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## Transformative Community School Practices and Impacts: A Tale of Two Community Schools

Aixle D. Aman

*Loyola Marymount University*

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Aixle D. Aman

Loyola Marymount University, [aixleaman@gmail.com](mailto:aixleaman@gmail.com)

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Transformative Community School Practices and Impacts:

A Tale of Two Community Schools

by

Aixle D. Aman

A dissertation presented to the Faculty of the School of Education,

Loyola Marymount University,

in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

2017

Transformative Community School Practices and Impacts:

A Tale of Two Community Schools

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by

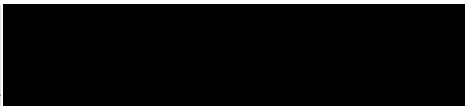
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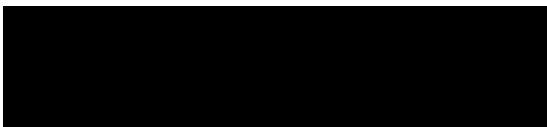
This dissertation written by Aixle D. Aman, under the direction of the Dissertation Committee, is approved and accepted by all committee members, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Date July 1, 2017

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## **ABSTRACT**

Transformative Community School Practices and Impacts:

A Tale of Two Community Schools

by

Aixle D. Aman

Students are coming to school with myriad issues that teachers and schools cannot address alone. Ecological systems theory posits that the environments with which a child comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, can impact her or his development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). With the support of community partner organizations in the local community, community schools can effectively respond to students' needs and help them navigate the interconnected web of environments. Through interviews, focus groups, and a document review, this cross-site case study explored the practices that are employed by community school leaders (school staff and employees of community partner organizations) at two pilot high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), to implement six guiding principles of community schools.

The study also captured impacts of these practices through participants' perceptions, documents, and the application of transformative leadership theory. The findings revealed that the pilot school model is a natural avenue for the community schools strategy, and that

intentional practices and a shared vision by all stakeholders can result in transformative impacts on students and the school as a whole. District and school leaders could consider developing processes and systems for implementing a community schools strategy district-wide by providing funding for community school coordinators for school sites, working with school leaders to develop their shared decision-making skills, and leveraging the assets and resources of community partners.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

It takes a village to raise a child.

—African Proverb

Since the early 19th century, the education movement has acknowledged that educating a child requires the work and support of more than just the teacher, or even the family. Oftentimes, students come to class with a variety of needs that teachers or families are unable to address. Since the social center movement and social reconstructionism in the early 20th century, schools were seen as places that would provide health and social services and would be anchors in their communities (Rogers, 1998). The current community school movement has continued this focus on integrated services, but has added components of rigorous teaching and learning, collaboration, and shared decision making. This study sought to identify what is currently happening in two community schools that are part of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

#### **Problem Statement**

Students are going to school with an increasing number of social, emotional, and physical needs. These stressors are barriers to teacher success and student learning. Children do not learn well if they are hungry, sick, have inadequate housing, or are emotionally impacted by the violence in their community. Schools are being asked to find ways to address these concerns in order to accomplish their educational missions effectively. Wrap-around services and supports for students are being developed in order to meet students' needs, but schools have their limitations, too. Schools can collaborate and coordinate with other public and private agencies and organizations in order to address children's multiple needs and support their overall growth

and development. By doing so, schools potentially can be places that impact the lives of students, their families, and the overall community.

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) serves a wide range of students and families in a diverse setting. According to LAUSD's Fingertip Facts (2016), 77% of students qualified for free- or reduced-priced meals, which is often an indicator used synonymously as living in poverty. There were over 94 languages other than English spoken in LAUSD. In 2017, the LAUSD was the second largest school district in the country and served over 600,000 students in grades K–12. Los Angeles schools often need additional supports, services, and resources to meet students' holistic needs. It can be difficult for schools to mitigate all of the health, emotional, social, and mental health barriers students face, and often bring into their classrooms. The village of local community groups, businesses, and organizations can come together to support schools through resources and direct services. A 2015 financial report written by an independent financial review panel made publicly clear that the LAUSD was experiencing serious financial difficulties. "The LAUSD is facing a significant structural deficit in its operating budget that threatens the District's long-term financial viability" (Anguiano et al., 2015, p. 6). Given resource limitations in Los Angeles and across the country, the district can leverage the assets of local community partnerships and organizations to provide resources and holistic services that meet students' needs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Potapchuck (2013) and the national Coalition for Community Schools have recognized six guiding principles of effective community schools. These guiding principles are discussed below and in the next chapter. The purpose of this study was to identify what practices

community school leaders employed to implement these guiding principles of an effective community school and what impacts these leaders perceived these practices had on student learning and school effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

