 or more English learners must form a District-level English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) or subcommittee of an existing district-wide advisory committee. The responsibilities of the DELAC follow two major topics: (1) The DELAC, or subcommittee on English learner education, shall advise the district's local governing board (e.g., in person, by letters/reports, or through an administrator) on programs and services for English learners. (2) The DELAC shall be responsible for advising the district's local governing board on the following tasks: (a) Development or revision of a district master plan of education programs and services for English learners, taking into consideration the Single School Plan for Student Achievement. (b) Conducting a district-wide needs assessment on a school-by-school basis (c) Establishment of district programs, goals, and objectives for programs and

services for English learners (e.g., parental exception waivers and funding). (d) Development of a plan to ensure compliance with any applicable teacher and instructional aide requirements. (e) Administration of the annual language census (e.g., procedures and forms) (f) Review and comment on the district's reclassification procedures. (g) Review and comment on the written notifications required to be sent to parents and guardians (California Department of Education, DELAC).

If one were to base the success of current policy approaches to engaging Latino parents solely on the number of Latino parents that participate to date, it would appear that there is a significant misalignment between what the law states and what is really happening in schools and school districts. It is contradictory for schools to continue to experience low parent participation and thus, low student achievement scores if the law governing DELAC is followed. This study adds to the research that can provide answers to this question by looking at a district that has experienced success in the engagement of Hispanic/Latino parents through the DELAC venue.

Statement of the Problem

Various studies report that parent participation is a critical yet often missing element that greatly impacts student success or failure in school (Fan & Chen, 2001). One reason for limited parent participation is that many parents; especially Hispanic/Latino parents are unaware of the power they hold regarding their children's education. Because of this, Hispanic/Latino parents do not establish collaborative relationships with the school (Ramirez, 2003). One possible reason for this is that parent participation programs and activities do not effectively target Latino parents. Traditional

parent programs are designed so that one size fits all. Consequently, schools become apathetic to the fact that parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds do not play a more active role in school. According to Epstein (1995) it is through the building of parent and educator partnerships that we bring together the two most powerful influences that shape and mold our children.

A qualitative study by Lee and Bowen (2006) on parent participation and academic achievement by race/ethnicity, poverty and parent educational attainment revealed a difference in parental participation and student achievement based on racial/ethnic and socioeconomic status (SES) as well as educational attainment factors. Based on their findings, Latino students were among the fastest growing school population and were at the same time consistently the lowest performing. Poverty and race/ethnicity have played a role in predicting children's academic achievement above and beyond the effects of parent participation (Lee & Bowen, 2006). If nothing is done to engage more Latino parents in their children's education more Latino children will continue to fail in our schools. Parental participation is a resource that could potentially help decrease the achievement gap among diverse groups of students but has up to this point gone virtually untapped. One way to answer the question of whether parental participation can positively impact student achievement is by examining the development of Latino parent engagement.

Previous research on Latino parent participation has focused on the barriers preventing Latino parents from getting involved. Two primary themes emerge within these barriers: (1) negative school culture, and (2) a misalignment between Latino parents' cultural beliefs and the schools' expectations of parents (Arias & Morillo-

Campbell, 2008). A number of studies have examined the question of what works to improve Latino parent participation by eliminating these barriers so parents understand how to expand their concept of participation in their children's education at home and at school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Fewer studies have focused on the level of participation and parental leadership necessary to support students who speak languages other than English to be successful. The purpose of this study is to add to the existing body of research on Latino parent participation by investigating how and why Latino parents become engaged in leadership roles.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to identify ways that provide avenues for Latino parents to enter into leadership roles where they have a voice that can bring about change within their school district. The benefit of increased Latino parent leadership spans from the belief that greater human capital enhances school culture and community and thus student achievement. This research tested the hypothesis that engaged Latino parents can have a transformative and beneficial effect on a school culture and student achievement through the examination of strategies and tactics used by one successful District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC).

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What influences parents to become actively engaged in their school community through a DELAC Committee?
2. What components support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?

- a. What district policies, structures and procedures support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?
 - b. What parental structures support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?
3. What supports are in place at the district level to ensure that parent participation moves beyond involvement into the level of engagement?

Fostering more Latino parent leadership at the district level is critical if we are going to adequately prepare students to be productive citizens of society. This study incorporated key conditions for parent leadership by drawing on bodies of literature including: (1) parent engagement; (2) parent decision-making, (3) Applied Critical Leadership (ACL), and (4) social and intellectual capital. Due to the limited amount of research in key areas and in order to strengthen the validity of this study, the literature on Self-Determination Theory and Ecologies of Parental Engagement were used as rival theories for explaining parent participation as it relates to engagement. These frameworks formed the conceptual model that was used to frame this study.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study was framed utilizing parent participation research characterized as having elements of parental engagement described by Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) and using one of Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement- Decision Making (2009). Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) definition of parent engagement was used to suggest the foundational definition of parent leadership. Epstein's description of Decision Making Parental Involvement (2009) was used to define how Latino parents might engage as

leaders with educational authorities. Social capital frameworks were applied to identify how parents, once engaged, could become knowledgeable about their roles in the educational process and then potentially move to become change agents. In addition to the abovementioned frameworks, Self-Determination Theory and Ecologies of Parental Engagement were introduced as alternative explanations for the motivation that possibly moves parents along a participation continuum towards engagement. These frameworks were integrated to form a structure that helped explore the concept of parental leadership more deeply.

Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) Involvement versus Engagement. Based on the work of Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) there is a clear difference between parent involvement and parent engagement. For the purposes of this study, it was important to distinguish between involvement and engagement because parent participation literature uses these terms interchangeably. Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) distinction between parental involvement and parent engagement was applied to the parent participation research used in this study to sort between examples of involvement and engagement and to clarify these bodies of literature. This study proposed both involvement and engagement fell under the universal title of parent participation but that these two forms of parent participation represented different points in a continuum. Engagement assumes leadership on the part of parents, and therefore engagement research was the central theoretical framework used for this study. Another key theoretical framework used in this study was parental decision making.

Epstein's (2009) Decision Making Parent Involvement Type. This study utilized parental involvement Type 5 Decision Making derived from Epstein's (2009)

Framework of Six Types of Involvement for Comprehensive Programs of Partnership. This type of parent participation is defined as the inclusion of parents in school decisions, and developing parent leaders and representatives. It is redefined by Epstein (2009) as *Decision Making* to mean a process of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not a power struggle between conflicting ideas. Parent leaders are a real representative with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families. Epstein's (2009) Decision Making Parent Involvement Type was used in this study but was characterized as engagement instead of involvement based on the definition and activities involved in this type of involvement and how it aligned with Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) definition of engagement. Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) and Epstein's (2009) theoretical frameworks were selected in order to propose a working definitions for parent involvement, parent engagement and parent leadership. Based on their work along with the work of others, once parents become involved in the school community, they are no longer isolated and their social capital is increased through group collaboration.

Byrk and Schneider's Social Capital and Intellectual Capital. Scholars like Byrk and Schneider (2002) identified social capital as an underlying asset gained through relational ties. For the purposes of this study, relational ties may occur when parent groups and committees collaborate. The amount of social capital in a group or organization is based on the knowledge contained within that group or organization. When people establish relationships and have opportunities to collaborate, they gain knowledge and resources from others that may influence their work. A supportive component to building social capital is the presences of trust. Trusting relationships foster more collaboration and the sharing of ideas may occur more regularly. If there are high

levels of trust in an organization, a committee or school district, more knowledge could be generated and strategies for fully engaging the students could lead to greater student achievement (Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009).

The importance of building social capital lies in the idea that an organization with higher levels of social capital inherently creates intellectual capital. Research on intellectual capital suggests the importance of combining knowledge from several people or groups of people in an effort to co-construct knowledge, and take action (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). The research on social and intellectual capital is important to this study because it informed the way in which parents could have moved from involvement to engagement. Social and Intellectual capital are also fundamental themes found in the work of Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009). How people communicate with each other, how they value what they learn and share as a collaborative group translates into a sense of equality for all members of the group and thus, leadership can flourish. In a trusting environment more voices are not only heard but listened to and hence acted upon. The opinions of everyone in the group are honored, recorded to validate credence and incorporated into the decision-making of the group. The inclusion of each member's ideas acts to inspire trust in the process and the group itself (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). In other words, people who talk to each other, listen to each other, and learn from each other, make decisions that positively affect policies and procedures that benefit all students from diverse and mainstream backgrounds. The collaboration that is done with the leaders of the organization can also inspire leadership in parents.

Applied Critical Leadership (ACL). Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) describe critical leaders as individuals that “lead by asking a series of deliberate critical questions”

(p. xiii). Critical leaders are unique in that they purposefully chose *change* as their self-described leadership practice to achieve educational equity within their educational environments (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press). These leaders view the world through a Critical Race Theory lens. Critical Race Theory accounts for how race and language overlap with culture and social institutions. Critical Race Theory addresses how power differences create barriers that Latino parents face in their child's school. This imbalance of power is due to the manifestations of a difference in culture especially the culture of schooling and capitalist culture of schooling, which is different from Latino culture (Delgado-Gaitan, 1996). Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012) and Santamaría's (in press) empirical work revealed that critical leaders innately strive to eliminate racism within their educational environments through the decisions they make to employ non-conventional, culturally responsive practices. This leadership style was pivotal to this research study. This analysis suggests the success of one Southern California district could be related to the critical leaders within the organization. Alternatively, this study suggests, an alternative explanation for the success of the study district using Self Determination Theory and Ecologies of Parental Engagement.

Self Determination Theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) is primarily focused on human liberation and enhancement. It does this by examining the association between human tendencies for growth and realization of potential and social, economic, and cultural supports or constraints towards that end (Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2009). SDT empirical research was used in this study to introduce an alternative explanation to the success of parent engagement in South Lake Elementary School District DELAC (a pseudonym). Self-Determination Theory is focused on how to improve the sense of

autonomy and belongingness in schools for the urban poor (Niemic, Ryan, & Deci, 2009). SDT was important to include in this study because it informed the study by examining an alternative reason why Latino parents may participate despite the multiple barriers they face. It provided a rival theory that helped to validate findings (Yin, 2009). Another rival theory used was Ecologies of Parental Engagement (Barton, Drake, Pérez, St. Louis & George, 2004; Peña, 2010) which also served as an alternate reason for explaining what might drive parents to become engaged. EPE theoretical framework was applied to answer how parents moved along the continuum of parent participation proposed by this study.

Ecologies of Parental Engagement. Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) encompass a data-driven framework for understanding parental engagement in urban elementary schools (Barton et al., 2004; Peña, 2010). EPE marks a change in understanding parental participation from focusing on what parents do to engage in decision-making and governance, to concentrating on how parents understand the why and how of their engagement (Barton et al., 2004; Peña, 2000). EPE helps frame the interconnections between why parents engage in decision-making and governance and how they manage to do so. Barton et al. (2004) conceptual framework draws on cultural historical activity theory and Critical Race Theory to create an ecological perspective for parental engagement by showing that social context matters. This is done by understanding what parents and educators know and do and how this knowing and doing is mediated by the community in which that doing takes place (Peña, 2010). This conceptual framework posits that cultural values manifest themselves in recurring social practices and that their artifacts give order, purpose, and continuity to life in that social

organization (Barton et al., 2004; Peña 2000). Artifacts include objects that motivate parents' activity, the tools they use, the rules that give pattern to their actions and the division of labor expected within that community. EPE defines parental engagement as a relational phenomenon that relies on activity networks like parent groups and committees to function (Peña 2010). The framework helps conceptualize a much higher quality of parental involvement by viewing parents as both authors and agents in the school community. Quality parent participation is a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interactions with schools and among school actors (Barton et al., 2004).

Study Methodology

The research design of this study was a single, within site intrinsic (unique) case study that used multiple methods to answer three research questions. The research questions in this study focused on exploring what district policies, structures, and procedures positively affected parental engagement in leadership positions in DELAC. The study focused on exploring one best case unit of analysis (Yin, 2003), a selected large urban district that has been successful in closing the achievement gap between mainstream students and Latino students by continuously increasing student achievement over the past ten years.

Data was collected from one-on-one interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data collected provided qualitative information about what may motivate parents to become leaders in DELAC. Documents analyzed followed Yin's (2003)

recommendation for case study information included: (1) documentation, (2) archival records, (3) interviews, (4) direct observations, (5) and, participant observations.

The theoretical frameworks used in this study were combined to form a conceptual model. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model that guided this study. This conceptual model illustrates the proposed existence of a parent participation continuum beginning with involvement through to engagement and within engagement- leadership-level decision-making. Self-Determination Theory and Ecologies of Parental Engagement are listed on the model but represented an alternative explanation that might assist in moving parents to become increasingly involved. This study suggested that critical leaders and social capital supported the movement of parents along a continuum to become engaged and ultimately decision-making leaders. The district examined, had a District English Language Advisory Committee that appears to be working on the engagement/ leadership side of the participation continuum.

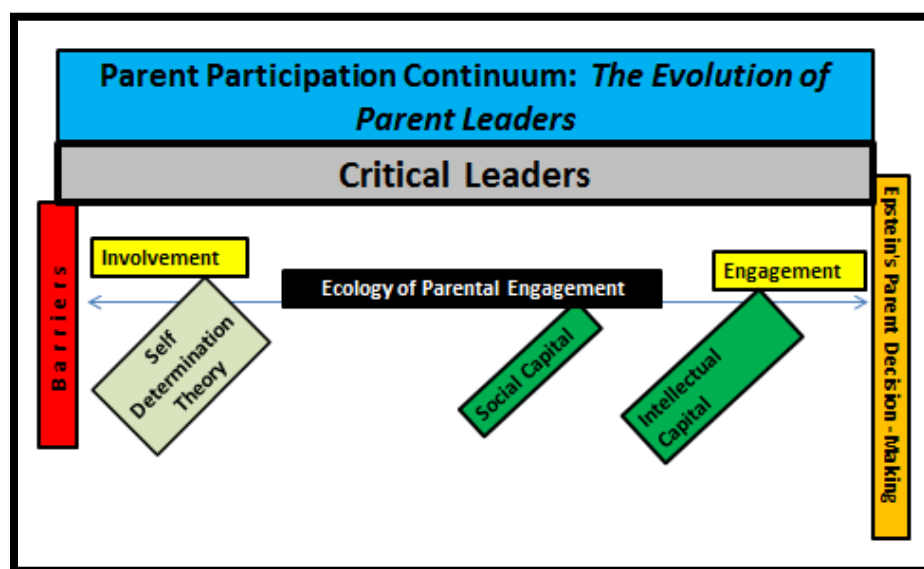


Figure 1. Parent Participation Continuum Integrated Model: The Evolution of Parent Leaders

Rationale for Selection of the Study Site. South Lake Elementary School

District was selected because it served a large number of Hispanic/Latino students and these students represented the type of learner who most often underperforms on standardized measures of achievement. Despite being highly impacted by the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act, SLESD has consistently made gains in student achievement over the past ten years. In fact, this district was one of a few in California that has continued to show steady student achievement. Therefore, something can be learned from this district and makes it an important “telling case” (Van Maanen, 1988). There were a number of factors to investigate concerning the success of SLESD in regards to enhancing parent leadership. For one, SLESD seemed to practice shared decision making with all its stakeholders including its parents. This district appeared to prepare parents to effectively perform their leadership duties within the DELAC through an apparent successful training system. As such, SLESD provided an excellent opportunity to explore how to develop parent leadership. This study hopes to add to the limited research on Latino parent engagement in leadership roles through the examination of one district that has seemingly successfully reached high levels of parent participation.

Through the examination of a high functioning DELAC in one school district in Southern California, this research can provide examples for educational leaders hoping to improve their own schools’ parent engagement. The South Lake Elementary School DELAC was selected as a best case example based on the high levels of parent

engagement and decision making leadership that seem to have taken place at the district. The DELAC in this district appears to facilitate meetings outside the school grounds, and has successfully acted to change the district's reclassification¹ procedures to better meet the needs of students. How did South Lake Elementary DELAC become so engaged? Is it the encouragement of district leadership? Is it the district vision and commitment of the School Board and district personnel that encouraged this level of engagement? Or is it the parents themselves who took the initiative? Few studies report on initiatives that have included parents as equal partners and decision makers. This study investigated how the various stake-holders may have contributed to the parental engagement in this one successful district.

The following chapter will outline the bodies of literature used to anchor this study including: (1) Parent engagement; (2) parent decision-making, (3) Applied Critical Leadership (ACL), and (4) social and intellectual capital.

¹ Reclassification is the process whereby an English Learner is reclassified as a Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) student after meeting various linguistic and academic criteria set by the State and District.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The first chapter outlined the purpose for the study; chapter two details the research that was used to drive this study. Since this study examined parent participation it was critical to establish the distinction between the two forms of parent participation-involvement and engagement.

Parent Involvement versus Parental Engagement

Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) distinguish the difference between involvement and engagement as school/parent partnerships, that answer the following: (1) who is the source of the energy that drives the work for the partnerships; (2) who is the source of motivation for the partnerships;(3) what are the different roles played by all of the stakeholders in a school or a district;(4) what is the purpose for the collaboration, or the process of decision making; and (5) what is the nature or types of the partnerships. The answers to these questions make up the distinguishing factors that describe the differences between involvement and engagement. Tables 1a-c below contrasts involvement and engagement in terms of the supportive components that comprise school-parent partnerships. The tables were reproduced from the original work of Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) description which was used as the basis to determine and define parent participation in one successful DELAC. The following is the definition of involvement based on this work.

