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Cultural Proficiency of High School Leaders in Relation to English Learners and Their Families in an Urban School District

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Cultural Proficiency of High School Leaders in Relation to
English Learners and Their Families in an Urban School District

A Dissertation Presented
by
Johanna Elizabeth Fawcett

Submitted to the Graduate School of Education
Lesley University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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PhD Educational Studies
Educational Leadership Specialization
SCHOOL LEADERS’ CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

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Graduate School of Education
Lesley University

PhD Educational Studies
Educational Leadership Specialization

Approvals
In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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the impact it can have on school leaders. I am eternally indebted to all of you for your commitment to me and my research.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all past, present, and future English learners and their families. I cannot undo past injustices or prejudices that you have faced, but I can dedicate my life to making schools a place where you are welcomed, respected, and valued.

Personal Mission Statement

To provide all students with the education they deserve, I will:

Speak up for those who have no voice,

Defend those whom others would make victims of their circumstances,

Stand side-by-side with those whom others would prefer to ignore,

Fight for those who have been stripped of all power,

Protect their unique identities,

Care for their social, personal, and academic needs,

Guard them from those who would do intentional harm,

Listen to their needs and dreams,

Respect their opinions and world views,

Acknowledge the differences between us and not disregard the importance of those differences,

Admire their courage to continue, no matter how difficult the journey,

And, most importantly,

I will treat all students with the dignity they deserve.
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders in addressing the needs of English learners (ELs) and their families at a public, urban, grades 9 through 12 high school in Massachusetts, a Level 3 school in a Level 3 district with an achievement gap for ELs. The ELs and their families represented one-fourth of the high school’s student population; the school was located in a linguistically and culturally diverse community. The participants for this study were the 16 educational leaders of this high school. Three research questions guided this study: (a) To what degree do school leaders in an urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of ELs and their families?, (2) How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with respect to ELs and their families?, and (3) What professional preparation have leaders at this high school received in cultural proficiency to address the current needs of ELs and their families? This research was based on the theoretical model of the cultural proficiency continuum (Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013). Data were collected in three ways: through a survey, individual follow-up interviews, and direct observation. Findings revealed that the school leaders were not yet addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of families of ELs; did not yet use culturally and linguistically proficient practices; and had not yet experienced professional development that could translate into appropriate practice. Recommendations include changing school policy, addressing the achievement gap of ELs, building relationships with EL families, providing opportunities for research-based professional development, and enabling school leaders to become culturally proficient and responsive to all students and families in the school community.

Keywords: cultural proficiency, school leaders, English learners, families of ELs
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Chapter I: Introduction

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

Emma Lazarus (1883)

The words quoted above are engraved on the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of compassion and acceptance for all. Today it is not only the shores of the United States that must welcome and embrace all newcomers; educators, too, must hold open the golden door of education, with acceptance and caring, for both students and their families. Educators and educational leaders have the challenge of developing partnerships with the ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse families in their school communities. In order to encourage school districts to engage with families, the federal government included in the national Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) and the preceding No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) a specific section (Section 1118) entitled “parental involvement.” Section 1118 of ESSA outlines the measures schools are to take to develop and sustain parental involvement by all families, specifically those belonging to groups which historically have been marginalized. Section 1118 states “particular attention [needs to be given] to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background” (ESSA, 2015). Although ESSA stipulates what actions schools must take to
develop partnerships with families, it gives no guidance as to how school districts are to begin to understand and connect with all families in a diverse population. Many school districts have continued to view parental involvement in terms of a White, European American, English-speaking, middle-class model (Linse, 2011), often to the exclusion of the families of English learners; this perspective all too frequently results in rejection of cultural beliefs regarding parental involvement (Doucet, 2011).

In working for a decade with adult English learners, many of whom were parents of school-aged children, I began to develop a better understanding of the biases, concerns, and obstacles these parents confronted. The adult English learners in my classes came from many countries, including Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Korea, Lebanon, and Turkey. Although my adult students came from different countries and spoke different languages, they discussed how language, work, and family obligations posed obstacles to becoming involved in their children’s education. Yet they also talked about the strictness with which they enforced homework completion, the conversations they had with their children about the importance of education, and the family time they spent together with immediate and extended family members. During the decade that I worked with adult English Learners, I was also working with high school-aged English Learners. I observed that at school functions designed for parents, the families of my students were frequently absent. Knowing that the adult students I worked with wanted to be involved in school activities and in their children’s education, I became interested in understanding why my EL students’ families did not attend school functions. I also began to question how it would be possible for schools and families to work together in a partnership, since parents from every culture have their own ways of educating their children.
In conversations with my adult students, I realized that the obstacles they spoke of posed genuine barriers to their involvement in their children’s education in my school community. A major obstacle these parents of EL children mentioned was their own inability to speak English with confidence. When school leaders neglect to acknowledge the various obstacles faced by families of English learners (ELs), and fail to develop programs and activities accessible to those families, they discourage their participation in the school community and in their children’s academic life.

To acknowledge the obstacles faced by the families of ELs, school leaders need first to identify and understand their positionality and how it impacts their professional practices. Positionality refers to a person’s values and beliefs, often developed due to a person’s gender, race, experiences, and social status. David Takacs (2003), professor at California State University Monterey Bay, argues that it is necessary for educators to understand how their positionality influences their teaching practices. If educators are unaware of the biases attributable to their positionality, there is the potential for them to view others who are different as deficient. For example, an educator who views a student’s bilingualism as a deficit is not acknowledging this ability as an asset the student brings to the classroom. Takacs identifies a bilingual student as being a “simultaneous insider and outsider, [who] can help native English speakers see things they might have missed about their own language and culture, about their own positions in the world” (2003, p. 28). Although Takacs is discussing students’ bilingualism, the same perspective can be applied to the bilingualism of EL students’ families and similarly, to families who are bilingual or monolingual in a language other than English.

School leaders and educators may be unaware that their positionality, which impacts their leadership and epistemology, may have a negative impact on their students and...
families. No one can truly be free from all bias. However, awareness of one’s bias enables a person to counteract it. I have found that reflecting on my own positionality has led to an awareness of how it creates bias and how those biases, if not monitored, could negatively impact my interactions with families of ELs. By engaging in personal reflection, “we come to learn that our views may be constrained by the limitations of our own experiences” (Takacs, 2003, p. 29). Once school leaders have recognized the differences between themselves and their linguistically and culturally dissimilar students and students’ families, they can realize the value of such differences, and draw upon them to develop a culturally responsive school. Takacs asserts that “Only I have lived my life; only you have lived yours” (2003, p. 29). Educators are well advised to keep this maxim at the forefront in working with EL students and their families. The result, Takacs suggests, is rewarding:

Rather than “tolerating” difference, we move to respect difference, as difference helps us to understand our own worldview—and thus the world itself—better. From respect, we move to celebration, as we come to cherish how diverse perspectives enable us to experience the world more richly and come to know ourselves more deeply. (Takacs, 2003, p. 28)

In other words, respecting and indeed celebrating linguistic and cultural differences enriches a school’s climate for all learners and families, even as it lowers barriers to participation in both learning and community.

The United States is a diverse nation. One way to measure its diversity is to observe the multitude of languages spoken by its residents. Referring to 2011 Census Bureau figures, Ryan (2013) notes that in the United States, “Of the 291.5 million people aged 5 and over, 60.6 million people (21 percent of this population) spoke a language other than English at home” (p.2). This
report also included historical data indicating that from 1980 to 2010 the number of people who spoke a language other than English at home had increased from 23 million to over 59 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The population of those who speak a language other than English in the home will continue to increase. Schools must take notice of this changing demographic if they are to develop parental involvement programs that are inclusive of all families and their cultures.

**Families of ELs bring a richness of experiences that may not conform to the expectations of those in the majority culture, which focuses on middle class parental involvement (Daniel-White, 2002; Panferov, 2010). To reap the benefits of cultural diversity, schools must become responsive to these differing values and norms. Figure 1 illustrates parental role expectations in American society. Notice that the parent(s) assume a central position. But some students may live with relatives in addition to (or in place of) their biological parent(s); key household members who are invested in the student’s educational success. Centering family, rather than parent(s), acknowledges the realities of families beyond the mother-father nucleus (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). In addition, norms surrounding contributing elements of family involvement may differ by culture.**

When families of ELs do not conform to the majority culture’s expectations of parental involvement and interaction with the school, they are often mislabeled as uninterested in their child’s education (Vera et al., 2012). The task for teachers and administrators is to acknowledge how differing cultural norms enact involvement with children’s education, and to recognize when families experience barriers to communication or participation. “As educators, understanding the challenges that ELL parents may face is critical to fostering parental involvement in our ELL students’ school experiences and, subsequently, supporting ELL
students’ academic success” (Panferov, 2010, p.106). Family constraints can include linguistic barriers, work constraints, limited childcare, cultural attitudes toward teachers, and previous educational experiences (Vera et al., 2012).

When school leaders ignore families’ needs or barriers to educational participation, it is not inappropriate to apply Paulo Freire’s (2012) paradigm of oppression by the powerful. Freire asserts that when a person discovers “himself to be an oppressor [it] may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed” (2012, p. 49). Rather, Freire argues, such recognition more readily may lead the oppressor to rationalize “his guilt though paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them fast in a position of dependence” (2012, p.49). I do not believe that those in the educational profession intentionally oppress the families of ELs. However, policies and actions that do not acknowledge or support linguistically and culturally diverse families serve a social (and educational) function.

If school leaders desire to create relationships with all families in their school community, they must create a culturally responsive environment, one that welcomes diverse
expressions of family involvement. An important prerequisite for school leaders is thus identifying their own level of cultural competence. Such self-reflection requires summoning the courage to face one’s oppressive attitudes or practices, and the commitment to develop cultural proficiency. Lindsey, Roberts, and Campbell Jones define cultural proficiency as “a mindset, a worldview, a way of being assumed by a person or an organization for effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that arise in diverse environments” (2013, p. 8). Culturally proficient school leadership anticipates the needs of families of English-learner students.

Lindsey et al. (2013) developed an implementation guide to help school leaders examine their schools’ attitudes, behaviors, and norms with respect to cultural proficiency. The guide was designed to “help educators develop an understanding of how they and their schools can progress from recognizing ‘deficit-based’ perspectives that predominate their schools, to recognizing systematic oppression, and to develop culturally proficient leadership behaviors and organizational practices” (2013, p. 14). They suggest that school leaders who engage in this challenging path may uncover uncomfortable truths about their, and their schools’ assumptions and norms; but that such discoveries can stimulate movement toward changes to better address the needs of the school community.

This study of school leadership with respect to EL students uses an adapted form of Lindsey et al.’s (2013) cultural proficiency continuum, the CPC2 model, as illustrated in Figure 2. Tolerance for diversity refers to behaviors that focus on them (those who are different from the majority culture), whereas transformation for equity refers to behaviors that focus on our practice (the practice of the school leaders). The construct of destructiveness and incapacity/blindness encompasses behaviors that attempt to negate and disparage different cultures, elevate the superiority of one culture over another, and signal the
actor’s apparent belief that cultural differences do not exist. The behaviors of precompetence/competence and proficiency encompass behaviors that acknowledge one’s limitations or lack of cultural knowledge and understanding. Persons who are culturally proficient welcome interaction with cultural groups that are different from their own and advocate on behalf of all cultures to honor and exalt differences.

Figure 2. Lindsey, et al.’s cultural proficiency continuum (2013) as adapted for this study.

Problem Statement

The problem this study addressed was assessing the cultural proficiency of school leaders, given a recent increase in the diversity of students and their families in a public high school. According to data collected and presented by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (2016), there were over four million public school students participating in programs for English Learners during the 2011–2012 school year in the United States. In Massachusetts public schools, there was an increase from 52,610 in 2010–2011 to 62,354 students in 2011–2012 participating in programs for ELs. Given this increase in EL students, there is also an increase in the number of linguistically and diverse families in the community with whom school leaders have a professional responsibility to engage (National Policy Board of Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015). Furthermore, ESSA (2015),
following in the footsteps of the NCLB (2001), mandates that schools develop partnerships with all parent groups, specifically those that have been routinely marginalized.

Historically, school leaders, usually members of the majority (White) American culture, have shaped norms for how families are to be involved in the school community (Berger, 1991; Springer, 2013). These norms, or ways of knowing on which school leaders base their practices, tend to create obstacles in connecting with families of English Learners (Coll et al., 2002). School leaders must also increase their knowledge of the instructional needs of ELs. In exploring the role of elementary school principals in supporting teachers instructing ELs, Stein (2012) uncovered a discrepancy between elementary school principals’ self-perception about their knowledge of appropriate instruction for English Learners and how these school leaders were perceived by the teaching staff. Indeed, the teachers reported that their principals were not well versed in the needs of this population.

**Justification for the Study**

The site for this research was a public high school in Massachusetts at which the overall school population in grades 9 through 12 was 1,828, with 24.3% of its 2014–2015 student population identified as being ELs (English learners), FELS (former English Learners), and FLNEs (first language not English students), according to information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016). The school was located in a community that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2007), had 48,514 inhabitants with 14.9% of the population stating they were foreign born and 18.1% of the foreign-born population identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

Given the current shift in demographics in this community and in the United States as a whole, there has been a growing professional demand for school leaders to shift their (dominant)
ethnocentric perspective to a culturally responsive perspective and begin to meet the needs of families of English Learners (Anderson & Davis, 2012; Lindsey et al., 2013). This research speaks to the need for school leaders to develop a culturally proficient mindset and practices. Until 2011 the educational needs of ELs and their families were invisible on the websites of major professional organizations in Massachusetts, according to Serpa and Lira (2011). Given the influence of school leaders in creating and implementing policy and the impact such policies can have on instruction and student achievement, it was critical to study school leaders’ current cultural proficiency.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders at a Level 3 urban public high school in a Level 3 school district in Massachusetts. The theoretical model for this research was based on Lindsey et al. (2013), and adapted for the present study.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions framed the scope of this study:

1. To what degree do school leaders in an urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners (ELs) and their families?
2. How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with ELs and their families?
3. What professional development or preparation in cultural proficiency have leaders at this high school received to address the needs of ELs and their families?

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms used in this study were defined as follows:
**Culturally proficient:** This term describes those who engage in a “paradigmatic shift from viewing others as problematic to viewing how one works with people different from oneself in a manner to ensure effective practices” (Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008, p. 21).

**English Learners (ELs):** Students who speak a language other than English at home and who are acquiring use of English as an additional language (WIDA ACCESS levels 1-5) in order to achieve academic success in English similar to that of their monolingual English peers; and to interact socially and academically in an educational setting and within the global community. The term *English Learner* is synonymous with *language minority student, bilingual student,* and *English language learner.*

**Families of English Learners:** The term *family* is used instead of *parent(s)* because an English Learner may be living with one or more relatives other than a biological parent, who all have an interest in the student’s education (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

**First Language Not English Students (FLNEs):** Students who speak a language other than English at home and are not classified by the state of Massachusetts as an EL or FEL. FLNE students may have completed the 4 years of academic monitoring required for FELs. A student classified as FLNE may have immigrated to the United States as a young child, have become fully proficient in English, and no longer need specialized English language development courses.

** Former English Learners (FELs):** Students who speak a language other than English at home and have reached the required levels of English proficiency on a state assessment such that they no longer require specialized English language development courses. In Massachusetts, English learners must obtain a 4.2 overall English proficiency score and a 3.9 English literacy
score to be reclassified from EL to FEL. FELs in Massachusetts are monitored in their academic subjects for 4 years after they exit EL status; how FELs’ academic monitoring is conducted is defined by each school district.

Majority culture: For the purpose of this study, the term majority culture refers to the predominant culture in the United States (specifically, Massachusetts) during the late 2010s decade, that is, White, English-speaking, middle-class, and American-born.

School leader: For the purpose of this study, the term school leader includes district-wide supervisors, principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, and department heads.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is multifaceted. This study provides a framework for school leaders to use in identifying their actions and behaviors along the cultural proficiency continuum shown in Figure 2. Second, this study provides school leaders with additional knowledge about how to develop home-school partnerships with families of ELs, as required by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (NPBEA), and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE). Third, this study provides professional development instructors with a model to use when discussing how school leaders can shift the practices and policies of their schools. Finally, this study provides directors of educational leadership preparation programs with current research for use with new school leaders in planning and assessing the cultural proficiency of school practices and policies.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations of this study include the size of the sample population, the selection of the research site, and the definitions of terms. The sample population for this study consisted of high
School leaders at one public high school serving a community with a growing population of families of English Learners. This study included only high school leaders, not those at elementary or middle schools. This study did not focus on the thoughts and actions of English Learners and their families. This was a qualitative study of the school leaders who were all members of the English-speaking majority culture working within one school. The study used three forms of data collection: observation, a survey, and follow-up interviews. This study defined the term school leaders as those in the following positions: district-wide supervisors, principal, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, and department heads.

**Limitations of the Study**

There were limitations to the study that may limit generalizability of the results. One limitation was the potential for participants to choose to not respond to the survey and therefore diminish the total number of study participants. Another potential limitation of this study was related to English Learners and their families, who were not surveyed or interviewed about their feelings with respect to being accepted, welcomed, or understood by their school leaders.

**Role of Researcher**

The role of the researcher in this study was to conduct ethical, valid, and reliable research at an institution at which the researcher is currently employed. As a current employee at this school, the researcher acknowledged that the relationships built over the previous 16 years might have had an effect on the research conducted. However, the relational trust (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010) that had developed over a decade of working with these high school leaders allowed for frank and truthful communication, without fear of judgment or disclosure of information. This researcher did not supervise any of the participants in this study, nor did the researcher have any involvement in their performance evaluations. The researcher
had a vested interest in conducting unbiased, ethical research that would benefit the school leaders, parent populations, and ultimately the student population. The data collected could be applied to the district in which the researcher works; assisting school leaders in identifying their behaviors as being culturally proficient by operating on the transformation for equity side of the cultural proficiency continuum (see Figure 2). “A caveat of case study research is that generalizability is not the goal, but rather transferability---that is, how (if at all) and in what ways understanding and knowledge can be applied in similar contexts and settings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31). The data and information collected may inform future professional development of future school leaders in the district, and possibly in other school districts with similar demographics.

Summary

Chapter I introduced this study, along with the problem statement, the significance of the study, and a justification of the need for study. Chapter I also outlined the research questions and provided term definitions for purposes of clarity. The role of the researcher along with the delimitations and limitations of the study have also been addressed in Chapter I. Chapter II includes a review of the literature that is divided into two sections, each covering three areas important to this study. The first section focuses on contextual aspects of the study: (a) demographic changes; and (b) federal and state-specific expectations related to school leaders building partnerships with families of ELs. The second section of the literature review presents the theoretical constructs and findings from prior research that frame the study: (a) cultural proficiency as defined by Lindsey et al. (2013) and the Cultural Proficiency Continuum 2 (CPC2) model that was adapted for this study; (b) definitions of family involvement; (c) obstacles faced by parents of ELs; and (d) expectations that families of ELs have of schools.
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for investigating the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban high school in Massachusetts. The review of the literature is organized into two sections; underlying observational and demographic data that informed the direction and organization of literature consulted is included in Appendices G, H, and I. The first section of this chapter focuses on literature that addresses: (a) demographic changes in the United States; (b) federal and state policies related to building partnerships between schools and families of English Learners; and (c) cultural proficiency as defined by Lindsey et al. (2013) and adapted for the present study. The second section focuses on literature that addresses: (a) definitions of parental or family involvement in the child’s educational experiences; (b) obstacles to involvement faced by parents or families of ELs; and (c) expectations that parents of ELs have of schools.

Guiding Questions

Two questions guided selection of research for the first section of the literature review:

1. How have the demographics of the United States changed in the past ten years (approximately 2008-2018), and how has that demographic change been experienced in the location of this research?

2. What are the federal and state expectations of school leaders related to work with culturally and linguistically diverse families?

Guiding questions for the second section of the literature review were:

1. What are the culturally proficient behaviors of school leaders?

2. What does the term “parental involvement” mean?
3. What are the most prevalent obstacles, including the cultural deficit concept, that immigrant parents or families face when trying to become involved in their child’s education?

4. What are the expectations that families of English language learners have of schools and of themselves with regard to their child’s education?

The key words used for the first section of the review of the literature were:

demographics (federal and Massachusetts), immigrant demographics, current U.S. census data, census data for schools, ESSA, MADESE, standards for school leaders, cultural proficiency, culturally proficient. Federal and state government websites were consulted the first part of the review of the literature; which included The U.S. Census Bureau, The Department of Education, The Department of Justice, The National Policy Board for Educational Administration and The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The following books were selected for this section of the review of the literature: *The Culturally Proficient School: An Implementation Guide for School Leaders* (Lindsey et al., 2013) and *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: A Lens for Identifying and Examining Educational Gaps* (Lindsey et al., 2008). The key words used when searching databases for the second section of the review of the literature were: immigrant parent(s), parental involvement, cultural models, barriers/obstacles, school involvement, and parents of ELLs. The three databases that were used to search for relevant and current research were *ProQuest Central Dissertations, ProQuest Central*, and the *Social Sciences Citations Index*. During the selection process, this author focused on literature that was relevant and conducted from 2000 through 2014. However, there were two articles; one dated 1991 and one dated 1994, which deemed necessary for historical
reasons, to give a more comprehensive overview of the topics researched. See Appendix A: An Overview of Research Literature by Database and Key Words, Appendix B: Methods and Locations of Research Studies in Review of Literature, and Appendix C: Purposes of and Participants in Research Studies in Review of Literature for a breakdown of the search engines that were used during the search for relevant and current literature, the number of studies found and used, author(s), research areas, sample size of each study, and the school level that was the focus of the study.

**Context of the Research**

There has been a substantial change in demographics at the city and school levels in the area in which the present research was conducted. These demographic changes reflect the same changes being experienced at state, regional, and national levels. School leaders within the study school, and in all public schools in the country, have professional obligations to work with the culturally and linguistically diverse families of their school populations.

**Demographic changes in the United States.**

The demographic makeup of the United States has undergone substantial changes in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Census figures for 2010 showed that the number of Hispanic/Latino persons living in this country increased by 43, from 35 million in 2000 to 50 million in 2010 (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). Among the four regions delineated for census data collection (Northeast, Midwest, South and West), the Northeast has experienced the smallest population change, yet it is still substantial. In 2000, 9.8% of the Northeast’s population identified as Hispanic/Latino (5.3 million of the total 53.6 million population); by 2010, the percentage had risen to 12.6% (7 million of 55 million). Thus in 10 years, the Hispanic/Latino population increased by 1.7 million. Increases in other regions have been similar or greater.
According to the U.S. Census Tables for Education and School Enrollment (2006), 8.9 million Hispanic/Latino students were enrolled in public nurseries or preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1 through 12 in 2000; by 2010, an increase of 3.9 millions.

Massachusetts, the state in which this study on the cultural proficiency of school leaders was conducted, has also witnessed a noticeable change in its population within the past decade: U.S. Census Bureau figures show an increase in the population of Hispanic/Latino residents from 428,729 in 2000 to 627,654 by 2010 (Ennis et al., 2011), an increase of nearly 50%. The population of the city in which this research was experienced a similar demographic change. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), the Hispanic/Latino population percentage nearly doubled, from 4,255 (9.7%) in 2000 to 8,531 (18.1%) in 2010. The change in Hispanic/Latino population was mirrored in the school studied here, increasing from 19.6% in 2004-2005 to 31.8% in 2015-2016, or up 60% (MADESE, 2016).

School Leaders’ Expectations: Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families

Three organizations have outlined the professional expectations of school leaders working with culturally and linguistically diverse families: the federal government, the state government, and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. These three organizations describe multiple foci, but one common thread between the three is that school leaders should work toward building relationships with the full cultural and linguistical spectrum of students and their families. At the federal level, ESSA §118 (2015) focuses specifically on parental involvement. At the state level, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018) has developed four standards for administrator evaluation, one of which is family and community engagement (2018, Standard III). Two standards published by
the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015), formally known as ISLLC (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium) spotlight cultural awareness and family engagement: “Equity and Cultural Responsiveness” (Standard 3) and “Meaningful Engagement of Families and Communities” (Standard 8). It is clear that working with and developing partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families should be a targeted focus of school leaders. These three levels of standards are illustrated in Figure 3.

![Diagram](image-url)

*Figure 3. Professional expectations of school leaders by the federal government, MADESE, and NPBEA.*

Describing the ESSA, signed by President Obama in December of 2015, The U. S. Department of Education (2019) states: “This bipartisan measure reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students.” Like the most recent prior comprehensive education law, the NCLB (2002), the ESSA included a section on schools and parental involvement. Section 1118 outlined the expectations of school leaders regarding involvement of parents in the school setting, and of schools to implement programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs (ESSA, 2015). Under ESSA, schools have a specific mandate to develop relationships with parents and families of students who have not always been included in school activities.

To implement these various mandates, schools must not only reach out to parents and families who have historically been excluded from school activities but also must be aware of and remove barriers that impede parents and families from joining school-based activities. The writers of ESSA were cognizant of barriers that might inhibit some parents or families of students from engaging in school activities: §1118(2)(E) states that schools must work toward “identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background).” With these barriers in mind, ESSA required schools to “offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening,” and allowed them to “provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, childcare, or home visits, as such services relate to
parental involvement” (ESSA, 2015). These provisions form the basis upon which school leaders are expected to construct pathways to family inclusion.

A further provision of ESSA requires schools to develop parental involvement policies that create a shared responsibility between schools and families for high student academic achievement. Under this provision, schools need to describe the ways in which families will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child’s classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time (ESSA, 2015, §1118, subpart D). These provisions of ESSA are built upon Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964), which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. All federal agencies that provide grants of assistance are required to enforce Title VI.

The U.S. DOE and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) have developed a joint fact sheet (U.S. DOE & U.S. DOJ, 2015) that “answers common questions about the rights of parents and guardians who do not speak, listen, read, or write English proficiently because it is not their primary language.” The fact sheet makes it clear to school leaders that they have legal obligations: to provide written communications “in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English”; to build partnerships with families of English Learners; to remove barriers that stop these families from engaging in school-sponsored events; and to “provide translation or interpretation from appropriate and competent individuals and may not rely on or ask students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for parents” (U.S. DOE & U.S.
DOJ, 2015). At the U.S. DOE website, this fact sheet is available in English and 11 other languages (U.S. DOE and U.S. DOJ, 2015).

**National Professional Standards for Educational Leaders**

In 2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), formally known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), strengthened standards for professional educational leaders (NPBEA, 2015), citing changing “conditions and characteristics of children, in terms of demographics, family structure, and more” (p. 1) and the resultant fast-changing demands on educational leaders. The NPBEA is a national organization with members reflecting those in the positions of educational leadership, including superintendents, elementary and secondary school principals, and post-secondary school professors.

The focus on NPBEA’s updated standards, which apply to all levels of educational leadership—including, in effect, not only administrators but also teachers—was “a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2). The goal was to “communicate expectations to practitioners, supporting institutions, professional associations, policy makers and the public about work, qualities and values of effective educational leaders” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 2).

The NPBEA standards articulated 10 principles for educational professionals, which are intended to functional interdependently to promote student learning. Figure 4 illustrates the interrelationship of the standards, shown grouped in areas that cover professional operations and management, as well as community and engagement both among personnel in the school and
between educators and families; norms and values, including cultural responsiveness; curriculum and support for students; and school improvement.

The NPBEA stated that the 2015 Standards have “direct influence on members of the profession by creating expectations and setting directions for the practice of educational leaders” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 5), adding that the 2015 Standards “can be a force for states and leadership preparation programs as they identify and develop the specific knowledge, skills, dispositions, and other characteristics required of educational leaders to achieve real student success in school” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 5).

![Diagram of professional standards for educational leaders]

**Figure 4.** Interdependence of professional standards for educational leaders. Based on National Policy Board of Educational Administration, *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015.*
Each of these professional standards implies elements of cultural proficiency in leadership practice; however, two focus on it: Standard 3, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, and Standard 8, Meaningful Engagement of Families and Communities. Standard 3 states that “effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11); Standard 8 states that “effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16). See Table 1 for the effective school leader practices included in Standard 3 and Standard 8.

The NPBEA Professional Standards document remarks that “whether they are first-year novices or veterans of the profession, educational leaders need ongoing support to succeed in a job that is dramatically changing” (2015, p. 6). School leaders, new or experienced, need training and support in implementing the standards in order to develop a school where all students, regardless of their cultural and linguistic diversity, succeed at grade-level.

**State Policy: MADESE**

MADESE has developed its own evaluative tool (2012, updated 2015), which includes four standards for school-level administrators in instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, and professional culture. Standard 3 of the school-level administrator rubric focuses on developing family and community interactions: engagement, sharing responsibility, communication, and family concerns. See Figure 6 for a breakdown of these elements.
Table 1 *Selected Effective Practices from the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*

**Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**

1. Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of each student’s culture and context.
2. Recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
3. Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.
4. Develop student policies and address student misconduct in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner.
5. Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
6. Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.
7. Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in interactions, decision making, and practice.
8. Address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership.

**Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Communities**

1. Be approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
2. Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefits of students.
3. Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.
4. Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school.
5. Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
6. Understand, value, and employ the community’s cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school improvement.
7. Develop and provide the school as a resource for families and the community.
8. Advocate for the school and district, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities for families and the community.
9. Advocate publicly for the needs and priorities of students, families, and the community.
10. Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to provide school improvement and student learning.

*Note.* Adapted from NPBEA, *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*
Figure 5. Elements of the indicators for Standard 3 of Massachusetts’ evaluative tool. Based on Massachusetts Model System for Education Evaluation, Part III (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2012, updated 2015).

MADESE’s Standards (2012, updated 2015) also provide direction for school leaders in meeting these obligations. See Figure 7 for a description of proficient practice for each indicator element of Standard 3.

The family and community engagement indicator of Standard 3 includes six of seven elements with the word families, and four of seven elements that specifically address families of English Learners (see Figure 6). MADESE makes it clear, with the inclusion of one indicator specifically to address family and community engagement, that school leaders need to connect with families as a priority; they are evaluated based on how, with what frequency, and with which families they engage throughout the year.
Indicator III-A. Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the classroom, school, and community’s effectiveness.

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<tr>
<th>III-A-1</th>
<th>Family Engagement</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Uses culturally sensitive practices to ensure that all families are welcome and can contribute to the classroom, school, and community’s effectiveness. Works with staff to identify and remove barriers to families’ involvement, including families whose home language is not English.</td>
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<th>III-A-2</th>
<th>Community and Business Engagement</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishes ongoing relationships with community organizations, community members, and businesses. Engages them to increase their involvement to maximize community contributions for school effectiveness.</td>
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Indicator III-B. Sharing Responsibility: Continuously collaborates with families to support student learning and development both at home and at school.

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<tr>
<th>III-B-1</th>
<th>Student Support</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Supports educators to identify each student’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs, including students with disabilities and English learners. Collaborates with families to address student needs, utilizing resources within and outside of the school.</td>
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<th>III-B-2</th>
<th>Family Collaboration</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Sets clear expectations for and supports educators to regularly engage families in supporting learning at school and home, including appropriate adaptation for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency.</td>
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Indicator III-C. Communication: Engages in regular, two-way, culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.

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<th>III-C-1</th>
<th>Two-way communication</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Sets clear expectations for and provides support to educators to communicate regularly with families using two-way communication channels, including careful and prompt response to communications from families. Supports educators to maximize the number of face-to-face family-teacher interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<th>III-C-2</th>
<th>Culturally Proficient Communication</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Sets clear expectations for and provides support to educators regarding culturally sensitive communication. Ensures that school and classroom communication with families is always respectful and demonstrates understanding of and sensitivity to different families’ home language, culture, and values.</td>
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Indicator III-D. Family Concerns: Addresses family concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.

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<tr>
<th>III-D-1</th>
<th>Family Concerns</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reaches out to families as concerns arise and works to reach equitable solutions in the best interest of students.</td>
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</table>

School leaders in Massachusetts are thus receiving directives from the federal government, NPBEA, and MADESE to work with families of their student populations. Each of these three organizations indicates specifically that school leaders must include the full range of culturally and linguistically diverse families of their student population in their plans for parental involvement. Such inclusivity requires that school leaders have the mind-set to work with families whose norms and values may lie outside the leaders’ experience.

**Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Standards of behavior vary across social and institutional environments. How people define their and others’ membership and positions in those environments, and define behaviors that are acceptable or unacceptable, vary, as well. This study is framed by theoretical constructs and empirical outcomes that have been defined and discussed in current literature on how culture influences attitudes and behaviors specifically in educational settings; and how educational diversity has been addressed in the academic and institutional practices of schools.

**Cultural Proficiency**

Cultural proficiency is defined as “a mindset, a worldview, a way of being assumed by a person or an organization for effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that arise in diverse environments” (Lindsey et al., 2013, p.8). Currently, the ESSA (2015) mandates that schools build partnerships with diverse families. MADESE (2018) evaluates school leaders on their efforts to engage, communicate, and build partnerships with families of English Learners. NPBEA (2015) designates two of its 10 professional standards as “equity and cultural responsiveness” and “meaningful engagement of families and communities” (p. 16.). In order for school leaders to meet the professional expectations set forth by the U.S. DOE, MADESE, and NPBEA, they must assess their cultural proficiency.
However, Landa’s (2011) review of the literature on cultural proficiency in education reveals that administrators are often missing from current scholarship: “although the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of administrators are key to the achievement of cultural competence, there is more attention in the literature to those of teachers” (p. 10). Given that school leaders are instrumental to the success of all students, including ELs, this imbalance is unfortunate. Landa’s review did, however, find support in the literature for ”knowledge requirements of administrators,” such as “a detailed knowledge of the community, including the histories, languages, lifestyles, and worldviews of people new to the district and extensive knowledge of the teaching and learning process” (Landa, 2011, p. 10). These requirements mirror those found in federal, state, and professional standards.

School leaders are tasked with looking beyond their own histories, languages, and lifestyles when implementing policies and practices for their schools and the communities they serve. They must incorporate the histories, languages, and lifestyles of all members of the school community in school policies and practices. This requires school leaders to develop the capacity for operating in a culturally proficient manner.

Lindsey et al. (2013) posited that cultural proficiency is “a model for shifting the culture of the school or district; it is a model for individual transformation and organizational change” (p. 8). School leaders must examine the policies and protocols in place at a school to determine whether they are leading the school in a culturally proficient manner. Cultural proficiency can be explained using the cultural proficiency continuum (Lindsey et al., 2013; see Figure 2).

The six behaviors on the continuum are organized into two sides (Lindsey et al., 2013). On the left side of the cultural proficiency continuum are the behaviors of cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, and cultural blindness. School leader practices and actions

SCHOOL LEADERS’ CULTURAL PROFICIENCY
that fall within these three behaviors are identified as having *tolerance for diversity*, meaning that the focus of their practices and actions is on others, or those who are different. On the right side of the cultural proficiency continuum are the behaviors of cultural precompetence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency. School leader practices and actions that fall within these three behaviors are identified as creating *transformation for equity*, meaning that the focus of their practices and actions is on themselves, the school leaders. For purposes of this study, the cultural proficiency continuum was modified in order to simplify the collection and analysis of the data. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum 2 (CPC2) model combines two of the behaviors on both sides of the continuum. On the left side of the CPC2 model, cultural blindness and cultural incapacity are identified as cultural blindness and incapacity. On the right side of the CPC2 model, cultural precompetence and cultural competence are identified as cultural precompetence and competence. See Figure 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOCUS IS ON OTHERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>FOCUS IS ON LEADERS THEMSELVES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM 2 (CPC2)**
Adapted by Fawcett for this study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOCUS IS ON OTHERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>FOCUS IS ON LEADERS THEMSELVES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity &amp; Blindness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Cultural Proficiency Continuum 2 model (CPC2).
Adapted for this study from Lindsey, Roberts & Campbell Jones, 2013.

Lindsey and his co-authors have made minor revisions to the cultural behavior descriptions (see Lindsey et al, 2008; Lindsey et al, 2013), but these represent an evolution rather than a reformulation. See Table 2.
Table 2

*Cultural Proficiency Continuum: Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Lindsey et al., 2008</th>
<th>Lindsey et al., 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY SIDE OF THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Destructiveness</td>
<td>Seeking to eliminate vestiges of the cultures of others.</td>
<td>Negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Incapacity</td>
<td>Seeking to make the culture of others appear to be wrong.</td>
<td>Elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Blindness</td>
<td>Refusing to acknowledge the culture of others.</td>
<td>Acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize any differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY SIDE OF THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Pre-Competence</td>
<td>Being aware of what one does not know about working in diverse settings.</td>
<td>Recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Viewing one’s personal and organizational works as interactive arrangements in which the educator enters diverse settings in a manner that is additive to cultures that are different from the educator’s.</td>
<td>Interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences, motivate you to assess your own skills, and expand your knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Proficiency</td>
<td>Making the commitment to lifelong learning for the purposes of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups.</td>
<td>Advocating in a way that honors the differences among cultures, seeing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among cultural groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


According to Lindsey et al. (2013), school leaders’ actions or practices could be grouped into five leadership behaviors, defined as the essential elements of cultural competence: (a) Assessing one’s own cultural knowledge, (b) Valuing diversity, (c) Managing the dynamics of difference, (d) Adapting to diversity, and (e) Institutionalizing cultural knowledge. The actions of school leaders could be organized within these five essential elements and identified as either operating
on the tolerance for diversity side or the transformation for equity side. See Table 3 for a description of the essential elements of cultural competence along the cultural proficiency continuum.

Table 3

*Cultural Proficiency Continuum Stages as Elements of Cultural Competence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Elements of Cultural Competence</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity Destructiveness, Incapacity, &amp; Blindness</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity Precompetence, Competence, &amp; Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessing One’s Own Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Demographics are viewed as a challenge</td>
<td>Demographics are used to inform policy and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
<td>Tolerate, assimilate, acculturate</td>
<td>Esteem, respect, adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Dynamics of Diversity</td>
<td>Prevent, mitigate, avoid</td>
<td>Manage, leverage, facilitate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to Diversity</td>
<td>System-wide accountability to meet the changing needs of a diverse community and reduce cultural dissonance and conflict</td>
<td>System-wide accountability for continuous improvement and responsiveness to community; staff understands, operates and perseveres on the edge of often rapid and continuous change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>Information contributed or added to existing policies, procedures, practices</td>
<td>Information integrated into system, provoking significant changes to policies, procedures, practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Source:* Lindsey, Roberts & CampbellJones, 2013, p. 98

In order for school leaders to operate within the transformation for equity side of the cultural proficiency continuum, they need to adopt an appropriate mindset to accept cultures other than their own as equal and worthy of acknowledgment and integration into the school. Once school leaders have developed this mindset, they can work toward meeting the expectations set forth by the U.S. DOE (2015), NPBEA (2015), and MADESE (2018) to develop
partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families: schools communicating effectively with these families. Section 2 of this review addresses literature related to that subject.

**Families of ELs**

The following topics will be examined through a review of current literature focusing on family involvement in U.S. schools: (a) the construct of parental involvement, (b) the obstacles faced by parents/families of immigrant students as they engage in the majority culture’s practices regarding parental involvement, and (c) the expectations immigrant parents/families have of schools. The research questions that anchor this review of the literature are based on these elements. Underlying them is a fundamental query: should schools alter their expectations to meet the needs of the parents or should the parents alter their expectations to meet the demands of the school? (Denessen, Bakker, & Gierveld, 2007).

**The Construct of Parental Involvement**

Berger (1991) reviewed the history of parental involvement in education in the United States from the 1800s to the early 1990s. She argued that parental involvement was not a new concept, and that parents have been involved in their children’s education since prehistoric times, before school buildings existed. She observed, too, that an integral element of parent involvement was educating parents about their children’s learning. In the 1800s, for example, education served two purposes: to enlighten middle-income families, and to “mainstream immigrants and the underclass parents” by acclimating them to middle-class norms (p. 209). Berger stated:

Although the kindergarten movement, early education, and parent involvement in schools were started by middle-class parents who believed in the natural goodness of a child, they
became avenues for acculturating lower-class immigrant families into the mainstream culture of the United States. The establishment of settlement homes in the late 1800s served as a vehicle for teaching these new arrivals the dominant culture’s ways. (1991, p. 212).

In other words, during this period, parental involvement was oriented toward assimilating nonconforming parents into the school’s pre-established protocols.

In the 1920s, the focus of parental involvement and parental education shifted, from integrating newly arrived immigrants into the majority culture’s norms to providing requested or sought-after information to middle-class families. Berger contended,

The need to “mainstream” immigrants seemed lessened because restrictive legislation had reduced the number of immigrants arriving in the United States. Most of these new parent education groups were not established for new arrivals. They met the needs of middle-class parents who formed study groups for their own enlightenment. (1991, p. 213)

During this period, then, the needs of immigrant and lower-income parents were ignored.

In the 1930s, the focus shifted again, as the federal government directed educational associations and state education departments to investigate how to incorporate parent education into the public school system. “The professionals hoped parent education would help parents learn about proper ways to rear their children…verbalize ideas of the norms of society and their ability to adapt to them, and understand the functions and purposes of education” (Berger, 1991, p. 214). Attention again focused not only on newly arrived immigrants but also on the country’s poor, always with the aim of changing their behavior to accord with dominant-culture values and behaviors.
This rubric persisted throughout the 1940s and 1950s; but the 1960s saw great changes in the United States and the world and, indeed, in the educational arena. “The term ‘culturally deprived’ emerged in early literature, [but] educators soon recognized that all people have cultures and that children, rather than being deprived, come from diverse cultures” (Berger, 1991, p. 215). Programs developed during the 1960s, such as Head Start and Home Start, which were designed to prepare children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve within majority-culture (White) norms, continued to thrive during the 1970s.

In contrast, during the 1980s, “the Office of Education and individual public schools responded to the need for parents’ involvement in the education of their children” (Berger, 1991, p. 217). Instead of having uniform policies, schools were urged to respond to the needs of their parent populations. Berger admitted that it was a challenge to build relationships between schools and parents but stated, “strong parent-teacher collaboration will be needed to ensure continuity in care and education, and support for children of all income levels and ethnic backgrounds” (Berger, 1991, p. 217). Although the tide was turning toward acknowledgement of students’ and families’ diverse cultures and needs, attention still lay primarily on the tolerance side of the cultural proficiency continuum.

In the United States, the majority culture’s view of parental involvement has been constructed around the middle class family. Linse stated that “this middle-class construct does not take into account-economics, linguistic and too often immigration challenges facing urban families who speak home languages other than English at home” (2011, p. 657). According to Linse, parental involvement, as defined by the majority culture, required parents to attend meetings organized by the school, assist children with homework, provide educational materials

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1 The term *majority culture* is used in this paper to describe the predominant culture in the United States at this time (2018). The culture referred to is White, English speaking, and middle class American culture.
to support the school, and contact the school when questions or concerns arose. An additional expectation was that all parents, including the families of ELs, would have the level of English proficiency necessary to fulfill the majority culture’s expectations of parental involvement. An expectation placed on the families of ELs was that they would—and could—follow customs of parental involvement based on the American majority-culture middle-class family (Linse, 2011).

