Power of Family Voice: A Study of Two Elementary Schools Applying the

Principles of Equitable Collaboration

by

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ABSTRACT

With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, as part of the

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), it

prioritized schools to include families as collaborative partners in schools' improvement

efforts. Minimal family voice existed at two elementary schools. Thus, this mixed-

methods action research study investigated both schools as they applied the principles of

equitable collaboration (PEC), explored how participants experienced family voice

through collaboration, and whether it strengthened school-family partnerships. The

Equitable Collaboration Framework, Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model, and

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model were the theoretical perspectives in applying the

principles of equitable collaboration (PEC). Data analysis and its triangulation were

derived from family and teacher participants through surveys, interviews, observations,

and field notes from a series of workshops. Results suggested there were mixed views on

family voice prior to the application of PEC. Experiencing family voice during family-

teacher collaboration resulted in varied outcomes: one school acknowledged families as

assets and equal contributors to schools' decision-making processes, whereas the other

school, in ways, reverted to the traditional school-centric approach. Results also

identified strengths as schools developed teacher-family relationships. Implications for

these findings point to the concerted efforts that must occur at school sites, recognizing

the importance of family voice and seeing families as shared partners in school

improvement. To build strong school-family collaboration requires commitment and

support in overcoming barriers, such as language and the issue of time, to ensure that all

families are invited to participate and provide the power of family voice into school's decision-making processes.

DEDICATION

This achievement could not have been accomplished without the wonderful support from my family and friends. First and foremost, I must thank my daughter, who in many ways inspired my passion on the topic of family engagement. She not only encouraged me to pursue my doctorate, but throughout my program, she was my biggest support. She was also my first editor during the first draft of my dissertation. Thank you, Rebecca, for providing me with so much love and encouragement during this journey! "I love you more" are the words I constantly receive from my Mama and Papa, and I thank you so much for always being there to support me. I wholeheartedly recognize and am so grateful for all the love, hard work, and dedication you have sacrificed for me. Family is so important to me, and I am so thankful for my sisters who continually shared words of encouragement these past three years. In line with family, I need to thank Clarky, our family dog who has been so patient with me. You have been a constant support at my feet. As well, I could not be here without the continued support from my friends. I am so glad and thankful that my friends were there to support me as thought partners in overcoming some challenges along the way. Finally, thank you to the families and teachers who were involved in the action research study. This dissertation is possible because of your participation. Thank you for your time and dedication to this work. As a scholarly practitioner, I have learned so much, and I recognize there is still work to be done.

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determined. During the last stretch as we worked via Zoom to complete our dissertations, you have championed my efforts. Thank you for being such a great friend and accountability partner. To all my cohort, thank you for all the support in helping me accomplish this life goal!

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CHAPTER 1

LOCAL AND LARGER CONTEXTS AND PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

"My vision for family engagement is ambitious… I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children's teachers, from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected -- and teachers should feel supported. When parents demand change and better options for their children, they become the real accountability backstop for the educational system."

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, May 3, 2010

National Context

Over ten years have passed since Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education, delivered these words in a speech titled "Looking in the Mirror" to the Mom Congress, the U.S. mother's rights membership organization. Yet nationally, this quote holds significance for the continued vision for family engagement today. In that speech in 2010, Arne Duncan heartened the appeal for greater family engagement in schools by inserting it as a higher priority and recognizing the need to establish a national framework to support schools and districts in making that vision a reality. In the spring of 2010, the U.S. Department of Education called on Karen Mapp, a researcher in the field, to work as the top consultant for what is now known as the "national family and community engagement framework," *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships* (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). This important quotation is memorialized within the introductory pages of that framework.

Across 50 years in federal policy, Title I-A in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) had identified the significance of families' presence in their children's educational process. With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary

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Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), the U.S. Department of Education transitioned from using the wording *parental involvement* to using *parent and family engagement*. This expansion of the word *family* works to broaden the understanding of a child's adult caregiver as not only being a parent but also a grandparent, foster parent, aunt, uncle, or older sibling (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). The broader representation in the use of *family* acknowledges the value of family dynamics, and it continues to broaden the significance that families have in response to student achievement (Fenton et al, 2017; Ferlazzo, 2011). Certain essential conditions are compulsory for family engagement to cultivate and flourish. These conditions, as Mapp and Kuttner (2013) state, work on the

> initiatives that take on a partnership orientation—in which student achievement and school improvement are seen as a shared responsibility, relationships of trust and respect are established between home and school, and families and school staff see each other as equal partners. (p. 5)

Therefore, schools are strengthened when there is an established and solidified partnership with families. These relationships then transfer to increased student progress and achievement.

The vision for family engagement, as depicted in the quotation above, highlights a call to action in parents' arduous efforts for schools to demonstrate the highest quality of education to foster children's learning and academic success. It also speaks to the importance of having parents as true partners with teachers, working hand in hand throughout a child's educational journey. Nationally, most schools are nowhere close to fulfilling this vision. Schools continually state they want to enhance family engagement efforts and increase parental involvement, yet educational practice does not demonstrate this (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2017; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Strier & Katz, 2016). Schools

have taken on a school-centric approach in addressing family engagement, omitting family participation from the very development of family engagement initiatives, programs, and school policies. As a result, these institutional scripts have established a negative sentiment in allowing for the coexistence of family-school relationships. To add to this, the educational system, in its bureaucratic evolution and its professional stance, has also contributed to the development of particularly dismal and ineffective family-school partnerships with families of color (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Ishimaru, 2020).

Problem of Practice

The crux of the matter surrounding family engagement lies heavily within schools' current forms of family engagement and school improvement practices. As mentioned, schools operate in a school-centric lens, holding to a one-sided view for how family engagement practices are planned and implemented. School decisions have primarily been determined by school leaders and school staff. The notion of administering equitable collaboration amongst school staff and families has been non-existent, primarily due to the school-centric practices. These practices have long withstood addressing family engagement and school improvement goals (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Buchanan & Buchanan, 2017; Ishimaru, 2020). Operationalizing family-school partnerships within this context creates a hierarchical stance wherein school's perspectives are accounted for, and families' voices are omitted as stakeholders from school's decision-making processes. Thus, schools who continue to operate in this mode are unable to achieve equitable collaboration, which encompasses a commitment in building connections with families and communities, learning from each other, and

working collectively to enhance family engagement efforts and build a stronger school community.

For schools to develop equitable collaboration, authentic relationships must be established and prioritized. Within the school context, Bryk and Schneider (2003) define relational trust where "each party in a relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role's obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other parties" (p. 41). The minimal relational trust that currently exists between school staff and students' families stems heavily from views and issues related to equity (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). In order to define equity, it is best to illustrate it via its opposition within the current climate in education. The inadequacies seen in education, primarily dealing with issues of students' race, class, and socioeconomics, have been discussed in an array of scholarly articles and texts (Jimenez, 2020; Liou & Matias, 2019; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The evidence continues to demonstrate how the educational system works to establish barriers and disparities for students of color. This is perpetuated by school staff and their lack in building connections with families of color (Ishimaru, 2020; Olivos & Mendoza, 2009; Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, white families tend to be overrepresented at family engagement activities. This overrepresentation influences school culture as it works on connecting with and meeting the needs of those families. However, the presence of almost exclusively white families refutes the importance of the representation of the diversity of a school community and of ensuring that all families feel welcomed and acknowledged and have opportunities to add their voice to a school's decision-making process. In contrast, families of color record minimal attendance at school events. One of the main contributing factors is that marginalized families have felt

undervalued, unappreciated, and even unwelcomed by school staff (Fuentes, 2012; Hong, 2019; Ishimaru, 2020). Additionally, some families have been disconnected from their children's school due to their own personal educational experiences, which they often see as negative and harmful (Brown et al., 2020; Jimenez, 2020; Valencia, 2002).

More recently, the educational landscape has been challenged by the effects of COVID-19. For example, schools and governing boards have been working vigorously to decide what is best in meeting students' academic needs, while prioritizing safety for the entire school community. White families and their influence are being felt in their demands to reopen schools and permit students to be on school campuses (Shapiro et al., 2021). These factors further expand the issues in building strong family-school partnerships.

The racial disparities in education prevent family engagement from being seen as the lever for equity. Liou and Matias (2019) state that "[t]he educational racial contract perspective tells us that the foundation of family engagement is deeply racial and not one dimensional" (p. 77). In this, the educational racial contract (Liou & Matias, 2018) defines yet again the school-led approach in working with families. School-led practices do not allow for reciprocity, and they do not make space for engagement, where families and schools can work in collaboration to advance students' academic performance. Family engagement built on relational trust cannot fully exist unless the issue of race is confronted head on. Unfortunately, schools have not faced or admitted to the educational inequities that continue to deter the progress of students of color and their families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Therefore, until the issues surrounding race and equity

are confronted, schools will continue to practice and exhibit biases in the relationships and communications that occur between schools, students of color, and their families.

Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model provides an asset-based approach for educators to learn about and identify the strengths and significance coming from families. To this point, schools have been working tirelessly in developing family engagement nights that result in low attendance. Schools also work on holding school-family meetings, either to meet federal compliance requirements or to provide school information. It is important to note that, in these meetings, there continues to be a school-centric lens, where schools provide families with a set agenda, dismissing opportunities for families to be a part of the discussion. In many respects, the educational system has created this form of practice in school's decision-making to solely rely on what schools perceive as expertise coming from educators and professionals, and it upholds assumptions that families and communities are incapable of providing input for school improvement (Baquedano-López et al, 2013; Ishimaru, 2014). As Ishimaru (2020) asks, "where are the opportunities for educators to learn about the Ancestral knowledges and what Yosso (2005) calls the 'community cultural wealth' of students and their families" (p. 84)? The CCW Model serves the educational realm by helping schools to recognize the value of cultural capital that comes from families, specifically families of color.

Cycles of Research

The beginning cycles of my action research (AR) study centered on exploring and understanding teachers' perceptions of family engagement. In Cycle 0 and Cycle 1, I collected data from teachers regarding the relationships and communications they had

with families. Conducting Cycle 1 presented challenges due to the health concerns of

COVID-19; however, although there was a small sample of participants during this

phase, this cycle of research extracted what teachers perceived as barriers in building and

establishing relationships with families.

The following section summarizes the findings that emerged from these cycles.

First, the data suggested there were concerns teachers had in communicating with non-

English speaking families. A teacher who identifies as a White female shared about the

language barrier with the following response:

> [Students] come here, at a young age, from their country. If I were to give you an
> estimate, I would say our percentage is about 85% Mexican American, so I would
> say that the barrier with language is huge.

In this response, the teacher associates race with the primary language of the family

household. In many ways, this assumption aids teachers' views of certain families as a

challenge to work with instead of spurring them to find necessary resources to support

and enhance the communication between families and school staff. In Cycle 1, another

White female teacher responded in the following way when asked how she communicates

with Spanish-speaking families:

> That's harder because I don't speak Spanish. I am present when we have an
> interpreter. When I can, I will try and speak Spanish if that's the language. That's
> typically our second language in our school. I understand enough so it makes it
> nice, so I know how to answer because I've caught on to what's being said. I'm
> just not very fast. I like to compare myself to a three-year-old. No Spanish. I
> usually just work with our interpreters and I'm always there. I just can't speak
> fluent sentences.

Additionally, timing of school events was also seen as a barrier in enhancing

family engagement. Teachers stated that some school events had minimal attendance, due

in part to families' own workload and responsibilities. From these cycles of research, I

did gain a better understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding the barriers they saw in building family engagement at their school sites. These cycles of research provided me with opportunities and considerations as to the direction and shift in my approach to addressing my innovation.

The occurrence of COVID-19 seriously impacted school operations from its onset in March 2020. Schools had to rapidly transition modes of instruction from in-person learning to an online format due to the catastrophic health crisis. Within this time frame in my doctoral program, I was enrolling in my 2020 summer courses. One course required me to participate in an internship, and I was able to secure an internship working alongside a superintendent. In May 2020, a reopening team was established at this school district to start planning for the anticipated reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. The reopening team consisted of members from district leadership, school administrators, selected teachers, and two members from partnering community organizations. Having the opportunity to work alongside the superintendent, I was welcomed to be a part of the reopening team. It was at my first meeting where I realized that there were no family members participating in these conversations. This summer experience caused me to shift the direction of my study.

Thus, Cycle 2 of my project added families as participants in my study. The research question guiding this cycle of the research study was:

- What can family-school relationships during COVID-19 teach us about establishing a collaborative family engagement environment?

The investigation focused on families' perceptions of the relationships and communications that existed between families and school staff, particularly with regard

to the impact of school closures in the spring of 2020. With my internship, I received

Research Integrity Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct this cycle of

research, which concentrated on a school district's developed family survey data and

worked to capture family voice. During this time, I also supported the district in

facilitating focus group interviews. The interviews centered on assessing families'

concerns, insights, and thoughts surrounding the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021

school year. This cycle of research demonstrated a school district's efforts in obtaining

family voice and investigated whether families' responses influenced the school's

decisions surrounding the reopening of schools.

The district survey included 16 questions, which investigated families'

perceptions (n=161) surrounding school closures and the anticipated reopening plans for

the 2020-2021 school year. There were open-ended questions to ascertain what schools

did best with the instant closures in March 2020 and to understand what families saw as

their biggest challenges due to school closures, and what the schools could have done

better to support students and families. The survey also investigated families' concerns

with students returning to school for the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, the survey

had three ranking scale questions that focused on families' perceptions of distance

learning and their thoughts on having students return to school in the fall. Survey

questions and common trends are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Cycle 2 Survey Questions: Common Trends in Responses

Question	Responses: Common trends/themes	Data examples
3. What did we do best during school closures to support you and your child(ren)?	· Communication · Supplying laptops/resources · Food distribution · Safety in closing schools	"Closed the schools to prevent the spread of the diseases. The virtual classes and the computers. Also the lunches you guys gave out. The communication was also the best." "To have all the attention so that our children do not stop learning, from flexibility to pick up or deliver a laptop, availability of hours to clarify any questions, tasks always ready, in fact always working with our children." "Help us how to work with our children at home so that they do not forget what they have already learned from their teachers" "They gave us the tools to be able to give our children a better explanation of each of the topics seen."
4. What was your biggest challenge during school closures?	· Managing children's schoolwork and my own work (One parent has 5 children to attend to) · Student accountability and motivation · Being teachers to our kids · Difficulty adjusting to online system · Technology issues	"My biggest challenge was to be a mom, an essential employee who still worked from home full time and be their TEACHER…" "Keeping my child motivated to continue to learn." "The biggest challenge was taking the teacher's place and finding strategies for my daughters to learn about this online system that is totally new to them."
5. How could we have made this experience better for you and your child(ren)?	· Addressing students with IEP and 504s · Ensuring structure/organization of online instruction · Course for parents and students · Incorporating study group sessions	"If we were able to get her an IEP so she can get the work that's best for her thru online." "I believe that the schools did the best they could to support us. My only suggestion would have been to keep things consistent. By that I mean the format of the material that was available to us. Some days it was easy to access the material, other days videos wouldn't upload, or it felt like a scavenger hunt to look for the assignments."
6. Do you feel your child was able to keep learning through our distance learning program?	74% agree-strongly agree that their child kept learning through distance learning	
7. What concerns do you have about returning?	· Safety/health · Learning gap	"The potential for my child to get sick, especially knowing social distancing will be hard." "That my 2nd grader won't be ready for 3rd grade because she had a really hard time doing her schoolwork on a laptop rather than hands on."
8. How comfortable are you sending your child(ren) back to school in August 5, 2020?	Approximately 40% are somewhat comfortable or very comfortable in	

	sending children back to school in August	
9. If public health and elected officials deem it appropriate to return to school, would you feel comfortable if school staff took your child(ren)'s temperature daily when they return to school?	Over 83% would allow staff to conduct temperature checks	
10. Would you support limiting the number of visitors to the school campus including parents/family members to ensure less exposure?	Nearly 84% support the limitations of visitors at school sites	
11. If public health and elected officials do NOT deem it appropriate to return to school as usual, what kind of alternative learning method would you prefer for your treasure(s)? Please rank options in order of preference.	Online learning, 45.3% opted for online learning	
13. Would you be able to purchase and send your child to school with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including wearing a face cloth covering/mask?	70% of families would send children to school with PPE	
14. Would you consider driving your child(ren) to school to allow for social distancing?	82.4% would transport children to and from school	
15. What information would you like to receive from your school over the summer months to better prepare you to return to school on August 5, 2020?	Continued communication is needed for families	"Constant communication about what is being done to keep my children safe. For instance, will class sizes be lowered to ensure social distancing can be obtained?..." "Keep us updated on how school sessions will resume and take precautions with distance if some Covid-19 cases do not have symptoms."
16. Is there any additional information you would like to share or questions you would like to ask?	· Learning gap · Maintaining cleanliness of schools	"What are we doing for children that fall behind because of this? I have one child who already doesn't meet standards and I'm pretty sure he'll be farther behind. …" "Will teachers have time to wipe everything in the classroom before the next class arrived? What precautions are being taken by faculty and kitchen staff to prevent Covid with so many students and limited space…"

The survey results clearly identified several concerns that were impacting families and schools during this time. However, in reviewing the survey questions, there were few opportunities for families to provide additional considerations for certain situations. Some of the main themes coming from the families' responses centered on the challenges

they faced in simultaneously managing children's schoolwork and their own work, instructing and motivating children for learning, and troubleshooting technology. However, families also noted their appreciation for the school's continued communication, support of resources, the flexibility and availability of teachers, and the district's assurance of safety. The families appreciated the district's dedication in transitioning from in-person to online instruction. The survey indicated that 75% of families agreed that their child kept learning through distance learning. To expand on the continued learning, 43% of families responded they were uncomfortable sending their children back to school. This provides context pertaining to health concerns, even with continuity of learning. Families believed this modality of instruction could continue for the beginning of the 2020-2021school year. The survey responses identify that schools stepped up to support family's needs in versatile ways, from providing resources to helping parents instruct their children at home. Enhanced communication is important for parents and maximizes efforts in supporting students learning at home. The survey findings suggest that families would benefit from continued deeper engagement with the school.

At the district's governing board's request, follow-up family focus group interviews were conducted. The focus interviews were conducted with families of color, primarily Latina mothers whose primary language was Spanish. The interviews allowed participants to contextualize the situations that occurred during school closures, along with sharing their thoughts on their children returning to school. During this time, the District's Family Engagement Coordinator and I held two focus group interviews with families. The triangulation of the survey and interviews substantiated and identified

important themes. Families expressed that communication frequency improved via computers and phone calls. With this new circumstance of having students learning from home, families faced inevitable challenges in maintaining work-life balance in serving as a primary role in their child's learning. With the reopening plans, families also expressed their health concerns about having their children return to school.

Research from Cycle 2 echoes the common narrative on how schools were operating during this period (Shapiro et al., 2021). Schools took on a reactionary approach in planning for their reopening. It was a challenging time, in that schools were having to work with uncertainties in handling health issues and ensuring the safety of school staff, students, and the community. With Cycle 2, the school district continued to operate via a one-sided approach in making decisions about the reopening of schools. The district and governing board underwent efforts to gain further clarity regarding families' perceptions. In particular, they targeted families who were often omitted in providing input regarding school closures and the district's plans for reopening schools in the 2020-2021 school year. Yet, families were not members of the reopening team, providing initial thoughts and considerations on how schools should reopen under these new conditions. Instead, families had to provide responses to an initiated and developed school plan of action for the reopening of schools.

Significance of the Study: Power of Family Voice in Applying Equitable Collaboration

What would happen if there was a shift in school practice where schools welcomed families to the table from the beginning, giving them a voice and working collaboratively with them to address the needs of the school, in addition to enhancing

relationships and communication? The present realities of family engagement and the inequities seen at school sites, along with the last cycle of research, have provided a clearer direction in addressing the innovation for this study. Many schools have been working vigorously to enhance family engagement practices and programs, yet these school-centric efforts have resulted in minimal changes. Most schools in Arizona have not broadened their understanding of valuing family voice within the conversations to advance family engagement efforts and provide input for school improvement.

For family voice to exist, trusting relationships must already be established. The conditions for engagement rely heavily on the relationships that are built between school staff and families. Yet, with the ever-present inequities in education, these relationships tend to manifest as school staff communicating *to*, rather than *with,* families. These deficiencies permeate within schools, and because of this, schools are unable to strengthen family-school partnerships. Thus, authentic relationships must be at the center of shifting the narrative toward having schools acknowledge families as a vital resource and lens to advancing school practices and strengthening school communities.

Schools must take an innovative approach in developing equitable collaboration with families. Ishimaru (2020) discusses equitable collaboration as a theoretical framework in which schools work to develop equitable collaboration with families and communities. This framework aids in building families, specifically families of color and their communities, as crucial stakeholders in strengthening family engagement efforts along with improving school climate and culture. Equitable collaboration has six main principles: 1) community capacity, 2) authentic relationships, 3) families as experts, 4) educators as learners, 5) balanced power, and 6) family-driven goals (Ishimaru et al.

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2014). Thus, the innovation for this research placed families at the forefront of change. This innovation worked to improve families' perceptions of school practices as they pertain to the relationships and communication coming from the schools. It called on families to work collectively to produce a product that encompasses family voice and drew on family leadership in efforts to implement and positively impact the school community. To envision equitable collaboration, it also summoned schoolteachers to engage and serve as learners within this process. Family voice and the embedded principles of equitable collaboration (PEC) were imperative as I investigated how families and teachers partnered to develop plans for school reform.

Role as a Researcher

This research relied heavily on my own personal, educational, and career experiences. Milner (2007) states the importance in rejecting "practices in which researchers detach themselves from the research process, particularly when they reject their racialized and cultural positionality in the research process" (p. 388). Therefore, my positionality firmly holds to the roles and responsibilities I have as a Latina mother who has worked hard in raising a daughter in the Arizona education system. As a Latina mother, I have had to confront inequities throughout my daughter's schooling years. On reflection, my own educational experiences have also been instrumental in realizing the inequities I endured as I entered the public school system as a child. I grew up in an exceptionally large Latinx community. Yet, speaking Spanish upon entering school was seen as a deterrent instead of an asset to my success in education. In an integral way, my cultural identity was put into question within the first days of my educational experience.

I became a student who equated my first language as inferior, and because of that I worked vigorously to learn and solely speak English.

Upon graduating from college with two degrees in anthropology and history, I decided to become a teacher. The success of my ten-year teaching career was influenced by students' families who worked cooperatively with me in building strong and authentic relationships. These relationships and partnerships allowed me to innovate my work as an educator and strengthened student success in my classroom.

In defining my positionality in context to my role as a Latina mother and educator, I must also emphasize my current place of employment, as this work influences the direction for my AR study. For 11 years, I have held the position of Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Education Program Specialist, overseeing Title I-A and Title II-A programs. The ADE is the State Educational Agency (SEA) that works to support Arizona's local educational agencies (LEA), which are the schools and districts. Currently, there are 558 employees working at the ADE, whose main purpose is to service the state's Pre-K-12 education system. Thus, the ADE works in supporting schools and districts to ensure the compliance of these federal and state programs, as well as assisting them in enhancing the educational setting for all students. In 2017, I was assigned as the Lead Family & Community Engagement Specialist under the umbrella of the Title I-A and Title II-A programs Educator & School Excellence Unit. In this role, I have had the opportunity to conduct LEA visits, overseeing the implementation of the federal programs at the school level. During these visits, I am constantly reminded by school personnel of the challenges schools face in enhancing family engagement at their school sites.

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In the 2019-2020 Arizona School Enrollment data, it was estimated there were 1,150,631 students enrolled in Arizona public schools (Arizona Department of Education, 2020b). The ESEA Title I-A "provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards" (ESSA, 2015). With the most current enrollment data taken from the 2019-2020 school year, over 511,000 students qualify for free and reduced lunch, which is a poverty criterion in identifying Title I students. Currently, the ADE Title I-A services 500 school districts and charter schools combined.

In 2017, the ADE developed a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), which served as an annual Title I-A tool requirement for schools to assess and evaluate their practices. The CNA focuses on six different principles: 1) Effective Leadership; 2) Effective Teachers & Instruction; 3) Effective Organization of Time; 4) Effective Curriculum; 5) Conditions, Climate & Culture; and 6) Family & Community Engagement (Arizona Department of Education, 2020a). The CNA tool works in assessing the needs of each school. Because this is a comprehensive assessment, schools are required to include all stakeholders as an integral part of the assessment. Besides the use of a self-reflective tool utilized within the ADE- School Improvement unit, this was the first time Title I-A schools were accounting for their work around family and community engagement.

In 2017, an ADE colleague and I developed a three-tiered approach in providing professional development on the topic of family and community engagement. Figure 1 depicts the professional developments that have now been termed as *Arizona's Pyramid*

of Change for Family & Community Engagement. These professional learning

opportunities take on a three-tiered approach in addressing family and community

engagement. The tiers are as follows: 1) LEA Leadership, 2) School Teams, and 3) Entire

School Community. The top tier of training is intentionally focused on LEA leadership,

addressing the CNA's Principle 6: Family and Community Engagement. This session

also provides evidence-based research that includes conversations about *Partners in*

Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships,

strategies to address the topic, and opportunities to share best practices. With the second-

tiered professional development, the training centers on working with school teams

consisting of at least five members: a school leader, school staff, and family and

community partners. The training allows school teams to explore various family

engagement models and provides allotted time to restructure school practices. Finally, the

third-tier training focuses on addressing the topic of family and community engagement

for the entire school community and leveraging the work to enhance the school's family

engagement activities.

Figure 1

Arizona's Pyramid of Change Family & Community Engagement Professional

Development

For the past six years, I have been leading professional developments for school leaders, school teams, and entire school communities. On the one hand, high attendance at these training sessions substantiates that Arizona schools want to be doing better in this work. On the other hand, these trainings have also demonstrated the minimal nature of family participation. For example, the school teams training encourages schools to build teams representative of school staff, families, and community. During these trainings, schools continue to share that families and community members are unable to attend or unwilling to participate in professional development. This realization has aided my research in addressing the problem of practice and purpose for this study.

The Arizona Department of Education has yet to implement strong family engagement policies and practices for schools that demonstrate true partnership and collaboration and thus, work to strengthen student academic progress. This is just one contributing factor that results in the continued challenge in building strong family-

school partnerships in Arizona. As a Lead Family Engagement Specialist and scholarly practitioner, I wanted to enhance my learning and work to change the narrative surrounding this topic. Regarding my research, I found myself in a unique situation. Unlike my student peers who are conducting their AR projects within their working environments, the ADE required me to conduct my dissertation study outside of my working environment. However, conducting this research at two different school sites aided in contextualizing what occurs at school sites and how this work can influence my own approach to addressing the topic. Conducting my study at school sites proved valuable as I uncovered the scope of what takes place at school sites in relation to family and community engagement. Thus, my research study improved my practice and delivery in supporting LEAs.