Tables 1a-c. : Recreation of the Original work of Ferlazzo and Hammond's Involvement versus Engagement

| | Involvement | Engagement |
|---|--|---|
| Whose Energy drives it? Who initiates it? | Ideas and energy come from the schools and government mandates. Schools try to "sell" their ideas to parents. School Staff and public institutions might feel they know what the problems are and how to fix them, and determine the criteria to use in evaluating success | Ideas are elicited from parents by school staff in the context of developing trusting relationships. They emerge from parent/community needs and priorities. More parent energy drives the efforts. |
| What is the invitation? | Parents might be irritated-pushed to do something about what staff might perceive as important, and asked to do things without necessarily having a trusting and reciprocal relationship with school staff. | Parents are agitated-they are challenged to do something about what they feel is important to them staff learn what is important through developing a relationship. |

Table 1a. Beginning the Process

Recreation of the Original work of Ferlazzo and Hammond's Involvement versus Engagement (Contd.)

| | Involvement | Engagement |
|---|---|--|
| What is the role of the parent? | He is a volunteer who is generally directed by school staff towards completing tasks or a client who receives services and information. | She is considered a <i>leader</i> (or a <i>potential leader</i>) who is integral to identifying a vision and goals. She encourages others to contribute their own vision to that big picture and helps perform the tasks that need to be achieved to reach goals. |
| What is the role of the teacher/school librarian? | She is more of a social worker who might do things for the parents, or tend to tell them what they should be doing with their child | He is more of an <i>organizer</i> who helps parents do things for themselves, and elicits from parents what school staff could be doing to better help their child and their community. |
| What is the role of the administrator? | Develops the vision and assigns tasks to parents to help accomplish them. | Encourages parents and staff to help develop a joint vision, and helps develop those leadership abilities, while recognizing that tasks are just a tool towards that end. |

Table 1b. Roles of Parents and School Staff

Recreation of the Original work of Ferlazzo and Hammond’s Involvement versus Engagement (Contd.)

| | Involvement | Engagement |
|---|---|--|
| What is the purpose? | Support students by strengthening and assisting school programs and priorities. | Support students by developing parent relationships, strengthening families, and improving their local communities. |
| Decision-Making Power | School staff might look at power as a finite “pie” if parents get some, and then schools lose some. Staffs are the experts. | There is recognition that more possibilities are created when more stakeholders have power to make real decisions-the “pie” itself gets bigger. Parents are recognized as co educators and experts in their own right. |
| What kinds of partnerships are developed? | “Narrow & Shallow.” Schools might get gift certificates from businesses, or staff might initiate bringing social services to school site with minimal parent input. Police, for example, are brought in to deal with campus safety issues only. | “Board & Deep.” Technical assistance is provided by community groups and universities on leadership development and other issues parents identify. Partnerships are developed with businesses, the police, local political bodies, and other entities to respond to community-wide issues. |

Table 1c. Purpose, Decision-Making, and Partnerships

Parental Involvement. According to the work of Ferlazzo and Hammond, (2009) the purpose of parent involvement is to support students by strengthening and assisting school programs and priorities. With involvement, parents are volunteers directed by the school to do something or a client who receives services or information. The school tries to sell their ideas to parents because the school leaders feel they know what the problems are and how to fix them (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). The administrator develops the vision and assigns tasks to parents to help accomplish this vision. School staffs see themselves as the experts and partnerships with parents are narrow and shallow. Parents are not perceived as possessing much expertise except to help teachers accomplish the school’s goals, and focusing on tasks the school feels *it* needs help with (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). The teacher is more of a social worker

who might do things for the parents, or tend to tell parents what they should be doing with their child. In this type of parent participation the school staff might look at power as a finite pie, that is, if parents get some, then schools loses some (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). Based on Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) research, involvement can be viewed as a less evolved version of parent participation. Conversely, engagement can represent a higher level of parent participation.

Parental Engagement. Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) posit that engagement encourages parents to contribute *their own* vision to the big picture of education and help perform the tasks that need to be achieved to reach the desired goals parents *and* educational leaders have for students. Engagement means, parent energy drives partnership efforts because ideas are elicited from parents and emerge from *their* needs and *their* priorities. Thus, parents feel challenged to do something about *what they* feel is important and their role shifts to leader or *potential leader* (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). Parents are integral to identifying a vision and goals for the school community. The role of the teacher is more of an organizer who helps parents learn the processes of getting things done to ensure that their children are academically successful. The teacher elicits from parents what he or she could be doing to better help their children and their community. In other words, teachers and administrators act as guides for families to facilitate the needs of parents and students (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). The role of the administrator is to encourage parents and staff to help develop a joint vision, and help develop leadership abilities, while recognizing that tasks are just a tool towards that end. Based on this work, the purpose of engagement is to support students by developing collegial relationships with parents, strengthening families, and improving local

communities. Decision making power in engagement is recognition that more possibilities are created when more stakeholders have the power to make real decisions- the pie itself gets larger (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). Thus, parents are recognized as co educators and experts in their own right and the kinds of partnerships created in the process of engagement are broad and deep. Based on Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) engagement can be seen as the highest level of parent participation and therefore plays a key role in this investigation. The next section will detail another theoretical framework that was essential to this study. It is important to note that there is an over reliance on one perspective of parent engagement and involvement due to the fact that there is a limited amount of literature on the distinction between these concepts. Explanation of the difference between parent involvement and parent engagement is limited to the work of Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009). Epstein (2009) work adds to the description by providing an additional layer for parent engagement. Both Ferlazzo and Hammond's 2009 work and the work of Epstein (2009) were combined to propose a foundation for the difference between the parent engagement and parent involvement.

Decision-Making. Epstein's (2009) Six Types of Involvement further set the foundation for the conceptual model used to describe parental leadership in this study. Figure 2 is a recreation of Epstein's (2009) work and details all Six Types of Involvement however, this study used only Type 5: Decision Making and changed its label from involvement to engagement because the definition and activities associated with Epstein's (2009) Type 5: Decision Making type of involvement matched Ferlazzo & Hammond's definition of engagement.

Recreation of Epstein's Six Types Involvement: Focus on Decision-Making

| Type | Parenting | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at Home | Decision Making | Collaborating with the Community |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| Definition | Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. Assist schools in understanding families | Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications | Improve recruitment, training and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school and in other locations to support students and school programs. | Involve families with their children in learning at home, including homework, other curriculum-related activities, and individual course and program decisions. | Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through the PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations | Coordinate community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community. |

Recreation of Epstein's Six Types Involvement: Focus on Decision-Making (Contd.)

| Type | Parenting | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at Home | Decision Making | Collaborating with the Community |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| Redefinitions | <p>“Workshops” are not only meetings on topics held at the school building but also the content of the meetings to be viewed, heard, or read at convenient times and varied locations by those who could not attend.</p> | <p>Communications about school programs and student progress go not only from school to home but also from home to school and within the community.</p> | <p>“Volunteer” not only means someone who comes to school during the school day but also anyone who supports school goals and children’s learning and development in any way, at any place, and at any time.</p> | <p>“Homework” not only means work that students do alone but also interactive activities that students share and discuss with others at home and in the community to link schoolwork to real-life experiences. “Help” at home means how families encourage, listen, praise, guide, monitor, and discuss schoolwork with their children, not whether or how they “teach” school subjects.</p> | <p>Decision Making in schools means a process of partnership-sharing views, solving problems, and taking action toward shared goals for excellent education and student success-not a power struggle of conflicting ideas.</p> | <p>Community includes not only families with children in the schools but also others who are interested in and affected by the quality of students’ education. Communities are rated not only on economic qualities but also on the strengths and talent f people and organizations who may support students, families, and s schools</p> |

Recreation of Epstein's Six Types Involvement: Focus on Decision-Making (Contd.)

| Type | Parenting | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at Home | Decision Making | Collaborating with the Community |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Results for Students | Balanced time spent on chores, homework, and other activities. Regular attendance. Awareness of family supervision and importance of school. | Awareness of own progress in subjects and skills. Knowledge of actions needed to maintain or improve grades. Awareness of own role as courier and communicator in partnerships. | Skills that are tutored or taught by volunteers. Skills in communicating with adults. | Skills, abilities, and test scores linked to class work. Homework completion. View of parent as more similar to teacher and home as similar to school. Self-confidence in ability as learner as positive attitude about school. | Awareness that families' views are represented in school decisions. Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and committees. | Knowledge, skills, and talents from enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences and explorations of careers. Self-confidence and feeling valued by and belong to the community |
| Type | Parenting | Communicating | Volunteering | Learning at Home | Decision Making | Collaborating with the Community |
| Results for Parents | Self-confidence about parenting as children proceeds through school. Knowledge of child and adolescent development | Understanding of school programs and policies. Support for child's progress and responses to solve problems. Ease of interactions and communications with school and teachers. High rating of school quality. | Understanding of the teacher's job. Self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children. Enrollment in programs to improve own education. | Discussions with child about school, class work, homework, and future plans. Understanding of curriculum, what child is learning, and how to help each year. Appreciation of teacher's work and skills. | Awareness of and input to policies that affect children's education. Development of participation and leadership skills in responsibilities for activities and in representation of other parents. | Knowledge and use of community resource. Participation with others to strengthen the community and to build a sense of community |

Figure 2. Epstein's Keys to Successful School, Family, and Community Partnerships are the Six Types of Involvement

According to Epstein's definition Type 5: Decision Making Involvement encompasses the following supportive components: (a) include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through the PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations. (b) The activities that fall under this type of parental collaboration include the quality of participation, and shared

leadership in organizations such as school councils or school improvement teams. (c) The challenges that come with this type of parental engagement include the commitment by the leaders, that membership on committees will include parents from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Engagement means training in the process of decision making is available to all parent leaders. These trainings in turn develop parents' leadership skills so they may utilize their strengths to represent other parents.

Epstein (2009) redefines the Type:5 Decision Making Involvement as a process of *partnership* where all parties feel comfortable in sharing views, suggest ways to solve problems, and take action toward shared goals for excellent education and student success. In other words, decision-making is not a power struggle of conflicting ideas (Epstein, 1988; Epstein, 2005,; Epstein, 2009). Instead it fosters opportunities to disagree, with a focus on consensus and collaborative decision-making that has positive effects for all stakeholders.

The following section describes the many obstacles limiting and even preventing Latino parents from participating in their children's education in the first place followed by factors that are known to eliminate such barriers.

Barriers of Parental Participation

Research points to three overarching factors that inhibit participation for Latino parents. These factors are (a) language proficiency that has a negative influence on many Latino parents' abilities to effectively communicate with school personnel, (b) lack of knowledge of school practices, culture and procedures, (c) demographic factors like economic status, (d) logistics and, (e) conventional modes of participation.

Language Proficiency. Language barriers prevent parents from expressing concerns with teachers and inhibit parents from helping their children with homework. Language proficiency is also a challenge when communicating within school events delivered in English especially without translation assistance. Ramirez (2003) examined the effects of limited language proficiency and illustrated the poor response by school officials in providing translation of critical materials for parents. One parent in this study commented, “The schools make me feel stupid because I have trouble with English” (Ramirez, 2003, p. 102). Parents in this study were well aware of the fact that their children’s lack of English proficiency also caused them to fall behind (Ramirez, 2003). Language barrier is the cornerstone to all other Latino parent challenges preventing them from properly participating and engaging in their children’s education. Another barrier is parents’ lack of school knowledge.

Lack of Knowledge of School Practices. The lack of knowledge of school practices is partly the result of limited or uneven levels of parent education and cultural differences (Chrispeels & Rivero 2001). This limited or uneven level of parental education stems from a lack of adequate exposure to the U.S. educational system which makes Latino parents less likely to participate in the school and work with school officials. Hispanic/Latino parents generally have fewer years of school experience (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010, Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) and many find themselves unable to navigate the unique challenges of a foreign educational system compounding their confusion and frustration. Latino parent perceptions and expectations regarding the roles of parents and teachers are different from those of the traditional U.S. school. Parents’ understanding of a school system is influenced by their cultural backgrounds and

prior knowledge of the school systems to which they were exposed (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

Based on their cultural background, most Latino parents see their role as providing a nurturing home environment and teaching their children about values and good behavior (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Latino parents believe teachers are the experts and should do the teaching without parent interference (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Latino parents in the U.S. report that teachers expect them to support their students in ways that are unknown and unattainable to them (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Ramirez, 2003). For this reason, when parents get involved in school, they will need to learn about and be supported in their expected roles in the school's organizational system and learn how they can support school expectations at home (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Research examining Latino parental participation in education points to the mismatch in perceptions between the teachers and parents as a primary deterrent to their engagement in the school culture (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Auerbach, 2009; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools generally expect that parents will provide support for their children in all academic areas, and that this will be in English. Research posits teachers expect parents will provide students with sufficient educational stimuli and extra-curricular activities that serve as prerequisites for academic success in school. Most teachers and administrators expect parents to attend school meetings and special events to support the school by volunteering and being part of advisory committees. Unfortunately, research has shown Latino parents may lack the resources, experience and education to support their children's academic attainment as it

is expected by the schools (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). When making sense of this mismatch it is important to examine the make-up of the teaching staff versus the mounting change in the diversity of student and family populations. Based on the California Report Card, two thirds of the teachers in schools today come from white middle class backgrounds while the majority of their students are culturally and linguistically diverse and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Edsource, 2010). This change in student demographics is rapidly growing and key to understanding how differences play out. Researchers have noted this difference in culture results in different expectations and add multilevel barriers for parents from Hispanic/Latino backgrounds to become as involved as other parents (Desimone, 2001). When teachers know little about students and their culture it creates misunderstanding which then contributes to the creation of negative beliefs and stereotypes about families and communities from diverse cultures (Ramirez, 2003). The lack of Latino parent participation has been attributed by some scholars to cultural beliefs. Latino parents, by nature, feel it is disrespectful to meddle in the work of the teacher (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). They strongly believe teachers are the most equipped to educate their children (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001) and thus, parents leave it up to the schools to instruct their children. This may be seen as, to a culturally unaware teacher, a lack of interest in their child's success on the part of Latino parents. This continuation of lack of cultural awareness and lack of resources to support their children then proves to be disastrous for Latino students especially when considering all the challenges linguistically and culturally diverse students have with learning content and learning English at the same time. The previous section described

the challenge of language and how that along with cultural differences leads to a mismatch in expectations between schools and Latino families. Along those same lines, demographic differences and logistics add to the challenging factors preventing parents from becoming involved.

Demographic Factors. Research indicates that demographic factors like socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity and cultural background are positively correlated with parental school involvement (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Overall, parents in higher socioeconomic brackets are more involved than their lower income counterparts. Higher SES parents advocate placement in honors classes and manage their children's education more than their counterparts. (Epstein, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Lee and Bowen (2006) found four factors significantly correlated with higher academic achievement. These factors are: (1) non-poverty, (2) European-American descent, (3) higher parental educational levels and (4) active parent participation in their schools. Studies like the Lee and Bowen study contribute to the literature in certain respects but unfortunately help to perpetuate a deficit view of Latino families by showcasing lower achievement of Latino students from diverse backgrounds who also have lower levels of parental involvement. The lack of studies examining the multitude of reasons for understanding why Latino parents are less engaged in their children's education directly and indirectly contribute to the misbelief that there is nothing to be done about this lack of parent engagement. In summarizing the research, socioeconomic and educational levels, combined with parent/teacher perspectives and expectations, critically factor to the degree of parent participation and student achievement (Lee and Bowen, 2006). This combination of factors creates obstacles to engaging in school relationships that Latino

parents cannot easily overcome. Barriers for Latino parents including traditional procedures such as how the schools run parent participation, how they communicate or not, with parents and most importantly the message of disrespect they are sending to the under-represented parent body. When Latino parents are left out of the communication loop the most important message they receive is lack of respect (Ramirez, 2003). So far, this chapter has outlined the following Latino parent barriers that inhibit their school participation: (1) lack of language proficiency, lack of knowledge about school practices, and demographic factors. The next section will discuss logistical barriers known to limit Latino parents from participating in school.

Logistics. Research posits that logistics are often the overlooked factors in parental involvement, but need to be addressed as critical in affecting Latino parents' participation. Time, for example, as a factor influencing the ability of parents to get involved is more greatly impacted in the Latino low SES community. Parental involvement, especially at the school site, is one that requires parents to take time away from their work schedules. This is especially problematic for Latino parents because work schedules tend to be more restrictive and demanding therefore, logistics are an essential barrier to their involvement (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001).

The time necessary to attend school functions is only one factor, however, affecting the extent to which parents show up to these events. In addition to time, the culture of Latino families is such that parents expect to be formally invited to attend school functions as opposed to taking the initiative to attend an advertised activity (Ramirez, 2003). Such invitations are preferred by parents to be in the form of a phone

call from the teacher or a personalized written notice from an administrator. In any case, in the absence of such a formal invitation, Latino parents are less likely to view these events as something which they are expected to attend, or even should attend.

Schools' traditional way of "doing business" creates obstacles for Latino parents. By developing non-traditional forms of parent involvement that address these barriers schools will be able to give parents what they really want, that is, help for themselves and their children to succeed. Defining what Latino parents want and need for their children is the first step in addressing these barriers.

The next section of this chapter continues to build a case that argues against traditional stances taken by school and district administrators in regard to parental participation. The case is made that it is courageous school administrators who can dismiss parental disengagement and choose parental engagement. Should Latino parents be empowered to become intricately engaged in the processes by which schools are managed; curriculum decisions made; and state and federal mandates implemented? If the answer is yes, then things need to change. The following section will begin by reviewing traditional forms of parent involvement and how they fail to entice Latino parents to participate.

Conventional Forms of Participation. Conventional parent participation assumes the parent is ready, willing and able to support the school and students instead of the school finding ways of supporting parents and families. School-based barriers to parent participation include traditional modes of involvement, such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA), open house and volunteering in the classroom (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). Delgado-Gaitan (1991), found that Latino parents

did not attend traditional parent participation activities like conferences and open houses because they felt these activities did not help them understand how to support their children's education. These conventional practices assume parents know teacher expectations and have knowledge of how the educational system works. Research states non-English speaking, low-income parents benefit very little from conventional parent involvement activities such as parent teacher conferences and parent teacher associations. These methods are ineffective in channeling parents to participate in a meaningful way (Zarate, 2007). For example, Latino parents may not have the language skills to effectively understand how to support their children's needs. They also may not understand how the grading system works and where to find extra support for their children if needed. This factor leads to the misalignment in expectations between the school and parents unfamiliar with the school system. Many educators view a lack of parent involvement as a lack of parental interest in their children's education (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). At the same time, parents report feeling unwelcome and their participation discouraged at their children's school. Parents report feeling confused and frustrated by an educational system that misunderstands their cultural values and beliefs (Arias, Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Furthermore, parents indicated feeling intimidated by the academic demands required of parents who get involved in the classroom, or other activities that might require expertise outside their skill-set. This same lack of academic confidence of Latino parents limits their ability to fully help their children at home. However, what about, federal, state and local mandates, which expect parent involvement to take place in schools. Can these places be a catalyst for changes in school? Based on the limited research in this area it is safe to assume that Latino parents

serving on these committees are not adequately prepared to perform even their basic duties much less to the level of engagement as Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) described. The following section will detail non-conventional strategies known to positively improve Latino parent participation.

Factors that Diminish Barriers to Parental Participation

In showcasing programs and techniques that have contested against Latino parental barriers this study demonstrates that Latino parents can and want to be intimately involved in the success of their children in our schools (Arias, Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). These practices have shown to have resisted traditional procedural barriers that decrease and/ or eliminate Latino parental participation in their children's education. Several factors seem to drive these barrier busters. The most essential barrier eliminators seem to be critical leaders.

Critical Leaders. Research has shown that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). The leader sets the tone and leads by modeling for teachers who are shown to be the most influential factor for students (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). According to Auebarch, (2009) leadership around the commitment for school-community connections is poorly documented in the literature and insufficiently addressed in training for administrators. Educational preparation programs must train administrators to work with diverse cultures (Auebarch, 2009). Critical leaders can train and allow for training of teachers to improve the collaborative relations between culturally and linguistically different families. Critical leaders can be

identified as cultural brokers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991) by sharing similar backgrounds and providing training that leads to leadership capacity for Latino parents.