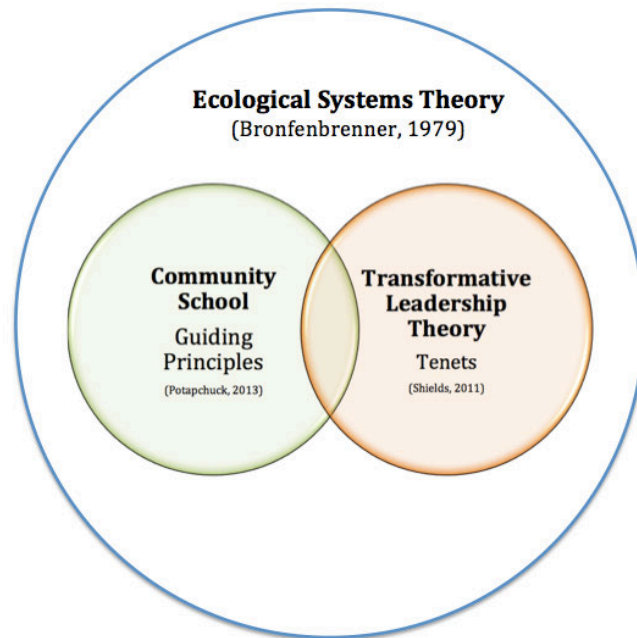
This study focused on the following research questions: *What practices do community school leaders employ to implement guiding principles of a community school? What impacts do community school leaders perceive these practices have?* To answer these questions, this study collected data on these practices and their perceived impacts through focus groups and interviews with school-site leaders within the community school and with community partners that collaborated with the community school. Some of the identified impacts were verified through an analysis of documents that were provided by the school or community partner organization, or through public sources. The document analysis also included a review of the school and community partner organizations' mission statements, demographic data, the school report cards, and the school experience surveys.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this research was based on an integration of three main elements: (a) ecological systems theory, (b) six guiding principles of an effective community school, and (c) transformative leadership theory. The guiding principles of a community school served as the foundation of this study and the development of the data collection protocols. Ecological system theory was the lens through which the study was viewed. Transformative leadership theory was one of the lenses by which the data were analyzed. The three elements are graphically depicted below, in Figure 1. This conceptual framework situated a community school



within the context of ecological systems theory, as it relates to the multiple environments into which a student comes in contact. Transformative Leadership Theory was an additional lens through which the data were analyzed.



*Figure 1.1.* Conceptual framework.

### **Ecological Systems Theory**

As it relates to education, ecological systems theory suggests that a child’s environments, and the people, entities, or things within them, influence a child’s overall development.

ecological systems theory is a theory of environmental connectedness and the impacts of these environments on the growth of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). People are dynamic entities that are influenced by the environments they interact with. Bronfenbrenner described several different systems that affect a child’s development, of which this study initially focused on two—the microsystem and mesosystem. The microsystem refers to the interactions within the

child's immediate setting, which can include the child's family, classroom, and peer group. The mesosystem refers to interconnected settings in which the child participates. Figure 1.2 is an adapted graphical representation of ecological systems theory. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, this figure graphically depicts the interconnectedness of a child's environments, as it relates to education.