Situational Context

The realities of COVID-19 have impacted schools' practices as schools have had to shift to virtual instruction in efforts to maintain the health and safety of the school communities. In many instances, this shift created a silver lining in addressing the topic of family engagement. Schools are recognizing the importance of finding ways to develop trusting relationships with families. This moment in time calls for schools to implore the help from families in gaining voice, addressing the challenges, and enhancing relational and educational practices.

Two predominantly Latinx based elementary schools invited me to investigate their current family engagement practices, procedures, programs, and policies. The invitation to investigate one of the school sites was established during my internship course with a superintendent. The superintendent was highly interested in my area of

study and understood that the schools she oversaw were challenged in addressing family engagement. Therefore, she discussed with the school leaders the opportunity to have me conduct my study at one of the school sites. Sunset Elementary School (SES) welcomed me to conduct the investigation at their school site. Gaining access to Bradley Elementary School (BES) was first initiated at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, when the school requested that the Arizona's Pyramid of Change: Entire School Community professional development session be presented at their school site. I already had a connection with one of the school administrators, and because of this connection and the professional development that was provided to the entire school community, the school invited me to conduct my research at this school site. Conducting my study at two school sites added depth to the study, enabling me to gain more data and uncover similarities and differences between the two sites.

From Title I-A CNA, the two elementary schools identified family and community engagement as one of their primary needs and acknowledged their struggle with family involvement and the lack of family participation in the schools' decision-making processes. Both schools have been implementing Academic Parent Teacher Teams, a family engagement program intended to shift traditional parent-teacher conferences toward a collaborative effort where families come together with teachers to build relationships, focus on student academic goals, and find ways to support the learning at home (Paredes, 2011). Unfortunately, the undertaking of this program has not proven successful or sustainable. Additionally, the two school sites have also invested in a communication tool, ClassDojo, which serves as the primary means of communication with families. However, as the school administrators shared, this communication tool is

not aiding schools in building family capacity. The two elementary schools recognize this time as a critical opportunity for action, and therefore have welcomed me as a researcher in studying the schools 'current practices surrounding family voice and implementing an innovation for change.

SES is one of four elementary schools in the Thomas Elementary School District, and its grades span from Pre-K-8th grade. For the 2019-2020 school year, there were 768 students enrolled. The student demographics represent a large Hispanic/Latinx population. In fact, 69% of students are Hispanic/Latinx, 17% are African American, 8% White, 3% are Asian, and 3% are Multiple Races (Arizona Department of Education, 2020b). SES has a principal, an assistant principal, 38 teachers, and five academic support staff members. Currently, the school has a B rating as determined by the ADE A-F School Accountability School Report Card rating (Arizona Department of Education, 2020c), and this rating signifies the school's record of academic performance.

BES is one of 19 elementary schools in the Radford Elementary School District. For the 2019-2020 school year, there were 616 students enrolled. Like SES, BES represents a large Hispanic/Latinx student population. The student demographics consist of 58.6% Hispanic/Latinx, 28.41% African American, 3.57% White, 4.06% Asian, and 3.57% Multiple Races (Arizona Department of Education, 2020b). Currently, the school has a D rating as determined by the ADE A-F School Accountability School Report Card rating (Arizona Department of Education, 2020c).

The administration from both elementary schools wanted to capitalize on this time in strengthening their work on family engagement. The schools know the value and importance of having a strong family engagement that is built on trusting relationships

and effective communication, but their efforts had had little to no success. Because of this, the schools welcomed the research and innovation in providing a new approach to developing equitable collaboration with families.

Purpose of the Project

The concept of family voice must be understood prior to discussing the purpose of this project. When family voice is present at school sites, schools demonstrate their acknowledgement of the value in moving away from a school-centric model into a collaborative effort amongst stakeholders, building a shared responsibility to identify school goals and areas for improvement. Ishimaru (n.d.) states, "In an equitable collaboration, all the participating organizations feel they have an equal voice and that their knowledge and contributions are valued and legitimate contributions to the shared goals of the effort." Family voice cannot be concretely defined; it is a multifaceted concept. For the purpose of this research study, "family voice" was represented verbally during workshops as families dialogued with each other and with teachers. "Family voice" was also represented as a product that families collectively created and finalized as a group. Lastly, "family voice" was represented as family participants led workshop presentations where they informed teachers of their product and shared what they envisioned schools could implement in improving family engagement and school practices.

The purpose of this action research study was to: a) determine how families and teachers initially perceived family voice at SES and BES, b) to analyze the collaboration between families and teachers when the school experience family voice in its decision-making process, and c) to investigate how families' and teachers' experience with family

voice in applying PEC works to strengthen school-family partnerships at these two school sites.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are families' and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide voice into the school's decision-making processes?
- RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence, 2) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence?
  - o Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct at Sunset Elementary School
  - o Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct at Bradley Elementary School
- RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experiences with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?

Definition of Terms

The following terms relate to this topic in the scholarly literature, and represent the vocabulary that will be discussed throughout this study:

- *Equitable Collaboration* – This term stems from the scholarly work of the University of Washington on a collective model that builds on community capacity, where families of color are recognized as educational leaders working on goals and strategies to address systemic change. In this approach, families

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work collaboratively with schools in addressing social issues within the school community (Ishimaru, n.d.).

- *Families/Parents* – These terms are taken from Mapp and Kuttner (2013) and represent any adult caretakers who have responsibility for the well-being of a child or children. This includes parents, foster care providers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings, or fictive kin.

- *Family & Community Engagement* – This term is taken from the ADE CNA. Family & Community Engagement is an essential component of improving outcomes for children and youth. Effective family and community engagement is a reciprocal and essential partnership between families, communities, and schools that reflects a shared responsibility to foster children's development and learning.

- *Family Voice* – This term represents the ability of families to engage in dialogue in a welcoming space, providing workable solutions that are recognized and heard by schools in building what Ishimaru (2020) identifies as balanced power, which works in conjunction with establishing equitable collaboration. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) state, "To be heard is to have a recognized and credible voice, to be known as a source of creativity, innovation, and influence" (p. 273). Family voice within schools acknowledges the importance of moving away from a school-centric model into a collaborative effort amongst stakeholders, building a shared responsibility to identify school goals and areas for improvement. Ishimaru (n.d.) states, "In an equitable collaboration, all the participating organizations feel they have an equal voice and that their knowledge and contributions are valued and legitimate contributions to the shared goals of the effort."

- *School-Centric* – This term refers to a school's one-sided approach when working with families. Baquedano-López et al (2013) define this approach as, "power relations between educational stakeholders, which often position parents as passive or complacent... and reflect[s] a restricted vision of partnership" (p. 150).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter 1 provided an outline of the context and purpose of this project. I

described the topic of family engagement, my role as a researcher, the situational context,

and data related to the problem of practice. Additionally, I introduced the concept of

equitable collaboration with an emphasis in implementing family voice. Equitable

collaboration, as a theoretical framework, will function as the lens through which I

address the problem of practice. In Chapter 2, the Equitable Collaboration Framework,

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model, and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model will be

discussed, providing context for current realities in education and how these frameworks

can work to address issues of equity and enhance family engagement. Lastly, I will

contextualize how the frameworks worked within my study and how I will be utilizing

each to analyze data from this action research (AR) project.

Family Engagement – Equitable Collaboration

Research surrounding school-family partnerships has evolved over time, as have

the words used to describe this form of partnership (Yamauchi et al., 2017). What was

first termed "parent involvement" has advanced to what is now termed "family

engagement." A multitude of theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1981; Epstein, 1995; Hoover-

Dempsey et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992) work to frame family dynamics and their roles in

connection to the education of their children. One can look to Bronfenbrenner's (1981)

bioecological theory of school, families, and the community connections and the spheres

of influence for the student. Epstein's (1995) six types of involvement (parenting,

communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with

the community) focused on schools addressing these forms of involvement for the purpose of improving student achievement. Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2005) model focused on parent involvement, specifically on why families are involved, what they do when they are involved, and how their involvement affects student outcomes. Moll et al. (1992) concentrated on the funds of knowledge coming from families and their households and the importance of building from those connections to enhance student learning. The term "family engagement" came into focus in Mapp and Kuttner's (2013) *Dual Capacity-Building Framework*. In fact, this research deepened the school-family partnership by emphasizing the importance of school-family collaboration and ensuring there are established relationships, shared responsibilities, and reciprocal communication and voice.

In 2015, with the reauthorization of ESEA changed the verbiage from "parent involvement" to "parent and family engagement" (ESEA). In fact, this new Title I-A federal requirement emphasized the importance in schools including families in the school's decision-making process. This portion of ESEA reads:

SEC. 1116. PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT.

(c) POLICY INVOLVEMENT.—Each school served under this part shall—

(3) involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b),…

(ESEA, 2015)

Thus, Title I-A schools now must develop collaboration with families, ensuring that families are part of the planning process and are able to provide voice to the school's implementation of the Title I-A program.

Positioning school-family collaboration, specifically as a Title I-A school requirement employs an effort toward school reform. As mentioned, schools have traditionally held the power in relation to family engagement. Thus, school-family collaboration calls for schools to assess current practices and make the necessary shift toward reform (Ishimaru, 2019; Olivos, 2006). As Warren (2010) states, "the main problem may not lie in the individual, passive parent, but rather in the lack of opportunity for participation" (p. 141). In many respects, families have not been provided comfortable and creative spaces that allow them to voice their thoughts, possibilities, and visions to improve family engagement practices and strengthen entire school communities.

Principles of Equitable Collaboration

The overarching framework that encapsulates the theoretical perspectives for this study is heavily taken from Ishimaru's work on equitable collaboration (see Figure 2). This framework was developed by the Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research Project (Ishimaru, n.d.). The project consisted of a collective group of district and school leaders, educators, community organizations, family members, and university researchers. The framework they developed calls for a systemic change in educational systems as schools work to build true family engagement, which is built on relational equity and equitable collaboration. This theoretical framework envisions what can occur when communities organize, build authentic relationships with one another, and connect

as equal partners with school sites. Equitable Collaboration works at ensuring that not only is there a diversity of representation amongst families and communities but also that there are equal voices being acknowledged, heard, and represented equitably in collaboration with school leaders and staff (Ishimaru, n.d.). Schools have been challenged to create such a system; their efforts become a continual cycle of expending energy to build capacity with little to no effective change. What if schools shifted their approach in building family engagement by inviting family voice and creating collaborative spaces within schools to strengthen school plans and programs that can then work on strengthening family-school partnerships?

Figure 2

Principles of Equitable Collaboration (PEC)

Note. *Taken from the Equitable Parent-School Collaboration website: https://www.education.uw.edu/epsc/*

As seen in Figure 2, this research project highlighted six major components essential for establishing equitable collaboration, the "Principles of Equitable Collaboration (PEC)":

- Community Capacity (strengthening individual and collective capacity to improve schools),

- Authentic Relationships (building relationships among families and between families and educators),

- Families as Experts (seeing family experiences and stories as sources of knowledge, expertise, and solutions),

- Educators as Learners (positioning educators as learners working to improve their practice),

- Balanced Power (attending to power imbalances and planning for equal voice and influence), and

- Family-Driven Goals (beginning with and prioritizing family goals and concerns). (Ishimaru, 2014)

The PEC demonstrates the importance of ensuring that the voices of both families and school staff are addressed and embedded to reach attainable goals and improve school practices. These principles are essential and need to work in tandem to establish and sustain equitable collaboration practices at school sites. Schools must create welcoming spaces to build family capacity. Developing authentic (family-family and educator-family) relationships must take priority in ensuring trust and empowering all members within a school community. Additionally, this framework ensures that all participating members feel their voices are heard, valued, and contributing to solutions to make positive changes.

Related Literature to the Principles of Equitable Collaboration

Building community is the first step to developing equitable collaboration. Chaskin (1999) defines community capacity as "the interaction of human, organizational, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community" (p.6). Over recent decades, the idea of community capacity has undergone numerous changes, where it has developed a greater emphasis building greater networks for partnership and addressing various social issues (Christens & Speer, 2015; Warren et al., 2011). Warren et al. (2011) state, "organizing groups build capacity and power for communities so that they can increase equity and improve public education as well as address the range of issues confronting families in low-income communities" (p.11). As mentioned previously, schools know that family engagement is a priority, but they have also been challenged in enhancing their efforts. Warren et al. (2011) present various components for understanding how community organizing works; some of the main themes rely on shared histories and identity, building relationships, building power, and transforming communities. Utilizing community organizing as a model for families can benefit schools by strengthening families in becoming the changemakers needed to enhance family engagement and improve school-family-community partnerships.

Families are advocates for their children's education. In some instances, parents build their own self-efficacy as they work on connecting with other families and learning about the common struggles they face with other non-dominant families. In essence, parent leaders work at becoming the community leaders who work on confronting issues, researching school's policies and procedures, and building alliances with school leaders

and educators to find common ground (Cossyleon, 2018; Stovall, 2016; Warren et al., 2011). Chicago Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), a community-based organization, demonstrates the power families have when seen as leaders for school improvement (Hong, 2011). They have created a parent mentor program, which works to support families of color as they work to learn how schools operate and identify the multiple ways families can participate in school. The mentor program builds parent leaders who are positioned to strengthen the school community and effect positive school changes.

The significance of families and communities collectively organizing themselves to bring about change is that it addresses the oppression of various races, ethnicities, and classes within education. Families and communities are challenging the status quo, and they are advocating for better school systems that will support high-quality education for all students (Mediratta et al., 2008; Stovall, 2016; Warren et al., 2009). Their unified work and dedication are shifting the way we see family engagement and education as a whole. Mediratta et al. (2008) define these organizational forms as a conceptual framework that works on a participatory theory of change methodology. Community organizing is effectively addressing the educational inequities and is working to systematically build more equitable and just schools (Mediratta et al., 2008; Stovall, 2016; Warren et al, 2009). Organized communities can ultimately influence school policies and practices. Furthermore, families who are involved with organized communities also enhance parental involvement and strengthen support in student outcomes (Mediratta et al., 2008; Stovall, 2016).

School districts, along with community organizations have been working to build equitable collaboration at school sites (Ishimaru, 2019; Ishimaru et al., 2014). Ishimaru's (2019) research focused on Pathway Projects as a collaborative initiative. This initiative addressed students who were close to graduating from college or ready to embark on a career path (Ishimaru, 2019). The program centered on marginalized students and finding ways to address the opportunity gap, working in collaboration with families and communities within a particular region in the United States to identify the level of support needed at the district level (Ishimaru, 2019). Two school districts, along with a neighborhood organization, initiated this work (Ishimaru, 2019). All three entities worked on shifting their practices, building family capacity, embracing the diversity of families, and accounting for community organization members taking a participatory approach in working with school staff to find possible solutions to improve the school sites (Ishimaru, 2019). The research coming from this work highlighted some positive changes that occurred during these initiatives, including that school districts welcomed this form of action and reform. This work resulted in enhanced relationships amongst families and between families and educators (Ishimaru, 2019). It also elevated families, specifically families of color, to be seen as leaders (Ishimaru, 2019).

The move to equitable collaboration is not an easy one in school practice. Ishimaru (2014) also discussed how these initiatives, at times, led back to traditional and deficit strategies during some school-family interactions. Change does not happen overnight. It requires constant observation and examination of the new strategies that all members are creating.

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Another school district, Salem Keizer School District, underwent a similar project of change (Ishimaru, 2014). The families and the community organizations within this school came together in a coalition effort to influence schools positively by advancing equity. At this time, the population was changing and representing a stronger demographic diversity. School leaders were aware of the population shifts that were occurring; leaders needed to be partners in collaborating with families and the community to strengthen support for students of color at the school sites. By establishing school-family-community collaboration, the district improved relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) between schools and families. The coalition also evoked a growing sense of family leadership at the school sites.

Relationship development between school staff and families to enhance family engagement practices is an integral component of addressing the problem of practice. To expand on the definition of relational trust, Bryk and Schneider (2003) focus on four key aspects in addressing relational trust: respect, personal regard, competence in roles and responsibilities, and personal integrity. Respect ensures that each member is genuinely listening, acknowledging, and considering others' viewpoints. Personal regard pushes members to be vulnerable, committed, and willing to extend beyond the general requirements of their position. Understanding competence in roles and responsibilities relies on each party honoring their values, ethics, and trust, and remaining attentive to their obligations. Finally, personal integrity displays the trust and commitment that each party has to the student's well-being and education (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Relational trust is a key determinant for enhancing family engagement, and it is the foundational work for school improvement.

Relationships are instrumental in demonstrating collective agency to confront inequities in education. To effectively impact family engagement, trusting relationships need to exist. As Yosso (2005) outlines within the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model, building relational capacity amongst families creates a social capital that characterizes the strengths and wealth of cultures within a community, which then allows them to gain momentum to effectively create change within the school system. To effectively impact family engagement, trusting relationships need to exist. Cossyleon (2018) takes the effects of family-family relationships even further by augmenting the positive impacts they can have in establishing long-lasting relationships within the community: "Often, parents said that what joined them and kept them together was their desire to create better communities for their families" (p. 5). A sense of community and purpose thus works to build relationships within and find ways of connecting and strengthening communication within the entire school community.

It is equally important to understand that each school community is made up of its own contextual conditions, such as school size, socioeconomic status, and school diversity (Adams et al., 2009). This, in turn, influences families' trust within the relational network that includes the school and school staff. To contextualize this further, race and social class plays a significant role in building relational trust in school sites that represent a marginalized community. (Adams et al, 2009). Thus, it is critical to utilize the CCW Model as a supportive measure to enhance teachers' perceptions of the value and wealth of knowledge coming from families of color.

The discussion of the following principles of educators as learners and balanced power are incorporated into the next two theoretical frameworks. Educators as learners is discussed within the CCW Model and balanced power is embedded within the AI Model.

Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model: Influence on Collaboration

The CCW Model serves as a supportive model for teachers as they worked to build relational trust and gain further perspectives in acknowledging families' cultural wealth, which works to build equitable collaboration with families and communities. This framework also works with families in exhibiting the cultural capital they have for their children. Within this framework, Critical Race Theory (CRT) encourages a shift from a deficit viewpoint with regards to race and marginalized communities toward an asset-based approach within the cultural context of marginal groups. Yosso (2005) goes on to explain the six forms of cultural capital that serve as the basis for CCW: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant (see Figure 3). The CCW Model dives deeper into CRT by acknowledging the wealth of knowledge within the cultural capital.

Yosso (2005) defines the components of the CCW Model as:

- *Aspirational capital:* The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers

- *Linguistic capital:* The intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style

- *Navigational capital:* The skill of maneuvering through social institutions

- *Social capital:* Networks of people and community resources

- *Familial capital:* Those cultural knowledges that are nurtured among family that carry a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition

- *Resistant capital:* Those knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenge inequality

Figure 3

Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) Model
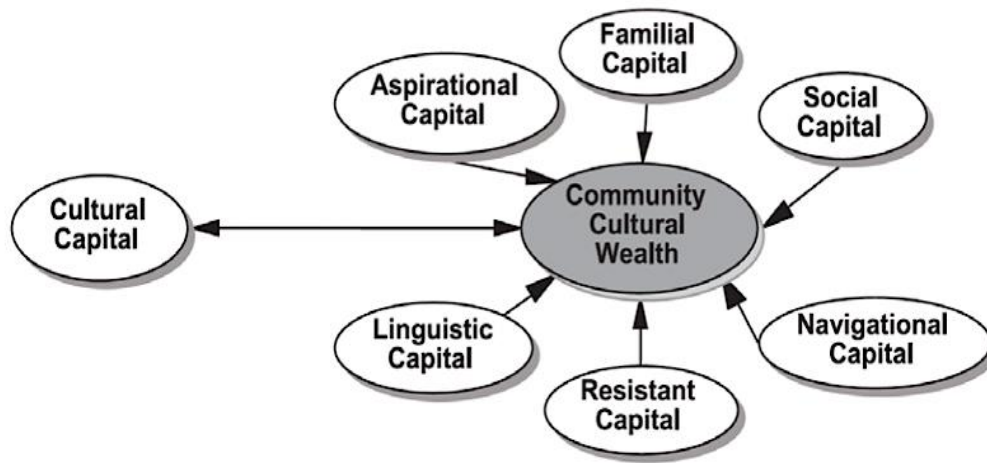
Note. *Adapted from (Yosso, 2005, p. 78).*

For this study, the following forms of capital had a heightened emphasis: aspirational capital, familial capital, and linguistic capital. Additionally, social capital was interwoven and discussed in relation to Community Organizing Theory. The following sections detail each of the aforementioned forms of capital in relation to the present study.

Aspirational Capital

Several studies highlight the relevance and importance of teachers incorporating the six forms of capital into their practice (Jimenez, 2020; Liou et al, 2016). Jimenez (2020) provides an autoethnographic study that uncovers the potential of CCW, shifting

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narratives to empower and elevate the existing capitals that are represented within a minority group of students, primarily concentrating on aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital. The study concentrates on the value of providing lessons that work to embrace and welcome students' cultural capital. Jimenez (2020) states:

> students dialogue with each other about the aspirational strengths their families have and practice. They share examples of dreams of a better future, going to college, obtaining professional careers, and valuing education in the midst of their parents' low-level, backbreaking work. (p. 793)

Bringing the cultural wealth from families, specifically as it comes from life experiences, lessons learned, and the aspirations students and families have into the curriculum and instruction works to personalize meanings and positively impact minority students.

Familial Capital

Familial capital is tied to the wealth of knowledge that is associated with the Mexican American communities (González et al., 2005). The theory, Funds of Knowledge (FoK), works to build the value and knowledge that minority families bring to enhance family engagement. Within the confines of the public educational system, schools do not confirm in identifying the various cultures and strengths that come from a child's experiences. Therefore, FoK works at changing these constrictions. González et al. (2005) states that, "this separation makes an understanding of the cultural system necessary to build constructive relationships between teachers, students, and parents, relationships that are needed to improve the educational quality, and equity in schools that serve U.S.-Mexican populations" (p. 48). The historical context and the struggles and challenges Mexican-Americans have had to endure bring with them particular knowledge and experiences that are gained from students' households. Many families worked

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diligently in production, and it is through this labor they mastered certain knowledge and skills (González et al., 2005).

Counternarratives or counterstorytelling serves as another component of familial capital that adds relevance and value in personalizing and humanizing cultural practices. Hong (2019) states:

> when teachers are disconnected from the full lives of students, the only window into the child becomes the academic and social life of the classroom. With this partial and incomplete view, it becomes easier to dehumanize students – to see them solely for the unmet literacy goals, the challenges in math-problem solving, and the distractions they may cause in the classroom. (p. 89)

Educators can be the learners in this work, as they take the time to allow students and students' families to share their Ancestral stories, culture, traditions, aspirations, forms of resilience, and sacrifices in supporting their children's education. As Jimenez (2020) states, "at the heart of this approach lies the teacher-student relationship honoring students' experiences, histories, and everyday lives and fostering critical consciousness, cultural identity, and academic achievement" (p.782). In many ways, counterstorytelling is a form of CRT that works to recognize the stories of marginalized communities and challenge the pre-existing dominant stories that have been exhibited within school curriculum (Jimenez, 2020). Counterstorytelling or counternarratives embrace students' identities as they work to illustrate and depict their families' history, culture, and traditions. This experience allows students to learn more about their families, understanding some of their sacrifices, aspirations, and resilience.

Understanding that the two school sites of this AR study represent a large Latinx population, it was important to also shed light on the concept of "respecto" within Latinx families. Perreira et al. (2006) define respecto as "the importance of teaching children the

proper level of courtesy required in various social context with people of a particular age, sex, and social status" (p.1387). Families convey this level of respect and trust to their children. In many instances, respecto serves to weaken the stressors that can result from social and economic concerns (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Perreira et al., 2006). Families develop this form of respect as a competency in handling and supporting their children through educational experiences. Families ensure that the importance of education is communicated to their children, and with the value of respect and trust in their children, families also ensure cultural images are represented positively within the Latinx communities (Perreira et al., 2006). This level of respect can thus transfer to how Latinx families connect and communicate with school staff.

Valuing hard work is an additional concept that warrants discussion, specifically within Latinx familial context. Family engagement is constantly associated with involvement, meaning that families who attend school events equate to families who are engaged with the school. Lopez (2001) discusses how this perception works to devalue marginalized families and categorizes them as being uninvolved. Yet, Lopez (2001) highlights how Latinx families are already invested in the educational lives of their children. Families demonstrate hard work on a daily basis, and families make sure their children are valuing their education. Hard work can be positioned as a form of involvement. Many times, families will be unable to attend school functions due to work responsibilities, but families prioritize hard work to ensure that the household is cared for and students' essential needs are met, so that those students can focus on their education.