Teacher and leader attitudes have a significant impact on parental involvement (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Critical leaders are open and willing to do what it takes to involve Latino parents by changing current parental participation practices and adopting strategies that support a welcoming, inclusive environment for diverse groups of parents (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press). They also provide high quality training for Latino parents to build social capital and leadership capacity.

Current research suggests schools implement strategies that address barriers impacting Latino parental participation by displaying the will to employ non-conventional forms of resources. Non-conventional methods to parent participation improve the school climate and allow parents to reach higher levels of engagement and gain a sense of empowerment (Quioco & Daoud, 2006). According to Santamaría and Santamaría (2010) and Santamaría's (in press) empirical research this is referred to as *Applied Critical Leadership*.

Applied Critical Leadership (ACL)

Established in the recent work of Santamaría & Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría (in press) ACL is defined as the type of educational leadership that promotes social justice. Critical leaders, because of their unique backgrounds and understanding of diverse groups, employ multiple perspectives with equity at the base of their leadership style (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press). This type of leadership is grounded in Critical Race Theory and transforms practices to improve educational

outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Santamaría & Santamaría 2012; Santamaría, in press).

Santamaría & Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría (in press) describe this form of transformational leadership style as encompassing critical pedagogy, and Critical Race Theory to provide an emergent theoretical framework they refer to as *Applied Critical Leadership*. The groundbreaking work of Santamaría & Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría (in press) was essential to this study because it attempted to investigate how Applied Critical Leadership may support and enhances Latino parent leadership in one district. This work will also attempt to add to the limited amount of research on educational leaders that use a Critical race Theory lens.

Santamaría & Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría (in press) found that leaders who use Applied Critical Leadership practice governance through a Critical Race Theory lens and make leadership decisions based on their individual differences in seeing the world's strengths. ACL could explain the driving force in use in this successful district that has seemingly given rise to a highly engaged parent committee. By employing Applied Critical Leadership, these educational leaders apparently produced real change. Based on Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) and Santamaría (in press) critical leaders in this successful district are leaders who seem to have taken action to make decisions by employing the use of critical pedagogy through a critical race theory lens. Hence, the premise of this study is that nonconventional changes, leader attitudes, structures and procedures may have led this DELAC to high levels of engagement and decision-making due to Applied Critical Leadership. The following section outlines the specific ways in

which Applied Critical Leadership can account for the elimination Latino parent participation when layered over current research on barriers beginning with logistics.

Critical Leaders eliminating logistical barriers. As previously outlined, logistics involves parent work schedules, transportation to and from school functions, childcare needs, and all the physical constraints that may get in the way of parents getting involved in their children's education (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Logistical barriers can be addressed by modifying meetings, accommodating to parents' work schedules, providing childcare to facilitate parent attendance and by arranging transportation to enable parent participation in school activities (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). These positive examples assume the leader chose to do things differently to meet the needs of the parents. As such, the case can be made that all best practices shown to limit and even eliminate Latino parent may have had a critical leader at the helm. With that in mind, critical leaders can account for offering translation of written and oral communication especially during meetings and school events. Critical leaders can be credited for personally inviting parents to get involved and adjusting meeting times to match parent needs. In doing so, these leaders can also be credited for bridging the language barrier and providing bilingual school information for parents so they feel part of the school community.

Critical Leaders eliminating misalignment between school and home. Critical leaders may also be the driving force for shifting conventional forms of parental involvement to non-conventional forms like home visits (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Critical leaders can be seen as doing this by sharing the differences between school and the Latino home culture for parents (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008).

Critical leaders hold added value in the efforts to eliminate negative school/parental perceptions because they gained or have the respect and knowledge of how diverse cultures view their roles in schools and can support the efforts of the community. A parent leader serving on the District English Learner Advisory Committee making decisions with scaffolds that allow them to positively impact students despite not speaking the language is an example of a non-conventional approach that is engagement. Another way schools can align expectations with parents is by acknowledging their cultural values, incorporating them into the curriculum and by inviting extended family members to school activities (Moll & Gonzalez, 1992). This study aimed to investigate the possibility that positive impacts in parent participation can be due in part to the choices of Critical Leaders.

Critical leaders encourage social capital. Another way critical leaders seem to bridge misunderstanding between the school culture and home culture is through parent trainings about school practices. Research posits non-conventional or culturally responsive parent participation activities improve social and intellectual capital of Latino parents, which not only improves participation but increases the development of leadership skills and roles among parents (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Current research has shown that non-conventional practices happen mostly in parent training programs (Hill & Taylor, 2004). The following sections describe the most current research on Latino parent training programs which can be viewed as a non-conventional practice.

Parent Trainings that Develop Social Capital and Intellectual Capital.

According to Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler's (1997) parent motivation model, parents become involved in their children's education when they as parents develop a role that

prompts them to get involved in school. Based on these findings, parents *must* develop the belief that they are responsible to volunteer in order to act accordingly. Once parents develop this understanding they also develop a positive sense of self-efficacy about helping their children succeed in school despite their language barriers. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) explain that once a parent becomes involved, they choose specific involvement activities. These activities are based on the following research findings: (a) Parent perceptions of their own skills and abilities, (b) parents' experiences in school (c) demands of their time and energy, (d) parents' expectations to receive invitations to become involved in school activities from their children, teachers and the school (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010). Research shows the higher the parents' sense of efficacy the more inclined they will be to get involved in leadership roles to improve school effectiveness and student achievement (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). The creation of social capital influences the development of intellectual capital. "Intellectual capital" refers to the knowledge created from a social unit such as an organization (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) or DELAC committee that propels action based on the new knowledge. Given this research one can assume when structures are created in an organization for people to interact amongst each other, they have opportunities to build relationships and establish trust. Therefore, based on the research these are two essential building blocks to creating more social capital leading to intellectual capital. When groups of people who trust each other have opportunities to collaborate not only amongst their own group, but with other groups, the knowledge generated enables people to act in new ways. Thus, according to scholars in the field intellectual capital is created through the combination and exchange of knowledge in a group setting leading to new knowledge

and action (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These scholars also posit that in order for groups to create intellectual capital there must be opportunities for valuable interaction, people must be motivated to participate, and the new knowledge or information must be synthesized and used (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Furthermore, the process of working together, grappling with ideas and creating an action plan leads to more informal groups working together outside of the program. Additionally, current research suggests a fundamental strategy a school can provide to Latino parents is training in the articulation of the United States School System.

Based on leading researchers in the field of parental involvement programs where all parents feel welcomed and valued by schools and become involved (Epstein, 1988; Epstein, 1995; Desimone, 2001) to enhance school related outcomes for children (Hill & Taylor, 2004) are needed but rarely found. The literature is clear about the success of two leadership programs: (a) The Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) and (b) The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund's (MALDEF) Parent Partnership Program. Chrispeels & Rivero (2001) observed parent involvement changed after parents went through the PIQE trainings. They found that these programs positively impacted aspects of their parental involvement.

PIQE: Parent Institute for Quality Education. PIQE began in San Diego in 1987 by a retired Baptist minister who was concerned about the high dropout rate and lack of school achievement among Latino students. The mission of the program was to build a bridge between Latino families and schools. The guiding principles of PIQE are that parents, especially low income immigrant parents need information about the educational system in order to be successful in participating and supporting their

children. The program consists of eight 90-minute sessions (1) one orientation, (2) six content sessions and (3) a graduation ceremony. Participants of the program have been shown to go on to leadership roles and serve as volunteer trainers. Chrispeels & Rivero (2001) studied 11 families going through the PIQE training program. They found changes in three major areas (a) parenting styles (b) parental sense of their place in school and (c) motivation factors.

The shift in parenting styles reported in the Chrispeels & Rivero (2001) study found that parents changed their discipline styles as they learned about the effectiveness of various approaches. As they learned about the pros and cons of each style, parents adopted the one they found to be the most effective (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Most participating parents agreed that the authoritative parenting style is the best to use because it provides structure for their children in a more democratic relationship in the home. Parents also showed improved communication with their children on school matters at the end of the PIQE training. For example, parents asked about their children's future goals and asked questions about the books they were reading. Finally, parents improved their self-efficacy about how to help and support their children's education. One example of self-efficacy improvement is when parents were introduced to basic literacy skills that teachers practice at school. Parents felt much more comfortable working with their children at home because they understood what the teacher was teaching and how they as parents could support these school skills at home in their own language (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). While PIQE training changed parents' parenting style, self-efficacy and motivation to becoming involved, another training program has been shown to develop the knowledge and leadership capabilities to help parents

advocate for their children. This training is the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund: Parent School Program

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund: Parent School Partnership Program. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) is a nonprofit organization born out of the civil rights movement in 1968. MALDEF provides parent training geared towards improving the leadership capacity of its participants. MALDEF's mission is to protect the rights of the Hispanic population and empower them to fully participate in American Society. Programs like PIQE train parents on parenting skills and roles to help improve the school climate. Moreover, leadership-training programs like MALDEF help to improve school effectiveness by enhancing the leadership capacity of parents (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2010).

Bolívar & Chrispeels (2010) conducted a study examining the impact of MALDEF's Parent School Partnership Program (PSP) for Hispanic Latino parents in two elementary schools. These schools contained large Hispanic populations and high percentages of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Bolívar & Chrispeels (2010) discovered that the lessons learned in MALDEF's parent training program translated into individual and collective action. The 15 mothers interviewed stated previously feeling that immigrants could not defend themselves and their cultural beliefs. MALDEF's PSP helped them learn to defend themselves in a proper, organized and non-threatening way. The parents who went through this program not only learned the benefits of involvement but also the added value of leadership (Bolívar & Chrispeels, 2010). Participating parents engaged in purposeful collective action. According to the study most of the learning took place when the graduates from prior classes met with

parents going through the training. The graduates acted as cultural brokers and improved the intellectual capital of the group. Based on the findings understanding how parent involvement develops can help identify ways to leverage human capital for the most positive results. The following examples of parent training programs are different given that they can be seen as initiated by a critical leader that evolution to parents taking ownership and more leadership roles. The subsequent examples of parent training programs can signify a possible rival theory to explain how parent leaders might become engaged. The following section suggests how parents may become engaged by learning from one another.

Parent Programs that Exhibit Self Determination Theory

In a four-year study of preschool parents in a high Latino populated school in Southern California Delgado-Gaitan (1991) followed the impact and experiences of one teacher who conducted regular home visits to better understand parent needs. Over the four years, this teacher developed trainings in response to needs expressed by her parent body. The teacher held parents accountable to attend meetings and this group of parents soon became a strong social network. Meetings were conducted in the evenings when it was most convenient for parents and childcare was provided when necessary. Through the course of the four years this parent group gained enough knowledge that parents formed their own group called el Comité de Padres Latinos or COPLA (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The COPLA became a strong force in district reform by standing up for the rights of Spanish speaking students and their families. They challenged schools and teachers who did not show respect for culturally and linguistically diverse students and their

families. This non-conventional practice of parent involvement enhanced cultural strengths of family and community by providing parent training in school curriculum, parental education and parent advocacy (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). The COPLA group understood the system and worked to do away with the discrimination they saw in many schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Although this group was highly successful and helped improve the education of many Latino students in their district the means by which this happened, and hence the means of replicating this elsewhere are little understood. It is clear from examining the supreme success of this program that detailed understanding of the development of parent and related studies are needed if we are to begin to create successful Latino parent engagement. Another rival explanation to the premise of this study exists in Ecologies of Parental Engagement.

Ecologies of Parental Engagement. In support of Ecologies of Parental Engagement, parents enhanced their understanding about how they fit within the school culture and what they are expected to do as part of the home/school connection (Barton et al., 2004). Parents develop an understanding of the value and importance of participating in school. The development of the understanding of the value and importance of participating in school is a critical first step and well documented as evidenced by the work of Peña (2010) and Barton et al. (2004). Although parent participation studies suggest parents who were trained did not take on leadership roles in parent teacher associations or advisory boards, they did get involved in other ways which can be seen as contrary to what was uncovered in this study. Participating parents attended school events and parent teacher conferences. Additionally, parents discovered the importance of making literacy a regular part of the home culture to support achievement at school. In

other words, EPE asks how engagement relates more broadly to parents experiences and actions both inside and out of the school community which helps to understand the interconnections between what parents engage in and how they manage to do so (Barton et al. 2004; Peña, 2010). This theory was included in the examination of the school district selected for this study to provide an alternate explanation to describe what might move parents to act despite the barriers they face in one successful school district with or without the help of critical leaders.

According to scholars, EPE defines parental engagement as a relational phenomenon that depends heavily on activity networks (Barton et al. 2004; Peña, 2010). Within these activity networks, space and capital play a crucial role in the success (Barton et al., 2004; Peña, 2010). This work offers a new way to conceptualize parental engagement that frames parents as both authors and agents in school. It supports Ferlazzo and Hammond's (2009) assertions and is found in the most recent research on successful Latino parent engagement programs. It redefines parental engagement as a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interaction with schools and among school actors (Barton et al. 2004). The following are examples of full parental engagement that appear to be fueled by part of the parents.

Examples of Full Parent Engagement

A Latino parent leadership study conducted by Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) investigated the motivations and interactions surrounding the development, participation and activities that lead to parent activism and how this involvement then impacted other

parts of the participants' lives. Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) examined three community and school-based parent and caregiver participation projects in California that involved Latino immigrant families taking an active role in eliminating discrimination in school and increasing parent participation. They investigated the motivations fueling the school-based participation and the organizing of activities by parents from historically underserved communities, as well as the significance of their organizing activities on other aspects of their lives. The researchers based their work on Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler's (1997) multidimensional model framework that explains how parents' motivation along with school and cultural content impacts the way in which parents develop the value of involvement within themselves for the purposes of advocating for their children (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Parent engagement motivation is critical for schools to understand because this motivation may be nurtured so more parents can become active participants and advocates for their children (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Additionally, Lareau (1989, 1994) looked at the socio-historical-cultural contexts that influence the relationship between families and schools. Lareau found these relationships are often unequal and strongly recommends that parent involvement research encompasses the contexts of race, class and family life including the experiences with historical legacies of discrimination in school. This perspective was approached in this study through the use of critical race theory and ACL. Based on the limited research in the field and the work of Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) there is a need for a thorough examination of the types of school participation and motivation of Latino parents in the areas of aspirations and desire to achieve something and how parents exchange information and as other ways parental engagement impacts Latino parents' lives.

Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) posit that Latino parent involvement practiced within the context of equity, inclusion and activism has the potential to maximize their children's education and future prospects in a positive way. The Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis (2012) study concluded that school participation and engagement increases when Latino parental roles, individual and family aspirations and background knowledge are respected and incorporated to the school as a valuable educational contribution. Parents who participated in these programs viewed their engagement in two distinct ways. First, engagement mobilized their sense of belonging, purpose and need for community action. Second, engagement allowed them to challenge their cultural isolation through localized participation and citizenship (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012).

One of the programs in this study called La Familia was created by Latino parents for parents. La Familia's mission is, end the chronic underachievement of their children (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Parents reported that important school meetings took place with predetermined agendas and without their input. Parents felt they were not given a fair chance to voice their opinions and they were not given the respect they deserved for suggestions for school improvement (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). As a result of their frustration Latino parents who had been ignored by school officials became parent activists. La Familia was made up of a steering committee with four sub committees each of which promoted leadership development among the group and rotated leadership roles on a yearly basis (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). All the parents in the La Familia program worked countless hours yet never missed a parent meeting. They met independently of school sponsored events in places where they could speak Spanish if they wished, where they could bring their young children as they worked. At the end

of 2 years the program was embraced by the principal and Latino parent participation rose significantly. Parents dramatically improved school climate, and family participation. The events created were teacher parent dialogues, family math and science nights; parent sponsored tutoring, bilingual and multicultural council meetings, Latino and multicultural holiday celebrations, community nutrition and food drives, fitness weekends, student safety walks and family health fairs. The fact that this grassroots parent-created group generated full parent participation in a middle school proves promising and supports a need for schools and school districts to promote parent leadership and autonomy for student achievement.

Summary and Conclusions

Family and community engagement are increasingly seen as powerful tools for making schools more equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative. Therefore eliminating factors that discourage Latino parents from participating in school can help to improve student achievement (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008).

The pledge of school leaders to involve parents more authentically is vital to school-community connections (Auerbach, 2009). Getting an education is the right of every student and parents are the best advocates Hispanic/Latino students can have to ensure this happens. By improving or adding to parents' understandings of what the expectations for their involvement entail they can be real supporters of the efforts of the school. In addition, making parents aware of the school system and their role in can make, previously uninvolved parents eventually gain power to hold the school accountable for the education of their children and help them to understand how to

mobilize to make changes. Improving the knowledge of parents around the educational system may enable parents to make informed decisions. Well-informed parents might be better able to advocate for improved student educational outcomes. Parent engagement may not just impact their own children's educational attainment but that of similar children whose parents may not yet be involved. Eliminating the achievement gap is not a job for the schools to do alone. Parents should and could play an active role in this endeavor.

As programs and instruction improves, positive life changes can occur for students and their families (Bartolome, 1994). Positive changes in the circumstances of Latino students and their families have been shown to change the trajectory of students' lives to be successful for the rest of their educational careers. The collective work presented in this paper can help parents understand they can assume responsibility for their children's education (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). The important question for leaders is "Are we willing to learn from people and do the work that must be done to create an educational system that is socially just and one where high expectations for everyone are sustained by culturally and linguistically appropriate support?" (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006, p. 266). Based on this review leaders in one successful district have demonstrated the potential to be catalysts for social justice reform through the use of ACL. The following chapter will describe the research methods that were applied in this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The previous chapters defined the importance of conducting a study about Latino parent leaders in order to support efforts to close the achievement gap among culturally, linguistically and economically diverse students. As described in the literature review, it was vital to this investigation to differentiate between parent involvement and parent engagement because these terms are used interchangeably within the current body of research (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). Equally important to this examination was the notion of parents as decision makers (Epstein, 2009). As discussed in the literature review non-conventional practices, set in motion by critical school leaders who understand the need to do things differently to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, have been shown increase Latino parent involvement and social capital. The researcher hypothesized a rise in social capital leads to intellectual capital which occurs when critical leaders provide access for parents to be part of a group. In addition, this study adds to the currently limited amount of research on Latino parent leadership within a decision making mandated committee like the District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). Lastly, this study includes alternative concepts like Self-Determination Theory and Ecologies of Parental Engagement to explain how parent leadership motivation might also be developed within this group from involvement to levels of engagement.

This chapter explains the research design methodology that was used to explore Latino parent leaders in one highly impacted yet successful district.