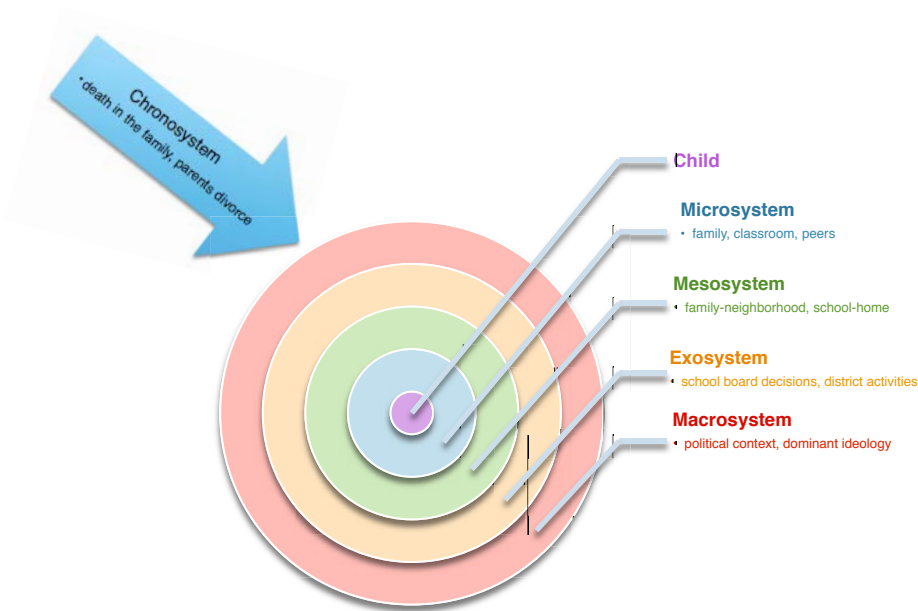


Figure 1.2. Ecological systems theory.

In this study, ecological systems theory was the primary lens through which the role of a community school was viewed. Bronfenbrenner (1979) concluded that community school leaders and partners often engaged multiple ecological systems in order to meet the holistic needs of the child, especially as the child came into contact with various environments.

### **Guiding Principles of Community Schools**

To mitigate the barriers to learning presented earlier, Los Angeles schools are being asked to meet the wide-range of needs students bring with them every day to their schools and

classrooms. A *community school* is a “strategy” or “approach” to educate the whole child by leveraging resources and partnerships within the greater community (Dryfoos, 2005; Potapchuck, 2013). It is not a “program” or “model.” Individual initiatives may be referred to as specific models; however, the overall principles of a community school movement are a type of strategy that can be employed. The community school movement began with John Dewey and the settlement house movement in the early 19th century (Rogers, 1998). Dryfoos (2003) described ways in which community schools can look different than traditional public schools, including being open for extended hours, housing multiple social and health services on the campus, and having a full-time community school coordinator who is responsible for coordinating with community partners. Williams-Boyd (2010) posited that community schools focus on two goals: “The success of students and the health of families and their communities” (p. 9). For the sake of this study, six guiding principles of an effective community schools were selected:

- They have a clear and shared vision and are accountable for results.
- Their collaborative partners share resources and expertise.
- There have high expectations and standards.
- They align the assets of local organizations and the community members who live and work in the community.
- They respect the diversity and identity of community members with diverse backgrounds.
- They share the decision-making power with local community leaders and families. (Potapchuck, 2013)

These guiding principles served as the foundation for the development of the data collection instruments created to answer this study’s research questions.

## **Transformative Leadership Theory**

An additional theory used during the data analysis process was Transformative Leadership Theory (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011; Shields, 2011; Starratt, 2011). To narrow the focus of this study, four transformative leadership tenets were used and examined more deeply:

- acknowledging power and privilege;
- working toward democracy;
- articulating individual and collective purpose; and
- demonstrating cultural competence (Shields, 2011, p. 5).

The four transformative leadership tenets were operationally defined accordingly for the purposes of this study.

**Transformative leadership tenet 1: Acknowledging power and privilege.** The first transformative leadership tenet acknowledges how institutions continue to marginalize groups and consider material disparities hindrances to an individual's progress. Additionally, this tenet examined the extent to which dominating, hegemonic cultures were perpetuated and assumptions were deconstructed.

**Transformative leadership tenet 2: Working toward democracy.** The second transformative leadership tenet was operationally defined as the school's efforts to be a place of democracy, where all voices and languages are respected, and where students are empowered to voice their opinions. Being a place of democracy involved having a self-governing community, with student, parent, and teacher representatives involved in discussions and decisions that promoted the primary agenda of the school: teaching and learning.

**Transformative leadership tenet 3: Articulating individual and collective purpose.**

This tenet involved the balance between academics and world experiences, such that academics connected students to their personal experiences, futures, and local community context. Students were viewed as global citizens and engaged with the school in a larger, shared purpose.

**Transformative leadership tenet 4: Demonstrating cultural competence.** This study operationally defined the fourth transformative leadership tenet in such a way that cultural competence extended beyond race, gender, ability, and religion. Experiences were also considered part of culture, especially if students identified experiences that shaped them. Additionally, cultural competence involved differentiating between good and bad stereotypes. The research study explored the extent to which the practices and perceived impacts corresponded to these four tenets of Transformative Leadership Theory.