Linguistic Capital

Language has been identified as a barrier to enhancing family engagement. Perreira et al. (2006) state that "when children express embarrassment about their parents' English-language skills and cultural heritage, parents feel disrespected" (p. 1403). This, again, transfers to how families feel when they are placed in spaces where school members are unable to interact with them due to the language barriers. Yet, linguistic capital can also be seen as a benefit and contributing asset within the educational system and toward the building of stronger relationships between teachers and families. Appreciation of and seeing advantages in Spanish-speaking families displays a cultural conflict within the educational context. In the state of Arizona, students who enter school speaking a language other than English are situated in a structured English immersion program. Deficit thinking again plays a role here in predetermined notions of student success. The lack of English proficiency is perceived as a deficit and a predictor of poor student performance outcomes. Students are termed "English Learners" (EL). Jimenez (2020) explains:

> sociocultural and critical scholars challenge the ''EL'' term (previously ELL) as deficit and narrow. Instead, they proffer alternative terms like emergent bilinguals and hybrid language speakers to help us expand our understandings of immigrant youth as dynamic language learners with a vast set of skills, experiences, and abilities. (p. 784)

Families who do not have English as their primary language may not feel welcomed by a school and can be disconnected (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Hong, 2019). González et al. (2005) states that "although public schools should find this advantageous for political, economic, and legal reasons, little use is made of their native language literacy"

(p. 63). Language can be seen as an advantage from families in enhancing

communication efforts to support family and community engagement.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model in Addressing Equitable Collaboration

The Appreciative inquiry (AI) Model is a process of organizational change. This

theoretical model supports an asset-based approach in developing opportunities for

improvement (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). In many ways, this model works as a

methodology toward innovation and positive changes in a working environment (Ludema

et al., 2006). AI situates within PEC in that it allows for the participating groups to feel a

sense of equal voices, where families can be seen as sharing in the leadership, and where

all participants can feel a sense of shared responsibility in efforts for improvement. As

stated, this approach takes a positive stance in envisioning situations that can serve for

the betterment of the organization. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) define

appreciative inquiry as "the study of what gives life to human systems when they

function at their best" (p. 1). Appreciative inquiry concentrates on a 5-D cycle: 1)

Definition, 2) Discovery, 3) Dream, 4) Design, and 5) Destiny. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model: 5-D Cycle
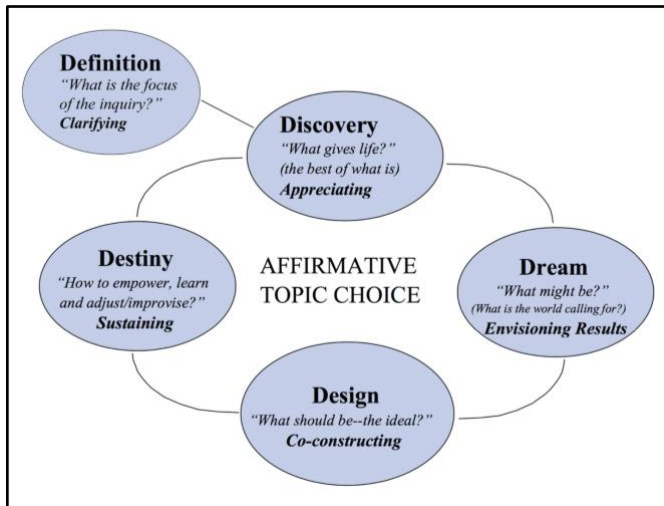
Note. *Figure 4: The original AI framework consisted of four steps—called the 4D Cycle— but some practitioners later recognized a fifth step, leading to the creation of the 5D Cycle. The 5D Cycle references the "five Ds," or the five terms beginning with the letter D, that describe each step in the Appreciative Inquiry process. This image is a modified version of the 4D Cycle presented in "A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry" (2001) by David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.*

This positive approach toward organizations coming together to develop workable solutions, sanctions members to account for what they currently have, embark on opportunities, create a plan of action through dialogue, and ensure that the practice or solution continues (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Ludema et al. (2006) state, "By unlocking existing deficit constructions, creating spaces for new voices and languages to emerge, and expanding circles of dialogue to build a supportive relational context, appreciative inquiry allows for the positive construction of social reality" (p. 162). When the balance of power is recognized, participants exhibit forms of freedom that are seen and heard. With these freedoms, participants can also begin to envision and contribute, feeling supported by other group members. These freedoms allow for positive advancements for change. Collectively, the work can grow in an affirmative manner, becoming a co-construction wherein families are welcomed to provide voice, input, and

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leadership within group discussions (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

To add greater depth, it is one thing to create space for family voice; it is another to ensure that family voice is heard. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) state, "When we feel we are not heard, we feel less real, less able to affect our environment" (p.273). Schools must not only welcome families to participate and share their ideas but also listen to and validate family voices. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) goes on to state that "when another person hears us – when they witness and repeat our ideas and stories – we become tangible, real, significant, somebody who can make a difference" (p. 273). Family voice is significant, but the freedom to be heard adds credibility to the speaker.

Most schools have struggled to establish safe spaces where family members feel equally recognized and valued in adding voice to discussions surrounding family engagement and school improvement goals. AI and equitable collaboration work at ensuring there is equal voice coming from the school, families, and the community. When all members feel respected and valued, collective responsibility permeates and, thus, the collaborative group can effectively work to meet shared goals and effect change.

Balanced power, one of the principles in equitable collaboration, ensures there are equal voices represented within a collective group (Ishimaru et al, 2014; Ishimaru, 2020). As mentioned, schools have dismissed the voices of families. Omitting family voice has been a constant concern as schools continue to work on school-centric approaches to family engagement and operational practices. The AI Model evaluates this principle of balanced power and ensures the development of equitable collaboration, allowing for family voice and input, and having families identify workable solutions and design plans

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that can service schools in building a stronger school community, representative of key stakeholders.

Organizations, in many ways, try to handle problems or concerns by taking a negative approach in identifying what goes wrong. In some instances, this approach can prove advantageous to organizations regarding certain situations (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). However, when having various stakeholders take part in systemic change, it is important for this collaboration to take on a positive, asset-based, and strength-building approach in order to recognize and allow for the autonomy to express what stakeholders see as true possibilities for improvement.

AI and Related Literature within the Context of Education

The AI Model was intended to address practices within organizations, aiding in the development of collaborative environments where all members could participate, envision opportunities, and positively design for change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The components of the AI Model can therefore support schools as they work to create a collaborative process for school improvement. Scholarly work (Calabrese, 2006; Dickerson, 2011; Shuayb, 2014; Willoughby & Tosey, 2007) spotlights the impact when schools invest in the AI Model. The process begins when schools examine their current practices surrounding school improvement and acknowledge the value and voice coming from various stakeholders to not only build partnerships, but also to work collectively to enhance schools' efforts for improvement.

Collaboration is crucial to the AI process. Dickerson (2011) discussed the impact of an instance when school staff, families, community members, and students came together to address the cultural shifts that were taking place in a high school setting. The

population dynamics were changing, and the school was aware of these changes. The school made the decision to utilize the AI Model and began the process of building stakeholder capacity. Prior to initiating this work, the high school had had minimal opportunities for school staff to connect with families. However, when a collaborative group was formed, affirmed by a welcoming environment, stakeholders' willingness to engage was enhanced. Dickerson (2011) described how students felt their voices were amplified during the collaborative meetings. There was power to their voice, and students perceived they were being seen as equals.

The AI Model works in connection with PEC. AI is an asset-based approach and process. Shuayb (2014) states, "AI has a lot to offer in promoting participatory change in schools" (p. 306). This participatory approach requires voice, and it requires action. Calabrese (2006) dives deeper into AI in education as he states that, "approaching partnerships with school organizations from an appreciative inquiry theoretical perspective creates an environment for building trust, affirming partnership members, increasing bridging capital, and addressing challenges as part of a life sustaining growth experience" (p. 177). In that, AI requires time to build trust; it also requires commitment from all members. The AI Model is a perspective, that if employed in an appropriate manner, can positively influence schools' practices, and strengthen efforts for improvement.

These three theoretical perspectives (the Equitable Collaboration Framework, CCW Model, and AI Model) work together in addressing my AR study. In some ways, the frameworks interweave within the discussions of family engagement. Yet, each theoretical framework is aligned in a specific way in my study and aids in the data

analysis. Equitable Collaboration postulates an understanding of what was taking place, regarding family voice at the two school sites, prior to the workshop implementation. The AR study then utilizes Equitable Collaboration and the AI Model to address the collaboration when family voice was disseminated among teachers and families. Lastly, all three theoretical perspectives extrapolate the experiences of teachers and families and expose whether the study worked in strengthening school-family partnerships.

Applying the Principles of Equitable Collaboration (PEC)

"Innovation" refers to a new creation, a new method, or idea. Innovation is the best way to view my AR study. As discussed above, there are six PEC. For my study, I chose to apply the principles by repositioning them within the family and teacher workshops. The two school sites participating discussed how, prior to this study, they had little to no family engagement. Therefore, it was important to set up independent workshops with families and teachers working separately in their own spaces. In these independent workshops, I assigned the principles to the corresponding workshops. Next, the design bridged families and teachers in collaborative meeting spaces, allowing participants to develop relationships with one another and experience family voice. This form of innovation is a new method in developing equitable collaboration. This AR study allowed families and teachers to experience family voice in exploring workable solutions to improve schools' practices.

Schools need to recognize families as experts and leaders in the work of strengthening family engagement at school sites. Within this framework, there is a *User's Guide for Road Map: Family Engagement Survey* (Ishimaru, et al., 2014)*,* which served as an instrumental basis for the innovation, in tandem with the eight workshops at each

school site. The family survey was developed by a collaborative group consisting of staff from school districts, community-based organizations, and University of Washington researchers. The constructs within this survey work to uncover the following (Ishimaru et al., 2014):

1) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence – This area focuses on statements depicting families' perceptions surrounding their knowledge and confidence in supporting their children's learning

2) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate – This area focuses on statements that depict families' perceptions regarding the school's level in welcoming and providing a culturally responsive environment

3) Educator-Family Trust – This area focuses on how families perceive their level of trust in working with teachers and educating their children

4) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence – This area centers on families' perceptions of their leadership role and their influence in the school's decision-making process.

With Cycle 2 and the continued work in December and January of the 2020-2021 school year, the AR project pivoted to place families as the main participants in the study. Shifting the focus to families provided insight into what can occur when spaces are created for families to voice input during the discussions surrounding family engagement and school improvement; in other words, family participants were seen as the change agents for the study. For equitable collaboration to exist, a partnership must exist between families and members of the school; therefore, teacher participants served as an integral part of the study.

The principles of the Equitable Collaboration Framework are the basis of this AR study and its design. The theoretical perspectives that are associated with this framework provide additional context in designing a simultaneous two-level approach to the innovation at the two school sites (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Applying the Principles of Equitable Collaboration (PEC)
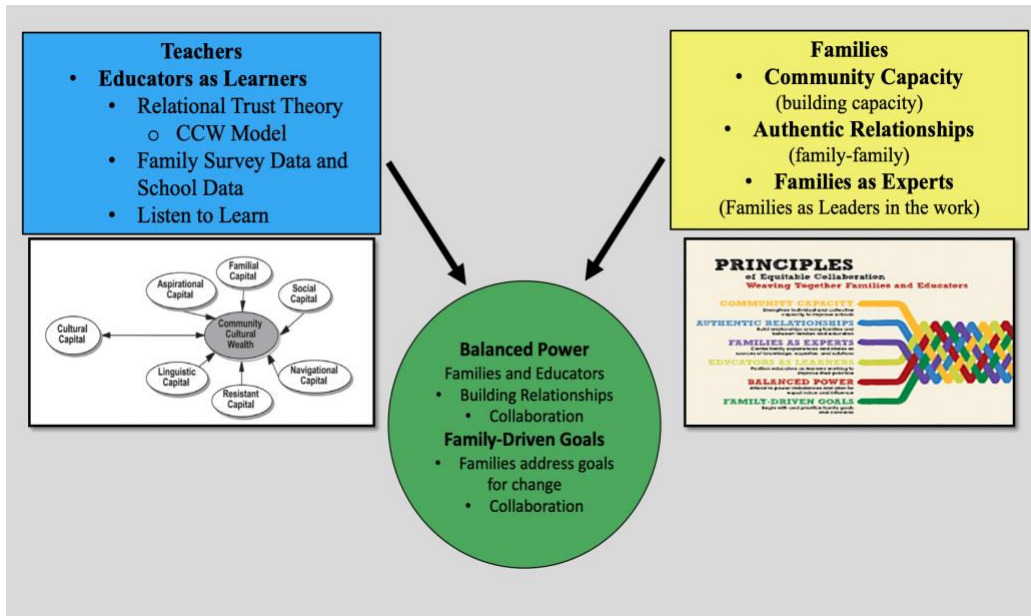
This innovation focused on changing the narrative where schools tend to control their own decision-making processes, and instead invested in families to voice and provide input on what they envisioned for schools to strengthen programs and practices, while establishing relational trust and building better communication between families and school staff. The innovation included eight meetings at each school site. As mentioned, the workshops centered on PEC. The learning objectives for each workshop are outlined in Table 2.

The approach in Applying the Principles of Equitable Collaboration (PEC) concentrates on two participant groups, families, and teachers. APEC captures theoretical perspectives based on the principles of equitable collaboration. CCW Model and the AI Model are interwoven to provide greater context on how these principles are conducted within the study. From previous cycles of research, coupled with the collection of data and related literature, I conceptually constructed APEC. Simultaneous workshops were conducted during the innovation with families and teachers.

Table 2

Learning Objectives for Applying PEC Workshops

Teachers	Families
Workshop One (Educators as Learners) Teachers will be able to: • Identify the components of relational trust • Review and discuss the CCW Model • Review teacher responses pertaining to teacher-family relationships	**Workshop One** (Community Capacity & Authentic Relationships) Families will be able to: • Understand the layout and purpose of all workshops • Understand the importance of families and celebrate the collective group • Build family-family relationships
Workshop Two (Educators as Learners) Teachers will be able to: • Review//Assess the Family Survey • Review the School CAN • Assess/Strengthen Listening Skills	**Workshop Two** (Families as Experts) Families will be able to: • Continue to build on developing relationships • Review/assess the results from the family survey • Decide on a construct to provide voice • Strategize/develop an Improvement Plan
	Workshop Three (Families as Experts) Families will be able to: • Finalize an improvement plan to share with teachers • Decide on a family leader(s) to present the family product to teachers

Workshop Four (Balanced Power)
Teachers and Families will be able to:
• Develop relationships (interactive activity, conversational)
• Share their experience from the activity

Workshop Five (Balanced Power & Family-Driven Goals)
Teachers and Families will be able to:
• Listen as families lead in sharing improvement plan/action plan
• Dialogue collectively regarding the presentation
• Work collaboratively on shared goals
Teachers will be able to:
• Understand the steps/areas of consideration for improvement

Workshop Six (Balanced Power)
Teachers and Families will be able to:
• Reflect on/share their experience from this study

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Chapter 3 will focus on the research design and methodology of the action

research project. The chapter will describe the setting and participants, in addition to

defining my role as the researcher. Following that, the chapter will describe the phases of

the study, the data collection instruments, planned data analysis, limitations, and possible

risks to the validity of the study.

Research Design

Action research (AR) is a cyclical process in working to find solutions to evident

problems. This form of systematic inquiry (Mertler, 2017) conducted by practitioners

works as a learning process in gathering data on how schools operate, investigating

effective teaching strategies, and understanding the various ways students learn. AR

provides evidence and findings from the cyclical process of research, and from those

findings can set a course into a new direction for exploration and inquiry (Ivankova,

2015; Mertler, 2017). Within the context of this AR project, it goes even further to what

is defined as *critical action research*. Mertler (2017) states, "action research can serve an

ideal mechanism for the advocacy of social justice within educational context" (p. 23).

Critical AR is a way of conducting research that enhances practice. Schools working to

build equitable collaboration with families aligns to this form of AR. Its intentional

approach to systemic change allows scholars to continually question the issues of

inequities within their practice. The resolution of inequities and challenges of authentic

school-family-community partnerships rely heavily on this use and approach of research.

Therefore, this approach works well for the overall design of this project.

This AR study used a concurrent mixed-methods approach, which included quantitative and qualitative data (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2017). The triangulation of the data substantiated the study and its findings. The combined collection of surveys, interviews, observations, and field notes influenced the innovation of the study. According to Mertler (2017), this methodology of combining quantitative data and qualitative data assists in the analysis and works to influence innovation. Additionally, the concurrent mixed-methods design allowed me to better understand the purpose and application of the AR project, and it also incited the reflective processes within the study, as mentioned by Herr and Anderson (2015). Correlating survey data to interview data, along with observation and field notes, strengthened the project. This approach in design worked simultaneously in response to two groups of study, teachers, and families.

COVID-19: Impact on Research

COVID-19 significantly impacted schools' routine practices. The pandemic and its detrimental health concerns shifted how teachers provided instruction; it also impacted how schools communicated with students, families, and the community. The two school sites for this study had to follow new protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of school staff and students. During this timeframe, the two schools prevented families from entering the school campuses. Families were only given permission to enter the school building if it was determined an emergency.

Because of the heightened level of security and safety, I, as the researcher, was prevented from visiting the school campuses on a more frequent basis. The pandemic impacted my research design because I had anticipated frequently meeting families and school teachers face to face, allowing more opportunities to present myself to the school

sites and share the relevance of my research project. Because of these new challenges, I strategized new methods that would allow me to connect with families and teachers at SES and BES. Through these efforts, I was successful in gaining some family participation. However, on reflection, I feel, with the severity of the pandemic not only affected the schools but it also affected students' and families' way of life. The effects of COVID-19 impacted SES particularly severely, as many classrooms were forced to close during Cycle 3 of this study due to students and staff being exposed to the virus. Whereas, I may had anticipated conducting workshops in person, I had to shift to conducting the sessions via Zoom. It is uncertain whether there would have been more participation from families and teachers at SES and BES without the constraints of COVID-19, yet the reality of COVID-19 certainly impacted the context of this study.

Setting

Cycle 3 began in August 2021 and ended at the end of November 2021. The study was situated in two Arizona elementary schools in the Phoenix metropolitan area, both of which are predominantly Latinx. As noted, the two school sites welcomed me to research the topic of family engagement at their school sites. Within the schools' Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), SES and BES identified family and community engagement as a primary need. A majority of the students were students of color. The schools, as previously noted, took steps to enhance family and community engagement through the implementation of Academic Parent-Teacher Teams. However, the programs had not resulted in enhanced family-school partnerships. Both elementary schools wanted to build stronger relationships with families in order to improve student learning. Additionally, the two school sites wanted to build a collective group, inclusive of family

and community representation, to collaborate and identify priority needs coming from the CNA. Therefore, the two school sites invited me to conduct my research study to see what could result from the ongoing learning and findings of the innovation.

Recruitment and Translation Services

I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Thomas Elementary School District on September 10, 2020, which allowed me to conduct my study at SES. Prior to the initiation of Cycle 3, I spent the 2020-2021 school year and the weeks leading up to the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year recruiting families to participate in the AR study. At SES, I began by embedding a video of myself in ClassDojo, sharing the purpose of my study and the importance of family participation. In those first months, I volunteered at the school site, working to build relationships with school staff. Additionally, I attended a Parent-Teacher-Association meeting, where I was invited to share my study with the families who were in attendance. Next, I attended family meal distribution events to support the school and to converse with families and share information about my study. In addition, in ClassDojo, I sent Zoom meeting invitations to families to allow further opportunities for them to learn about me and the purpose of my research project. Lastly for the 2020-2021 school year, I was present at student drop-off and family pickup on four occasions, disseminating information about my research project.

I received school district IRB approval on April 6, 2021, to conduct my study at BES. Again, I worked on embedded a video into ClassDojo at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. I also spent a few days sharing information about my study with BES families before and after school. Because I had not solidified a working sample of family

participants, I continued to recruit families prior to the 2021-2022 school year. In June 2021, I received the Alejandro Perez Scholarship from the Arizona Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents. With the additional funds, I decided to modify my IRB application at ASU in July 2021, as I incented family participation by providing $99 to participants who successfully completed the action research project. On July 29, 2021, BES invited me to participate in the Meet the Teacher event. BES allowed me to disseminate flyers to families, informing them of the research project and the opportunity to receive funds for their participation. On August 2, 2021, I went to SES for the Back-to-School Night, where I shared the same information with SES families.

With the modification to the ASU IRB, I also accounted for provision of a translator/interpreter for my study. I anticipated I would have Spanish-speaking families at both school sites. I wanted to ensure accuracy and clarity of the Spanish language and, therefore, a Spanish translator/interpreter volunteered their time to support the family meetings that took place at the two school sites. From the first family meetings, it was determined that the translator would only be needed at BES.

Population, Participants, and Sampling

Population

Population at SES. SES is one of four elementary schools in the Thomas Elementary School District, and its grade spans from Pre-K-8th grade. For the 2021-2022 school year, there were 647 students enrolled. Table 3 is representative of the comparative demographics of teachers and students enrolled at SES.

Table 3

SES: Comparative Demographics – Teachers and Students

Race/Ethnicity	Teachers	Students
Hispanic/Latinx	14	451
Black or African American	4	118
White	18	31
Asian or Asian-American	2	16
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
Other	0	0
Two or more ethnicities	0	22
Total	38	647

The student demographics represent a large Hispanic/Latinx population. In fact, 70% of students are Hispanic/Latinx, 18% are Black or African American, 5% are White, 2% are Asian, and 3% are Multiple Races. (School administrators emailed me the school data on October 20, 2021.) SES has a principal, assistant principal, and 38 teachers. Out of the 38 teachers, over 53% are teachers of color. Currently, the school has a B rating, as determined by the ADE A-F School Accountability School Report Card rating (Arizona Department of Education, 2020c). Each school in the state of Arizona receives a letter grade based on an A through F scale, which measures student academic growth and proficiency.

Population at BES. BES is one of 19 elementary schools in the Radford Elementary School District. For the 2021-2022 school year, there were 532 students enrolled and 24 teachers. Table 4 is representative of the comparative demographics of students and teachers at BES.

Table 4

BES: Comparative Demographics – Teachers and Students

Race/Ethnicity	Teachers	Students
Hispanic/Latinx	7	320
Black or African American	5	150
White	5	24
Asian or Asian-American	1	19
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	15
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	4
Other	2	0
Multiple ethnicities	4	0
Total	24	532

BES also has a large Hispanic/Latinx student population. The student demographics consist of 60% Hispanic/Latinx, 28% Black or African American, 5% White, 4% Asian or Asian-American, 3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. (A school administrator emailed me this data on October 25, 2021.) Out of the 24 teachers, over 79% are teachers of color. Currently, the school has a D rating, as determined by the ADE A-F School Accountability School Report Card rating (Arizona Department of Education, 2020c).

Participants

Students' families and teachers were selected as participants for the purpose of the new approach in applying PEC. There were two main reasons for selecting the two study group participants: First, the two school sites had been working to establish a school team representative of school staff, families, and the community. The team's focus was to be

addressing the needs of the school. The two sites wanted to strengthen their relationships with families and develop a collaborative team. Second, as this innovation calls for equitable collaboration, students' families were essential participants required for this work. Families and teachers represent a huge population within the school community. Ensuring their participation in this study was crucial in enhancing school-family partnerships.

Sampling

A purposeful sampling was used for this cyclical research. Creswell (2015) states, "in convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (p. 143). As noted, the schools of study are working to strengthen family engagement efforts and, therefore, the teachers' participation was encouraged by school leadership. It is important to note, however, that the teachers' participation was still on a voluntary basis. As well, the families participating in this research voluntarily agreed to be part of the study.

Upon receiving Institution Review Board approval to conduct this research, I reached out via email to the instructional staff at SES (n=38) and BES (n=24) and invited them to participate in the study. To solicit family participation, I began by recording a video as a message for families to introduce myself and provide a background for the purpose of the research. I provided these recordings in English and Spanish. The recordings, along with an invitation, were embedded into the two school sites' ClassDojo application for families. (n=660 at SES, n=427 at BES) to view. All participants in this research completed the required consent form and were at least 18 years of age. Due to the tumultuous times and impact of COVID-19, this method was empathetic and sensitive

in allowing individuals to select whether or not to participate in the study. The sampling method of participants aided in answering the RQs.

Sampling at SES. At SES, all teachers participated in the teacher portion at the beginning of the study, but out of the 38 teachers, only 7 teachers participated in the latter portion that involved meetings between families and teachers. Pseudonyms have been used for the teacher participants at SES. The 7 teachers who participated with families are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

SES: Teacher Participants and Demographics

Teacher Participants	Race/Ethnicity
Ms. Housen	White
Ms. Adams	White
Ms. Dickenson	White
Ms. Trujillo	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Stone	White
Ms. Saucedo	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Stephens	White

At the beginning of Cycle 3, I had 10 families who volunteered to participate in the AR study. From August through September 2021, families attended intermittently. Five family participants remained consistent in completing all portions of the study, and pseudonyms have been used for them. Those family participants and their race/ethnicities are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

SES: Family Participants and Demographics

Family Participants	Race/Ethnicity
Ms. Garcia	Hispanic/Latinx
Mr. Newsome	White
Mrs. Stanley	White
Mrs. Lucero	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Acosta	Hispanic/Latinx

Ms. Garcia is a Latina mother who has a second-grader at SES. The next family participant, Mr. Newsome, is a white father who has two children attending SES, one in kindergarten and another child in seventh grade. Mrs. Stanley is a white female who has a child in eighth grade attending SES. Mrs. Lucero is a Latina mother who has a second-grader attending SES. Finally, Ms. Acosta is a Latina mother who has a sixth-grader attending SES.

The sample size was suitable for the following reasons: First, the entire teaching staff took part in the first phase that worked with teachers independently. Second, the collective meetings between families and teachers represented a comparable number of participants. Lastly, the initial family participation provided me the opportunity to present a descriptive analysis from the family survey to the family participants, as well as gathering qualitative findings from meeting observations, field notes, and responses from the study's final project. The study was aided by the teachers' participation in meetings, activities, and responses from the final project.

Sampling at BES. The second school of study was BES. All 24 teachers at BES took part in the entire study. The teachers attended two school site meetings, as well as

two virtual meetings with families. Teachers attended a final meeting where they

provided a final project reflecting on their experience of having participated in the study.

Pseudonyms have been used for the teacher participants at BES. Table 7 lists the teacher

participants.

Table 7

BES: Teacher Participants and Demographics

Teacher Participants	Race/Ethnicity
Mr. Perez	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Sanchez	Asian or Asian-American
Ms. Smith	White
Ms. Alvarez	Hispanic/Latinx – Moroccan and Nicaraguan
Mr. Hernandez	White
Ms. Townsend	White
Mr. Rodriguez	Hispanic/Latinx
Mr. Schneider	White and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Ms. Thurgood	Black or African American
Ms. Beltran	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Gomez	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Hathaway	Black or African American
Ms. Sears	Black or African American and American Indian or Alaskan Native
Ms. Duran	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Radcliffe	Black or African American
Ms. Benedict	White
Ms. Fernandez	Hispanic/Latinx
Mr. Greenwood	Black or African American
Ms. Abraham	Other
Ms. Racine	Other
Ms. Adal	Asian or Asian-American

Ms. Adair	Black or African American
Mr. Taylor	White
Ms. Carson	Black or African American

At BES, there were 13 family participants who began the study. As with SES, from August to September 2021, families attended the initial meetings intermittently. Seven family participants were consistent in participating and completed the entire study. Pseudonyms have been used for the family participants at BES. The family participants and their race/ethnicities are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

BES: Family Participants and Demographics

Family Participants	Race/Ethnicity
Mrs. Quinn	Black or African American
Ms. Villa	Hispanic/Latinx
Ms. Trejo	Hispanic/Latinx
Mrs. Lara	Hispanic/Latinx
Mrs. Fernandez	Hispanic/Latinx
Mrs. Graham	Black or African American
Mrs. Prieto	Hispanic/Latinx

Mrs. Quinn is a Black mother who has a first-grader at BES. Ms. Villa is a Latina grandmother who helps support her grandchildren who are in second and fifth grade at BES. Ms. Trejo is the daughter of Ms. Villa, who has her two children attending BES. Mrs. Lara is a Latina mother who has two children attending BES, a kindergartner and a fourth-grader. Mrs. Fernandez is a Latina who has one child attending BES. Mrs. Graham is a Black mother who has a kindergartner and sixth-grader at BES. Finally, Mrs. Prieto is

a Latina mother who has two children, one in fifth grade and another in seventh grade, attending BES.