Case Study Methodology

According to Yin (2009) case studies are the preferred method when “(a) ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed (b) the investigator has little control over events, (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with a real life contexts” (Yin, 2009 p.2). This study focused on the following questions:

1. What influences parents to become actively engaged in their school community through a DELAC Committee?
2. What components support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?
 - a. What district policies, structures and procedures support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?
 - b. What parental structures support parent leaders who become involved in DELAC?
3. What are the contributing factors for parents to begin to move beyond involvement to engagement and leadership?

Merriam (1998) describes case study research as a means of investigating complex social units (p. 41). These investigation questions were exploratory with the goal of uncovering district and parent structures that support the development of Latino parent leaders. Constructing a preliminary theory as part of the design was critical in guiding data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). In order to do this the investigator created a conceptual framework that served as the foundation for theory development. This theory placed involvement and engagement within a continuum of parent participation. The researcher suggested that critical leaders may have served as linchpins to allow Latino parents to break through barriers in the study district, by selecting non-

conventional forms of parent participation for their schools/school district. These nonconventional forms of parent participation brought parents together and developed their social and intellectual capital. This study proposed that once parents developed intellectual capital, they seemed to move into more engagement levels of participation and eventually to decision-makers. Figure 3 describes how the initial model presented in Chapter 1 (see Fig. 1), was used as the conceptual framework supporting the process of data collection and analysis of findings.

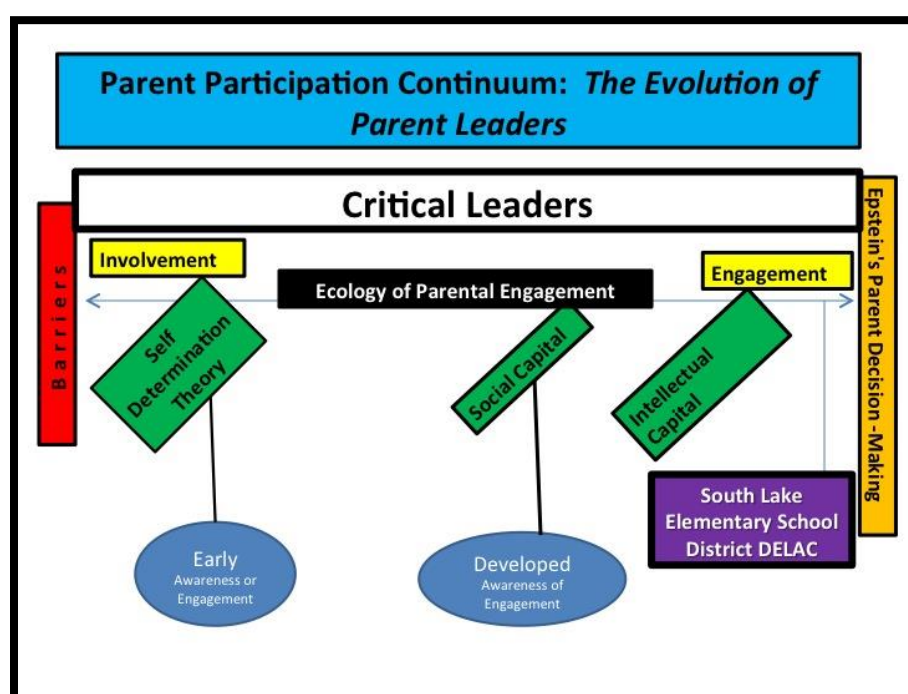


Figure 3. Parent Participation Continuum: The Evolution of Parent Leaders

Case study research was selected because according to Yin:

Case study research is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there are many more variables of interest and data

points and relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in the triangulation fashion and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (p.81).

Context of the Study. Site selection. A critical component to case study research is the careful selection of the unit of analysis or the sample (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) argues that the most appropriate sampling strategy for a qualitative study is nonprobability or purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990). A purposeful sample according to Patton (1990) is an information-rich case that will allow the researcher to maximize learning around the purpose of the study. Since time and access for fieldwork was limited, it was important to select a case that was easy to access and accommodating to collecting pertinent data (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, Merriam states, “purposeful sampling is based on the belief that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61).

This study was a within site, intrinsic, critical case study (Creswell, 1998). According to Creswell (1998) an intrinsic case study is a case selected for its uniqueness. The study district was a unique case to study because it is one of a few large urban school districts in the state that has continued to increase student achievement over the past ten years. Another unique aspect of this district is the relationship between the district and its parents. This case district offered an important opportunity to study how parent may have become leaders and key decision makers. The case enabled an exploration of policies and practices that may have allowed parents to feel empowered, engaged and receives high levels of efficacy to support accountability for student learning results.

Location and description. The study district was located in Southern California. It was comprised of a large number of elementary schools, including several charter schools, and served 27,500 students in kindergarten through grade eight. The ethnic breakdown of the students in the 44 schools was as follows: 65.4% Hispanic, 12.1% White, 9.8% Filipino, 4.2% African American, 2.5% Asian, 0.6% Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 5% other/declined to state. 40.8% of the students were considered socioeconomically disadvantaged and 36.5% were English language learners.

History of the District Governance

A new era for the study district started in the fall of 1993 in which a grassroots community-wide strategic planning process was led by the Board and Superintendent where hundreds, of school/community stakeholders were engaged in an intense process for reorganizing the district governance. The process lasted twelve months, however what emerged was a courageous new organizational structure in which the Board gave up power for the benefit of students, parents, and community. The district also established a new vision and values, strategic goals, and a Student-Based Decision making framework (Gill, 2001) that is still used to guide student achievement today.

The new organizational structure placed students and the community (parents) at the top instead of the Board like the previous model, thus the traditional top-down “central office” structure was inverted (see Figure 4) A shift from traditional leadership values of authoritarian leader or site managers to a more collaborative leadership model.

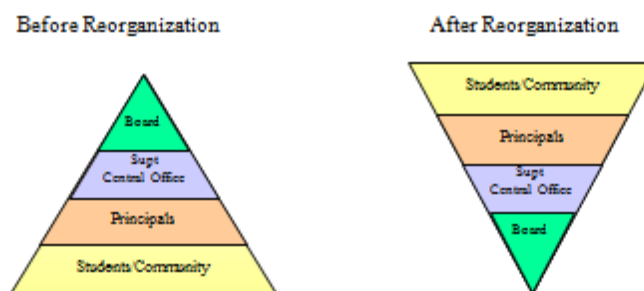


Figure 4. District Reorganization Context: Site Selection

This powerful model, which still exists to this day, represents “a context of collaboration, communication, and parent and community involvement between the district and principals” (Gill, 2001, p.12) and is believed to be one of the reasons for the continuing academic success of their students.

Participants.

Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). For the purpose of this study, a purposeful sample of individuals and groups of participants were invited and interviewed starting with key district leaders including the superintendent, assistant superintendent and executive director who worked directly with the DELAC. District leaders included:

Superintendent. The Superintendent oversees the district and ensures the vision and mission of the district is upheld. The Superintendent attends all DELAC meetings. One Superintendent was interviewed individually for this study.

Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent works with the Director of English Learner Services to support DELAC leaders and provide training and leadership to DELAC parents. One Assistant Superintendent was interviewed individually for this study.

Director of English Learner Services. The Director of English Learner Services is the primary coordinator of the DELAC group. One Director of English Learner Services was interviewed individually for this study.

DELAC Past Chair. The DELAC past chair has completed a year of DELAC chair responsibilities and previously completed one year as Vice Chair where they shadow the Chair. They remain on the committee for an additional year after their term as Chair is over to support the Chair and Vice Chair. One past DELAC chair was interviewed individually for this study.

DELAC Chair. The DELAC chair is the current acting chair. The DELAC chair runs the district meetings. The DELAC Chair spends one year as Vice Chair. During Vice Chair term they shadow the chair. One DELAC chair was interviewed individually for this study.

DELAC Vice-Chair. The DELAC Vice-Chair is a newly elected leader who is in training for one year. They attend all meetings and shadow the Chair in preparation for their term the following year. One DELAC Chair in training was interviewed individually for this study.

A total of 6 participants were interviewed one-on-one for this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the methods for maintaining

confidentiality, and the right to not participate in this study (see consent forms, Appendices A-D).

Research Outline and Timeline.

The research timeline was as follows (see table 2). The research was conducted in three re-iterative sequential but overlapping phases. Following IRB and District permission to conduct the study, the researcher began to access and analyze archival documents with value for understanding the districts DELAC program and efforts to engage Latino parents. For phase two, the researcher obtained participant consent and schedule one-on-one interviews with three District Leaders and three DELAC Board Leaders. The final phase was to attend one DELAC training, three DELAC planning meetings and three open DELAC meetings. This process was iterative and although sequential, overlapping. Information gained for each phase was used to inform the other phases. Information from open DELAC meetings and DELAC planning meetings was used to further evaluate the possible alignment of the goals outlined in the archival documents. This process was iterative, and so following the first series of interviews, to board meeting attendance, the researcher then, collected additional information to use for analysis in a second round. Table 2 depicts the collection of documents and data used in this study.

Table 2. Research Timeline of Document Collection

| |
|--|
| Archival Records |
| District Vision District Shared Values DELAC Bylaws |
| Interviews |
| 3 District Leaders 1 Superintendent 1 Assistant Superintendent 1 Director of Language Acquisition 3 DELAC Parent Leaders 1 DELAC Chair 1 DELAC Past Chair 1 DELAC Chair in Training |
| Direct Observation |
| Training of new DELAC Board Members 3 DELAC Planning Meetings Field Notes 3 DELAC Meetings Field Notes Meeting Minutes |

Phase One: Document and Artifact Review. A variety of documents were collected and analyzed including the district’s shared vision, share values, student-based decision making, and strategic goals. The majority of these documents were publicly available. Document analysis and observations provided access to the district structures and procedures that may be credited for supporting parents to serve as leaders and provided a way to triangulate data.

Phase Two: Individual Qualitative Interviews. Interviews of administrators and DELAC chairpersons were semi-structured, and conducted individually. These interviews were designed to address the key literature themes including (1) engagement, (2) Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) (3) decision making and (4) social and intellectual capital. Interviews were held in a conference room at the district or a location of the

person's choice. Interviews took approximately 60-90 minutes. See Appendix E for individual interview questions for Parents and Appendix F for District administrators.

Interview coding and meaning making. All interviews were coded numerically and no names or identifying marks were used other than the code known to the researcher. Interview and documents were read and re-read to identify potential codes that emerge from the data using extant literature regarding parent engagement as prepositions (Yin, 2009). Themes were then analyzed in relationship to literature on parent participation. The investigator returned to the participants to member check to ensure their true voice was captured.

Using multiple sources of evidence and creating a database. Based on Yin's (2009) recommendations, the researcher employed the three principals of data collection to strengthen validity: (1) multiple sources of evidence (2) create a case study database, (3) maintain a chain of evidence. As explained earlier the investigator collected a variety of sources of evidence. The researcher created a database by categorizing and numbering all items collected. In addition, the investigator maintained field notes throughout the process to assist with the chain of events. These data was used to create a global theory regarding the development of parent leadership, and how it appeared to act to create a culture of success (Merriam, 1998).

Phase Three: Direct Observation. As noted earlier the researcher completed a total of 7 direct observations: (a) one DELAC training meeting, (b) three DELAC Board planning meetings, and (c) three DELAC open meetings. The investigator observed the process surrounding parental engagement at the district based on the four key areas noted earlier: (1) engagement, (2) Applied Critical Leadership (3) decision making and (4)

social and intellectual capital. Observations were audio taped and field notes were collected to maintain a chain of events and reflections.

Reiterations of Each Phase

As the data was collected, it was analyzed and compared to the other data sources for alignment, or misalignment to predetermined themes. This approach, similar to grounded theory, called pattern matching (Yin, 2009) allowed the researcher to make adjustments in focus as different themes emerge. The first round of document analysis, interviews, and observations was followed by a second series of analysis, interviews and observations with a more refined focus based. This approach added a deeper level of validity to the findings (Saldaña 2009).

Data Analysis. The strategies used to analyze observations, interviews, and document data were described in this section. Qualitative data analysis involved preparing the data for analysis, analyzing data for deeper insight, determining how to represent data, and "...making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2003, p. 190). The process of data analysis was done in three concurrent flows as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994): (a) data reduction, (b) data display during the collection, and (c) conclusion drawing to explain the findings. Analysis required combining, and calculating the case data as a direct reflection of the initial study proposition (Yin, 2009). The intent of the initial analysis of the data was to establish common themes, patterns and ideas that aligned to the themes surrounding the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In addition, the researcher relied on theoretical proposition in order to focus attention on the right data and to increase the

level of internal validity (Yin, 2009). Tables 5-8 represent the propositions used in this study. These propositions are based on the literature presented in Chapter 2.

Table 5: Propositions: Codes and Themes from the Literature adapted from the work of Ferlazzo & Hammond (2009) on Parent Engagement

| |
|---|
| Values of the District/Educational Leaders |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are leaders • Parents are co-educators and experts • Parent energy drives the efforts • Recognition that more stakeholders have the power to make real decisions • School/District leaders elicit from parents what they (leaders) could be doing to better help their child and their community |
| Relationships |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are integral to identifying a vision and goals • Develop trusting relationships • Ideas emerge from parents and community needs and priorities • Staff learns what is important to parents through developing a relationship • School/District leaders are organizers who help parents do for themselves |
| Leadership Development |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are challenged to do something about what they feel is important to them • Perform the tasks that need to be achieved to reach the goals • Parents support students by developing parent relationships |
| Results |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents strengthening families • Parents improve local community • Partnerships are developed with local community agencies |

Table 6. Propositions of themes adopted from Epstein’s (2009) Type 5- Decision Making Parental Involvement

| |
|--|
| Parent Participation |
| School councils School committee Leadership representation |
| Parent Leaders |
| Partnership-Sharing view Taking action toward shared goals for excellent education and student success Not a power struggle |
| Results for Stakeholders |
| Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness that families’ views are represented in school decisions • Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and committees |
| Parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and input policies that affect children’s education • Development of participation and leadership skills in responsibilities for activities and in representation of other parents |
| Teachers and Administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of families’ perspective in policies and school decisions • Recognition of equality of family representatives on school committees |

Table 7. Propositions of themes adopted from Applied Critical Leadership Social Capital and Intellectual Capital Literature of Byrk & Schneider (2004) and Nahapiet & Ghoshal, (1997)

| |
|--|
| Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) |
| Liberation of traditionally oppressed groups Development of critical consciousness Restructures traditional relationships in learning communities Collective experiences of teacher and learning produced through meaningful dialogue |
| Social Capital |
| Trust Collaboration |
| Intellectual Capital |
| Creating New Knowledge Increased levels of knowledge of the group and individuals in the group |

According to leading researchers the technique that is most desirable to validate findings is pattern matching. Pattern matching requires the use of a rival theory to explain findings (Yin, 2009). It added an additional level of validity to this study. Table 8 demonstrates the rival theories that were used.

Table 8. Preposition of Rival Theory: Self Determination Theory of Niemiec, Ryan & Deci (2009)

| Self-Determination Theory |
|----------------------------------|
| Intrinsic aspiration |
| Personal growth |
| Extrinsic motivation |
| Social recognition |

Validity

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research should aim to find data that is valid, repeatable and correct. This study attempts to ensure trustworthiness and accuracy of findings by employing a number of validation techniques (Creswell & Clark, 2011). First, the investigator used member-checking; summarized findings were reviewed by participants to ensure accuracy (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Second, comparison of data from each of the multiple sources was supported by the emerging theories. Rival theories were also used to add a deeper level of internal validity to the study (Yin, 2009).

Positionality

The researcher was an administrator in the study district, which was a limitation as well as an advantage. Participants may have felt there was some risk of breach of privacy or data confidentiality; however, the researcher did not have a supervisory role in relation to any of the participants in this study. Furthermore, in order to mitigate any discomfort participants were reassured their responses would be kept confidential and nobody other than the researcher would have access to the data. Additionally, a pseudonym for the district was used to minimize risk of potential loss of confidentiality.

In order to limit potential bias, the researcher looked at multiple data sources such as interview data, documents, and student achievement data as well as conducted a member check with each participant once the investigator had done the initial analysis.

In addition, participants were informed of the specific steps that were taken by the researcher to ensure complete confidentiality, including creating a coding system for respondents and restricting access to the data collected. An advantage of working in the study district was the easy access to data and documents as well as the relationships already formed with district administrators and many parents.

Chapter Four: Qualitative Analysis and Results

This critical case study examined Latino parent participation through the lens of parent and district leaders in one highly successful district in order to identify the contributing factors mediating Latino parental engagement at the leadership level. Based on current research, there is a need to explore Latino parent leadership as a means of influencing Latino parent participation and student outcomes. This study explored whether parent leaders can serve as a catalyst for improving parent participation and assist towards, increasing student achievement.

Key bodies of literature used to frame the findings came from research in the area of parent participation and leadership including: (1) parent involvement and parent engagement, which served as the working definition for effective parent participation (2) parent decision making, provided another layer of description of effective parent leadership (3) Applied Critical Leadership (ACL), helped identify the possible presences of leaders that encouraged parent engagement to take shape in this district and (4) social and intellectual capital represented a valuable by product as parents became engaged and actively networked with other parents and leaders in this district.

District leaders that practiced the principles of ACL were selected as a best example for this study. These leaders appeared to make conscious efforts to eliminate barriers in their district so that Latino parents could more effectively participate in the school community. This study illuminates the factors and processes of how one district seemed to effectively improved Latino parent participation through their District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) using Applied Critical Leadership. Social

capital frameworks were applied to identify how parents, once engaged, may have become knowledgeable about their roles in the educational process and appeared to be moved to become change agents themselves. The approach suggested here demonstrates how parents who served on the DELAC committee were not only involved, they seemed to be engaged in decision making activities and served as a voice for other Latino parents of the district.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the data obtained by analyzing parent and district leader interviews. The chapter is organized based on significant results, the literature that supports the results and anecdotal quotes from the interviews collected. Thirteen key findings were identified through the data collection process that included (1) five foundational factors central to core attitudes about parent participation held by the leaders of the study district, (2) six supportive components initiated by district leaders that suggests the success of parent leaders, and (3) two developmental factors that appear to have emerged as a result of parental participation in DELAC. These factors and components seemed to work in tandem and provided an account of how parent leaders may have been created at South Lake Elementary School District (SLESD). These features build on one another and appear to work in concert to produce parent advocates who then transformed into change agents.