Linse (2011) researched how schools might use taxonomies as a means for examining and categorizing their methods of connecting with culturally and linguistically diverse families. A taxonomy can function as a tool for schools to recognize how culturally responsive their practices are and make adjustments where necessary to be more inclusive of all parents. As Linse contends:

- a taxonomy can serve as the basis for developing both short-term and long-term plans to improve the interactions that occur between schools and homes of ELL families….instead of trying to fix these families, schools need to see learners’ home languages as an asset, a valuable resource with English being added to the learner’s existing linguistic repertoire (2011, pp. 653, 658).

Table 4 provides a sampling of the examples Linse developed for school leaders to use when measuring the responsiveness of their efforts to build home-school partnerships.

The shift in thinking represented by Linse’s use of taxonomy needed to occur in the construct of parental involvement; but it also needed to account for the challenges that the existing middle-class definition of involvement posed for those of differing economic, linguistic, or immigration status (Linse, 2011). The perspectives that school leaders hold regarding parental involvement may differ from those held by families of ELs; this notion extends beyond simple linguistic difference.
Educators and policy makers have claimed that parental involvement is instrumental to student success (NCLB, 2001), and a majority cultural expectation is that parents will involve themselves in their children’s education; however, it is not clear what constitutes parental involvement in American schools. Hara (2011) observed that NCLB (2001) did not clearly define parental involvement or its components as understood by the majority U.S. culture, NCLB explained parental involvement as:

the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning. That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school, and that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees” (US Department of Education NCLB Non-Regulatory Guidance.).

Hara commented: “the actual nature of what it means for a parent to ‘play an integral role,’ to ‘be involved,’ and to be ‘full partners’ remains open to discussion” (2011, p. 4). The federal government provided schools with guidelines regarding parental involvement but failed to provide examples or definitions of what such involvement would consist of.
Table 4

**Sample of Home-School Connection Taxonomies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very unresponsive</th>
<th>Unresponsive</th>
<th>Neither responsive nor unresponsive</th>
<th>Responsive</th>
<th>Very responsive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General School Contact</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School office staff is at a loss when families come in who do not speak English. The school always relies on children to translate for their parents.</td>
<td>School office staff are rarely able to provide immediate support to families who do not speak English.</td>
<td>School office staff occasionally able to find an adult who can translate into the learner’s home language. School staff seem welcoming to ELL families.</td>
<td>A school staff member speaks one of the main languages used by ELL students and families. School office staff usually can find an adult to translate into the learner’s home language. Staff are usually welcoming to ELL families.</td>
<td>Members of the school office staff are always able to find an adult who can translate into the learner’s home language. School staff is always welcoming to ELL families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent-Teacher Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes from teachers are handwritten in English using a different form of cursive script form than that family members are accustomed to.</td>
<td>Notes from teachers are handwritten in English using block letters.</td>
<td>Notes from teachers are handwritten in the home language, without regard to whether parents have literacy skills in the home language. Notes are written using block letters.</td>
<td>Notes from school and teachers are always written in the home language, using block letters. Information is presented orally to parents who lack literacy skills.</td>
<td>Communication from teachers is printed in block letters, or given orally, using language chosen by parents. Visual cues are included; e.g., a calendar page if the note is to schedule a parent-teacher conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment: Report Cards</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student report cards are provided in English only. There is no explanation of the marking system; for instance, what letter grades denote.</td>
<td>Report cards are in English and occasionally in the learner’s home language. There is no explanation of the marking system.</td>
<td>Report cards are translated into the learner’s home language. Some supporting documents, such as an explanation of the marking system, are translated.</td>
<td>Report cards are translated into the learner’s home language. All supporting and explanatory documents are also translated.</td>
<td>Report cards and all supporting documents are delivered in English in translations into the home language. Examples are included of potentially confusing items. Information is given orally if parents lack literacy skills in their native language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Source: Linse, 2011, p. 665.*
The following section identifies various definitions of parental involvement used in research studies. As there is no reliable definition of the construct, the aim here is to provide an overview of how diverse researchers approach and define it. Table 5 identifies the definitions of parental involvement that selected researchers have used in their studies.

Table 5

*Definitions of Parental Involvement in the Literature*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delgado-Gaitan (1991)</td>
<td>“Conventional school activities (open house) that have been institutionalized to involve parents in limited ways tend to regulate all the power to the institution and have usually ignored the needs of groups, particularly those with a different language who are unfamiliar with the school’s expectations” (p. 43). “The nonconventional activities (bilingual preschool and migrant worker program) validated the families’ social and cultural experience, which allowed them to feel a part of their children’ schooling, and thus achieved a better balance of power and cooperation between home and school” (p. 43).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connors &amp; Epstein (1994)</td>
<td>“Parenting practices such as high expectations, homework assistance, attending school events, co-managing and balancing activities are parenting practices that are important for students of all grade levels” (p. 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez (2001)</td>
<td>“Exposing their children to hard work in the fields, the Padilla parents were simultaneously teaching them three important, ‘real-life’ lessons” (p. 416).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel-White (2002)</td>
<td>“Traditional parental involvement programs often ignore the knowledge that language minority parents possess. They focus on the skills that schools want the children to learn rather than including knowledge that is valuable to non-majority cultures and families” (p. 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carreon, Drake, &amp; Barton (2005)</td>
<td>“Parental involvement is not a fixed event but a dynamic and ever-changing practice that varies depending on the context in which it occurs, the resources parents and schools bring to their actions and the students’ particular needs” (p. 466).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>DEFINITION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crozier (2006)</td>
<td>“Teachers tend to adopt the same strategies for promoting parental involvement irrespective of class, parental needs, individual circumstances, and so on” (p. 316).&lt;br&gt;“The working-class parents must conform to the teachers’ construct of parental involvement which reinforces “the parents’ perception of teachers as the professional ‘who knows best’: as the powerful knower” (p. 316).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auerbach (2007)</td>
<td>“Moral supporters (are those) who emphasized indirect, behind-the-scenes moral support for education at home. At the opposite end of the continuum were the Struggling Advocates, who provided more direct, instrumental support and monitoring at home along with advocacy at school. A third, unexpected category in between, the Ambivalent Companions, offered strong emotional support and occasional direct help but conveyed deeply ambivalent messages about schools and higher education” (p. 258).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeynes (2010)</td>
<td>Overt acts of parental involvement: “Engaged parents who help their children with their homework, frequently attend school functions, and maintain household rules that dictate when their young engage in schoolwork and leisure” (p. 747).&lt;br&gt;Subtle acts of parental involvement: “Parental expectations, the quality of parent-child communication and the parental style may be more highly related to student achievement” (p. 747).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera, Israel, Coyle, Cross, Knight-Lynn, Moallem, Bartucci, &amp; Goldberger (2012)</td>
<td>“Reading at home with child, having routines, monitoring child’s homework, utilizing community resources, communicating with teachers/school staff, and communicating with child about school experiences” (p. 189).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Obstacles to Involvement for ELs’ Families**

Because expectations concerning parental involvement are still largely driven by White middle-class culture, families of ELs may experience a number of obstacles when interacting with the educational system in the United States. The following section identifies such obstacles as discussed in current literature, including linguistic diversity; educational experiences of families of ELs; cultural difference; perception of being culturally deficient; hidden messages; and fear, distress, and anxiety.
General factors. Park and Holloway (2013) investigated the level of parental involvement of a sociodemographically diverse population, studying 3,248 participants who were African American/Black, White, or Latino and had a child in high school, defining parental involvement as “school-based involvement, homework monitoring, and educational expectations and college planning” (2013, p. 108). They measured school outreach efforts and parental satisfaction, parental motivational beliefs, parental involvement, and parental demographics. Results showed differences by race and culture in parental involvement practices. The researchers speculated that “historically disenfranchised racial/ethnic groups, who may experience ongoing mistrust and perception of unfair treatment within the schools, may be more likely to engage in home-based activities and be less involved at the school site than their more advantaged counterparts” (2013, p. 106). The authors attributed some of these differences to language fluency, and some to cultural norms. “In terms of parental motivational beliefs, Latino parents reported a lower level of self-efficacy and placed less emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in schooling than did White and Black parents. This tendency became more pronounced when Spanish-speaking parents were compared to English-speaking parents” (Park & Holloway, 2013, p. 111). Figure 13 expands upon the three areas of parental involvement as defined in Park and Holloway’s study.

Auerbach (2007) investigated how marginalized parents constructed their involvement role while supporting their children in school, interviewing 16 working-class parents who had children in a Los Angeles high school in a qualitative case study. The 16 parents were from 11 families, “including 11 Mexican and Central American immigrants, 2 U.S.-born Chicanas, and 3 African-Americans” (p. 256). Parents who were Spanish-language dominant were interviewed in Spanish. Results showed that schools did not recognize the parental involvement practices of
marginalized parents if they did not match the majority-culture’s practices. “Educators may be unaware or unappreciative of the invisible strategies that parents of color/low income use to support their children’s education” (2007, p. 252). Auerbach identified that “support had multiple meanings for them [marginalized parents], ranging from positive approval of the child’s desire to go to college to specific forms of instrumental help” (2007, p. 258). Based on her analysis, Auerbach proposed a typology of the roles that working-class minority parents engaged in to become involved in their children’s education: moral supporters, struggling advocates, and ambivalent companions. Figure 9 highlights the actions taken by parents in each of these roles.
Auerbach concluded her study by stating, “In terms of definition, we must move from seeing parent involvement as a narrow range of traditional practices associated with White, middle-class parents to a wide range of practices by diverse parents at home and at school” (2007, p. 278). See Figure 9.

In research conducted by Carreon, Drake, and Barton (2005), interviews were conducted with 17 Spanish-speaking immigrant parents who had previously volunteered to be a part of a 3-year study that investigated the school engagement experiences of immigrant parents in a high-poverty urban area. The interviews were conducted in Spanish during the evening to allow working parents to participate. The authors discovered that barriers such as language, work commitments, and a lack of cultural capital often impeded immigrant parents from engaging in the traditional majority culture’s practice of parental involvement. These researchers expanded on their argument by claiming that the majority culture’s practice of parental involvement did not include or value the experientially based knowledge that is often passed from parents of English Learners to their children. The researchers stated that “parental involvement is not a fixed event but a dynamic and ever-changing practice that varies depending on the context in which it occurs, the resources parents and schools bring to their actions, and the students’ particular needs” (Carreon et al., 2005, p. 466). This research identified three forms of parental involvement engaged in by immigrant parents that differed from the majority culture’s definition: presence as a strategic helper, presence as a questioner, and presence as a listener. Figure 14 illustrates these roles. In each, the parents “sought to establish their presence through constructing relationships with school actors, thus increasing their knowledge of the school cultural world and their ability to have a significant influence on it” (Carreon et al., 2005, p. 494). The researchers argued that their findings demonstrated a need to formulate a more
encompassing view of parental involvement, one that integrated the experiences and knowledge of the parents of immigrant students.

**Figure 9.** Roles taken on by parents of English learners. Adapted from S. Auerbach (2007). From moral supporters to struggling advocates: Reconceptualizing parent roles in education through the experience of working-class families of color. *Urban Education, 42*(3), 250–283.

Daniel-White (2002) conducted an ethnographic home study of a Costa Rican family’s experience of school involvement programs in a northeastern U.S. school. She found that parental involvement programs often viewed immigrant families as needing to be altered in some way, to better meet the expectations of the U.S. school system, implying that the parents were not able to create a home environment that would allow a child to thrive academically. Daniel-
White claimed that “traditional parental involvement programs often ignore the knowledge that language minority parents possess. They focus on the skills that schools want the children to learn rather than including knowledge that is valuable to non-majority cultures and families” (2002, p. 10). It appeared that such programs were taking away from the cultural identity of the families because the “parents’ own interactional patterns are not valued, and they are taught to interact with their children in ways which are not valued by their home cultures” (Daniel-White, 2002, p. 5). Daniel-White argued that “this model of fixing families and making them more like middle class families does not promote the strengths of minority families and denigrates the efforts these families make to educate their children (2002, p. 22).

Lopez (2001) observed and interviewed 5 immigrant or migrant families living in Texas to explore their parental involvement practices during a 6-month period. Lopez’s research “expands the definition of ‘parental involvement’ by illustrating ways that parents are involved
in their children’s educational development that lie outside of traditional school-related models” (2001, p. 416). With respect to one family interviewed in greater depth, Lopez discovered that “seen through a traditional academic lens, the Padillas appeared to be largely ‘uninvolved’ in their children’s education” (2001, p. 422); however, the family had their own interpretation of parental involvement. “For the Padillas, involvement was seen as teaching their children to appreciate the value of their education through the medium of hard work” (2001, p. 422). The Padilla parents felt that as they exposed their children to the hard work in the fields, the children were also learning real-life lessons: “1) to become acquainted with the type of work they do; 2) to recognize that this work is difficult, strenuous, and without adequate compensation; and 3) to realize that without an education they may end up working in a similar type of job” (2001, p. 416). The Padilla children had been labeled as highly successful by the school personnel; “all the children in the family graduated from high school in the top 10 percent of their class and performed exceptionally well in their coursework, as indicated by consistent placement on the school’s honor roll” (2001, p. 421). The father reported that he had no interaction with the schools, other than to have his children enrolled in school as soon as they moved to a new location for work. “There was little formal interaction between the Padillas and their children’s schools, and they rarely (if ever) formally reinforced particular school lessons in the home” (2001, p. 433). The actions of the Padilla family did not match the majority culture’s practices of parental involvement, yet they felt that they “were highly involved in shaping their children’s work ethic and positive orientation towards school” (2001, p. 433). Lopez concluded that: instead of trying to get marginalized parents involved in specific ways, schools should begin to identify the unique ways that marginalized parents are already involved in their
children’s education, and search for creative ways to capitalize on these and other subjugated forms of involvement (2001, p. 434).

Lopez’s study illustrates the type of knowledge that school leaders need in order to operate from a mindset of cultural proficiency.

Delgado-Gaitan (1991) undertook a 4-year qualitative study at three elementary schools in California with parental involvement programs, conducting interviews and observations of parents, teachers, and administrators, in an effort to understand how to empower students’ Spanish-speaking parents. Based on these interviews and observations of 157 activities (interactions) that involved both parents and teachers, she found that the primary reasons Spanish-speaking parents felt excluded lay not only in linguistic hurdles but also in the organization of parental involvement opportunities that failed to promote what the parents considered productive home/school relationships. Delgado-Gaitan contended that “to actively participate in the schools, parents must become informed about the school system and how it functions. Schools, for their part, have the responsibility to communicate to parents about their rights and to maintain continual dialogue with families through established structures as well as to support parents in their efforts to organize” (1991, p. 25).

In the three schools Delgado-Gaitan’s studied, the primary vehicle for parental involvement was the traditional open house, a typical majority-culture practice that offered little opportunity for personal engagement. The parents “felt that the event did not offer sufficient time to discuss their children’s progress” and the “teachers recognized that annual events like open house were not designed for lengthy conferences” (1991, p. 26). “Schools facilitate the exclusion of students and parents by (consciously or unconsciously) establishing activities that require
specific majority culturally-based knowledge and behaviors about the school as an institution” (1991, p. 21).

In contrast, activities oriented toward nonmajority (Spanish-speaking) families—a bilingual preschool program and a migrant program—were more successful in promoting parental involvement. Delgado-Gaitan noted that both programs “had a parental-involvement component and required involvement of the parents in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program” (1991, p. 27). By involving the parents in the different stages of the programs’ development, the parents were viewed as equal stakeholders in their children’s education. Delgado-Gaitan concluded that traditional activities, such as the annual open house, “tend to regulate all the power to the institution and have usually ignored the needs of groups, particularly those with a different language who are unfamiliar with the school’s expectations” (1991, p. 43). Therefore, schools needed to examine “the nonconventional activities in which underrepresented parents do participate in order to learn the needs of the Spanish-speaking families” (1991, p. 42). Such activities must be viewed and valued as equal to activities in which the majority culture traditionally has taken part.

Connors and Epstein (1994) analyzed data collected from surveys completed by 150 ninth-grade teachers, 420 families, and 1,300 ninth-grade students in six Maryland high schools to examine how schools developed partnerships with families and the community. The results informed a discussion on how schools might build or strengthen school, family, and community partnerships. The authors noted that high school students were typically more autonomous than elementary and middle school students. However, the increased autonomy “does not mean the elimination of all practices to inform and include parents in their teens’ schools or plans for the future” (p. 2). Parenting practices such as high expectations, homework assistance, attending
school events, and co-managing and balancing activities were important for students of all grade levels. The authors identified six types of involvement that all schools can practice to build and support family, school, and community partnerships: setting home conditions for learning and development; communication about school programs and student progress; volunteer opportunities and audiences at the school; learning activities at home; decision-making and leadership; and collaborating with the community. The authors provided sample practices for each type of involvement that could be implemented in a school. For example,

- parenting information can be delivered through workshops presented at various times during the day;
- communication-building can occur by including students in parent-teacher conferences;
- volunteering allows parents to participate in providing teachers or the schools with needed assistance;
- learning at home necessitates that teachers design assignments requiring students to engage in conversations with family members;
- decision-making among all stakeholders occurs when parents and students are invited to be decision-making members of committees and councils; and
- collaborating with the community occurs when community agencies share their resources and knowledge with schools and families.

Connors and Epstein concluded that “if practices are well designed and implemented, they should fulfill parents’ need for information, teachers’ need for good communication and support from home, and students’ growing autonomy” (1994, p. 28). Building partnerships was not easy work, they acknowledged, but was possible with careful planning and implementation.
Families of English Learners are often unable to be active in the school as expected by the majority culture because of the many obstacles they face, such as linguistic barriers, work constraints, limited childcare, cultural attitudes toward teachers, and previous educational experiences (Vera et al., 2012). Table 6 identifies the various obstacles that families of English Learners encounter, according to the literature reviewed herein.

Vera et al. (2012) researched the barriers faced by the parents of English Learners when trying to become involved in their children’s education in the United States. Three levels of barriers were identified: social, individual, and logistical. However, the researchers argued that through a more inclusive framework, immigrant parents could be deeply involved in their children’s education, even though it might not be what the majority viewed as parental involvement. For this purpose, they favored Epstein’s (2011) model: “Epstein’s multidimensional framework of parental involvement includes the following types: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community” (p. 185). These forms of parental involvement can enable any parent, regardless of language ability or formal education, to be actively involved in their child’s education. Vera et al. conducted their investigation by surveying 239 parents of ELs in four elementary schools. The surveys were translated into the primary languages of the parents. The main findings were that immigrant parents were concerned about their children’s education, but lacking English proficiency was a barrier to involvement, and immigrant families were unfamiliar with practices and procedures of the American educational system. They concluded: “This population of parents often face unique barriers to being more actively involved in their children’s’ academic lives and, therefore, to being a more active part of the school community” (p. 185). Negotiating multiple barriers understandably made involvement more challenging.
Table 6

*Obstacles Faced by Families of English Learners*

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<th>Limited English proficiency</th>
<th>Work constraints</th>
<th>Limited childcare</th>
<th>Differing cultural beliefs</th>
<th>Economic instability</th>
<th>Inadequate school outreach</th>
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Trueba (2002) examined how the perception of immigrants was slowly transforming: Focusing on the psychological challenges Latino immigrants face when needing to maintain different identities in order to exist within different cultures, he developed an argument that was contrary to the deficit model: “We used to conceive of immigrants of color, especially Latinos, as ‘handicapped’ because of their experience of oppression and their low economic status. They were seen as lacking the necessary cultural capital to succeed at the level of mainstream populations” (Trueba, 2002, p. 23). In contrast, Trueba argued, changing U.S. demographics have made the very skills that immigrants possess—their cultural fluidity—increasingly valuable.

The mastery of different languages, the ability to cross racial and ethnic boundaries, and a general resiliency associated with the ability to endure hardships and overcome obstacles will clearly be recognized as a new cultural capital that will be crucial for success in a modern diversified society, not a handicap. (2002, p. 7)

Trueba (2002) concluded that the hardships realized by immigrants (cultural, linguistic, social demands) would provide them the “strength and skills to succeed in settings foregone to mainstream folks” (p. 25).

Hill and Torres (2010) attempted to understand the discrepancy between the high aspirations Latino parents (a term they applied to all Spanish-speakers in their study) have for their children’s academic success and the high dropout rate of students in this largest and fastest-growing U.S. minority group. They reported that immigrant parents often misunderstood, and became frustrated with, the U.S. school system, experiencing it as a system build around “middle-class, Euro-American culture” (p. 103), in which other cultures were seen as divergent and therefore deviant. Hill and Torres (2010) claimed that the policies that mandated family-
school relations had not considered culturally embedded strategies or beliefs about parental involvement for the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States (p. 96). The authors wrote extensively about the dream of Latino immigrant parents arriving in the United States with the dream of seeing their children succeed in school, and pointed out that this dream was not realized when the parents’ and the schools’ expectations did not match.

Jeynes’s (2010) research explored nontraditional forms of parental involvement and advocated for the recognition and acceptance of these less traditional forms by school leaders. The research did not specifically target the parents of ELs, but examined the power of subtle aspects of parental involvement, and indicated that school leaders would need to reassess how they determined a parent’s level of involvement. Jeynes (2010) identified the verbalization of parental expectations, the quality of parent-child communication, and parenting style as forms of parental involvement that school leaders should consider to be equally as significant as forms of parental involvement accepted by the majority culture, such as helping children with homework, attending school functions, and maintaining household rules that dictated children’s engagement in homework and leisure (Jeynes, 2010). Some parents, especially those who were not English proficient, struggled with demonstrating the overt types of parental involvement recognized by members of the mainstream culture. According to this study, school leaders needed to acknowledge the value of these unfamiliar forms of involvement, and to understand linguistic diversity not as a deficit, but rather as a boon, for the parents of ELs.

Cairney (2000) conducted a comparative review of the history of relationship-building between schools and families in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, finding that “there has been a dramatic increase in awareness and research concerning the relationships between home and school in the last decade” (p. 163). Yet they saw that schools remained in
control avenues for parent and family engagement. Schools initiated programs “to encourage parents to become more involved in school and support school agendas in a variety of ways” (p. 164), instead of building relationships in which both groups had equal voices. Cairney’s (2000) research identified that the interest in building school and family relationships in the three countries occurred after governmental research was conducted regarding the academic success students had when they were enrolled in reading programs that had family involvement components, such as parents reading to children or maintaining a home library. School leaders had begun to attribute student success or lack of it to the idea “that school achievement varies for some students because their families lack the specific skills to enable them to create an environment of support that will enable their children to succeed at school” (Cairney, 2000, p. 165). He went on to refute that claim by stating that “deficit explanations of differential school achievement fail to recognize the fact that much of the variability of student achievement in school reflects discrepancies that exist between school resources and instructional methods, and the cultural practices of the home, not deficiencies” (p. 165).

Instead of referring to families as deficient or identifying them as being unable to provide adequate learning environments, Cairney (2000), argued that in order for schools to meet the needs of their students, they needed to be “acknowledging and responding to the richness and diversity of the language and culture of their communities” (p. 166). Cairney (2000) put forth the challenge to school leaders to “transform schools into sites for learning that are far more responsive to the social and cultural diversity of the communities that they serve” (p. 172). In order to assist in this transformation, Cairney (2000) developed a framework for schools to consider when evaluating the family and school initiatives. The framework requires schools to
critically assess all aspects of these initiatives’ design: their sources, content, processes, and importantly, the stakeholders who control them.

The research discussed in the previous section reflects the ideas of scholars who believed there were forms of parental involvement that, although they differed from the majority culture’s practices of parental involvement, should be given equal value. Aside from being identified as culturally deficient by school leaders with regard to how they engage in their children’s education, parents of ELs were also facing numerous obstacles that impeded their efforts to engage in the majority culture’s practices of parental involvement.

According to Panferov (2010), Carreon et al. (2005), Perreira, Chapman, and Stein, (2006) and Vera et al. (2012) there existed a variety of obstacles that families of English Learners must face when attempting to become involved in their children’s education in ways conform to majority-culture expectations. These obstacles, as identified previously, were: limited English proficiency, previous educational experiences, economic stability, school expectations, and cultural beliefs that contrasted with the majority culture’s beliefs in the United States. For families of ELs to be viewed as “successful parents, they must develop new understandings about the world, establish new social networks, acquire new forms of cultural capital (e.g., learning English) and learn new ways to function” (Carreon et al., 2005, p. 469). Carreon et al. (2005), Delgado-Gaitan (1991), Doucet (2011), and Coll et al. (2002) highlighted the concept that the cultures of EL students’ families may view education, teachers, and schools differently than the majority culture parents do. For example, they may hold the belief that the teacher or educational institution is always correct and that the actions of the school or teachers should not be questioned. These cultural differences may be another reason the parents of ELs do not involve themselves in the schools in ways that school leaders recognize. Vera et al.
emphasized that “the mainstream cultural expectation in the United States—that parents are highly active advocates for their children within school—can be a cultural incongruity for many parents of ELs” (2012, p. 186) According to the research, schools expect all families to advocate for their children, yet, for many families of ELs, this may be cultural expectation of which they have little experience or knowledge.

Panferov’s (2010) longitudinal study of parental involvement in two families sought to understand how parents’ educational backgrounds influenced how they involved themselves in their children’s education. The two families held differing views about their roles in their children’s education because of their own experiences, emphasizing the central point of Panferov’s project: schools need to engage in learning about the parents of their students. Panferov asserted, “As educators, we expect parental involvement with the schooling of their children to be important to students’ success; however, we often know little or nothing about the parents or the realities of their own education” (2010, p. 107). Without knowing—or understanding—these environmental factors, schools cannot assume what expectations parents hold for their involvement in the school. Panferov explained that “parents must be able to advocate for their children’s schooling and literacy development. However, this advocacy must be culturally relevant to the parents and commensurate with their own formal learning experiences” (2010, p. 111). Panferov advised that:

In this multidimensional world, education is becoming more diverse and more complex, with fewer of our students (and our teachers) fitting into traditional monolingual monocultural schools’ molds. As teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators, learning the stories of our ELL students and their parents will increase parental involvement and enrich the educational experience for all. (2010, p. 112)
This insight leads to a critical step in schools trying to appreciate the level of EL students’ parental involvement: school leaders need to learn who the EL families are in their community, what obstacles to expected forms of educational involvement they confront, and what values or beliefs they bring to supporting their children’s success.

**Linguistic diversity.** The number of languages spoken in the homes of school-aged children in America is a quickly changing variable. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2011) claimed that, in the United States, there were 325 languages spoken in the homes of school attendees. The parents of these students were expected to participate in the model of parental involvement that was developed for middle class, English-speaking parents in the United States. But if the parents of English Learners were unable to quickly develop English proficiency, they were likely to be excluded from school-based activities geared toward developing parental involvement in the school. Vera et al. (2012) identified limited “linguistic proficiency or formal education” (p. 185) as impediments that could deter some forms of parental involvement. “Being available to attend school functions, volunteering for school trips, or initiating communication with a teacher may be a challenge for the EL child’s parent who does not have adequate English language skills or who works multiple jobs” (Vera et al., 2012, p.185). According to the research, if a parent cannot communicate in the language used in school, then the possibilities for that parent to engage in school activities were limited, creating a separation between school and home.

Perreira et al. (2006) used qualitative methods to study how 18 Latino immigrant parents with adolescent children in North Carolina “cope with their new environment and how that environment shapes their parenting practices” (p. 1383). The researchers conducted interviews in English or Spanish, as participants preferred, either in the participants’ homes or at a local
community center. Open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate as little or as much as they felt comfortable. Four themes emerged from the interviews: navigating new social contexts, coping with loss and family change, fearing a new environment, and encountering diversity and confronting racism (Perreira et al., 2006). Embedded in the theme of navigating a new social context was the need for parents to overcome the language barrier in order to help their children in school. The authors concluded that “without the ability to communicate, parents feel helpless, alienated, and unable to advocate on behalf of their children” (p. 1396). School leaders expected that all parents would initiate communication when they had concerns about their student’s education. But Perreira et al. (2006) stressed that “the language barrier became increasingly palpable, as parents sought to help their children do their homework and navigate the school system” (p. 1396). With little or no English proficiency, parents of English language learners found it difficult to communicate their concerns and questions. Similar results regarding the language barrier were discussed in the research conducted by Carreon and colleagues, who stated that “because of their limited familiarity with English, parents find it difficult to understand and express their views and concerns regarding the schooling of their children” (2005, p. 470).

**Experiences of families of ELs.** Educators often focus on learning about the students who make up their school’s population in order to understand the students’ backgrounds, previous educational experiences, and strengths and needs. However, they not infrequently ignore how these same factors operate in the lives of students’ parents and families. “As educators, we expect parental involvement with the schooling of their children to be important to students’ success; however, we often know little or nothing about who the parents are and the realities of their own education” (Panferov, 2010, p. 107). Linse (2011), similarly contended that
“school staffs also need to be cognizant of any potential conflicts between their own prevailing belief systems and those of their students’ parents” (p. 658). Linse (2011) further illustrated the need to understand the parent population by stating:

A parent’s varied experiences with education, including literacy development, can have practical repercussions. For example, schools may assume from the behavior of families of ELs that they view formal parent-teacher conferences with disinterest. However, parents may come from cultural contexts where they are terribly frightened that the only reason that they are being summoned is because of a problem with their child. (p. 659)

Linse (2011) asserted that the use of critical taxonomies would allow schools to learn who is a part of their parent population. Once school leaders have built their knowledge of the parent population, they can begin to predict where differences in culture may arise and work to meet parents half-way.

**Cultural differences.** Cultural differences exist between the families of English Learners and the majority culture in the United States regarding the practice of parental involvement. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) and Panferov (2010) identified a cultural difference between the families of English Learners and the majority culture that could also be identified as an obstacle for them to overcome: maintaining educational materials in the home. An assumption of the majority culture is that families have educational materials in the home to assist with a child’s academic progress, and that they allocate a location in the home where students complete homework. Panferov (2010) claimed that “second language school literacy seems to hinge on three main opportunities: access to books and/or technology, structured study time, and regular reading and writing exposure” (p. 109). However, not all cultures view home as an extension of school, nor do they regularly maintain educational materials in the home. Also, depending on
the family’s economic, access to educational resources and space may be limited in the home. “Ethnically diverse families living in poor socioeconomic conditions often face sustained isolation from the school culture, which can lead to miscommunication between parents and schools” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p. 21). According to the research by Delgado-Gaitan (1991) and Panferov (2010), parents of English Learners may not be culturally aware of the expectation the majority culture has in maintaining educational materials in the home. This unwritten expectation may also create a financial stress on the family.

Another important cultural influence in the families of EL students is a family’s reason for immigrating to the United States. School leaders need to understand the values and experiences these families bring with them when they immigrate to the United States. No two families living in America have exactly the same historical background, nor do the families of ELs living in the United States. Some families may come of their own free will, with hopes of a better future for their children, while others may be undocumented or come as refugees, trying to survive for another day.

Coll et al. (2002) examined levels of parental involvement among three immigrant groups that represented the largest immigrant populations in two New England cities—Dominicans, Portuguese, and Cambodian—who had children in either the second or fifth grade. Researchers interviewed 334 parents of immigrant students, in the language of the participant’s choice. Coll et al. found “significant differences among cultural groups, yielding a range of immigrant contexts within which to examine the developmental characteristics of children and their families” (2002, p. 305). In the interviews, “leaders from the three communities cited language barriers, lack of parental education, unfamiliarity with the U.S. educational system, and the parental need to work long hours as deterrents to greater parental involvement in school” (Coll et
al., 2002, p. 317). A noteworthy difference among members of the three immigrant groups studied were the reasons for emigration to the United States. Dominicans and Portuguese expressed positive reasons, whereas Cambodians typically fled their home country during a hectic, turbulent time. Coll et al. stated:

Several community leaders mentioned that experiences under the Khmer Rouge had left local adults with physical and emotional scars such as depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and mutual suspicion, which made it difficult for some parents to become more engaged in community activities and their children’s schooling. (2002, p. 317)

These researchers also identified that the genocide from which many of the Cambodian families fled targeted the “urban, educated, and elite members of society, those who best knew how to advance through social and educational institutions” (Coll et al., 2002, p. 319). In addition, the researchers acknowledged that the Cambodians in the sample were “disproportionately made up of rural individuals whose families have less experience negotiating educational institutions” (Coll et al., 2002, p. 319).

When working with families of ELs, school leaders need to understand what may be culturally influenced limitations within this portion of the parent population, as well as differences among both ethnic groups and individuals within those groups. School leaders must balance expectations (for example, concerning the availability of educational materials in the home) against potential limitations (for example, effects of the emigration/immigration experience), lest they judge EL students’ parents to be culturally deficient.

**Perceived as being culturally deficient.** The cultural deficit model of parental involvement was identified in the literature by Daniel-White (2002). This model viewed the families of English Learners as being unfit with regard to preparing their children for academic
success in U.S. schools. Carreon et al. (2005) argued that when school leaders viewed the parents of EL students as being inactive and deficient, the parents were seen “as subjects to be manipulated or without power to position themselves in ways they see fit” (p. 468). As a result, Daniel-White (2002) argued, “schools assume that it is the parents’ responsibility to meet the school’s demands without giving parents adequate tools to do so and without adapting efforts to meet parental needs” (p. 6). For example, often schools would tell parents that they needed to read to their children or help them with their homework. If the parents were not proficient in English, or themselves lacked literacy or sufficient educational attainment, their ability to carry out these activities would be compromised. Daniel-White (2002) claimed that “many assignments sent home with children are decontextualized and require parents to have a high level of formal education in order to help their children” (p. 10). She contended that schools need to become more sensitive to what they consider acceptable demands or types of parental involvement. Because of the problems with the cultural deficit model, Daniel-White (2002) argued:

> It is important to propose alternative ways to involving language minority parents in homework and home activities which celebrate these families, take into consideration minority parenting styles, respect the linguistic socialization children receive at home, and contextualize involvement in ways that consider individual family characteristics, rather than prescribing one-size-fits-all activities that all parents should employ at home.

(p. 8)

According to the research findings described above, when families of English Learners are unable to meet majority-culture expectations for parental involvement the perception that they are deficient impedes their ability to establish productive home-to-school relationships.
Hidden messages. School leaders need to be aware of hidden curricula, which she defines to include what she terms hidden messages, i.e., expressions or actions that intentionally or unintentionally marginalize families of English Learners. For example, a school may profess to welcome everyone to an open house, using signs and invitations that are written only in English, although the parents speak a variety of languages. Linse (2011) explained that such “hidden curricula are often contrary to stated curricula and can undermine many different facets of educational programming for school-aged students” (p. 655). A pathway to remedying such exclusionary curricula, she proposed, starts with affording time for parents to talk about and explain their cultures and languages.

Crozier’s (2006) interviewed 58 parents and 15 teachers in the United Kingdom over a 3-year period about how they perceived their roles in the parent-teacher relationship. Crozier’s research did not focus specifically on the families of English Learners, but it shed light on how teachers replicated the parental involvement norms of their own social and cultural status without taking into account those who made up their parent populations. Crozier (2006) reported that “teachers tend to adopt the same strategies for promoting parental involvement irrespective of class, parental needs, individual circumstances, and so on” (p. 316). For example, working-class parents were expected to conform to the teachers’ construct of parental involvement, thus reinforcing “the parents’ perception of teachers as the professional ‘who knows best’: as the powerful knower” (Crozier, 2006, p. 316). The majority of parents interviewed expressed educational hopes for their children and concerns regarding their children’s education, but said they would not bring them to the school because “there was amongst these parents an overwhelming sense of trust placed in these professionals to fulfill their role” (Crozier, 2006, p. 319). Along with this trust came the belief that if the assigned teacher(s) could not educate the
child, then no one would be able to do it. “Parents are aware that teachers are not always, or even frequently successful in their endeavors, but they take the view that if the teachers can’t do it, then they themselves would stand no chance of success” (Crozier, 2006, p. 321). Lacking productive communication with parents, the teachers expressed “a particular set of expectations of parents’ role and behavior, and thus when the parents fail to match this model, teachers are critical and accuse them of lack of support” (p. 324). This disparagement occurred despite the teachers’ acknowledging that many of the parents “held a different set of values from themselves,” (Crozier, 2006, p. 326). Crozier concluded: “whilst the teachers might see parents differently, in the drive to ensure parents as agents of the school they employ the same strategies to involve all parents” (p. 326). In other words, even teachers who recognized class or cultural differences between school personnel and parents failed to adjust their communication practices to accommodate the parents’ values, thereby sending the hidden message that differences were not accepted or tolerated.

Interviews with administrators at four elementary schools in the Netherlands by Denessen et al. (2007) focused on the basic dilemma that schools face: when developing parental involvement programs and practices, who needs to comply with whom? Should schools alter their expectations to meet the needs of the parents, or should the parents alter their expectations to meet the demands of the school? The Netherlands is home to many different ethnic groups: immigrants from former Dutch colonies, guest workers from Mediterranean countries, and refugees (Denessen et al., 2007). Immigrants must demonstrate proficiency in Dutch before they receive their immigration papers (Denessen et al., 2007). This social indication of a superior language has implications for how schools approach minority parental involvement. “The results of this study indicated that school administrators recognize difficulties in getting immigrant
parents involved in their children’s school” (Denessen et al., 2007, p. 27). The researchers grouped the interview responses into four sections: Issues that were evident in all four elementary schools concerned experiences with respect to ethnic minority parent involvement, language problems of ethnic minority parents, communication with parents, and parent participation (Denessen, et al., 2007). None of the schools had specific goals for developing and sustaining parental involvement, and school leaders did not share their strategies for engaging immigrant families. This research is relevant to practices in the United States because of the demographic changes in the United States, and resulting political conflicts over whether to enforce English-only policies in schools.

On the other hand, in a qualitative study in four Texas school districts, Lopez, Scribner, and Mahitivanichcha (2001) found that administrators—“a building-level administrator (usually a principal or assistant principal), a school counselor or social worker, the parent involvement coordinator or community liaison for the school, and occasionally a parent or teacher” (p. 259)—had redefined their perceptions of parental involvement to meet the needs of their migrant parent population. The research suggested that “the main criterion for successful parental involvement programs [for migrant parents] is an unwavering commitment to meet the multiple needs of migrant families above all other involvement considerations” (Lopez et al., 2001, p. 261). The authors concluded: “schools in this study were successful not because they subscribed to a particular definition of involvement, but because they held themselves accountable—first and foremost—to meet the multiple needs of migrant parents on a daily and ongoing basis” (p. 281). In other words, by developing practices flexible enough to accommodate all populations in the school, the administrators the schools enacted multiple forms of parental involvement.
In order for a school to demonstrate that it does not engage in inappropriate messaging, Panferov (2012) explained, “creating opportunities for parents to engage in sharing their home cultures and their own expertise transfers a positive attitude to ELL children about their first language and learning experiences” (p. 111). When school and community leaders work together to demonstrate cultural responsiveness, they show that a school is not merely giving lip service to the idea of diversity, but is instead embracing it. Similarly, Coll et al. (2002) contended that “community leaders can inform local immigrant groups not just about the importance of education and its benefits, but about the specific processes that underlie parental involvement” (p. 322). By working in this way with community agencies, schools can overcome parents’ fears surrounding home-school communication, and uncover the incongruences of hidden messages, including the unspoken expectations the school has regarding parental involvement (Coll et al., 2002)

**Fear, distress and anxiety.** Families may view schools with skeptical eyes because of fear, a perceived lack of respect, different cultural constructions of education, and anxiety over losing their cultural identity. Doucet (2011), Hill and Torres (2010), Panferov (2010), Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao (2008), and Vera et al. (2012) recognized obstacles that were emotional in construction, as opposed to logistical or economical. For example, family dynamics may change when immigrant children become more fluent in English than the parents. Panferov (2010), in his study of parents of English Learners, explained that “one of the distinctive characteristics of immigrant and refugee families is that children often surpass their parents’ proficiencies in the new language and, as a result, are called upon to interpret for family issues that they might not normally have ever been exposed to because of their young age” (p. 110).
This dynamic can cause a shift in power, making the parents feel a loss of authority, thus creating distrust and dislike of the educational system.

Research by Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao supported “the importance of working with Latino families to decrease parent-adolescent acculturation conflict—the strongest risk factor for family dysfunction” (Smokowski et al., 2008, p. 306). This finding emerged from home interviews conducted in their choice of language (English or Spanish) with 402 Latino adolescents and their families in metropolitan, small-town, and rural areas of North Carolina and Arizona to discover how adolescent and parent acculturation influenced family structures. Analyses revealed that levels of culture-of-origin involvement, i.e., “the maintenance of ethnic identity through language, media use, and enacting traditions from one’s native culture” (p. 299) vs. host-culture involvement (acculturation) had impacted the family. Acculturation, the authors specified, “has two important subcomponents: (a) the extent to which the acculturating individual or group retains culture-of-origin involvement and (b) the extent to which host-culture involvement is established” (p. 295). Not only do immigrant children often develop proficiency in the English language at a faster rate, but also they acculturate faster than their parents. When parents or children are more involved in one culture than the other, acculturation conflicts can be disrupt family relationships. “Despite their valued new roles as cultural brokers, younger family members who are rapidly acculturating may adopt norms and values of the host society” (Smokowski et al., 2008, p. 297). When such conflicts, or acculturation gaps, occur, the families of EL students can begin to feel alienated from their children and fear that the children will lose connection with their native culture.

Doucet (2011) explored immigrant parents’ “fears of losing their children to Americanization” (p. 2707), and whether these fears affected school-community relations,
through interviews with 54 Haitian parents of school-aged adolescents in the Greater Boston area. Posing questions about “household composition; impressions of child(ren)’s educational experiences; parenting beliefs and practices; attitudes and practices around education and schooling; children’s peer relationships; education, discrimination, and social relations” (Doucet, 2011, p. 2713), Doucet sought to consider the “possibility that families play an active and deliberate role in creating distance between the worlds of home and school” (p. 2705). Among her findings, Doucet observed that “encouraging children to keep family business private was a tactic parents adopted to insulate themselves from problems with schools and other agencies, and parents themselves were extremely cautious with the information they divulged to outsiders” (p.2718). As a result, these parents found personal questions from teachers, or assignments that required students to disclose information about their families, to be intrusive. These privacy concerns reflected a distrust of the U.S. legal system.

Doucet’s interviews also revealed that in Haiti teachers are responsible for the students’ education and so “it makes sense that some Haitian parents question the competency of American teachers for constantly seeking their input and feedback about their children’s school performance” (Doucet, 2011, p. 2726). She concluded with the following suggestion for future practice:

Educators should be open to the possibility that many immigrant families may strongly desire relationships with schools and teachers that follow commonly accepted U.S. paradigms. But rather than assume that the process of building those partnerships will take traditional paths, educators should be prepared to recognize divergent means to reaching common goals. (p. 2729)
In other words, immigrant families’ goals for school involvement may resemble those of American-born families, but their preferred paths to achieving them may differ.