The sample size was suitable for the following reasons: First, the entire teaching staff participated in and completed the entire study. All teachers participated in the family-teacher meetings. Full teacher participation was highly encouraged by the administrator of BES, and their attendance and participation supplied added data. Second, the collective meetings between families and teachers demonstrated a commitment from the school for the family participants. Lastly, with 13 family participants initially participating in the study and responding to the family survey, it supplied the opportunity to present a descriptive analysis from the family survey to the family participants, as well as gathering qualitative findings from meeting observations, field notes, and responses from the study's final project. The AR study was aided by the teachers' participation in meetings, activities, and responses from the final project.

Role of the Researcher

As mentioned, I serve as the Lead Family & Community Engagement Specialist in the Title I/II-A unit at the ADE. I have held this specialized position for the past six years. The current cycle of research aligns with my position, as I continue to support Arizona schools in providing strategies and best practices to enhance family and community engagement. Taking the time to investigate these elementary schools in Phoenix allowed me to gain valuable information that aided my work and enhanced my level of support in providing state trainings and professional learning experiences to local educational agencies. A reflective process is required in understanding my positionality within this research process. Herr and Anderson (2015) state, "positionality occurs not

only in terms of inside/outside, but also in terms of one's position in the organizational or social hierarchy, and one's position of power vis-à-vis other stakeholders inside and outside the setting" (p. 13). Understanding that I am in a unique situation, where I am viewed as an outsider looking in, it was important for me to develop relationships with the participants, working to understand their views and perspectives within the study and its context. In some respects, the fact that I was on the outside looking in yielded potential benefits for the validity of the project. As I gained background knowledge and scheduled meetings with teachers and families, I anticipated collecting data to gain further clarity on what each school had been doing in relation to family engagement. One potential threat that I saw to the validity of this project pertains to my working position at the ADE. It was important for me as a researcher to be transparent with participants in making sure I provided a clear understanding of the purpose of this AR study. Additionally, I was conducting this research through a participatory lens and approach. In that, it broadened my range and epistemologies in addressing critical theoretical perspectives within the educational system (Given, 2008).

For this research project, I was responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. As the action researcher, I was responsible for maintaining the instruments and serving as the interviewer for the qualitative components of the study. Finally, as the researcher, I was the facilitator of group meetings within my conceptual design. As the facilitator, it was important to reflect on my positions as a Latina mother and educator, ensuring that I was working collaboratively with teachers and families.

Purpose of the Project and Research Questions

As noted in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research study was to: a) determine how families and teachers initially perceived family voice at SES and BES, b) analyze the collaboration between families and teachers when the school experiences family voice in its decision-making process, and c) to investigate how families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC works to strengthen school-family partnerships at these two school sites.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are families' and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide voice into the school's decision-making process?

- RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence; 2) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence?

  o Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct at Sunset Elementary School

  o Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct at Bradley Elementary School

- RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?

Table 9 provides an illustration of the concurrent mixed-methods used in this AR study. The table concentrates on the theoretical frameworks, purpose, sources of data, and methods used in alignment with the research questions.

Table 9

Research Questions, Framework, Purpose, Sources of Data, and Methods

RQ#	Framework	Purpose	Sources of Data	Method
RQ1: What are families' and teachers' initial perceptions of families' ability to provide voice into the school's decision-making process?	Equitable Collaboration	The purpose of this question is to determine how families and teachers initially perceive family voice at SES and BES.	Pre-survey-family survey Teacher survey Semi-structured focus interview, family meetings	Quantitative analysis Quantitative analysis Qualitative analysis
RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement?	Equitable Collaboration AI Model	The purpose of this question is to analyze the collaboration between families and teachers when experiencing family voice in the school's decision-making process	Observation, field notes, Reflections/evaluations Observation, field notes, Reflections/evaluations	Quantitative analysis Qualitative analysis
RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?	CCW Model Equitable Collaboration AI Model	The purpose of this question is to investigate how families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships at these two school sites.	Observation of CCW Model activity for teachers and the correlation to families' responses in first family meeting Observation of Relationship activity-families and teachers Post-innovation, participants reflective assignment (families and teachers)	Qualitative analysis Qualitative analysis Qualitative analysis

Data Collection

Prior to the implementation in Cycle 3 of this AR study, I received IRB approval (Appendix A). Letters of consent (Appendix B – family survey (English version), Appendix C – family survey (Spanish version), and Appendix D – teachers) were provided for all participants, and their consent to participate in this study resulted in their submitting the survey as the first source of data. In conducting interviews, I sent an email letter of consent to all family participants who had submitted a pre-innovation survey. This letter of consent (Appendix E-family interview (English version) and Appendix F-family interview (Spanish version)) required participants to sign and return a portion of the text to me via email. Verbal consent was also collected at the conclusion of the project. The following sections will describe the procedures used for the collection and analysis of each data source.

For the family survey, the pre-innovation family survey was disseminated to family participants prior to the first family meeting workshops. The post-innovation survey was administered at the end of the sixth meeting date with families. A hard copy or survey link was sent during these times, and the anticipated time it took to complete these surveys was no longer than 30 minutes. The survey was provided through Qualtrics, and therefore, participants were able to complete this instrument on any technology device with Internet access. Family participants also had the option to submit responses on a hard copy. Hard copy responses were later recorded into Qualtrics. Descriptive statistics were utilized because of the small sample of family participants. Non-parametric statistics were also tested from the family surveys at SES and BES to analyze if there were differences in each of the four constructs from pre- to post-innovation in

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identifying any areas of significance. In addition, there was quantitative data gathered from observations and field notes conducted during the innovation, where I, as the researcher, worked in recording the interactions, accounting for time that occurred amongst families and teachers.

The elementary schools of study served as an integral part of this process and innovation. For this study, concentration was given to the data collection from families, but there was simultaneous work being conducted from the schools in relation to teachers, whose participation contextualized and substantiated the data collected from the families. Teachers in this study were supplied with a pre-innovation survey to gather responses regarding the teachers' levels of confidence in building relationships and communicating with students' families. The survey also gathered input on teachers' abilities to communicate with families who spoke a primary language other than English. The school's root cause analysis coming from the CNAs, along with previous cycles of research, reveal language as a barrier in developing relationships and communications between the schools and families. Lastly, the survey focused on teachers' perceptions of families' voice and influence into the schools' decision-making processes. As has been mentioned, the two school sites had struggled to have a collective team of school staff and families to address school issues. Therefore, the questions surrounding family voice addressed RQ1.

The semi-structured interview was conducted prior to the beginning of the first family-teacher workshop, and they were conducted with two family participants at BES. The focus group interview was conducted virtually via Zoom, and the meeting took no longer than 60 minutes. The meeting was scheduled at a time that was most convenient

for participants. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were asked for their verbal consent, in addition to the agreement from the consent form that was submitted by the participants via email. Participants were also asked for their consent to have the interview recorded. Study participants used pseudonyms when responding or referring to another person. As the researcher, I informed participants that they did not have to answer questions they did not feel comfortable answering and that they could request to stop the focus group interview at any time. Lastly, I informed participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions being posed; the purpose was to gain better understanding from the participants' responses.

Observations, scripted discussions from the workshops, and field notes were another source of data that I, as the researcher, compiled during the innovation. The data collection from these workshops answered RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 in gaining family and teacher perceptions surrounding family voice. The products developed by the family participants at SES and BES in addressing the constructs from the survey were instrumental in answering RQ2. Additionally, the second family-teacher workshop served as a critical meeting in gathering families' and teachers' collaboration in experiencing family voice in making decisions for school improvement.

A final reflective project was completed and delivered by participants after the innovation. The project was a creative project of participants' choosing to depict their experience from the AR study and innovation. The delivery of these projects was shared at the last workshop with families and teachers. The last workshop also provided data to address RQ3.

Quantitative Data

Pre- and Post-innovation Family Survey. A vital component of this study was the pre- and post-innovation survey (Appendix G-family survey (English version) and Appendix H -family survey (Spanish version)). This survey instrument provided a baseline understanding of the following constructs: (a) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence, (b) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, (c) Educator-Family Trust and (d) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence.

As mentioned, this survey instrument was taken from the University of Washington's Equitable Parent-School Collaboration, and this data tool has been measured and has successfully demonstrated reliability and validity (Ishimaru, et al., 2014). For this study, the instrument was modified by reducing it from an eight-point Likert scale to a five-point Likert scale. This modification helped narrow the selection responses for the family participants. The pre- and post-innovation survey responses were submitted via Qualtrics. As described, the survey focused on understanding families' viewpoints and assessments regarding the four constructs. The Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence component focused on assessing the level of knowledge and confidence families have in relation to supporting their child's education. An example of one of these items reads, "I know how well my child is doing academically in school." The Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate component captures eight items, such as "My home culture and home language are valued by the school." The Educator-Family Trust component focuses on five specific items. For example, one survey item states, "Teachers at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with families." The Parent/ Family Decision-Making and Influence component focuses on four items that

assess families' level of influence in their involvement with school practices. An item within this section reads, "I have opportunities to influence what happens at the school." For the purposes of this action research study, this survey data and its findings from pre- and post-innovation were compared and validated with the qualitative data instruments. The reliability of the surveys is shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Pre- and Post-Innovation Family Surveys: Constructs and Survey Items

Construct	Construct items	Number of items
Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence	Items 1-7	7
Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School	Items 8-15	8
Educator-Family Trust	Items 16-20	5
Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence	Items 21-24	4

Teacher Pre-Survey. Another survey that was utilized for this study was the teacher pre-survey. The survey was a self-developed survey that obtained teachers' perceptions of teacher-family relationships and forms of communication, and the level at which teachers perceived families were allowed to provide voice in the school's decision-making processes. For this study, this data instrument provided greater context in answering RQ1. As an example, the teacher survey included the following Yes/No question: "Do you allow families to provide feedback and input to support and impact your teaching?" If teachers responded Yes, they then expanded on how teachers receive feedback. If teachers responded No, they then expanded on why teachers did not allow for feedback. An additional question that answered RQ1 was, "How important is it for you to empower families to become active participants in the school's decision-making

processes?" The teacher survey was solely provided at the beginning of the study to assess teachers' perceptions prior to the full implementation of the AR project.

Qualitative Data

Teacher Pre-Survey. Though the teacher survey was mentioned when discussing quantitative data sources, the survey also provided qualitative data as teachers responded to how they perceived they were allowing families to provide feedback. Teachers' responses helped to answer RQ1 in outlining the various methods for family feedback. As mentioned, the consent form for the teacher survey can be found in Appendix D. All survey items can be found in Appendix I.

Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview. The focus group interview asked more in-depth questions related to the surrounding themes: interactions with teachers, how welcoming the school was, and their perceptions of whether they were viewed as equal partners with the teachers and school in their child's learning and success. Due to time constraints at SES, the focus group interview was only conducted at BES. As mentioned, the letters of consent for the focus interview can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F. The complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix J and Appendix K. After the interview, I followed up with participants to ask clarifying questions. The interview added more depth in answering RQ1.

Observations/Field Notes. The observations and field notes collected during this study provided both qualitative and quantitative data in relation to the interactions that transpired between teachers and families. Observations and field notes were recorded before, during and after the innovation. Family meetings were conducted via Zoom, except for the final family-teacher meeting, which took place at the school site. The

teacher meetings were all conducted at the school sites. The collaborative meetings where families and teachers came together were conducted via Zoom. A reflective final project was requested from family and teacher participants. The purpose for this last exercise was to gain the participants' understanding of the impact of the innovation, their experience in the study, and possible future efforts in building on this work for the future at both school sites. The data collection was representative of both teachers and families. At SES, family participants were the only members who submitted this project. The reasoning behind this will be explained in Chapter 4.

For observations and field notes, I was cognizant in jotting preliminary codes after each workshop. For observations and field notes, it was important for me to review the workshops after each session, allowing me to reflect, analyze, and extract the data.

Following Saldaña's (2016) form in developing preliminary codes, I opted to create three columns. The first column served for notetaking. The second column was used to jot some preliminary codes from the written notes. Lastly, the last column served to gather final codes from the workshops. Because most of the workshops were conducted via Zoom, I had the ability to go back and review the participants to gather nonverbal cues on how family-family related during workshops, as well as family-teacher workshops. However, the teacher workshops were conducted in person. Thus, field notes were primarily utilized for these workshops.

Observation of CCW Model for Teachers and the Relationship to SES Families. The CCW Model was used during the first teacher workshop. At SES and BES, this activity captured the six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic. This activity focused on teachers' reflections from their

educational journeys as students. The questions developed reflected the CCW framework and the six forms of capital. The following questions were posed to teachers:

- What were the aspirations/dreams your family/parents had for you as you went through school?

- How did your family/parents influence you in your learning?

- Describe any social connections (community support, extended family) that supported your efforts in school.

- How did your family/parents help you navigate through educational spaces?

- How did your family/parents model perseverance and hard work?

- Does your family speak another language, and how have you embraced it as a value and significance?

The recordings from this discussion, along with teachers' hard-copy answers to the questions, added additional data for addressing RQ3. In correlation to this activity, family participants added their voice regarding the following forms of capital as they pertained to supporting their children: aspirational, familial, and linguistic.

To gain clarity, it is important to provide an example of the analysis process. Looking at the second question above, teacher participants shared the following: "family was hard working" and "mom worked hard". At the first family workshops, a family member stated, "I work hard, and it in some ways, it influences my child to do well. I tell them to always work hard." The quotes and discussions coming from these two workshops allowed for the emerged theme of "hard work". The findings from this data assisted in answering RQ3.

Artifact: Post-innovation, reflective final project. The post-innovation reflective project added further data for understanding the influence and impact of this study. Family and teacher participants were provided with a reflective assignment to share at the last workshop. The following questions were posed to all participants:

- What did you learn by participating in this study?

- How do PEC work to improve family-teacher partnerships?

- What can [SES/BES] do to continue this work?

The assignment allowed participants the freedom to reflect and share their learning from and experience of participating in this study. For example, participants were able to create a poem, share pictures that were captured during their experience, or simply write responses to the posing questions. This creative assignment gathered further understanding of the participants' view of the study and its impact. The directions and prompt for this assignment are discussed in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis

This section describes how the quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed. The beginning purpose of the AR study, prior to the implementation of Cycle 3, was to assess families' and teachers' perceptions surrounding family voice in school decision-making processes. The second purpose of this study was to analyze the collaboration of experiencing family voice as families developed a product to address one of the four constructs from the family survey. The last purpose of the AR study was to determine whether family voice expressed through equitable collaboration strengthened family-teacher partnerships.

Quantitative Analysis

For the quantitative portions of this study, the data was collected and analyzed. The pre-innovation family survey results aided families in choosing the construct to contribute family voice for improvement. As mentioned previously, this survey focuses on four main constructs. The analysis of this survey was downloaded from Qualtrics and saved in an Excel file. It is important to note that data was saved in separate files to maintain data integrity. The pre- and post-innovation surveys were imported into the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software, Version 26. Descriptive statistics were used with the pre-innovation and post-innovation surveys. Non-parametric statistics were also tested from the family pre- and post-surveys to analyze if there were differences in each of the four constructs to identify any areas of significance (Salkind & Frey, 2019). Thus, the analysis concentrated on the variance between the pre- and post-innovation family surveys. The teacher pre-survey also answered RQ1 in gaining further clarity about how teachers perceived family voice prior to conducting the innovation.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative components of this study concentrated on understanding the way families and teachers perceived family voice prior to the implementation of the study. The pre-innovation semi-structured focus group interviews addressed RQ1. Additionally, discussions from workshops also provided additional data in answering RQ1.

The focus groups interview was recorded and transcribed via Zoom. HyperRESEARCH was used to organize the qualitative data collected through this focus group interview. The process began by reviewing this family focus group interview and the transcription. The interview was coded, and then the codes were refined and

categorized to draw out themes. To establish credibility for this portion of the study, I

requested that family participants review the themes and meanings to ensure accuracy

through this process. Table 11 will provide a summary of this process.

Table 11

Qualitative Data Analysis Process – Focus Group Interview

Steps	Description
Step 1	Transcription was reviewed.
Step 2	Focus group interview was coded.
Step 3	The coding was refined.
Step 4	The codes were placed into categories of codes.
Step 5	Themes emerged from the coding categories.

Additionally, for the CCW activity, I used HyperRESEARCH to organize the qualitative

data collected from this discussion with SES and BES teachers. Conducting this process

equated to the analysis process performed with the focus group interviews. The teacher

participants (n=38 at SES) were given a sheet of paper where they could respond to the

six questions. Using data from the hard-copies submitted, along with the data from the

workshop discussion, I utilized HyperRESEARCH to organize the codes that emerged.

At SES, 132 codes emerged from the data. These codes were then refined to 54 to

account for the redundancy of like notions. From these codes, 15 themes emerged that

addressed the six forms of capital. The themes from aspirational, familial, and linguistic

capital were then analyzed in conjunction with the first family meeting. At this meeting,

family participants (n=5 at SES) discussed the aspirations they had for their children, how

they influenced their learning, and whether families spoke another language at home.

At BES, the same method of study was used with teacher participants (*n*=24 at BES). At BES, 119 codes emerged from the data. These codes were then refined to 40 to account for the redundancy of like notions. From these codes, 12 themes emerged that addressed the six forms of capital. The themes from aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital were then analyzed in conjunction with the first family meeting. At this meeting, family participants (*n*=7 at BES) discussed the aspirations they had for their children, how they influenced their learning, and whether families spoke another language at home.

Scripted discussions from workshops, along with field notes taken during the innovation, were also coded and analyzed. Additionally, I utilized some participants to review the themes and context to ensure accuracy. The semi-structured focus group interviews, observations, field notes, and a post-reflective assignment were utilized to associate with the phenomenological workings for this AR study.

The Innovation – Applying PEC

As was discussed, schools had not been able to establish true family engagement that welcomed families into the discussions and engaged families to support and provide voice to school policies, programs, and practices. In many instances, schools continued to deliver a one-sided offering of what they envisioned for family engagement, and thus schools missed establishing trusting relationships, which is necessary for the development of equitable collaboration with families. This study's novel approach in applying PEC presented some major opportunities, as well as posing some challenges. The goal in designing this innovation was to build relational trust between families and families and families and teachers. The design enacted an opportunity to supply family

voice in applying PEC. In this process, families were seen as the change agents and leaders in inciting school plans and opportunities that could transform schools' operational practices. The work from the University of Washington's Equitable Parent–School Collaboration research project addressed the core principles and design within this AR study.

To summarize, the purpose of applying PEC was to determine prior perceptions surrounding family voice in schools' decision-making processes. Applying PEC is a change in practice. Concentrating this study on families changed the dynamics of how schools had been designing family engagement programs and initiatives. More specifically, PEC were needed to: a) determine how families and teachers initially perceived family voice at SES and BES, b) to analyze the collaboration between families and teachers when experiencing family voice in the schools' decision-making processes, and c) to investigate how families' and teachers' experiences with family voice in applying PEC strengthened school-family partnerships at these two school sites.

Timeline in Conducting Innovation

The timeline in conducting Cycle 3 was strategically designed to meet the needs of the two school sites. First, teacher and family surveys were disseminated to SES and BES at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. Using data from the survey responses, I then conducted a family focus group interview. I anticipated conducting interviews at both school sites; unfortunately, due to time, SES family participants were unable to participate in a family interview. At BES, a sample size of two family members consented to participate in an interview. The interview was conducted via Zoom at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. Next, I held three sessions with families, and

concurrently facilitated two sessions with teachers. At SES, I was required to compile the first two teacher workshops into one shortened session. Because I was conducting the study at two school sites, a total of six meetings with families alongside three meetings with teachers were conducted. For the next phase of the study, I facilitated two sessions where families and teachers met collectively, and I observed the relationships and experience of family voice in applying PEC. Collectively, at the two school sites, these workshops accounted for four sessions. Additionally, there was a final family-teacher workshop that requested participants reflect on their experience and participation in the AR study. This final reflection project provided data surrounding teacher-family partnerships and whether the application of PEC influenced and strengthened those partnerships.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The purpose of an AR study is to understand a problem of practice and work to address it within a specific context. This study met this requirement and scope at the local level. The sample size of the study was five family participants from SES and seven family participants from BES. At SES, 38 teachers participated in the beginning teacher workshops and seven teachers participated in the family-teacher workshops. At BES, 24 teachers attended and completed participation in the entire study. An adequate sampling worked to generalize findings within the larger population size. This AR project was utilized by external consumers in collating the setting of this study to their specific context, extracting their own conclusions based on the findings for their own purposes. To help strengthen the trustworthiness of this study, I continually assessed the findings to interpret the data. The triangulation in this study proved necessary in gaining full

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understanding of the outcomes. Additionally, the research design worked at improving the process and credibility of the analysis (Creswell, 2015). The data from the pre- and post-survey instruments, semi-structured focus group interviews, scripted discussions and activities conducted during the innovation process, and the final reflective assignments triangulated the study. To improve the trustworthiness of this AR study, potential threats to the validity are discussed in the following section for further clarity.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to address the potential threats to validity that could have impacted this study. The following sections described the areas of concern and what I did to minimize possible threats to the validity of this AR project.

Researcher

As the action researcher for this study, I know I hold biases, whether explicit or implicit. My position as an ADE Family Engagement Specialist carried some additional threats to this work. The complexities of my position in relation to the schools of study also posed their own threat. There was a potential threat where participants viewed me as an outsider looking to make changes. To minimize this threat, it was important for me to be aware of my continual position throughout each phase of the innovation and be cognizant in remaining neutral. It was also imperative for me to build my own relationships with participants, working to remain transparent and neutral. The multiple sources of data aided in substantiating the work and findings from the innovation. In order to bring about change and build equitable collaboration, this study called for data to be coming from family and teacher participants. The data collected by the teachers substantiated and contextualized the findings from the families. Asking some participants

to review the themes and meanings from the focus group interview also strengthened the validity of the study.

Time and Scope

The timing for the AR study required scheduling separate workshops with families and teachers within the same time frame, while ensuring that both schools were given the same amount of time and effort. I stayed organized and monitored schedules on a weekly basis. This project accounted for valuable time from both families and teachers. Time posed a possible threat to this study, especially in working during a tumultuous health pandemic. Therefore, I ensured that each workshop was convenient to participants' schedules; workshops had clear objectives and outcomes that allowed for clear understanding of the following phases of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter 3 concentrated on the research design and the methods used in

conducting the innovation of this action research (AR) study. It outlined the purpose of

examining the two school sites, providing rationale to the overview of applying PEC,

along with discussing the steps used in analyzing the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings

from Cycle 3 of this AR study. Prior to providing the finding analysis, I will discuss each

school's context, and because there are two schools, each school will be presented in

multiple sections. First, I will share the findings from each school site in relation to RQ1,

RQ2, and RQ3. I present the findings from Sunset Elementary School (SES) first, as this

was the first school site that granted me district approval in conducting my study at their

school. I will then present the findings from Bradley Elementary School (BES). To add

more context and depth to the study, I will discuss similar findings that emerged in

working with the two school sites. In addition, I will share the differences that resulted in

investigating SES and BES. In conclusion, I will summarize some key findings that

resulted from the action research study. Again, this study was guided by the following

research questions:

- RQ1: What are families and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide

  voice in the school's decision-making process?

- RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice

  in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1)

  Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence; 2) Welcoming and Culturally

Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family

Decision-Making and Influence?

- o Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct at Sunset

    Elementary School

- o Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct at

    Bradley Elementary School

- RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying

    PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?

SES: Context Prior to the Innovation

Prior to discussing the findings of the study, it is important to contextualize the

work at SES. This elementary school is one of four schools in the Thomas Elementary

School District, and its grades span from Pre-K-8th grade. The school welcomed me in

conducting my study at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. The selection of this

school site also came about through my connection in working with the superintendent of

this district during my internship. SES administration accepted the superintendent's

request and invited me to their school site to conduct the AR study. For the 2021-2022

school year, there were 647 students enrolled at Sunset Elementary School. In the 2021-

2022 Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), the school had written the following as

a desired outcome: "We will establish a site council team based on equitable

collaboration with families, school stakeholders, and the community" (Arizona

Department of Education, 2021). SES administration was working to build capacity, and

they believed that allowing me to conduct my study at their site would assist them in

developing a team of school staff and families.

The first family meeting served as an introductory meeting. The families learned about why I was invited to conduct my study at SES. During this initial meeting, families were given the opportunity to share why they decided to participate in this study, as well as sharing some thoughts about SES. To end the meeting, the families worked on an activity to learn about each other's thoughts and perspectives on assorted topics of interest, such as how many children they had attending SES, their aspirations for their children, and how each person influenced their child(ren)'s learning.

The findings and the research questions they address are summarized in Table 12 providing the emerged themes, assertions, and sources. The full discussion of the findings and supportive evidence will follow the table.

Table 12

SES: Emerged Themes, Assertions, and Sources

RQ1: What are families' and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide voice into the school's decision-making process?		
Themes	**Assertions**	**Sources**
1. Mixed Views Amongst Teachers and Families	1a. Most teachers reported that families provided input in various ways. 1b. A minimum of teachers reported not receiving family input due to uncertainty on how to initiate feedback, time constraints or it was not needed. 1c. Family participants reported that family voice had not occurred at SES. 1d. Families feel uncertain of what results from family surveys. 1e. SES does not account for family schedules.	Teacher survey with open ended responses Observation/Field notes

RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence; 2) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence? Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct at SES		
Themes	**Assertions**	**Sources**
1. Unequal Voices at SES	1a. A family participant led the presentation, but it was teachers who spoke the majority of time during the discussion portion of the second family-teacher meeting.	Observation/Field notes
2. Reverting to a School-Led/School-Centric Model	2a. Teachers shifted from positive to negative messaging. 2b. Teachers partnered in justifying why an item from the family presentation had not worked in the past.	Observation/Field notes

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RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?		
Themes	**Assertions**	**Sources**
1. Shared Beliefs Amongst Teachers and Families	1a. There is correspondence in how teachers and families view the following forms of capital: aspirational, familial, and linguistic.	CCW Model Activity First Family Workshop
2. Enhanced Relationships (Families-Teachers)	2a. Families and teachers enjoyed connecting with each other in a new way, 'human-like conversations'.	Relationship Activity
3. Families-Pursuit for Continual Progress 3.1 Teachers-Inability to participate	3a. Families have seen some movement in having supplied voice in the decision-making process. 3b. Due to exposure to COVID-19, teachers did not attend the final workshop, nor did they submit a project.	Final Reflection Project

Research Question 1: SES

Mixed Views Amongst Teachers and Families

The teacher survey was an instrument used for analysis to address RQ1. As discussed in Chapter 3, descriptive statistics were used from the survey data. The following section details the findings of SES teachers' perceptions of family voice prior to the application of PEC at the school. Table 13 provides the frequency and percentage.