**Significance of the Study**

Based on the review of the research, currently only a limited number of studies have focused on community schools in Los Angeles. Evaluative reports that included examples of community schools across the nation often highlighted only one community school in Los Angeles, in addition to other approaches across the nation. This study provides researchers and community school leaders with a comparison of two different community school approaches in L.A. Unified. A review of the literature also revealed limited research that highlighted the perspectives of community partner organizations that forged alliances with the community schools. This study gathered the perspectives of individuals who represented a total of 12 different community partner organizations, including the intermediary partners that funded the community school coordinators, which worked with the participating schools—Community

School 1 (CS1) and Community School 2 (CS2). Lastly, regarding the analysis of the data, an additional round of coding was used involving transformative leadership theory. Frankl (2016) linked concepts that emphasized how community schools can transform struggling schools into thriving communities. This study intended to directly link community schools to specific transformative leadership tenets through the analysis of the data.

### **Context of the Study**

This study focused on two schools within the LAUSD that employed the community schools strategy. Both schools are pilot high schools in the district and have similar enrollments and demographic populations. Based on these guiding principles and other research on community schools, three *structural elements* were developed for this study, which aided in the selection of the two participating schools:

1. Partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports.
2. Collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making.
3. A full-time community school coordinator.

Additionally, the two community schools in this study both worked closely with an intermediary partner organization that funded the community school coordinator that worked with the school.

### **Overview of Methods**

The research design was a cross-site qualitative case study analysis. The research questions focused on community school leaders. These leaders were defined as those who were directly managing the community school strategy within the school site, and those who were part of community partner organizations that brought services and resources into the schools. As part of the data collection, interviews were conducted with the school principal and community

school coordinator. Additionally, focus groups were conducted with the school principal and other faculty, including teachers. Principals were asked to select school leaders that they believed were essential to the implementation of the community school strategy at the school site. Additionally, individuals that were employed by community partner organizations and collaborated with the schools also participated in individual interviews. Lastly, documents were analyzed to corroborate some of the data the participants provided, with regard to the perceived impacts of their practices. These documents included mission statements, school report cards, and school experience surveys results. Ultimately, the data analysis involved a triangulation of the data collected from the focus groups, interviews, and documents.

### **Findings**

The findings were organized by themes of practices for each of the guiding principles of community schools. Impacts were identified for each theme of practices. Guiding principle one (shared vision and accountability) encompassed practices involving the integration of the school's thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning and the creation of a positive culture and climate on campus. Guiding principal two (collaborative partners that share resources and expertise) involved four themes of practices: (a) providing greater capacity to enhance teaching and learning, (b) providing real-world opportunities, (c) addressing social-emotional needs and trauma with holistic supports, and (d) navigating district requirements and policies. The themes found in guiding principle three (high expectations and standards) encompassed: the alignment of school-level teaching practices, student-centered teaching, and the support of students to become contributing members to their community.

Like guiding principle two, guiding principle four (align the assets of local community organizations and members) also focused on community partners, but with an emphasis on the school's actions to coordinate them. The themes that emerged under guiding principle four focused on the development of formal and informal structures for coordinating partners, and tapping into local community members. Guiding principle five (respect for the diversity and identity of community members) had four themes of practices that emerged from the data: (a) respect for the diverse profiles and experiences of students and families, (b) the creation of an inclusive environment, (c) curriculum that directly addresses identity, and (d) the celebration of language diversity on campus. Lastly, the themes that emerged under guiding principle six (shared decision-making power with community members) included: promoting student voice, encouraging teachers to share the responsibility of running the school, and creating formal structures to facilitate meaningful shared decision making. All of these specific practices are described more thoroughly in Chapter 4. The practices were also classified as having an impact on student learning or school effectiveness.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The final chapter reveals five main findings that emerged as a result of this study. First, the findings were clear that the LAUSD pilot school model serves as a natural avenue to implement the community schools strategy, especially since the pilot schools structure allowed the schools to operate in a way such that they were already implementing three of the six guiding principles of community schools. Additionally, all partners—school faculty, school staff, and community partner organizations—showed an intention to serve the specific needs that had been identified by the school. This intentionality and shared purpose is critical to having effective



community schools. Thirdly, the data revealed that the conceptual framework developed in this study ultimately created a framework for a *transformative community school*. The subsequent finding is that this transformative community school can help a student navigate the interconnected ecological systems with which she or he is constantly coming into contact. Lastly, the school principal is the linchpin that ensured that the guiding principles were implemented with fidelity and that decision-making was intentional and shared by the school community members, including the multiple community partner organizations that collaborated with the school. These findings, as well as their implications for future researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, are discussed in greater detail in the final chapter.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The data and generalizability of this study were limited because the study was conducted at two schools and involved small, pilot high schools, instead of large, comprehensive high schools. The study's research questions focused on practices and impacts; however, the findings revealed that significantly more practices were identified than impacts. This may have been due to the way the interview and focus group questions were written and asked, especially since the questions focused more on the leaders' roles as members of the school or organization, and less on their perceptions as individuals.