Research conducted by Hill and Torres (2010) yielded a similar finding. They found that “many Latino families found the schools to be disrespectful of their culture and their authority in the family and did not trust their judgment” (p. 101). According to the research, if the nature of the relationship between the schools and parents was unclear, or the activities the parents were expected to undertake were not understood, parents would be hesitant to engage in building a relationship with school leaders. “Because the purpose and utility of some involvement strategies are unclear and because Latino parents find that their cultural beliefs are challenged or devalued, there are significant barriers to building relationships” (Hills & Torres, 2010, p. 106). In order for schools to build relationships with families of English Learners, the schools need to make efforts to understand the backgrounds, knowledge, and expectations of their culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

**Expectations of School by Families of ELs**

When school leaders want to build relationships with families of English Learners, they need to understand what cultural expectations these families have of the school leaders and the education that their children will receive. Due to the linguistic and cultural differences between families of English Learners and school leaders, who often are members of the majority culture, there is often miscommunication about the expectations that each group has for the other. According to the research conducted by Delgado-Gaitan (1991), parents of English Learners “expected more instruction and frequent communication from the school, while teachers expected the parents to take more initiative to enquire about their child’s progress on a regular basis” (p. 30). Both groups wanted more communication, yet both groups had an expectation
that the other would make the first step and open the lines of communication. Hill and Torres (2010) asserted in their research that:

Whereas they [parents of ELs] respect teachers’ roles in school, they also expect teachers to respect parents’ roles in the home. Latino parents hold teachers in high regard and believe that it is disrespectful to challenge teachers, so parents are often reluctant to express their opinions to teachers, especially if they disagree. (p. 100)

School leaders need to be aware of what expectations their parent populations have in regard to overstepping boundaries and interfering in the school or home domain. “Latino immigrants arrive in the United States with a strong belief in the American Dream, a strong work ethic, and high aspirations for their children” (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 106). In conjunction with the research conducted by Hills and Torres (2010), Carreon et al. (2005) found similar concerns voiced by the parents of ELs.

They believe the curriculum is not challenging, and their children are studying material they already know, they view the school environment as hostile or violent, and they report that their children are taunted because of their accents or the kinds of clothes they wear. (p. 470)

In Delgado-Gaitan’s study (1991) of parental involvement activities, parents reported that the open house events “did not offer sufficient time to discuss their children’s progress” (p. 26).

Vera et al. (2012) pointed out that “the perceived climate of the school environment and, in particular, whether or not the parents feel welcomed in the school community is another important area for schools to assess in efforts to increase parent participation” (p.196).

Sometimes it is only a perceived climate, but that is enough to deter parents from becoming involved. In Doucet’s (2012) research on Haitian parents, some said they “were put off by what
they perceived as discriminatory attitudes from teachers” (p. 2723). Although there was no
evidence that the teachers or school leaders held discriminatory attitudes toward the parents, the
parents internalized these perceptions and were thus unable to begin developing connections
between their homes and the schools. Schools must work at changing these perceptions if they
hope to engage all families. One way a school may inadvertently impart a perceived negative
climate or hidden curricula is to not recognize all of the languages represented within the school.
According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2011), “…states
report the five home languages most commonly spoken by ELs. In interpreting these data, it is
critical to be aware that speakers of languages which do not fall into the five reported languages
in a state are not counted or identified” (p. 1). If parents speak one of the minority languages and
their language is not represented in school signage or in communications sent home, they may
perceive these omissions as discriminatory.

The cultural conflicts discussed in the research by Coll et al. (2002), Delgado-Gaitan
(1991), Doucet (2011), Hills and Torres (2010), Smokowski et al. (2008), and Vera et al. (2012)
explained how obstacles can be built between the school and home. Table 7 identifies the
obstacles that emerge between schools and families of English Learners due to cultural conflicts.

Considerable research, at sites across the United States, has shown that schools typically
view lack of parental involvement as indicating a lack of interest in the education of the child,
but that this view is inaccurate. Rather, parents from many non-U.S. cultures hold reverence for
the educational profession, viewing teachers and school leaders as authorities whose knowledge
they cannot question or attempt to supplement. Therefore “to be culturally responsive and to be
able to recognize the cultural assumption of the parents, schools must often suspend their own
cultural assumptions about schooling” (Linse, 2011, p. 658). For example, Coll et al. (2002)
Table 7

*Cultural Difference Obstacles that EL Families Face*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Cultural Difference Obstacles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coll et al., (2002)</td>
<td>Families of ELs believe teachers are the experts in educating their children and it would be considered impolite and inappropriate for parents to involve themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delgado-Gaitan (1991)</td>
<td>Families of ELs expect that schools will provide frequent communication while the teachers expect the parents to take a more active role in learning about their child’s academic progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doucet, (2011)</td>
<td>Families of ELs protect the home terrain (culture, language, traditions), equate school with Americanization, negotiate a seat at the table (having an equal voice), and possess a culturally based definition of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill and Torres, (2010)</td>
<td>Families of ELs find schools to be disrespectful of culture and authority and feel schools did not trust them to make appropriate judgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokowski et al., (2008)</td>
<td>Families of ELs desire to maintain ethnic identity and traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera et al., (2012)</td>
<td>Families of ELs have cultural differences regarding the role of parents and teachers and different definitions of the word education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

pointed out that, among Cambodian parents, “it is assumed that teachers are the best equipped to guide the child’s academic and moral development, and parental involvement in schooling would be seen as inappropriate and disrespectful” (Coll et al., 2002, p. 317). Similarly, Doucet (2011) noted that Haitian parents were uncomfortable with providing family information school personnel: “Given that teachers are perceived in Haiti as being ultimately responsible for teaching children, it makes sense that some Haitian parents question the competency of American teachers for constantly seeking their input and feedback about their children’s school performance” (Doucet, 2011, p. 2726). Such norms and beliefs, which typically are unfamiliar to U.S. teachers and school administrators, explain why it takes time and effort to build sufficient trust across cultures before open communication between home and school can occur.

Similarly, it is important for schools to acknowledge that students’ acculturation to U.S. norms may lead immigrant parents’ to fear that their children will become alienated from the
home culture as they become increasingly Americanized (Doucet, 2011; Hill and Torres, 2010). Doucet (2011) elucidated the ideas Haitian parents have about their definition of education: “the goal of schooling is to instruct as well as to provide an education, the French word referring to providing children not only with reading, writing and counting abilities, but also with moral guidance, a sense of civic duty, and interpersonal skills” (p. 2722). Latino families define being “well educated” more broadly than do U.S. schools (Hill & Torres, 2010, p. 99): Education, for them, encompasses not only academics but also the components of morality, responsibility, respectfulness, and proper manners (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Ideas of morality can differ between cultures, and when there is a difference between these ideas, conflict may arise. In the opinion of this author, school leaders need to become aware of their cultural values, perceptions, and assumptions, and how these may differ from those held by the families of English Learners. School leaders are capable of building awareness of cultural differences regarding parental involvement. The use of taxonomies as a tool for critical self-evaluation, as suggested by Linse (2001), is one method school leaders may use to monitor their knowledge of their population and how best to serve their needs. Also, school leaders need to expand their definition of parental involvement to be more inclusive of the various forms of parental involvement engaged in by families of ELs. Jeynes (2010) argued that salient forms of parental involvement, such as verbalized parental expectations, communications between the parent and child, and parenting styles, should be considered equally important as the forms of parental involvement accepted by the majority culture. By understanding cultural differences, school leaders can support the learning and academic success of ELs and develop meaningful relationships with their families.
Conclusion and Implications

A review of the literature on parental involvement of families of English Learners in K-12 U.S. schools was conducted to address the following question: How is parental involvement defined and what obstacles are faced by parents of ELs who are trying to engage within the U.S. majority culture’s expectations of parental involvement? Findings from the literature lead to three overarching conclusions: (a) the construct of parental involvement is based on the ethnocentric perspective of school leaders (Cummins, 2000; Schleicher & Kozma, 1992; Springer, 2013); (b) the term parental involvement in the United States has multiple definitions, many of which exclude the practices of families of English Learners (Auerbach, 2007; Lopez, 2000; Lopez et al., 2001); and (c) families of English Learners face numerous obstacles in engaging with an ethnocentric school system that does not respect their cultural ways of knowing (Carreon et al., 2005; Daniel-White, 2002; Delgado-Gaitian, 1991; Coll et al., 2002; Panferov, findings. 2010; Perreira et al., 2006; Vera et al., 2012). See Figure 11 for a succinct illustration.

The findings of the literature review of parental involvement related to families of English Learners has important implications for school leaders in the 21st century. These may be distilled into four domains of action: (a) better defining the construct of cultural responsiveness to parental involvement; (b) rethinking the definition of parental involvement; (c) improving professional preparation and development to promote cultural intelligence; and (d) removing obstacles that deter communication and participation of families whose linguistic and cultural traditions may differ from those of the U.S. majority population.

Cultural Responsiveness

The construct of parental involvement in the United States is based on an ethnocentric perspective (Cummins, 2000; Schleicher & Kozma, 1992; Springer, 2013) that defines which
actions and behaviors constitute parental involvement (Lopez, 2001; Lopez et al., 2001). For school leaders to embrace a construct of parental involvement that embraces the linguistic and cultural diversity brought to their school by families of English Learners, a critical shift in thinking must take place. School leaders need to move from a perspective of viewing the majority culture as superior to other cultures (Schleicher & Kozma, 1992) to a culturally proficient perspective (Gay, 2000; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Lindsey et al., 2013) in which they view the languages, cultures, and values of English Learners’ families as equivalent in worth to those of families from the majority U.S. culture (Springer, 2013).

Therefore, school leaders must develop awareness and knowledge of students and families from cultures different from their own, so that they can address current demand (Darling Hammond, 2011). To accomplish this and counteract the ethnocentric perspective that is pervasive in the U.S. school system (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Springer, 2013), professional development and training for school leaders in the area of cultural responsiveness in parental involvement is recommended (Epstein, 2011; Gay, 2000). Figure 12 shows a continuum of professional growth that school leaders follow as they increase their knowledge and understanding of families of English Learners.

![Ethnocentric vs. Culturally Responsive Perspective](image)

*Figure 11. Development of school leaders’ cultural and linguistic perspectives regarding English learners.*

Once school leaders have shifted their thinking from one of ethnocentricity to one of cultural responsiveness, they can begin to rethink what constitutes parental involvement. In the process of rethinking the definition of parental involvement, school leaders can create a
definition that is inclusive of all parent groups: those who are members of the majority culture as well as those who are linguistically and culturally different.

**Rethinking the Definition of Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement in the United States has many definitions, most of which exclude the practices of families of English Learners (Auerbach, 2007; Epstein, 2011; Jeynes, 2010; Lopez, 2001; Lopez et al., 2001). NCLB (2001) defined parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular meaningful communication regarding student academic learning and other school activities, ensuring the following:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their children’s learning;
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s school education;
- that parents are full partners in their children’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children; and
- that schools carry out other activities, such as those described in section 1118 of ESSA (2015).

The stipulations set forth by ESSA regarding what constitutes parental involvement are not inclusive of families of English Learners (Auerbach, 2007; Epstein, 2011; Jeynes, 2010; Lopez, 2001; Lopez et al., 2001) and also amplify the obstacles faced by families of English Learners (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Carreon et al., 2005; Daniel White, 2002; Delgado-Gaitian, 1991; Coll et al., 2002; Panferov, 2010; Perreira et al., 2006; Vera et al., 2012). As a solution to this issue, this author proposes a new and broader working definition of parental involvement as follows: *Any and all culturally appropriate ways a parent or guardian uses to support a child’s social, physical, emotional, and academic well-being at home and at school* (Auerbach, 2007; Lopez, 2001; Lopez et al., 2001).
Professional Development

School leaders already are educated for initial licensure, and they continued professional development to maintain it. In addition, however, they should develop a working knowledge of the ways in which families of English Learners perceive parental involvement in the context of their cultural ways and beliefs. This means that school leaders need to pursue culturally responsive professional development for both themselves and their staffs to break down the obstacles faced by the families of ELs (Ballard & Taylor, 2012). As a start, school leaders need to develop cultural competency in general, their own knowledge base of the diverse cultures represented in their parent populations, and ideally, fluency in one or more of the languages spoken by their students’ families. School leaders and associations such as the American Association of School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of Elementary School Principals,., and the National Association of Secondary School Principals need to expand their purview to focus more attention on the development of home-school connection practices that engage all parents regardless of their level of English proficiency.

Removing Obstacles

Families of English Learners face numerous obstacles in many ethnocentric school systems that do not yet acknowledge, respect, or embrace their cultural ways. The major obstacles identified in the literature related to parental involvement include: linguistic differences; cultural differences; perceptions of cultural deficiency; hidden messages; and fear, distress, and anxiety. This author proposes the following solutions to remove the parental involvement obstacles faced by families of ELs.
**Remove communication barriers.** School leaders must determine which languages and cultures are represented in the school community (Epstein, 2011), and then identify the members of the teaching staff and community who can serve as translators. Translators should be used to communicate school information at every occasion (Carreon et al., 2005; Perreira et al., 2006; Vera et al., 2012). One of the most challenging obstacles for families of English Learners is having limited English proficiency in a school setting that functions only in English (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Carreon et al., 2005; Daniel White, 2002; Delgado-Gaitian, 1991; Coll et al., 2002; Panferov, 2010; Perreira et al., 2006; Vera et al., 2012). This critical language barrier challenges school leaders to become bilingual (or multilingual) and/or to use trustworthy interpreters. School leaders must also engage in an all-inclusive self study of the school to determine what messages are communicated to families explicitly or implicitly, and what actions the school currently takes to build relationships with parents (Linse, 2011; Panferov, 2010).

Often parents receive the message that everyone is welcome to come to school, yet when families of ELs arrive, there is no one there who can communicate with them (Carreon et al., 2005; Coll et al., 2002). Through a self-study, school leaders can identify where schools are being successful, where they are struggling, and measures needed to overcome the shortcomings associated with their ethnocentric perspectives (Linse, 2011). Actions speak louder than words, but leaders must assure that both their actions and their messages bespeak cultural responsiveness (Gay, 2000; Linse, 2011; Panferov, 2010). To eliminate hidden messages, school leaders must become aware of them and then actively plan to eliminate them across the school community. One such action could be to provide time during the school year for families of ELs to share their home cultures and languages with the school community.
Renounce ethnocentrism and eliminate perceptions of ELs as culturally deficient.

School leaders should receive both preservice and in-service professional development that will prepare them to understand and value cultural differences between the majority culture and the growing and diverse population of minority cultures. In the 21st century, school leaders are charged with the task of removing ethnocentrism and perceptions of cultural deficiency in their schools (Cummins, 2000; Gay, 2000; Springer, 2013). They need to ensure the professional development of their staff in the areas of cultural and linguistic responsiveness. Moreover, they must take care to hire staff that are linguistically and culturally diverse. It is recommended that state professional development standards and state associations address current demographics by recognizing, understanding, and capitalizing on the linguistic and cultural diversity of the parents of English Learners.

The ISLLC has published six standards that detail the professional requirements and expectations of school leaders. Standard 4 outlines how school leaders are to promote student success through understanding of, and collaboration with, linguistically and culturally diverse populations. Standard 4 also states that “an education leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (ISLLC, 2015, p. 27). State professional development standards and state associations must continue to require school leaders to “promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community’s diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources and build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers” (ISLLC, 2015, p. 27) By keeping these essential requirements at the forefront of professional development, school leaders will build their cultural competency in working with
linguistically and culturally diverse parents (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Epstein, 2011; Gay, 2000; Linse, 2011).

**Address social-emotional obstacles.** In order to lessen the fear, distress, and anxiety felt and reported by some families of English Learners, school leaders need to create a welcoming environment within the school (Doucet, 2011; Linse, 2011; Vera et al., 2012). This starts with having signs welcoming parents in the languages spoken by all in the community. The school leader must make it a priority to employ bilingual (or multilingual) main office staff, and assure that staff members who can speak the languages of EL student’s families are readily available to translate for parents during registration, tours, and meetings. School leaders must also make it non-negotiable that school information sent home is provided in all the languages spoken by parents, and includes visual cues for parents who are preliterate (Linse, 2011; Panferov, 2010).

To effectively involve families of EL students, school leaders must stop any attempts to homogenize the actions of families of English Learners to meet preconceived expectations about parental involvement (Springer, 2013). School leaders must engage all parents in culturally responsive educational experiences of their school-age children and develop partnerships with parents who represent ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities, as directed by ESSA (2015). ESSA specifically states that schools are to develop and sustain parental involvement with all parents, and specifically with those who have been marginalized. School leaders must be mindful of how they approach the topic of parental involvement in their schools, recognizing that their views of parental involvement may be based on an ethnocentric perspective. They need to develop cultural responsiveness in themselves, their staff, and their schools. The leaders of schools must make efforts to value the richness of the cultures of their EL students and families.
Summary

Chapter II has provided a review of literature that lays the theoretical foundation for this study of school leaders’ cultural proficiency. The review was organized into two sections: (1) a review of demographic changes in the United States, Massachusetts, and the city in which this study was conducted; of policies and expectations for engagement and partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families; and of cultural proficiency (as defined by Lindsey et al., 2013), and the CPC2 model (adapted for this study), and (2) a review of the historical construct of parental involvement by the majority culture, the obstacles faced by parents of immigrants seeking to engage with the majority culture’s practices regarding parental involvement, and the expectations immigrant parents have of schools. Chapter III includes an explanation of the methodology used in this study. Also discussed in Chapter III are the research sample, research design, data collection, methods, and data analysis and synthesis. Chapter III concludes with ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and the limitations and delimitations of this study.
Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this research was to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban public high school in Massachusetts. This chapter describes the research methods used in this study, including (a) an introduction and synopsis of the research; (b) summary of the problem; (c) research sample; (d) research design; (e) data collection methods; (f) data analysis and synthesis; (g) ethical considerations; (h) issues of trustworthiness; and (i) delimitations and limitations of the research.

Synopsis of Research

This section first establishes the contextual framework for the study; outlines the problem statement, justification for the study, and purpose of the study, and the research questions.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

If school leaders are to create relationships with all members of the school community they need to utilize culturally proficient practices—to create an environment in which all students and their families, including those of English Learners, can demonstrate their systems of involvement in their children’s education, and feel their practices are valued. To realize such inclusivity, school leaders should take time to identify their level of cultural proficiency before taking any leadership action within a school setting. Lindsey et al. (2013) define cultural proficiency as “a mindset, a worldview, a way of being assumed by a person or an organization for effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that arise in diverse environments” (p. 8). Self-reflection requires school leaders to open themselves to the uncomfortable possibility of realizing that, by their identity or their actions, they may be
perceived as oppressors—that is, as dominating others by enforcing hegemonic, monocultural norms (Freire 1970).

Lindsey et al.’s implementation guide for school leaders (2013) was designed to “help educators develop an understanding of how they and their schools can progress from recognizing ‘deficit-based’ perspectives that predominate their schools, to recognizing systematic oppression, and to developing culturally proficient leadership behaviors and organizational practices” (Lindsey et al., 2013, p. 14). Using the cultural proficiency continuum illustrated in Figure 2 (as adapted from Lindsey by this author) allows school leaders undertake the challenging path of self exploration and critical assessment of their schools, so they can begin to adopt more culturally proficient practices that better address the needs of the school community they serve.

This study uses Lindsey et al. (2013) as a theoretical model for examining the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban public high school in Massachusetts. Its purpose is to discover strategies for improving the responsiveness of school leaders to the school’s diverse population.

Statement of the Problem

Historically, school leaders from the majority U.S. culture have shaped how families are involved in the school community (Berger, 1991; Springer, 2013). But the increasing number of English Learners in U.S. schools (U.S. DOE, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016) has revealed that these traditional forms of engagement fall short of meeting the needs of diverse educational communities: The ways of knowing that inform how many schools are led tend to create obstacles to connecting with families of English Learners (Coll et al., 2002). Moreover, although principals may perceive themselves as knowledgeable about instructional approaches,
teachers who instruct EL students have reported that their principals were not well informed about the needs of this population (Stein, 2012).

Majority-culture school leaders have a professional responsibility to not only address the needs of these EL students, but also to engage their families in the school community (ISLLC, 2008). Furthermore, NCLB (2001) and now ESSA (2015) mandate that schools develop partnerships with all parent groups, specifically parent groups that have been routinely marginalized (NCLB, 2001).

This study focuses on examining the extent to which school leaders actually demonstrate cultural proficiency in building relationships with EL students and their families. Although conducted at a single school, the study addresses the critical nationwide problem of how to accommodate the educational needs of an increasingly diverse U.S. school population.

**Scope and Justification for the Study**

The site for this research was a public high school in Massachusetts at which the overall school population was 1,828, with 24.3% of its 2014–2015 population identified as English learners (ELs), former English learners (FELs), or students whose first language is not English (FLNEs), according to information from MADESE (2016). The school was located in a community that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), had 48,514 inhabitants, with 14.9% of the population stating that they were born outside the United States and 18.1% identifying themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

Given the growing professional demand for school leaders to shift from an ethnocentric (White, Euro-American) perspective to a culturally proficient perspective, and to demonstrate responsiveness to the needs of families of English Learners (Anderson & Davis, 2012; Lindsey et al., 2013), it was important to investigate the degree of cultural proficiency that school leaders
bring to addressing the needs of EL students and their families—needs that have until very recently were invisible on the websites of major professional organizations in Massachusetts (Serpa and Lira, 2012).

**Purposes of Study**

The purposes of this action research were to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban public high school in Massachusetts, and thereby to develop appropriate recommendations for improving the leaders’ ability to foster engagement and involvement among EL students and their families. The theoretical model for this research was based on Lindsey et al. (2013).

**Research Questions.**

The following questions framed the research:

1. To what degree do school leaders in an urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners (ELs) and their families?

2. How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with English Learners and their families?

3. What professional development or preparation have high-school leaders at this school received in cultural proficiency to address the current needs of ELs and their families?

**Research Participants and Setting**

This section describes characteristics of the research participants and the high-school setting in which the research was conducted.
Participants

Participants for this research study were 16 school leaders at a grades 9-12 urban public high school in Massachusetts: the principal, assistant principals, district-wide supervisors, curriculum coordinators, and department heads.

These school leaders self-reported their demographic and linguistic characteristics; they were primarily white, male and monolingual English speaking. One self-reported as African American, and one self-reported as having had studied outside the United States in a country where the language of instruction was not English. Only three of the school leaders claimed proficiency in a language other than English: Spanish (two) and French (1). Table 8 summarizes these characteristics of the sample.

Table 8

*Self-Reported Demographic and Linguistic Characteristics of Research Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (years in position)</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Language(s) Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal (&lt;1 year)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal (16-20 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal (16-20 yrs.)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal (&lt;1 year)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Director (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Dept Chair (&lt;1 year)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Supervisor (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Consumer Sciences Supervisor (1-5 yrs)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts Dept. Chair (20+ yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Dept Chair (16-20 yrs.)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English and French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance Dept. Chair (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Dept Chair (&lt;1 year)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Dept Chair (11-15 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Dept Chair (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education (1-5 yrs.)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Setting

The site for this research was a public high school in Massachusetts where the overall school population was 1,828, with 24.3% of its 2014–2015 student population identified as FLNEs (first language not English) according to information from MADESE (2016). The school was located in a community with a population of 48,514, 14.9% of whom identified as foreign-born and 18.1% as Hispanic or Latino/a (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Data Overview

This section describes the two types of data collected for this research study: contextual and perceptual. Contextual data provided a useful lens for interpretation of information gained from the school leaders participating in the study: it indicated their social and professional location, in addition to the physical and institutional environment in which they worked. The context of the study also had contributed to refining the terms of the research problem. Perceptual data formed the heart of this qualitative research: it revealed how the school leaders went about their work—how they thought about it and themselves, and how they presented their work and themselves to those they worked with and served.

Contextual Data

Two types of contextual data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) were collected for this research study: (a) data concerning cultural, or demographic, characteristics and changes at and around the research site, including how they mirrored changes in the nation as a whole, as well as how they were experienced; and (b) data concerning the research site itself, recorded through visual observations and photographs of the physical environment in which the research participants operated every day as school leaders.
Descriptive demographic data were collected from participants, first, to describe their relevant personal characteristics, and second, to determine how the school leaders’ characteristics compared with those of the school’s students and their families. Participants reported these characteristics through an online survey, the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire*, which was developed for this study and administered using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) point to the importance of obtaining this type of data for a study in which participants’ perceptions and behaviors form part of the analysis: “Relevant demographic information is needed to help explain what may be underlying an individual’s perceptions, as well as the similarities and differences in perceptions among participants” (p. 105). The demographic data specifically collected for this study were the following: participants’ race, their ability to communicate in a language other than English, and what languages other than English the participant could use for communication. Additional information, such as participants’ current educational position and the length of time in that position, was also collected using the online questionnaire. See Table 7.
Perceptual Data  Perceptual data gathered for this study was both statistically descriptive and qualitative.

This type of data documents the perceptions held by the participants regarding the subject of the research study or inquiry (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Participants recorded how often they engaged in a number of culturally proficient actions through the online *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* and through the *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview*, both of which were developed for this study. Questionnaire responses were anonymous. Frequency (always, often, about half the time, seldom, never) was recorded on a Likert scale.

Qualitative perceptual data was collected through individual in-person interviews, in which open-ended questions allowed participants the opportunity to further explain the culturally proficient actions they took at the research site. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) caution that the validity of this type of data lies not in its fealty to fact, but in its accurate representation of a respondent’s beliefs. “It should be remembered that perceptions are just that—they are not facts—they are what people perceive as facts they are neither right nor wrong; they tell the story of what the participants believe to be true” (p. 106). In this respect, the researcher is the instrument of data collection, and she must take care to project a neutral composure that refrains from encouraging desired responses and accepts every response nonjudgmentally.

---

**Figure 12.** Data collected for research.

- **Contextual Data**
  - Demographic data
  - Observational data

- **Perceptual Data**
  - Questionnaire responses (self-assessments)
  - Interview responses (accounts and attitudes)
The next section discusses the research design and the steps taken to carry out the research study.

**Research Design**

This section presents the design for this qualitative study investigating the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban high school in Massachusetts. In accord with Creswell’s (2013) assertion that “the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone” (p. 4), this study began with quantitative descriptors (demographic characteristics of the research sample and setting, collected via questionnaires), which were then investigated qualitatively through observations and interviews. The structure of the study design thus uses an explanatory sequential method (Creswell, 2012). See Figure 13.

*Figure 13. Explanatory sequential method as applied in the research study.*

**Procedures**

This section outlines the steps taken to execute delivery of consent forms, collect online data, schedule interviews, implement interview protocols, ensure safekeeping of data, record data used for follow-up interviews, and complete a nonbiased transcription process. See Figure 15.
A consent form (see Appendix D) was personally handed to each school leader asked to participate in the research. This allowed the researcher an opportunity to directly invite each school leader to participate in this research on the cultural proficiency of school leaders. Once participants had signed and returned the consent forms, they were emailed a link to the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* (see Appendix E), which they were able to complete anonymously, and given completion a date. The questionnaire was developed and administered using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, 2018). Using Qualtrics ensured the confidentiality and safekeeping of the data while they were collected and organized. The only two people with access to the Qualtrics data were this researcher and her senior committee chair. The two computers used for collecting and interpreting the data were passcode-protected.

![Flowchart showing research procedures]

*Figure 14. Research procedures.*
Once collection of the questionnaire data from the 16 school leaders was complete, this researcher, advised by her senior committee chair, analyzed the responses to inform the development of the interview protocol, *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol* (see Appendix F). The interview protocol was developed as follows. First, any questionnaire item that did not garner a 100% response rate was removed from the follow-up schedule, and questionnaire items that were determined to be redundant were combined. Finally, interview questions were designed to elicit further information from participants about their questionnaire responses. For example, questionnaire item 4 asked participants to rate how often they “uphold the belief that ELs are a positive resource in my school/district.” The follow-up interview question asked school leaders “What are the plans to, first, validate and use the Spanish that students already know, and, second, capitalize on the positive resources brought to the school by the families of the ELs in a 21st-century global world?” In total, 14 questionnaire items were eliminated from specific follow-up exploration, and 13 follow-up interview questions were developed.

The follow-up interviews were conducted individually between this researcher and each school leader. The purpose of these interviews was to clarify and deepen the researcher’s understanding of participants’ perceptions of their cultural proficiency and behaviors. This approach is consistent with the aim of qualititative research, in which “the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature” (Creswell, 2012, p. 47). In other words, participans’ experiences of themselves, their schools, and their community were the phenomena under study in the interviews. The researcher’s goal was not to
Interviews took place in the offices of the school leaders, after the workday and at their convenience, so as not to interfere with the responsibilities of the school leaders. With an awareness of the emotional discomfort some school leaders might have felt in answering the interview questions, they were permitted to remain seated behind their desks. This was consciously done to provide the school leaders a sense of control over the interviews. The interviews were recorded in their entirety on a handheld audiorecorder. A separate file on the recorder was used for each interview. The audiorecorder was secured in the possession of this researcher at the end of each interview session. The 16 recording files, unedited, were sent to a transcription company, Cambridge Transcriptions (Cambridge, MA), which was unaffiliated with this researcher or this research. Cambridge Transcriptions requested a copy of the School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol to serve as a template for creating MS Word files of the interview questions and responses. Cambridge Transcription created one document for each study participant, 16 in all. These transcription documents were stored digitally on the researcher’s computer and in hard. At the end of the research, all forms, questionnaires, interview notes, recordings, and interview transcriptions were filed in a secure location, known only to this researcher.

Observational data was then collected to further understand the physical environement of the school and how the school communicated information with its families. This data was to be gathered through taking pictures of the school’s exterior, the main office, guidance office, and media center; school records related to the languages of the students in attendance at the school; and screenshots of the school’s website (see Appendix G for a complete listing of the data.
sources in this category). Two other pieces of data that were collected as observational data was the student handbook, the only document on the school website that was provided in both English and Spanish and the School Wide Improvement Plan (SWIP) which indicated no specific plans to address the achievement gap of English Learners.

**Data Collection Methods**

This section describes the pilot study and data collection methods for the observations, surveys, and interviews used in this research study. Multiple methods were used in order to strengthen the validity of the data. The use of the “multiple methods of data collection to achieve triangulation is important to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 107). Observations were conducted to document visible markers of culturally inclusive practices (or their absence). Questionnaire items, designed by the researcher and grounded in the literature, elicited participants’ self-reflections on specific, salient topics. Interviews allowed participants to add nuance and detail to their cultural proficiency stories. Taken together, these three approaches allowed the research to gather a thorough and consistent body of data amenable to accepted forms of qualitative analysis.

**Observations**

The researcher assessed the physical environment of the research site for evidence or examples (or their absence) of the following environmental and communication factors: accessibility to culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families; physical markers that demonstrated inclusivity or representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families; and a digital presence (on the school’s website) that evinced the school community’s linguistic and cultural diversity. To capture these data, photographs of the physical
environment and the website were captured using an iPad. See Appendix G for observational data.

Pilot Study

Before the questionnaire was designed, a pilot study for this research was conducted with a group of five school leaders from other schools. Based on the results of this pilot study, questionnaire items were revised for clarity of wording and format. The original questionnaire contained 28 items and was administered using Google Docs. The revised questionnaire contained 33 items, which would be delivered and tabulated via Qualtrics.²

Questionnaire

The Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire, developed by this researcher, was designed based on the work of Lindsey et al. (2013), which focused on helping school leaders identify their beliefs, actions, and behaviors related to cultural proficiency using the Essential Elements of Cultural Competence framework (Lindsey et al. 2013). Content was reviewed and validated by the researcher’s doctoral committee members and an outside expert on cultural proficiency in education, Patricia Medeiros Landurand, Mary Taylor Professor of Education at Rhode Island College. The questionnaire contained 33 items, including one that invited participants to write in additional information if they wanted to add anything to their responses. Questionnaire items addressed the following five themes: (1) building educational equity; (2) cultural responsiveness; (3) family communication; (4) increasing visibility of cultural and linguistic diversity in the school community; and (5) training and professional development. These items required the participants to report their respective beliefs, actions, or

² Qualtrics is a software system that allows users to perform online data collection and analysis including questionnaires. http://www.qualtrics.com
behaviors using a Likert scale, with the response choices Never, Seldom, About Half the Time, Usually, and Always.

**Interview Protocol**

In-person individual interviews with each of the 16 school-leader study participants followed analysis of the data collected through the *Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire*. The purpose of these interviews was to expand upon participants’ questionnaire responses, and to thereby gain further insight into their enactment and experience of cultural proficiency (or its absence). The protocol was based on the research questions and the responses provided on the questionnaire. The *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview* contained 13 open-ended questions, organized under the same themes as the questionnaire (building educational equity, cultural responsiveness, family communication, increasing visibility, and training and professional development).

**Data Analysis and Synthesis**

The data collected from the questionnaire *Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* were analyzed using descriptive statistics, (Salkind, 2011). Descriptive statistics are used as “techniques designed to summarize data on a single dependent variable” (Huck, 2012, p. 18) and “to organize and describe the characteristics of a collection of data” (Salkind, 2011, p. 8). The descriptive statistical picture developed from the questionnaire responses revealed areas of information or experience that might be elicited by interviewing participants.

Once the interviews had been completed and transcribed as discussed earlier, the researcher applied descriptive codes. Descriptive coding is based on summarizing “in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 88). Frequency analysis
Data collected from the individual interviews using the *Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Interview Protocol* were descriptively coded. Descriptive codes are used to identify and document specific topics that emerge through analysis of the qualitative data, and are not abbreviations of the content collected (Saldaña, 2013). The coding process revealed themes that characterized participants’ responses, enabling both comparison of interview content with variables related to participants’ positions and characteristics, and identification of response patterns (Harris & Brown, 2010; Zaller & Feldman, 1992).

The next step in the analysis consisted of assigning the coded data from the questionnaires and follow-up interviews to appropriate locations on the cultural proficiency continuum (CPC) developed by Lindsey et al. (2013) and adapted by this researcher to form the CPC2. This adapted continuum served as the theoretical framework through which the qualitative data were interpreted. The power of this framework was that it could link perception to behavior, making it possible to discern how attitudes are enacted. In the case of the school leaders, their self-perceptions (arising from attitudes) plotted at different locations on the CPC2 than their behavior. Applying the coded data to the model thus enabled this researcher to identify patterns (as discussed in Chapters IV and V) that revealed some of the key findings of this study.

The follow-up interview responses were read through a total of five times by this researcher. While reading through each follow-up interview response, the cultural proficiency continuum was consulted to determine the placement on the continuum of the response. This process involved evaluating whether a particular response reflected *tolerance for diversity* (behaviors of cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, and cultural blindness) or *transformation for equity* (behaviors of cultural precompetence, cultural competence, and
cultural proficiency), as defined by Lindsey et al. (2013) and adapted by this researcher as the CPC2 model, in which behaviors of cultural incapacity and cultural blindness were grouped into a single factor, cultural incapacity and blindness, and behaviors of cultural precompetence and cultural competence were grouped into the single factor, cultural precompetence and competence. The senior advisor was consulted to read responses that had conditionally been assigned to the extremes of the continuum (cultural destructiveness or cultural proficiency), or if the researcher was unable to make a determination between two categories. See Figure 16 for an illustration of these groupings and their relationship to Lindsey et al.’s (2013) model. See Table 10 for examples of how statements were assigned to categories on the CPC2 model.

Comparison between the initial survey data and the follow-up interview responses showed wide discrepancies between the data on the two sides of this conceptual framework. It should be noted that data were combined for all 16 school leaders, and this is an overall picture of the cultural proficiency of the group, not individual proficiency. All data responses were analyzed using the CPC2 model developed by this researcher, as adapted from Lindsey et al., 2013. See Figure 15 for an explanation of the adaptation of the cultural proficiency continuum to accommodate the CPC2 model. See Table 8 for an explanation of how the data from the questionnaire and follow-up interviews were plotted on the CPC2 model.

**Ethical Considerations**

Because this research gathered sensitive information from human subjects, approval was obtained from the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and each participant was asked to sign a consent statement. Consent consisted of participants’ willingness to complete the questionnaire, agreement to be interviewed and audiorecorded, and acknowledgement that they had been provided with documentation of the researcher’s data protection procedures.
Data protection consisted of the following measures: (a) anonymity of a participant’s identity and position; (b) anonymity of the research site, and of any locations or names of buildings, streets, or persons referenced by the participants; (c) interview transcription by an unaffiliated third party located outside of the city in which the research was conducted; and (d) procedures undertaken to secure data, recordings, and analyses, as earlier described. Only the researcher and the transcription service listened to the audiorecordings; the only persons who could view the questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, and preliminary analyses were the researcher and the chair of her dissertation committee.

These confidentiality and data protection measures were especially important because this research asked school leaders to disclose self-assessments of their professional practices and potentially to provide sensitive information about themselves and colleagues at the school. The intentions of this research were not to expose what school leaders were doing wrong, but instead (a) to measure participants’ and the researcher’s views of the cultural proficiency of school leaders’ practices using the CPC2 model; and (b) to develop recommendations for how school leaders could redirect behaviors that evinced tolerance for diversity to promote transformation for equity. Explicit expectations were that participants would be forthcoming and open about their leadership practices at this culturally and linguistically diverse school; and that the researcher would share her recommendations with participants, in the interest of improving leaders’ engagement and involvement with EL, FEL, and FLNE students and their families.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) identify three criteria for trustworthiness that need to be addressed when conducting qualitative research: credibility, dependability, and transferability. This research required heightened concern for trustworthiness, because the researcher currently served
as a teacher and department head at the school, and had been employed there for 16 years. This meant that the researcher enjoyed longstanding relationships with staff and leaders at the school, and that these relationships could have affected the conduct of the research, or been threatened by it. Methods for this research were designed to safeguard both the relationships and the research. The researcher did not supervise any of the participants in this case study, and had no involvement in their performance evaluations. Moreover, the researcher had a vested interest in conducting unbiased, ethical research that would benefit school leaders, parent populations, and ultimately the student population of the school. Beyond these organizational contributions to the ethical conduct of the research were other conditions and measures that contributed to meeting Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2012) criteria for trustworthiness.
### Cultural Proficiency Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Destructiveness</th>
<th>Cultural Incapacity</th>
<th>Cultural Blindness</th>
<th>Cultural Precompetence</th>
<th>Cultural Competence</th>
<th>Cultural Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negating, disparaging or purging cultures that are different from your own.</td>
<td>Elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own.</td>
<td>Acting as if difference among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize any difference.</td>
<td>Recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them.</td>
<td>Interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences, motivate you to assess your own skills, expand your knowledge</td>
<td>Advocating in a way that honors the differences among cultures, seeing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among cultural groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CPC**
Lindsey et al., 2013

**CPC2**
Adapted, Fawcett, 2019

---

*Figure 15 Comparison of CPC and the CPC2 models.*
Table 9

Application of interview codes to the theoretical model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPC2</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire Response</td>
<td>1- Never</td>
<td>2- Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Response Codes (samples)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not do that</td>
<td>I’m not sure</td>
<td>I do that by…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have that</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>I have done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not my area of knowledge</td>
<td>I am not aware of it/that</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We could work on that</td>
<td>I think we try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think some people do that</td>
<td>We are able to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s really hard</td>
<td>Some materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure how I could do that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They (the students) are not prepared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a tricky/ sensitive subject/ topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See everyone kind of the same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whether we like it or not it is something we have to embrace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bloomberg and Volpe define credibility as “whether the participants’ perceptions match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them” (2012, p. 112). In proposing and implementing this project, the researcher frankly acknowledged her personal and professional investment in its success; her firm commitment to truthful and ethical communication without judgment or disclosure of information; and her anticipation that participants’ would reciprocate these warrants. Foundational to the trustworthiness of the research, the researcher, and the participants was the relational trust (Bryk et al., 2010) established through many years of collegial interaction.

The second facet of trustworthiness is dependability, which refers to “whether one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 113). As earlier discussed, the protocols implemented in this research were designed to promote such dependability. These measures, along with the credibility with which the research was conceived and conducted, contributed to the dependability, or in other words, the validity, of the data and its analysis.

The third aspect of trustworthiness—alternatively conceptualized as reliability or generalizability—is the transferability of research to other locations, circumstances, and participants. Bloomberg and Volpe dispute that generalizability, as it is traditionally construed, is a necessary criterion for rigor in qualitative research: “A caveat of research is that generalizability is not the goal, but rather transferability—that is, how (if at all) and in what ways understanding and knowledge can be applied in similar contexts and settings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31). In the strictest sense, the results of this research can be applied only to the district in which it was conducted. However, the conditions and questions the research addresses—broadly speaking, how school leaders reflect the presence or absence of cultural
proficiency in their administrative practices and outreach to members of a diverse school community—exist in K-12 education throughout Massachusetts and, indeed, many areas of the United States. Transferability will, of course, be most robust in school districts, cities, or regions with similar demographics to those of the research site.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Elements in the nature of qualitative research and in the scope of this study may have limited its results. One limitation was the potential for participants to choose to not respond to questions on the questionnaire, thereby decreasing the number of participants in the study, and to some extent, the dependability of the results. Another potential limitation of this study was that the families of EL students were not surveyed or interviewed about their feelings of being accepted, welcomed, and understood by school leaders; that is, the perspectives presented by the school leader participants, although credible by Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2012) standard, were neither corroborated nor disputed by those who experienced practices based on them.

This research project is a case study, and as such it is delimited: by the size and scope of the sample population, by the selection of one particular research site, by and the study’s definition of terms. The sample population for this study was high school leaders at a single public high school in a community with a growing population of families of English Learners. The focus of this research was on the cultural proficiency of high school leaders, and not that of elementary and middle school leaders. It was the perceptions and actions of these leaders that were studied, rather than those of English Learners at the school, or their families. All the school leaders in this study belonged to the English-speaking majority culture, working within one school. Other design delimitations included the forms of data collection (observation, questionnaires, and follow-up interviews) and the definition of school leaders sampled (principal,
assistant principals, district-wide supervisors, curriculum coordinators, and department heads). Finally, the selection of a case study research method, by definition, delimited the types of analysis afforded by the data.

Summary

Chapter III presented the methodology used in this study of the cultural proficiency of school leaders at an urban high school in Massachusetts. The chapter began with a synopsis of the research and descriptions of the conceptual framework for the study, the statement of the problem, the justification for the study, and the purpose of the study. The chapter also described the research participants, the research setting, and the three types of information collected: contextual, demographic, and perceptual. The chapter discussed the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis and synthesis. Finally, Chapter III discussed ethical implications and issues of trustworthiness, along with limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter IV presents the findings of this qualitative study regarding the cultural proficiency of school leaders at an urban high school in Massachusetts that has a growing number of culturally and linguistically diverse families and students.
Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this research was to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban public high school in Massachusetts. This chapter describes the findings according to the three research questions that guided this study:

1. To what degree do school leaders in an urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners (ELs) and their families?
2. How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with English Learners and their families?
3. What professional development or preparation have high school leaders, at this high school, received in cultural proficiency to address the current needs of ELs and their families?

Synopsis of Procedures

This chapter also reviews aspects of the research setting, participants’ characteristics, data collection, and data analysis, along with the data collected for each of the research questions through both the survey and the follow-up interviews.