Table 13

SES Teacher Survey: Allowing Families to Provide Feedback

Allowing Families to Provide Feedback	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	89.5%
No	4	10.5%

The teacher survey also captured teachers' perceptions of the importance of empowering families to become active participants in the school's decision-making process. A five-point Likert scale ranging from *unimportant* to *very important* was utilized. Out of 38

teachers surveyed, four felt it was *moderately important*, 12 felt it was *important*, and 21 teachers stated it was *very important*.

Chapter 3 discussed the qualitative data sources used to answer RQ1. As outlined above, most teachers perceived they allowed families to provide feedback. Teachers shared that they obtained feedback during IEP meetings, through ClassDojo, through school surveys, at parent-teacher conferences, and at APTT meetings. The 34 teachers also shared how they received feedback through emails and phone calls. Ms. Stephens responded by stating, "I make it a point to ask parents questions" (SES Family Survey, August 2021).

Four out of the 38 teachers responded that they did not allow families to provide feedback. When the four teachers responded as to why they did not allowed feedback, they shared it had to do with time, uncertainty on how to receive feedback, or that families had never requested a mechanism to provide feedback. Upon further analysis, it was determined that three of the four teachers are White, they had one year to five years of teaching experience, and two of the SES teachers hold a master's degree in education. This additional information provides context, but it did not extract any clear findings with regards to their responses. Although there is a small percentage of teachers who are challenged or do not see the need in receiving family voice, it raised the concern on how teachers can enter the profession and continue to experience a sense of unpreparedness in working with families (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2017; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013).

From family workshops, I gathered additional qualitative data that answered RQ1. On September 20, 2021, I conducted a second workshop with SES families. The meeting was conducted in the evening via Zoom. During the workshop, families focused on

reviewing the results of the family survey. As Ms. Garcia reviewed the Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct, she communicated that she had never been allowed to provide voice in the school's decision-making processes. The family participants shared how the school had disseminated a survey regarding ESSER III funds (ESSER funds are federal funds that provide local recovery needs and efforts in response to COVID-19). Ms. Garcia stated, "When I was doing that survey, I was thinking of the other things that the school could utilize the money for, but [the survey] doesn't give the option to give input or talk about that. You have to pick the options the school thinks" (SES Second Family Workshop, September 20, 2021).

Another concern that was raised during this workshop was in reference to the times in which SES scheduled school-family events. Mrs. Stanley shared how there were few options for families to participate because of time constraints. Mrs. Stanley continued, "Most families are still working when SES schedules PTA meetings. There needs to be more options in order for us to be involved." (SES Second Family Workshop, September 20, 2021).

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative data suggested mixed perceptions coming from teachers and families. The findings from the teacher survey suggested that 89.5% of SES teachers allowed families to provide feedback. As well, approximately 87% of SES teachers felt it was important or very important to empower families in becoming active participants at SES. However, family participants expressed a lack of participation and opportunities to add voice to the school's decision-making process. Additionally, family participants discussed how SES needs to be more flexible with time in scheduling school meetings.

These mixed perceptions suggest the disconnect in how school's interpret family voice in the decision-making processes versus how families interpret their participation. In ways, this further illustrates what Ishimaru (2020) discusses in schools' inability to gather families' perceptions and develop a shared understanding of what it means to have family voice in school's decision-making processes.

Research Question 2: SES

As mentioned, the statements from the family survey served as the main instrument from which families dialogued and provided voice in addressing workable solutions for one of the constructs. At SES, there were a total of 10 family participants who responded to the pre-innovation family survey. Descriptive statistics were applied through Qualtrics to gather the median for each construct.

Table 14

SES Family Survey: Descriptive Analysis – 10 Participants

Construct	Construct Items	Median
Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence	Items 1-7	3.61
Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School	Items 8-15	3.65
Educator-Family Trust	Items 16-20	4.02
Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence	Items 21-24	3.40

Each construct with its corresponding statements was presented at the second family meeting via bar graphs, delineating the representation for each statement by median. Although there was a small sample size of who responded to the pre-innovation family survey, it still served as a basis from which families could work from. At that second family meeting, the families reviewed the survey statements and took time to assess the

averages from each construct. In presenting each construct to the group of families, I provided one minute of wait time per construct, allowing families time to assess the information. When all constructs were delivered to the family participants, I then provided an additional five minutes for each person to review the slides.

   After reviewing the four constructs, I then asked the family participants as to which area they felt they could be providing voice to in elevating/enhancing the work at the school site. Ms. Garcia then spoke and stated that Parent/Family Decision-Making & Influence was her choice. Mrs. Stanley then stated, "Each one of the slides had areas that could be worked on. Parent/Family Decision-Making & Influence had the lowest average score, which has the greatest room for improvement" (SES Second Family Meeting, September 20, 2021). The survey statement, "My school or district helps me develop my leadership skills" stood out within the construct of Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct. This statement received one of the lowest scores, 3.20, not only from this construct, but from the entire family survey. Mrs. Stanley continued to add further voice to this area by going back to the first family meeting, where it was shared that the school was invested in establishing a site council representative of school staff, families, and the community. Mrs. Stanley stated, "If we work on this one, we can work on better communication and more parents can be involved if the school is willing to be more flexible with their time" (SES Second Family Meeting, September 20, 2021). All family members at this meeting agreed that Construct Four: Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence would be their area of focus and their area to provide voice. I ended the meeting by informing the families that I would be sending out a beginning PowerPoint that had the four statements from the construct. I gave the families the opportunity to

begin the thought process by providing input for the document prior to the third family meeting.

The third family meeting took place on September 27, 2021. At this meeting, the families dialogued to address the four statements. The families worked cooperatively in building workable solutions. As mentioned, the families focused on the importance of communication and the flexibility of time. Each family participant provided voice during this meeting by either questioning situations or working in agreement to family's responses. For example, when the group began to address the first statement of the construct, Ms. Garcia asked if all participants utilized ClassDojo. All participants stated they did use the tool daily. With that, Mrs. Stanley then stated, "SES can record the Pan Dulce (Coffee with the Principal) with families and place it into ClassDojo" (SES Third Family Workshop, September 27, 2021). Mrs. Lucero thought that was a great idea. Ms. Garcia also shared, "I never know what is taking place at those meetings. There is no agenda. If a recording is placed in ClassDojo, I would take the time to watch it" (SES Third Family Workshop, September 27, 2021). Dialogue continued in this same manner as the family members envisioned possibilities to enhance SES practices. The final family product can be found in Appendix L.

Unequal Voices at SES

To answer RQ2, field notes and observations were analyzed for quantitative findings. After the family meetings and the collective work in developing a final product to share with teachers, Mrs. Stanley decided to volunteer to present the material to the teachers during the second family-teacher meeting. On November 2, 2021, five families and seven teachers attended the second family-teacher meeting via Zoom. The meeting

addressed some follow-up questions from the first family-teacher meeting. Mrs. Stanley then led the presentation by sharing the families' workable solutions to enhance collaboration efforts at the school site, with a focus on the Parent/Family Decision Making and Influence survey statements. Mrs. Stanley spoke for approximately 10 minutes. Then Ms. Housen began to share positive things she saw coming from the presentation. The discussion following Mrs. Stanley's dissemination of family voice lasted approximately 18 minutes and 40 seconds. During this time, I, as the researcher, accounted for 2 minutes and 5 seconds of that time in probing questions for the participants. This family-teacher workshop is in contrast to what Ishimaru (n.d.) states in having equal voices in collaborative workshops to establish equitable collaboration. Within that time frame, teacher participants accounted for a majority of speaking time. The teachers, particularly Ms. Housen and Ms. Adams, spoke for 14 minutes, 13 seconds (86.73%). Family participants accounted for 2 minutes, 12 seconds (13.27%). Participation and voice within discussion is a critical component in establishing equitable collaboration. As mentioned, equal voices are pertinent in defining balanced power (Ishimaru, et al., 2014; Ishimaru, 2020). Additional findings coming from this discussion will be highlighted below in the qualitative findings.

Reverting to a School-Led/School-Centric Model

The field notes and observations gathered from the second family-teacher meeting, along with prior family meetings, provided qualitative data to answer RQ2. As mentioned, Mrs. Stanley led this meeting, providing workable solutions to address the construct of Parent/Family Decision- Making and Influence. From the family meetings, the family participants perceived that working on the Parent/Family Decision-Making

and Influence could result in the most change, and that it could also help with what this family group was feeling as essential progress for families to become more involved with SES.

As mentioned in the quantitative findings, teachers tended to speak more than families during the second family-teacher meeting. Ms. Housen began by stating, "Those are great! That's very eye opening to see the perspectives on the parents' side" (SES Second Family-Teacher Meeting, November 2, 2021). As Ms. Housen continued to share her perceptions of the input provided by families, the discussion began to transfer from a positive view of families to viewing families' workable solutions as unattainable. For example, Ms. Housen discussed Career Day as a consideration. The teacher mentioned how this had been conducted in the past. However, due to COVID-19, the school has been unable to have family attendance at the school site. Ms. Housen continued to outline other family meetings that were affected due to COVID-19, such as the APTT meetings and having to conduct parent-teacher conferences via phone. Ms. Housen shared how there were some great ideas, but they simply could not be implemented at this time. After Ms. Housen spoke, there was a short pause. I then probed by asking the teacher participants if there was any opportunity to provide any of these meetings virtually. Again, Ms. Housen responded and recalled how virtual opportunities had been used in the past for students to learn more about careers in science and gave Ms. Housen the opportunity to reconsider the possibilities in conducting meetings virtually.

Ms. Housen went on to discuss how much she welcomed the idea of having a monthly newsletter that could be distributed to the SES community. Ms. Housen continued to share the wonderful things that are happening with the Student Council and

how great it would be to gather monthly news on what classrooms were doing. This sense of excitement shifted to frustration as Ms. Housen then shared the problem in making this an actionable outcome: "The problem that I feel is that our district, [SES] specifically, we [SES] can't tell you what we're doing on Friday, let alone next month" (SES Second Family-Teacher Meeting, November 2, 2021).

In the minimal speaking time for family participants, Mrs. Stanley responded to Ms. Housen in a supportive manner with a willingness to create the monthly newsletter. Mrs. Stanley stated how she would simply need any content to be submitted in a timely manner. Mrs. Stanley continued to share that it would not take long to create a monthly newsletter. Ms. Housen welcomed having parents involved in the process, expressing how that would help, as teachers do not have the time to do this work. Ms. Housen again shared her excitement about the possibility of starting this newsletter to celebrate the remarkable things occurring at SES. Ms. Adams then chimed in about her experience in creating a monthly newsletter for her classroom: "I've done a newsletter since the beginning of school, and I have done one every single month" (SES Second Family-Teacher Meeting, November 2, 2021). Ms. Adams then discussed the challenges in distributing the newsletter to families. One of the challenges Ms. Adams expressed was that most of her families do not speak English. Another issue of concern that Ms. Adams raised was that, as a middle-grade teacher, her students typically do not bring anything home for families to read or gain information from. Lastly, Ms. Adams stated, "I consistently have seven out of 20 families looking at it off ClassDojo" (SES Second Family-Teacher Meeting, November 2, 2021).

Ms. Adams called on families from this meeting to assist in providing some viable solutions to these challenges. Ms. Acosta asked if the teachers knew the percentage of parents who were viewing ClassDojo. Ms. Adams stated that it was less than half of her students' families. Ms. Housen also expressed a lack of family views in ClassDojo. (SES Second Family-Teacher Meeting, November 2, 2021). This meeting soon became Ms. Housen and Ms. Adams speaking back and forth about the amount of work and cost involved in incenting students to disseminate information to their families. The demands and hardships of the teacher participants shifted the meeting's focus from the family product to the amount of work that teachers endure.

To summarize, SES families and teachers experiencing family voice began with positive emotions coming from the teachers, specifically Ms. Housen. However, there was a shift from exploring the options provided by families to teachers justifying why some of the workable solutions had failed in the past. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of the amount of time, cost, and efforts to incent the dissemination of material to families consumed a large portion of the second family-teacher meeting. Furthermore, during the discussion time, teacher participants accounted for most of the voice, emphasizing the problems in efforts to initiate families' solutions for improvement. In many respects, this workshop took on what began as a family-led approach and morphed into a school-centric approach (Buchanan & Buchanan, 2017; Ishimaru; 2020; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013; Strier & Katz, 2016). This resulted in a lack of equal voices to ensure equitable collaboration was not established and honored. In ways, the minimal family voice during this meeting suggest that families felt they were not being heard, and therefore, they stopped participating in the discussion. Valuing and validating family voice demonstrates

a form of respect (Calabrese, 2006; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010); however, that did not occur during the second family-teacher workshop. School-centric representation ensued, with teachers gaining control of the discussion, and thus, the principle of balanced power was unattained.

Research Question 3: SES

Shared Beliefs Amongst Families and Teachers

As discussed, Chapter 3 accounts for the findings derived from observations, field notes, and activities conducted during the workshops, which work to answer RQ3. As mentioned, the workshops were conducted via Zoom, except for the teacher workshop and the final family-teacher workshop. Three main forms of data were analyzed, and the following list provides added descriptions of the activities conducted during the workshops:

- CCW Model Activity: This activity was conducted at the first teacher workshop. It captured the six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, social, navigational, resistant, and linguistic. This activity centered on teachers' reflections on their educational journey as a child. The following questions were posed to teachers:

  o What were the aspirations/dreams your family/parents had for you as you went through school?

  o How did your family/parents influence you in your learning?

  o Describe any social connections (community support, extended family) that supported your efforts in school.

  o How did your family/parents help you navigate through educational spaces?

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o How did your family/parents model perseverance and hard work?

o Does your family speak another language, and how have you embraced it as a value and significance?

The discussion and notes gathered from this meeting were also analyzed in relation to the first family meeting, where family participants discussed the aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital.

- Relationship activity: This activity served as an icebreaker to allow family and teacher participants to learn more about each other. Three small groups met in breakout rooms. Each group was composed of teachers and at least one family participant. The activity called for each group to share who from each group: 1) had more than two siblings, 2) liked pineapple on their pizza, 3) shared the same birthday month, 4) liked the same sports team, 5) shared the same hobbies, and 6) spoke more than one language.

- Final reflection project: As mentioned in Chapter 3, the final project gathered family and teacher participants' learning in participating in the study, how it improved family-teacher partnerships, and how the schools could continue the work. This project was not placed as a requirement, but it was encouraged and requested.

The CCW Model activity was conducted at the first and only teacher (n=38) workshop on September 15, 2021. In connection with this activity, the first family meeting was held on August 30, 2021. At this workshop, family participants (n=5) discussed the aspirations they had for their children, how they influenced their learning, and whether families spoke another language at home. From the two separate workshops,

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four common themes surfaced in relation to teachers' reflections and families' aspirations. The themes consisted of aspiring for their children to do well, be successful, be happy, and be college bound. The two workshops expressed the importance of showing hard work and high expectations in influencing children's learning. Finally, the two workshops supplied some depth in understanding teacher and family participants' value of language. Nine of the 38 teachers discussed how their families spoke another language, Spanish. Yet, from the discussions, few mentioned that the families were proud of speaking Spanish, while other teachers expressed how their families either chose not to embrace the language or were never taught the language. In correspondence to the teachers' reflections, three out of five families discussed how they spoke Spanish, but all three family participants mentioned that their children did not grow up speaking Spanish. In conclusion, the findings from these exercises provide common themes and shared thoughts from teacher and family participants; they heighten the level of understanding in how families and teachers relate to the following forms of capital: aspirational, familial, and linguistic. Utilizing the CCW Model (Yosso, 2005) allowed teachers to see the commonalities that SES families have with regard to their own families' influence on their educational paths. These shared beliefs acknowledged the value of families' involvement and influence in their children's learning.

Enhanced Relationships (Families-Teachers)

The relationship activity was conducted at the first SES family-teacher workshop. The purpose of conducting this activity was to assess whether relationships could be built through connections found amongst teacher and family participants. After this activity, Mrs. Lucero shared how fun the experience of working with teachers had been. Ms.

Acosta went further in conveying the similarities between families and teachers. To add to this, Ms. Saucedo stated, "It was really cool that we didn't capture each other like teachers and parents" (SES First Family-Teacher Workshop, October 20, 2021). With the continued conversation, Ms. Saucedo then said, "We were having human-like adult conversations, like 'Oh, I like that show. Oh, I like that show, too.'…We were able to have people-to- people conversations" (SES First Family-Teacher Workshop, October 20, 2021). Finding ways to build family-teacher relationships is critical in building equitable collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Ishimaru et al., 2014; Ishimaru, 2019).When there is evidence of authentic relationships, it strengthens respect between families and teachers, and it enhances the communication.

Families-Pursuit for Continual Progress

For the last family-teacher workshop, family and teacher participants were assigned a final project to share their experience of being a participant in the AR project, to explore whether it improved family-teacher partnerships, and to propose how SES could continue the work. The SES third family-teacher workshop was conducted on November 9, 2021, and it was held at the school site. Family participants arrived at SES and saw a celebration dinner laid out for the participants at SES. Unfortunately, the seven teachers who had been participating in the family-teacher workshops were unable to attend the last meeting due to COVID-19 exposure in several of the classrooms. Although the teachers were unable to attend, the principal of the school decided to attend and converse with the family participants on this date. Family participants submitted their final project via email or communicated it directly to the group at the last workshop.

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Families provided their thoughts from their participation in the AR study. Ms.

Garcia shared the following:

> I am thankful to have been part of this study. Anyone that cares about the future of their children will always want to be a part of their learning journey and also help contribute in any way they can to be successful. This was a great opportunity for the community and families to be heard and also for [SES] to improve the collaboration between families and [SES].

Mrs. Stanley also stated, "I learned that I am not alone in my concerns with the school.

Having teacher and parent input makes it better so both sides of student life are taken into

consideration." Mr. Newsome opted to submit his thoughts through poetry and shared the

following:

Knowledge passed freely
Finds open ears and hearts in,
Collaboration

Principles stand strong
Guiding our thoughts and actions
What's best for our kids

Communication
The key to progress abound
Lays the groundwork here

In the discussion on how SES can continue this work, Ms. Garcia responded with the

following:

> In order for [SES] to improve, they need to make the commitment to be consistent by setting goals based on the principles of equitable collaboration. They need to make the goals specific and follow through to ensure they were achievable. If they were not, they take back to the drawing board and identify areas of improvement or any barriers they may have encountered. Currently I do not see specific ways they strive to involve families. They should make it clear to families what their plan and purpose is and also request that in order for them to be successful, families also need to do their part.

Mrs. Stanley continued in sharing: "[SES] can continue by keeping communication channels between parents and staff open. Keeping open minds on both sides, and listening, not just hearing the concerns" (SES Third Family-Teacher Workshop, November 9, 2021).

In summary, the findings from the data provided areas of growth and opportunities to strengthen family-teacher partnerships. The CCW Model activity and the first family workshop revealed some common themes in how teachers perceived their own educational experience through family support and how the family participants' feel about aspirations, the influence of learning, and the importance and appreciation of language with their children. Families want the best for their children; they have dreams of happiness and success for their children's future. As well, families show sacrifices of hard work (Lopez, 2001) and hold to high expectations for their children. From the two workshops, there was an interest in the similarities between how teacher and family participants viewed languages other than English. The family participants shared how many of them spoke Spanish, but it was not a language that was forced onto their children. The relationship activity worked at enhancing family-teacher partnerships. Families and teachers expressed enjoyment in finding ways to learn, listen, and connect to each other regarding the assorted topics that were shared with each small group. This activity served as a beginning process in establishing family-teacher partnerships.

The responses from the families also indicated that they were glad to be a part of the AR study. The analysis of the final project suggests that family participants have seen some movement in having supplied voice in the decision-making process at SES. It also suggests there is still more work to be done. The fact that only families attended the final

workshop, in addition to being the only ones to submit the final project, is indicative of the circumstances surrounding the school at the time. However, it also displays a lack of commitment from SES. In order to build equitable collaboration, there must be commitment coming from both school staff and families. This will be discussed in greater detail within the similarities and differences between SES and BES.

BES: Context Prior to the Innovation

It is important to reiterate the situational context of Bradley Elementary School prior to the implementation of the AR study. BES is one of 19 elementary schools in the Radford Elementary School District. For the 2021-2022 school year, there were 532 students enrolled at BES. At BES, there is one principal and 24 teachers. The addition of this school to my study came about through my work at the ADE. In September 2020, I and a team of colleagues conducted a virtual family and community engagement professional development. This workshop initiated future conversations with the school leaders, who then requested that I conduct my study at their school. BES has been working to build relationships with students' families. Currently, BES has a school team, representative of school staff members. Like SES, BES wants to build a team that is inclusive of both school staff and family members. For the 2021-2022 school year, a primary objective for BES is to implement practice where "teachers and students will cultivate, foster, and maintain respectful and trusting relationships including community and family culture and traditions, while ensuring to hold each other and students with high expectations of success and achievement."

The first family meeting at BES was conducted in the same manner as it was at SES, apart from including a translator to support the Spanish-speaking families who

attended. At the introductory meeting, family participants learned about the school's purpose for inviting me to conduct my study at BES. During this initial meeting, families were given the opportunity to share why they decided to participate in this study, as well as sharing their thoughts about BES. At the end of the meeting, families worked on an activity to learn about each other's thoughts about and perspectives on assorted topics of interest, including how many children they had attending BES, their aspirations for their children, and how each participant influenced their children's learning.

The findings and the research questions they address are summarized in Table 15 providing the emerged themes, assertions, and sources. The full discussion of the findings and supportive evidence will follow the table.

Table 15

BES: Emerged Themes, Assertions, and Sources

RQ1: What are families and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide voice in the school's decision-making process?

Themes	Assertions	Sources
1. Mixed Views Amongst Teachers and Families	1a. Most teachers reported that families provided input in various ways. 1b. Teachers felt it was unnecessary or were uncertain as to how to administer feedback. 1c. Families reported schools' inability to task them in providing voice for school's decision-making processes.	Teacher survey with open ended responses Observation/Field notes BES Family Interview
2. Sense of Comfort (Families-Teachers) 2.1 Good Relationships (Families-Teachers)	2a. With issues of concern, families felt comfortable in communicating with teachers. 2b. There is a good relationship with office staff who speak Spanish. 2c. With school's decision-making process, families felt BES had not tasked families with that responsibility.	Observation/Field notes BES Family Interview
3. Language Barriers	3a. Spanish speaking family feels comfortable speaking with office staff because they speak Spanish.	BES Family Interview
4. Initial Strength from Family Voice	4a. At BES, there were areas of strength surrounding family voice. 4b. There were still areas to improve upon.	Teacher survey with open ended responses Observation/Field notes

RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1) Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence; 2) Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence?
Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct at BES

Themes	Assertions	Sources
1. Honoring and Celebrating Family Voice	1a. Teachers expressed gratitude from the presentation and product of family voice. 1b. Teachers felt some of the items discussed could be easily implemented.	Observation/Field notes
2. Family Dedication and School Commitment	2a. Families volunteered extra time to complete the family product of voice. 2b. Teachers saw how some of the workable solutions can be easily implemented at BES.	Observation/Field notes

RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experience with family voice in applying PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?

Themes	Assertions	Sources
1. Shared Beliefs Amongst Teachers and Families	1a. There is correspondence in how teachers and families view the following forms of capital: aspirational, familial, and linguistic.	CCW Model Activity First Family Workshop
2. Enhanced Relationships (Families-Teachers)	2a. Families and teachers enjoyed each other's company through laughter and dialogue.	Relationship Activity
3. Families and Teachers-Collaboration for Change	3a. The words depicted from families and teachers, along with the artwork provided areas of growth and opportunities. 3b. This form of collaboration demonstrated the power of voice, power in being heard, and the power for change.	Final Reflection Project

Research Question 1: BES

Mixed Views Amongst Teachers and Families

To address RQ1, the teacher survey served as an instrument for analysis.

Descriptive statistics were used from the survey data. The following section details the

findings of teachers' perceptions prior to the application of PEC.

Table 16

BES Teacher Survey: Allowing Families to Provide Feedback

Allowing Families to Provide Feedback	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	70.83%
No	7	29.17%

The teacher survey also captured teachers' perceptions of the importance of empowering families to become active participants in the school's decision-making process. Out of 24 teachers surveyed, two felt it was *moderately important*, 10 felt it was *important*, and 12 teachers stated it was *very important*.

As mentioned, the teacher survey also supplied qualitative data to answer RQ1. The 17 teacher participants who perceived they allowed families to provide feedback shared that they allow feedback in the following ways: via ClassDojo, via Facebook, during parent-teacher conferences, via text messages, and via emails.

The seven teachers who responded they had not allowed feedback from families commented on their reasoning, which centered on how teachers felt it was unnecessary, never considered receiving feedback from families, or were uncertain how to administer feedback. Upon further analysis, five out of the seven teachers are Hispanic/Latinx. However, four out of the seven teachers were in their first year of teaching at BES. This can attribute to teachers' unawareness on how to accept family voice and influence school's decision-making processes.

From family workshops, I was only able to gather one participants' response. Mrs. Quinn shared the experience of having filled out family surveys in the past. She

went on to state, "There was never any follow-up coming from the school on what happened from the family responses the school actually received" (BES Second Family Workshop, September 8, 2021).

From the family interview, Mrs. Lara shared her perceptions on family voice in school's decision-making processes. When asked, the family participants felt as though the school had never tasked families with that responsibility. Mrs. Lara stated, "You know they'll ask us for school supplies or things like that, or what you know our opinions are on simple things like that, but as far as decision-making, I don't feel that I've had that opportunity" (BES Family Interview, October 6, 2021).