Regarding the delimitations to this study, the two community schools selected for this study encompassed the same grade levels, had similar enrollment sizes and demographics of students, and had the three structural elements developed by this study. Regarding the delimitations of the conceptual framework, each of the three components—ecological systems theory, guiding principles of effective community schools, and transformative leadership

theory—had specific elements that were selected for this study. This delimitation allowed the study to have a narrower focus.

### **Summary of Study**

This study sought to identify the types of practices being employed in two community schools in the LAUSD, and the impacts these practices had, as perceived by the community school leaders. This study focused on leaders of community partner organizations that helped implement the community schools strategy at school sites, and with school-site faculty and the community school coordinators who worked at the school. The practices were identified and categorized into themes. The respective impacts, as identified by the participants or reviewed in documents, were also identified, as they pertained to student learning and school effectiveness. Transformative impacts were also explored for each of the themes of practices. Future research and quantitative analyses could directly study the impacts of various practices on families and the overall community and could also explore the impacts of community schools on feeder patterns of schools from elementary to middle to high school.

### **Background and Role as the Researcher**

As the principal investigator, it is important to note that, at the time of conducting this research, I was also an employee of the Los Angeles Unified School District. More specifically, I worked in the office of elected school board member Dr. Ref Rodriguez, who represented District 5. The Board of Education is tasked with overseeing the work of the LAUSD superintendent of schools. I was particularly mindful of my professional role, as I connected with LAUSD staff members in the schools selected for this study. I clearly communicated that all individuals would remain anonymous and that their school would not be identifiable in any way.

## **Conclusion**

Ecological systems theory, as it pertains to education, states that children are impacted by the multiple systems (environments) that they either come into contact with directly or indirectly. If children have a negative experience with the environments that directly impact them (microsystem and mesosystem), they are unlikely to be as successful as peers who may not be experiencing similar challenges. Community schools can mitigate some of those barriers by tapping into the community's assets and building bridges between the school, the families, and the surrounding community. The community schools strategy recognizes that some students may have many barriers in life, while others who are privileged may have fewer or may have the resources to address them. Through this holistic strategy, educating children becomes the responsibility of the entire community.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Community schools that are collaboratively offering a quality, equitable education at the same site in which access to requisite health, human and social services for children and families is provided, graduate students with enhanced educational and psycho-social outcomes. Schools that serve as hubs of services are mediators of social justice in vulnerable and marginalized neighborhoods.

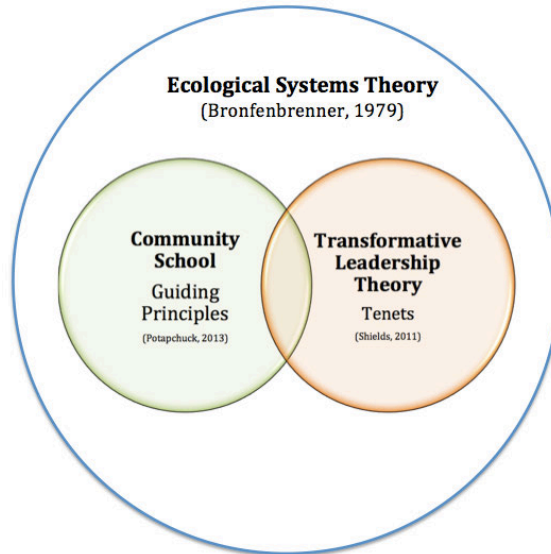
—Williams-Boyd

When people hear the term *community school* they might not know how it differs from any traditional public school. They may think that community members may be involved in the school, but might not necessarily think about how the school interacts with local community members and organizations. People may wonder what the involvement of community partners looks like at these schools, but they might not consider what non-negotiable structures need to be in place to ensure full coordination and integration of services. Community schools are not a new concept. The fact of the matter is that community schools have a history, some largely accepted characteristics and guiding principles, and definitions that share common elements. They focus on how to best educate the whole child, and they rely on collaborative partnerships to accomplish this goal.