Research Setting

The research site was one high school in Massachusetts, serving grades 9 through 12, in an urban setting, with a student population of approximately 1,900 students. Of these, 433 students (23%) came from families who spoke a language other than English at home. Although Massachusetts allows districts to offer a variety of language-learning programs, such as the two-way model (a language immersion approach in which content instruction is delivered partly in English and partly in another language) and Transitional Bilingual (in which native-language fluency and literacy are used as a springboard to English acquisition), this high school offered
only Sheltered English Immersion courses in English Language Arts (ELA), history, and mathematics, as well as biology courses co-taught by an ESL teacher and a biology content teacher. See Appendix H.

Profile of Participants

There were 16 participants in this research study. Six self-identified as female and 10 as male. Nearly all (15 of the 16), self-identified as White; one self-identified as African American. All were native English speakers; three also self-identified as proficient in a language other than English. Of these 3 school leaders, two in Spanish and one in French. The French-speaking participant was the only school leader who had had experience learning in a non-English-speaking educational system (France).

Data Collection

Three kinds of data were collected for this qualitative study: (a) an initial questionnaire, (b) a follow-up interview with individual participants, and (c) observational information. Initially the data were collected through an anonymous questionnaire, titled Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire (see Appendix E), administered through Qualtrics and taken online. The second component of data collection was through individual follow-up interviews with each of the participants, conducted by the researcher, who used the interview protocol titled School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol (see Appendix F). It should also be noted that the interviews were recorded. The third component consisted of observational data that included pictures of the school’s exterior, the main office, guidance office, and media center; school records related to the languages of the students in attendance at the school; and screenshots of the school’s website (see Appendix G for a complete listing of the data sources in this category). At the time of data collection there were 16 school leaders on the high school
administrative team, and all of them responded to the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* online and participated in the follow-up individual interviews carried out face-to-face with this researcher. Therefore, the response rate was 100%.

**Data Analysis**

Data collected from the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* were analyzed so as to produce descriptive statistics, because this method of analysis was appropriate to the sample size and to the efficient exposition of characteristics of these data (Salkind, 2011). Using descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to tally and compare, through the school leaders’ self-reported data, how they viewed their actions and interactions with the families of culturally and linguistically diverse English learners.

Data collected from the individual interviews with the *Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Interview Protocol* were transcribed, descriptively coded, and analyzed thematically based on the elements-of-cultural-competence theoretical framework and on motifs discovered in the data that addressed school leadership behaviors. In thematic analysis, descriptive coding summarizes “in a word or short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 88). The codes are the specific topics that emerge through the analysis of qualitative data, and are not abbreviations of the content collected (Saldaña, 2013). Descriptive coding of the interview data provided a more extensive understanding of the beliefs and practices of this group of school leaders as they described their actions and interactions with the families of culturally and linguistically diverse English learners.

The theoretical framework used to collect, analyze, and categorize the data from the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* and the data provided by the *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol* was based on Lindsey et al.’s (2013) Essential
Elements of Cultural Competence, discussed in Chapter III, and the CPC2 model (developed by this researcher). See Table 9 for a summary of how the theoretical model was operationalized. See Figure 16 for a map of how components of the theoretical model, essential elements of cultural competence, were operationalized in the questionnaire and follow-up interview items.

Table 10

*Characteristic Elements of Cultural Competence as Operationalized for Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructiveness • Incapacity &amp; Blindness</td>
<td>Precompetence &amp; Competence • Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The focus is on <em>them</em>.</td>
<td>The focus is on <em>our practices</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessing One’s Own Cultural Knowledge**

| Demographics are viewed as a challenge | Demographics are used to inform policy and practice. |

**Valuing Diversity**

| Tolerate, assimilate, acculturate | Esteem, respect, adapt |

**Managing the Dynamics of Difference**

| Prevent, mitigate, avoid. | Manage, leverage, facilitate. |

**Adapting to Diversity**

| System-wide accountability to meet changing needs of a diverse community and reduce cultural dissonance and conflict. | System-wide accountability for continuous improvement and responsiveness to community. Staff understands, operates, and preserves on the edge of rapid and continuous change. |

**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge**

| Information contributed or added to existing policies, procedures, practices. | Information integrated into system, provoking significant changes to policies, procedures, practices |

### Elements of Cultural Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessing One's Own Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Diversity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to Diversity</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Assessment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Professional Development and Training</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Parent Communication and Community Outreach</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observational data included pictures of the school’s exterior, main office, guidance office, and media center, a review of school records related to the languages of students in attendance at the school, and screenshots of the school’s website. See Collection of Observational Data in Appendix G.

The next several sections of this chapter discuss findings related to the research questions.

**Findings for Research Question 1**

*To what degree do school leaders in an urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners (ELs) and their families?*

To answer this question data were collected in three ways. First, the researcher conducted a review of school and city demographics, and school-based data about achievement retrieved from the MADESE website. Second, during the spring of 2016, the researcher observed, reviewed, or captured photographic images of the school environment, signage and other artifacts relevant to the presence (or absence) of cultural inclusivity, the school’s website, and relevant documents. Third, data from the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* were used to explore the participants’ demographic profiles in addition to their self-reported attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to cultural proficiency.

These data were analyzed for evidence of the extent to which school leaders understood the cultural and linguistic needs of families of English Learners, and of how these needs were addressed through school policies and practices. The data were categorized as follows: (a) demographic characteristics and changes in the state, city, and school, populations; (b) physical and visual environment of the school; (c) backgrounds of school leaders versus those students; and (d) achievement gap between White and EL and/or Latino/a students on standardized tests of
achievement in Mathematics and English Language Arts, as published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE, 2016).

First, it was important to understand what demographic changes had occurred in the United States in the past 10 years, and how these were reflected in the school community.

Second, pictorial and observational evidence collected in the school’s physical environment gave a clear indication of current recognition of the cultural and linguistic needs of families of English Learners at this urban high school, and how these were being addressed.

Third, demographic background data of the research participants and the students they served highlighted such background differences between the school leaders and the students.

Fourth, this high school was a Level 3 school in a Level 3 district in Massachusetts. Level 3 school refers to schools or districts that rank in the lowest-performing 20% relative to schools with similar grade ranges.

Community Demographics

The school under study is located in Massachusetts, which has seen a noticeable change in its demographics during the past decade. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), the Hispanic/Latino population of Massachusetts in 2000 was 428,729; by 2010, it had increased by nearly 50%, to 627,654. By 2016, the Bureau estimated that the figure would be 783,354. See Figure 17.

The population of the city under study saw a similar increase in its Hispanic/Latino population, from 4,255 (9.71% of the total) in 2000, to 8,531 (18.05%) in 2010, again an increase of just over 100% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016); the 2015 estimate (American Community Survey) was 11,316 (23.3%). See Figure 18.
Figure 17. State demographic changes in Hispanic/Latino population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015)

Figure 18. City demographic changes in Hispanic/Latino population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2015).
These demographic changes within the city were reflected in the school’s population, as well.

**High School Demographics**

According to the DART data from MADESE (2016), there was an increase in the number of Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in the high school between 2005 and 2015. During the year of this research study (2016), the high school enrolled a total of 1,828 students (2015-2016). Among this number were 83 were ELs, 27 FELs and 323 FLNEs—in other words, 433 students (24%) did not speak English as a native language. See Figure 19. The data do not reflect the degree of English language skill among these students’ families, but children typically gain fluency more readily than adults do, so it may be expected that school leaders’ challenges in communicating with nearly a quarter of the school’s families would be significant.

![Student Demographics Regarding Language Identification](image)

*Figure 19. Enrollment of students identified as EL, FEL, and FLNE, 2015-2016.*
A further challenge for school leaders lay in the fact that although a majority (323, or 75%) of EL/FEL/FLNE students were Spanish-speaking, the remaining 110 students in this group represented 19 other languages. According to data collected from school records kept at the language acquisition department at the central administration office building, languages native to students at the high school included Albanian, Afrikaans, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Cape Verdean, Chinese, French, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Loa, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. The most frequently spoken language, after Spanish, was Arabic, spoken by 31 students and their families. See Appendix I, “Languages Spoken by Families of the School Community.”

The freshmen class consisted of 109 (out of 533) students whose families spoke a language other than English. The sophomore class consisted of 110 (out of 528) students whose families spoke a language other than English. The junior class consisted of 112 of 414 students whose families spoke a language other than English. The senior class consisted of 103 of 471 students whose families spoke a language other than English. There were 8 special education students who were identified as students who had attended this school for longer than four years.³

³ At the time of the research no English Learners were receiving both ESL and special education services.
Physical and Digital Environment

The extent of a school’s cultural inclusivity and responsiveness can be inferred from how (or whether) its physical environment—in effect, the public face it consciously presents—visibly reflects the diversity of its population. Observational data about the school’s physical environment were collected in two ways: through the researcher’s observations of signage and artifacts on display; and by documenting the environment in photographs of the school’s front entrance, the main office, guidance department, and media center. See Appendix G. Further, the school’s digital presence was examined for evidence of school documents published in any language other than English.

Front entrance of school. The front entrance of the school was identified by the name of the school spelled out in large block letters. There was no welcome sign in any language, nor did any signage or other images acknowledge or welcome the diversity of English- and non-English-speaking families into the school. No signage was visible, in any language, about how to gain entrance to the school or how to find the main office or other locations.

Main office. The main office was located on the first floor of the school. To access the main office a person had to go through the front doors, immediately turn left, press a buzzer, and wait for the secretary to remotely unlock the door. Then, one had to turn right and walk down a short hallway to reach a doorway that led to the main office and the secretary. The front door, the locked door with the buzzer, and the hallway were devoid of signage in any language to assist families with communication of their purpose for being in the school, such as attending a parent meeting or a meeting for disciplinary issues or enrolling a student. There was no signage identifying the names of the principal, associate principals, or other administrators. There was no list of teachers, guidance counselors, or support staff. Print material available in the main office included: (a) a copy of the school newspaper; (b) a calendar of sporting events; (c) school-
related flyers about fundraisers; and (d) announcements of other upcoming school-sponsored events. All of these documents were in English only. There were a few chairs and a table where family members could sit and wait for a meeting. The office receptionist spoke only English.

Guidance department. The guidance department was located on the first floor; it was identified by a placard on the wall. There was no welcome sign in any language on the front door of the guidance office. There was no information on the exterior or interior walls identifying the names or locations of guidance counselors, support staff, or the registrar for the school. There were posters on the inside wall of the guidance department’s front office advertising SAT registration and scholarships; these were printed only in English. There were no materials in the guidance front office to assist non English-speaking families with communicating their needs or concerns for their children. The guidance department secretary spoke only English. Two guidance counselors self-reported as bilingual: one in Spanish and one in Vietnamese, a language native to 23 (1%) of students or their families. There was one Spanish-speaking parent liaison; her desk was situated in the records room of the department, which was connected to the department front office. There was no signage or other visible indication that any personnel were bilingual.

**Media center.** The media center (library) was located on the second floor of the school. Outside the doors of the media center was a locked bookcase; when photographs used as data for this study were taken, it held a display of books focused on international foods and cultures. These books were written in English only; no books in the display were written in any other language. The doors of the media bore no welcome sign, in any language. Posters in the media center focused on MLA formatting, the Pledge of Allegiance, and encouraging reading. These posters were all in English. The only representations in the media center of languages other than English were found in bilingual dictionaries.
School website. The purpose of the high school’s website was to provide families of all students with current information about announcements; how to contact school personnel; important dates, such as school events; updates regarding ongoing activities or date changes; and school policies. Thus, the site provided important digital-documentary evidence of the extent to which the school sought (or failed to seek) to communicate with students, their families, or community members in its linguistically diverse environment. This researcher accordingly collected observational data from the website on December 4, 2015, capturing screenshots of the home page, the technology page, the principal’s newsletter, the school profile, and the first two pages of the program of study. Other site content reviewed included the student handbook.

All information on the school’s website was presented only in English, except for the 2015–2016 student handbook, which was also provided in Spanish. In interviews, school leaders confirmed that they communicated with families primarily in English, despite the fact that one-quarter of students spoke a different first language, and 20 such languages were represented in the school community.

It was particularly striking that, although nearly one-fifth (18%) of families in the school community were Spanish-speaking, no documents other than the student handbook were provided in Spanish. Also noteworthy was the fact that even announcements of major consequence, such as delayed start time due to weather; information about parents’ night, financial aid nights, or student progress reports of attendance and grades; or scheduled academic, athletic, or fine arts events appeared only in English. School leaders and personnel, in other words, assumed almost none of the burden of sending effective communications, leaving families to assume the often-considerable burdens of receiving and interpreting them.
High school leaders’ backgrounds versus students’ backgrounds. In a diverse community, the identities of its leaders serve as a visible sign of an institution’s recognition of, and responsiveness to, the population they serve. Thus, a comparison of the racial/ethic identities of this study’s participants with those of the school’s students was considered to provide useful data for this study. This was especially so, given that only 3 of the 16 school leader participants claimed proficiency in a language other than English.

At the time of data collection, the 16 persons in leadership positions at this school were predominantly white, English-speaking males, and identified as such. One of the school leaders self-identified as African American. These men constituted the entire population identified as school leaders for this study, and all of them participated in it. The positions they held, as reported in the Cultural Proficiency Questionnaire: School Leaders Questionnaire, were: district-wide supervisors or directors (3); curriculum coordinators; (2), department heads (5); associate principals (5), and school principal (1). Tenure in their current positions ranged from less than 1 year to more than 20 years, with a mean of 2.7 years.

The contrast between these school leaders’ racial/ethnic identity and those of their students was evident. See Figure 20. Note that while the percentage of African American representation among school leadership (5.9%) appears greater than the percentage of African American students (3.6%), this is an artifact of population size: only one school leader identified as African American. Given the high proportion of Hispanic students at the school the lack of any Hispanic school leaders is striking.

As noted earlier, a similar disproportion existed in terms of languages spoken by school leaders versus students and their families. Whereas one-quarter (24%) of the school population was documented as speaking a first language other than English, 100% of the school leaders
spoke English as a first language, and 81.25% reported that they only spoke English. Again, percentages are somewhat misleading: the 18.75% of school leaders reporting proficiency in a language other than English represented only three individuals. Moreover, although these three persons self-reported proficiency in their second language, the level of their fluency was neither reported nor tested in this study. Evidence suggested that the school leader who spoke French may have had the greatest fluency, she she had spent a period of her education in France; but only 4 families among the more than 1,800 in the school were reported as speaking this language.

The physical environment of the high school that served all ELs and their families was devoid of all languages except English (see Appendix G). The entrance of the school building, main office, guidance department, and media center had notices and posters in English only. There were no books in languages other than English, except bilingual dictionaries, in the media center. In addition, all information on the high school website was in English except for one document in Spanish, the student handbook. The school leaders who were responsible for the daily operation of the school that served a diverse school community did not reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students and their families. The majority of the school leaders at this research site were white, middle class males who spoke English, whereas there was abundant linguistic and cultural diversity within the school community. The English Learners and their families were invisible in the physical environment of this school, based on the evidence described above.

**Summary of Findings for Research Question 1**

Four findings were derived from analysis of the data for Research Question 1.
Finding 1.1. The achievement gap of English Learners in the school, who include Latinos and other minorities, was not being addressed. Accountability data for the school indicated that students whose first language was Spanish performed far more poorly on the state-mandated exam known as MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Scale). MCAS standardized tests, which are administered at several specific grade levels throughout a student’s K-12 education, measure achievement in Reading, English and Language Arts (ELA), Writing, Mathematics, and Science. In Mathematics and (ELA), a scaled score above a specified level (codified as either Proficient or Advanced) is required for receipt of a high school diploma.

As shown in Table 11, among White students who took the MCAS exam in 2015 or 2016, 17-19% scored below the Proficient level in Mathematics, and just 3-5% scored below it in
ELA. In contrast, among Latino students, 43-49% scored below Proficient in Mathematics, and 13-29% scored below Proficient in ELA (the number scoring Failed varied considerably in this group between the two testing years). EL students performed far more poorly on both tests in both years, with 91-92% scoring below Proficient in Mathematics, and 51-84% scoring below Proficient in ELA (again, scores on this test varied substantially in this group from year to year).

In both years, the percentage of EL students at the Failure level in Mathematics (58-69%) was higher than the level of those at the Needs Improvement level (23-33%); these students performed somewhat better in ELA, with failures at 27-38% and Needs Improvement, 27-46%.

Percentages are somewhat misleading, in that only 11-13 EL students took the exams, as compared with 102-140 Latino students, and 235-262 White students; and in that the numbers of test-takers for each test in each year differed somewhat.

Table 11

School’s MADESE 2015 and 2016 Accountability Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th></th>
<th>Subj</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failures</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failures</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>White (235)</td>
<td>3% (9)</td>
<td>16% (37)</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>White (262)</td>
<td>4% (10)</td>
<td>13% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latino (101)</td>
<td>28% (28)</td>
<td>21% (21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino (140)</td>
<td>14% (20)</td>
<td>29% (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL (13)</td>
<td>69% (9)</td>
<td>23% (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL (12)</td>
<td>58% (7)</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>White (237)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>3% (7)</td>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>White (259)</td>
<td>1% (3)</td>
<td>4% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latino (102)</td>
<td>11% (11)</td>
<td>18% (18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino (139)</td>
<td>3% (4)</td>
<td>10% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EL (13)</td>
<td>38% (5)</td>
<td>46% (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>EL (11)</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* EL = English learner; ELA = English Language Arts. Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE).
Despite these minor limitations inherent in the data, however, it is inescapable that White students out-performed Latino students and substantially out-performed EL students on these crucial exams. Of greater consequence was the fact that this Level 3 (low-performing) school articulated no specific steps in its school improvement plan to close this achievement gap.

**Finding 1.2.** *The school’s physical environment was devoid of linguistic and cultural diversity.* Observation of the school’s spatial environment, photographic documentation of key locations, and examination of the school’s website all pointed to the school’s maintaining an almost exclusively all-English environment.

Signage throughout the school, including directions to key locations such as the guidance office, was posted only in English. Any artwork or artifacts in the hallways represented an English-speaking culture. The only materials on the media center’s bookshelves not published in English were bilingual dictionaries. The physical and spatial environment of the school, in effect, rendered a significant portion of the school population culturally and linguistically invisible.

The effect of this monoculturally focused environment, however, went beyond a failure to acknowledge, much less embrace, its multicultural population—a circumstance that surely must have eroded the self-esteem of FLNE students. An insidious secondary loss lay in the school’s failure to expose monolingual English-speakers to the richness their diverse environment literally embodied. In a nation—let alone, students’ immediate neighborhoods—where cultural diversity is steadily increasing, an education that ignores the breadth of experience inherent in that diversity implicitly teaches English-speakers’ (largely European-American) hegemony. At the very least, it neglects to prepare students for the wider environment in which they will live as adults.
Finding 1.3. *The school's communication method was monolingual English, although 25% of the school community did not speak English as a first language.* Both documentary evidence—school announcements, signage, the website—and follow-up interviews indicated that school leaders communicated in a way they found comfortable, rather than attempting to accommodate the needs or comfort of students’ families. The only school-issued document that was provided in a language other than English was the school handbook, which also was available in Spanish. Although Spanish was the most frequently spoken first language among the broad FLNE student body (17%), this meant that the 6% of students and families who spoke a first language other than English or Spanish received no official school communication in the language of their native fluency.

In other words, school leaders imposed the responsibility for understanding school communications on the intended recipients of those messages, rather than themselves taking responsibility for sending messages that could readily be understood by everyone to whom they were sent. This practice had the effect of trivializing both the families who were not fluent in English, and in the end, the school’s communications themselves, since a message of genuine significance would need all parties to grasp its meaning.

Finding 1.4. *Linguistic and cultural differences were evident between the school leaders and the families of the school community.* Cities or town with significant immigrant populations are often assumed to be lower-income communities. In the community under study, however, this was not the case: despite the relatively high proportion of nonnative English-speakers, and despite the low ranking of the city’s schools—often a marker of socioeconomic status in a state where a large proportion of school funding was locally determined—median household income in the city exceeded $70,000. Although the buying power of such an income is attenuated by the
high cost of living in eastern Massachusetts, a median income at this level suggests an economically (and likely, occupationally) stable population. And indeed, census results show that 29% of adult residents in the city had earned a bachelor’s or higher degree.

Thus it was somewhat surprising to find a wide discrepancy between school leaders’ professional and cultural backgrounds and those of the EL students and their families, based both on linguistic fluency and on the standardized test scores of EL or FLNE students. The study participants led mainly with a majority-culture monolingual English-speaking mind-set; and while the scope of this study did not allow for conclusions about causality, it would perhaps be fruitful to examine whether there are links between the school’s cultural environment and its students’ academic success.

Findings for Research Question 2

How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with English Learners and their families?

Qualitative comparison between school leader participants’ responses to items on the Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire (see Appendix E) and their responses to follow-up questions during the School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol (see Appendix F) highlighted discrepancies in results from the two data sources. These discrepancies concerned participants’ perceptions of both their own cultural and linguistic professional practices and their report of such practices at the school. In short, on the questionnaire, school leaders rated themselves as more culturally proficient than was warranted by the attitudes, beliefs, or practices they described in their interview responses.

The items on the The Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire were designed to elicit school leaders’ self-perceptions of their beliefs and practices with respect to the
culturally and linguistically diverse population of the school’s students and their families.

Theoretically grounded in Lindsey et al.’s (2013) model of a cultural proficiency continuum (CPC) as adapted for this study (CPC2), questionnaire items were created using the five *Essential Elements of Cultural Competence* (Lindsey et al., 2013) and analyzed within the CPC2 model to identify in what ways the school leaders at the research site believed they were exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices. Questionnaire items matched the theoretical constructs of the model to concrete behaviors—or leverage points for change—that school leaders who sought to create a culturally responsive educational institution would undertake to implement. Table 12 illustrates how the theoretically derived leverage points mapped onto questionnaire items to address Research Question 2 (RQ2).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Items Matched to Leverage Points for Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five Essential Elements as Leverage Points for Change</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Behaviors for Assessing One’s Own Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Behaviors for Valuing Diversity</td>
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<td>Leadership Behaviors for Managing the Dynamics of Diversity</td>
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<td>Leadership Behaviors for Adapting to Diversity</td>
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<td>Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</td>
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participate in school

Providing alternative meeting times and locations
Questions for the School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol were developed from the questionnaire results, to gain a deeper understanding of participants’ responses. These interview questions were designed to give participants an opportunity to expand upon, and thus implicitly confirm or contradict, the attitudes and behaviors they claimed in their responses on the Likert scale for each questionnaire item.

To categorize and analyze interview responses, both in isolation and in comparison or contrast with questionnaire responses, the CPC2 theoretical model adapted from Lindsey et al. (2013) was employed. Table 13 summarizes how specific behaviors map onto the model.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic Behaviors of CPC2 Model Stages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tolerance for Diversity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Destructiveness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Incapacity and Blindness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize any differences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next section presents results and analyses of school leaders’ questionnaire and interview responses, categorized according to the Essential Elements of Cultural Competence.

Assessment of Cultural Knowledge

In this research study, leadership behaviors related to assessing one’s own cultural knowledge were defined in two dimensions:

1. a *performative, or policy, dimension*, operationalized in questionnaire item 6 (I analyze demographic data relative to all ELs and meet with staff to share findings and discuss culturally and linguistically effective practices that promote grade level achievement as required by No Child Left Behind Act), and interview question 1 (regarding concrete actions taken to address the achievement gap between White students’ and Latino/EL students’ MCAS standardized test scores).

2. an *attitudinal and behavioral dimension*, operationalized in questionnaire item 4 (I uphold the belief that ELs are a positive resource in my school/district) and interview question 2 (regarding viewing ELs and their families as a positive resource, as discussed in Chapter II, through validating and using Spanish in the school).

Figure 21 illustrates this categorization.
Results for the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* items indicated that the majority of the school leader participants self-evaluated as operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the CPC2 model, which encompasses precompetence/competence and proficiency, on the two dimensions shown above. However, responses provided during the follow-up individual interviews did not support the questionnaire results.

On the questionnaire item regarding analysis of demographic data as a platform for culturally responsive programming, 10 of the 16 school leaders (63%) checked a response that placed themselves on the *transformation for equity* (henceforth, *transformation*) side of the CPC2; 5 responses were categorized as representing precompetence/competence, and 5 as representing proficiency. Responses from the remaining 6 (37%) placed them on the *tolerance for diversity* (henceforth, *tolerance*) side; 1 response fell into the destructiveness category, and 5 in the incapacity/blindness category. *Transformation* responses indicated leaders’ self-report that they had reviewed and analyzed the demographic data relative to ELs and had met with their staff to share their findings and discuss culturally and linguistically effective practices that promoted grade level achievement (as previously required by NCLB and now by ESSA).

On the questionnaire item regarding viewing EL students and their families as a positive resource for the school community, all participants (100%) checked responses that placed them on the *transformation* side; 6 responses represented precompetence/competence, and 10 represented proficiency. Table 14 summarizes these results.
Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Assessing One’s Own Cultural Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Assessing One’s Own Cultural Knowledge (N = 16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct demographic analysis</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>5 (31.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELs and their families are positive resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These self-reports were belied, however, during the follow up interviews, as school leaders acknowledged that the positive resources EL students and their families brought to the high school had not yet been validated or capitalized on in the educational community. Specifically, when school leaders were asked (a) whether they had an action plan to address the achievement gap of ELs, Latinos, and other student minorities, and (b) whether they had articulated concrete steps toward implementing programming to improve these students’ achievement, they responded that they had not.

Moreover, although a schoolwide improvement plan (SWIP) had been delivered electronically to the entire school staff on October 26, 2016, it contained only passing reference to EL students, and articulated no specific action items aimed at closing the achievement gap. The SWIP contained three objectives: (a) improve academic achievement of underperforming students; (b) increase family and community engagement; and (c) improve social and emotional support for all students. These objectives, and the actions planned to realize them, are summarized in Table 15.
Among at total 49 activities identified to implement the SWIP, only two mentioned English Learners (a biweekly data meeting and a book study on poverty); and no activities mentioned families of English Learners or the social or emotional health of these students.

Evidence from the SWIP thus showed that the specific language learning and achievement needs of English Learners were not yet being directly addressed through the three outlined objectives, even though this was a Level 3 school, and nearly 25% of the school population spoke a first language other than English. In fact, it was questionable whether the SWIP was even in force at the time of this study. During interviews, 14 of the 16 school leaders (87.5%) indicated that they knew about the existence of the school wide improvement plan (referred to as their action plan), while 2 (12.5%) stated that they were not aware of any plan.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SWIP Objectives</th>
<th>Implementation Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1.</strong> Improve academic achievement of underperforming students</td>
<td>17 activities: none directly addressed ELs’ academic needs or achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The language acquisition department (LAD) supervisor was to have biweekly meetings to review student achievement data; the ELL coach was to lead a book study on poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No acknowledgement that additional and different procedures are required for addressing academic needs of EL vs. English-proficient students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mention of EL students’ additional needs regarding cultural adaptation, academic learning, and language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 2.</strong> Increase family and community engagement</td>
<td>18 activities: none to be led by LAD personnel or ESL teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mention of engaging the families of English Learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 3.</strong> Improve social and emotional support for all students.</td>
<td>14 activities: none to be led by LAD personnel or ESL teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mention of social or emotional needs specific to EL students, such as culture shock, homesickness, or feelings of isolation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It appeared that not only was the high school neglecting to undertake measures to close, or at least narrow, the achievement gap among EL students; but also, leaders’ commitment to the published plan for raising achievement more broadly in this low-performing school was undetermined. Similarly (and potentially) sidelined were outreach efforts toward increasing family and community engagement, as well as measures to address students’ social and emotional needs. Implementing such measures for the school population as a whole would have constituted a lower bar than instituting services designed to address the additional needs of EL students and their families; but given that two key school leaders were unaware of the SWIP, a deeper probe of this document and its goals was warranted. In addition, further inquiry related to school leaders’ efforts to date in assessing their own cultural knowledge was necessary.

**Action Plan Steps to Reduce Els’ Achievement Gap**

In follow-up interviews, therefore, school leaders were asked whether or how the SWIP’s three major objectives and its 49 action steps addressed the needs of minority students and English Learners. This line of inquiry was operationalized, first, in questions about course offerings and supports the leaders felt they needed to implement programming for EL students. Subsequent interview questions probed the school leaders’ perspectives on whether EL students and their families brought added value to the school community; and on how they validated (or failed to validate) the use of Spanish in the school, both as a resource for all students and as a site of need for the nearly 20% of students who spoke Spanish as a first language.

**Course offerings designed to increase academic achievement.** Three of the 16 school leader study participants (18.75%) reported knowing about an after-school MCAS Academy, whose intended purpose was to help all the school’s students raise their scores on these exams important for graduation. This supplemental instruction, however, was not designed to address
the specific language learning and academic needs of EL students. Moreover, the program was not being offered at the time of this study due to lack of state funding.

Similarly, 3 participants (18.75%) mentioned that supplemental math classes were available for students struggling in this domain, as was a supplemental sheltered English immersion (SEI) math class for English Learners. SEI courses typically use enhanced teaching techniques, sometimes including first-language instruction, to support EL students’ comprehension of course material. The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) required that teachers of SEI courses achieve competency (called endorsement) in techniques for this pedagogical approach. At the school under study, the teacher for the SEI math course had received such endorsement. The DOE also required that an administrator tasked with overseeing SEI instruction have obtained the endorsement.

Other course offerings designed to increase student achievement schoolwide were an academic support lab (ASL), in which students were placed after their grades had been reviewed by an academic intervention team; and advanced placement (AP) courses. Two of the 16 study participants (12.5%) drew attention to these offerings; but they did not indicate what supports were provided for students not proficient in English who were failing in coursework that did not include an SEI component; and they did not disclose how students were recruited for AP courses.

Planning supports for implementing school improvement. Implementing the actions outlined in the SWIP would require school leaders to design new measures for supporting programs and staff. In interviews addressing this topic in general, and the achievement gap between native English-speakers and FLNE students, 2 of the 16 study participants (12.5%) referenced implementing a coteaching model that had recently become a focus at the school. The coteaching model would pair ESL teachers with general education English teachers, and also
special education teachers and general education English teachers. One participant (6.25%) referred to team meetings of 9th- and 10th-grade students and teachers as a step toward implementing SWIP activities. These team meetings did not include ESL teachers, however, because although they taught 9th and 10th grades, they also taught 11th and 12th grades, so their focus was not considered specific enough to the meetings.

Two school leaders said they were unaware of an action plan for increasing students’ performance scores. SL (school leader)-B stated, “Yeah, this is not my—my area. I don’t really have a lot for that question, unfortunately. I’m kind of—that’s a new area for me.” SL-N stated, “Concrete steps we’re taking: I don’t think we’re taking any steps from my point of view. Should we? Of course.” These responses suggested that although a school improvement plan had been devised and documented, its purpose and objectives had not seen thoroughgoing adoption even at the leadership level.

When school leaders were asked what help they needed to meet the expectations of the 2015–2016 school wide improvement plan (SWIP), only 7 of the 16 (43.75%) addressed this issue. Their responses varied, but they included the following themes: (a) time, training, and resources; (b) changes to the attendance policy and scheduling; and (c) access to the state’s RETELL (rethinking equity in teaching English language learners) course. See Figure 22 for an illustration of these articulated needs. See Table 16 for a sample of school leaders’ responses to the question regarding their needs.

The responses shown in Table 16 (below) suggested that although some school leaders had ideas about specific school improvement measures, they felt they lacked access to resources as basic as time, or as structural as state support, for implementing them. It lay beyond the scope of this study to establish the extent to which these responses reflected a broader sense of
helplessness in the face of insurmountable limitations, vs. insufficient persistence toward obtaining or managing available supports.

*Figure 22. School leaders’ responses: needs for implementation of the SWIP.*

**How school leaders perceived the achievement gap.** Only 9 of the 16 school leader participants (56.25%) provided personal insight when asked in interviews about how the school was addressing the achievement gap between non-Hispanic White (native English-speaking) students and FLNE students of all races. These respondents were frank in acknowledging that the gap was relatively unremediated, but their perceptions varied about the school’s efforts or ability to close it. The views of these predominantly white, monolingual English-speaking school leaders ranged from regret that the school’s efforts were insufficient to resignation about the intractable nature of the problem. Table 17 summarizes the range of responses given.
**Table 16**

**Interview Responses: Resources Needed to Implement Schoolwide Improvement Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample responses to question about implementing improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-A</td>
<td>Need: time, training, and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Time for collaboration: administrators need more time together to discuss how best to continue to put different things in place during the school day to support these [EL] students and this should happen during the school day.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-C</td>
<td>Need: changes to the attendance policy and scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I think a big problem is the attendance piece, and I think moving forward it would be nice to have some flexibility or some alternatives which—in terms of that all or nothing policy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a student has seven or more unexcused absences from a course within a term the student receives credit denial for the course. If the student does not reach the maximum absences the following term, the credit denial from the previous term is removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-P</td>
<td>Need: access to the state’s RETELL course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I think the one thing is for the—from the state where the SEI endorsement went to the cores first even for the administration it went to core admin: I can’t even, I’m sort of locked out of this country club here of SEI.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 17**

**Interview Responses: EL Achievement Gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-A</td>
<td><em>I was trying—I mean I don’t want to oversell. I hate that—like, I hate when people try to, like “Well we do all the—” it’s like—no, we do stuff, but we’re obviously not doing it as well as we want to or this data wouldn’t look like it does, so...</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-D</td>
<td><em>In my experience it’s more about alignment. Not just aligning of goals and values; it’s now more about what [are] the expectations from the department heads to the teachers to the administration to the district and then figure out how do we do that and what support that we have for—for the person who has the kid in front of them every day.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-E</td>
<td><em>I’d like to look at—I know we’ve broken down in years past not necessarily by race or color, but I do think that’s important to look at, but look at how long students have been with [the school].</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Leader | Sample Response
--- | ---
SL-G | *So, at this point, there’s a large net cast. All of the students who are underachieving are caught by that net, and there are programs in place to directly boost their MCAS scores and their college and career readiness in turn.*
SL-H | *But I think that we’re all kind of shooting in different directions. So, if we could have one funneled way to move in, that might help.*
SL-F | *I honestly don’t feel—I do feel that there have been conversations about the gap. I don’t think that some of the leadership has as accurate information as you have right here. I also feel like our school is lacking people that they can identify with. I don’t think that for the type of building we have or the multicultural student body we have: I don’t think we present that the same way through our professional staff. I think sometimes that’s lacking.*
SL-L | *One of the things from the RETELL is you’re always going to have that achievement gap, because when you modify the instruction, the whites are getting the same instruction that the ELLs are getting. So, they’re going to keep increasing, so how do you—how do you make the second group increase faster? It is hard. But, as long as they’re all—as long as they’re all improving and getting better at literacy.*
SL-M | *The larger issue at hand is that these students are required to take these high stakes assessments in a language that they don’t—they’re not prepared to do that in, they don’t have the academic language. So, the language of instruction in testing is not their first language, and they haven’t had time to build that up. And so that’s like a systemic issue, right? It’s not a—it’s ok to talk? It’s a systemic issue. It is not necessarily like a class is going to solve that problem.*
SL-N | *I think more training when it comes to making sure we get our point across, and you know we are teaching all students. We’re not—we’re not just looking for the bell curve. You know. We’re looking at both ends of the bell curve and how we help other students, all different levels and all different language abilities and I think that’s the hugest thing.*

The school leaders’ own words further support that they were functioning on the *tolerance* side of the CPC2 model. These responses suggested that more professional development would be needed before leaders at the school would respond to the needs of EL or FLNE students from a *transformational* perspective.

**How school leaders viewed ELs and their families.** When school leaders were queried on the survey about whether they viewed ELs as positive resources in the school, all 16 (100%) gave self-evaluative responses that placed them on the *transformation for equity* side of the
CPC2 model (precompetence/competence and proficiency), as shown in Table 13. In the follow-up individual interviews, however, 6 of the 16 (37.5%) acknowledged that the school did not endeavor to validate students’ fluency in Spanish. See Table 18 for a sample of school leaders’ responses in this vein.

Table 18

*Interview Responses: Validation of Spanish Fluency as a Resource*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-I</td>
<td>I’m not sure how—if there are plans to incorporate the Spanish language. I know in classes, it’s English only, so that’s not incorporating the Spanish into the lessons. So yeah, I’m not quite sure that we do look at it as a positive resource, and maybe that is something that we should look into.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-K</td>
<td>I’m not sure how we’re showcasing, you know, the Spanish that the kids already know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-F</td>
<td>I think historically it’s been difficult for us in Malivi to help these families get/interact with the high school and get involved with the high school. I don’t think, to be honest, I don’t think when I look at the question: I don’t think we use the Spanish speaking students enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-L</td>
<td>I can’t think of anything that we’re doing that addresses this off the top of my head.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four respondents (25%) considered the presence of one Spanish-speaking school liaison as validation of the presence of Spanish-speakers among students and their families. See Table 19 for a sample of such responses.

Almost half of the school leaders, 43.75% (seven of 16), went on to suggest ways the school could validate the Spanish language, such as: (a) communicating the power of bilingualism, (b) engaging in more interactions with the Spanish-speaking portion of the community’s population, and (c) beginning the conversation about validating the Spanish
language. See Table 20 for a sample of school leaders’ responses about validating the Spanish language.

Table 19

*Interview Responses: Importance of the Spanish-Speaking School Liaison*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-M</td>
<td>We have a wonderful parent liaison and I think our families do feel validated by her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-E</td>
<td>I think one very, very valuable person we have in our school community is our parent liaison, Barbara who—she’s not just a Spanish speaking parent; she’s a leader in their community, which is so valuable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-J</td>
<td>We do have the Spanish interpreter or translator who works here full time—I believe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20

*Interview Responses: Validation of Spanish-Speaking Students and Families*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-C          | Communicate the power of bilingualism:  
*I think there’s no more valuable message you can send them than just in terms of being successful in this world and having more opportunity would be to be truly bilingual.* |
| SL-E          | Engage with the community’s diverse population:  
*I think it would be nice if we had a second parent liaison to work with the community and I’d like to see some more possibly outreach with our staff and possibly the hierarchy; sort of the administrators, to be able to kind of infuse ourselves a little more in community locations that are primarily Spanish speaking.* |
| SL-G          | Begin to validate use of Spanish:  
*I think the other piece is that we want our—the larger population to be associated with and immersed in a culture that validates bilingual status.* |
School leaders were asked about their future plans to capitalize on the positive resources brought to the school by the families of ELs in a 21st-century global world. Only 8 of the 16 (50%) responded to this interview question, and of them, 5 indicated that there were no plans to capitalize on the positive resources brought to the school by the families of the ELs: A response from SL-B clearly illustrated how an attitude of tolerance translates into the self-perception that one holds a transformational attitude, and how a mismatch between self-perception and evidence to the contrary (in particular, the phrase whether we like it or not) translates into inaction at the administrative level:

*Obviously, the Latino population is growing so, you know, whether we like it or not it’s something that we do have to embrace and really move forward with, so I think these families can, you know, be positive resources as far as, you know—not only language but how the culture is and, you know, different challenges that we might, you know, encounter with them.* (SL-B)

This respondent’s apparent belief that hav[ing] to embrace Spanish-speaking families equated with acknowledging that these members of the school community can…be positive resources—while in the same breath referring to the challenge…we…encounter with them—starkly illustrates the perceptual gulf that sustains the achievement gap between EL or other minority students and their White, English-speaking majority counterparts.

Overall, then, data from interviews indicated that these school leaders were not operating on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2 model when it came to analyzing demographic data as a starting point for creating a successful multicultural school community, or viewing the ELs and their families as positive resources. On the contrary, these school leaders appeared to mistakenly consider that tolerance, in itself, represented a form of transformation. These results
provided discouraging testimony to the intractable, and systemic, nature of the linguistic and cultural gulf between school leaders and the increasingly diverse populations whose achievement it is their responsibility to support.

The next section analyzes data collected to better understand study participants’ *leadership behaviors for valuing diversity*.

**How School Leaders Valued Diversity**

In this research study, leadership behaviors for valuing diversity were defined in one dimension: sponsoring an approach that led educators in the school or district to examine their own understanding of the empirically established cultural and linguistic needs of ELs and their families as discussed in the literature. This dimension is represented by questionnaire item 13, regarding whether or how participants sponsored measures to define the needs of EL students and their families; and interview question 3, regarding how participants exercised leadership that would engage school faculty in meeting those needs. Figure 23 illustrates this dimension of inquiry.

![Figure 23. Questionnaire item and interview question: leadership behaviors for valuing diversity.](image-url)

When school leaders were initially queried about sponsoring an approach that leads educators in their school/district to examine their own understanding about research-based cultural and linguistic needs of ELs and their families, 14 of 16 (87.5%) self-identified as operating on the *transformation* side of the CPC2: 12 (75%) at the precompetence/competence...
level, and 2 (12.5%) at proficiency. Only 2 of the 16 (12.5%) self-identified as operating with blindness/incapacity (tolerance). See Table 21.

Table 21

Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Valuing Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Valuing Diversity (N=16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsoring approach for educators to examine the needs of ELs and families</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in the individual follow-up interviews, participants’ responses did not support these initial self-perceptions. School leaders were asked to detail how they would explain to their faculty what cultural responsiveness consisted of, and the relevance of its practice at this high school in which one-quarter of the student population came from families who spoke a non-English language. Their responses fell under three broad definitions of valuing diversity: (a) explanations (which they defined variously in terms of self-reflection, communication, or awareness); (b) difficulties (attributed to the school’s cultural diversity); and (c) needed improvements (defined as a need to provide more explanation of what responsiveness would consist of). In other words, school leaders at this high school did not have a shared vision or an established format for how cultural responsiveness was explained to their staff or demonstrated in practice at the research site. Figure 24 illustrates these results.
Explanations. Ten of the 16 study participants (62.5%) considered that leading faculty to value diversity at the school meant giving faculty explanations about what it would mean to be culturally responsive. Of these 10 participants, 4 (25%) said that they explained cultural responsiveness in terms of expecting faculty to self-reflect on their attitudes and beliefs; 4 other participants (25%) explained it in terms of needing to communicate with all the families of their students; and 2 (12.5%) explained it as being aware of the language needs of English Learners. See Table 22 for a sample of school leaders’ explanatory responses. The effectiveness of these explanatory strategies, of course, depended on how well the school leaders set expectations consistent with them—in other words, on how clearly they required that faculty “walk the talk.” The response from SL-C, who acknowledged that that’s something you can’t force people to do, suggests a limitation of this approach. Unless faculty are known to
Table 22

*Interview Responses: What Valuing Diversity Means*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-C          | Valuing diversity = giving explanations about personal reflection  
*I think it starts with yourself and I think you have to examine your own belief systems and you have to be open too, and that’s something you can’t force people to do.* |
| SL-A          | Valuing diversity = explaining how to communicate with families  
*Early on in the school year when we talk about the importance of communicating with families through outreach in all different ways. We make it a point to communicate all of our important messages in both English/Spanish* |
| SL-I          | Valuing diversity = explaining the unique needs of EL students  
*I think it goes back to what I talked about with the language objectives and the importance of them. I don’t think all the faculty realizes that just some of the words that we use in everyday English have double meanings, and that could be difficult for students.* |

consider explanations as exhortations, and unless exhortations are supported by requiring faculty education in the form of workshops or other professional development, it would be difficult for a school leader to determine whether his explanations would achieve results. Similarly, explaining the importance of communication without providing adequate resources for monolingual faculty imposes a heavy burden on teachers who already may feel they are lacking in time. (Note, too, that SL-A’s contention that important announcements are delivered in Spanish as well as English may be inaccurate, as the observational data discussed earlier suggest.) Finally, and in the same vein, explaining to teachers that EL students experience difficulty with monolingual-English instruction can achieve little effect unless supported by staff resources and/or professional development. Like the school improvement plan (SWIP), whose lofty objectives faltered in the face of limited resources and insufficient blueprints for cultural inclusivity, leaders’ explanations...
of diversity’s value in the classroom and the community seemed difficult to translate into concrete performance benchmarks.