Sense of Comfort (Families-Teachers)

Qualitative data surrounding family perceptions to answer RQ1 were collected from a semi-structured focus group family interview, along with field notes and observations from family workshops. Two family members volunteered to participate in an interview, and when asked whether they preferred having an individual interview or to hold a group interview, they opted for the group interview. The interview was conducted on October 6, 2021, and the translator attended this meeting to translate for one of the family participants. The interview was about family perceptions as to whether they were active participants in the school's decision-making process and whether teachers allowed for family voice to support the learning in the classroom.

From the interview, it became clear that the family participants felt very comfortable in communicating with teachers, specifically when it came to issues of concern. Mrs. Graham shared how there had been an incident that occurred with her youngest child and another student in the class. When Mrs. Graham brought the concern

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to the teacher, the teacher stated how the issue had not been brought to her attention by either of the students. Later, the teacher contacted Mrs. Graham, stating that she would be following up with the two students, ensuring it got handled quickly. Mrs. Graham has a high comfort level in working with this teacher. In ways, this sense of comfort and efforts in building relationships built on trust and respect demonstrates the ability in leading toward equitable collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ishimaru, 2014).

Language as a Barrier

Mrs. Lara shared how language can be an issue when communicating with teachers. She has tried to communicate in English, but she feels more confident in her primary language (Spanish). Therefore, she relies on working with her husband, who does speak English, to communicate with teachers cooperatively. She stated, "If I am by myself, I tend to work with the front office" (BES Family Interview, October 6, 2021). Mrs. Lara has developed a good relationship with the office staff, who speak Spanish. If there are any concerns, Mrs. Lara feels comfortable bringing them to the office staff. Mrs. Lara went on to discuss how she had a similar situation happen with her child as the one Mrs. Graham described. Mrs. Lara considers herself to be a calm person, but when she needs to, she will put pressure on the school to resolve a concern. Mrs. Lara contacted the school immediately when she heard her child was in a fight while on a bus. Mrs. Lara stated how she believed her concern was heard and acted upon: "I felt very comfortable expressing what took place, and I felt really good about being heard and that something was going to be done to take care of the situation, so that it didn't happen again" (BES Family Interview, October 6, 2021).

From the interview, language was identified as a barrier, which had emerged from previous cycles. It continues to pose an issue of concern as non-English speaking families must overcome barriers in order to support their children's learning and school experiences. Families can feel unwelcomed (Perreira et al., 2006) when teachers are unable to communicate with non-English speaking families.

Initial Strength from Family Voice

The findings gathered from this data suggest there were areas of strength in family voice, in addition to some areas to build upon and address. Many teachers expressed how they communicated with and received feedback from families. As well, family participants discussed their level of feeling comfortable when working with teachers to the point where they also felt they were being heard. The findings also suggest there are still areas to improve upon. For example, language surfaced as a barrier in communication between families and teachers. One family participant discussed how she overcame this barrier by relying on her husband, who speaks English. Families' beliefs also signaled the need for BES to have families take part in the school's decision-making processes.

Research Question 2: BES

As mentioned, the family survey statements served as an instrumental for the AR project. There was a total of 13 parents from BES who submitted the pre-innovation family survey. The data results from this survey were then shared with the families during the second family meeting on September 08, 2021, which was held via Zoom. Table 17 displays the median coming from the pre-innovation family survey.

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Table 17

BES Family Survey: Descriptive Analysis – 13 Participants

Construct	Within Construct items	Median
Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence	Items 1-7	3.97
Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School	Items 8-15	3.73
Educator-Family Trust	Items 16-20	3.95
Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence	Items 21-24	3.52

The data was shared in Google slides; each slide displayed a construct with the median range represented in a bar-graph format. After this data was shared with families, I waited for families to review the Google slides via chat in the Zoom meeting. I also waited to see if there were any questions pertaining to the graphs. Mrs. Lara started the conversation by sharing that she thought she could provide voice to the orange areas (Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence) and the gray section (Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate). Mrs. Quinn then shared how she was concentrating on the gray section, particularly on the following statements: "I am invited to visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning," and "The school encourages feedback from parents and the community." As discussed earlier, Mrs. Quinn shared her experience of having filled out family surveys in the past. She continued to share how she never received any updates on whether anything developed from having received responses to the family survey. Ms. Villa agreed with Mrs. Quinn. Ms. Villa then expanded on what Mrs. Quinn shared about survey results but related it to the blue section (Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence) regarding feedback. Mrs.

Fernandez saw how three areas could be supported by the families in this study, but she also agreed that the gray area was a good idea. Mrs. Fernandez is a newer parent at the school and wanted to support the school's efforts to create a more welcoming environment for families. Mrs. Graham also agreed with Mrs. Quinn, but she went further in wanting to make sure to address the cultural barriers at the school. Mrs. Graham stated, "We are the advocates for our children" (BES Second Family Workshop, September 8, 2021).

This information was pertinent as it provided context to what family participants communicated with each other in selecting the construct to work on collectively as a group. The gray section, as was noted from the colored slides, was the construct the families selected. Although it was not the construct with the lowest median range, it was the one that they believed could add value and was needed to begin the work in supporting BES.

The BES third Family workshop took place on September 22, 2021. The families focused on addressing the eight statements of this construct. The families began by addressing the first statement: "I am greeted warmly when I call or visit the school." The families started by listing positive things the school was already doing to meet that first statement. I, as the researcher, probed families by asking them what they envisioned for the school in the future. The family participants worked diligently, but in the one-hour time frame, the families were only able to address the first two statements. At the conclusion of this meeting, the families decided to continue to work on the statements in their own time, adding their considerations. The families volunteered to meet for an extra meeting to discuss the input.

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On September 28, 2021, the families met for a continuation of the third meeting to review their work and provide any additional information. The families had worked on the Google slides prior to meeting on September 28, 2021. During this meeting, families continued to add voice. As the families worked on providing voice to the fifth statement on the construct, Mrs. Fernandez asked the other families: "Is it possible for BES teachers to invite families into a Zoom meeting so families can see what is happening in the classroom" (BES Continued Third Family Workshop, September 28, 2021)? The other families responded with agreement. Mrs. Prieto shared how that could be a great way to see some fun activities taking place in the classroom. Families worked hard in developing their final family product. The final family product can be found in Appendix M.

Honoring and Celebrating Family Voice

The field notes and observations gathered from the second family-teacher workshop, along with prior family meetings, provided qualitative data to answer RQ2. As mentioned, the BES family participants chose to work on the Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct. In the BES second family workshop and the second family-teacher workshop, family participants shared the importance of addressing this particular construct. Family participants also shared how they were ready to address all the constructs. Families expressed their willingness to support BES and voiced workable solutions for improvement (BES Second Family Workshop, September 8, 2021; BES Third Family Workshop, September 22, 2021; BES Continued Third Family Workshop, September 28, 2021).

On October 25, 2021, families led the second family-teacher meeting. This session called for families to voice possibilities to enhance the Welcoming and Culturally

Responsive School Climate construct. Mrs. Quinn volunteered to present the information in English, and Mrs. Lara volunteered to present the same information in Spanish. The families agreed that it was important to share the information in both languages.

After the two families presented this information, they allowed some time for questions. Ms. Townsend thanked the families for the presentation and requested clarification regarding the last bullets for the seventh statement: "Teachers should be more open with students to talk, ask, learn, and share." She wanted to know if this was centered on academics or personal life in relation to students. Ms. Townsend then ended by stating that that was her only concern and that everything else made sense. Mrs. Graham then addressed the question by stating that the statement was academically related: "It is important for teachers to be more open to talk to children looking at cultural identity" (BES Second Family-Teacher Workshop, October 25, 2021). Mrs. Graham then shared how, in the family meeting to develop this product, it was shared that a teacher gave an assignment, but they provided students with options, which allowed more opportunities to personalize the activity.

Family Dedication and School Commitment

During this meeting, teachers continued to share how there were so many things that families shared from their work that could be easily implemented. This meeting provided families the opportunity to voice the possibilities in building a more welcoming and culturally responsive school. As well, teachers provided the space to listen and to see the possibilities that can effect change when families are part of the work.

In summary, the qualitative findings suggest that BES welcomed family voice. The teachers at the second family-teacher workshop expressed gratitude for the families'

work, and the teachers also shared how many of the suggestions could easily be implemented. The collaboration that took place at this meeting signified a shift in having families speak, providing an opportunity for families to share workable solutions to enhance a welcoming and culturally responsive environment. When family voice is celebrated and honored, it echoes what Calabrese (2006) discusses in bridging stakeholders to be seen as equal partners. Additionally, the families exhibited dedication to this work, as this was demonstrated when they volunteered extra time to complete the family project. The experience from the BES second family-teacher workshop provided the lens that Ishimaru (2020) explains in allowing for equal voices, where input is valued and the shared contributions from families and school work together to reach goals for improvement.

Research Question 3: BES

Shared Beliefs Amongst Teachers and Families

As mentioned, Chapter 3 accounts for the findings derived from observations, field notes, and activities conducted during the workshops, which work to answer RQ3. At BES, the workshops were conducted via Zoom, except for the two teacher workshops and the final family-teacher workshop. The three main forms of data: (CCW Model activity, relationship activity, and the final reflection project) were analyzed. The following sections will discuss the findings and outcomes from that analysis.

The CCW Model activity was conducted at the first teacher (n=24) workshop on September 1, 2021. In connection with this activity, the first family meeting was held on August 26, 2021. At this meeting, family participants (n=7) discussed the aspirations they had for their children, how they influenced their learning, and whether families spoke

another language at home. From the two separate workshops, five common themes surfaced in relation to teachers' reflections and families' aspirations. The themes consisted of aspiring for their children to do well, to graduate, to go onto college, to be successful, and to be happy. The two workshops shared the importance of demonstrating support and encouragement as children are going through their educational experiences. Finally, the two workshops supplied some depth in understanding teacher and family participants' value of language. Ten of the 24 teachers discussed how their families spoke another language. There was not only discussion of the value in speaking Spanish, but another teacher expressed the significance of the Patwa and Geechee language. There was only one teacher who discussed how her parents spoke Spanish, but she was never taught the language. In correspondence with the teachers' reflections, five out of seven families discussed how they spoke Spanish. The five families also expressed that, not only did they expect their children to speak Spanish, but they also thought it was highly important to value the language. (BES First Family Workshop, August 26, 2021; BES First Teacher Workshop, September 1, 2021).

It must be noted that, when I was conducting the CCW Model activity with teachers, Mr. Taylor approached me at the end of the workshop. He expressed his disappointment in turning in the hard copy of the activity, sharing how he had not received anything from his own upbringing from his family. However, Mr. Taylor then shared how his own reflection and the meeting discussion allowed him to see that just because families are not present does not mean they do not care. Mr. Taylor shared how this activity was very helpful for him personally and as a teacher (BES First Teacher Workshop, September 1, 2021).

Enhanced Relationships (Families-Teachers)

The relationship activity was conducted at the first BES family-teacher workshop on October 11, 2021. The workshop was conducted via Zoom, and for this activity, I had teachers and families go into four breakout rooms. In setting up the breakout rooms, I ensured there was a Spanish-speaking teacher to translate for the family participants. During this activity, I made sure I entered each room to observe what was taking place between the interactions of families and teachers. As an observer, I entered the rooms hearing laughter and conversations as they learned about each other. When the activity ended, the participants reconvened as a whole group. As the researcher, I asked the group what they thought of the activity. Mr. Perez shared the following: "What I really like is the opportunity to share this kind of stuff with the parents… We don't have many opportunities to talk to the parents" (BES First Family-Teacher Workshop, October 11, 2021). The same teacher went on to share that it was "very rewarding to see how families shared things in common with us. This helps build better communication. The relationships and confidence work both ways" (BES First Family-Teacher Workshop, October 11, 2021).

As the meeting continued, one group shared how there were several members who spoke another language. When I asked, Ms. Sears shared that she spoke Navajo, and Ms. Trejo, one of the parents, shared that she spoke Spanish. It continued with Ms. Carson and Ms. Radcliffe sharing that they spoke Spanish. Ms. Radcliffe further explained that she started speaking Spanish because she knew it was important to learn it in communicating with families. Ms. Radcliffe then stated, "Yo hablo español y estoy aprendiendo y practicando tanto como sea posible" [translation: "I speak Spanish and I

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am learning and practicing as much as possible"] (BES First Family-Teacher Workshop, October 11, 2021).

Families and Teachers-Collaboration for Change

For the last family-teacher workshop at BES, family and teacher participants were assigned a final project to share their experience of being a participant in the AR project, evaluate whether it improved family-teacher partnerships, and propose how the school could continue the work. The last workshop took place on November 15, 2021. The meeting, which was also seen as a celebration, was held at the school site. Due to the concerns surrounding COVID-19, the celebration took place outside, and BES staff took time to set up tables and chairs to ensure they were meeting physically distance protocols.

As the researcher, I took time at the beginning of the meeting to simply walk around and observe what was happening, as families and teachers interacted with each other. I encountered Mrs. Lara and Mr. Perez making introductions and just enjoying the time to speak with each other. Families and teachers sat down together, eating, and holding conversations. At the end of the meeting time, teachers and families provided their final thoughts about the study. Eight out of 24 teachers submitted their thoughts regarding the AR study. Mr. Taylor shared the following:

> What did I learn from this study? Just because I don't hear from families doesn't mean they don't want to be involved. I learned about alternative ways on how I can work with parents… Most parents are willing to learn-whatever it takes!

Ms. Beltran followed: "This solidified that we all want the same things. We have the same goals, and we [teachers] agreed with what families presented. We need to provide more opportunities like this for parents and teachers to work together." Mr. Greenwood then proceeded to say:

I appreciate the families for participating. As a community, as a staff, as a person that lives here, we all want the best for our community, our students, our school. This has been a big step in getting there and building upon what we've done in the past couple of years so thank you for bringing this to BES.

Mr. Perez addressed the family-teacher group by sharing:

We are trying to get closer to parents in a different way. Parents are concerned about our school, up to the point where they want reports from specials. The biggest learning from this is that a school without parents, stakeholders being part of the process, it doesn't get anywhere. The parents that are here, please let others [parents] know we need them so we can make better decisions for their kids.

Ms. Racine then said:

With culture, some families didn't feel represented, which some students feel the same way. Student Council is now involved with this looking at cultural months to become international. Kids can then represent themselves at their school and have more pride in their culture. As a school, the more we instill this in our kids, the more they take ownership and feel proud to be a part of this community. It becomes a circular opportunity.

Finally, Ms. Castillo opted to provide some artforms to reflect her thoughts on the study:

1   2

Ms. Castillo shared how the first image represented what things look like when there are

no connections taking place between school staff and families. As depicted in the image,

the teacher and family are facing in opposite directions. The second image represents

what school-family collaboration can look like by hands shaking in partnership.

As mentioned, families also participated in the providing their final reflection.

Mrs. Lara said:

> I learned strategies on how to interact with parents and teachers. As Ms. Castillo said, 'we want the same things.' I believe something has awakened me to have the confidence to share good ideas and to know that the school is going to listen, and I will be heard. I enjoyed working with other parents.

Mrs. Graham provided the following words via email:

> I was glad I had the chance to participate. As a parent, I am also involved. I am the advocate for my children. I would be happy to continue to support the school. I learned a lot from this experience.

Finally, Mrs. Quinn shared the following at the last family-teacher workshop:

> I feel like I am well-known here, and I have always been a parent who has been involved. I think the biggest area of opportunity is going to be truly bridging that gap between school and home. Like my mom always says, 'You have to be the change that you want to see.' Another area of opportunity is figuring out how to garner more involvement… What can we do to get them here? That's going to be an ongoing pursuit for teachers and all stakeholders. This also goes with the changes the district is doing, and hopefully, those changes will bring parents to being more involved.

In summary, the qualitative findings to answer RQ3 provide insights into the

common areas to reflect upon in regard to the aspirations, influence, and appreciation for

language. In having conducted the CCW Model activity along with the first family

meeting, themes emerged that exhibited the shared beliefs with what teachers reflected

on, as well as how families perceived their roles as caregivers for their children. The

findings from the relationship activity demonstrated an opportunity for families and

teachers to come together and simply learn more about each other in a way that had not

happened in the past. As mentioned from my observations, families and teachers enjoyed

each other's company through laughter and dialogue. As with SES, this demonstrates the abilities in enhancing teacher-family relationships. Finally, the findings from the final reflection provided the participants' views of the study, along with suggestions that the school could already see being implemented to address what families had shared from the second family-teacher workshop (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Ishimaru, 2014; Ishimaru, 2020). This demonstrated the power of voice, the power in being heard, and the power for change.

Similarities between SES and BES

As the researcher, I was fortunate to have been welcomed to conduct my AR project at the two elementary schools. Conducting two studies simultaneously at SES and BES provided me with an opportunity to obtain added data, but it also allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the similarities and differences between the two elementary schools. The following sections outline the similarities and differences at SES and BES.

Demographics: SES and BES

The two elementary schools represented similar demographics. For example, SES had 70% Hispanic/Latinx students and 18% Black or African American students; BES had 60% Hispanic/Latinx and 28% Black or African American students. In analyzing the full data, 95% of students at SES and BES were students of color. Additionally, at SES and BES, the majority of teachers represented teachers of color, 53% at SES and 79% at BES.

The sample size of family participants at SES and BES were also relatively similar. There were 10 family members who began the study at SES, but only five family participants completed the entire study. In comparison, there were 13 family members

who began the study at BES, but only seven family participants completed the entire study.

Family Workshops: Shared Experiences

There were shared experiences in the family meetings conducted with SES families and BES families. From the first to the third family meetings, family participants exhibited growing levels of comfort in how they communicated with each other. At the first family meeting, as family members participated in an icebreaker, families found areas to connect. In addition to asking families about the aspirations and influences they had for their children, I requested they also share a little about themselves by describing their favorite meals. At SES, family members started to find connections, such as the food they ate and how they prepared it, as well as extending the conversation to learn more about each other. This extension demonstrated a willingness to build family-family relationships (Cossyleon, 2018; Hong, 2011; Stovall, 2016; Warren et al., 2011) (SES First Family Workshop, August 30, 2021; BES First Family Workshop, August 26, 2021).

During the second and third family workshops, family participation proved critical in building a product of family voice to share with teachers at the second family-teacher workshop. During these meetings, families worked collectively to provide input on workable solutions to address the statements coming from the family survey. As families discussed their thoughts, family members would echo what someone had shared, providing relevance on how a situation equally impacted them. For example, Mrs. Quinn expressed the importance of addressing the Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct, specifically for parents receiving feedback. Ms. Villa and Mrs.

Graham acknowledged and agreed with what Mrs. Quinn communicated to the group, with Mrs. Graham stating, "You took the words right out of my mouth" (BES Second Family Workshop, September 8, 2021). Equally, at the SES family workshops, families worked cooperatively in creating a product to share with teachers. The significance was in how well the families worked together. They all participated equally in providing thoughts and considerations to support SES and BES in efforts to enhance school practices (BES Third Family Workshop, September 22, 2021; BES Continued Third Family Workshop, September 28, 2021; SES Third Family Workshop, September 27, 2021).

Differences between SES and BES

Translation Required at BES Family Workshops

The research wealth from conducting two studies simultaneously also requires acknowledging the differences that existed between SES and BES. For example, I anticipated that I would need a translator for both SES and BES. However, from the first family workshops, it was determined that a translator would only be required at BES. As mentioned, I speak Spanish, but because I wanted to ensure accuracy and clarity of the communication that occurred, it was important to have a translator at all the BES family workshops. As well, because there was additional time needed for translation during these sessions, it caused meetings to go over the time limits. Yet, what was appreciated was that the BES family participants were willing to stay longer in the Zoom meetings to ensure that they completed the workshop objectives. At SES, all family participants had English as their primary language, and therefore, no translator was required at the SES family workshops.

Differences in School Participation

Another difference between SES and BES was the teacher participation. At SES, the administrator communicated that teachers were extremely busy with the 2021-2022 school year. Due to the issues related to COVID-19, teachers were experiencing a great number of challenges in facilitating classroom instruction, along with ensuring the safety of their students. The SES school administration therefore did not want to overburden their teaching staff. At the end of September 2021, the SES school administrator sent me an email with a list of seven teachers who had volunteered to attend the family-teacher workshops in October. At BES, by contrast, the school administrator embedded the AR study into their school year initiatives. The BES administrator highly encouraged all teachers to participate in the study, specifically working to attend the family-teacher workshops. The full teacher participation was important to BES, which also aided in gathering the additional data to answer the research questions. Chapter 5 will provide more detail about the participation of teachers and school involvement for the AR study.

Significance from Pre- and Post-Innovation Surveys at BES

Knowing there was a small sample size of family participants at both schools, it was still important for me to analyze the pre- and post-innovation surveys for areas of significance. Non-parametric tests were run via SPSS to compare each school site, looking at the scores of each of the four constructs, and determining whether there was a significant difference between the medians from the pre- and post-innovation survey scores.

In the analysis of all constructs, there was no area of significance from pre- to post-innovation surveys from SES (*n=5)* and BES (*n=7*) with regard to three of the

constructs: Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate, Educator-Family Trust, and Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence ($p > .05$). In analyzing the pre-innovation survey from both schools in the area of Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence, there again was no significance in the score. However, with this construct, there was a difference between SES and BES with regard to the post-innovation surveys. In order to demonstrate an area of significance, it is important that $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the value for BES represented a significantly higher score than SES ($p < 0.05$). The difference in Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence from BES from pre- to post-survey can be attributed to how families perceived their level of confidence from having been involved in the AR study, acknowledging the school's dedication to the work and participation, along with the school's influence in beginning to shift and address the workable solutions resulting from family voice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To recapitulate, the purpose of this AR study was to aid two elementary schools (SES and BES) that had been challenged in building family capacity and participation in adding family voice to each school's decision-making processes. Sunset Elementary School (SES) and Bradley Elementary School (BES) wanted to strengthen family-school relationships and build two-way communication. The two elementary schools had been working to establish a collective team of school staff and families, but they had been unsuccessful. Family voice had been non-existent at SES and BES. Therefore, applying principles of equitable collaboration (PEC) concentrated on bringing awareness and understanding of what occurred when family voice addresses an area for school improvement. This simultaneous mixed-methods study was conducted to answer the research questions for Cycle 3 of this investigation.

I start with a summary of the findings of Cycle 3. Next, I will compare the findings of Cycle 3 to the theoretical perspectives and literature reviewed in Chapter 2. I will also provide the implications of this AR study. Finally, I will conclude by discussing possibilities for future cycles of action research, along with this study's influence on my work at the ADE and future possibilities. Again, the three guiding research questions of this AR project are as follows:

- RQ1: What are families' and teachers' perceptions of families' ability to provide voice into the school's decision-making process?

- RQ2: How do families and teachers collaborate when experiencing family voice in making decisions on one of the four constructs for school improvement: (1)

Parent/Family Knowledge and Confidence; 2) Welcoming and Culturally

Responsive School Climate, 3) Educator-Family Trust, and 4) Parent/Family

Decision-Making and Influence?

        o Parent/Family Decision-Making and Influence construct at Sunset

        Elementary School

        o Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate construct at

        Bradley Elementary School

- RQ3: How do families' and teachers' experiences with family voice in applying

    PEC work to strengthen school-family partnerships?

Summary of the Findings

Research Question 1 at SES and BES

        Chapter 4 discussed the findings of Cycle 3; the following provides a brief

summary of the outcomes from SES and BES. In terms of RQ1, the quantitative data

measured the descriptive statistics from the teacher survey that depicted items allowing

for family feedback and providing voice to the decision-making process. With the family

participants, the qualitative data was gathered from the family workshops. From this, the

analysis shared how there were mixed perceptions coming from teachers and families.

Teachers' assumptions in allowing for feedback in comparison to families' perceptions of

schools' lack of providing adequate times for families to be involved portrays the

disconnect in how SES operates versus what families are needing in order to be involved.

Building equitable collaboration (Ishimaru et al., 2014; Ishimaru, 2020) alleviates mixed

perceptions in that it allows families and school staff to come together in a comfortable

and welcoming space to dialogue, share perspectives, and develop shared goals to not

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only enhance family engagement practices but to effect school's decision-making processes.

At BES, there were signs of strength in answering RQ1. The quantitative data represented how teachers were accepting family feedback. As well, in analyzing the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview and family workshops, families expressed a sense of comfort in voicing issues of concern to the teachers and school staff. Although, there were areas of strengths regarding family voice, there were still also areas for improvement, specifically with regard to the school's decision-making processes and helping families overcome language barriers.

Research Question 2 at SES and BES

In terms of RQ2, with teachers' and families' experiencing family voice resulted in two different experiences at SES and BES. At SES, what started off as a positive form of collaboration reverted to a school-led workshop, where teachers discussed their past efforts in communicating with families and provided reasons why certain items from families' product of voice on workable solutions would not be attainable practices. At BES, this was not the outcome. At the second family-teacher workshop, where families and teachers experienced family voice, the collaboration resulted in celebration. Teachers were heard congratulating the family participants for their product of voice and their investment into the work. Further findings suggested that BES teachers could possibly put into practice some items that families had identified in their presentation.

Research Question 3 at SES and BES

In terms of RQ3, the qualitative data analyzed resulted in common themes exhibited in addressing forms of capital, appreciating new ways to build family-teacher

relationships, and assessing participants' perceptions regarding the AR project and its continuance at SES and BES. At SES, the analysis suggested there were gains in associating themes coming from teachers and families. Additionally, the findings also suggested that relationships were strengthened as teacher and family participants actively participated in new ways to build family-teacher relationships. Finally, the family participants discussed the study in applying PEC and how it has resulted in positive movement going forward.

The analysis at BES reciprocated in many ways what was found at SES. The findings at BES suggest there were common themes that emerged in relation to the forms of capital that were shared by family and teacher participants. Additionally, through applying PEC, families and teachers were able to build and strengthen family-teacher relationships. Lastly, at BES, the qualitative data from teacher and family participants suggested there was recognition of the power of family voice; it also suggested there was power for change.

Relationship to Literature and the Existing Research

Chapter 2 introduced Ishimaru's (2020) Equitable Collaboration which was chosen as the theoretical framework for this innovation. Along with this theoretical framework, there were additional theories that served to enhance PEC. The series of workshops provided the opportunity to learn about balanced power, community organizing, fostering relationships, and having families as leaders in the work of school advancement.

Power of Family Voice and the Importance of Balanced Power

In Cycle 3, the power of family voice was crucial in applying PEC and addressing perceptions of prior school and family perceptions, perceptions when family voice is experienced through collaboration and how the experiences of family voice can work in strengthening family-teacher partnerships. There is consistency in this AR study's findings and the principle of balanced power. As Ishimaru (n.d.) explains, school and families must provide equal voices into the school's decision-making processes. As indicated from this AR study, families expressed how schools had not promoted family participation in school's decision-making processes. Additionally, families discussed the lack of opportunities for families to attend school meetings. As Warren (2010) explains, the problem does not reside on the families, but instead, it resides on schools lacking opportunities for families to participate and be engaged in the work.