Participants

A total of six participants were interviewed one-on-one for this study. Participants were comprised of three parent leaders and three district leaders. Parent leaders consisted of the DELAC Chairperson, DELAC Vice Chairperson and the DELAC

Past Chairperson. District leaders included an executive director, the assistant superintendent, and the superintendent of the district. Figure 5 below outlines the demographic make-up represented by the participants.

| Parent Leader Make-Up | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Title | Vice Chair | Chair | Past Chair |
| Description | Female mother of 2 children | Male, father of one student | Female, mother of 2 |
| Cultural Background | Hispanic/Latino | South American raised in Germany | Hispanic/Latino |
| Years of Service in DELAC | One | Two | Three |

| District Leader Make-Up | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Title | Executive Director | Assistant Superintendent | Superintendent |
| Description | Female | Male | Male |
| Cultural Background | Latino | White | Latino |

Figure 5. Participant Demographics

Parent leader participants were made up of two females and one male.

Participants were selected because they represented parents from the Hispanic/Latino culture and were part of DELAC. Each of the parent participants had varying years of service and experience in DELAC. District leaders were made up of two males and one female. Two of the leaders were Latino one was White/Caucasian. The following section outlines the supportive and developmental factors revealed in this study that seemed to support parent leaders to move beyond involvement into engagement. This study along with current ACL research suggests that the cultural backgrounds of the

district leaders may have allowed them to see the parents' world differences in a positive way and thus, empowering them. The leadership style of district leaders was consistent with the attributes for Applied Critical Leadership framework which state that critical leaders because of their unique backgrounds and understanding of diverse groups employ multiple perspectives with equity at the base of their leadership style. There was one member from the district leadership group that did not share the same cultural background but who also appears to have used Applied Critical Leadership which may suggest that critical leaders do not have to come from diverse backgrounds in order to exercise Critical Race Theory.

Foundational Factors for Parents to Begin to Move Beyond Involvement to Engagement and Leadership

There were five foundational factors found that possibly contributed to parents moving beyond involvement into engagement. Based on the interviews and documents collected these foundational factors seemed to stem from positive attitudes surrounding parent participation held by district leaders. These core attitudes, which appeared to permeate throughout the system, were encouraging to the findings of this investigation given the limited amount of research supporting positive parent and school community relationships.

Centered on district and parent leader interview data, leaders of this district appeared to value and desire historically unengaged groups of parents to be heavily involved. The leaders of this district sought out and encouraged parent participation, and established a united sense of purpose between themselves and the parents. Additionally,

district leaders appeared to hold the belief that parents should be informed and knowledgeable in order to be equal partners in the decision making process. As such, the leaders of this district consistently provided resources and opportunities for parents to develop their working knowledge of the educational system. District leaders also held the belief that parents, could and should be empowered to teach and lead other parents.

Figure 6 outlines the interrelatedness of the factors discussed above. These factors appeared to be foundational to the development of parent leadership in this study district.

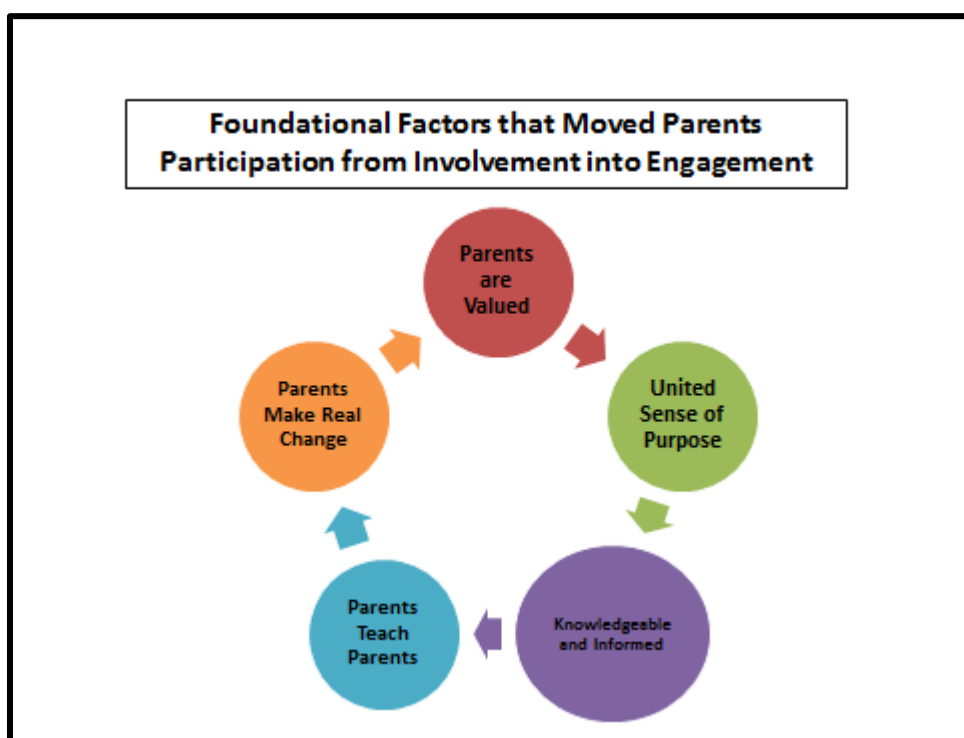


Figure 6. Foundational Factors that Encouraged Parent Engagement

Foundational Factor One: Parents are valued by the district. Previous empirical research on the topic of Latino parent participation posits that parents of diverse backgrounds are historically sent messages of disrespect from the school community. Parents in the studies presented in Chapter 2 reported feeling unwelcome

and claimed their participation was discouraged based on the negative beliefs held by their children's school. Research has found these discriminatory messages originate from the conscious and unconscious stereotypes about families from diverse cultures held by school personnel (Arias & Murillo-Campbell, 2008; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Ramirez, 2003; Valdes, 1996).

Prior research also reports Latino parents who wanted to be involved but were discriminated against moved to engage in activism as a means to defend their rights and challenge the school and teachers who did not show respect for their children and families' cultural and linguistic differences (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis, 2010).

In contrast, the research collected in this study revealed, parents felt the leaders of this district valued and respected them. Interview data from parents and district leaders discovered parents were listened to and motivated through their interactions with the district leaders. The inviting and respectful environment found in this study may have contributed to the supportive factor of feeling appreciated by the school district. Parents stated they were encouraged to contribute in the reform efforts of the district. This valuing effect led to the development of a mutual type of trusting relationship between parents and district leaders as evidenced by the comments of the DELAC chair who stated, "I feel valued because I have been asked to contribute in other areas". This sentiment is also illustrated in the following quote by the DELAC vice chair who said, "We see the district leaders' faces of satisfaction. They thank us for the work we do".

Desimone (2001), Epstein (1995) and Hill & Taylor (2004) suggest parent participation programs where parents feel welcomed and valued by schools are needed

but rarely found. According to these researchers these programs can produce parents that become involved as a means to enhance school related outcomes for children. This study suggests possible ways of developing such a program.

Foundational Factor Two: District and Parents Created a United Sense of Purpose. Research data in this study indicated the study district placed a great deal of emphasis on developing a united sense of purpose with the DELAC parent group at the beginning of each year. Based on data collected the creation of a united purpose arose from a need to support a good working relationship among district and parent leaders. The development of a united sense of purpose took shape during group development sessions where leaders and parents unpacked the districts' mission and vision statement, consensus building protocols and student based decision making protocol. This ensured all the decisions made by the partnership were done in the best interest of the students in the district with shared goals within a collaborative process. According to Epstein (1991) and Epstein's (2009) research, positive effects take place for all stakeholders if there is commitment from leaders that membership committees include parents and that leaders take action toward shared goals for excellent education with a focus on consensus and collaborative decision-making. The process by which the study district encouraged collaboration and partnership with parents to make decision together is further described by the executive director's comment below.

We give all of our DELAC parents a copy of the district vision, values, strategic goals and student based decision making protocol. In order to have parents really understand we unpack each one. We do this every year to make sure we are all on the same page speaking the same language. This is pretty much what drives every decision we make. Parents are in the best position to make the right decisions in the best interest of kids. Training parents all the time to ensure that we make

decisions based on the district values and vision, that is where we ultimately arrive.
Executive Director-SLESD

Collaborative development of shared goals, described above falls under what Epstein (1991) and Epstein (2009) describes as decision making involvement. According to Epstein (1991) and Epstein (2009) it represents partnerships of quality participation and shared leadership. The partnership of quality participation and shared leadership that seemed to exist within the study district serves to suggest that based on the parent participation continuum proposed by this study SLESD parents are working on the engagement level of the continuum.

Foundational Factor Three: Knowledgeable and Informed Parents. Much of the research surrounding Latino parent participation centers on parents' lack of knowledge of school practices as a significant barrier that limits and even prevents parents from participating in school. Lack of knowledge of school practices is partly the result of limited or uneven levels of parent education and cultural differences (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Hill & Taylor, 2004). Many researchers have found that in order for parents to be involved and or engaged in school, they must learn about and be supported in their expected roles in the school's organizational system. They must also learn how they can support school expectations at home (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Auerbach, 2009; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010; Chrispeels & Rivero 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Desimone, 2001; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Ramirez, 2003)

Building parent capacity around school practices and the educational system appeared to be essential to the work done in SLESD DELAC. Increasing the knowledge

of parents around educational areas seemed to be instrumental in improving their autonomy and leadership development. Trainings about the educational system enabled parents to make informed decisions. This research suggests parents became better informed and became more confident to advocate for improved student educational outcomes. This engagement seemed to impact their children's educational attainment and that of other children whose parents were not equally involved.

As stated by the executive director of SLESD, this process was facilitated by involving parents in regular training opportunities, such as state-wide conferences, and local developmental offerings on EL pedagogy provided by the district.

Sending parents to training allows them to build their leadership. We offer them opportunities to attend trainings and many parents take this opportunity and really attend. The CABE conference is huge for them because they get to network with parents across California and from other states. They learn new things that are coming up [in the educational field]. They want to learn. They want to know. These are very good opportunities for them to build their background knowledge of the most current practices and pedagogy about teaching English learners. In order to build [parent] leadership capacity anytime I see an opportunity I present it to them. That is in addition to the type of support that they get here at the district through me meeting with them or them receiving training from the home/school partnership program. The home/school partnership also helps me coordinate parent trainings to build parent leadership. The community liaison works with parents and provides a lot of support so [parents] are successful in their role.
Executive Director-SLESD

This study found that the lack of knowledge about the educational system barrier seems to be addressed and reversed in this district by providing parents the opportunity to attend a variety of trainings and conferences in order to learn about their roles, educational system and English learner pedagogy.

Foundational Factor Four: Parents Teach and Lead Parents. As evidenced by the data collected parent leaders built their capacity, and in turn supported the learning of other parents in the district. Parents teaching parents seemed to be a core expectation at SLESD. As such, DELAC parent leaders planned and conducted trainings for other parents in a variety of areas. Data also uncovered parent leaders seemed to rise to the challenge of teaching other parents because they had acquired the knowledge and abilities to effectively share information and tools to help other parents support their children academically. Parent leaders also reported they confidently coached one another in the process of providing training for other parents and felt they could easily share information due to the experiences learned as being part of DELAC. This study then may suggest that parents in this district became knowledge brokers for other parents because they were able to build their capacity in their knowledge of the educational system and were empowered to share the knowledge they learned with other parents. This communication and sharing of information appeared to drive parent participation in the DELAC program into further levels of engagement. Below are examples of the existence of this sharing of knowledge and information.

Yo a veces les digo: Oigan, ¿Sabían que va a ver esto? ¿Oigan saben qué? El distrito está ofreciendo esto. O saben que voy a ir a una capacitación, ¿les interesa? Es una manera en que vas involucrando a los papas.
 Translation: I sometimes will say: Listen, did you know that this is happening? You know what? The district is offering this [training]. Listen, this was discussed. Or, you know, I will be attending this training, are you interested? This is a way I involve parents.
 DELAC Past Chair SLESD

We want parents to teach other parents. The past chair stays on one more year to support the rest of the committee. They serve as mentors.
 Superintendent SLESD

Empirical research on parental knowledge broker has been well documented with parental training programs such as the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). The difference between PIQE and MALDEF with the training parents encountered at SLESD is that PIQE and MALDEF grew out of a movement started by parents who stood up for a quality education for their children because they were not supported by the school community (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2010). This study suggests there are alternative purposes and avenues for developing knowledge brokers within Latino participation.

Foundational Factor Five: Parents Made Real Changes. Data indicated parents made real change occur within the study district. Evidence from DELAC minutes indicated parent leaders were instrumental in changing the reclassification process of the district in order to improve educational outcomes for English learners. Parents in this study appeared to learn they could take action and make a real difference. They gained the confidence of knowing what was going on in the district and with English learners to provide an opinion and a voice for improvement efforts. Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) and Epstein (1998) explain the higher the parents' sense of efficacy the more inclined they will be to get involved in leadership roles in order to improve school effectiveness and student achievement. It appears that the district leaders' high expectations of parents seemed to inspire them to become fully engaged leaders, and participate in making real

change. Evidence of the “parents teach parents” expectation can be interpreted by the statement below from the superintendent.

I expect parents to create the agenda. It is their meeting and they should communicate. It is expected that they make decisions. It is almost second nature to them. I had them help select the next school board member. I met with the group. They created a profile of what they wanted. The Chairs participated in the interview process. This is the way we do things.
Superintendent SLESD

Evidence suggests these foundational factors appeared to be a result of the positive attitudes about parent participation held by the leaders of the district. These supportive attitudes seemed to manifest themselves into actions that seemed to positively support the growth of participation in this district. The attitudes of the leaders of this district appear to fall in line with the research of Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press).

Applied Critical leadership is defined as a type of educational leadership that promotes social justice. This promotion of social justice can be attributed to the district leaders of SLESD based on the findings revealed about how their core attitudes surrounding parent participation may have led to action that supported parents in their leadership role. Leaders that use Applied Critical Leadership, according to Santamaria & Santamaria (2010) and Santamaria (in press) employ multiple perspectives with equity at the base of their leadership style because of their unique backgrounds and or understanding of diverse groups. As stated previously, the cultural background of most of the leaders in this district was similar to the group they worked with. All participants seemed to act in similar fashion because they all supported the critical pedagogical spirit of the district. For these reasons, ACL can explain how foundational factors enhanced

parent participation in this district. ACL can further serve to add to the dearth of research on educational leaders that use a Critical Race Theory lens to positively support Latino participation in the school community. Based on data collected for this study, leaders in this district demonstrated a genuine respect for the parent voice and were committed to engaging them to become equal partners in the work of the district. From the analysis, it can be suggested that Applied Critical Leadership was a driving force and theory in use in this successful district that gave rise to a highly engaged parent committee. The next section outlines the changes in policy, procedures and structures that made up components that seemed to support parents leaders involved in DELAC.

Components that Supported Parent Leaders who Become Involved in DELAC

There were six components found that supported parent leaders to become involved in DELAC in this study district. The following table illustrates the supportive components uncovered in this study. As stated earlier, these supportive components can be described as actions and responses that helped aligned the foundational factors with the positive attitudes the district leaders held about parent participation. The result of these actions was change in policies and structures which appeared to make way for this parent group to interact differently. These changes also seemed to impact the participation and evolution of parent leaders in this district. Table 9 identifies the policies, structures, and procedures that changed as evidenced by the data. Literature supporting these findings can be described by the work of Barton, Drake, Peña and St. Louis & George (2004) who established that parents, once involved interact with their resources to create a space for membership to thrive and grow. The changes in

structures, policies and procedures were found to have changed as a result of the district leaders' positive attitudes about parental leadership that gave rise to a higher level of parent participation.

Table 9. Six Components Shown to Support Parent Leader Success

Six Components that Support the success of Parent Leaders Participating in DELAC

DELAC Officers: A Three Year Commitment

Chairperson runs the District English Learner Advisory Meetings

Planning Meetings between Parents and District Leaders

District Translator

Capacity Building of Parent Leaders

Trainings

Supportive Component One: DELAC Officers: A Three Year Commitment.

The first and most outstanding supportive component found was the intensity of the responsibilities of the officers. Parent leaders served on the committee for a total of three years. They began as vice chairpersons who shadowed the chairperson for one school year. In their second year of service, they moved on to the chairperson position. The chairperson's central duty involved running DELAC meetings. In year three, the chairperson moved into the past chair position where they served primarily as a mentor for the chairperson and vice chairperson. This structure seemed to encourage parents to support one another and appeared to facilitate the creation of collaborative relationships among parent leaders. The following figure displays the roles and responsibilities of the officers within their three years of service. Currently, there is minimal research that speaks to the commitment experienced by Latino parents within parent participation. Only two examples in parent participation research literature speaks to the intensity of commitment of parents which included the studies of El Comité de Padres Latinos (COPLA) and La Familia, discussed in Chapter 2. In both of these examples parents

came together to help improve the education of their children and eliminate discrimination (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Once again, this was different from SLESD DELAC because the parents in this study appeared to have been encouraged and invited to participate by the school community. Parents from COPLA and La Familia devoted hours of their time to the group as did the parents of this study. This finding revealed that parents can be motivated to participate and become fully engaged under a variety of circumstances.

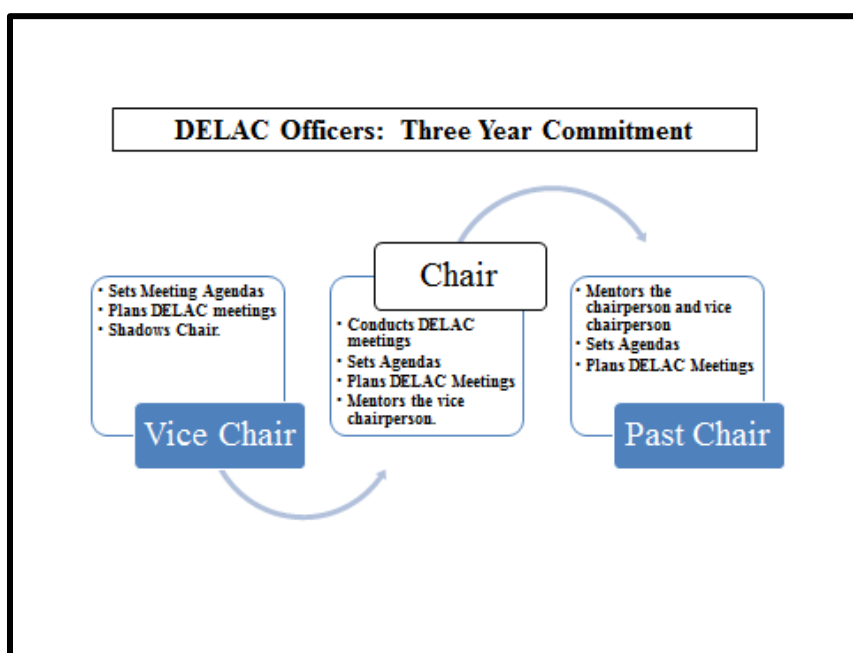


Figure 7. DELAC Officers' Primary Roles and Responsibilities

Supportive Component Two: The Chairperson Runs DELAC Meetings.