**Difficulty.** Some school leader participants (4 of the 16, or 25%) responded to questions about exercising leadership in a way that values diversity by citing the difficulties associated with their school’s diverse enrollment. These school leaders stated that the school faculty cannot or does not know how to relate to students due to the demographic differences they perceive between themselves and their students or families. Some participants characterized these differences in terms of neighborhood characteristics. See Table 23 for a sample of these responses.

Table 23

*Interview Responses: Difficult of Valuing Diversity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-B</td>
<td>Valuing diversity = a difficulty inherent in the diverse study body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I—you know, a lot of it’s like whether it be picking up the phone or say having a parent meeting, and like I need to realize —how do I say it the best way possible, but like I need, you know, that family down in the Arlington district isn’t that family from the other side of town.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-F</td>
<td>Valuing diversity = a difficulty inherent in the diverse study body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I look sometimes at some of the students that we have at [our school] that come here and work so hard to fit into what they think we want them to fit into, but then they have to go home to ‘the district’ which has different expectations.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These participants spoke of geography as a metonym for culture, and possibly, class—attributes of difference over which they felt they had no control, and perhaps no ability or responsibility to bridge.
**Needed improvements.** Some school leader participants saw valuing diversity as a call for improvement in their own practice and practices throughout the school. Three of the 16 (18.75%) expressed this view, saying that faculty needed better knowledge about what cultural responsiveness entailed. See Table 24 for a sample response.

### Table 24

*Interview Response: Diversity Valuing Needs Improvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-A          | Valuing diversity = an area that needs improvement
  *So, again, though, another area that we want to continue to improve upon, but we certainly want to make sure that everyone in the high school understands that it’s an important item and one of the things that we focus on this year.* |

The above response represented a quite amorphous statement of purpose—one unlinked to specific actions or benchmarks. It was thus difficult to envision how the expressed goal of “improvement” might be realized.

Overall, evidence collected during interviews indicated that the 16 school leader participants were not yet operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the CPC2 model in terms of sponsoring an approach that would lead educators in their school/district to examine their own understanding about research-based cultural and linguistic needs of ELs and their families. Rather, several viewed their school’s cultural diversity as a point of poor understanding, challenge, or unattained—perhaps inherently unattainable—ideals. These views placed their attitudes and behaviors firmly on the *tolerance* side of the cultural proficiency continuum (CPC2).
The next section analyzes the data collected to improve understanding of leadership behaviors for managing the dynamics of diversity.

**How School Leaders Viewed Managing Dynamics of Diversity**

The concept of leadership behavior for managing the dynamics of diversity was operationalized through one dimension: acknowledgment of the continued lack of access to equitable education for some language groups, a chronic problem much discussed in the literature. Figure 25 maps this concept to questionnaire item 23 (regarding participants’ acknowledgment of chronic access issues), and to interview questions 4 (regarding whether there were plans to hire more bilingual staff at the school) and 7 (regarding whether school information materials besides the school handbook were slated for translation into other languages).

**Figure 25.** Questionnaire item and interview questions: leadership behaviors for managing the dynamics of diversity.

**Acknowledging lack of access to equity as a function of managing diversity.** Results for questionnaire item 7 suggested that the majority of the school leaders at the research site again self-evaluated as operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the cultural proficiency
continuum when it came to managing the dynamics of diversity. See Table 24. However, responses provided during the interviews did not support the questionnaire responses.

When school leaders were initially queried about acknowledging the continued educational inequity for some language minorities, only 12.5% (two of 16) self-evaluated as operating with cultural blindness/incapacity, on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model. The majority, 87.5% (14 of 16), initially self-evaluated as operating on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2 model, which encompasses precompetence/competence and proficiency. As indicated in Table 25, 5 participants’ self-assessments (31.25%) qualified as representing precompetence/competence, and 9 (56.25%) as representing proficiency (both indicating transformation). Only 2 participants (12.5%) placed themselves at a level representing incapacity/blindness (a level representing tolerance).

Table 25

| Leadership Behaviors for Managing the Dynamics of Diversity (N=16) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Dimension                                      | Tolerance for Diversity | Transformation for Equity |
| Acknowledge the continued educational inequity for some language minorities | 0 | 2 (12.5%) | 5 (31.25%) |
|                                                |                              |                              | 9 (56.25%) |

Again, however, responses obtained during follow-up interviews told a different story. School leaders were asked, first, whether they planned to hire additional bilingual staff to represent more of the languages spoken by the families in the school community; and second, whether they planned to increase the number of school communications presented in languages other than English. In both instances, responses to these more concrete inquiries differed from the more
abstract (and more anonymous) questionnaire responses. Responses to the first interview question, regarding staffing, are presented next.

Staffing responses fell into three broad categories, two related to awareness and one related to participants’ perspectives on the staffing issue, more generally. Figure 28 shows quantified results for these responses; and (c) perspectives. See Figure 26 for responses about hiring bilingual staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness of a plan to hire bilingual staff</th>
<th>5 of 16 participants (31.25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School Plan: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%) were aware of planning to hire more bilingual staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bilingual Candidates: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%) said they seek bilingual candidates when hiring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SEI Endorsement: 1 of 16 participants (6.25%) said he seeks candidates with SEI endorsement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lacked awareness of a plan to hire bilingual staff</th>
<th>5 of 16 participants (31.25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lacking an awareness of bilingual hiring: 5 of 6 participants (31.25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives on hiring bilingual staff</th>
<th>5 of 16 participants (31.25%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Beneficial: 3 of 16 participants (18.75%) viewed hiring more bilingual staff as beneficial.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constraints - 2 of 16 participants (12.5%) cited budgetary limitations and dearth of bilingual applicants as hiring constraints.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 26. School leaders’ responses: hiring bilingual staff.*

**Awareness and conditional support of bilingual hiring plan.** A total of 31.25% (five of 16) of the school leaders’ responses reflected awareness of a plan for hiring bilingual staff. Of the leaders, 12.5% (two of 16), stated that hiring more bilingual staff was part of the school’s
plan, whereas 12.5% (two of 16) stated that, when hiring new staff, they looked for candidates who were bilingual. One school leader (6.25%, or one of 16) stated that having an SEI endorsement (achieved by completing the RETELL course) was as important as looking for a teacher who was bilingual. See Table 26 for a sample of school leader responses related to awareness of hiring plans to increase staff diversity.

Table 26

Interview Responses: Awareness of a Plan for Bilingual Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-A          | Managing diversity = bilingual hiring plan  
*That is absolutely part of the plan. It’s been emphasized to all administrators that were going through the hiring process: when all things are equal, if there is someone who is bilingual, that person will be one that we would want to hire first.* |
| SL-G          | Managing diversity = conditional preference for bilingual candidate  
*I can speak from my perspective, in that I’m always looking for bilingual staff to augment what we already have. I can’t say that it’s a factor that will outweigh skills sets that are critical to be able to deliver services, but it’s a massive consideration. You know, all things being equal, I’m going to want a candidate who speaks multiple languages.* |
| SL-I          | Managing diversity = seeking SEI endorsed or EL-experienced candidates  
*I do know when we hired teachers this past year that the endorsement was important to us, and two of the teachers that we hired were not necessarily bilingual but had experience teaching English language learners.* |

These responses suggested that among the 5 participants who voiced awareness of diversity-increasing hiring, hiring bilingual staff was considered desirable, but it was not a top-priority qualification. Phrases such as *all things being equal* and *I can’t say that it’s a factor that will outweigh skill sets* signaled caution and conditionality—an expectation, perhaps, that it would be

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7 The RETELL course does not teach participants a second language, although there is a list of Spanish/English cognates provided in the participant manual. It should be noted that hiring bilingual staff is not included in the action plan of the research site.
difficult to find highly qualified bilingual staff; and that *not necessarily bilingual but had experience teaching [EL students]* was a good-enough substitute for multilingual capability.

Such views attenuated participants’ assertions that they supported plans to hire more faculty who could communicate with students in a native language that was not English.

*Lack of awareness, but conditional support, of bilingual hiring plan.* Five of the 16 school leader study participants (31.25%) indicated they were unaware of specific planning to hire more bilingual staff for their school, in which 24% of the students spoke a first language other than English. This lack of awareness did not, however, signal a lack of support for such hiring. Table 27 provides a sample of responses in this category.

Table 27

*Interview Responses: Lack of Awareness About Bilingual Hiring Plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-E          | Managing diversity ≠ awareness of plan to hire bilingual staff  
*I am not sure that there is a specific action plan as far as that’s concerned. I know we do make a concerted effort that if that resume does include somebody that is bilingual, I think that’s a huge trump card over other qualifications.* |
| SL-H          | Managing diversity ≠ awareness of plan to hire bilingual staff  
*I’m not privy to the hiring process, but I know that that certainly is deemed valuable when we have an applicant for a position who is bilingual, and we do have a variety of languages spoken here, and it would be nice to have representative from those, but I don’t know of the plans.* |

These responses indicated that SL-E and SL-H had a vague notion that it would be desirable to have more bilingual staff members, but had little concrete knowledge of how or whether the notion would translate to implementation. SL-E believed that a bilingual candidate would hold *a huge trump card over other qualifications*, in contrast with the school leaders who were aware of
a hiring plan to increase diversity, but who did not consider this attribute primary. SL-H’s response was similar.

*Divided perspectives on hiring for staff diversity.* The 5 school leaders (31.25% of the sample) who elaborated on their views regarding hiring additional bilingual staff held contrasting views of the practice. Three (18.75%) of the sample contended that it would benefit the school to hire more bilingual staff (without suggesting how this benefit might be achieved), whereas 2 participants (12.5%) stressed the difficulty of such hiring, offering as reasons budgetary limitations or a dearth of bilingual candidates. See Table 28 for a sample of such responses.

Table 28

*Interview Responses: Perspectives on Bilingual Staffing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-C</td>
<td>Managing diversity = diverse faculty is a benefit, conditionally, <em>Absolutely. I think that the more diversity we can show within the faculty, I think it’s important to kids. So, I think that there’s always that sensitivity to—you know, balancing the need for diversity and for proficient teachers.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-L</td>
<td>Managing diversity = experiencing constraints on hiring for diversity, <em>This is something that I’ve thought of, and I’ve had conversations with other administrators over, and one of the facts is in the past I’ve had a few positions open up, and I have not had one bilingual person apply, and it’s—it’s overwhelming.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that SL-C, although he asserts the benefit of a more diverse faculty, falls into the longstanding fallacy that *need for diversity* and *[need for] proficient teachers* are opposing qualities that must be *balance[ed]*. In a similar vein but stressing a different reason for lack of staff diversity, SL-L points to the absence of bilingual candidates for the few open positions that arise. Interestingly, he does not indicate whether he or others have made affirmative efforts
(outreach) to seek such candidates, beyond perhaps advertising openings through traditional channels.

**Communicating multilingually.** As a second aspect of leading in ways that would effectively manage the dynamics of diversity, study participants were asked about communicating multilingually with a school population that represented some 20 languages other than English—an issue that observational evidence indicated was barely addressed at the research site. The school leaders were asked about how (and whether) the school handles translation of school documents into languages other than English, and how families whose native language was neither English nor Spanish (the most prevalent second language in the school community) accessed the student handbook and other school information.

In general, responses to this question were quite divided. Some school leaders focused on the difficulties inherent in communicating across many languages and cultures. Others deplored the lack of responsiveness to linguistic diversity, as reflected in the tendency to publish school documents primarily in English. The following analysis groups these responses along three trajectories: (a) knowledge about current practices regarding document translation in school communications; (b) suggestion that accessibility of documents for all members of the school community is not an urgent issue; and (c) broader perspectives on the notion of document translation as a vehicle for communication with a diverse school population. Figure 27 summarizes these results.

**Document translation for families with limited English proficiency.** Four of this study’s interview questions (numbers 6-9) addressed communication with students’ families. In a school with a significant population of students and families for whom English was not a first language, a *transformational* approach would suggest that documents sent home would
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of Document Translation Practices</th>
<th>Access to Documents for All is Not an Urgent Issue</th>
<th>Differing Perspectives on Document Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;Official documents&quot; are translated: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%)</td>
<td>• Unaware how non-English and non-Spanish speakers would access information: 6 of 16 participants (37.5%)</td>
<td>• School and department websites should be translated: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some teachers provide translations: 3 of 16 participants (18.75%)</td>
<td>• Parents could request information: 3 of 16 participants (18.75%)</td>
<td>• We are not being inclusive of all families: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ConnectED calls are offered in Spanish: 4 of 16 participants (25%)</td>
<td>• If the student received SPED services, no translation issues: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%)</td>
<td>• Lack of translation into other languages is a weakness of the school: 1 of 16 participants (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Translation depends on importance of documents: 1 of 16 participants (6.25%)</td>
<td>• Translators are used more at the district level: 2 of 16 participants (12.5%)</td>
<td>• Number of languages spoken makes it difficult to translate all documents: 1 of 16 participants (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional documents need to be translated: 1 of 16 (6.25%)</td>
<td>• Staff is used for translating: 1 of 16 (6.25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 27. School leaders’ responses: document translation as a vehicle for communicating with a linguistically diverse population.*
routinely be translated into the multiple languages spoken within the school community. Moreover, ESSA requires that “Schools must communicate information to limited English proficient [LEP] parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English” (U.S. DOE and DOJ, 2015). However, the school under study had no protocol concerning which documents would routinely be translated; and when asked in interviews about document translation, school leaders’ responses varied or contradicted one another.

Discussing which materials were translated for families, 11 of 16 school leaders (68.75%) stated that most, if not all, documents going home from the school were translated into Spanish, the most prevalent language other than English that was spoken in the school. The common theme reflected awareness of the federal mandate: study participants initially responded that “official” documents, i.e., those coming from the principal’s office or dealing with discipline and state assessments, were sent home in Spanish. But they did not mention other languages for document translation, although families in the school community spoke some 18 other languages.

When asked for more specifics, school leaders’ responses varied considerably. Only 1 of 16 (6.25%) stated that the importance of a document determined whether it would be translated. Three of 16 (18.75%) stated that some of their teachers provided information to parents in Spanish, and 4 (25%) mentioned ConnectEd calls as translated information and stated that the calls were provided in English and Spanish. Just 1 (6.25%) stated that the school needed to provide more documents in translation. See Table 29 for a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding document translation.
Table 29

_Interview Responses: Document Translation Practices_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-B          | Official documents are translated:  
  *Obviously, the handbook, but all—any, like disciplinary letters, suspension letters. MCAS materials are sent out, English and Spanish.* |
| SL-K          | Official documents are translated:  
  *I think the decision on what is going to be translated is really a decision around, you know, how—how important is this document for everyone. I can’t say definitively that all—all materials are translated, and it is a choice, and I think that choice comes down to, ‘Do we have the staff to be able to support translating everything?’ And I don’t think that we do.* |
| (SL-H)        | Some teachers provide their own translations:  
  *Several teachers have been very good about translating their newsletters home or announcements, field trip forms, any sort of formal documentation, but that would be limited generally to Spanish.* |
| (SL-D)        | Connect-Ed phone calls are translated into Spanish, but not other languages:  
  *Connect Ed calls, are translated into Spanish. I don’t believe it’s translated into other languages.* |
| (SL-N)        | Additional translations are needed:  
  *From a school standpoint, what else is translated or what else needs to be translated? You know, I think we take a lot of things for granted, just the basics, you know? Lunch—you know, how they act in the lunchroom. You know, there’s no signs up there that say how to act in the lunchroom, there’s no signs in there how to walk in the hallway.* |

Overall, interview responses indicated that there _might_ be a protocol requiring certain documents, such as disciplinary letters and state assessment documents, be sent home to families in English and Spanish. However, there did not appear to be a protocol for other documentation, such as report cards, school announcements, and teacher notices. In other words, some translations in Spanish were occurring, though not universally, throughout this high school.

A further interview question addressed translation into other languages; 15 participants (93.75%) replied. Six (37.5%) stated that they did not know how families would access
information if they did not speak English or Spanish; 1 (6.25%) said that staff was asked to assist with interpretation; and 3 (18.75%) said parents could request that information be translated into their native language. However, 1 school leader (6.25%) stated that the school currently did not translate materials into any languages other than English and Spanish; whereas 2 (12.5%) said that when families had a student who was receiving special education services, translating documents was not that challenging and could be done with ease, perhaps because support for these students was handled at the district level, where according to 2 participants (12.5%) said there was more use of translation services, adding that this practice needed to be used more often. See Table 3- for a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding availability of school documents to families with limited English proficiency. Apparent in the responses is a tolerance for diversity perspective that reflects little initiative by the school’s leaders to broaden the availability of school documents readable by members of the school community who lack proficiency in English or Spanish; and acknowledgement that even Spanish translation is inconsistently available.

**Leaders’ perspectives acknowledge weakness in linguistic equity.** Six school leaders participating in the study (37.5%) volunteered their personal perspectives on the school’s failure to disseminate documents in all the languages of its community. Two (12.5%) said they believed the school and department websites should be available in more than one language; 2 (12.5%) specifically described current practices as not inclusive of all families. In other words,
Table 30

*Interview Responses: Availability of Documents to LEP Families*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-L          | Unaware of translation capabilities beyond Spanish:  
*I don’t know what—we have a few members; like I know if there was a Russian kid one of my teachers speaks Russian, but officially or where to go for a lot of this: I honestly don’t know.* |
| SL-K          | Staff members used when interpretation is required:  
*We do try to assist the families who speak another language by using staff on hand to be able to interpret.* |
| SL-H          | Parents must request translation:  
*My understanding is that that would need to be done as a result of the parent advocating for that.* |
| SL-N          | Software is available for translation, but use is limited:  
*I think we’re kind of at an advantage within Special Ed, because we do make sure that we are doing that. A lot of the software that we use, we can easily pump out in 15 or16 different languages.* |
| SL-P          | Translation available at district level:  
*As far as families that may not speak English or Spanish but there’s a—you know, another language that we’re not hitting here: I’m not—I can’t speak to the statistics, but it may be so few a number where we have to—you know, we’ll provide translation services for them, and I know that’s happened in the past at the district level, where they’ve brought in other language translators to help parents out.* |
| SL-E          | Documents available only in English and Spanish:  
*Yeah, I would say that we don’t have that out there right now...a third language.* |

they identified the status quo as a condition that needed remedying, although they did not profess accountability for effecting changes. However, while 1 (6.25%) cited the current situation as a weakness, he echoed the view of another participant (6.25%) who located the problem of inclusivity as one that resided in the diversity of the school community—a response that implicitly absolved the school of responsibility for changing its practices. See Table 31 for a sample of school leaders’ perspectives on linguistic inclusivity.
Table 31

Interview Responses: Perspectives on Linguistic Inclusivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-M</td>
<td>School website should be multilingual: What really needs to be translated into Spanish is the website. So that is really—and actually it should be a multilingual website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-O</td>
<td>More information should be available in other languages: We do not have actually—we probably should have—we have a fine arts website, which has calendars and that sort of thing, and that kind of planted the seed that maybe some of that information should be in other languages besides English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-F</td>
<td>Current practices are insufficient: You know, it does leave a percentage of our population behind, even though—and I think we look at it and say, ‘well, we’re addressing our largest need.’ But you are: ‘You’re forgetting about—you’re still not making other families comfortable. And the whole idea about bringing them into school is making them comfortable.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-G</td>
<td>Need to study and address current shortcoming: I think that being aware of how many students outside of school have parents who don’t speak either English or Spanish is something that we need to look into and then address that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-C</td>
<td>A weakness attributable to small numbers and diversity: I do think that’s probably our weaker area, and again that’s challenging because that’s a very small population and they have even many, many different languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-B</td>
<td>Responding to diversity is daunting: The problem is we have—the school is so diverse, you have so many cultures and so many languages it’s—you know, it’s a pretty daunting task I think if we were to have that translated in every single language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, then, the interviews indicated that school leaders were tolerating diversity, rather than operating on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2 model with respect to the needs of a population that included a significant proportion of families whose LEP represented some 20 languages.

The next section analyzes the data regarding leadership behaviors that would demonstrate adaptation to, or promotion of, diversity.
Adapting Leadership to Diversity

In this research study, leadership behaviors for adapting to diversity were considered in one dimension—ensuring culturally appropriate communication—that was operationalized in two ways: through accurately using a language comprehensible to EL students and their families; and through exercising cultural sensitivity, as discussed in Chapter II. This section of the chapter addresses questionnaire and interview results relative to these two aspects of communication. Questionnaire item 27 asked participants how often they required monolingual staff to communicate via an interpreter with LEP families; interview question 8 asked how participants ensured that staff communicated with these families through accurate, linguistic and cultural responsiveness. Figure 28 illustrates the protocols used.

On questionnaire item 8, a majority of participants’ responses fell on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2, indicating that they regularly ensured that staff use interpreters when communicating with LEP families. Responses to interview question 8, however, did not support these questionnaire results.

When school leaders were initially queried about whether they required their staff to communicate via an interpreter in the language used by the families of EL students, only 2 of the
16 school leaders (12.5%) gave self-evaluations that indicated they were operating with cultural incapacity/blindness; that is, on the *tolerance for diversity* side of the CPC2 model, encompassing destructiveness and incapacity/blindness. On the other hand, 14 (87.5%) gave self-evaluations that indicated they were operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the CPC2 model, encompassing precompetence/competence and proficiency. The latter responses included 11 (68.75%) indicating precompetence/competence and 3 (18.75%) indicating proficiency. Table 32 summarizes these results.

Table 32

*Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Adapting to Diversity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Adapting to Diversity (N=16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require staff to communicate via an interpreter in language of ELs’ families</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the follow-up interviews, school leaders were asked how they ensured that their staff communicated with families with accuracy and cultural sensitivity (since the research site had 433 families who spoke a language other than English; 323 of these spoke Spanish). The leaders’ responses fell into three broad areas related to communicating with accuracy and cultural sensitivity: (a) current practices; (b) shortfalls; and (c) needs. Figure 29 depicts results in these areas.

**Current practices.** When asked how they ensure accurate, culturally sensitive communication with families who have limited English proficiency (LEP), 13 of 16 school
leader participants (81.25%) said they call upon resources available at the school or through the district: staff (4, or 25%); parent liaisons (3, or 18.75%); students (2, or 12.5%); and personnel from the Central Office (2, or 12.5%). However, 2 (12.5%) indicated that, on occasion, they simply tried to “work through the language barrier” without the presence of a translator. See Table 3 for a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding ensuring communication.

Most of the school leaders seemed to believe that current resources were adequate, although on-site translation into languages other than Spanish was unavailable. Those who were happy to have students translate for their parents seemed unaware of the literature that cautions against adultifying children in this way, since it distorts power dynamics in the parent-child relationship. Similarly, those who felt they were able to successfully “work through” language barriers failed to take into account the tendency of persons with LEP who signal that they have understood an authoritative English-speaker even when they haven’t. On a more operational plane, leaders did not acknowledge that staff or students used as translators might lack crucial background information or perspective on the student, family, or school issue. Overall, these school leaders were aware that school personnel should attempt to meet the needs of families with LEP; but the leaders seemed poorly informed about best practices for doing so.

Concerns. Despite this relative state of optimism about current cross-cultural communication practices, 10 school leaders (62.5%) voiced concerns about current resources, and hoped for progress in this area. For example, 5 (31.25%) were troubled by the limited availability of translation for school families who spoke neither English nor Spanish; 3 (18.75%) indicated a need for improvement in this area; and 1 (6.25%) suggested that staff may have lacked awareness of that translation services were available through the Central Office. One participant (6.25%) looked ahead to new student management systems that could translate
**Current practices**  
13 of 16 (81.25%) responding

- Staff: staff members called upon to translate (4)
- School liaison: rely on the school's Spanish speaking liaison (3)
- Students: ask students to translate (2)
- Central Office: rely on Central Office services (2)
- Improvising: attempt to "work through" language barriers (2)

**Concerns**  
10 of 16 (62.5%) responding

- Uncertainty: don't know who speaks which languages (5)
- Complacency: communication with families is adequate (3)
- Lack of awareness: others may be unaware of available resources for translation (1)
- Future technology: newer software products may offer translation capability (1)

**Needs**  
5 of 16 (31.25%) responding

- Training: staff may need training on cultural sensitivity (2)
- Capacity: families prefer to communicate with school personnel directly, in their own language, i.e., without a 3rd person translating (1)
- Top-Down support: need support from the Central Office to provide better communication (1)
- Translation variety: school should translate materials into more languages (1)

*Figure 29.* School leaders’ responses: communicating with accuracy and cultural sensitivity.
Table 33

*Interview Responses: Current Communication Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-M          | Staff members translate  
*With the families that speak Spanish, we do pretty well, because we have enough staff. We have a couple guidance counselors that are Spanish speakers (English first language) that usually impress me. Parent liaison. Some of our ESL teachers speak Spanish, even, you know, not—they are white American women but they are pretty bilingual.* |
| SL-I          | School liaison translates  
*There’s also a Spanish speaking liaison in the Guidance department that can make phone calls home or is available during Guidance meetings or parent meetings with parents to translate.* |
| SL-P          | Students translate  
*I’ve seen a lot of cases where students will be able to translate for the parents and help in a meeting. That situation is good.* |
| SL-C          | Central Office provides translators  
*You know, I think that we have a great resource, and just remembering to access either J*** or H***, because I know that in my previous life as a Special Ed teacher I was always able to call and say, “You know, I need someone who speaks whatever” and they have a list of resources and people.* |
| SL-O          | Improvise, “work through” barriers  
*We use translators as necessary. Sometime we have language barriers. Sometimes we don’t. I personally have had conversations with a parent and I can tell they’re struggling with English, and we communicate to the best of our abilities.* |

automatically into many languages. Table 34 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses related to concerns about communication across linguistic and cultural differences.

The responses shown in Table 34 indicate that, again, the school leaders’ interview responses indicated systemic shortfalls in their obligation to ensure that staff communicated with parents who have LEP. It appeared that these leaders did not routinely share information about how to obtain translators for family or school meetings. At the same time, study participants did not appear to consider the school’s communication shortfalls a serious deficiency, at the same time
as they recognized that improvements were called for. These perspectives represented an attitude of tolerance for diversity—a sense that communication issues stemmed from the school’s population—at the same as some leaders showed nascent recognition that transformation for equity might be due.

Table 34

*Interview Responses: Communication Concerns*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-B          | Uncertainty about translation into languages other than Spanish  
*You know, once again I think it’s a case of, you know being creative and, you know, as far as staff here: I don’t know of anybody that speaks anything besides English and Spanish offhand that I can think offhand, French, Italian, but as far as, like I don’t know, like the Arabic or anything like that: I don’t know, and I know our Arabic population is growing.* |
| SL-M          | Staff may lack awareness of available translation resources  
*Also, we run an office that all translation is accessible with just the question of being asked. They are not called upon from the high school as often as they are from other schools. So, it needs to be brought to someone’s attention in order for us to show. So, I’m not—so anyway maybe that part of me is not communicating that. I wonder if people know that, I mean, I assume that they do, but maybe they don’t.* |
| SL-L          | Status quo is adequate, but not ideal  
*So, I think, again, we could do better, but it’s adequate.* |
| SL-G          | Future technology may provide a solution  
*One of the things that I think is really exciting is looking at student management systems that have the capacity to be able to translate into multiple languages and then having a speech-to-text version of that sent out to families who request it in any language.* |

**Needs.** It was then not surprising that only 5 study participants (31.25%) volunteered thoughts about changes that might be needed if the school’s cross-cultural communication practices were to be improved. Their perspectives varied, suggesting that, while members of the school’s leadership felt fairly knowledgeable about communication issues, they lacked a unified
purpose or plan for improving the cultural responsiveness of school communications. For example, 1 (6.25%) contended that LEP families preferred direct conversations with teachers, even if communication was compromised by language barriers; 1 (6.25%) said that more support from “the top” was needed; and 1 (6.25%) proposed a limited improvement—translating the

Table 35

*Interview Responses What Was Needed to Improve Communication*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-B Translators need greater cultural sensitivity</td>
<td><em>When I communicate with the families there I have to take into account, you know, their culture, that they’re praying five times day and all that, so I have to make sure if someone’s translating to them that I’m very careful what they’re saying, so that’s a challenge.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-H Teachers need greater cultural sensitivity</td>
<td><em>I think first and foremost the language barrier seems to be the most obvious. But if we were to ascertain a translator, then I’m not confident that the teachers would understand with great accuracy the cultural sensitivity that would need to help mitigate that situation, whatever it may be.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-L Families prefer direct communication with teachers (complacency)</td>
<td><em>I’ve talked to some parents where they had broken English and we communicated and went through it fine. I think they like to hear from the teacher as well, rather than going through that third person.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-F Central administration should provide more support</td>
<td><em>I think it starts at the top. I think that since I want to say for 20 years we have been talking that we should have a central registration location. There should be people who speak multiple languages, to make people feel comfortable about coming in to sign their child up to school, that can help them communicate those needs to the school system in an appropriate manner, and then help to appropriately set up a schedule for that student.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SL-P) Need translation into more languages</td>
<td><em>We probably would need someone to translate in a handbook and some other materials into our next most important language, which I know in our district is Arabic. I think that might need to be done, just so we can communicate, and so that families know what our expectations are.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
school handbook and other materials into “the next most important language” (based on FLNE students’ enrollment) which, after Spanish, was Arabic. These perspectives indicated a *tolerance for diversity* that was enacted through a combination of *laissez-faire* practices, shifting responsibility upward, or introducing incremental change. Two study participants (12.5%), however, showed awareness that cultural sensitivity training could serve as a step toward improving communication with the school’s linguistically and culturally diverse population, demonstrating some awakening among the leadership to the need for *transformation for equity*. Table 3, above, shows a sample of school leaders’ responses in this domain.

It was unclear, based on the interviews, whether school leaders felt a need to substantially revise current cross-cultural communication practices. Rather, it appeared that they may have lacked a way to assess how effective these practices were in conveying both information and sensitivity.

The next section analyzes the data collected to better understand leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge via curriculum and instruction.

**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Curriculum and Instruction**

Curricula in the United States have historically under-represented both the presence and the contributions of racial, ethnic, and other cultural minorities. As a result, students whose backgrounds or identities lie outside the bounds of White, English-speaking, middle-class life often feel invisible in the pedagogical space of the classroom; and, as a corollary, majority-culture students may absorb the lesson that such invisibility is normative. As the nation’s population becomes increasingly diverse, however, the privileging of traditional narratives ill-serves students in both groups.
Accordingly, questions for school leaders participating in this study addressed how they assured that knowledge about diverse cultures was integrated into curriculum and instruction. To highlight the two-fold nature of this issue, it was operationalized in two ways. Questionnaire item 17 and interview question 10 addressed majority students’ learning about culture, while questionnaire item 18 and interview question 11 addressed combating the invisibility of minorities. Figure 30 depicts this dual inquiry.

**Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Curriculum and Instruction**

**Questionnaire (17):** Require the integration of curriculum so that majority-culture students gain familiarity with cultures in the school community

**Interview (10):** Materials within the school’s physical environment and/or curriculum that positively portray ELs and their families

**Questionnaire (18):** Promote multicultural education to ensure the visibility of all ethnic groups

**Interview (11):** Plans to make ELs and their families visible in the school’s environment, library, media, school events, etc.

*Figure 30. Questionnaire items and interview questions: leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge in curriculum and instruction.*

Questionnaire results initially indicated that the majority of school leaders at this research site self-evaluated as operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the CPC2 model along the two dimensions described above. When asked the extent to which they required integration of diverse cultures into the curriculum, 12 participants (75%) gave responses that placed themselves in either the precompetence/competence (10, or 62.5%) or proficient (2, or 12.5%)
category. Only 4 (25%) gave responses indicating cultural incapacity/blindness (3, or 18.75%) or cultural destructiveness (1, or 6.25%). Table 36 summarizes these results.

Table 36

*Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Curriculum and Instruction*

| Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Curriculum and Instruction (N=16) | Tolerance for Diversity | Transformation for Equity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dimension | Destructiveness | Incapacity/Blindness | Precompetence/Competence | Proficiency |
| Require integration of curriculum so that majority-culture students gain familiarity with cultures in the school community | 1 (6.25%) | 3 (18.75%) | 10 (62.5%) | 2 (12.5%) |
| Promote multicultural education to ensure the visibility of all groups | 0 | 3 (18.75%) | 9 (56.25%) | 4 (25%) |

Participants’ responses to interview questions asked what materials in the school’s physical plant and/or the staff’s curriculum positively portrayed the cultural and linguistic diversity of minority-culture students (abbreviated here as ELs), however, did not support these results. Figure 31 illustrates three categories of responses the school leaders provided. Results associated with the categories are discussed in the three sections following.
Integrating diverse cultures into the physical environment. Displays of symbols and artifacts in the physical environment readily signal appreciation of a culture’s importance. In a multicultural school, this kind of recognition offers an immediate welcome to members of the community whose numbers place them in a minority. When asked about integrating cultural diversity into the curriculum, and promoting the visibility of diverse cultures, 8 school leader study participants (50%) mentioned the presence or absence of cultures in the school’s physical spaces. Of these, 5 (32.25% of the study sample) mentioned a collection of flags that had hung in the building before its most recent renovation, completed in 2014. These flags had not been replaced; and 2 participants (12.5%)—perhaps reminded that this simple, yet powerful, gesture of cultural inclusivity—responded that the school lacked positive visual portrayals of its diverse enrollment. Two other participants (12.5%) pointed to more modest representations of cultures: one said that some teachers hung a variety of national flags in their classrooms, and another pointed to the school’s “multicultural club.” Table 37 provides a sample of responses in this category.
Table 37

*Interview Responses: School’s Portrayal of Diverse Cultures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-P</td>
<td>International flags formerly hung in hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I know that in the future there are plans to bring back—we used to have all the different flags from around the world. I know that there’s much discussion about getting those hung back up in the hallway, in the main foyer, which was always a nice way to walk into a building, to be embraced by that multicultural feeling.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-B</td>
<td>A few teachers display international flags or artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I think I’m so used to everything around here, I’m going to have to think about that. John Flower’s room has—and a couple other rooms: they have flags from all over, you know countries from all over. Frank Kopiclo, who’s Greek: he has a lot of soccer stuff put out that’s kind of embracing, you know, that piece of it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-A</td>
<td>Physical environment lacks recognition of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Our building is, you know, a year old really, and we have plans to do some different things that would portray the cultural and linguistic diversity of our students and families, but currently our physical plant doesn’t have much in that way.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-G</td>
<td>Multicultural club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We do have a multicultural club.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These responses were noteworthy in two respects: first, they highlighted the fact that despite participants’ self-assessed cultural competence, they had not assured institutional commitment to multiculturalism even at the simplest level; and second, their first response to questions about instructional measures to make visible the school’s variety of cultures concerned literal visibility, rather than instructional content.

**Integrating diverse cultures into the curriculum.** Perhaps school leaders’ attention to physical symbols of culture was related to a similar dearth of multicultural curriculum. Just 6 participants (37.5%) interpreted the cultural integration questions in terms of curriculum: of these, 3 (18.75% of the sample of 16) said that curriculum from their departments positively portrayed the cultural diversity of ELs and their families; and 2 (12.5%) said such integration was effected by individual teachers. The remaining participant (6.25%) pointed to the difficulty
of incorporating cultures into the curriculum. Table 38 provides a sample of responses that mentioned curriculum.

Table 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-J</td>
<td>Cultural portrayal evident in language classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well, I can say for our curriculum: are very reflective of the cultures of the— the cultures of the target languages that we teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-H</td>
<td>Individual teachers may portray diverse cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the classrooms, I think, I’ve mentioned there have been some projects in which we have invited culture in, and I don’t think—I’d like to think that it’s not an isolated assignment, but that it’s more of an understanding that students are bringing to a discussion; a field of knowledge or experiences, from which others could benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-I</td>
<td>Difficult to incorporate cultural portrayal into a standard curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum: math there really isn’t anything that speaks to different cultures, that’s hard to do when you have a curriculum to follow and the books don’t really speak to that, and that’s something that you have to bring in on your own. It’s not to say that teachers don’t do that, it’s just—it’s difficult to do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These responses reflect relatively poor knowledge or commitment concerning cultural awareness in curriculum. For example, language teachers routinely exhibit symbols and artifacts related to the language under study; these displays are not necessarily related to the first languages of their students, or to the variety of nations in which Spanish, French, and Italian (the only “foreign” languages taught at the school) are spoken. Pointing out the limitations of textbooks or subject areas suggests that attention to culture is appropriately located only in certain areas of learning. On the other hand, “invit[ing] culture in” may indicate a wish to see culture more pervasively infuse instruction, although the respondent’s uncertainty about whether this was a regular feature
of instruction suggested that curricular integration of culture was not a generally recognized protocol.

**Needs or plans.** Ten (62.5%) study participants volunteered additional remarks that fleshed out their personal perspectives on the school’s portrayal of the school’s diverse community in its physical environment and curriculum. Of these, 6 (37.5% of the sample of 16) said there was a need for additional efforts in this arena; and 2 (12.5%) mentioned related future plans. But only 1 (6.25%) attested to having great personal interest in culture, manifested as a love for multicultural literature; and another (6.25%) appeared to exhibit some defensiveness.

Table 39

*Interview Responses: Perspectives on Portrayal of Diverse Cultures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-G          | Cultural portrayal occurs informally, but needs improvement  
But it's not readily apparent all the time. It's not something I think that if I were truly asked to list it out, I think I'd do a pretty horrible job of it, but I do think that we are doing that in more of an informal way. |
| SL-A          | Planned multicultural artwork not implemented  
So, I asked for a mural to be painted, but it hasn’t been done yet, so I don’t have that on the physical plant. |
| SL-C          | Leader presents multicultural literature  
I think I’m going to take that kind of on a more personal level. An interest of mine has always been multicultural literature, and so I’ve been a collector of just simple books with people of color, people of different cultures, urban environments —just not your traditional literature presented to students. |
| SL-P          | Acknowledge that American (U.S.) values promote diversity  
I think that with this— and this is my view is that we also need to, you know that we acknowledge, but we also have to acknowledge the values of America as well within the building, and to know that under our system, you know, we offer the opportunity for everybody to be culturally represented, which I think is a great thing. |
about portraying cultural diversity, contending that there needed to be acknowledgment of American (U.S.) values as well as those of other cultures. Table 39 provides a sample of school leaders’ perspectives on needs and plans for portrayal of cultural diversity at the school. Responses suggested that while most of the school leaders supported the intention of representing cultural diversity in the environment and curriculum, institutionalization of these intents was substantially absent.

Focusing specifically on raising the visibility of cultural diversity in the school’s physical environment, its library, and at school events, and on deploying visibility as a platform for promoting cultural understanding, a similar disconnect occurred. On the questionnaire, 13 of the 16 (81.25%) gave self-evaluative responses that scored on the transformation for equity end of the CPC2 model: 9 responses (56.25%) fell into the precompetence/competence category, and 4 (25%) into the proficiency category. Only 3 participants (18.75%) self-evaluated in ways that placed them on the tolerance for diversity end of the continuum, representing incapacity/blindness or destructiveness.

But in follow-up interviews, responses were more varied. Although nearly all participants (15, or 93.75%) pointed to what they initially deemed plans for increasing cultural visibility of minorities, 4 (25%) allowed that such planning was still in the discussion phase; and nearly one-third of the sample (5 of 16, or 30%) also said they were unaware of specific plans in this arena. The next section unpacks results reflecting these three orientations; Figure 32 summarizes them.
Figure 32. School leaders’ responses: plans for portraying cultural diversity.

**Plans for increased visibility.** Four study participants (25%) pointed to visual representations of culture as a means for raising visibility of the school’s diverse population; another 4 (25%) looked to technology as a tool. Perhaps reflecting this idea, 2 responses (12.5%) saw better communication as an avenue for conveying multicultural visibility, while another 2 (12.5%) saw arts and music as a promising vehicle. Just 2 participants (12.5%) pointed to school events, as a site for demonstrating visibility, and one of these viewed the cultural diversity of sports teams as falling into this category. Table 40 provides a sample of these responses.

It is evident from the responses that the measures these school leaders pointed to as plans were speculative rather than in process. Moreover, the only performative (vs. merely visual) endeavor mentioned consisted of “maybe” conducting school tours in Spanish. SL-P seemed unaware that diversity on sports teams needed to be balanced with representations of multicultural academic engagement, if the school—which exists as a primarily academic institution—wished to show genuine appreciation for its FLNE population.
Table 40

*Interview Responses: Plans for Portraying Diversity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-I          | Flags as visual reminder  
*Again, with the flags for the countries.* |
| SL-A          | Use art to welcome diverse cultures  
*Incorporate a mural somewhere in the building that says, “Welcome” in many languages.* |
| SL-F          | Technology to educate about diverse cultures  
*But with the technology we have in this building, we should be doing more out in those hallways to educate the entire population of what our students’ population is.* |
| SL-B          | Offer school tours in Spanish  
*Open House: we’re working more to—you know, it started out great, just because we had the—the grades 5 to 8 Open House, but I think the goal is: the part of it that we do want to work on is maybe having like an area that’s more geared towards the—the Spanish-speaking population for the most part and kind of like welcome them and make them a little more comfortable. Maybe having, like the tours that would be in Spanish for those families.* |
| SL-P          | Athletics demonstrate diverse population  
*Our athletic team, that one way to bring everybody together culturally, our track team. We have, you know, great representation across the board from all different cultures, backgrounds, and I think the best part about those is that it provides visibility; it’s representation of our community.* |

**Discussions about raising cultural visibility and responsiveness.** Four school leaders (25% of the sample) pointed to ongoing discussions about how to demonstrate cultural visibility and responsiveness. Of these, 2 (12.5%) mentioned a need for outreach measures that would strengthen connection with FLNE families; and 2 (12.5%) referred to collaboration with a local university for administrative professional development that would support planning in this area. Table 41 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding discussions about making diverse cultures more visible.
These responses indicated appreciation that cultural visibility included not only visual recognition of families in the broad range of FLNE cultures in the school population but also measures that would actively welcome them. At the same time, reference to “flock[ing] to people that they feel comfortable with” recalls an issue that Tatum’s research explored (with respect to race) nearly 20 years ago (1997/2017). Consultation around strategy and “district and school plans” for “inviting parents in” showed, as SL-C suggested, “a great beginning,” though it raised questions about the extent to which district rubrics would translate to local measures.