The AR study also lends to the confirmation to the alignment of the appreciative inquiry (AI) model in resourcing the power of freedom, ensuring that voices are heard, recognized, and acted upon for change (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). At SES, the experience was first witnessed as one of family voice being heard. However, with the second family teacher workshop, SES shifted to a school-led meeting where teachers imparted their past experiences of why certain items from family voice would prove unsuccessful. In contrast, the experiences at BES identified AI in how the collaboration manifested as implementation of school action in response to what teachers heard from families. The celebratory meeting advanced efforts in establishing equitable collaboration, where families could be seen as partners and where family voice could be recognized, heard, and valued. Working to build equitable collaboration equates to shared

responsibility working collaboratively in reaching school goals and improving school practices.

Community Capacity-Organizing to Build Family Participation

The concept of community capacity influenced the AR study and provided some key thoughts for advancing the work. Community capacity describes how meaningful community groups can work through interactions, building upon capital, and working collectively to solve problems (Chaskin, 1999). Although the AR study had a small family sample size, there was evidence of families' abilities to work collectively to find workable solutions in addressing one of the constructs from the family survey. The efforts from SES family and BES family participants produced presentations of family voice.

Community capacity also lends to community organizing theory. Community organizing theory dives deeper in leveraging work to address social issues. Community organizing also identifies the importance of building capacity. In Chapter 1, I shared a salient quote from Arne Duncan that envisions family engagement and the importance of having "too many parents" and having "all parents" as partners working to improve education. The importance of building capacity was expressed by family participants at SES and BES. The family participants expressed the need to continue to build family capacity by sharing their experience from this study with other families. For example, Mrs. Quinn described what the study meant for her as a parent, but what was highlighted from Mrs. Quinn's final reflection project was the need for schools and families to work together to find opportunities to include more families who could increase family involvement.

Fostering Relationships through the CCW Model

Building relationships amongst families and teachers was instrumental to the AR study in applying PEC. Ishimaru (2020) highlights the importance of educators learning Yosso's (2005) CCW Model, enacting the significance of seeing families as assets in relation to the six forms of capital. In developing this activity for teacher participants, it was important for me, as the researcher, to see what developed when teachers reflected on their own educational experience in relation to the six forms of capital. Taking the time for teachers to work through these forms of capital and discussing the teachers' experiences in seeing families as assets to their own education demonstrated teachers' willingness to learn and identify with families.

The AR study continued efforts to build family-teacher relationships. Finding new ways for families and teachers to connect also strengthened the interactions for families and teachers. The opportunities for families and teachers to connect at the first family-teacher workshop created comfortable spaces of respect, demonstrated through listening, and acknowledging what participants shared with each other, which aligns with one of the components of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Fostering relationships served as a catalyst for ensuring the collaboration amongst families and teachers. Applying PEC and its conceptual workshops allowed relationships and learning to occur organically. The CCW Model activity and the relationship activities enhanced efforts for families and teachers to come together in a collaborative effort to address family voice. Making sure there were exercises or activities that provided opportunities to experience authentic relationships was important, as it provided a comfortable environment in allowing for family voice.

Families as Leaders

Schools have not witnessed families as leaders (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Warren, 2010). This AR study in applying PEC called for families to lead and provide voice in bringing about change. For this AR study, families advocated for better school systems, supporting high-quality education for all students (Mediratta, 2008; Stovall, 2016; Warren et al, 2009). The families that participated in this AR study understood the purpose of the study. Through their efforts, the family participants at SES and BES were able to create a product of voice that could then be shared with teachers. Families were engaged in the work, working cooperatively, and allowing for equal voice as families developed a family product. It was greater enhanced when family participants volunteered to lead by presenting the family product of voice at the second family-teacher workshops. In conclusion, it is important to reiterate what Mrs. Graham shared in relation to the role families play: "We are the advocates for our children" (BES Second Family Workshop, September 8, 2021).

Implications of the AR Study

Implications were elicited from this AR study. As the researcher, I welcomed the reflective learning that occurred in conducting this investigation. This section will outline the implications drawn from this AR study, focusing on the areas of commitment, the importance in allowing for flexibility, ensuring the opportunities to build relationships with the participants, and the continued language barrier that can exist among families and teachers.

Lessons Learned

There were several lessons learned throughout my study. First, serving as the Lead Family & Community Engagement Specialist at the ADE, it allowed me to continue to strengthen my research as I conducted my study at the two elementary schools. An implication drawn from this AR study surrounds the area of commitment. Understanding that my study was conducted outside of my working environment aided my efforts in connecting this study to the context of my work in supporting local educational agencies in their family and community engagement. Commitment to the study surfaced as a lesson learned. Finding a school that not only welcomed me to conduct my study but to commit to participating was critical. The cycles of research posed issues of concern, but they also demonstrated areas of commitment. For example, in early cycles of research, I was welcomed at a school site; however, because of the lack of school commitment and the occurrence of COVID-19 health concerns, I had to find a school site that would be committed to the study and willing to participate, even during the time of COVID-19. I was pleasantly surprised to establish a relationship where two school sites welcomed me in conducting my AR study.

Welcoming my study was one thing, but it was just as important to establish an understanding of commitment. At one of the school sites, school administration took the time to fully comprehend what was going to be required of the school, how families were going to play a role in the study, and how the administration would work in establishing this study as a priority. The opportunity to have an in-depth conversation with administration allowed me, from the beginning, to schedule and plan this study at the school site.

The allowance of flexibility also serves as an implication for practice. As the researcher for this AR study, the flexibility of time proved critical in establishing family participation. For example, I had to schedule the first family workshops at SES and BES a couple of times, as I learned that the scheduled time did not work for all family members who were considering serving as participants. It was also important for me to be as flexible with my time. At the beginning of this study, it required a lot of time in working with families' schedules in ensuring participation. At the end of the first family workshops, I placed the responsibility for scheduling the next two family workshops on the families. I wanted families to collectively decide the meeting dates. This allowance of flexibility of time was essential in meeting families' need for time and participation.

The concept of time is important to highlight from Cycle 3. This cycle of research was conducted from August to November 2021. This AR study required time as a group of families addressed a construct from the family survey. This work could service a longitudinal study in researching what can result when family participants address all constructs of the family survey, taking time to dialogue with other families and school staff, having families work in generating voice by envisioning workable solutions that could ultimately improve school practices. In the end, this work has the potential to enact new school or school district policies that can ultimately impact family engagement and school improvement.

Building relationships at the school sites logically served as an implication of this AR study. As the researcher, it was important for me to build relationships with the school staff at SES and BES. Receiving district IRB approval from SES prior to BES allowed me to find opportunities to serve at the school site, volunteer my time, and

interact with the school staff. At BES, I had a shortened period to build the relationships; however, there was a quick sense of comfort, on my part, in interacting with the school staff.

It was equally important to build relationships with the families at SES and BES. At SES, I held meetings with families prior to Cycle 3 to allow families to learn more about me. As well, the first family workshop served as an opportunity for me to build relationships with families. The first workshop generated conversations about families' roles and responsibilities, and from these beginning conversations, the family participants learned about my role as a Latina mother and my efforts in supporting my daughter through her educational journey. These relationships built trust and confidence in what families then shared throughout the AR study.

The last critical area that needs to be discussed is in reference to language barriers that continue to exist amongst school staff and families. From previous cycles to what was shared in Cycle 3, the ability to communicate, when families speak another language has deterred relationships and communication. It is essential for schools to continue to find methods of communication that can be easily accessible and quickly transfer from one language to the next. For this AR study, I shared a translation application, Microsoft Translator, to teachers at one of the teacher workshops. This application could service schools and families. In reflection, I see this application being a resource in building relationships and communication. However, it requires time to practice and implement this at a school site.

Limitations of the AR Study

On reflection of my AR study, there are limitations that are worth mentioning. As discussed in previous chapters, COVID-19 impacted the research and influenced the design in conducting Cycle 3 of the action research study. The health crisis placed families and schools with a direct impact in shifting educational structures and operations. Schools and families had to prioritize their efforts in supporting this transition in educational practice. The limitations due to COVID-19 presented me with challenges in visiting the two school sites on a more frequent basis.

Being seen as an outsider conducting this work at two school sites also placed limitations to my study. There were extra challenges in building relationships with the school staff and families. However, with the initial workshops, I quickly found areas of comfort and that hopefully transitioned onto my participants. An additional limitation, as the researcher, was the challenge in serving as a facilitator and researcher simultaneously during this AR study. There were minor instances where my focus as a facilitator during workshops prevented me from taking notes or capturing instant non-verbal cues from participants. Fortunately, all workshops were recorded via Zoom, which allowed me to go back and record data.

Time was also seen as a limitation for this study. As a researcher, I had to be as flexible with my time. As mentioned, I worked on families' time. I scheduled the first meetings with families, but moving forward, the families scheduled the continued workshops. I had to ensure that my availability during this timeframe was as flexible as possible. As well, in conducting workshops with the two school sites, the school's assigned the workshops. At SES, due to other priorities and teacher requirements, I was

only given one workshop date instead of the anticipated two teacher workshops. In addition, not having full teacher participation at SES also provided limitations in that it only accounted for a portion of the teaching staff's perceptions during the collaboration workshops with families. Overall, the limitations did present some challenges, but it did not deter from capturing results from the research design and the participation from the families and teachers.

Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations serve as guidance in supporting the two school sites where this AR study was conducted. The process that occurred during Cycle 3 was the first stage in an innovation to shift practice, ensuring family voice was witnessed, but where it could also be recognized within school's decision-making processes. The two school sites must continue to develop equitable collaboration with families. Therefore, these recommendations address the results from the AR study, along with an intentional plan for each school site to not only establish equitable collaboration but to sustain it.

Policy Recommendations for SES

SES addressed family engagement as a high priority, wanting to have families and community members serving on their school team and collectively working together in identifying shared goals for improvement. However, to do this work purposefully, it requires a strong commitment from the entire school staff. To continue to build from Cycle 3, it is recommended that more teachers participate in collaborative sessions with the families who contributed to the study. The issue of time presented a factor for teacher participation. Therefore, it will require school administration to think critically and

creatively on ways to have families and teachers meet at a time that is conducive to all members.

The family participants discussed the need to build capacity. Therefore, I would recommend that the family participants meet with the school administrator to schedule a time where family participants can present their learning from the AR study. As well, the family participants can invite families to participate in these conversations. Although family voice was witnessed at the school site, building family capacity could only enhance school's efforts in establishing equitable collaboration, where a diversity of families is meeting collectively with school staff. This collaboration will strengthen school-family relationships and communication and could ultimately result in stronger school-family partnerships.

Policy Recommendations for BES

BES expressed their challenges surrounding family engagement prior to the implementation of Cycle 3. The school site had been working to build stronger relationships and communication with families. This priority was documented in the school's Comprehensive Needs Assessment. In fact, the school had placed family engagement as one of its main initiatives for the past two years. BES invited me to conduct the study at their school site, as they wanted to see if this work could build a collaborative team that meets Title I-A requirements, where families can partner and contribute voice into the school's improvement plans.

Policy recommendations stem from the outcomes that resulted from the action research study. The emerging themes derived from the family-teacher collaboration were built on honoring and celebrating family voice. Teachers welcomed the families'

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workable solutions and celebrated all the hard work in sharing out the presentation. As well, the teachers also identified the value of language and shared how some of the solutions could be easily implemented into school's practice. With this understanding, I recommend that teachers follow through on what they have said to the families. With the second family-teacher collaboration workshop, the teachers are merely demonstrating performative response to family voice. It is important for the family participants to see that family voice was truly recognized and heard by witnessing first-hand some workable solutions transfer into school's implementations and practices.

For BES family participants, I recommend that they continue to build capacity. The family participants dedicated their time in developing workable solutions to enhance the construct centered on Welcoming and Culturally Responsive School Climate. In fact, the family participants wanted to continue this work in addressing the other four constructs. To see this come to fruition, it is important for the school to act in addressing some of the families' workable solutions from the AR study. When BES acts, families can then inform other families on how valuable family voice can be and how it can bring about positive changes. I recommend that the family participants continue to connect, finding times to meet in order to strengthen their own relationships. Additionally, I recommend that the school administration support the family participants in finding welcoming spaces where families can share and lead discussions with the school community on what transpired from this research. If these recommendations are met, it can help strengthen school-family partnerships. Once that is established, I recommend that the school staff and families schedule meetings where families and teachers can work collaboratively to address the additional constructs from the family survey.

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AR Study and Future Cycles of Research

This research investigated two school sites as they applied the principles of equitable collaboration (PEC), explored family voice through collaboration, and examined whether it strengthened school-family partnerships. The Equitable Collaboration Framework, coupled with the Community Cultural Wealth Model and the Appreciative Inquiry Model, served as the theoretical framework for this action research study. Results suggested positive shifts in school staff identifying families as assets, but it also cautioned the notions in schools reverting to a school-centric approach. Implications point to the concerted efforts that must occur at school sites, recognizing the significance of family voice and seeing families as shared partners in school improvement. School-family collaboration requires commitment and support, ensuring that all families are invited and providing voice into school's decision-making processes.

There are a few considerations on how I foresee future cycles of research. First, I see the possibility in going back to the two school sites, Sunset Elementary School, and Bradley Elementary School. I would conduct the same innovation where families would address an additional construct from the family survey. However, this time, I would add two family-teacher workshops to include the discussion on how the workable solutions could be implemented at the school sites in addition to scheduling another workshop to discuss the outcomes of the schools' implementations to the solutions. This can ultimately lead to a longitudinal study. Another future cycle of research could center on Title I-A family engagement policies developed at the school level and district level. Taking time to investigate the development of those policies would service the school's Title I-A programs. Lastly, another consideration for future cycles would be to

concentrate on marginalized families within a school community. As mentioned, racial disparities in education have prevented family engagement from being seen as the lever for equity. Researching marginalized families and sharing the counternarratives has the possibility of adding greater depth in advancing equity by building family engagement that embraces diversity.

AR Study and its Influence at the ADE

This AR study served as an exploration of the problem of practice, and thus, family voice was instrumental and embedded in applying PEC. The topic of family engagement and the call for family voice have influenced my work at the ADE, and this study affirms the passion I have as a parent and an educator. The title of this AR study sheds light on the power of family voice and how it can influence school-family practice.

This study provided the opportunity to conduct a family survey and sanctioning family participants to contend with the survey statements in finding workable solutions to support and strengthen schools' efforts and practices for improvement. The AR study solely concentrated on one construct from the family survey per school. This grants the opportunity for SES and BES, specifically along with SES families and BES families, to continue to build and address the additional three constructs, continuing to leverage this work moving forward.

I have obtained some anecdotal outcomes that have transpired from this AR study. At SES, a family participant expressed how this study enhanced school-family communication. The family participant has gone further in stating how, "the school has addressed some of the possible solutions we developed during the study" (email correspondence). As well, the family participant shared how the study has influenced her

level of confidence in working with the school site. At BES, a family participant replied in an email to say how BES has been more receptive in "listening and learning more in what families have to say" (email correspondence). The family participant critically addressed the importance of this study, and they also acknowledged that this work requires time and effort, not only from school staff but from the family members within the school community (email correspondence).

Within my own work at the ADE, I have already infused my learning from my AR study into my professional developments. I am working to shift the narrative away from a deficit model of thinking to an asset-based approach, calling for the power of family voice and understanding how families need to be welcomed to sit at the table, be seen as leaders with equal voice, and collaboratively work to advance schools' goals and efforts for improvement. Spotlighting the power of family voice in applying PEC conjures opportunities for change in enhancing family engagement efforts toward positively influencing school practices.

Conclusion

This action research study shed light on the importance of family voice. Too often, schools have been practicing on a traditional school-centric approach in how they handle family engagement and school improvement efforts. The principles of equitable collaboration must be uncovered and discussed at school sites, elevating these necessary components to connect schools and families into a collaborative environment. This environment works collectively in identifying shared goals and responsibilities within school's decision-making processes.

The AR study worked to investigate what happens when the power of family voice is witnessed. The project provided areas of strengths, but it also cautioned the notions in reverting to the traditional stance of a school-centric model. Therefore, school staff must continue to build on their learning, shifting deficit views of families to instead identify all the strengths and assets that families can bring into the discussion for school improvement. Families need to know that schools need family voice to exist within the decision-making processes. Family voice must not only be heard, but it must also be recognized and built into school practice and implementation. The AR study conducted at the two elementary school sites serves as an innovation for change. For these two school sites to develop and sustain equitable collaboration, it requires a continued plan of commitment and time. The families from this AR study demonstrated signs that they were ready to continue this work. Therefore, it is equally important for the schools to prioritize this work in conjunction with families and continue to build school-family capacity. Change requires hard work, but it is from this work that ultimately strengthens school-family partnerships and positively impacts an entire school community.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Ying-Chih Chen
Division of Teacher Preparation - Tempe -
████████████████

Dear Ying-Chih Chen:
On 9/11/2020 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review: Initial Study	
Title: Paradigm Shift to Advancing Equity through Family- Teacher Partnerships	
Investigator: Ying-Chih Chen	
IRB ID: STUDY00012461	
Funding: None	
Grant Title: None	
Grant ID: None	
Documents Reviewed:	• Administrators interview questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Consent for Family Focus Group Interviews- revision, Category: Consent Form; • Consent for Family Survey-revision, Category: Consent Form; • Consent for Teacher Survey-updated-second revised, Category: Consent Form; • Consent for Teachers Focus Group Interviews- revision, Category: Consent Form; • Consent Form-School Administrators, Category: Consent Form; • Consent from Tolleson ESD to conduct study, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • District Approval Letter-signed-Leader of the District Research Review Committee, Category: Off- site authorizations (school permission, other IRB
	approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Family Focus Group Interview Questions , Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Family Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

	• Introduction-Families, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Introduction-School Staff, Category: Recruitment Materials; • R Alvara Protocol-revisions made, Category: IRB Protocol; • Teacher Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Teachers Focus Group Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 9/11/2020.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Raquel Alvara Raquel Alvara

APPENDIX B

FAMILY CONSENT LETTER (ENGLISH)

Dear Family Member of ██████████ Elementary School:

My name is Raquel Alvara, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on family & community engagement. The purpose of this online survey is to better understand families' perceptions on family & community engagement, and the relationships and communications that occur with teachers and ██████████ Elementary School.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in this survey concerning your perceptions on family & community engagement. We anticipate this survey taking no more than 30 minutes total.

<u>Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be compensated $99. Please note, to receive the funds, you must attend each family meeting, a total of 6, for this research study. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.</u>

The benefit to your participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on perceptions on family & community engagement. Survey responses will also inform future iterations of the study and family & community engagement. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of teachers and families. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. In completing the survey, the research team is seeking participants for a focus group interview and will ask for the survey participant's name and contact information for that purpose.
Please note, complete confidentiality or indeed anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the participation that will be needed to determine the focus group participants for follow up interviews.

Please know that there will be an additional consent form for participating in the focus group interviews. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Ying-Chih Chen at ██████████ or ██████████ or Raquel Alvara at ██████████ or ██████████.

Thank you,

Raquel Alvara, Doctoral Student
Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, Professor, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Ying-Chih Chen at ██████████ or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at ██████████.
Clicking on the link below serves as consent to participate in the study:

APPENDIX C

FAMILY CONSENT LETTER (SPANISH)

Estimado(a) miembro de la familia de un/a estudiante de la Escuela ████████ Primaria:

Mi nombre es Raquel Alvara y soy estudiante de doctorado en Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College (Facultad de la formación de maestros) (MLFTC) de la Universidad del Estado Arizona (ASU). Estoy trabajando bajo la dirección del Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, miembro de la facultad de MLFTC. Estamos realizando un estudio de investigación sobre la participación de la familia y la comunidad. El propósito de esta encuesta en línea es comprender mejor las percepciones de las familias sobre la participación de la familia y la comunidad, y las relaciones y comunicaciones que ocurren con los maestros y la escuela primaria.

Pedimos su ayuda, que incluirá su participación en esta encuesta sobre sus percepciones sobre la participación de la familia y la comunidad. Anticipamos que esta encuesta no tomará más de 30 minutos en total.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Si elige participar, se le compensará con $99. Tenga en cuenta que para recibir los fondos, debe asistir a cada reunión familiar, un total de 7, para este estudio de investigación. Debe tener 18 años o más para participar.

El beneficio de su participación es la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre las percepciones sobre la participación de la familia y la comunidad. Las respuestas de la encuesta también informarán las versiones futuras del estudio y la participación de la familia y la comunidad. Por lo tanto, existe la posibilidad de mejorar las experiencias de los profesores y las familias. No hay riesgos ni molestias previsibles en su participación.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. El equipo de investigación solicita participantes para entrevistas en grupos de discusión debido a lo cual se piden tanto el nombre de los participantes como los datos para contactarlos en este cuestionario.

Tenga en cuenta que habrá un formulario de consentimiento adicional para participar en las entrevistas de los grupos de discusión. Los resultados de este estudio se pueden utilizar en informes, presentaciones o publicaciones.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio de investigación, comuníquese con el equipo de investigación: Ying-Chih Chen a ████████████ o ████████████ o Raquel Alvara a ████████████ o ████████████

Gracias,

Raquel Alvara, Estudiante Doctoral
Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, Profesor, MLFTC

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, o si siente que ha sido puesto en riesgo, puede comunicarse con Ying-Chih Chen al ████████████ o con el Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de Sujetos Humanos a través de la Oficina de Integridad y Aseguramiento de la Investigación de ASU al ████████████.
Hacer clic en el enlace a continuación implica su consentimiento para participar en el estudio:

APPENDIX D

TEACHER CONSENT LETTER

Dear ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Staff Member:

My name is Raquel Alvara, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on family & community engagement. The purpose of this online survey is to better understand the current situation with respect to teachers' perceptions on family & community engagement, and the relationships and communications built with families.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in this survey concerning your perceptions on family & community engagement. We anticipate this survey taking no more than 20 minutes total.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on perceptions on family & community engagement. Survey responses will also inform future iterations of the study and family & community engagement. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of teachers. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Please note, complete confidentiality or indeed anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the participation that will be needed to determine the focus group participants for follow up interviews. I will be asking for teacher names as part of the survey. The names will be replaced with a study ID and further data can be linked with that study ID, thereafter. I will maintain a master list until the data are linked.

Please know that there will be an additional consent form for participating in the focus group interviews. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications.

Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Ying-Chih Chen at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or Raquel Alvara at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Thank you,

Raquel Alvara, Doctoral Student
Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, Professor, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Ying-Chih Chen at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Clicking on the link below serves as consent to participate in the study:

APPENDIX E

FAMILY INTERVIEW CONSENT LETTER (ENGLISH)

Dear Family Member of ▮▮▮▮▮▮ Elementary School:

My name is Raquel Alvara, and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting research on the topic of family & community engagement. This focus group interview is for school families to share their thoughts and perceptions surrounding the relationships and communications with the teachers at ▮▮▮▮▮ Elementary School.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in a focus group interview. Please know that your participation in this focus group interview is on a voluntary basis. This focus group session will take about 1 hour and is being conducted via Zoom meeting. I would like to record this session. The session will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the meeting to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Please note, complete confidentiality or indeed anonymity cannot be guaranteed because of the participation of others in the focus group. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to share your thoughts and perceptions surrounding the relationships and communications that occur with the teachers and school. Your feedback will provide some valuable thoughts on how to enhance and strengthen family-teacher partnerships. Interview responses will also inform future iterations of the study and family & community engagement at this district. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Ying-Chih Chen at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or Raquel Alvara at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Thank you,

Raquel Alvara, ASU Doctoral Student
Ying-Chih Chen, Professor, ASU-MLFTC
Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study and will let me audio record your responses by verbally indicating and signing your consent.
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact Ying-Chih Chen at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Please sign and return this to me via email. I give consent for my participation in this study.

Name (Print): _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

FAMILY INTERVIEW CONSENT LETTER (SPANISH)

Estimado(a) familiar de la Escuela Primaria ▮▮▮▮▮▮:

Mi nombre es Raquel Alvara y soy estudiante de doctorado en el Colegio de Maestros Mary Lou Fulton (MLFTC) de la Universidad del Estado de Arizona (ASU). Estoy trabajando bajo la dirección del Dr. Ying-Chih Chen, miembro de la facultad de MLFTC. Estamos realizando una investigación sobre el tema de la participación de la familia y la comunidad. Esta entrevista de grupo de enfoque es para que las familias de la escuela compartan sus pensamientos y percepciones sobre las relaciones y comunicaciones con los maestros de la Escuela Primaria ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Estamos solicitando su ayuda, que incluirá su participación en una entrevista de grupo focal. Tenga en cuenta que su participación en esta entrevista de grupo de enfoque es voluntaria. Esta sesión de grupo focal durará aproximadamente 1 hora y se llevará a cabo a través de una reunión de Zoom. Me gustaría grabar esta sesión. La sesión no se grabará sin su permiso. Por favor, avíseme si no desea que se grabe la reunión; también puede cambiar de opinión después de que comience la entrevista, hágamelo saber.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Tenga en cuenta que no se puede garantizar la total confidencialidad o, de hecho, el anonimato debido a la participación de otros en el grupo de enfoque. Si elige no participar o retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento, no habrá penalización alguna. Debe tener 18 años o más para participar.

El beneficio de la participación es la oportunidad de compartir sus pensamientos y percepciones sobre las relaciones y comunicaciones que ocurren con los maestros y la escuela. Sus comentarios proporcionarán algunas ideas valiosas sobre cómo mejorar y fortalecer las asociaciones entre la familia y el maestro. Las respuestas a las entrevistas también informarán las iteraciones futuras del estudio y la participación de la familia y la comunidad en este distrito. No hay riesgos ni molestias previsibles en su participación.

Sus respuestas serán confidenciales. Los resultados de este estudio se pueden usar en informes, presentaciones o publicaciones, pero no se usará su nombre.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio de investigación, comuníquese con el equipo de investigación -Ying-Chih Chen a ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ o ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ o Raquel Alvara a ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ o ▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Gracias,

Raquel Alvara, Estudiante de Doctorado ASU
Ying-Chih Chen, Profesor, ASU-MLFTC

Por favor, avíseme si desea ser parte del estudio y me permitirá grabar en audio sus respuestas indicando verbalmente y firmando su consentimiento.
Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, o si siente que ha sido puesto en riesgo, puede comunicarse con Ying-Chih Chen al ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ o con el Presidente de la Junta de Revisión Institucional de Sujetos Humanos a través de la Oficina de Integridad y Aseguramiento de la Investigación de ASU al ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.
Firme y devuelva la parte inferior (se puede enviar por correo electrónico)
Doy mi consentimiento para mi participación en este estudio.