Parental engagement research shows that engaged parents are considered leaders or potential leaders that are integral to identifying a vision and goals for the schools and districts they serve. According to the research literature on parent participation, such parents are encouraged and helped to perform the tasks that need to be achieved to reach

those goals (Ferralazzo & Hammond, 2009). Parents in this investigation seemed to be consistently engaged through their length of service, and were given a great deal of responsibility for organizing the content and process of activities in the district. Parents were expected to run district level meetings at SLESD. This supportive component attests to the level of trust this district had for its parents. The chairperson of the committee ran the meetings with support to ensure they were successful. The executive director viewed this as an important supportive component to building parental leadership skills.

[Parents] grow in their leadership skills. They are more confident. I see this when I witness them preside over the DAC/DELAC meeting. They carry themselves with pride and confidence. Executive Director-SLESD

Figure 8 demonstrates the make-up of a DELAC meeting. Attendance at DELAC was comprised of the governing board, audience, support staff and guest speakers. The audience was made up by a principal, associated principal and one ELAC representative from each school. The governing board presided over the meetings however, it was the chair who led meetings. Meetings were directed using Robert's Rules of Order and lasted approximately two hours. There were a total of eight meetings per year and district leaders participation was limited to giving update reports about their respective work. District leaders did not interfere or direct meetings. Instead they worked behind the scenes as supports.

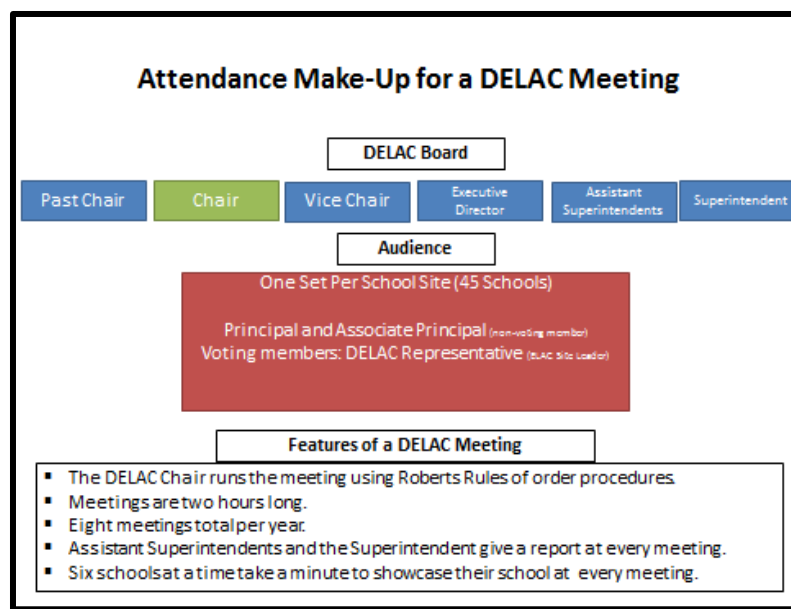


Figure 8. DELAC Meeting Attendance Make-Up

Supportive Component Three: Regular Planning Meetings with Parent and District Leaders.

In order to run effective district level meetings, parent leaders were involved in planning and preparation beforehand. Informal planning meetings were conducted in partnership with district leaders. Parent and district leaders met regularly to set the agenda and prepare for DELAC meetings. The chairperson was in charge of running agenda planning meetings. Meeting topics were found to be generated through discussion of issues brought up by parents and surveys collected throughout the year. This planning meeting practice was consistent with what Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) described as engaged parental participation is that the ideas for meetings are elicited from parents and from what emerges from community needs and priorities. Research also supports parent energy drives the efforts in engaged parent participation. This seemed to be the case at SLESD.

Supportive Component Four: District Translator. Ramirez (2003) examined the negative effects of limited language proficiency and the poor response by school officials in providing translation of critical materials for parents. The language barrier that exist between linguistically and culturally diverse groups and the school community has been documented to be the leading barrier to Latino parent challenges preventing them from properly participating and engaging in their children's education. As such, the district translator in this study seemed to play a very important role in increasing the engagement of the parents. The district employed a full time translator to serve as a support for parent leaders and parents attending DELAC meetings. All trainings and meetings at SLESD offered translation services for parents. For many, the translator was their voice because meetings were conducted in English. He/she was instrumental in translating meetings and trainings for parents. He/she worked closely with DELAC officers and helped them prepare for meetings and trainings. He/she was part of the agenda planning meetings. He/she also helped the chair write and rehearse what they were going to say during district meetings. The district translator appeared to serve as a cultural broker for parents as they navigated through their three year commitment. Parents rehearsed meeting procedures with him/her and created written scripts ahead of time in order for parents to be successful when conducting meetings.

Supportive Component Five: Capacity Building of Parent Leaders. District leaders utilized resources and funding to provide parents with training so that they would be better equipped to conduct their duties and responsibilities. Many dollars and time was spent providing parents training in a variety of areas. This training appeared to help them become equal partners and execute their roles and responsibilities as DELAC leaders.

Parents in this study reported that trainings were very important to parents because they gave them the confidence to perform their jobs well. The executive director of the district explains how and why this was done. The theme of training came up several times throughout this study. Latino parent training also appears within current parent participation research as a best practice for increasing social and intellectual capital among parents in order to enhance parent participation (Hoover-Dempsey and Sadler, 1997; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

I feel my role is to build parents' capacity as parent leaders so that they can go back to their schools sites and build capacity and support leadership at their school in order to improve learning and achievement for English learners. We build their capacity by providing trainings for [parents] at the district office or sending them to trainings.
Executive Director-SLESD

Supportive Component Six: Trainings. Trainings at SLESD were conducted in a variety of areas. Parents were trained in consensus building and the student based decision-making protocol used throughout the district. Parents were trained in understanding the district vision and mission and developed group norms. In addition, parents were also trained in the use of Roberts Rules of Order and worked with district personnel to create scripts and sentence frames to help them direct district meetings. Parents also attended the California Association of Bilingual Educators conference and were sent to trainings offered around the county. The district invested many hours and dedicated resources to develop parents who were informed and knowledgeable. At the end of their three year of tenure, parents would have attended hundreds of hours of training in a variety of areas. The information gained by parents was shared amongst other parent leaders and parents of the district. Based on the results of interviews and

observations both district leaders and parents identified the importance of having consistent and focused trainings on issues that directly affected their leadership roles. This component seemed to help parents understand the culture of the district and appeared to be instrumental in transforming parents from involved participants to leaders themselves.

Parents in this study seemed to enhance their understanding about how they fit within the school culture and what they would be expected to do as part of the home/school connection (Barton, Drake, Peña, and St. Louis & George, 2004). Parents seemed to develop an understanding of the value and importance of participating in school improvement. The following section will discuss developmental factors that appear to have emerged to allow parents to become actively engaged in the school community through the DELAC. Data uncovered two unexpected developmental factors that seemed to tie to the Ecologies of Parental Engagement Framework. Ecologies of Parental Engagement (Barton et al, 2004) were originally included in this study to serve as a rival theory (see Chapter 1, 2 and 4). However, evidence revealed, EPE did not support an alternate theory for the movement of parents into higher levels of the continuum but it appears to have existed *in addition to* the theories presented. This seems to be primarily due to the relational phenomenon characterized by the EPE framework that appeared to develop as a result of the interplay between foundational factors and supportive components working together in a caring environment.

Developmental Factors that Supported the Development of Parental Applied Critical Leadership

Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) a theoretical framework seems to be in place at this district because the EPE framework helps to explain how parents made sense of their roles as participants and contributors after receiving training and reaching an understanding of the expectations of their roles as critical leaders.

Data analyzed suggested the existence of two developmental factors that seemed to enable parents to become actively engaged in their school community through a DELAC. As parents acquired knowledge and worked together with other parents along with district leaders they seemed to change. First, parents created a constant and varied communication and collaboration network amongst themselves. Second, the experience and knowledge they gained through trainings appeared to allow them to transform into change agents and advocates for students, and other parents. Figure 9 is a diagram proposing how developmental factors may have surfaced and effected parent engagement. Again it is important to note the developmental factors appear to have resulted by the intersection of foundational factors and supportive components impacted by EPE.

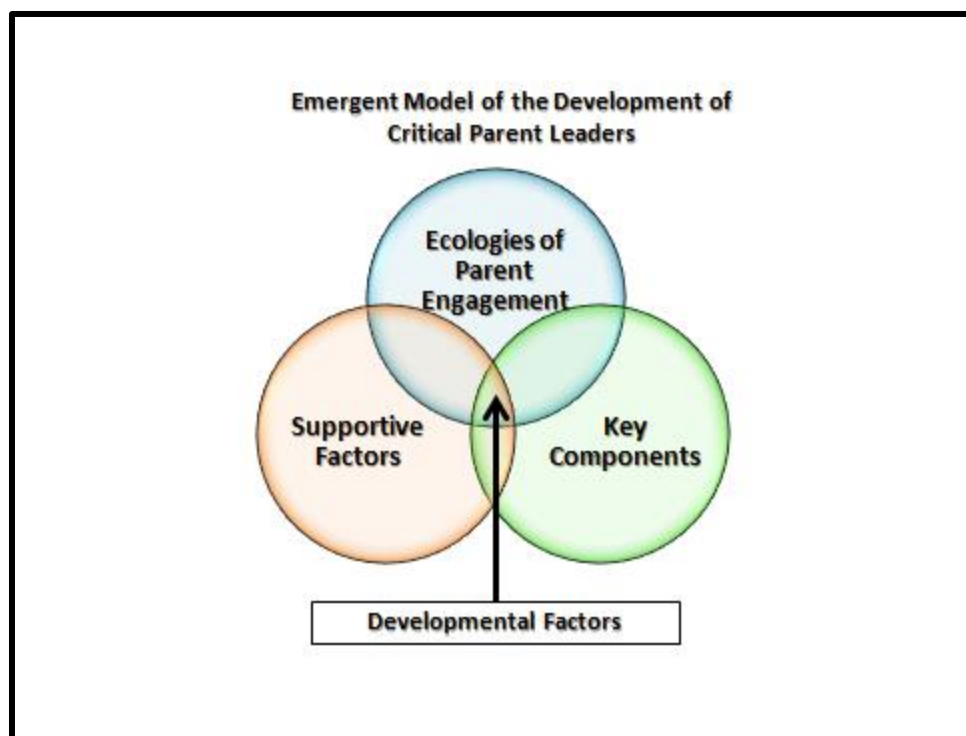


Figure 9. Factors that Developed Applied Critical Leadership

Developmental Factor One: Communication Network. Data from interviews stated that parents participating in DELAC seemed to be in constant contact with one another. They emailed to stay connected and many built lasting relationships as a result. Parent leaders attested to meeting outside district sponsored meetings *by choice* to continue their work. These meetings appeared to help parents collaborate on ideas and make recommendations for the district. Structures created in this organization seemed to help people interact among each other, and have opportunities to build relationships and establish trust. This group of people appears to trust each other and had opportunities to collaborate not only within their own parent group, but with other leadership groups. The knowledge generated seemed to enable people to act in new ways and thus, transform. The following statement speaks to the type of communication experienced in this district.

Primero nos reunimos entre presidentes y los vicepresidentes y presidentes pasados. Entonces con la experiencia de los pasados, nos aconsejan a los presidentes actuales. Una vez que nos pusimos de acuerdo en nuestra junta antes de la junta regular. Entonces nosotros hacemos de manifiesto al distrito lo que estamos escuchando de los padres y somos la voz de los padres ante el distrito.

Translation: First, we get together as the chair, vice chair and past chair. Then with the experience of the past chair we give advice to the current chair. We find consensus during a pre meeting. Then, we all share with the district what we are hearing from parents and become the voice of the parents before the district. DELAC Past Chair SLESD

Based on the data collected it appears that parents serving in DELAC did in fact create a space of their own with the support of the district. Data from this study revealed parents began to leverage resources to conduct their work. It is important to note that EPE appears to evolve from a relational phenomenon that can explain improved parent engagement. Activity networks, space and social capital seemed to play a crucial role in the success of the group. This study can further inform work focused on new ways of conceptualizing parental engagement, one that frames parents as both authors and agents in school (Barton, Drake, Peña, and St. Louis & George 2004). EPE redefines parental engagement as a dynamic interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to determine their interaction with schools and among school actors (Barton et al., 2004). EPE appears to be an anchor that grounds the results of this study around the supportive components that transformed participation into engagement and beyond. EPE can also account for the creation of ownership and a higher level of parental contributions to organizational change in this district.

Developmental Factor Two: Parents Transformed. The coming together of foundational factors supportive components and the first developmental factor appeared to create a pathway for parents to transform into critical leaders themselves. Parents in this study seemed to gain an honest belief that involvement works and appeared to be moved by their experience to actively pursue advocacy in other areas. Parents seemed to become confident and courageous leaders as described below by the assistant superintendent of SLESD. This developmental factor was unexpected yet significant because it suggests that parent leaders that went through the SLESD DELAC transformed into critical parent leaders as a result.

One person went on to become an active board member in CAFE regional because she was a DELAC person. Some else went on to become the council president for PTA because she was a DAC chair. One DELAC leader is now advocating at the high school level and even ran for school board. This person had the confidence and took the necessary steps to go through the process. They developed their leadership skills for the programs they serve and became great advocates. We are very proud of our success.

Assistant Superintendent-SLESD

After their service with DELAC parent leaders went on to hold top level leadership positions of their own. Parents appeared to act like critical leaders in that they consciously selected change as their preferred leadership style.

The figure below proposes how the foundational factors, supportive components and developmental factors found in this study may have come together to create an evolved parent leader. The need to feel valued and respected in order to fully empower and engage parents as leaders seems to be central to the success of this district's parent participation program. Figure 10 is an integrated model that suggests the elemental aspects of the data that appeared to be found in this successful district. It demonstrates

how the foundational factors emerging from the data appeared to make way for the leaders to take action in supportive components and how those two elements seemed to give rise to the developmental factors that lead to the development of parents as critical leaders. This idea adds to the literature on Applied Critical Leadership to encompass the notion that parents can also become key players in leadership and can in fact serve as advocates and change agents for the many Latino parents not *yet* participating in their children's education.

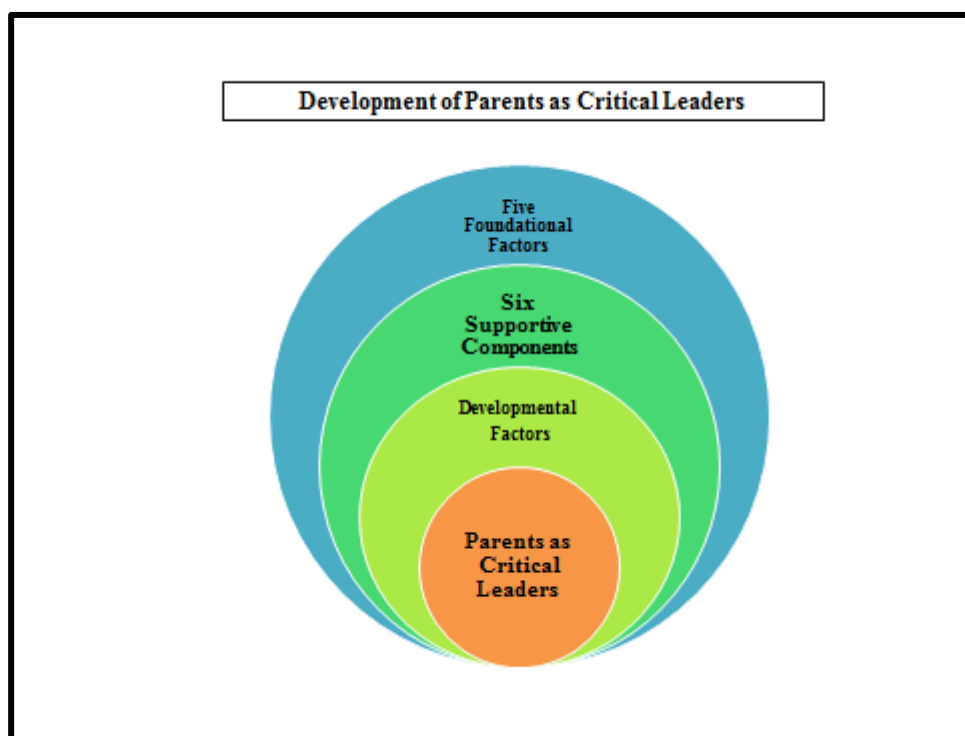


Figure 10. Characteristics Involved in the Development of a Parental Critical Leader

Summary of the Findings

The data of this study revealed the processes and results of high levels of parental engagement. The processes showed it was through the invitation of their site principals that supported parents to begin their journey towards effective, Applied Critical

Leadership. Encouragement and support by site leaders to participate in the school's English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) and continual opportunity for personal growth in both language skills and knowledge of school structures were provided. As these budding parent leaders began to understand the unique needs of English learners through their participation in trainings on the subject, their involvement and passion to serve seemed to increase. These parent leaders moved on to become leaders at the district level and continued to be supported and encouraged by the leaders with whom they worked. They met and interacted with other parent leaders and began to collaborate and build a network that seemed to enable them to grow into engaged leaders. These parents appeared to transform and began to see themselves as a voice for parents in the district and took action on behalf of the group. The evolutionary process outlined in this chapter appears to demonstrate the process of how parents can move along a continuum from volunteers, to participants to local leaders, to courageous critical leaders. The following chapter offers a discussion of the findings and suggestions for practice and policy as well as suggestions for future research. By placing these findings within the greater body of research this study can assist schools and districts in their efforts to develop effective Latino parental engagement.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

The research conducted in this study was intended to identify ways that provide avenues for Latino parents to enter into leadership roles where they have a voice that can bring about change within their school district. This research tested the hypothesis that engaged Latino parents can have a transformative and beneficial effect on a school culture and student achievement through the examination of strategies and polices used by one successful District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC). This chapter begins with a brief summary of the problem, the methodology, and the findings followed by conclusions, recommendations and closing remarks

Summary of the Problem

Various studies report that parent participation is a critical yet often missing element that greatly impacts student success or failure in school (Fan & Chen, 2001). One reason for limited parent participation is that many parents; especially Hispanic/Latino parents are unaware of the power they hold regarding their children's education. Many face cultural, socioeconomic and logistical barriers that keep them from volunteering at their children's school. Because of this, Hispanic/Latino parents do not establish collaborative relationships with the school and thus are not able to fully support their children's educational outcomes (Ramirez, 2003).