**Unawareness of plans for increasing cultural visibility.** Perhaps the strongest indication that the school’s efforts on cultural visibility were lagging was acknowledgement by 5 study participants (31.25%) that they were unaware of specific future endeavors (plans) in this regard. Table 42 provides a sample of these comments.
Table 42

*Interview Responses Unawareness of Plans to Increase Cultural Visibility*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Respons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-D          | Don’t know about plans  
*I don’t believe there’s—I don’t know, if there are plans: I don’t know of them, and there’s a whole bunch of plans I don’t know of yet. I will be very honest about that. But I—but—and—but these are important questions to put in front of administration.*” |
| SL-L          | No plans yet  
*I’m not as sure of any specific plans. That this is definitely something that we would want to address, but it hasn’t been yet.” |
| SL-M          | Current practices attempt welcome; no plans for more  
*There are no, like, there’s no specific, you know, game plan that we have in place, other than doing all the things that we know to do to help parents feel welcome, to be informed.* |

The hesitancy evident in these remarks illustrated participants’ discomfiture about what they implied was a lack of planning for raising cultural visibility in the school. In other words, they recognized that their lack of awareness about planning in this area betrayed the extent to which institutionalization of equity in this area was not a top priority at the school.

Overall, then, results from interviews of the school leader study participants belied their self-assessments on the questionnaire. Probes about institutionalizing diversity in the curriculum elicited responses skewed toward visual representations of culture rather than integrated academic content; and even these representations were addressed on superficial level, as shown by the apparent lack of specific, implemented endeavors to represent the academic engagement of minority students and their families in the school community. Clearly, despite their initial claims that they were operating in ways that reflected *transformation for equity*, further exploration indicated that their behavior, in contrast, showed only *tolerance for diversity*. 
Next, the salient academic component of leadership for institutionalizing cultural responsiveness in assessment is discussed.

**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Assessment.**

In this research study, leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge as related to assessment were operationalized based on current literature, as ensuring the implementation of Common Core grade-level standards in academics by requiring culturally responsive practices. Questionnaire item 11 asked participants to evaluate their performance of these practices. Interview question 5 probed their awareness of how the needs of EL students differ from those of native speakers of English. See Figure 33.

![Figure 33. Questionnaire item and interview question: leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge in assessment.](image)

Results from questionnaire and interview responses followed a familiar pattern: self-assessments of cultural competence, which were contradicted when probed in interviews. On the questionnaire, 15 of 16 respondents (93.75) claimed behaviors that indicated *transformation for equity*—12 (75%) at the precompetence/competence level, and 3 (18.75%) at proficiency. Only 1 (6.25%) responded in a way that fell on the *tolerance for diversity* side of the CPC2 model. See Table 43.
Table 43

Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge About Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Assessment (N=16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure implementation of Common Core and require culturally responsive practices</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview responses varied considerably, but most framed the needs of students learning English (ELs) in terms of these students’ deficits. For the most part, the school leaders’ comments addressed ELs’ need to attain fluency in English; only a few, however, detailed existing or needed strategies for supporting language development. Figure 34 depicts some of the points made during the interviews; Table 44 provides a view of participants’ comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leaders’ Perceptions About Instructional Needs of ELs that Differ from those of English-Speaking Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ELs learn differently 3 (18.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning English 3 (18.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Word meanings 2 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ELs have multiple needs 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation of materials 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cotaught classrooms 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading at grade level 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language objectives 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity in educational exposure 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not having L1 proficiency 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passing the MCAS 1 (6.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 34. School leaders’ responses: knowledge of ELs’ instructional needs.
**Interview Responses: Instructional Needs of English Leaners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-I          | EL students require a different instructional approach  
*The instructional need of our students is that they learn just a little bit differently. It’s not that they can’t learn it; the approach has to be different. There has to be more strategies that are incorporated instead of just, “Here’s a problem, this is how you do it and go on.”* |
| SL-L          | ELs are capable, but handicapped by language deficit  
*So, I think Latino, Asian, whatever—whoever the student is in front of you, they’re capable of doing it. I think the difference is, the difficulty is they’re being handicapped by we’re doing it in a language that they’re not proficient in. So, it’s not that these kids aren’t capable of it, it’s what we’re doing it—it’s like tying a kid’s arm and then going, “Okay, swim.”* |
| SL-O          | ELs are capable in the arts  
*They seem to be able to—whether it’s playing an instrument or taking a painting class or whatever. They can learn—diverse learners learn what we’re giving them, and language doesn’t seem to be a problem.* |
| SL-G          | English proficiency must come first  
*So, the instructional needs that I’m aware of—I mean, obviously it’s—it’s a need with regards to being able to learn the English language and they’re immersed in this culture and I think that there are huge benefits to that, but until things are equalized, and until ELL students are able to access the language here, they’re not able to capitalize on their bilingual status.* |
| SL-K          | Academic content is difficult for ELs  
*In terms of the instructional needs: I think certainly the content itself: science is my discipline: it’s very, very language rich or dependent content area. In order to understand subjects like biology or subjects like anatomy: it’s difficult for all our students, not just, but definitely our, you know, our language learners.* |
| SL-P          | ELs become confused by nuances of meaning in English  
*I think the instructional needs that I’ve become aware if, that I’m not yet comfortable with myself are, are breaking down—breaking down the language for students who really struggle with understanding the double meanings or using a word one way in one class and then seeing it, you know, posed differently in another class.* |
| SL-H          | Complexity of English vocabulary makes learning difficult  
*Being aware of the possibility that words have multiple meanings and multiple contexts, and that some areas that we might take for granted that kids are familiar with might not be the same for students that are not native to our country or are non-English speakers.” (word meanings)* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking steps with word walls and making relationships. Take the nuts and bolts from the Common Core and take the verbiage, and then educate students of what that is, because it’s so different culturally for them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SL-C | Special education approaches and co-teaching help ELs  
As a former Special Ed teacher, I find that a lot of the strategies we use for Special Education students in terms of language acquisition work very well with the second language learners. Realia, word walls, visuals—a lot of those things worked so well in a co-taught environment. |
| (SL-H) | Multiple approaches and requiring oral performance improve fluency  
Presenting material in variety of ways; visually, auditorily, giving students the opportunity to speak on a daily basis, with partners or in front of the class.” (presentation of materials) |
| SL-A | Co-taught classes address ELs’ needs  
Coteaching component is a big—plays a big role. |
| SL-A | Reading enhancement is important for ELs  
Specific instructional support, we want to make sure that they can read at grade level. So, a reading enhancement class is in place to—support students to make sure that they can actually access the content. |
| SL-A | Persistently introduce language objectives  
Support students with our language objectives each period. Provide learning opportunities for students to learn the—the language objectives for each content area. |
| SL-J | Language objectives are topic of professional development  
At the high school there is a major initiative this year to incorporate language objectives across all disciplines, and we’ve had at least three days of professional development on that, and we’ll be having more on that.” (language objectives) |
| SL-P | Language objectives are desirable  
So, when it comes to instructional needs, I probably would speak to building the fundamentals of learning English with our ELL students by having some language objectives and some other—you know, strategies that we could teach our staff. |
| SL-M | Many ELs’ academic background is inadequate  
The majority of our students are Spanish speakers that are coming from the Dominican Republic that have not had the exposure to an equitable—equitably rigorous standards-based education. They’re coming to us, typically overaged, and they might have the credits, but they have not had the same educational background as their English-speaking peers. |
| SL-N | ELs lack proficiency in their native language(s), as well as in English  
You know, they’re mildly proficient in both languages, but they’re not overly proficient in that, you know, they don’t have a strength either way or a weakness either way. It’s kind of middle of the road.” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Respons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-D          | Linguistic code-switching requires difficult work for ELs  
*Well the one thing I think about, and that I have read— it’s the work that happens in a student when they’re going from English to Spanish and native tongue to whatever language: that they do inside, the science behind it—you know, that they kind of have to do to interpret the kind of— of bilingual conversation and understand it.* |
| SL-B          | ELs primary need is to increase graduation-test performance  
*Yeah, the only thing that’s really popping into my head is MCAS. I mean, obviously, regardless of if you’re a, you know native speaker or a second language learner all of these kids have to pass the MCAS so I think, you know, just to kind of answer that question, I mean those needs that those kids have is that they need to get up to par with—with everybody else.” (passing the MCAS)* |

*Note. LI = first language learned.*

School leaders’ own words seem to further support that they are functioning on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model with regard to the instructional needs of English Learners, in that they primarily drew attention to what they saw as significant learning obstacles that students not fluent in English confronted. On the other hand, some study participants showed understanding that the peculiarities of English (multiple word meanings in different contexts), when compared with some other languages, contributed to ELs’ learning challenges.

School leaders were also asked about what research informed their leadership policy regarding the language learning and academic achievement of English Learners. Only 11 of the 16 participants (68.75%) responded. Figure 36 depicts the components of these responses.

Study participants who responded to questions about the basis of their academic leadership policy with respect to EL students were almost equally divided between saying they relied on state-issued information (5 of 11 participants, 31.25% of the full sample) and saying
they did their own research (also 5, or 31.25%). Interestingly, unlike the 5 participants who offered no response, 1 who did said he didn’t really know what resources informed his individual practices. Table 45 gives a sample of these responses.

Overall, although the school leaders self-assessed their behavior in ways that scored as \textit{transformation for equity} on the CPC2 model, results from interviews indicated the contrary: \textit{tolerance for diversity} was the dominant form of practice regarding compliance with Common Core standards regarding education for English learners at this school.

Rounding out the analysis of school leaders’ institutionalization of culturally responsive practices, the next section discusses results in this area concerning parent communication and community outreach.
Table 45

*Interview Responses: Basis for EL Leadership Policy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-G</td>
<td>Personal research. <em>Research I’ve conducted about community and about the impact of transition on students, the impact of bilingual status on the students, students who are ELL and whether or not they’re able to immerse themselves in the culture and feel as though they are part of this culture.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-E</td>
<td>State Dept. of Education. <em>Minor readings probably from Marshall Memo and RETELL.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-H</td>
<td>State Dept. of Education. <em>RETELL.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-N</td>
<td>School district professional networks. <em>I think we do a good job in the district of sharing the information. MCAS scores and actual grades within classes.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-B</td>
<td><em>I don’t know.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. “The RETELL initiative (Rethinking Equity in the Teaching of English Language Learners) represents a commitment to address the persistent gap in academic proficiency experienced by ELL students. At the heart of this initiative are training and licensure requirements for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement, which core academic teachers of ELLs and principals/assistant principals and supervisors/directors who supervise or evaluate such teachers must obtain.” (http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/)*

**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Parent Communication and Community Outreach**

In this research study, leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge related to parent communication and community outreach, as required by ESSA, were operationalized in two dimensions: provision of interpreters by the school or district to support communication with and engagement of EL students’ families; and provision of additional meetings times or locations to accommodate families whose schedules prohibit their participation in ordinary practices (questionnaire items 10 and 12). Follow-up interview questions 9 and 6, respectively, addressed qualitative dimensions of these endeavors: how staff and families were supported in conducting parent-teacher interactions; and more broadly, how
participants encouraged partnerships between the school and EL students’ families. Figure 36 depicts this operationalization.

![Figure 36. Questionnaire items and interview questions regarding leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge in the areas of parent communication and community outreach.](image)

When school leaders were initially queried (questionnaire item 10) about whether the school or district provided interpreters for EL students’ families to help engage them in school events or communicate in meetings with teachers, they all (100%) evaluated themselves as culturally responsive, giving responses that reflected precompetence/competence (13, or 81.25%) or proficiency (3, or 18.75%). Table 45 summarizes these results. Responses to questionnaire item 12, regarding accommodations of time and place for school/parent meetings, were more varied. Only 6 participants self-evaluated in ways that reflected transformation for equity: 5 (31.25%) at the precompetence/competence level, and 1 (6.25%) at proficiency. The majority of responses (9, or 56.25%) reflected incapacity/blindness, and 1 (6.25%) fell into the
destructiveness category. These 10 responses represented *tolerance for diversity*. Table 46 summarizes these results.

Table 46

*Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge About Parent Communication and Community Outreach*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge – Parent Communication &amp; Community Outreach (N=16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/district provides interpreters for families of ELs to communicate and participate in school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/District provides alternative meeting times and locations</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>9 (56.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Provision of translation services to families.** When asked in interviews for specifics about how the school provides translation for families who do not speak English, participants’ responses were less unanimous than on the questionnaire: they articulated rather tepid assessments of current translation practices (50%), or various challenges presented by the need to communicate with families not fluent in English (50%); in addition 37.5% volunteered their perspectives on the need to provide translation practices. Figure 37 illustrates the variety of responses.
It is evident that, to some extent, these categories of response are not mutually exclusive; but they reflect three strands of thinking about what the school leaders perceived as a complex issue.

**Current practices regarding language support for families not English-fluent.** Four school leaders (25% of the full sample of 16) said that when parent meetings or conferences were conducted in Spanish, they felt that there was adequate support for those present; and 1 (6.25%) said efforts were always made to find a translator for staff and family meetings. One participant (6.25%) said he routinely contact the Central Office to find translators for these occasions, and another (6.25%)—perhaps aspirationally—reported that using staff members who were bilingual in English and French was a way to support staff and families at parent meetings/conferences. Finally, one respondent (6.25%) emphasized that any language-support measures required lead time to arrange. Table 47 provides a sample of these responses.
Table 47

*Interview Responses: Current Practices for Parental Language Support*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL-P</td>
<td>Support for Spanish-speakers is best the school can provide. <em>I can say that the only thing that I’m confident that we do is for Spanish-speaking only families, we make sure to have translated versions of documents and encourage them to the best of our ability to reach out if they need more help.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-H</td>
<td>Translation requires advance arrangements. <em>So, this would be a situation where we’d have to preplan for this, so I think that the staff—well the faculty and administration are fairly resourceful and eager to help in a situation like this, but we would have to have prior knowledge and be able to get a translator and figure out kind of the more particular workings or agenda for the meetings.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-J</td>
<td>French translation (from bilingual staff member) serves Arabic-speakers. <em>I know we have a significant Arabic or Arab population, and most understand French, because a great deal of them come from Lebanon and have been taught French, so the French serves them.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-C</td>
<td>Appeal to Central Office. <em>Call Giana</em>. [staff member at Central Office Language Acquisition Department]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-B</td>
<td>Try our best. <em>As far as—parent conferences or parent meetings we just always try to have someone—obviously I want to make sure someone’s in place that speaks both, that can translate.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These responses represent what school leaders depicted as best efforts to support translation for parents who needed it at school meetings or conferences. Evident holes in the fabric of this coverage are omission of reference to the full complement of languages spoken by families in the school community; and likely unavailability of such support for impromptu communication with teachers.

*Challenges to provision of language support for families.* Several school leaders drew attention to these shortcomings of service. Three (18.75% of the full sample) made general statements of the need for improvement in the availability of translation; and 2 (12.5%)...
identified communication struggles with families who did not speak English or Spanish. Two others pointed to a dearth of resources: 1 (6.25%) saw relying on students for translation as challenging; and another (6.25%) indicated that the limited number of translators on staff created challenges when supporting staff and families. A single school leader (6.25%) professed not to know how he supported families not fluent in English. See Table 48 for a sample of these responses.

Table 48

*Interview Responses: Language Support Challenges*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-L          | Improvements needed, but unsure of current needs or resources  
*I don’t know that we actually do that right yet, so again that’s something that we’re going to need to look into as far as what languages there are: how can we communicate? I know that there are technology tools for translation for teachers available to them. I’m not quite sure how often that’s used or if it’s necessary or not.* |
| SL-P          | Support inadequate for languages other than Spanish  
*I do believe it’s a weakness in the sense that we focus on two languages in the High School; our main language of English and our—what I know to be Spanish.* |
| SL-E          | Adequate but not ideal for students to translate  
*I know often when we have parent conferences and parents know that they’re going to need assistance, they bring their student, and that’s the only way I see them sort of navigate those waters. Is it effective? Enough, yes, but not—it’s not the best.* |
| SL-G          | Number of available translators is limited  
*Primarily, we’re relying on translators. And we have a limited number of translators, so I don’t think that we’re at 100%.* |
| SL-D          | Unaware of support practices  
*Again, this is one of those that—I do, I don’t—I can’t say for sure how I specifically support.* |

**Perspectives on the need to provide translation.** Six study participants (37.5%) volunteered personal perspectives on needs or goals for better language support for families who
were not English-speakers. Some of these responses took the form of implied or expressed complaints about the families. Two (12.5%) wished that families would bring their own interpreter; 1 (6.25%) implied that leaders did not always receive the advance notice required to provide translation. Another (6.25%) said translation was provided, but that families of EL

Table 49

*Interview Responses: Needs or Goals for Parental Language Support*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| SL-B          | Wants families to bring own translator  
*So, I want to make sure there’s always a family member in there that, you know, is trusted by—on both ends, because, you know, I—for me—I want to make sure that the proper information is getting relayed to the families that I’m seeing and they’re not kind of skewing it a little bit. Not to say it has happened, but it could happen.* |
| SL-M          | We don’t always get advance notice of need  
*Our low-incidence speakers: those families, they—we support them. It needs to be brought to our attention, which it’s not always brought to our attention, but we do have a list of interpreters that we keep on our staff and we call when needed.* |
| SL-F          | Impossible to serve all, but need more bilingual staff  
*We have to do a better job of—and of course, you’re not going to have somebody that’s going to be able to speak all 19 languages, but we need to have somebody that’s able to speak more than one of them.* |
| SL-O          | Translation provided, but families don’t always attend meetings  
*Same, same way. Interestingly enough, they don’t always come. So, it’s not a problem. If we need to contact them, which very often we do, just to clear up any little issue, we do it the same way the school does generally, which is we use translators, we use—you know, those kinds of things.” (families do not come)* |
| SL-P          | Full complement of translation services is cost-prohibitive  
*I think when you dive into 19 different languages, we’re not going to be able to—It’s very hard to maybe accommodate 19 different languages. I think that probably is a little unrealistic to have that available, and it’s probably cost prohibitive. That’s a big piece.* |
students did not always show up for meetings. Finally, two participants said it was probably impossible to provide translation for all languages spoken in the school community. One of these (6.25%) added that the school could do a better job of hiring bilingual staff, while the other (6.25%) said that accommodating all languages would be cost-prohibitive. Table 49 provides a sample of these responses.

**Developing partnerships with families of FLNE students.** Like provision of translation services, developing partnerships with all families—in particular, those who represent linguistic or cultural minorities—is required by NCLB and ESSA. Measures that create partnerships include outreach to increase families’ engagement (recruiting families); and provision of alternatives to standard timing and location of school meetings or parent/teacher conference. Both types of partnership can serve not only families that lack English fluency, but also any family prohibited by work schedules or access to transportation from vital forms of communication with their children’s school.

In the follow-up interviews, school leaders were asked about how they fulfilled requirements set forth by the NCLB Act and then the ESSA that schools develop partnerships or relationships with all families, and specifically families of English Language Learners. Specifically, study participants were asked what they had done or planned to do in this regard, as well as how frequently they recruited families of ELs to be members of school groups or provided alternative times and places for school meetings or conferences. Responses are discussed as follows: (a) current partnership practices, (b) partnership plans (c) recruitment for family engagement, and (d) alternative meetings. Figure 38 illustrates a breakdown of these categories.
**Current Partnership Practices**

- Communicating information- (5)
- Open House events- (3)
- Bilingual events- (1)
- Standard practices for all school families (1)
- School district Community Center- (1)
- Reliance on community reciprocity (1)

**Partnership Plans**

- Digital signage or other technological aids (3)
- Not much success to date (3)
- Few efforts in place (2)
- Encouraging families to visit the school (1)
- More effort needed (1)

**Recruitment**

- Could do better (2)
- Difficult to recruit (2)
- Community Center a site for recruitment (1)

**Alternative Meetings**

- Offer less rigid times (2)
- Open House- (1)
- Efforts made (1)

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**Figure 38.** School leaders’ responses: partnerships with families not fluent in English.

**Current partnership practices.** Most of the school leaders (12 of 16, or 75%) provided interview responses that described current practices aimed a creating partnerships with families of English Learners. Of these, 5 (31.25% of the full sample) stated that communicating school information in English and Spanish had been a means to building partnerships with families of ELs. Three participants (18.75%) mentioned multiple open house events designed to build family partnerships with all families in the school community. Finally, among 4 participants, each (6.25%) pointed to a single partnership strategy: (a) bilingual events; (b) similar outreach to all families; (c) access to the district community center; and (d) reliance on the community’s responsibility to engage. Table 50 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding current practices for creating partnerships with families of EL students.
Table 50

*Interview Responses: Current Partnership Practices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-A          | All communications sent in English and Spanish  
*We do all our communication in English and Spanish to ensure that all parties are able to access the information that’s available.* |
| SL-K          | Open house events invite all school families to partnership  
*I think we reach out. We do our Annual Open House in September, we talk about expectations. All families are invited, but we stress, and certainly encourage the ELL families to come in, to meet the teacher, talk about the course, what it entails, and the expectations.* |
| SL-G          | Bilingual events  
*We hold events that are held in different languages at different times. One example is the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority Financial Aid night. So, we hold that in English and Spanish* |
| SL-O          | Outreach is the same toward all families  
*We do not do anything separate. We have a lot of outreach to all students. The art teachers communicate with parents regularly. In music, we have parent organizations, so we’re communicating with them all the time. I’ve got two Hispanic parents on the Rampart Band Parents Association.* |
| SL-B          | District office functions as a community center  
*I would think our biggest partnership as far as that population; we’re probably connected with Minda Boucey down at the District, the District neighborhood which she has down there.* |
| SL-P          | Community must reciprocate our efforts  
*We’ll reach out just as much. We need the community to reach back, and — and that’s important. We can’t knock on doors, door to door; it’s not really what our responsibility. Our responsibility is to offer the opportunity, and we’ve done that.* |

These responses indicate that some school leaders viewed partnership with parents as a goal for all families, but not one that would require additional efforts toward the families of EL students. Others pointed to partial measures, such as translation of documents only into Spanish (note that results discussed earlier indicated that not all documents were translated); occasional meetings conducted for Spanish-speakers; or functions that took place outside the school, at the district office. Some responses also implied that school leaders’ efforts at creating parent partnerships...
went unreciprocated, perhaps suggesting that leaders had not identified more successful means, perhaps reflecting some sense of futility that discouraged additional outreach.

*Partnership plans—or their absence.* Of the 10 school leaders who addressed future efforts to partner with families of EL students (62.5%), 3 (18.75%) suggested that technology could provide answers in the form of digital signage that could show instant translations. Two participants (12.5%) focused on the importance of persistence, one by indicating that communication struggles were natural, the other by proposing that greater efforts were in order. However, 2 other participants (12.5%) said that to their knowledge there were few, if any, events held specifically for families of EL students. An additional 3 (18.75%) allowed that past efforts to create partnerships with ELs’ families had been unsuccessful, but said that outreach would continue. Table 50 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding presence or absence of plans for building partnerships with families of EL students.

The responses indicate that school leaders sincerely and persistently wished to operate in partnership with the families of EL students, but had experienced lack of response, little participation from staff, and hopes pinned to the increasing capability of digital translation. At the same time, some were discouraged by the lack of success, though they intended to keep trying to engage families, while accepting the difficulty of the task.

*Recruitment of ELs’ families into partnership with school personnel.* Several other school leaders (5, or 31.25% of the full sample) frankly addressed challenges associated with trying to recruit EL students’ families into partnership with teachers and other school personnel. Two (12.5%) pointed to EL families’ reticence and experiences of miscommunication as barriers; and 2 more (12.5%) said it was difficult to get these families involved. One (6.25%) mentioned recruitment efforts by offsite district personnel. Table 52 provides a sample of these
responses. The responses reflected school leaders’ frustration with the difficulty of engaging parents who were not English-fluent in partnership with school personnel, whose past efforts had been met with lack of response. Given inherent limits in time and resources, it was not surprising that one study participant felt a need to “punt” responsibility for outreach to the district office (with which some families may have been familiar).

Table 51

*Interview Responses: Plans (or Lack Thereof) for Family Partnerships*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| SL-A          | Digital signage plan  
*There is a plan to continue to communicate through our digital signage with— in English and Spanish.* |
| SL-F          | Lacking success, more effort needed  
*I think that we’ve tried. I don’t think that we’ve been very successful, and I think just like everybody else, when you first make that initial try, you fall back on, ‘Well, we tried, and nobody’— think that you have to try more often.* |
| SL-J          | Only bilingual invitations are offered by teachers of Spanish  
*I can’t think of a specific time where we have invited just ELL language learners in my department; unless it’s the parents who come to Parents’ Night for the courses that are taught to the Spanish speakers. My teachers who teach those courses and/or Spanish courses very often provide—provide information about those courses in Spanish to the Spanish—to Spanish families.* |
| SL-D          | Accept that families may struggle with language  
*Now, indirectly working with families, it’s just about getting them in here, and letting them know that: listen, even I may— you’re struggling speaking to me, but I’m, I don’t, it’s not that I don’t mind it, it’s okay. You can— I want you to be able to communicate the best way you know how to communicate.* |
| SL-C          | Further investigation is indicated  
*That is definitely a topic that we absolutely have to explore a little bit deeper.* |
Table 52

*Interview Responses: Recruitment for Partnership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-L          | Reticence and miscommunication  
  *It’s really hard to find a way to involve these parents: kind of going back to the cultural responsiveness. They may be reticent about contacting us, we don’t know how to approach them, and I think there’s a lot of miscommunication going on, and we can do better.* |
| SL-E          | Difficult for families to make commitments  
  *We have reached out to families, but often it’s tough for them to make the commitment, so we’ve got to keep working at it.* |
| SL-A          | Rely on outreach from district office  
  *Another specific area that we look for outreach is through the District with Minda Boucey.* |

*Alternative Meeting Times and Locations.* Just 25% (four of 16) of the school leaders provided responses indicating that alternative meeting locations and times were being provided, or not provided, for families of English Learners. Of this 25% (four of 16), 12.5% (two of 16) indicated that the school and school events should be open longer and with less rigid times to make it easier for families to attend. Of the 25% (four of 16) group, the following two statements were made, each only once: weekend open house and efforts made. See Table 53 for a sample of school leaders’ responses related to arranging alternative meetings for partnerships. Again, leaders reported efforts to accommodate the time (or potentially, spatial) needs of families in their school community. They acknowledged the difficulty of bringing flexibility to entrenched practices. But they believed that they were trying, and they reported experiencing small measures of success.
Table 53

*Interview Responses: Alternative Meeting Arrangements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-E          | Considering alternatives to the traditional, rigid open-house approach  
*I don’t know that we’ve provided a lot of alternative meeting times for all families. I think we’re stuck in our old kind of rigidity of the Open House model. I think it was nice that we looked at doing a Saturday and more of a literally open house from [X] hours to, you know [Y], as opposed to ‘it starts at 6:00 and ends at a given time.’*  
(more efforts needed) |
| SL-P          | We’ve done a nice job  
*As far as flexibility of providing alternate meeting times for families, I think our school has done a nice job, whether it’s providing Open House opportunities, even we’ve done a weekend day for an Open House. Our program was part of that, of course, to reach out and be there.* |
| SL-G          | Try to individualize meeting times and places  
*We try to tailor the individual meetings to the families.* |

**Assessing openness to partnership with EL parents.** Overall, the data on engaging with families who are not English-fluent by providing translation services was discouragingly limited. Several school leaders appeared to lack sufficient understanding of, or commitment to overcoming, the barriers posed by limited availability of on-call translation services that would cover all languages spoken at the school. But primarily, they were frustrated: they saw their (meager) efforts dissipate in the face of limited financial and human resources, unrequited outreach, in addition to the difficulty of determining whether families’ struggles to comprehend an unfamiliar language had been successful. They conceived of themselves as operating at the *transformation for equity* end of the CPC2 when it came to linguistic communication, but their actions fell on the side of *tolerance for diversity*.

With respect to accommodations of time and locations designed to create partnerships with the families of EL students, school leaders were less magnanimous in their self-
assessments, and more ready to acknowledge their own (and school families’) shortcomings. In most schools, both time and space are at a premium; at this school, the same was true, as follow-up interviews confirmed, despite some leaders’ willingness to offer a degree of flexibility. Nevertheless, responses to both the relevant questionnaire item and the follow-up interview indicated that study participants’ attitudes and behaviors with respect to developing relations of partnership with the families of EL students—and, indeed, any parents who required language, space, or time accommodations—fell on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model.

With respect to all elements of Research Question 2, there were strong discrepancies between the self-reporting of school leaders on the questionnaires and the data collected during follow-up interviews. Study participants consistently rated themselves (on the questionnaire items) as more culturally proficient than their attitudes and behaviors indicated.

**Summary of Findings for Research Question 2**

Research question 2 asked: How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with English Learners and their families? This question addressed the heart of leadership at a multicultural school: introducing and sustaining administrative practical measures to welcome, highlight, and sustain the richness that a diversity of students and their families can contribute to the linguistic, cultural, and academic vigor of the school community. Findings reveal unfortunate shortcomings in the leaders’ proficiency in fulfilling the mandates of NCLB and ESSA in this respect.

**Finding 2.1** Validation and capitalization of the Spanish language was not occurring at this school. The school leaders had not yet found ways to validate and capitalize on the Spanish language, brought to the school by students who are English Learners and their families.
**Finding 2.2** School leaders were not yet operating with cultural proficiency. Leaders at this high school were operating with tolerance for diversity (cultural destructiveness or incapacity/blindness), rather than with cultural precompetence/competence or proficiency characteristic of the transformation for equity side of the CPC2 model (adapted by this research from Lindsey et al., 2013), as evidenced by discrepancies between their self-assessments of cultural competence and their responses to interview questions about specific implementations.

**Finding 2.3** Educational inequity that EL students and their families experience are not being addressed. The majority of the school leaders acknowledged that there has been continued educational inequity for ELs, and they also reported that they do not yet have a plan to address this inequity.

**Finding 2.4** Communication in a language understood by families of ELs was not ensured. School leaders were not universally ensuring that their staff (including teachers, counselors, secretaries, or others) communicated with the families of ELs in a language they understand. This shortfall particularly affected those who spoke languages other than Spanish.

**Finding 2.5** There was effectively no representation of ELs and their families in the building environment or curricula. The school’s physical environment and its curricula showed extremely limited representation of English Learners’ and their families’ language and cultural backgrounds. For example, there was no signage in any language other than English, and apart from sheltered-immersion classrooms or courses in Spanish, French, or Italian, curricular content was presented only in English.

**Finding 2.6** School leaders were not aware of the instructional and communication needs of EL students and their families. Although all study participants reported having taken administrator training in implementing Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language
Learners (RETELL) and sheltered educational immersion (SEI) initiatives as required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as having earned SEI endorsement, the evidence indicated that this professional development has had little to no impact on their professional practices with EL students and their families. Evidence also showed that this professional development had not school leaders’ understanding of ELs’ instructional needs or the communication needs of their families.

**Finding 2.7 School leaders did not yet have partnerships, or plans to build partnerships, with families who were not fluent in English.** School leaders’ interview responses indicated that while they were taking measures to build partnerships with families across the board, they did not have plans that addressed the specific needs of families of English Learners, as required by ESSA.

The next section analyzes the data collected to better understand leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge, with a focus on professional development.

**Findings for Research Question 3**

*What professional development or preparation have leaders at this high school received in cultural proficiency to address the current needs of ELs and their families?*

To fully understand to what extent the school leaders at the research site had been provided professional development for addressing the school’s increasingly diverse student demographics, this study used two instruments for collecting data: *The Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* (see Appendix E), and the *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol* (see Appendix F). A qualitative comparison between data compiled using descriptive statistics to analyze participants’ questionnaire self-assessments and data from their individual responses during follow-up interviews highlighted discrepancies
between the two sources of data regarding the extent to which school leaders at the research site had participated in and implemented professional development designed to prepare themselves and their staff for addressing ongoing changes in the demographics of the school population.

**Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: Professional Development**

In this research study, leadership behaviors for institutionalizing cultural knowledge through professional development were defined in one dimension: providing professional development to help staff understand the characteristics and needs of English Learners and their families. In this section, data collected from the questionnaires and interviews as it pertains to this dimension is analyzed qualitatively. See Figure 39 and Table 54.

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**Questionnaire (16):** Provide professional development to staff to ensure their understanding of the characteristics of the diverse languages and specific cultures of ELs

**Interview (12):** School leaders’ own professional development to understand the diverse educational and emotional needs of ELs

**Interview (13):** Future plans for professional development to enhance and grow the cultural proficiency of their staff

---

When school leaders were queried about whether they provided professional development to help staff understand the characteristics and needs of English Learners, 6 (37.5% of the sample) self-evaluated in ways that suggested they were operating on the *tolerance for diversity* side of the CPC2 model, which encompasses destructiveness (1, or 6.25%) and
incapacity/blindness (5, or 31.25%). The majority, (10, or 62.5%), self-evaluated in ways that suggested they were operating on the *transformation for equity* side of the CPC2 model, which encompasses precompetence/ competence (9, or 56.25%) and proficiency (1, or 6.25%). Table 54 summarizes these results.

However, in their follow-up interviews, when school leaders were asked about (a) their own professional development related to the diverse EL population and about these students’ unique educational and emotional needs to attain grade-level achievement, and (b) the professional development they provided to their staff, again a mismatch with questionnaire data emerged. Responses are reported for school leaders’ own and their staff’s achieved professional development; and leaders’ perspectives on provision of professional development.

Table 54

*Questionnaire Results: Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge Training and Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Behaviors for Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge: (N=16)</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Destructiveness</td>
<td>Incapacity/Blindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide professional development to help staff understand ELs</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td>5 (31.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School leaders. All 16 school leader study participants (100%) provided responses to the interview question about what type of professional development they had undergone to help them understand the diverse English Learner population and their educational and emotional needs related to attaining grade-level achievement. The majority (10, or 62.5%) reported taking the state-required RETELL SEI administrator course, and said it had provided them with an understanding of the diverse academic and emotional needs of EL students. Two (12.5%) stated that their understanding of EL students’ academic and emotional needs had come from category courses (state-offered courses offered prior to the RETELL mandate). An additional 2 (12.5%) cited their graduate courses as a basis for such understand. However, 2 participants reported having undertaken no professional development in this area (1 or 6.25%) or having had no access to the RETELL course (1, or 6.25%). Table 55 provides a sample of the school leaders’ responses.
Table 55

*Interview Responses: School Leader Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SL-E          | RETELL training provided basic awareness and tools  
*The RETELL it sort of helped create some common language, some foundational, very basic instructional tools for people to use and created an awareness that's been nice.* |
| SL-C          | Accessed every opportunity  
*So, starting way back I have accessed every opportunity to be able to address a, you know, diverse population. I started, officially with the category courses that were offered by DESE [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education].* |
| SL-M          | Graduate-level coursework  
*My professional development will have its own story because I chose to get a Master’s Degree in English as a Second Language. And so, embedded into, you know, that 36 credits, are all culturally relevant. I mean, I think I took a whole course on culture.* |
| SL-F          | No professional development pending retirement  
*Myself: I haven’t been involved in too much of it, because when a lot of it came in, even the different course: Anybody that was retiring within that group, that year period didn’t have to. So, I did not take it.* |
| SL-O          | No access to RETELL  
*I do have I think two teachers in my department that have taken the whatever series of ELL course that were required for that—what’s the word I want? Endorsement. The new language does not require us to have—because again they’re keeping the core academic language, but all music teachers, all art teachers, any teachers will be required to have 15 professional development hours in ELL as they—another 15 of courses in Special Ed.* |

**Staff professional development.** Only 7 school leaders (43.75%) of the school leaders provided responses regarding what type of professional development had been provided to their staff to help them understand the educational and emotional needs of English Learners. Of these, 5 responses (31.25% of the full study sample) named in-house training about understanding and creating language objectives. The other responses named training to understand state mandates (1, or 6.25%) and the RETELL course (1, or 6.25%). Table 56 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses about staff professional development.
Table 56

*Interview Responses: Staff Professional Development to Understand EL Student’s Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (SL-I)        | In-house training  
*There hasn’t been a ton of professional development that has been specific to this school about ELL students, except for the fact that our departments have been working on language objectives in our class, and that’s done on the half-day professional days.* |
| (SL-J)        | Training to understand state mandates  
*I would say big emphasis on our professional development has been to understand the new teacher evaluation system, and to develop DDMs. [district-determined measures of student learning, growth, and achievement].* |
| (SL-N)        | RETELL training  
*Professional development for the staff. I’ve not personally seen anything, besides the teachers all having to take the RETELL.* |

**Professional development outcomes.** Of the school leaders interviewed, 4 (25%) provided responses regarding outcomes of provided professional development. Two (12.5% of the study sample) stated that the RETELL SEI administrator course provided a basic understanding of EL students and their learning needs. Two offered broader comments: professional development stimulated conversation (or 6.25%), and more development was needed (1, or 6.25%). Table 57 provides a sample of school leaders’ perspectives on professional development outcomes. The responses indicate that the school leaders who provided perspectives on the outcomes of professional development for understanding characteristics and needs of EL students found such training beneficial.
Table 57

*Interview Responses: Perspectives on Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (SL-B) Training provided basic understanding about learning and communication  
*The big part of it for me that kind of helped me wrap my brain around it was how we get information to kids, and especially, like how misconstrued, like words can be. So, like, I’m very careful, like, you know, try to be more—you know, as far as when I’m talking to a family: I don’t use lingo.* |
| (SL-E) Training stimulated conversation  
*Working on the language objectives has also got people thinking about language and how you’re teaching language and some good strategies have definitely come from that.* |
| (SL-P) More professional development is needed  
*Outcomes: I think we have a lot of work to do still. I think we still need more training, and it needs to be a priority to make sure that teachers are supported whenever they need it, as far as trying to meet the needs of our students.* |

School leaders were also asked about future plans for professional development that would enhance the cultural proficiency of their educational professionals. Their responses fell into two categories: (a) plans and (b) uncertainty or constraints. Figure 41 illustrates school leaders’ responses about future professional development.

**Plans for future professional development.** Of the school leaders interviewed, 10 (62.5%) provided responses that indicated plans for providing further professional development that would enhance the cultural proficiency of their educational professionals. Four (25% of the full study sample) stated that there would be a continuation of the in-house language objective trainings; 3 (18.75%) said that participation in the state-mandated RETELL SEI teacher course would continue, and for staff who had not yet taken it, would provide their professional development and enhance their cultural proficiency. Three participants mentioned other endeavors: department-based professional development (1, or 6.25%); curriculum revisions
(6.25%); and collaboration with a local university (6.25%). Table 58 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses regarding future plans for professional development at the school. The responses implied some leaders’ excitement about new or continuing initiatives in professional development.

**Uncertainty about future professional development.** Of the school leaders interviewed, 6 (37.5%) provided responses indicating uncertainty regarding plans for further professional development to enhance the cultural proficiency of their educational professionals. Three participants (18.75% of the full study sample) said they did not know what the future plans were for professional growth. Three others mentioned possible training provided by a district specialist (1, or 6.25%); constraints on time for development (6.25%); and potential action by a professional development committee (6.25%). Table 59 provides a sample of school leaders’ responses indicating uncertainty about future professional development to increase school personnel’s understanding of characteristics and needs of the school’s population of English Learners. The responses suggest that these school leaders felt uncertain about future professional development because they lacked power to implement it, given constraints on their autonomy and their staff’s professional development time.

![Figure 41. School leaders’ responses: future professional development.](image-url)
On the whole, evidence collected from interviews indicated that study participants may have been willing to operate in ways that would reflect \textit{transformation for equity} regarding provision of professional development to enhance understanding of EL students’ academic and emotional needs, but for various reasons felt unable to do so. As a result, analysis showed that these school leaders were operating on the \textit{tolerance for diversity} side of the CPC2 model.

Table 58

\textit{Interview Responses: Plans for Future Professional Development}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (SL-I)        | Continued in-house training  
\hspace{1em} I’m sure there will be more professional development—I don’t think this year, but hopefully next year with the ELL department to—again—still work on the language objectives. |
| (SL-B)        | RETELL training  
\hspace{1em} I think the RETELL one is—I think the state’s basically taken over the reins as far as, you know, as far as that plan. So, you know, maybe once that’s all said and done maybe they’ll look at something else down the road, but I guess RETELL would be my answer for that. |
| (SL-J)        | Department-based professional development  
\hspace{1em} We work a lot on strategies to teach language and culture. One of our initiatives this year has been to develop strategies to reach the 90% + standard usage of foreign language in the classroom. |
| (SL-H)        | Curriculum revisions  
\hspace{1em} In the grade 10 curriculum, development which is coming up: All the grade 10 English teachers and myself will be developing the Literature Course, in which we aspire to incorporate literature form several cultures, and I would like to start with a unit on I guess the frame of reference that we have and what we bring to work and how we interpret things, and also understanding that the perspectives of someone else is not different, and that there are links that can connect them, but that we’re all kind of coming from different spheres that contribute to our general understanding. |
| (SL-G)        | Collaboration with local university and the community  
\hspace{1em} I think that we will continue to work with University and try to increase community involvement and to try and enlist the community in, have the—ELL population more visible in the school and to have the staff members reach out to this population at a higher rate.” |
Table 59

*Interview Responses: Uncertainty About Future Professional Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Leader</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (SL-M)        | Uncertain whether plans exist and lacks implementation authority  
*I don’t think that there is any future plan laid out in stone. I also don’t drive the bigger picture professional development. I capitalize on the moments that are given to me and so then I try to make decisions about, you know, what came first, how do we attack that first.* |
| (SL-O)        | Possible support from a district specialist  
*Going forward, there is a plan for the district specialists to provide them with the necessary—in [town]—at least I’ve heard that from the Language Department. So, I’m kind of waiting to see the regulation really just this July 1, so we’re not—you know, under the gun, to—you know we have to slap something together real fast.* |
| (SL-P)        | Time constraints limit training opportunity  
*I know we address it often. It’s a matter of—I think it’s one thing that we lack: it’s time, and to get to everything is difficult; even at a Department level.* |
| (SL-L)        | Potential for action by professional development committee  
*For the professional development, we have a professional development committee, and they get input from across the district from teachers, administrators, and the committee meets and decides the planning for the subsequent year for the PD days.* |

**Summary of Findings for Research Question 3**

Research question 3 asked school leader study participants about their own professional development and that of their staff. Results showed the leaders’ beliefs that such training had, to date, been insufficient.

**Finding 3.1** *Professional development for addressing the needs of English Learners and their families had not been adequate for school leaders.* School leaders at this high school reported that they had taken the required MADESE RETELL course for administrators. As indicated in finding 2.6, however, data showed that policies and practices were not in place to meet the needs of ELs and their families; in other words, outcomes of such professional development were unsatisfactory. Furthermore, there was no evidence of district-wide or high
school-wide cultural proficiency professional development during the 3 years preceding this study.

**Summary**

Chapter IV presented the findings of this study that focused on cultural proficiency of school leaders at an urban high school in Massachusetts (findings are summarized in Figure 43). The chapter included a brief overview of the design of this study; findings were presented for each of the three research questions. Overall, analysis showed that school leaders’ behaviors and actions at this school largely fell on the *tolerance for diversity* side of the CPC2 model, meaning that school leaders were operating in ways that elevated the superiority of their own cultural values and beliefs while suppressing those of cultures different from their own; and that simultaneously, they behaved as if differences between cultures did not exist, or refused to recognize them (Lindsey et al., 2013). Chapter V provides discussion of the findings and recommended pathways for school leaders to follow to become more culturally proficient.