Nombre (Letra Imprenta): _____ Fecha:_____

APPENDIX G

FAMILY SURVEY (ENGLISH)

Please provide your name: _____

Please provide your email address or phone number: _____

(The research team will use your name and contact information to contact you for a possible follow-up focus group interview. Your name and contact information will be kept confidential and only the research team will have access to this information.)

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell me the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

1. I know special programs available at school or the district to help my child.
   1 – Strongly Disagree
   2 – Disagree
   3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
   4 – Agree
   5 – Strongly Agree

2. I know how well my child is doing academically in school.
   1 – Strongly Disagree
   2 – Disagree
   3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
   4 – Agree
   5 – Strongly Agree

3. I understand the steps my child needs to take in order to go to college.
   1 – Strongly Disagree
   2 – Disagree
   3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
   4 – Agree
   5 – Strongly Agree

4. I know the community resources to help my child.
   1 – Strongly Disagree
   2 – Disagree
   3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
   4 – Agree
   5 – Strongly Agree

5. I know who to talk with at school regarding my concerns or questions about my child's education.
   1 – Strongly Disagree
   2 – Disagree
   3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
   4 – Agree
   5 – Strongly Agree

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please mark your level of confidence about each of the following statements:

6. I feel confident in my ability to support my child's learning at home.
    1 – Very Poor
    2 – Poor
    3 – Fair
    4 – Good
    5 – Excellent

7. I feel confident in my ability to make sure my child's school meets my child's learning needs.
    1 – Very Poor
    2 – Poor
    3 – Fair
    4 – Good
    5 – Excellent

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

8. I am greeted warmly when I call or visit the school.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

9. My home culture and home language are valued by the school.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

10. I trust staff/administrators at my child's school.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

11. Teachers work closely with me to meet my child's needs.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

12. I am invited to visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree

4 – Agree
5 – Strongly Agree

13. The school encourages feedback from parents and the community.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

14. The school provides opportunities to strengthen my child's cultural identity.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

15. At this school, staff and parents can overcome cultural barriers.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please mark your level of respect regarding the following statement:

16. You feel respected by most of your child's teachers.
    1 – Very Poor
    2 – Poor
    3 – Fair
    4 – Good
    5 – Excellent

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

17. Teachers and/or staff at this school treat parents as equal partners in educating children.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

18. I feel my input is valued by most of my child's teachers.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

19. Teachers and/or staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with families.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

20. Teachers and/or staff at this school really try to understand families' problems and concerns.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

Question: On a scale of 1 to 5, please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:

21. I am involved in making the important decisions in my child's school.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

22. I have the opportunities to influence what happens at the school.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

23. My school or district helps me develop my leadership skills.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

24. My school involves me in meaningful ways.
    1 – Strongly Disagree
    2 – Disagree
    3 – Neither Disagree or Agree
    4 – Agree
    5 – Strongly Agree

Gender. (Mark only one)

Male _____

Female _____

Other (please specify): _____

What year were you born? _____

How many children do you have attending ███████ Elementary School? ____

How many adults live in your household? _____

What is the last grade you completed in school? (optional)

      a. Some grade school
      b. Some high school
      c. Graduated from high school
      d. Some college/trade/technical school
      e. Graduated college/trade/technical school
      f. Graduate/Professional

What is your race/ethnicity? Mark as many as appropriate.

      a. Latino/Hispanic
      b. Black or African American
      c. White
      d. Asian or Asian American
      e. American Indian or Alaska Native
      f. Native Hawaiian – Pacific Islander
      g. Other (please specify): _____

What is your annual household income? (optional)

    a. Less than $10,000
    b. $10,000 - $14,999
    c. $15,000 - $24,999
    d. $25,000 - $34,999
    e. $35,000 - $49,999
    f. $50,000 - $74,999
    g. $75,000 +

APPENDIX H

FAMILY SURVEY (SPANISH)

Por favor proporcione su nombre: _____

Proporcione su dirección de correo electrónico o número de teléfono: _____

El equipo de investigación utilizará su nombre y datos para contactarlo para una posible entrevista en grupos de discusión. Su nombre y datos de contacto serán confidenciales ya que solo los miembros del equipo de investigación van a tener acceso a esa información.

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, dígame en qué medida está en desacuerdo o de acuerdo con cada una de las siguientes declaraciones:

1. Conozco programas especiales disponibles en la escuela o el distrito para ayudar a mi hijo(a).
    1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
    2 - En desacuerdo
    3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
    4 - De acuerdo
    5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

2. Sé lo bien que le está yendo a mi hijo(a) académicamente en la escuela.
    1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
    2 - En desacuerdo
    3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
    4 - De acuerdo
    5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

3. Entiendo los pasos que mi hijo(a) debe seguir para poder ir a la universidad.
    1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
    2 - En desacuerdo
    3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
    4 - De acuerdo
    5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

4. Conozco los recursos de la comunidad para ayudar a mi hijo(a).
    1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
    2 - En desacuerdo
    3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
    4 - De acuerdo
    5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

5. Sé con quién hablar en la escuela sobre mis inquietudes o preguntas sobre la educación de mi hijo(a).
    1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
    2 - En desacuerdo
    3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
    4 - De acuerdo
    5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, marque su nivel de confianza sobre cada una de las siguientes declaraciones:

6. Confío en mi capacidad para apoyar el aprendizaje de mi hijo(a) en casa.
   - 1 - Muy pobre
   - 2 - Pobre
   - 3 - Regular
   - 4 - Bueno
   - 5 - Excelente

7. Confío en mi capacidad para asegurarme de que la escuela de mi hijo(a) satisfaga sus necesidades de aprendizaje.
   - 1 - Muy pobre
   - 2 - Pobre
   - 3 - Regular
   - 4 - Bueno
   - 5 - Excelente

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, marque su nivel de confianza sobre cada una de las siguientes declaraciones:

8. Me saludan calurosamente cuando llamo o visito la escuela.
   - 1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
   - 2 - En desacuerdo
   - 3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
   - 4 - De acuerdo
   - 5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

9. La escuela valora mi cultura y mi idioma materno.
   - 1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
   - 2 - En desacuerdo
   - 3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
   - 4 - De acuerdo
   - 5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

10. Confío en el personal / administradores de la escuela de mi hijo(a).
   - 1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
   - 2 - En desacuerdo
   - 3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
   - 4 - De acuerdo
   - 5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

11. Los maestros trabajan en estrecha colaboración conmigo para satisfacer las necesidades de mi hijo(a).
   - 1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
   - 2 - En desacuerdo
   - 3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
   - 4 - De acuerdo
   - 5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

12. Me invitan a visitar las aulas para observar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.
   - 1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
   - 2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

13. La escuela fomenta la retroalimentación de los padres y la comunidad.
  1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  2 - En desacuerdo
  3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
  4 - De acuerdo
  5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

14. La escuela brinda oportunidades para fortalecer la identidad cultural de mi hijo(a).
  1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  2 - En desacuerdo
  3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
  4 - De acuerdo
  5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

15. En esta escuela, el personal y los padres pueden superar las barreras culturales.
  1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  2 - En desacuerdo
  3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
  4 - De acuerdo
  5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, por favor marque su nivel de respeto con respecto a la siguiente declaración:

16. Se siente respetado por la mayoría de los maestros de su hijo.
  1 - Muy pobre
  2 - Pobre
  3 - Regular
  4 - Bueno
  5 - Excelente

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, por favor dígame en qué medida está en desacuerdo o de acuerdo con cada una de las siguientes afirmaciones:

17. Los maestros y / o el personal de esta escuela tratan a los padres como socios iguales en la educación de los niños.
  1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  2 - En desacuerdo
  3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo
  4 - De acuerdo
  5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

18. Siento que la mayoría de los maestros de mi hijo valoran mi opinión.
  1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  2 - En desacuerdo
  3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

19. Los maestros y / o el personal de esta escuela trabajan arduamente para construir relaciones de confianza con las familias.

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

20.. Los maestros y / o el personal de esta escuela realmente tratan de comprender los problemas y preocupaciones de las familias.

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

Pregunta: En una escala del 1 al 5, marque su nivel de confianza sobre cada una de las siguientes declaraciones:

21. Participo en la toma de decisiones importantes en la escuela de mi hijo(a).

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

22. Tengo la oportunidad de influir en lo que sucede en la escuela.

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

23. Mi escuela o distrito me ayuda a desarrollar mis habilidades de liderazgo.

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

24. Mi escuela me involucra de manera significativa.

1 - Totalmente en desacuerdo

2 - En desacuerdo

3 - Ni en desacuerdo ni de acuerdo

4 - De acuerdo

5 - Totalmente de acuerdo

Género. (Marque solo uno)

Masculino _____

Femenina _____

Otro (Por favor especifique): _____

¿En qué año nació? _____

¿Cuántos hijos tiene en la escuela primaria ███████ ? _____

¿Cuántos adultos viven en su hogar? _____

¿Cuál es el último grado que completó en la escuela?
- g. Alguna escuela primaria
- h. Alguna escuela secundaria
- i. Graduado de la secundaria
- j. Alguna escuela Universitaria / comercial / técnica
- k. Graduado de Universidad / comercio / escuela técnica
- l. Graduado / Profesional

¿Cuál es su raza / etnia? Marque tantas como corresponda.

- h. Latino/Hispano
- i. Negro o Afroamericano
- j. Blanco
- k. Asiático o Asiático Americano
- l. Indio Americano o Nativo de Alaska
- m. Nativo de Hawái - Isleño del Pacífico
- n. Otro (Por favor especifique): _____

¿Cuál es tu ingreso anual?

- h. Menos de $10,000
- i. $10,000 - $14,999
- j. $15,000 - $24,999
- k. $25,000 - $34,999
- l. $35,000 - $49,999
- m. $50,000 - $74,999
- n. $75,000 +

APPENDIX I

TEACHER SURVEY

1. Please provide your name.

_____

2. Please provide your email address.

_____

3. Gender. (Mark only one)

   Male _____

   Female _____

   Other (please specify): _____

4. How many years have you been teaching at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ Elementary School (including this year)?

   - Up to 3 years
   - 3 – 5 years
   - 6 – 8 years
   - 9 – 11 years
   - 12 + years

5. What is your race/ethnicity? Mark as many as appropriate.

   - Latino/Hispanic
   - Black or African American
   - White
   - Asian or Asian American
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Native Hawaiian – Pacific Islander
   - Other (please specify): _____

6. What is your highest level of education?

   - Bachelor's Degree
   - Master's Degree
   - Doctorate

7. Currently, what is your comfort level in partnering with all families to support student learning?

   1 – Very Poor
   2 – Poor
   3 – Fair
   4 – Good
   5 – Excellent

8. How would you characterize your relationships with your students' families?

   1 – I have very poor relationships with my students' families.
   2 – I have poor relationships with my students' families.
   3 – I have fair relationships with my students' families.
   4 – I have good relationships with my students' families.
   5 – I have excellent relationships with my students' families.

9. For successful student performance, how important are the relationships you build with the students' families?

   1 – Unimportant
   2 – Slightly Important
   3 – Moderately Important
   4 – Important
   5 – Very Important

10. Do some of your students' families speak a primary language other than English?

    - Yes
    - No

11. Currently, what is your comfort level in partnering with families who speak a primary language other than English to support student learning?

    1 – Very Poor
    2 – Poor
    3 – Fair
    4 – Good
    5 – Excellent

12. I feel confident in speaking a language other than English if it assists in the communication with students' families.

    1 – Very Poor
    2 – Poor
    3 – Fair
    4 – Good
    5 – Excellent

13. What is the best method of communication that families prefer?

    - Email
    - Note sent home
    - Phone call
    - Class Dojo
    - Social Media
    - Other (Please specify): _____

14. How many school – family events did you attend last year at ▉▉▉▉▉▉ Elementary School?

- I was not a teacher at ▉▉▉▉ last year.
- 1 event
- 2 – 4 events
- 5 + events

15. ▉▉▉▉▉▉ Elementary School provides numerous opportunities for school-family events, but family attendance tends to be low. What do you perceive is the reason for low attendance at these events?

_____

16. Do you allow families to provide feedback and input to support and impact your teaching?

- Yes
- No

17. If you answered "Yes" to #16, Please share how you obtain the feedback and input.

_____

If you answered "No" to #16, Please share why you do not obtain feedback and input.

_____

18. How important is it for you to empower families to become active participants in the school's decision-making processes?

1 – Unimportant
2 – Slightly Important
3 – Moderately Important
4 – Important
5 – Very Important

APPENDIX J

FAMILY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ENGLISH)

1. How many children do you have attending ▮▮▮▮▮ Elementary School?

2. What do you like about this school?

3. How comfortable are you in working with your child's teacher?
   How would you define your relationship with your child's teacher?

4. Please share an interaction with your child's teacher or a school event you found beneficial in building a relationship with the teacher/school.
   Why was this beneficial?

5. What other school events work on strengthening family-school-teacher relationships?
   What events provide you with resources to support your child's learning at home?

6. How welcoming is the teacher/school? Provide examples.

7. How do teachers and the school allow for family voice (feedback and input) to support and impact the learning that is taking place in the classrooms?

8. How does the school allow for you to be an active participant in the school's decision-making process?
   How does the teacher allow for you to be an active participant in the decisions made in the classroom?

9. What is the most effective communication you receive from the teacher/school?
   If you are a parent who is confident in speaking in another language than English, what do you do to communicate with your child's teacher/school?

10. ▮▮▮▮▮ School is working to cultivate family & community relationships that support student learning. What do you believe needs to happen in beginning this work?

APPENDIX K

FAMILY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SPANISH)

1. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene en ██████?

2. ¿Qué le gusta de esta escuela?

3. ¿Qué tan cómodo(a) se siente trabajando con el maestro(a) de su hijo(a)?
   ¿Cómo definiría su relación con el maestro(a) de su hijo(a)?

4. Comparta una interacción con el maestro(a) de su hijo(a) o un evento escolar que haya encontrado beneficioso para establecer una relación con el maestro(a) / escuela.
   ¿Por qué fue esto beneficioso?

5. ¿Qué otros eventos escolares sirven para fortalecer las relaciones entre la familia, la escuela / maestro(a)?
   ¿Qué eventos le brindan recursos para apoyar el aprendizaje de su hijo(a) en casa?

6. ¿Qué tan acogedor es el maestro(a) / la escuela? Proporcione ejemplos.

7. ¿Cómo permiten los maestros y la escuela la voz de la familia (retroalimentación y aportes) para apoyar e impactar el aprendizaje que está teniendo lugar en las aulas?

8. ¿Cómo le permite la escuela ser un participante activo en el proceso de toma de decisiones de la escuela?
   ¿Cómo le permite el profesor ser un participante activo en las decisiones que se toman en el aula?

9. ¿Cuál es la comunicación más efectiva que recibe del maestro(a) / escuela?
   Si usted es un padre que confía en hablar en otro idioma que no sea el inglés, ¿qué hace para comunicarse con el maestro(a) o la escuela de su hijo?

10. Su escuela está buscando desarrollar e implementar una comunicación efectiva, uniforme y bidireccional entre las partes interesadas, la familia y la comunidad para apoyar el aprendizaje de los estudiantes. ¿Qué cree que debe suceder al comenzar este trabajo?

APPENDIX L

SES: FAMILY PRESENTATION
PARENT/FAMILY DECISION-MAKING AND INFLUENCE

1. I am involved in making the important decisions in my child's school. Considerations: •Better Communication such as •ClassDojo-advance notice on school events, resources •Zoom (monthly meetings) •Group Discussions (Smaller group options to receive feedback) (sharing additional options) •Monthly newsletters •Coffee with the Principal (record it and place it on the ClassDojo) •.25 position for Public Relations (assisting with social media) •Parent-Teacher Conferences (additional insight and communication from families-teachers) What decisions are important to you? Topics to consider: Curriculum, food, enrichment programs, grading policies, and how SES deal with social and emotional situations as they come close to high school.	**2. I have the opportunities to influence what happens at the school.** Considerations: •District funding; where and what is it being used on? •Who is involved in the school board, and what kind of influence do they have on school decision making? •District Meetings (Governing Board) -dates •School Teams (School representation, family & community members) Advance notice Evening meetings (Going back to previous slide that speaks to communication)
3. My school or district helps me develop my leadership skills. Considerations: never have been part of any leadership skills at my district. •Community based resources •Career Day •Having parents be a Helper •Giving more communication on the free resources (such as Stanford Harmony to address social-emotional well-being) •Parent needs and resources •Sharing classroom goals with the teacher	**4. My school involves me in meaningful ways.** Considerations: "A school striving for parent involvement often leads with its mouth-identifying projects, needs and goals and then telling how they can contribute. A school striving for parent engagement on the other hand leads with its ears-listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about! I believe both are needed to not only make your child successful but also your chance to make a difference!"

APPENDIX M

BES: FAMILY PRESENTATION
WELCOMING AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

1. I am greeted warmly when I call or visit the school.
- The front office is very welcoming, and I would like that to continue.
- I feel welcomed by all staff, even when I don't know them by name.
- I have no concerns in this area. I've never had a problem when calling of visiting the school.

Considerations:
- Having an additional staff to cover the office area before and after school.

2. My home culture and home language are valued by the school.
- Students are able to sing songs in Spanish (during Christmas)
- Parent teacher conferences (translators are available)

What the school can consider:
- Staff that represents the identity of my children needs to grow
- For Black History Month, the same people get represented. Do the research to identify new people. Ask the class who they know or want to learn about.
- Teachers can also share their cultural identity to learn about culture.
- Celebrating cultural traditions and providing the history and sharing it in the classroom.
- One teacher: Receiving a handout from a teacher that shared the country's traditions, culture, food, etc.
- Spirit Week can also be more productive in relation to addressing culture.

3. I trust staff/administrators at my child's school.
- It starts with communication as a whole (home-school). Meet the Teacher Night. Teachers hand out information, handouts, and allows time for questions. Communication between the parent-teacher is important.
- Teachers can then follow up with the families that do not attend (utilizing Class Dojo).
- One teacher shared their personal story-education, how to contact the teacher, very professional, and very welcoming.
- Would like to have more updates on what is taking place in the classroom and how I can support my child.
- Monthly curriculum update-art teacher, music teacher-At the Parent-Teacher, parents can provide feedback on what is taking place and what can be improved.

1. Me saludan calurosamente cuando llamo o visito la escuela.
· La oficina principal es muy acogedora y me gustaría que eso continuara.
· Me siento bienvenido por todo el personal, incluso cuando no los conozco por su nombre.
· No me preocupa este ámbito. Nunca he tenido un problema al llamar de visitar la escuela.

Consideraciones:
· Tener un personal adicional para cubrir el área de la oficina antes y después de la escuela.

2. Mi cultura materna y el idioma del hogar son valorados por la escuela.
· Los estudiantes son capaces de cantar canciones en español l (durante la Navidad)
· Conferencias de padres y maestros (hay traductores disponibles)

Lo que la escuela puede considerar:
· El personal que representa la identidad de mis hijos necesita crecer
· Para el Mes de la Historia Negra, las mismas personas están representadas. Haga la investigación para identificar nuevas personas. Pregúntele a la clase a quién conoce o de quién quiere aprender.
· Los maestros también pueden compartir su identidad cultural para aprender sobre la cultura.
· Celebrar las tradiciones culturales y proporcionar la historia y compartirla en el aula.
· Un maestro: Recibir un folleto de un maestro que compartió las tradiciones, la cultura, la comida, etc. del país.
· La Semana del Espíritu también puede ser más productiva en relación con el abordamiento de la cultura.

3. Confío en el personal / administradores de la escuela de mi hijo(a).
● Comienza con la comunicación en su conjunto (hogar-escuela). Conoce la Noche del Maestro. Los maestros entregan información, folletos y da tiempo para preguntas. La comunicación entre el padre y el maestro es importante.

● Los maestros pueden hacer un seguimiento con las familias que no asisten (utilizando Class Dojo).
● Un maestro compartió su historia personal-educación, cómo contactar al maestro, muy profesional y muy acogedor.
● Me gustaría tener más actualizaciones sobre lo que está sucediendo en el aula y cómo puedo apoyar a mi hijo.

● Actualización mensual del currículo-maestro de arte, maestro de música-En el padre-maestro, los padres pueden proporcionar retroalimentación sobre lo que está sucediendo y lo que se puede mejorar.

4. Teachers work closely with me to meet my child's needs. • The teachers should continue to reach out to parents even if they are met with opposition. This outreach is one of the many pieces needed to bridge the gap between home and school. • Before teachers finalize grades and share them during parent-teacher conferences, communicate the areas of need for my children in advance by sending home a note identifying these areas, along with daily copies of extra exercises they could be working on at home. • Teachers should talk with parents to work as a team so that students do not feel attacked. • Teachers should communicate us more about how our kids been doing in school. or let us know or our kids have homework.	**4. Los maestros trabajan en estrecha colaboración conmigo para satisfacer las necesidades de mi hijo(a).** • Los maestros deben continuar contactando a los padres incluso si se encuentran con oposición. Este alcance es una de las muchas piezas necesarias para cerrar la brecha entre el hogar y la escuela, ej. • Antes de que los maestros finalicen las calificaciones y las compartan durante las conferencias de padres y maestros, comunique las áreas de necesidad de mis hijos con anticipación enviando a casa una nota que identifique estas áreas, junto con copias diarias de ejercicios adicionales en los que podrían estar trabajando en casa. • Los maestros deben hablar con los padres para trabajar en equipo para que los estudiantes no se sientan atacados. • Los maestros deberían comunicarnos más sobre cómo les ha ido a nuestros hijos en la escuela. o háganoslo saber o nuestros hijos tienen tarea.
5. I am invited to visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning. • Zoom meetings to allow families to enter the classroom • ClassDojo-sharing classroom lessons on video once a month • Parents helping with items needed in the classroom • Parents could be invited for a 15-20 classroom visit to observe an activity such as: a science project, student presentations, or listen to student-led read-aloud. • Teachers could have two days a week for parents to sign-up to visit classrooms rather than having one parent at a time.	**5. Me invitan a visitar las aulas para observar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje.** • Reuniones de Zoom para permitir que las familias ingresen al aula • ClassDojo-compartir lecciones en el aula en video una vez al mes • Padres que ayudan con los artículos necesarios en el aula • Los padres podrían ser invitados a una visita al aula de 15 a 20 para observar una actividad como: un proyecto de ciencias, presentaciones de estudiantes o escuchar la lectura en voz alta dirigida por los estudiantes. • Los maestros podrían tener dos días a la semana para que los padres se inscriban para visitar las aulas en lugar de tener un padre a la vez.
6. The school encourages feedback from parents and the community. • For many years, BBE would send home parent surveys but not once, was there ever a follow up with what the results yield. What is the point of hearing the parent concerns if we are unable to pinpoint the changes that were made from the survey if any? To improve in this area, they should ask for parent AND student feedback. Our children are the ones who are at the school and with the instructors 8hrs of the day. The students have voices as well and their feedback is just as important. This may reveal some areas of opportunity for some teachers as it's not always the student has room to grow. • During parent-teacher conferences, teachers can have space for parents to write down questions and/or suggestions. • Consider having parents get involved and participate as this is a great support for students and their learning.	**6. La escuela fomenta la retroalimentación de los padres y la comunidad.** ● Durante muchos años, BBE enviaba encuestas a los padres a casa, pero no una sola vez, si alguna vez hubo un seguimiento con lo que arrojan los resultados. ¿Cuál es el punto de escuchar las preocupaciones de los padres si no podemos identificar los cambios que se hicieron de la encuesta, si los hay? Para mejorar en esta área, deben solicitar comentarios de los padres y estudiantes. Nuestros hijos son los que están en la escuela y con los instructores las 8hrs del día. Los estudiantes también tienen voces y sus comentarios son igual de importantes. Esto puede revelar algunas áreas de oportunidad para algunos maestros, ya que no siempre el estudiante tiene espacio para crecer. ● Durante las conferencias de padres y maestros, los maestros pueden tener espacio para que los padres escriban preguntas y / o sugerencias. ● Considere la posibilidad de que los padres se involucren y participen, ya que este es un gran apoyo para los estudiantes y su aprendizaje.

7. The school provides opportunities to strengthen my child's cultural identity. • I disagree on this one as there aren't many teachers at this school that look like myself and my family. Maybe they can incorporate more ideas or achievements of individuals who look like them (the kids) and not just during black or Hispanic history month. • Teachers could share the main topics being discussed/taught during the week, because many times parents are not made aware of the good things being taught at school. • Teachers should be more open with students to talk, ask, learn, and share.	**7. La escuela brinda oportunidades para fortalecer la identidad cultural de mi hijo(a).** • No estoy de acuerdo en esto, ya que no hay muchos maestros en esta escuela que se parezcan a mí y a mi familia. Tal vez puedan incorporar más ideas o logros de personas que se parecen a ellos (los niños) y no solo durante el mes de la historia negra o hispana. • Los maestros podrían compartir los principales temas que se discuten / enseñan durante la semana, porque muchas veces los padres no son conscientes de las cosas buenas que se enseñan en la escuela. • Los maestros deben ser más abiertos con los estudiantes para hablar, preguntar, aprender y compartir.
8. At this school, staff and parents can overcome cultural barriers. • I believe that it is possible to overcome cultural barriers with some work. One way to do this is by showing an interest in what the kids like and make learning fun. Meet them on their level sometimes. It's not always an authoritative situation. • Cultural barriers can be overcome. Currently translators are offered during meetings and English classes are being offered although additional information has not been shared. • Present information more clearly, for example through a short video, using short phrases, and pictures/images so that all families can better understand.	**8. En esta escuela, el personal y los padres pueden superar las barreras culturales.** • Creo que es posible superar las barreras culturales con algún trabajo. Una forma de hacerlo es mostrando interés en lo que les gusta a los niños y hacer que el aprendizaje sea divertido. Encuérdalos en su nivel a veces. No siempre es una situación autoritaria. • Las barreras culturales pueden ser superadas. Actualmente se ofrecen traductores durante las reuniones y se ofrecen clases de inglés, aunque no se ha compartido información adicional. • Presente la información más claramente, por ejemplo, a través de un video corto, usando frases cortas e imágenes / imágenes para que todas las familias puedan entender mejor.