Summary of Methodology. Previous research on Latino parent participation focuses mostly on the barriers preventing Latino parents from becoming involved in the school community. A number of studies have examined the question of what works to improve Latino parent participation by eliminating barriers so parents understand how to

expand their conceptual understanding of participation in their children's education at home and at school (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Fewer studies have focused on the level of participation and parental leadership possibilities that can support the success of parents and students who speak languages other than English. Research in the area of Latino parent leadership requires greater attention if we are to find real solutions to the problems affecting our Latino student body. This research utilized a strengths based approach, focusing on one successful district's program of engaging Latino parent leaders in order to uncover the foundational factors that drove Latino parental engagement. The summary of the findings presented here is divided into three sections based on the primary research questions.

Summary of Findings

Findings from this study revealed five foundational factors, six supportive components and two developmental factors that appeared to move parents from involvement to engagement (see Table 10). Each of these related specifically to the processes, structures and positive attitudes that seem to be present at this district in order to ensure full engagement of Latino parents.

Table 10. Emergent Framework for Successful Latino Parent Engagement

| |
|---|
| Five Foundational Factors |
| Parents Felt Valued by the District |
| United Sense of Purpose |
| Parents are Knowledgeable and Informed |
| Parents Teach Other Parents |
| Parents Felt they were Making Real Change |
| Six Supportive Components |
| DELAC Officers: A Three Year Commitment |
| Chairperson runs the District English Learner Advisory Meetings |
| Planning Meetings between Parents and District Leaders |
| District Translator |
| Capacity Building of Parent Leaders |
| Trainings |
| Two Developmental Factors |
| Communication Network |
| Parents Transform |

Research Question 1. Factors that Influenced Engagement. The first research question was intended to address what influenced parental engagement in DELAC. Although this question was the first of the three, in some ways it represents the most complex and most emergent findings from the data analysis presented in Chapter 4. These developmental factors were unexpected outcomes that appeared to emerge naturally among parents as a result of participation in DELAC. The first developmental factor was the creation of a communication system between parent leaders and other parents that seemed to take a life of its own outside the realm of DELAC. As parents gained knowledge, collaborated with each other, and became more and more involved in DELAC, they began participating in a varied and constant communication network. This communication network utilized numerous outlets, both formal and informal and existed

on a personal level where parents met in coffee shops or people's homes to discuss and extend the ideas they learned. This communication also existed online. Parents regularly communicated over email and Facebook to discuss and share ideas. As parents were exposed to new ideas through participation in different conferences, discussions with presenters and new leadership situations, they appeared to become knowledge brokers for the rest of the parents within the communication network.

This communication allowed parents an opportunity to share their knowledge and support other Latino parents on how to advocate for their children. The communication link seemed to lead to direct and effective action on the part of other informed parents. For example, parent leaders who were part of the communication network began to support the parents of English learners whose children were referred to special education. These parents also began a discussion about how they could fit into the change structure of the district, and develop partnerships with the district to be able to support English learners in the transition required for the statewide adoption of the Common Core. These parents would not have known to ask such sophisticated question had they not been a part of the network of knowledge.

The other emergent developmental factor within these highly engaged leaders related to the discovery that these parent leaders transferred their leadership in other areas of their personal and professional lives. As an example of this, several parents who participated in the communication network went on to run and earn leadership positions for other organizations. Had these parents not participated in DELAC they would not have had the opportunity to attend the conferences and know that they were capable of

and could take on leadership roles in other areas. The parents in this group were sent to conferences and were provided trainings every year. This critically underscores the importance of training opportunities as a central and pivotal factor in informing the communication network and providing the foundation for active engagement in timely issues for school districts. The important role of the district in providing structures for the successful engagement of parents leads us to the second research question. It was through these components of support that parents appeared to extend what they learned with their experiences in DELAC and shared their knowledge and leadership skills across educational realms as agents of change.

Research Question 2: Six Components of Support. The second research question proposed was intended to identify the components that supported parent leaders. The interviews with parents and district leaders identified six supportive components that fell within two major areas. These structural and procedural changes were non-conventional and allowed the parent leaders to act in new and different ways. Thus, parents appeared to become the drivers of the DELAC committee.

The supportive components can be divided into the areas of expectations and supports. The positive attitudes held by the district leaders gave rise to foundational factors that seemed to influence the creation of high parent expectations. These expectations included a three year commitment to the organization and running of the DELAC committee, such as having parents preside over the meetings as well as provide parent trainings. These high expectations were buttressed by district support in particular thorough regular planning meetings and a translator to provide support to help parents reach their expectations. District leaders instituted regular meetings with parents to help

them prepare the agenda and review the content that would be covered at DELAC meetings. Parents also had the translator translate during meetings to ensure understanding of concepts and educational terms. The translator worked with the chairperson to create the necessary scaffolds to facilitate communication during meetings. For some chairs it meant translating for the audience everything they said in Spanish to English. For other parents it may have been practicing what was going to be said in English and scripting it out in order to gain confidence in presentations. Other supports uncovered in this study in the area of personal communication allowed parents to openly share and execute their expectations. Communication style supports were delivered via focused trainings and built communication and organizational capacity. Trainings ranged from Robert's Rules of Order and consensus building to building capacity around the mission and vision of the district and the English Learner Master Plan. This district devoted many hours of personnel support and financial backing to empower parents, demonstrating how important parents were to this district. Although this was the second of three questions the findings suggested that this question is a result of the five foundational factors. In other words, the components and supports revealed in question 2 were a result of the foundational factors discussed in research question 3.

Research Question 3. Beyond Involvement to Engagement. The third research question focused on the process by which parent involvement evolved to parent engagement. The findings of this question suggest the existence of an evolutionary process encompassing five foundational factors. This process seems to be driven by the positive attitudes surrounding parent participation held by the district and actions of the district leaders that aligned these attitudes. These attitudes and actions seemed to build

on one another and propelled parents to move along the participation continuum into higher levels of engagement. These five foundational factors could be viewed as a dual approach of the attitudes and actions district leaders seemed to consciously exercise to affect parent outcomes. First and foremost, a critical mass of the district behaved in ways that showed they valued Latino parents. The district leaders wholeheartedly believed in and were committed to this group. They respected them as an equal partner in educational reform. Next, district leaders brought parents in and created a united sense of purpose based on what they all viewed as best for students and to support the sharing of power and ideas. Developing a unified purpose required time, training and collaboration with parents. It was an action that seemed to be driven by the needs of the group, which greatly benefited the partnership of the committee. Next, district leaders systematically and regularly provided training for parents so they could become informed and knowledgeable in relation to English learner issues and pedagogy, the educational system and district culture.

Another foundational factor discovered is that district leaders found it essential that parents teach other parents what they learned from trainings. This parents teaching parents belief turned into action in this district which then led to positive outcomes for parent leaders. The last component of these findings was a transformational outcome for parents. Parents felt they could and were making real change. The parental awareness of decision making power can be explained because these valued parents who became informed and empowered to teach other parents were given the autonomy to make decision based on what they learned and what was best for students. This process is supported by Epstein (1991) work in the following way. Parents were considered leaders

(or potential leaders) who were integral to identifying the vision and goals. Parents were encouraged by others to contribute their own vision to the big picture and to help perform the tasks that need to be achieved to reach goals. Ideas were elicited from parents by school staff in the context of developing trusting relationships. These ideas emerged from parent/community needs and priorities. Energy to accomplish goals was a result of parent empowerment and as Epstein (1991) notes in her research; more parent energy drove the efforts.

A district or school wanting to implement this system should consider having similar high expectations for parents. One expectation is that parents run the ELAC/DELAC committee and teach other parents by sharing their knowledge and information about best practices for English learners, state, federal guidelines and how that relates to the educational system. For SLESD the sharing of power set in motion parent outcomes that supported making real change in the district.

The conceptual framework presented in Chapters 1 and 2 was based on the theories found in the research literature used to frame the study. As it turns out, the model appears to be supported by the findings in this study with a few enhancements and additions. Beginning on the left hand side the model is supported by the theories held by Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) and Epstein (1991) (see figure 11). These theories were applied to make a case for involvement and engagement to be placed on a developmental continuum of parent participation rather than refer to involvement and engagement as interchangeable terms. The research literature shows that engaged parents act and function differently than involved ones. As seen in the model below the proposed

continuum runs from left to right and places engagement as an evolved version of parent participation.

Next, the research suggested that district leaders who used ACL were the linchpins that allowed Latino parents to not only break through barriers but take on leadership roles in one district as seen at the top of the figure 11 below. These leaders can be referred to as critical leaders, based on the characteristics they exhibited and how their transformation related to Santamaría & Santamaría's framework (2010) and Santamaría (in press). These critical leaders held positive attitudes about parent participation and consciously applied non-conventional forms of participation to effect change. They also made bold decisions for their schools and or school district to support diverse parents in their leadership endeavors. Data revealed these leaders could be credited for moving parents along the continuum by encouraging them and supporting them to reach higher levels of leadership. Most of the district leaders shared the same or similar cultural backgrounds as parent leaders so they had unique perspectives of what these parents needed to become empowered and succeed as leaders. The district leaders that did not share all the same perspectives or attitudes as others fell in line with those that did because of the culture that appeared to have been created within the district around parent participation.

Furthermore, as parents began to move into higher levels of involvement due to their experiences they understood that higher levels of involvement could propel them to become intricately involved in implementing change for the district's school community. The non-conventional forms of parent participation enlisted by the district critical leaders

brought parents together and allowed them to create a nurturing space where they developed social and intellectual capital. This phenomenon can be described using Barton et al., (2004) and Peña (2010) Ecologies of Parental Engagement. EPE speaks to the shift parents went through in realizing what being involved means. Parents appeared to have created a space for this involvement to continue to flourish. As seen in the figure 11 below EPE can be seen as the additional motivation experienced by parents that caused them to be involved and eventually move into becoming engaged.

Finally, parents seemed to also move into higher levels of engagement through collaboration with the district, and with each other. Data revealed social and intellectual capital appeared to increase and support parents to move into higher levels of engagement. This movement was further facilitated through the participation in trainings and as parents performed their duties and responsibilities as DELAC leader. This study suggests that once parents moved into more engagement levels of participation they became critical partners that shared in the decision-making of the district.

The developmental model that this study suggests includes the following processes. First, parents became involved in support of their own children. Through training and collaboration they acquired an early awareness of engagement. It is this early awareness that appeared to propel them to become more involved and hence move into higher levels of engagement. Critical district leaders were instrumental in creating a nurturing environment or foundation that encouraged the leadership process to evolve within parents. The foundational factors and supportive components seemed to work in tandem and encouraged parents to create a varied and constant communication network

among themselves. This well connected network appears to provide knowledge and information to flow to both the parents on the committee and other Latino parents within the district.

Figure 11 shows the relationship between the literature and the process of parental participation evolution beginning at the stage of volunteerism and developing into an effective communication network. Through the generation of social capital, which was further advanced into intellectual capital, parents appeared to become effective critical leaders.

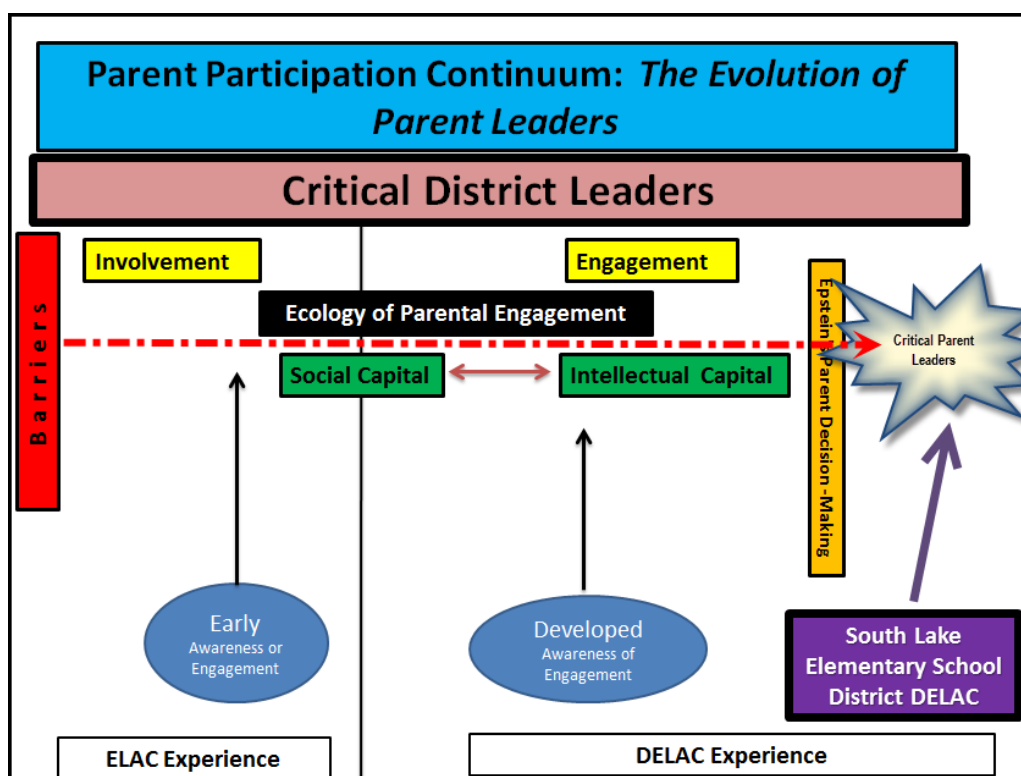


Figure 11. Refined Conceptual Model of the Evolution of Parent Leaders

Figure 11 shows the proposed emergence of parent leaders through each of the theoretical and resultant models from this study. This district DELAC seems to represent

a thoroughly advanced example of how to move parents through the process of initial participation into full engagement and eventually transformation into effective parent leaders.

Conclusions

The findings presented in this study support the coming together of a critical framework producing an effective self-learning communication network to create effective parent leaders. Each of the supportive components of this model appears to give rise to the other ending in the transformation of parents to critical leaders. This transformation can be explained by the existence of high levels of trust in an organization, a committee or school district. The generation of knowledge and strategies for fully engaging parents as a means of serving the students can lead to greater student achievement (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). This study also suggests that in order for groups to create intellectual capital there must be opportunities for valuable interaction, people must be motivated to participate, and the new knowledge or information must be synthesized and used (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This is where the communication network described in this study was critical.

Researchers posit that many parents do not have the time, or the background knowledge to actively become engaged in typical forms of parent involvement. However, despite the barriers, the parents involved in this study found ways to participate in their school decision making processes, emerging as powerful change agents. They understood the importance of sustainable change and stepped up to ensure that the Applied Critical Leadership process would be an integral part of the functioning of the

school and the district. So, the gavel of Applied Critical Leadership was handed on to others and consistently supported with current professional development of issues affecting the children of the district. One must ask, why not instead of trying to increase the *number* of parents that are involved, we nurture the ones that are already in the system to become the voice of many? Ironically, this study revealed by focusing on developing the skills and competencies of the few DELAC leaders the district had in fact increased the amount of total parents involved in decision making because parent leaders shared and gathered information with parents not traditionally involved.

This study explored whether parent leaders can serve as a catalyst for improving parent involvement and thus, increasing student achievement. What was found is that parents began volunteering to support their own children through the invitation of their site principals. These parents were encouraged and supported by site leaders to participate in the school's English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC). As parents began to understand the unique needs of English learners through their participation in trainings, their involvement and passion to serve appeared to increase. These parent leaders moved on to become leaders at the district level and were continually supported and encouraged. They met other parent leaders and began to collaborate and build a communication network that enables them to grow and change. Based on the interviews collected parents appeared to begin to see themselves as a voice for parents of the district; they represented and shared in the decisions made for this group.

Empirical research posits that leaders who apply critical leadership and who have an understanding of diverse groups employ multiple perspectives with equity at the base of their leadership style (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press). This

study suggests that parents who apply critical leadership may more intimately understand the diversity within their own group, and given the trust and decision making power they share with district level leaders, they may employ exponential perspectives with equity. These parents then can truly become the best advocates for children and more importantly other Latino parents. In other words, it is not the quantity of parents districts should target but possibly invest efforts in parents who are already involved or engaged that may have greatest pay off. Parental critical leaders may then advocate for the type of training and support they feel will best meet the needs of different groups of parents.

Leaders who apply critical leadership are unique in that they purposefully choose *change* to achieve educational equity within their educational environments (Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, in press). Perhaps when we help to develop parents as critical leaders they can, when supported correctly, make even more purposeful changes in order achieve higher levels of parent involvement and outcomes for the groups they represent.

In this case critical leaders appeared to be committed to apply changes to involve Latino parents by changing current parental involvement practices and adopting strategies that supported a welcoming, inclusive environment for diverse groups of parents (Santamaría & Santamaría 2012; Santamaría, in press). District leaders also provided training which revealed to have helped Latino parents to build social capital and leadership capacity.

This study supports current findings that critical parent leaders can be nurtured and created with high expectation and supportive actions. Historically research has ignored parents as leaders and painted a dim portrait of the participation of marginalized

parents in education. Favorable research in this area typically focuses on how well training programs work for parents. What this study attempts to do is shed a positive light on parent participation and offer a possible solution to develop and nurture participation. Districts should consider creating engaged parent leaders in order to improve overall parent involvement.

Improving the knowledge of a core group of parents around the educational system enabled the parents of this district to make informed decisions. Well-informed parents were better able to advocate for improved student educational outcomes. Parent engagement did not just impact their own children's educational attainment but that of similar children whose parents were not consistently involved.

Recommendations

Based on this research, there is a need to further explore Latino parent leadership as a means of influencing Latino parent engagement and outcomes. The important question for leaders is "Are we willing to learn from the people and do the work that must be done to create an educational system that is socially just and one where high expectations for everyone are sustained by culturally and linguistically appropriate support?" (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006, p. 266)

Recommendation 1. Establish the five foundational factors. Districts interested in implementing this framework should first consider establishing a supportive and welcoming environment for diverse parents by addressing the barriers that prevent them from getting involved. They should first ensure their district mission, vision and current leaders value parents and see them as an invaluable part of the decision making

process in the school system. In order for parents and leaders to learn to work together it is recommended that the district begin with developing a united sense of purpose where district leaders bring parent leaders in and share with parents the district's vision and mission for student achievement. In addition, they should systematically and regularly provide trainings on consensus building, effective meeting norms, English Learner pedagogy, By Laws, regulations, and the educational system. Districts should consider expectations that parents use knowledge gained to teach other parents by providing trainings. Finally, parents should be allowed to exercise what they have learned to make real changes in the system to support the district in the restructuring of curriculum, policies and procedures.

Recommendation 2. Restructure policies and procedures. Based on this work it is recommended that to support the work of the leaders changes in structure, policies and procedures should be addressed. The DELAC structure should change to allow for parents to serve on the board for more than one year. This will allow parents to shadow their counterparts and to take on their leadership roles. In addition, Latino parents who would not normally train groups of people should be supported and empowered to lead large district level meetings. This may mean providing additional supports such as a district translator and capacity building around meeting procedures. Districts should be aware this task may take many hours of trainings, devotion of time and resources to prepare parents to accomplish their leadership roles.