A summary of findings appears on the next page.
FINDING 1.1 The achievement gap of English Learners (Latinos and other language minorities) was not currently being addressed.

FINDING 1.2 The school’s physical environment was devoid of displays showing its linguistic and cultural diversity.

FINDING 1.3 Communication with all families was conducted primarily in English.

FINDING 1.4 Linguistic and cultural mismatch were evident between the school leaders and the families of the school community.

FINDING 2.1 The school was not validating or capitalizing on the presence of Spanish-speaking EL students.

FINDING 2.2 School leaders were not yet operating with Cultural Proficiency.

FINDING 2.3 School leaders were not yet addressing educational inequities of EL students.

FINDING 2.4 Communication in a language understood by families of ELs was not ensured.

FINDING 2.5 There was no representation of ELs and their families in the building or curricula.

FINDING 2.6 School leaders were not aware of the instructional needs of ELs.

FINDING 2.7 School leaders were not yet building partnerships with families of ELs.

FINDING 3.1 Professional development had not been adequate for school leaders in addressing the needs of English Learners.

Figure 42. Summary of findings for each research question.
Chapter V: Summary, Discussion, Future Research, and Final Reflections

This chapter discusses the data analyses and findings of this qualitative study of cultural proficiency among school leaders in an urban high school in Massachusetts. The discussion structured by the three research questions that framed this academic work. This chapter begins with an overview of preceding chapters, followed by discussion of findings, limitations and delimitations of the research. It concludes recommendations for actions to remedy deficits revealed by the study findings.

Overview of Preceding Chapters

This section provides an overview of the dissertation chapters. Chapter I introduced the study and the problem it defined; outlined the significance of the study; and offered a justification of the need for the study. Chapter I also presented the three research questions that guided the study and defined relevant terms. It set forth the study data collecting instruments, procedures, and approaches to data analysis. Finally, Chapter I described the role of the researcher and acknowledged delimitations and limitations of the study.

Chapter II reviewed relevant literature, which laid the theoretical foundation for this study’s focus on the cultural proficiency of school leaders. It was organized into two sections. The first described the increasing demographic diversity of the United States, Massachusetts, and the city in which the study was conducted; reviewed how recent literature has examined conditions that have shaped policies to increase educational equity for students from disparate linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and have developed expectations of school leaders around engaging and building partnerships with these students and and their families; and examined literature that defined the concept of cultural proficiency, with a focus the cultural proficiency continuum (CPC) developed by Lindsey, et al., (2013) and this researcher’s adaptation of it to
form the CPC2 model that served as a theoretical framework for this research. The second section of the literature review addressed the historical construct of parental involvement as it is understood by members of the White, European American culture in the United States; the obstacles faced by parents of immigrants attempting to enact involvement in their children’s schooling within this socially constructed context; and expectations about education and parental engagement seen among immigrant parents whose children attend public schools in the United States.

Chapter III presented the methodology used to study the cultural proficiency of school leaders at an urban high school in Massachusetts; and described the research setting and the study sample of 16 school leaders. The three types of data used for the study analysis—contextual, perceptual, and observational—were then described, as well as the research design, data collection methods, and procedures for data analysis and synthesis. Finally, Chapter III discussed ethical implications and issues of trustworthiness and confidentiality, along with limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter IV presented the qualitative findings of the study in response to the three research questions. Overall, analysis of the data indicated that school leader behaviors and actions at the research site were operating with tolerance for diversity as defined by the CPC2 model, meaning that their attitudes and actions elevated the superiority of their own cultural values and beliefs, while suppressing cultures different from their own by failing to recognize them and acting as though cultural differences did not exist (Lindsey et al., 2013).

The following sections of this chapter summarize the study; and discuss findings for the three research questions and the limitations and delimitations of the study; and present recommendations for future research, professional development, and professional practice.
Summary Review of the Study

This research on the cultural proficiency of school leaders at an urban high school was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what degree do school leaders in one urban high school address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners (ELs) and their families?

2. How are school leaders in one urban high school exhibiting culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with English Learners and their families?

3. What professional development or preparation have school leaders at this high school received in cultural proficiency to address the current needs of ELs and their families?

Research Context

The high school at which this research was conducted is located in a culturally and linguistically diverse community that has seen a substantial increase in residents who are immigrants in the past 10 years. These families were active and productive members of the community; many owned their homes and worked two, sometimes three, jobs to support their families and make ends meet. During the period of the study 433 families whose children attended the school spoke a language other than English at home. The preponderance spoke Spanish (Spanish-speaking families came principally from the Dominican Republic, but also from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Puerto); from 2005-2015, the school was an increase of 60% in enrollment of students for whom Spanish was a first language, to 323; but in 2016 there were also 110 students enrolled who spoke one of 18 languages other than English or Spanish.
Yet, as this study indicates, linguistic, cultural, educational, and communication practices at the school remained essentially unaltered.

**Theoretical Model**

The CPC2 theoretical framework for this study was adapted from the cultural proficiency continuum developed by Lindsey, et al. (2013). This model informed construction of questionnaire items and follow-up interview questions aligned with the five essential elements identified by these same authors as leverage points for change.

The data collected from these questionnaires and follow-up interviews were assigned to appropriate locations on the CPC2 model during analysis (Lindsey et al., 2013), meaning that they were coded as representing either tolerance for diversity (behaviors characteristic of cultural destructiveness or cultural incapacity and blindness), or transformation for equity (behaviors characteristic of cultural precompetence and competence or cultural proficiency), as defined by and adapted from Lindsey et al.(2013). Figure 43 recapitulates the behaviors associated with elements of the CPC2 model.

Comparison of results from the survey questionnaires with results from the follow-up interview responses showed wide discrepancies, with questionnaire responses and survey data aligning on different sides of the CPC2 model. All data responses were analyzed with respect to this conceptual framework, which was adapted by this researcher from Lindsey, et al. (2013).

**Study Sample: 16 School Leader Participants**

The sample for this study consisted of 16 school leaders at the single research site, 6 females and 10 males. The majority self-identified as white (15, or 93.75%). One male self-identified as African American. All the school leaders (100%) were native speakers of English; 3 reported having some proficiency in a second language (Spanish or French). It was interesting
to note that only one school leader had experienced learning in a second language, through study in France.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Elements for Change</th>
<th>Tolerance for Diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assesses Own Culture</td>
<td>Cultural Destructiveness</td>
<td>Cultural Precompetence and Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values Diversity</td>
<td>Negating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from one’s own.</td>
<td>Recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manages Dynamics of Difference</td>
<td>Elevating the superiority of one’s own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from one’s own.</td>
<td>Interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences, motivate one to assess one’s own skills, expand one’s knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapts to Diversity</td>
<td>Acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and refusing to recognize them.</td>
<td>Advocating in a way that honors the differences among cultures, seeing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully among cultural groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 43.* Description of behaviors represented by the CPC2 model.

**Data-gathering Instruments**

Data were collected for this qualitative study using three instruments: an initial survey, the *Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire* (See Appendix E); a follow-up interview and the *School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview* (See Appendix F) from individual participants; observational data about the educational environment, including documentary evidence found in the school’s publications and on its website (See Appendix G).
The survey was administered through Qualtrics\textsuperscript{9} and taken online. Interviews were carried out by this researcher; they were audiorecorded and transcribed. Observational data were drawn from the researcher’s first-hand experience of the school’s physical environment and from photographs and screen shots of the school’s main entrance, main office, guidance office, and media center. Documentary data consisted of the school’s published materials and its website.

**Data analysis**

Data collected from the survey questionnaire were tabulated (Salkind, 2012) and applied to the CPC2 model. By assigning the Likert-scale responses for each item to the CPC2 model (adapted from the cultural proficiency continuum developed by Lindsey et al., 2013), a more detailed picture (Huck, 2012) emerged about the cultural proficiency of the school leaders at this urban high school.

The data collected from individual interviews were coded descriptively and analyzed thematically. The codes consisted of specific topics that emerged in the analysis process, and were not simply abbreviations of the content collected (Saldaña, 2013). The use of interviews in this qualitative research provided a more extensive understanding of the cultural proficiency of the school leaders at this urban high school. See Table 59 for an overview of the findings for each research question as related to the CPC2. Observational and documentary data were analyzed for representation of the cultural and linguistic diversity of English Learners and their families in the school community. These analyses produced the 12 findings, which were framed by the research questions posed for the study. Table 60 shows the connection of each finding to its guiding research question and characterizes the study’s results from analyzing observational,
### Findings by Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tolerance for diversity</th>
<th>Transformation for equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( D ) = Destructiveness, ( B ) = Blindness/Incapacity</td>
<td>( C ) = Precompetence/Competence, ( P ) = Proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### FINDING 1.1
The achievement gap of English Learners, which included Latinos and other FLNE minorities, was not being addressed.

*There was evidence of an achievement gap between monolingual English-speaking students and English Learners at this high school. This was a Level 3 school in a Level 3 district at which no specific steps in the school improvement plan addressed closing the achievement gap for English Learners, as required by federal and state regulations.*

#### FINDING 1.2.
The school’s physical environment was devoid of representations of linguistic or cultural diversity.

*The physical environment of the school did not reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of its student population. This meant that the school, in effect, rendered these students and their families invisible to themselves and others who entered the building.*

#### FINDING 1.3.
Monolingual English communication was the school’s practice with all families.

*Communication with families from and within the school was carried out primarily in English, making comprehension difficult or impossible for the 433 families in the school community who spoke a first language other than English.*

#### FINDING 1.4.
Linguistic and cultural differences were evident between the school leaders and families in the school community.

*There was little to no overlap between school leaders’ professional and cultural backgrounds and those of the school’s 433 EL students and their families. The school leaders maintained a majority-culture, monolingual cultural and English-speaking mindset.*

#### FINDING 2.1
School leaders were not aware of the instructional and communication needs of EL students and their families.

*Although all the school leaders had taken the RETELL SEI administrator course required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and had earned SEI endorsement, the evidence showed that this professional development had had little to no effect on their professional practices with respect to EL students. The evidence also indicated that this professional development had not enhanced school leaders’ understanding of the instructional needs of English Learners or their communication with these students’ families.*

#### FINDING 2.2
There was little to no representation of ELs and their families throughout the school’s environment or curricula.

*There was extremely limited representation of ELs and their families’ language and cultural backgrounds in the physical environment of the school or in the school’s curricula. For example, there was no signage in any language other than English, and, with the exception of classes in Spanish, French, and Italian, the curriculum was primarily delivered in monolingual English.*
Tolerance for diversity  \( \text{D} = \) Destructiveness, \( \text{B} = \) Blindness/Incapacity

Transformation for equity  \( \text{C} = \) Precompetence/Competence, \( \text{P} = \) Proficiency

**FINDING 2.3**
Validation of and capitalization on EL students’ command of Spanish (the primary language spoken by ELs at the school) were not occurring.
*The school leaders had not yet identified ways to validate and capitalize on the language diversity of the school’s English Learners and their families, who among them spoke 19 languages other than English.*

**FINDING 2.4**
Communication in a language understood by families of ELs was not ensured.
*School leaders were not universally ensuring that their staff (teachers, counselors, secretaries, etc.) communicated with the families of ELs in a language they could understand.*

**FINDING 2.5**
School leaders were not yet building partnerships with families of EL students.
*School leaders’ responses indicated that they did not have a plan of action for developing partnerships specifically with families of English Learners, or indeed, for strengthening partnerships with monolingual English-speaking families. Such partnerships are required by federal and state regulations.*

**FINDING 2.6**
The school leaders at this high school did not exhibit cultural proficiency.
*Rather than operating on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2, leaders’ behaviors, as reported in their interview responses, reflected a tolerance for diversity orientation.*

**FINDING 2.7**
The educational inequity between White, European American English-speaking students and minority or FLNE students was not yet addressed by school leaders.
*The majority of the school leaders acknowledged that continuing educational inequity that depressed the academic achievement and social integration of EL students. Leaders also reported that they did not have plans to address such inequity.*

**FINDING 3.1**
Professional development for school leaders had proven inadequate in addressing the needs of English Learners.
*School leaders at this high school reported that they had taken the RETELL SEI administrator course required by the state board of education. Evidence showed that policies and practices nevertheless were not meeting the needs of EL students and their families. Furthermore, there was no evidence of district- or high school-wide cultural proficiency professional development during the three years prior to this research study.*

Documentary, questionnaire, and interview data according to the behavioral and attitudinal criteria of the CPC2 theoretical model. This chapter’s discussion of the study’s findings employs the explanatory power of the model to produce actionable recommendations based on the qualitative analyses.
Discussion of Results

This discussion of findings is organized according to the three research questions posed in this qualitative study, which considered the cultural proficiency of 16 school leaders at an urban high school in Massachusetts. These study participants’ responses were analyzed in terms of the CPC2 model adapted from Lindsey et al. (2013). The continuum represented in the CPC2 model can, for simplicity, be considered in terms of two sides: on the left, tolerance for diversity, a stance oriented toward “them”—those who are cast as more or less inferior others. Tolerance for diversity behaviors are those that bespeak cultural destructiveness and cultural incapacity or blindness. On the right of the CPC2 model lies transformation for equity, a stance that puts the focus on “us”—our own attitudes and beliefs about equally worthy fellow humans whom we happen not to resemble. Transformation for equity behaviors bespeak cultural pre-competence or competence and cultural proficiency. Refer to Figure 43.

Data analyses revealed a striking discrepancy between survey and interview results: school leaders’ self-scoring of their behaviors located them on the transformation for equity side of the CPC2 model; but their more detailed responses to interview probes revealed a predominant tendency toward tolerance for diversity. These findings are explained by a phenomenon related to socially desirable responding (SDR). Tracey (2016) explained that “socially desirable responding (SDR) refers to the presentation of oneself in an overly favorable light on self-report questionnaires” (p. 224). There are two main forms of SDR: self-deception and impression management. (Lawani, Shrum, & Chiu, 2009; Tracey, 2016; Zerbe & Paulhus; 1987). Zerbe and Paulhus (1987) explained that self-deception is “manifested in socially desirable, positively biased self-deception that the respondent actually believes to be true” (p. 253). Positive self-deception “refers to a tendency to be overly rosy and ignore less desirable
aspects of oneself and behavior” (Tracey, 2016, p. 226). The other form of SDR, impression management, differs: one tries to present an image of oneself that matches the expectations of the researcher.

Tracey (2016) stated that “impression management is similar to what is usually assumed to be SDR in that it focuses on conscious dissimulation; presenting oneself in a manner tailored to the audience” (p. 226). Zerbe & Paulhus (1987) further this claim by stating the term “impression management represents conscious presentation of a false front, such as deliberately falsifying test responses to create a favorable impression” (p. 253). It cannot be determined whether the school leaders provided socially desirable responses as a consequence of self-deception or of impression management, but the discrepancies between the questionnaire results and those of follow-up interviews suggest that one of these two forms of SDR was at play. Tracey (2016) also stated that “it is generally assumed that SDR is most prominent and problematic when there is high-stakes testing where the individual is identified and there are obvious gains or costs that are associated with the assessment” (p. 225). The school leaders who participated in this research knew that they were the only group of school leaders responding to the survey and participating in the follow-up interviews. Although they responded anonymously to the questionnaire items, but were identifiable by the researcher in interviews, it would have been much more difficult to manage SDR behaviors in vivo than online. Furthermore, study participants knew that their responses to both the survey and their interview would be reported anonymously, so they were perhaps more relaxed in the “soft” setting of an interview than when quantifying their behavior on the survey items’ Likert scales. Regardless of whether they engaged in self-deception or impression management in either setting, comparison of their questionnaire and interview responses undercut the success of either form of SDR.
Research Question 1: Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 considered the extent to which school leaders in an urban high school addressed the cultural and linguistic needs of families of English Learners. The data collected that addressed this question led to four findings: cultural and language diversity invisibility in the school environment, an EL achievement gap, monolingual English communication with families of ELs, and a linguistic and cultural background mismatch between administrators and the diverse EL school-age population and their families.

The context for this study was a Level 3 high school in a Level 3, very diverse school district (Level 3 schools are those that have been identified as poorly performing) with an achievement gap between monolingual English-speaking students and their English Learner counterparts (Latinos and other minorities). Evidence has shown that there was no plan in place to address this achievement gap at the high school\(^\text{10}\). In a community that has rapidly changed demographically within the last 10 years, at this high school the civil rights of families of English Learners were not being upheld, with school communications provided mainly in English, a language not understood by these EL families.

The findings for research question 1 revealed that attention was needed to: (a) closing the achievement gap for EL students; (b) creating a physical environment that represents or makes visible ELs and their families’ languages and cultures; (c) ensuring communication in languages understood by all families and; (d) pursuing high-quality, outcome-based professional development that leads to better abilities to address needs of the EL high school student population.

\(^{10}\) High School EL students are usually newcomers.
**EL students’ academic achievement.** In this Level 3 school and district, despite evidence of an English Learners achievement gap, SEI (structured English immersion), without direct native-language access, was the only Language and Literacies Education (LLE) program being offered, even though Massachusetts had allowed school districts to provide two-way bilingual and transitional bilingual education (SIMS) since 2002. At the school under study, SEI was not closing the achievement gap experienced by EL students. Research commissioned by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (English Language Learners Subcommittee, 2009), found that SEI did not produce grade-level achievement student outcomes for 80% of EL students. See Appendix A for a summary of research on achievement outcomes of EL students under a variety of educational models. The implications of the achievement gap are pressing (Fitzpatrick, 2014; Grasparil & Hernandez, 2015; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2014; Stewart, 2016), and SEI programs have been shown to produce outcomes for academic achievement and English proficiency that are far inferior to those of programs such as dual-language instruction with direct native-language access. It is thus imperative that school leaders at this study’s research site move toward adopting such evidence-based programming.

Cultural invisibility in the school environment. Observational and documentary evidence revealed that the school’s physical environment kept ELs and their families invisible in the school community, although they represented nearly one-quarter of total enrollment. The invisibility of EL students was likewise apparent in school publications which, with the exception of the student handbook (available in Spanish), were presented only in English, a further indication of cultural dissonance between the school’s monolingual public face and its multicultural, multilingual population (Brown, Ernst, Clark, DeLuca, & Kelly, 2018; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). Additional evidence of what effectively constituted cultural erasure was seen in
the absence of books published in languages other than English (with the exception of a few bililingual dictionaries); the staffing of such key positions as front-desk reception, school counselor, and school nurse with monolingual English-speakers; provision of phone service in English only; and messaging, including signage and real-time communications via television monitors through the building, that were displayed exclusively in English.

**Monolingual communication and civil rights.** The fact that school communications of nearly every type were delivered only in English also served to marginalize families of EL students, and contravened their legally enforceable civil rights. The school’s leaders, who were primarily monolingual English-speakers, did not yet consistently require that pertinent school information be provided in languages spoken by families of ELs in the school community. Perreira, Chapman, and Stein have explained that “without the ability to communicate, parents feel helpless, alienated, and unable to advocate on behalf of their children” (2006, p. 1396). The school’s all-English signage at its entrance and throughout the building made navigating the facility difficult; and the staffing decisions discussed above amplified the absence of a welcoming environment to those with no or limited fluency in English. Carreon et al. stated that “because of their limited familiarity with English, parents find it difficult to understand and express their views and concerns regarding the schooling of their children” (2005, p. 470). Leaders at the study site should direct that signage be posted in the multiple languages spoken by members of the school community, not only as an initial welcome but also as a signal that their participation in the life of the school community was valued. Similarly, school leaders needed to provide for those without English proficiency at important school functions, such as Open House, parent meetings, Financial Aid Night, sporting events, and fine arts performances, which
were conducted, almost without exception, in English only (Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Louise, & Beegle, 2004).

Moreover, results from study participants’ interviews indicated school leaders were only minimally aware that English-only communications from the school denied information access to 433 families of the school community who spoke a language other than English. Even though there were a few instances in which documents were translated into Spanish (the second most prevalent language among school families), this practice was not comprehensive, consistent, or universal and, of course, it failed to meet the needs of school families who spoke one of the 18 other languages recorded among members of the school community. Moreover, the few instances of translation that occurred did not include website notices of crucial import, such as weather-related schedule changes, issuance of report cards, or college fairs. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) pointed out that

To actively participate in the schools, parents must become informed about the school system and how it functions. Schools, for their part, have the responsibility to communicate to parents about their rights and to maintain continual dialogue with families through established structures as well as to support parents in their efforts to organize (p. 25).

Civil rights laws entitled EL families to receive all school documents that are disseminated in English delivered to them in their native language. A combined memo published in January 2015 by the U.S. DOJ, Civil Rights Department and the U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights stated that “Schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of
parents who are proficient in English.” School leaders participating in this study apparently were unaware of their federal communication obligations toward the families of English Learners.

Deficiencies of cultural knowledge. School leaders’ own demographic characteristics were also an important variable, analysis revealed. The leaders, predominantly white, monolingual English-speaking males, clearly exhibited cultural blindness while managing a school in which one quarter of the student population came from a home in which English was not the native language or primary mode of communication. School leaders’ practices and self-perceptions clearly indicated that their knowledge of the cultures of the school’s families was deficient. Such knowledge is an important condition for engaging family participation; and it has been shown to have consequences for students’ achievement (Coll, 2002; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Doucet, 2011; Hill & Torres, 2010; Smokowski et al., 2008; Vera et al., 2012). Panferov observes: “As educators, we expect parental involvement with the schooling of their children to be important to students’ success; however, we often know little or nothing about who the parents are and the realities of their own education” (Panferov, 2010, p. 107). When school leaders lack awareness of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the families, the school may “facilitate the exclusion of students and parents by (consciously or unconsciously) establishing activities that require specific majority culture-based knowledge and behaviors about the school as an institution” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p. 21). Delgado-Gaitan here alludes to the deeper level of culturally divergent beliefs about the nature of education, hierarchical relationships, and parental advocacy; but this study’s analysis showed that participants lacked knowledge or recognition of even superficial aspects of culturally affirmative leadership and communication, such as the needs to demonstrate openness to diversity and to send messages that facilitated recipients’ capacity to receive them.
Tolerance for diversity. The findings for research question 1 indicated that, overall, school leaders’ were operating on the *tolerance for diversity* side of the CPC2 model. Analysis showed that their behaviors aligned most closely with hallmarks of cultural incapacity and blindness. Table 61 summarizes application of the theoretical model to study findings for research question 1. By maintaining monolingual communication with all families regardless of their mode of communication and keeping the school environment devoid of any language other than English, these schools leaders were, in practice, enacting superiority of White European American U.S. culture and the English language above the cultures and languages of all others. These school leaders, while operating with cultural incapacity and blindness, were also behaving as though differences among cultures do not exist by not recognizing and addressing the academic achievement gap between monolingual White, English-speaking students and English Learners who, in this school’s population, consisted of Latinos and other minorities. The school leaders’ actions indicated that they saw all students at the school as having similar linguistic and cultural needs. Consequently they did not create action steps to address the real, identifiable learning needs of English Learners, and in the process, deterred their academic development (Serpa & Lira, 2012)

Demographic mismatch. The cultural and linguistic mismatch between the school leaders and the EL students and families was another factor that may explain why these school leaders’ behaviors reflected cultural incapacity and blindness, and why they were ignoring differences between cultures (Bonilla Silva, 2014; Sue, 2010).
Research Question 1 Findings: Cultural Incapacity and Blindness

<table>
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<th>Findings</th>
<th>Cultural Proficiency Indicator Level</th>
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| School publications and displays in the school environment were devoid of language other than English (sole exception: student handbook). Website content appeared only in English. | **Cultural Incapacity/Blindness**  
(Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013)  
Individuals with behaviors at this level usually: |
| In-school communication between school leaders and non-English-speaking family members was almost exclusively monolingual; availability of translation services was inconsistent. Language barriers were ignored. The school was out of compliance with applicable civil rights law. | • Elevate the superiority of their own cultural values and beliefs, while suppressing cultures different from their own.  
• Act as if differences among cultures do not exist and failing to recognize that cultural differences exist. |
| There was an EL achievement gap and no plan to address it. | |

Research question 1 considered to what degree school leaders in an urban high school addressed the cultural and linguistic needs of families of English Learners. The evidence indicated that school leaders’ practices and perceptions related to the school environment, school home communications, and the English Learner achievement gap reflected cultural incapacity and blindness, on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model. Their actions did not address the cultural and linguistic needs of English Learners and their families. The next section discusses the findings for research question 2.

Research Question 2: Discussion of Findings

Research question 2 focused on how school leaders at one urban high school exhibited culturally and linguistically proficient practices in their school community with families of English Learners. The data addressing this research question revealed seven findings: school leaders practices failed to show (1) familiarity with the instructional needs of ELs; (2) awareness...
of the need to visibly represent diverse cultures and languages in the school’s building and curricula; (3) validation of, and capitalization on, the Spanish language used by a significant minority of students; (4) connection with families of ELs; (5) a specific plan to build partnerships with families of ELs; (6) productive outcomes of participation in professional development that would facilitate transformation for equity behaviors; and (7) commitment to ending the continued educational inequity of English Learners at the school.

Each of these seven findings contained within it a path to remediating the deficiencies they revealed. The evidence indicated that school leaders needed to: (1) increase their limited understanding of EL students’ instructional needs; (2) incorporate the cultures and languages of the school’s community into the school’s building and curricula; (3) develop a plan to validate and capitalize on the Spanish language (as well as other languages) brought to the school by students and their families; (4) ensure that communication with families of ELs, whether in person, in published documents, or in messages sent home, was provided in a language or format the families could readily comprehend; (5) build partnerships with families of EL students; (6) provide relevant and effective professional development for school leaders to lead this school from tolerance to diversity to transformation for equity behaviors; and (7) develop plans to address the educational inequity experienced by English Learners.

The following section focuses on findings related to the need for school leaders to work toward eradicating the achievement gap, connecting with families of ELs, and recognizing the urgent need to address educational inequity.

**Eradicating the achievement gap.** The findings for research question 1 with respect to school leaders’ unfamiliarity with the EL students’ learning needs, along with the invisibility in the physical environment and in curricula of diverse languages and cultures and their
contributions to not only the life of the school but also to human achievements, form a point of departure for further insight into some of the factors that contributed to the achievement gap seen in the school’s EL students. The lack of awareness regarding cultural diversity in general, and EL students’ learning needs in particular, that these findings revealed brings into question the effectiveness of the professional development required by the state of Massachusetts (the RETELL Sheltered English Immersion administrator course), which all the school leaders had completed (DeCapua, & Marshall, 2015; Jimerson, Patterson, Stein, & Babcock, 2016; Li, 2013).

School leaders also showed unfamiliarity with the variety of options for language-learning educational programs and their academic outcomes (Cabazon, Lambert, & Hall, 1992; Collier & Thomas, 2007; Kanno, 2018; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002; Uriate, 2009, Uriate et al., 2011). See Appendix A for a summary of research that discusses LLE options and grade-level outcomes. Evidence-based LLE programming is directly linked to improved English proficiency and academic achievement among EL students.

In an era during which technology facilitates access to a wealth of information about research and educational resources for EL students, the achievement gap is a tragedy. Poor academic achievement results in negative outcomes for each one of these students, not only in school but also later in life. ELs’ lower academic achievement, when compared with that of their peers who speak English as a first language, is well documented (August & Shanahan, 2006; DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Lopes-Murphy, 2012; Sheng, Sheng, & Anderson, 2011). If the school leaders who participated in this study were to shadow an EL student for even a day, they would probably gain crucial insight into the language barriers faced by these students and their teachers. Leaders who visited ESL classes, observed firsthand how SEI teachers and ESL teachers presented grade-level academic
content, as well as English as a second or additional language, would undoubtedly increase their understanding of the three areas of need (academic, language, and emotional) that must be met in order for EL students to succeed in school and later in life. The results of these needs going unmet, which were further compounded by an SEI program model that provided no access to appropriate language-learning education, were seen in the achievement gap EL students at this school experienced, and of its long-term consequences. (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010; Kanno, 2018).

**Legal basis for ELL programming.** Language barriers are real; the Supreme Court’s decision in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) declared that schools must provide English-language instruction that allows students an opportunity to participate in their public education. “There is no equity of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Schools that do not comply with the dictates of this decision are in violation of the 14th Amendment, which protects students’ individual right for equal protection while receiving public education, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that requires schools to ensure ELs’ ability to fully participate in their education and access other services provided by the school. At the school which served as the site of this research, failure to address the learning needs of ELs was perhaps symbolized by the visual and documentary invisibility of their and their families’ presence in the school population. In other words, the same attitudes and behaviors that masked ELs’ cultural and linguistic representation in a visual sense may have contributed to their curricular invisibility. Indeed, these circumstances clearly demonstrated school leaders’ enaction of cultural incapacity and blindness, and they potentially positioned the school to be vulnerable to legal action by EL students’ families.
Cultural blindness and forfeitures of opportunity. A school can inadvertently impart a perceived negative climate, a hidden curriculum of social and academic marginalization, by not recognizing all of the languages, cultures, and learning needs of a school’s students. The invisibility of languages and cultures at the study site, and the use of ineffective SEI programming (English Languages Learners Sub-Committee, 2009), restricted EL students’ access to an equitable education. (Connors & Epstein, 1994; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Epstein, 2011; Vera et al., 2012) and diminished their access to opportunities for higher education and remunerative employment. The school urgently needed to address these deficiencies.

An additional, perhaps less obvious, consequence of marginalizing EL students’ language and cultures was that doing so deprived the remaining 75% of students of exposure to the linguistic and cultural assets that ELs’ presence offered (Edwards, 2004). For example, although Spanish was one of three European languages taught at the school and was the next-most prevalent language spoken by students, school leaders failed to validate or capitalize on the resource that Spanish-speaking students and their families represented. In a 21st-century global world, multilingual competence is needed—not only by English Learners, but also by the majority of U.S.-born, English-speaking students who typically grow into monolingual adults whose own language limitations may curtail their occupational horizons. Spanish is one of the world’s major languages; the same may be said of Arabic or Chinese (also spoken at the school); and languages provide a window to cultural knowledge, a vital source of understanding as the world metaphorically shrinks. Linse (2011) points out that “instead of trying to fix these families, schools need to see learners’ home languages as an asset, a valuable resource with English being added to the learner’s existing linguistic repertoire” (p. 658) and, equally salient, with EL students’ native languages being added to English-speaking students’ repertoires. This
forfeiture of opportunity to elevate diversity at the school left all its students the poorer. School leaders’ blindness to the value of their diverse student body exposed the extent of their *tolerance for diversity*. Certainly curricular changes could not have been implemented overnight; but raising the visibility of the school’s diversity in its physical environment and communications could have signaled progress toward *transformation for equity*, to employ the conceptual frame of the CPC2 model.

**Connecting with families of ELs: a legal and professional requirement.** Making cultural diversity visible could also help the school increase family participation. Vera et al. (2012) point out that “the perceived climate of the school environment and, in particular, whether or not the parents feel welcomed in the school community is another important area for schools to assess in efforts to increase parent participation” (p.196). Having limited proficiency in English while navigating a school setting that functions only in English is one of the most challenging obstacles for parents of English Learners (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Carreon et al., 2005; Coll et al., 2002; Daniel-White, 2002; Delgado-Gaitian, 1991; Panferov, 2010; Perreira et al., 2006; Vera et al., 2012). Results of this study indicated that connections with EL students’ families were weak.

The following two findings from research question 2, which deepen understanding of issues raised by research question 1, provide further details about the tenuousness of the school’s connection with EL families: (a) the communication mode used with families of ELs was almost exclusively monolingual English, making it nearly impossible either to confirm their comprehension of communications or to build relationships with them; and (b) leaders could point to no specific plan to build partnerships with these families.

Communication with families in their home language is a civil right, encoded in federal
law (ESSA, 2015) ESSA demands that schools identify barriers to parental participation, paying “particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background” In Massachusetts, a 2017 amendment to the General Laws pertaining to bilingual education, popularly known as the LOOK (Language Opportunities for Our Kids) act (Mass. General Laws, 2017), has a provision mandating that school districts create English learner parent advisory councils made up of parents or guardians of English learners in the district.

Indeed, MADESE incorporates family and community engagement in the school-administrator evaluation rubric (MADESE, 2012)\(^\text{11}\) as one of the four standards that school leaders are assessed on each year. In order to be assessed as proficient in this standard, school leaders must, along with other expectations, actively ensure that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the classroom, school, and community’s effectiveness. Furthermore, the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators has dedicated a standard to building relationships with families; Standard 8, “Meaningful Engagement of Families and Communities,” cites 10 specific practices, one of which is to “engage in regular two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments” (NPBEA, 2015).

School leaders’ practices at the research site did not universally ensure that staff members were communicating with families of ELs in a language they understood when they came to school for meetings, a shortcoming that echoed the marginalization of ELs’ language and culture seen in the observational and documentary data. The availability of dedicated translation services was inconsistent and required advance planning; only a very few building staff were

\(^{11}\) An updated standard was published in 2018. See http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/PartIII_ApPxB.pdf
capable of translating, and their availability, too, was extremely limited. So administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors resorted to having students to translate for their parents, a form of adultification that violates students’ civil rights and strains relations within families. Panferov (2010), in his study of parents of English Learners, explained:

one of the distinctive characteristics of immigrant and refugee families is that children often surpass their parents’ proficiencies in the new language and, as a result, are called upon to interpret for family issues that they might not normally have ever been exposed to because of their young age (p. 110).

Asking students to serve as messengers between their teachers and their parents can cause a shift in power, causing parents to feel a loss of authority and creating distrust and dislike of the educational system, contributing to disconnection with the school (Trueba, 2002). School personnel, alternatively, settled for trying to “work through” the language barrier using strategies usually associated with monolingual U.S. travelers abroad.

Leaders at the research site needed to undertake steps to engage participation of EL students’ families in the life of the school community. First, they had to require that a qualified professional translator (such as the Spanish bilingual parent liaison assigned to the district office) be present for in-person or telephone interactions between school personnel (themselves included) and the families of ELs. Leaders also had to communicate this policy, along with information about a family’s preferred language when applicable, to the entire school staff, in time for them to schedule a translator for meetings or obtain translation for documents sent home. Arrangements like this may feel cumbersome to already overworked teachers, for instance; but they are critical to respectful cross-cultural communication—as well as statutorily mandated.
Second, leaders at this school needed to be cognizant of providing alternative times and places, to accommodate the needs of families constrained by work schedules or lack of ready access to transportation. (This practice should be implemented with all families in such circumstances.) Another way of framing this issue is for leaders to recognize that their perspectives on practices for parental involvement may be based on a White, middle-class, U.S. construct (Linse, 2011; Rothwell, 2018), and that this perspective differs from those held by parents of English Learners. Research (Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Epstein, 2011; Epstein & Associates, 2009; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003), has shown that school leaders need to understand the importance of connecting with all parents, not just those who mirror themselves, or assumptions based on the school’s majority culture, or English-language nuances, in order to share and explain the school’s expectations and policies.

Partnerships with families of EL students are important. Vera et al. (2012) found that: lacking English proficiency is a barrier to participation by immigrant families, particularly those who are unfamiliar with practices and procedures of the American educational system; and found also that immigrant parents are concerned about their children’s education. School Leaders are not only charged with building partnerships with families of ELs; they must also develop their own sense of urgency about addressing the educational inequity faced by English Learners (Lien, 2014). Linse argues that “schools that do not first acknowledge the critical importance of connections and communications with families of all learners, not just those who communicate in English, are unlikely to be able to improve them” (2011, p. 657). The tolerance for diversity (specifically, incapacity and blindness) demonstrated by school leaders participating in this study suggests that they were overdue for such acknowledgement.
**Recognizing the urgency of educational equity.** Not only were EL students at the research site subject to persistent educational inequity; leaders at the school showed little to no sense of urgency about initiating changes to address it. They saw themselves as doing their best in a problematic situation, showing *tolerance for diversity* without sufficient cultural responsiveness to effect *transformation for equity*. Cultural responsiveness has been addressed in copious research (Anderson & Davis, 2012; Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2011; Epstein, 2011; Gay, 2000; Hamayan & Freeman Field, 2012; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Linse, 2011; Noel, 2008; Springer, 2013). Indeed, school leaders’ cultural proficiency begets culturally responsive pedagogy; that is, education that “validates, facilitates, liberates and empowers ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success” (Gay, 2000, p. 44). In contrast, school leaders at the research site operated as if differences did not exist; they kept majority White, English-speaking culture at the forefront of school activities.

It is possible that the linguistic and cultural mismatch discussed above, coupled with a lack of cultural proficiency, explained why the leaders participating in this study failed at alleviating longstanding educational inequity in their school (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Cummins, 2000; Freire, 1970; Lindsey et al., 2008; Lindsey et al.; 2013; Spring, 2013). For the most part, they acknowledged that such inequity existed with respect to language minority students, yet they had no plans to affirmatively address it by modifying the school’s visual environment, curriculum, educational resources, communication practices, staffing, or their own leadership behaviors, all of which were fundamental to the students’ educational opportunity and achievement at grade level (ESSA, 2015). They persisted in leadership behaviors that institutionalized persistent educational inequities for EL students, even as the school’s population
grew increasingly diverse in terms of its population’s linguistic and cultural profile. They noted that the school’s demographics were changing, and conceded the ongoing achievement gap, but had yet to put into action a plan to eliminate glaring inequities in the way they served the needs of a growing proportion of their school’s population. Most troubling, they showed no apparent urgency to afford EL students access to instructional content in the language(s) they understood.

One way to improve how the school served its EL students was by making a priority of hiring more staff who were fluent in those students’ first languages—teachers, counselors, and others who could educate both English-proficient students and English Learners. Bilingual staff would also be able to interact effectively with EL students’ families when they visited the school or when the school needed to convey information about school operations or events. Another way to address educational inequity was through appropriate professional development; this important subject is addressed in the discussion of research question 3.

This research measured school leaders’ behaviors and practices in terms of the extent to which they: (a) demonstrated understanding of EL students’ instructional needs; (b) incorporated the cultures and languages of the school’s community into the environment and curricula; (c) validated and capitalized on the school’s linguistic and cultural diversity; (d) ensured that communication with families of ELs at school and at home was provided in culturally appropriate language or mode of communication; (e) built partnerships with the families of EL students; (f) engaged in and offered relevant, effective professional development designed to effect transformation for equity behaviors, and (g) took action to end the educational inequity of English Learners. Findings indicated that with respect to all these measures, the school leaders operated with cultural incapacity and blindness—that is, on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model. This meant that their attitudes and behaviors with respect to
the domains enumerated above elevated White, English-speaking U.S. culture and language above the cultures and languages of all others.

Furthermore, the leaders in this study were also operating as though differing languages, cultures, and instructional needs did not exist; they proceeded blindly along a monolingual, monocultural path, forging no plans to build partnerships with families of EL students or to recognize the obstacles these families confronted as they sought to navigate unfamiliar, culturally infused protocols and expectations about instruction and parent participation. Table 62 summarizes this application of the theoretical model to study findings for research question 2.

Discussion of findings for research question 2 revealed that participant school leaders operated on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model. The following section addresses findings related to research question 3, which focused on the professional development school leaders had undertaken associated with the current change in demographics.

**Research Question 3: Discussion of Findings**

Research question 3 focused on discovering what professional development or preparation high school leaders at this urban high school had received concerning how to address changes in the demographics of its enrollment. Investigation revealed that although the school leaders in this study had completed, at minimum, a 45-hour RETELL SEI administrator course that addressed the distinctive language-learning and academic needs of English Learners and their families—professional development required by MADESE to maintain their licenses—the course did not have a direct impact on high school leaders’ policies or practices with respect to EL students.
Table 62

*Research question 2 Findings: Cultural Incapacity and Blindness*

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<th>Findings</th>
<th>Cultural Proficiency Indicator Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>School leaders lacked plans to close the achievement gap between EL students’ performance and that of their English-proficient counterparts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders maintained:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• unfamiliarity with the instructional, cultural, and language needs of ELs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• invisibility of diverse language and cultures in the school environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• invisibility of EL students’ languages and cultures in curricula</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• failure to validate or capitalize on the linguistic diversity of the school population and community</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cultural Incapacity/Blindness**

(Lindsey, Roberts, & CampbellJones, 2013)

Individuals who have behaviors at this level are usually:

- Elevate the superiority of their own cultural values and beliefs, while suppressing cultures different from their own.
- Act as if differences among cultures do not exist and failing to recognize that cultural differences exist.

School leaders failed to connect in productive, culturally appropriate fashion with the families of EL students.

School leaders failed to practice or develop:

- communication in language understood by families of ELs
- partnerships with families of ELs

School leaders exhibited no urgency to achieve educational equity for EL students.

There was no plan in place to directly address, in practice, the educational inequity experienced by ELs.

Data analysis revealed that the school leaders’ actions before and after completing this RETELL SEI administrator course did not meet the professional requirements for administrators serving ELs and their families. When the professional actions and practices at this high school were measured using the *Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator, and Teacher* (MADESE,
results showed that they were not meeting the state’s proficiency standard. For further discussion see Chapter 2. See also Appendix J for standard III and examples of proficiency under this standard.

To address educational equity for ELs, the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators stated that effective school leaders “ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success” (NPBEA, 2015, p.11). School leaders in this study were not fulfilling that standard. One way to meet the standard was to undertake professional development above and beyond the state-required RETELL SEI administrator course, to increase understanding of the real academic, language, and emotional needs of English Learners. Research had shown that the RETELL training alone did not lead to administer-led changes (Medina, 2009; Owen-Fitzgerald, 2010).

Educational inequities experienced by EL students are best addressed by school leaders who have undergone high-quality, outcome-based professional development that focuses on remedying deficiencies like those uncovered by the many findings discussed in relation to research question 2. Unless school leaders committed to developing their professional capacity—in other words, unless they felt not only obligated but also morally compelled to become culturally proficient, as defined by Lindsey et al., 2013—minority-language students would continue to face educational inequity at the school in this study.

Overall, the school leaders’ experience of professional development designed to help them address the needs of ELs and their families did not produce the intended outcomes. The leaders’ behaviors with respect to EL students aligned with cultural incapacity and blindness on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model. This meant that the school leaders were most
likely elevating their own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures different from their own; acting as if differences among cultures did not exist; and not applying the training they had undertaken to bring their school’s policies and practices in accord with culturally proficient transformation for equity. Table 63 summarizes application of the theoretical model to study findings for research question 3.

Table 63

**Research question 3 Findings: Cultural Incapacity and Blindness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Cultural Proficiency Indicator Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School leaders’ professional practices revealed that they had not yet accessed, or implemented learning from, sufficient professional development to help them address the specific language learning and academic needs of English Learners and their families.</td>
<td><strong>Cultural Incapacity/Blindness</strong> (Lindsey, Roberts, &amp; CampbellJones, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who use practices at this level are usually:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elevating the superiority of their own cultural values and beliefs, while suppressing cultures different from their own/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and failing to recognize that cultural differences exist.</td>
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Findings regarding professional development relate to research question 1 findings about the general characteristics of the school and research question 2 findings that revealed the administrators’ practices. All findings showed that school leaders were operating with cultural incapacity and blindness, that is, on the tolerance for diversity side of the CPC2 model (adapted from Lindsey et al., 2013). In conclusion, evidence showed that the school leaders in this study did not recognize or embrace the changes in school and community demographics, and that these failures were associated with leadership practices that were culturally unresponsive to the needs of ELs and their families.
The next section provides recommendations based on the study findings.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following section provides recommendations in the areas of policy, professional practice, professional development, and future research.