Limitations, Personal Bias, and Future Research

The limitations, biases and indications for this research to be complete are numerous. This case study has a restricted scope in that it represented only one school district in Southern California.

In addition to a restricted number of interviewees all participants represented part of the local culture unique from other parts of the country and different school structures. The limited scope hence may have reduced the ability to apply many of the findings to other circumstances, decreasing the generalizability of the study.

Qualitative research in general consists of biased views making the validity of the study questionable. As a researcher who is also Latina I am aware I have a set of personal perspective and biases that impacted the study. These potential limitations were addressed in the process of validating the study as mentioned previously through the use of rival theories and preliminary propositions.

However, because this case is a critical example of a successful parent engagement program through a DELAC, which is a required parent participation program, this study, despite its limitations, holds promise for understanding supportive components of what is necessary for fully engaging Latino parents in U.S. public schools.

Based on this study we can suggest that parents might evolve into leaders when they were given the appropriate circumstances and could generate an active communication network able to effectively support the various reform efforts of the school or school district in providing for individual student needs. The question remains as to whether a district would be able to replicate the findings presented here by establishing the five foundational factors and providing the six supportive components in

order to see if the same effects and two developmental factors emerge. It is the belief of this researcher that these and many other aspects of parental leadership can emerge through this process.

Concluding Remarks. The findings of this study offer a possible solution to address the lack of parent participation of Latino/ Hispanic, linguistically and culturally diverse parents present in schools. One consideration that can be derived from these findings suggest that rather than focusing on the quantity of parents involved, districts should consider nurturing parents already involved to become leadership partners, and central knowledge brokers for the creation of a communication network to serve other parents. Research has shown the higher the parents' sense of efficacy the more inclined they will be to get involved in leadership roles in order to improve school effectiveness and student achievement (Ferlazzo & Hammond, 2009). In other words, the goal should be to have already involved parents reach higher levels of engagement instead of wanting more parents at the involvement stage. In this study training was available to the development parent leaders who worked collaboratively with district leaders. These trainings were effective in developing parents' leadership skills, and allowed them to utilize their knowledge base as strength to represent other parents (Epstein, 1988; Epstein, 2005; Epstein, 2009).

The choices that district leaders made to support parents as this study suggests have many benefits. First, districts could have well informed parents who can bring about meaningful change for the groups they represent in partnership with the district. It is suggested that parents within this district were in the best position to make sound decisions for their represented group with the district. Second, this group was able to

unlock and leverage more involvement because they became spoke persons for the power of parental participation.

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Study (Parent Leaders)

Dear Parent Leader,

I am a student in the Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD). I am conducting a research study that seeks to explore what district and parent best practices enable parents to serve as key decision-makers in the district. You are being contacted because you were identified as a District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) member.

Through this research, I am hoping to identify elements of the district and of parents that foster parent leadership. I believe this study has the potential to provide effective ways to develop and support parent leaders and to positively affect educational practices to improve outcomes for students.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed. The interview will have a conversational style and will last about an hour. During the interview you will be asked to describe your leadership experiences within your participation in DELAC. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. You will be provided with a transcription of the interview for checking and clarifying the information.

Only I will have access to your information and it will be kept private. Pseudonyms (made up names) for participants and the district will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

I hope you will agree to participate in this research project. If you would like to participate, please reply to me by August 1, 2012. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Patricia Gil
Doctoral Student
UC, Sand Diego and CSU, San Marcos
619-952-3530

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Study (Parent Leader) Spanish

Estimado padre líder,

Soy un estudiante en el programa de doctorado conjunto en liderazgo educativo en la Universidad estatal de San Marcos (CSUSM) y de la Universidad de California en San Diego (UCSD). Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación que pretende explorar las mejores prácticas al nivel del distrito que permiten que los padres sirvan como líderes principales responsables del distrito. Usted está siendo contactado porque es un miembro del Comité asesor el distrito para estudiantes aprendices de inglés (DELAC).

A través de esta investigación, estoy esperando identificar elementos del distrito y de los padres que fomentan el liderazgo de los padres. Creo que este estudio tiene el potencial para proporcionar formas de efecto para desarrollar y apoyar padres líderes y afectar positivamente a las prácticas educativas para mejorar los resultados de los estudiantes.

Si decide participar en este estudio, usted será entrevistado individualmente. La entrevista tendrá un estilo coloquial y durará aproximadamente una hora. Durante la entrevista que se le pedirá que describa sus experiencias de liderazgo dentro de su participación en DELAC. Con su permiso, la entrevista será audio grabada y transcrita. Recibirá una transcripción de la entrevista para comprobar y aclarar la información.

Sólo tengo acceso a su información y se mantendrá privada. Seudónimos (nombres compuestos) para los participantes y el distrito se utilizará para minimizar el riesgo de identificación. Usted se dará la oportunidad de revisar la entrevista transcrita y eliminó cualquier comentario o referencias que se siente pueden ser identificables o tener connotaciones negativas. Sus respuestas no se vincularán a su nombre o dirección.

Espero que usted esté de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto de investigación. Si desea participar, por favor responder antes del 01 de agosto de 2012. Por favor déjeme saber si usted tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud.

Respetuosamente,

Patricia Gil
Estudiante de doctorado
UC, Diego y CSU San Marcos
619-952-3530

Appendix B: Email Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Study (District Leaders)

Dear District Leaders,

I am a student in the Joint Doctoral Program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD). I am conducting a research study that seeks to explore the supports that enable parents to become leaders within DELAC. You are being contacted because you are a district leader who works with DELAC and DELAC parent leaders.

Through this research, I am hoping to identify district and parent structures and practices that foster parental leadership. I believe this study has the potential to positively affect educational practices to improve outcomes for linguistically and culturally diverse students and families.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed individually. The interview will have a conversational style and will last approximately one hour. You may choose to have the interview take place at your office or off campus-which ever makes you feel most comfortable. During the interview, you will be asked to describe your experiences in working with DELAC parent leaders. These experiences include applying district vision and shared values to establish protocols for the committee. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. You will be provided with a transcript of the interview for checking and clarifying the information.

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

I hope you will agree to participate in this research project. If you would like to participate, please reply to this email by July 20, 2012. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Patricia Gil
Doctoral Student
UC, San Diego and CSU, San Marcos
619-952-3530
Patricia.gil@cvesd.org

Appendix C: District Leader Informed Consent

Invitation to Participate

Patricia Gil, under the supervision of Dr. Alice Quioco, Professor CSU San Marcos, with approval of the Chula Vista Elementary School District and DELAC parents is conducting a research study to find out about district and parent structures that promote and support parent engagement in leadership positions. As an administrator who works with DELAC parents your permission is requested to participate in this study.

This study has the following objective:

To understand how and why parents evolve into DELAC Leaders and how this is supported by district protocols, procedures and leadership decisions.

Requirements of Participation

Leaders will participate in an interview about their experiences working with DELAC and DELAC parents. The interview will be conducted sometime between July 30, 2012 and November 2, 2012. The interview administration time is 45 minutes to an hour, and will be conducted in English. The researcher, who is also a school administrator, will ask the questions. The interviews will be held in a location that is mutually agreed upon by the leader and researcher (office, or neutral off-site location).

Risks and Inconveniences

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. These include:

1. Loss of personal time necessary to participate in the interview and review of the interview transcript.
2. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no participant names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the CSUSM Institutional Review Board.

3. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

Safeguards

Although the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.

The administration of the interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the leader. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the district leaders or parents.

There may be a direct benefit to leaders participating in this study. The interview may serve leaders to reflect on how they feel about parent leadership. The researcher may learn more about how best provide a school environment that encourages and support parent participation and parent leadership so the educational community can benefit from this knowledge.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the interview at any time without penalty.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

This is no compensation of cost for your participation in this study.

Patricia Gil has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any additional questions or research-related problems, you may reach Patricia Gil at (619) 952-3530.

Appendix D: Parent Leader Informed Consent

Invitation to Participate

Patricia Gil, under the supervision of Dr. Alice Quioco, Professor CSU San Marcos, with approval of the Chula Vista Elementary School District and DELAC parents is conducting a research study to find out about district and parent structures that promote and support parent engagement in leadership positions. As parent leader who is a member of DELAC parents your permission is requested to participate in this study.

This study has the following objective:

To understand how and why parents evolve into DELAC leaders and how this is supported by district protocols, procedures and leadership decisions.

Requirements of Participation

Parents will participate in an interview about their experiences working in DELAC and district leaders. The interview will be conducted sometime between July 30, 2012 and November 2, 2012. The interview administration time is 45 minutes to an hour, and will be conducted in English or Spanish. The researcher, who is also a school administrator, will ask the questions. The interviews will be held in a location that is mutually agreed upon by the leader and researcher (district office, or neutral off-site location).

Risks and Inconveniences

There are minimal risks to participating in this study. These include:

1. Loss of personal time necessary to participate in the interview and review of the interview transcript.
2. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no participant names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the CSUSM Institutional Review Board.
3. Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

Safeguards

Although the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.

The administration of the interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for participants. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the district leaders or parents.

There may be a direct benefit to leaders participating in this study. The interview may serve leaders to reflect on how they feel about parent leadership. The researcher may learn more about how best provide a school environment that encourages and support parent participation and parent leadership so the educational community can benefit from this knowledge.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the interview at any time without penalty.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

This is no compensation of cost for your participation in this study.

Patricia Gil has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any additional questions or research-related problems, you may reach Patricia Gil at (619) 952-3530.

Appendix D: Informed Consent: Parent Leader Version-Spanish

Invitación para participar

Patricia Gil, bajo la supervisión de la Dra. Alice Quioco, Profesora de la escuela estatal San Marcos, con permiso del distrito elemental de Chula Vista y padres de DELAC está conduciendo un estudio para investigar las estructuras de padres y del distrito que promueven y apoyan la participación en posiciones de liderazgo. Como miembro del comité de DELAC, su permiso es necesario para poder participar en este estudio.

El estudio tiene el próximo objetivo:

Comprender como y porque los padres se involucran en el liderazgo de DELAC y como esto es apoyado por las reglas del distrito, procesos y decisiones del liderazgo.

Requisitos para Participar

Los padres participaran en una entrevista acerca de sus experiencias trabajando en DELAC y con los líderes del distrito. La entrevista se llevara a cabo entre el 30 de Julio 2012 y el 2 de noviembre 2012 y tomara de 45 minutos a una hora. La entrevista será en inglés o español. La persona encargada de este estudio, que también es parte de la administración de una escuela, completara las preguntas. Las entrevistas serán en un lugar de acuerdo entre el líder de DELAC y la persona encargada de este estudio (puede ser en las oficinas del distrito o en un lugar neutral).

Riesgos e inconvenientes

Existe mínimo riesgo al participar en este estudio. Esto incluye:

1. Tiempo personal necesario para participar en la entrevista y repasar las respuestas.
2. La posibilidad de que se llegue a saber la identidad del participante de este estudio. La probabilidad de que esto suceda es muy baja porque los nombres de los participantes no se usaran. Esta información se archivara y se guardara de acuerdo a las leyes. Los archivos podrán ser adquiridos por el CSUSM el comité de Revisión Institucional, encargado de este proceso a nivel universitario.

3. Por lo cual esto es un estudio, es posible que hayan otros riesgos que al momento no se conocen. Se le informara si llegaría a haber un riesgo de este tipo.

A Seguranzas

Aunque la entrevista es voluntaria, los participantes pueden brincar una pregunta o terminar la entrevista si esto sucede.

La administración de la entrevista y sus contenidos de ninguna manera pueden crear un riesgo para los participantes. Los resultados de ninguna manera son una evaluación o juicio de los líderes del distrito o sus padres.

Puede ver beneficio para los líderes que participen en este estudio. La entrevista les puede ayudar a reflexionar como se sienten acerca del liderazgo de padres. La persona encargada de este estudio podrá aprender más acerca de cómo mejor proveer un ambiente que motive y apoye la participación de padres y el liderazgo de padres para que la comunidad educativa se beneficie de este conocimiento.

Su participación en la entrevista es voluntaria. Usted podrá negar su participación a la entrevista durante cualquier momento sin consecuencia.

Se le informara si alguna nueva información se encuentre durante este estudio que pueda afectar su deseo de continuar.

No habrá compensación de costo por su participación en este estudio.

Patricia Gil le ha explicado este estudio y ha contestado sus preguntas. Si tiene preguntas adicionales o problemas relacionados a este estudio, usted puede contactar a Patricia Gil al (619) 952-3530.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol Parent Leader

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study of Applied Critical Leadership that Promotes Latino Parent Engagement

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Date | |
| Time of Interview | |
| Place | |
| Interviewer | |
| Participant | |

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purposes of this study is to understand how district protocols, procedures and leadership enable parents to become leaders in DELAC.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.

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

Questions:

General:

1. Tell me about yourself. How did you become a leader in DELAC?
2. Tell me what position you hold now?

Engagement:

3. In your opinion, what do you see is your role as a DELAC leader?

4. How do you get to make decisions as a DELAC leader? Please provide an example.
5. How do you involve other parents in the decision making process?
- 6. Support From the District**
 - a. (*Chair and Past Chair*) How did the district support you during your one year training period?
 - i. How are they supporting you now?
 - b. (*Chairperson in training*) How has the district supported you during your year in training so far?
7. How do parents support you as a DELAC leader?

Decision Making:

8. As a leader, what process do you use to make decisions?
9. How do you work with other parents to make decisions?

Applied Critical Leadership:

10. Do you believe the district values your leadership contributions? How do you know?

Social Capital and Intellectual Capital:

11. How do you work with other parents to share information?
12. How have you grown as a leader?
13. What will you do to encourage leadership in other parents?

Is there any other information that you would like to share with me?

Appendix E: Interview Protocol Parent Leader Version-Spanish

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study of Applied Critical Leadership that Promotes Latino Parent Engagement

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Date | |
| Time of Interview | |
| Place | |
| Interviewer | |
| Participant | |

Gracias por aceptar la invitación de participar en esta entrevista. Los propósitos de este estudio son entender como las reglas del distrito, procesos y liderazgo encalcan a los padres a ser líderes en DELAC.

La información que usted provee no se compartirá con nadie y únicamente se usará para análisis por la persona que conduce este estudio. Únicamente la persona que conduce este estudio y la persona que graba la entrevista estarán presentes. Las grabaciones de estas entrevistas serán destruidas a terminar los análisis; no más tardar el 30 de Junio, 2013.

Su participación es completamente voluntaria y en cualquier momento puede decidir ya no continuar. Si por razones de tiempo la entrevista le es inconveniente, puede terminar la entrevista a cualquier momento. No hay consecuencia alguna si usted decide no participar.

Questions:

General:

1. ¿Cuéntame de ti? Como fue que llegaste a ser líder en DELAC?
2. ¿Cuál es tu puesto que ahora ocupas?

Engagement:

3. ¿En tu opinión, cuáles son tus obligaciones como líder de DELAC?
4. ¿Cómo se toman decisiones como líder de DELAC? Favor de proveer un ejemplo.
5. ¿Cómo involucrarías a otros padres en el proceso de tomar decisiones?

Support From the District

6. (*Chair and Past Chair*) ¿Cómo te apoyo el distrito durante tu periodo de entrenamiento?
7. ¿Cómo te apoya el distrito ahora?
 - a. (*Chairperson in training*) ¿Cómo te ha apoyado el distrito durante tu año de entrenamiento?
8. ¿Cómo te apoyan los padres en tu capacidad de líder de DELAC?

Decision Making:

9. ¿Cómo líder, que proceso usas para tomar decisiones?
10. ¿Cómo trabajas con otros padres para tomar decisiones?

Applied Critical Leadership:

11. ¿Crees que el distrito aprecia tus contribuciones de líder? Como lo sabes?

Social Capital and Intellectual Capital:

12. ¿Cómo trabajas con otros padres para compartirles información?
13. ¿Ha crecido como líder?
14. ¿Qué harás para motivar el liderazgo en otros padres?

¿Habrá cualquier otra información que te gustaría compartir conmigo?

Appendix F: Interview Protocol-District Leader Version

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study of Applied Critical Leadership that Promotes Latino Parent Engagement

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Date | |
| Time of Interview | |
| Place | |
| Interviewer | |
| Participant | |
| Title | |

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purposes of this study is to understand how district protocols, procedures and leadership enable parents to become leaders in DELAC.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June 30, 2013.

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

Questions:

General:

1. Based on the position you hold in the district, what are your responsibilities as they relate to parent leadership?
2. In your opinion, what do you believe parents can contribute as leaders to the continued success of the district?

3. How do you support parents during their one year training period?
4. Once parents become DELAC leaders, what kinds of leadership traits do you see them exhibiting?

Engagement

5. In your opinion, what is the role of a DELAC leader?
6. As a leader of the district, how do you support parents in their role as DELAC leaders?
7. In your opinion, how have parents supported one another in their role as a DELAC leader?

Decision Making:

8. How do you expect DELAC leaders to engage in the decision making process at the district level?

Applied Critical Leadership:

9. Describe your relationship with parent leaders at the district?
10. What supports are in place at the district level to ensure parent leaders are successful?
11. What supports are in place at the district level to help parents grow as leader?

Social Capital and Intellectual Capital:

12. Describe how parents in DELAC collaborate with one another?
13. How do parent leaders grow from collaboration with each other?
14. How do parent leaders grow from collaboration with district leaders?

Is there any other pertinent information you would like to share?

Appendix G: Observation Protocol

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study Examining the Role of Applied
Critical Leadership in Promoting Latino Parent Engagement

| | |
|--|--|
| Date | |
| Time of Observation | |
| School | |
| Specific Places Observed (use a separate protocol for each meeting observed) | |

The purpose of these observations is to find evidence of parent engagement, decision making and Applied Critical Leadership Specific examples are listed below each category. These are provided to guide the researcher and should not be considered the only possible manner in which engagement and Applied Critical Leadership could be evidenced.

Engagement:

Decision Making:

Applied Critical Leadership:

Social Capital and Intellectual Capital:

Appendix H: Document Analysis Protocol

Through the Lens of Parent Leaders: A Case Study Examining the Role of Critical Leadership in Promoting Latino Parent Engagement

| | |
|--|--|
| Date | |
| Time of Analysis | |
| Specific Document Analyzed (use a separate protocol for each document) | |

The purpose of these observations is to find evidence of parent engagement, decision making and critical leadership. Specific categories are listed below each category. These are provided to guide the researcher and should not be considered the only possible manner in which engagement and critical leadership could be evidenced.

Engagement

Decision Making

Applied Critical Leadership

Social Capital and Intellectual Capital

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