1. **Recommendations for Improving Professional Practice**

1.1 **ENACT CHANGES IN SCHOOL POLICY TO ADDRESS THE COMMUNICATION BARRIERS WITH FAMILIES OF ENGLISH LEARNERS.**

Invest the resources and time required to consistently provide school information in the languages spoken by the school’s families. Action steps:

- launch a multilingual website
- provide signage in multiple languages, including on posters and TV monitors used to display announcements
- require that all school information be provided in all languages written or spoken in the school community
- provide phone service with language options
- add more bilingual parent liaisons

1.2 **CONVENE A CULTURAL PROFICIENCY HIGH SCHOOL TASK FORCE.**

As soon as possible, create a task force to develop a 3-year action plan with a mission to eradicate EL students’ achievement gap through a multiphase strategy. This action plan should include, but not be limited to these measures:

- Publicly acknowledge the achievement gap.
• Implement language-learning program options such as transitional bilingual or two-way bilingual education (the only two evidence-based approaches that reliably result in EL students achieving grade-level performance and English language proficiency).

• Hire bilingual teachers across disciplines and offer language-learning classes to volunteer educators, beginning with Spanish, the predominant language other than English spoken in the city.

1.3. CREATE A MULTILINGUAL WORKING GROUP OF TEACHERS, SCHOOL LEADERS, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES WHO ARE TASKED WITH MAKING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY VISIBLE IN THE SCHOOL.

Assemble a working group charged with making visible, in the school and in the curriculum, positive portrayals of the diverse languages and cultures represented by English Learners and their families. Outcomes for this task force should include, but not be limited to, these measures:

• Develop a section in the media center devoted to materials in the first languages of EL students.

• Create a mural at the school that represents the diversity of its student and family population.

• Organize events and evening functions that elevate languages and cultures present in the school.

• Identify ways to integrate the diversity represented by EL students and their families into curricula across disciplines.

• Offer elective courses or modules that allow students to use and improve their first-language proficiency, for example:
o instruction in skills for serving as a translator or interpreter
o supervised tutoring in the EL student’s first language
o educating others (fellow students and school personnel) about one’s native language and culture

1.4. IMPLEMENT RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES FOR MEETING DISTINCTIVE NEEDS OF EL STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Ensure that bilingual and monolingual teachers understand that families of ELs have specific language needs and culturally determined expectations regarding communication from and at the school, and regarding school/family partnerships within the community.

1.5. DEVELOP A DATABASE OF FACULTY AND STUDENT BACKGROUNDS

Direct that a database be created showing the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of faculty and students, to serve the following purposes:

- Facilitate school leaders’ identification of potential informal translators
- Identify persons who could provide linguistic and culturally appropriate support when a situation or emergency arises
- Determine appropriate staff members to support English Learners who are acclimating to the United States.

1.6. IMPLEMENT THE ACTION PLAN PROPOSED BY THIS STUDY THAT ADDRESSES THE URGENT FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH.

It is recommended that school leaders review this research and study the prioritized action plans it proposes based on findings for this study’s three research questions: (a) professional development and equity work; (b) recognition and prioritization of eradicating the achievement gap between ELs and English-proficient students; and (c) development of culturally
School leaders are strongly encouraged to implement the action plans described below as a foundation to begin addressing this study’s research findings, which have urgent implications for culturally competent educational equity. It must be noted that in the opinion of this researcher the majority of steps included in this action plan can be fulfilled by using resources readily available within the school.

2. Recommendations for Professional Development

2.1. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

It is recommended that school leaders establish and commit to outcome-based professional development to increase their own cultural proficiency and that of their faculty, as outlined in the work of Lindsey et al. (2008, 2013). This initiative may include employing models such as professional learning communities, and workshops on application of action plans and follow-up.

It is also recommended that school leaders commit to addressing what is different about the instructional needs of ELs and their families in a school with so many culturally and linguistically diverse families. This includes research, linguistic, cultural, and policy factors. What works for an English-proficient native does not necessarily work for an EL, because the needs of students who are in the process of learning a new language and adapting to a new culture are different than those of native-born members of the majority culture.

3. Future Research

3.1. DUPLICATION STUDIES

It is recommended that future research be conducted at other schools in Massachusetts with similar demographics using the cultural proficiency continuum developed by Lindsey et al.,
(2013) or the CPC2 model adapted from it for this research; and that other school leaders in the district support the colleagues and counterparts in addressing cultural proficiency needs of school leaders, school staff, students, and families.

3.2. DUPLICATION STUDIES WITH INCLUSION OF SPED ELs

It is recommended that future research be conducted with the inclusion of SPED ELs. As indicated previously, one of the delimitations of this study was that it focused on English Learners as a whole, and not on the different populations that make up the English Learner student population. By identifying the different categories of learners within the English Learner student population, pertinent information may be gained that will help school leaders change or modify current school practices and policies that are not inclusive of all English Learners.

3.3 FAMILIES OF ELs

A different and important avenue for related research would be to focus on the families of English Learners or on English Learners themselves. A delimitation of the study was that its participants were school leaders; thus it did not include the crucial perspectives of EL students or their families. These complementary angles of inquiry may well produce novel findings that can further inform school leaders’ endeavors to modify or broaden current school practices and policies that are not inclusive of all families or students.

3.4. SCHOOL LEADERS’ PREPARATION PROGRAMS

It is recommended that school leader preparation programs in Massachusetts be studied for elements that match the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders as set forth by the National Policy Board for Educational Administrators (2015). This would allow a researcher to determine whether school leader preparation programs are adequately educating future school leaders to handle the ever-changing population of children in U.S. schools.
3.5. IMPACT OF RETELL COURSE

It is recommended that research be carried out on the impact the RETELL administrator course has had on increasing the cultural proficiency of school leaders in Massachusetts; and potentially to determine why participation in this course appeared ineffective in developing cultural proficiency among the school leaders who participated in this study. It is important to understand why school leaders are ignoring the needs of marginalized groups, especially since legally mandated to address them.

3.6. RESEARCH TOOLS

When investigating the cultural proficiency of school leaders, it is recommended that researchers employ surveys only in conjunction with follow-up interviews. The substantial discrepancy revealed by this study between school leaders’ self-assessments regarding their cultural proficiency, and the cultural blindness and incapacity their interview responses betrayed, illustrates the necessity of this recommendation. On anonymous questionnaires, leaders provided social desirable responses (SDRs) that interview probes readily disputed. It is, of course, possible that interviewees, too, may exhibit a tendency toward SDR; and researchers are cautioned to construct questions (for both surveys and interviews) in ways that are designed to circumvent it.

As discussed, cultural proficiency demands school leaders maintain a mindset that: (a) does not resist change; (b) welcomes adaptation to new situations and demographics; (c) acknowledges systemic oppression (including those within the educational system); and (d) fosters awareness of privilege and entitlement (Lindsey et al., 2013). Once school leaders decide to change their mindsets from an us-versus-them mentality to looking for ways to promote inclusivity and acceptance of diversity, they will move to operating on the transformation for
equity side of the cultural proficiency continuum (Lindsey et al., 2013); that is, they will become empowered to support the academic and social success of EL students, and to build productive partnerships with their families. The EL school-age population in any school is entitled to learn at grade level and to have their language learning needs met through evidence-based best practices. Without a doubt these students present additional needs related to adapting to a new culture and learning a new language (ESSA, 2015), as compared with their English proficient student counterparts. These needs must be addressed so that ELs can achieve at grade level and can enjoy an equitable education.

**Bridge Research with Practice: Recommended Action Plans**

The recommendations in this study have urgent implications for practice. To increase the potential that school leaders may implement these recommendations for meeting the needs of EL students and their families, the recommendations have been reformulated as steps in a set of three action plans, each of which reflects findings from this study’s research questions. Further, the action step sets have been assigned one of three levels—or “buckets”—based on priority, as illustrated in figure 44. Finally, each step has been tagged according to its applicability to specific performance standards used in MADESE’s evaluation rubric for school leaders (MADESE, 2018). The action plan checklists that appear below were constructed as a tool to facilitate school leaders’ work in addressing the urgent needs of English Learners and their families that were highlighted in this study. Their purpose is to offer a practical, attainable, and systematic way of responding to this study’s findings.
### Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; EQUITY WORK</th>
<th>Priority 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development: School Leaders</strong></td>
<td>TIME LINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASK: Develop outcome-based cultural proficiency skills that impact daily practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARGET DATE: 2019-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review and reflect on research study findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANDARDS: II, III, IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASK: Create individual professional development plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAL: Adoptable practices aligned with <em>transformation for equity</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings

#### Priority 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; EQUITY WORK</th>
<th>TIME LINE</th>
<th>POINT PERSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Upgrade cultural proficiency skills** _URGENT_
  
  STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV
  
  TASK #1: Develop cultural proficiency skills
  
  RESOURCES: *Essential Elements of Cultural Competence for School Leaders* (Lindsey et al., 2013); MADESE extension courses
  
  FOCUS: Leadership behaviors:
  
  - Assessing one’s own culture
  - Valuing diversity
  - Managing dynamics of diversity
  - Adapting to diversity
  - Institutionalizing cultural knowledge
  
  TASK #2: Gain deep cultural knowledge of FLNE school families
  
  FOCUS: Spanish-speakers
  
  IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-20

- **Begin to Develop Proficiency in a Second World Language.**
  
  STANDARDS: I, II, III
  
  TASK: Develop conversational competence in a language other than English that is spoken by students and families
  
  RESOURCES: In-house (world language/bilingual teachers; bilingual students)
  
  IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-20

- **Implement culturally-focused Initiatives**
  
  STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV.
  
  TASK EXAMPLE #1: Initiate annual Community Family Cultures Event
  
  TASK EXAMPLE #2: Initiate annual Student Culture Sharing Conference
  
  - Attendees: staff, community dignitaries, families
  - Skill-objectives: student teamwork, organization, public speaking, synthesis, selection of ideas, technology use
  
  IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-20

**Professional Development: Staff**

- **Offer and support teacher opportunities to gain cultural proficiency, bilingual fluency**
  
  STANDARDS: II, III, IV
  
  TASK #1: Implement professional practice goals for language learning and cultural proficiency
### Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; EQUITY WORK</th>
<th>TIME LINE</th>
<th>POINT PERSON</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>o Provide in-house Spanish course</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>o Encourage voluntary world language and culture study</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-2020</td>
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</table>

**Equity Work**

- **PURPOSE: Eradication of EL students’ achievement gap or school failure**
- **FOUNDATION: *Lau v. Nichols* (1974): “There is no equity of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.”**

- **Diversify teaching staff across all academic and elective courses via affirmative hires of highly qualified bilingual candidates**
  - **STANDARDS: I, II, III**
  - IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-2020 roll-out

- **Initiate bimonthly school leader observations in EL classes**
  - **STANDARDS: I, II, IV**
  - **PURPOSES: School leader accountability; compliance with federal and state mandates**
  - **GOALS: Deepen connection with ELs; understand ELs’ content- and language-learning needs in critical domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing)**
  - IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-2020

- **Introduce high-quality dual-language instruction for all students**
  - **STANDARDS: I, ii**
  - **PURPOSE: Educational equity; 21st-century skill development**
  - IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-2020 roll-out

- **Implement Seal of Biliteracy award for qualifying students**
  - **STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV**
  - **TASK: Highlight Seal of Biliteracy meaning and significance on the school website**
  - IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-2020
**Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>TIME LINE</th>
<th>POINT PERSON</th>
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</table>

**ERADICATE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: Recognize & Prioritize**

**Support for Academic Equity**

STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV

**TASK:** Recognize empirically established causes and consequences of EL students’ unmet academic needs; prioritize counteractive measures

**GOAL:** Introduce curricular best practices, academic resources, and environmental features to equalize EL students’ access to learning and cultural representation

- **Create a language learning education task force.**
  STANDARDS: I, II, IV
  MISSION: Increase EL students’ access to high-quality native-language content instruction to improve grade-level achievement while gaining English proficiency in essential domains (speaking, reading, listening, writing)
  **TASK #1:** Implement language learning (LLE) program options
  **TASK #2:** Introduce LLE programming for students who have experienced limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), targeted toward those not yet literate in any language
  **IMPLEMENTATION:** 2020-21

- **Implement culturally responsive curriculum and multilingual access to literature in media center and classrooms**
  STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV
  **TASK #1:** Require summer reading for all students.
    - Develop, vet, and publish approved reading list representative of all cultures and languages used by students and their families
    - Obtain approved reading materials in original languages of publication
  **TASK #2:** Collaborate with community sources (local library, FLNE community members, national or international publishers) to provide school media-center access to books, magazines, newspapers, and videos representative of students’ native languages and cultures.
  **IMPLEMENTATION:** begin 2020-21

- **Introduce cultural representativeness of visual environment and curriculum**
  STANDARDS: II, III
  **TASK #1:** Visual environment

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13 Current SEI programming, the most restrictive language-teaching approach, has a documented 80% failure rate among EL students, resulting in a widened achievement gap.

14 SLIFE: students who often do not possess the school readiness skills, sociolinguistic proficiencies, content knowledge, and academic ways of thinking demonstrated by students who have consistently attended schools. (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2019. “SLIFE Guidance.” http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/guidance/slife-guidance.docx”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ERADICATE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: Recognize &amp; Prioritize</strong></td>
<td><strong>TIME LINE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Commission design and installation of culturally representative welcome mural (Art department)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Display national flags, cultural artifacts representative of school population (staff, students, families)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TASK #2: Curriculum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Require integration of cultural diversity across all curricula, to recognize and represent contributions of innovators (e.g., writers, scientists, mathematicians, inventors, historians, musicians, artists) from all nations; emphasize contributions by immigrants to United States</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION: begin 2019-2020</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Action Plan Checklist to Address Research Findings</td>
<td>Priority 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BUILD CULTURALLY PROFICIENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH MINORITY LANGUAGE FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td>TIME LINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Partner with minority-language families in the school community (including those of ELs, FELs, FLNE students)</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Routinely provide readily available translation and interpretation services for families not fluent in English. STANDARDS: I, II, III, IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASK #1: Implement systems for translation and interpretation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Convene a School Translation/Interpretation team comprising bilingual in-school and Central Office LAD adults with documented skill in educational setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Identity a single point person/position to fulfill and oversee requests for translation or interpretation services</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Deputize a Student and Staff Translation Team for document translation of materials—e.g., signage, school website, school social media or within-building digital posts, paper documents—that are not student specific or sensitive/restricted</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Distribute to all staff lists of school-based translators and School Translation/Interpretation Team members available for telephone and email communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASK #2: Maintain accurate current database of families requiring translation or interpretation services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IMPLEMENTATION: 2019-20</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Validate Spanish as the school's official second language</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>STANDARDS: I, III, IV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TASKS: Institute formal (academic) and informal bilingual English/Spanish programming, materials, and opportunities</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Offer bilingual school tours for new students and families</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Deploy audiovisual technology curriculum to create a video about understanding the U.S. high school</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Create spaces and opportunities for all students (English-fluent and FLNE) to engage in two-way bilingual communication and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Obtain expert consultation to create a credited elective course on bilingual interpretation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IMPLEMENTATION: Begin 2019-2020</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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15 Translators who are skilled in converting written text from one language to another; interpreters are skilled in converting spoken communication from one language to another.

16 Students eligible for translation tasks: English Learners with advanced proficiency, students in Advanced Placement world language courses, students highly proficient in their native language.
Research Notes

Priority 1: Professional Development & Equity Work

Priority 2: Eradication of the Achievement Gap
Carreon, Drake & Barton, 2005; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2014; Grasparil & Hernandez, 2015; Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Kanno, 2018; Lau v. Nichols, 1974; Linse, 2011; Massachusetts Board of Education, 2009; Mendes, 2018; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2014; Stewart, 2016 and; Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, 1964

Priority 3: Building Culturally Proficient Partnerships with Minority Language Families and the Community

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study: Summary
The purpose of this study was to investigate the cultural proficiency of school leaders in an urban high school in Massachusetts.

Limitations
Three limitations characterize the validity and generalizability of this study. First, school leaders’ participation was optional; therefore the number of participants was potentially diminished and sampling may have affected the results. Second, the study method did not
include data collection from EL students or their families, who were not surveyed or interviewed about whether they felt accepted, welcomed, and understood by the school leaders. Third, it emerged during the research that protocol in place for sharing findings with the school leaders who participated. The sensitive nature of the research findings demands that publication or distribution to school or district administrators be carefully planned, to avoid negative repercussions and to facilitate support for measures that would revise policies and practices that bespeak tolerance for diversity as defined by the CPC2 model (cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity/blindness), to bring the school into transformation for equity standing (cultural precompetence/competence, cultural proficiency) and compliance with federal and state regulations regarding educational equity for ELL students.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations of this study included the size and composition of the sample population, the selection of the research site, and the definition of terms. First, the sample population for this study was high school leaders in a public high school in a community with a growing population of families of English Learners. Second, the focus of this research was on the cultural proficiency of high school leaders; cultural proficiency of elementary and middle school leaders was not addressed. Third, the study did not investigate thoughts and actions of ELs or their families. This was a case study of school leaders working at one school who were all of the English-speaking majority culture, and who were, with one exception, White.

This study employed three forms of data collection—observation, surveys, and follow-up interviews—in addition to review of selected school documents published digitally or in hard copy. The study defined school leaders as those holding the following positions: principal, assistant principals, district-wide supervisors, curriculum coordinators, and department heads.
As this chapter concludes a dissertation that revealed the pressing need to address these school leaders’ cultural proficiency, this researcher calls to action all current and future school leaders. Through a school leader’s commitment to application of culturally proficient practices relevant for ELs and their families; continuing relevant professional development; attitudes and beliefs that consider diversity as an opportunity to learn rather than homogenize; and reflection regarding the rationale for all school policies and practices, every school can become a place where all students and families feel welcomed, are afforded the opportunity to thrive, and are supported on their path to academic and personal success. This must be the professional mission of all school leaders: “It always seems impossible until it is done.” (Nelson Mandela 1918–2013). As a school leader myself, I am inspired by the following words of Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888): “I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship.”

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the dissertation and discussion of its research findings on cultural proficiency of school leaders at a Level 3 urban high school located in a Level 3 school district in Massachusetts, where approximately 25% of students and their families were English Learners. Discussion of findings was organized according to each of the three research questions.

Evidence across all findings indicated that the attitudes and behaviors of the school leader participants were not yet culturally proficient: indeed, they were operating on the Tolerance For Diversity side of the cultural proficiency continuum (CPC2 Model as adapted from Lindsey et al., 2013), meaning that these school leaders performed in their positions as if differences between cultures did not exist, and therefore refused to recognize that the needs of EL students
differed from those of the other 75% of students at the school, who were English-proficient (Lindsey et al., 2013).

Based on the study findings, recommendations were developed for professional practice, professional development, and future research. In addition, an action plan that connects research with practice was provided to facilitate urgent change in this urban high school. Limitations and delimitations of the study concluded this chapter.
## Appendix A: Overview of Research Literature by Database and Key Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>Data Base</th>
<th>Number of studies/selected</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Research Area/Country/Language Group</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>School Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant parents + barriers + parental involvement</td>
<td>ProQuest Central Dissertations</td>
<td>14/1</td>
<td>Hara, May</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Parental involvement U.S. Multiple languages</td>
<td>17 parents (10 White, 2 African American, 2 Asian/Asian American, 3 Latina)</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17 teachers (6 White, 3 African American, 2 Asian/Asian American, 5 Latina, 1 Mixed race)</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant parents + school involvement</td>
<td>ProQuest Central</td>
<td>13/1</td>
<td>Denessen, Bakker &amp; Giervald</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>School and parent communication Netherlands Multiple languages</td>
<td>3 principals, 1 administrator (not a principal)</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural models + parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>39/3</td>
<td>Lopez</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Parental involvement Texas Spanish</td>
<td>1 Mexican family of (im) migrant workers</td>
<td>V</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lopez, Scribner, &amp; Mahitivanichcha</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>School practices of parental involvement Texas Spanish</td>
<td>4 effective migrant-impacted school districts</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Auerbach</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Parental perspectives California Spanish and English</td>
<td>16 parents (African American and Latino)</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant parents + parental involvement</td>
<td>Social Sciences Citations Index (ISI)</td>
<td>69/5</td>
<td>Coll, Akiba, Palacios, Bailey, DiMartino &amp; Chin</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Parental expectations, Obstacles U.S. Cambodian, Dominican, and Portuguese</td>
<td>334 parents (99 Portuguese, 101 Dominican, 134 Cambodian)</td>
<td>E &amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Words</td>
<td>Data Base</td>
<td>Number studies/ selected</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Research Area/Country/ Language Group</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>School Level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of ELLs + parental involvement</td>
<td>20/12</td>
<td>Delgado-Gaitian</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Parental involvement, Obstacles U.S.; Spanish</td>
<td>Mexican American parents* 157 interactions</td>
<td>E &amp; M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connors &amp; Epstein</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Parental, student and teacher perspectives Maryland; English</td>
<td>420 families, 1,300 students, 150 teachers</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linse</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Parental involvement School practices</td>
<td>Examined the use of a taxonomy to evaluate the approaches schools use to engage parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cairney</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Parental involvement, cultural deficit UK, Australia, U.S.; English</td>
<td>Review of the literature regarding parental involvement, 1960- mid 1990s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel-White</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Parental involvement, Cultural deficit Northeastern U.S.; Spanish</td>
<td>1 Costa Rican family</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Words</td>
<td>Data Base</td>
<td>Number studies/selected</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Research Area/Country/Language Group</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>School Level</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trueba</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Parental involvement Obstacles</td>
<td>Review of the literature supporting the hypothesis that oppression and abuse faced by immigrants can generate resiliency and social capital</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Crozier</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Parental perspectives United Kingdom; English</td>
<td>58 parents (English)</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perreira, Chapman &amp; Stein</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Obstacles U.S. Spanish</td>
<td>18 Latino parents</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Smokowski, Rose &amp; Bacallao</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Acculturation North Carolina and Arizona Spanish</td>
<td>402 Latino parents</td>
<td>M &amp; H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeynes</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>Review of the literature regarding the subtle aspects of parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Panferov</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Parental expectations Midwest of the U.S. Russian &amp; Somali</td>
<td>2 immigrant families</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vera, Israel, Coyle, Cross, Knight-Lynn, Moallem &amp; Goldberger</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Parental involvement, Obstacles U.S. Multiple languages</td>
<td>239 parents of ELs (53% Mexican, 10% American, 6% Ukrainian, 4% Japanese, 3% Russian, 3% Korean, remaining 20% representing 22 other countries)</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Methods and Locations of Selected Prior Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auerbach</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Los Angeles, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carreon et al.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connors &amp; Epstein</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>mixed-methods</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crozier</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>mixed-methods</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel-White</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delgado-Gaitain</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Southern California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denessen et al.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doucet</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcia Coll et al.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lopez, et al.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panferow</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park &amp; Holloway</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>mixed-methods</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perreira et al.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vera et al.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>mixed-methods</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
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</table>
### Appendix C: Purposes and Sampling in Selected Prior Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents of ELs: obstacles faced</td>
<td>Delgado-Gaitan (1991)</td>
<td>Mexican American parents (sample size undetermined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coll et al. (2002)</td>
<td>99 Portuguese parents, 101 Dominican parents, 134 Cambodian parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perreira et al. (2006)</td>
<td>18 first-generation Latino immigrant parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carreón et al. (2005)</td>
<td>3 Latino parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smokowski et al. 2008</td>
<td>402 Latino families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vera et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Parents representing 28 different cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement: U.S. majority-culture norms</td>
<td>Connors &amp; Epstein (1994)</td>
<td>Parents, administration, students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doucet (2011)</td>
<td>54 Haitian parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Park &amp; Holloway (2013)</td>
<td>3,248 participants (Latino, white and Black parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panferov (2010)</td>
<td>2 immigrant families; one from Russia and one from Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent perspectives on the parent and/or teacher role</td>
<td>Auerbach (2007)</td>
<td>16 working class African American and Latino parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crozier (2006)</td>
<td>58 participants, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lopez (2001)</td>
<td>1 Mexican (im)migrant working family, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Community communication</td>
<td>Denessen et al., (2007)</td>
<td>4 school administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lopez et al., (2001)</td>
<td>4 school districts with parental involvement practices for migrant workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural deficit theory</td>
<td>Daniel-White (2002)</td>
<td>1 family, Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Letter of Consent

Letter of Consent to Participate in

*Inquiry into High School Leaders’ Cultural Proficiency* Study

Dear Education Leader:

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Johanna E. Fawcett, from the Educational Leadership Ph.D. program at Lesley University. The results of this research study will contribute Ms. Fawcett’s dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your position as a high school leader in a school with a growing population of English Language Learners.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This research is designed to study how high school leaders identify their beliefs and behaviors as they relate to cultural proficiency. The conceptual framework for this research was based upon the work of Lindsey, Roberts and Campbell Jones (2013), which focused on assisting school leaders in making positive and transformative changes in their respective positions and schools.

Culturally Proficient describes those who engage in a "paradigmatic shift from viewing others as problematic to viewing those one works with as people different from one's self in a manner to ensure effective practices" (Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008, p.21)

- **PROCEDURES**

If you decide to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. **Complete a questionnaire**

   If you consent to participating in this research study, you will be emailed a questionnaire titled, Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire

   The questionnaire may take roughly 45 minutes

   After you submit the questionnaire, I will send an email, acknowledging receipt of the survey.

   I will then email you asking to schedule a follow-up interview
2. **Participate in a follow-up interview**

   The interview will be approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

  By participating in this research, you will be adding to the body of literature related to school leaders and the challenges they face in leading schools in the 21st century. The data collected from this research will identify the areas where school leaders feel knowledgeable in terms of cultural proficiency. The data will also identify where new or additional professional development is required to assist school leaders in developing their cultural proficiency. As an individual, you will be able to grow your professional understanding of cultural proficiency and how it relates to English Language Learners.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

  Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms, deletion of emails, and destruction of all transcriptions. All information will be kept in a locker drawer and computers/technology will be passcode protected.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

  You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. If you have questions before signing this consent form, please contact me either through email or phone.

  Email: jafawcett@methuen.k12.ma.us or johannafawcett@comcast.net or jfawcett@lesley.edu

  Phone number: 978-790-1639

  If you have additional questions, you can contact my senior advisor or a chair of the Lesley Institutional Review Board:

  Senior advisor: Dr. Maria de Lourdes B. Serpa mserpa@lesley.edu

  IRB chair: Terry Keeney tkeeney@lesley.edu

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

  You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.
I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant                                Date

Signature of Participant                                    Date
Appendix E: Culturally Proficient Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire

Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire
- Copy

Dear Participants:

Thank you for your participation in this research with the purpose of investigating the cultural proficiency of school leaders in relation to culturally and linguistically diverse English Language Learners in an urban school district.

The conceptual framework for this questionnaire entitled Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire was based upon the work of Lindsey, Roberts and Campbell Jones (2013), which has focused on assisting school leaders in identifying their beliefs and behaviors related to cultural proficiency.

Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. All responses will be complied together and analyzed as a group. Please read each statement and using the scale below select the word - number that most accurately reflects your beliefs and/or actions at this time in your professional life as follows:

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. About Half the Time
4. Usually
5. Always

Thank You, Gracias, Merci, Obrigada, Mesi, Shukran, Dhanyavaad

Johanna
Cultural Proficiency Inquiry: School Leaders Questionnaire

Q1 Please select the option that indicates the number of years you have served in your current position.

- 5 years or less (1)
- 6 to 10 years (2)
- 11 to 15 years (3)
- 16 to 20 years (4)
- More than 20 years (5)

Q2 Do you speak a language(s) other than English?

- No (1)
- Yes. If yes, please indicate the language(s). (2)

________________________________________________

If yes, please indicate at what WIDA level (1: Beginner - 6: Highly Proficient) you speak the other language(s) (3)

________________________________________________

Q3 Have you ever studied abroad?

- No (1)
- Yes. If yes, please indicate the country/countries and language(s) of instruction. (2)

________________________________________________

Q4 I uphold the belief that ELs are a positive resource in my school/district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q5 I use my knowledge of Language Learning Education research to ensure both grade level achievement and proficiency in English for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students including English Learners (ELs) [CLD/EL].

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q6 I analyze demographic data relative to all ELs and meet with staff to share findings and discuss culturally and linguistically effective practices that promote grade level achievement as required by No Child Left Behind Act.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q7 I endorse the idea that focusing on studying cultural and linguistic differences of my school community is a divisive approach to education.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q8 I uphold policies that are Culturally Responsive to address the specific needs of ELs, their families and their respective modes of communication (languages).

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q9 I acknowledge that historically there has been legal lack of access to educational equity for students from minority language groups in the USA.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q10 My school/school district provides interpreters for families of ELs to communicate and participate in school related activities (e.g. meeting with teachers for various reasons, school meetings)

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q11 I ensure the implementation of Common Core grade-level standards in academics by requiring *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive* classroom instruction with all ELs appropriate to the different levels of English proficiency.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q12 My school/school district provides alternative meeting times in the evening and locations to be responsive to the needs of the families of ELs in my community.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q13 I sponsor an approach that leads educators in my school/district to examine their own understanding about the research-based cultural and linguistic needs of ELs and their families.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q14 I address educational reform as a pathway to ensure a quality education for ELs in my school/district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q15 I require the addition of multicultural units within the curriculum for all students (ELs plus majority culture students) in the school/district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q16 I provide professional development to my staff to ensure their understanding of the characteristics of the diverse languages and specific cultures of the ELs in my school/district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q17 I require the integration of curriculum in which majority culture students learn to understand and value the diverse cultures of ELs in the school/district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q18 I promote multicultural education designed to ensure the visibility and understanding of all the diverse cultural and linguistic groups in my school/district community.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q19 I address educational reforms as driven by external audits, compliance reviews, litigation and/or monitory agencies.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q20 I am mandated to implement policies that I believe do not take into account the linguistic and cultural diversity brought to my school/district by the ELs and their families in regards to language, class, and race/ethnicity.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q21 I ensure the use of Common Core standards-based instruction in academics even though the instruction is only in English and the ELs are not yet proficient in English as a second language.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q22 I provide professional development for my staff that focuses on identifying and removing existing cultural and linguistic barriers to equitable education and grade-level achievement for ELs.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q23 I acknowledge that there continues to be educational inequity for some language minority groups of students in the United States Educational System as reflected by their achievement gap.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q24 I analyze demographic data in my school/district to assess the academic progress of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students including English Learners (ELs).

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q25 I explicitly require the use of books and other teaching resources that positively portray cultural and linguistically diverse group of the community in each classroom and in the school library.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q26 I provide a systematic orientation to newcomers and their families in their native language, about my school/district, including a tour of the building, the nurse’s office, bathrooms, exit doors and school rules.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q27 I require my monolingual staff to communicate via an interpreter with our families of ELs (who speak a language other than English) in their language or mode of communication.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)
Q28 I recruit families of ELs to participate on Parent Advisory Committees (PACS), School Advisory Committees, and other committees that specifically address concerns of every specific cultural and linguistic group in my school district.

- Never (1)
- Seldom (2)
- About Half the Time (3)
- Usually (4)
- Always (5)

Q29 Please select the title that best describes the position you currently hold.

- Principal (7)
- Associate Principal (6)
- Department Head (5)
- Curriculum Coordinator (4)
- District-wide Supervisor or Director (3)
- Building Supervisor (2)
- Other (8)

Q30 If there is a statement that you would like to expand upon, please indicate the number of the statement and write your comment or explanation in the space provided. Thank you for your participation.

- Write your comment or explanation here: (1)

- Write your comment or explanation here: (2)

- Write your comment or explanation here: (3)

Thank you for your time and responses. Your participation is contributing to improving the quality of education for English Learners and the engagement of their families in school. If you
would like to receive a copy of the results of this research, please check the yes box.
If you would not like to receive a copy of the results of this research, please check the no box.

○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)
Appendix F: School Leaders’ Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol

School Leaders’ Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol

The School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol was developed after an analysis of the data collected by the Cultural Proficiency Questionnaire: School Leaders Questionnaire. The responses to the Cultural Proficiency Questionnaire: School Leaders Questionnaire were provided by a sample of sixteen school leaders from one urban high school. After an analysis of the responses provided by the school leaders, additional questions were formed which necessitated further inquiry. The purpose of the School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview Protocol is to develop a more complete understanding of the level of cultural proficiency of the school leaders at one urban high school.

THEME: BUILDING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

1. Educational equity is a right of all students in the U.S. as well as in this high school. However, the Latino and other minorities are experiencing an achievement gap compared to their White peers. [The 2015 report card on the High School, provided by Massachusetts Department of Education, shows this achievement gap]. In 2015, 235 White students took the 2015 MCAS Math assessment, 9 (28%) failed yet of the 101 Latinos, 28 (28%) failed and of the 13 ELLs, 9 (69%) failed. Similarly, 237 White students took the 2015 MCAS ELA assessment, 0 failed yet of the 102 Latinos, 11 (11%) failed and of the 13 ELLs, 5 (38%) failed. Has this achievement gap of the Latinos and other student minorities led to an action plan? What concrete steps are you currently taking to meet the expectations of the action plan? What help do you need?

2. Spanish is the second language of this country and the largest minority language in this school community. M High School has 229 families who speak Spanish. What are the plans to first, validate and use the Spanish the students already now and second, capitalize on the positive resources brought to the school by the families of the ELs in a 21st-century Global World?

THEME: CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

3. How do you explain culturally responsiveness to your faculty and have it be relevant to them in their practice in this high school in which ¼ of the student population comes from families who speak a non-English language?
4. We know that proficient bilingual teachers can teach both native English speakers and ELs. To develop a more culturally responsive school, what is the plan to hire additional bilingual staff and incorporate more of the languages spoken by the families of this school community within the school environment?

5. As you know ELs are required to learn the academic Content of the Common Core Standards. What instructional needs are you aware of, that ELs have that differ from the English proficient students to be able to learn and succeed at grade level? What research informs your leadership policy in regards to Language learning and academic achievement?

THEME: FAMILY COMMUNICATION

6. The No Child Left Behind Act, now ESSA mandated that schools develop partnerships/relationships with all families, specifically families of English Language Learners. What have you done or plan to do in this regard? How frequently do you recruit families of ELs to be members of school groups and do you provide alternative meeting times for these families?

7. The MHS student handbook is already available in Spanish on the web. What school materials are chosen to be translated into other languages and what languages are they translated into? How do families, whose native language is not Spanish, access the student handbook and other school information?

8. In a high school with 433 families who speak a language other than English, 323 of them speak Spanish, how do you ensure your staff is able to communicate with families of ELs in a language understood by the families, with accuracy and culturally sensitivity or responsiveness?

9. As indicated earlier, there are 433 families of this school community who speak a language other than English; 20 languages are represented by these families. How do you support staff and families of nonnative speakers at parent conferences and parent meetings?

THEME: INCREASING VISIBILITY

10. Currently, to your knowledge, what materials within the school’s physical plant and/or in the staff’s curriculum positively portray the cultural and linguistic diversity of the ELs and families of this school community? Please give me some examples
11. What are the plans to make ELs and their families visible in the environment, in the library, in the media, in the school events, etc.?

THEME: TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

12. What professional development have you taken to understand the diverse EL population and their diverse educational and emotional needs to attain grade-level achievement? What professional development has been provided to you and your staff in the last 5 years? What were the outcomes?

13. What are the plans for professional development in regards to preparing your education professionals in the enhancement and growth in their cultural proficiency?

This concludes the School Leaders Cultural Proficiency Interview. Do you have any further comments that you would like to add to your responses or any comments to make in general before we conclude our time together?

Thank you for your insight, professionalism and time.

Your participation in my research will help broaden the literature in the area of cultural proficiency within the high school setting.

Thank you.
Appendix G: High School Observational Data

G 1. Outside school
G 2. Front vestibule
G 3. Hallway to main office
G 4. Main office (facing monolingual English secretary)
G 5. Side view of main office
G 6. Main entrance to media center
G 7. Information posted in media center about research papers and printers in English
G 8. Information posted in media center
G 9. First page of school’s website
G 10. High school handbooks in English and Spanish (only bilingual document)

G 1. Outside school
G 2. Front vestibule

G 3. Hallway to main office
G 4. Main office (facing monolingual English secretary)

G 5. Side view of the main office
G 6. Main entrance to media center

G 7. Information posted in media center about research papers and printers in English
G 8. Information posted in the media center
G 9. First page of school’s webpage
WELCOME LETTER
September 2017

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Welcome to the [School Name]! This school year is my third as principal and it is an honor and a privilege to lead the [School Name]. We have a proud history of providing the best learning experiences for students and our goal is to once again raise the bar.

In 2017-2018, students will continue to learn with an emphasis on 21st century learning expectations. Our 1-to-1 iPad program is entering its fifth year, and high-quality instruction and student engagement will be a priority in every classroom. Lessons will be designed and delivered to stimulate collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. All students will be challenged. College and career readiness is the priority, and it is our mission for all students to be prepared to access any desired post-secondary opportunity.

[School Name] is a large, comprehensive high school with a diverse student population. To meet the needs of all students, we foster an inclusive learning environment - enabling learners of all types to access course content, participate in learning activities, and demonstrate understanding. Our implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) along with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) began last year and will continue this year. A focus this year will be familiarizing our faculty with Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Through the principles of UDL, learning experiences are designed to meet the needs of the widest range of learners. The principles of PBIS, SEL, and UDL combine to provide the framework necessary to cultivate an inclusive school environment that is safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning for all. We aim to educate the whole student.

A successful high school experience requires committed partnering between community members, parents and guardians, and high school staff. This “village of caregivers” working together will provide the support network necessary for student success. We are a community built on pride, and this pride will inspire and empower students to take advantage of all that [School Name] has to offer.

It is with great enthusiasm that I enter the 2017-2018 school year as principal of [School Name]. I look forward to working together to provide our students with a rich learning experience. I wish everyone the very best this school year.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

DISTRICT GOALS
In order to improve student achievement at all levels and across the curriculum, the district will pursue the following goals:

1. Provide, supervise and sustain effective interventions to increase the success of all underperforming students, including those in the transient and subgroup populations.
2. Continue curriculum development and revision and ensure appropriate classroom implementation of new curricula.
3. Provide, supervise, and support effective instruction that communicates high expectations and the meets the needs of all learners.
5. Expand parental communication and involvement in the schools.
CARTA DE BIENVENIDA
Septiembre de 2017
Estimados Padres, Tutores y Estudiantes:

Este año escolar es mi tercero como principal y es un honor y un privilegio dirigir la comunidad de la [Nombre del Lugar]. Nosotros tenemos un gran historial de proveer las mejores experiencias de aprendizaje para los estudiantes y nuestra meta es que una vez más lleguemos más allá de los límites de excelencia académica.

En el 2017-2018, los estudiantes seguirán aprendiendo con énfasis en las expectativas de aprendizaje del siglo veintiuno. Nuestro programa de iPad 1 a 1 está entrando en su quinto año, y la instrucción de alta calidad y el compromiso de los estudiantes será una prioridad en cada salón de clase. Las lecciones estarán diseñadas y entregadas para estimular la colaboración, la comunicación, la creatividad y el pensamiento crítico. Todos los estudiantes serán desafiados. La preparación de la Universidad de la carrera es la prioridad, y es nuestra misión para que todos los estudiantes estén preparados para acceder a cualquier oportunidad post-secundaria deseada.

[Nombre del Lugar] High es una Escuela Secundaria grande, amplia con una población estudiantil diversa. Para satisfacer las necesidades de todos los estudiantes, fomentamos un ambiente de aprendizaje inclusivo-permitiendo que los estudiantes de todo tipo tengan acceso al contenido del curso, participen en actividades de aprendizaje, y demuestren comprensión. Nuestra implementación de (PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) “Intervenciones y Apoyos de Comportamiento Positivos junto con (SEL: Social and Emotional Learning)” “el Aprendizaje Social y Emocional” comenzó el año pasado y continuará este año. Un enfoque este año será familiarizándonos con nuestra facultad con (UDL: Universal Design for Learning) “el Diseño Universal para el Aprendizaje”. A través de los principios de UDL, las experiencias de aprendizaje están diseñadas para cumplir las necesidades de la amplia gama de principiantes. Los principios de PBIS, SEL y UDL se combinan para proporcionar el marco necesario para cultivar un ambiente escolar inclusivo que sea seguro, de apoyo, y conducente a la enseñanza y el aprendizaje para todos. Pretendemos a educar al estudiante completo.

Una experiencia exitosa de la escuela secundaria requiere una asociación comprometida entre miembros de la comunidad, padres y tutores, y el personal de la escuela secundaria. Este “pueblo de cuidadores” que trabajan juntos proporcionará la conexión de apoyo necesaria para el éxito educacional. Esta escuela debe ser una comunidad basada en el orgullo, y este orgullo inspirará y empoderará a los estudiantes para aprovechar todo lo que MHS tiene que ofrecer.

Es con gran entusiasmo que entro en el año 2017-2018 como [Nombre del Lugar] High Principal. Espero trabajar juntos para proporcionar a nuestros estudiantes una experiencia de aprendizaje rica. Les deseo a todos lo mejor este año escolar.

Atentamente,

[Nombre del Lugar] High
Principal
Appendix H: Language Learning Education Programs in Massachusetts, with Achievement Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Grade Level Achievement</th>
<th>Language Proficiency Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-Way Bilingual + 2Way</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>ENGLISH Academic Proficiency Including LITERACY 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Bilingual Education and other bilingual education</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>SPANISH PORTUGUESE FRENCH, etc., Academic Proficiency Including LITERACY 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>English Only 120% of students succeed, Literacy 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPTOUT*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>English Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Enrolled in an English language learner program</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>English Only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Used with permission.
Appendix I: Languages Spoken by Families in the School Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken (2015–2016)</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verdean Creole</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (Mandarin)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creole (Haitian Creole)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khmer</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Languages: 19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Families: 433</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J. Student Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group (2015-2016)</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Learners (ELs)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former English Learners (FELs)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Language not English (FLNEs)</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students with culturally and linguistically diverse families</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard 3: Family and Community Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator A: Engagement</th>
<th>Indicator B: Sharing Responsibility</th>
<th>Indicator C: Communication Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator D: Family Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>Elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation Part III:

Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator, and Teacher,

Examples of Proficiency for Standard III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator III-A. Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the classroom, school, and community’s effectiveness.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III-A-1 Family Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III-A-2 Community and Business Engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator III-B. Sharing Responsibility: Continuously collaborates with families to support student learning and development both at home and at school.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III-B-1 Student Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III-B-2 Family Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator III-C. Communication: Engages in regular, two-way, culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III-C-1 Two-way communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III-C-2 Culturally Proficient Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator III-D. Family Concerns: Addresses family concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III-D-1 Family Concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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