#### Research Questions

This chapter begins by describing the conceptual framework that was used to guide the study and the review of the literature. The research questions are two-fold: *What practices do community school leaders employ to implement guiding principles of a community school? What impacts do community school leaders perceive these practices have?*

This study focused on what community school leaders are doing to implement guiding principles of community schools and what impacts they thought these practices may have had. Regarding the community schools strategy, this chapter defines community schools, provides a brief historical overview of the community school movement, and describes the traits and principles of effective community schools. Next, three examples of community school initiatives in the United States are explored—one national model and two local initiatives—to more thoroughly illustrate what community schools look like today. The components of this study's conceptual framework are examined in greater detail, beginning first with a description of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the different systems that can have direct and indirect impacts on a child's development. Finally, part of the analysis of the data involved the lens of transformative leadership theory (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011; Shields, 2010, 2011; Starratt, 2011), which is also explored in this chapter. As a review, the following figure, Figure 2.1, is the conceptual framework that guided this research study. This conceptual framework situates a community school within the context of ecological systems theory, as it relates to the multiple environments with which a student comes into contact. Transformative leadership theory is an additional lens through which the data were analyzed.



*Figure 2.1.* Conceptual framework.

The final section of this chapter provides additional context on the L.A. Unified School District and education policies impacting California.

### **The Community Schools Strategy**

This section defines and describes the community schools strategy, provides a history of the community schools movement, and explores three different community school approaches and their impacts on student learning and school effectiveness.

#### **Description**

While there is not a single definition for a community school, the research field is getting closer to a shared understanding of the core elements of one. Dryfoos (2003) wrote:

The phrase describes a school that is open most of the time; houses an array of supportive child and family health and social services provided through partnerships with community agencies; integrates quality classroom teaching with activities in extended hours; involves parents in significant ways; has a full-time coordinator; and serves as the hub of the community. (p. 203)

In attempting to conceptualize what a community school looks like, Dryfoos (2005) also argued that community schools are traditionally public schools: “They are not to be confused with charter schools, which operate outside the formal school system. These are regular public schools that are undergoing transformation within the system” (p. 7). Blank, Jacobson, and Melaville (2012) clarified that community schools can be any type of public school, including traditional, charter, alternative, magnet, or others. Community schools are not a “program,” they are a “strategy” or an “approach” (Dryfoos, 2005; Potapchuck, 2013); that is to say, someone interested in community schools could not simply adopt a standard format and impose it on a school site. Each community school model or initiative can look very different, and “each community school evolves according to the needs and resources of the population and the neighborhood” (Dryfoos, 2005, p. 8). Context, location, resources, and partnerships available are critical to determining what a community school will look like.

According to Rogers (1998), community schools were founded on the notion that schools should be more than just places of academic learning that are set apart from the local community context. Instead, Rogers argued, “community schooling seeks to: a) extend the domain and the reach of the school; b) infuse local experiences and knowledge into the curriculum; and c) foster fluid roles, responsibilities, and patterns of interchange between school and community” (pp. 9–10). The following section describes what an effective community school should look like.

### **Community School Guiding Principles and Traits**

Adapted from Potapchuck (2013), the following list summarizes the six guiding principles of an *effective* community school. Embedded in each is a focus on equity:

1. They have a clear and shared vision and are accountable for results.

2. Their collaborative partners share resources and expertise.
3. There are high expectations and standards.
4. They align the assets of local organizations and the community members who live and work in the community.
5. They respect the diversity and identity of community members with diverse backgrounds.
6. They share the decision-making power with local community leaders and families. (Potapchuck, 2013, p. 5)

These guiding principles emphasize the importance of the voices, partnerships, expectations, and strengths of the community leaders and residents. Guiding principle two (collaborative partners that share resources and expertise) and guiding principle six (align the assets of local community organizations and members) appear to be quite similar, as they are both focused on partnerships; however, this study interpreted the difference between the two principles to be that guiding principle two is focused on what the community partners bring to the table, while guiding principle four is focused on what the schools do to effectively coordinate and organize those partnerships to ensure that they are not duplicative, irrelevant, or burdensome on the school.

Richardson (2009) asserted that community schools adapt to the needs of the community, convene vital resources for their distinctive neighborhoods, and have school staff and administration that are responsive to community-defined needs. Williams-Boyd (2010) posited that community schools focus on two goals: “the success of students and the health of families and their communities” (p. 9). In order to mitigate the barriers to these two goals, community schools tap into a community’s social and cultural assets and build mutually beneficial bridges to families and to the larger neighborhoods, which ultimately move forward the well being of



families and neighborhoods and encourage youth citizenship and democratic learning through community projects and rich service learning (Williams-Boyd, 2010). For these reasons, Houser (2016) believed that community partner programming is an essential part of the community schools strategy because the programs serve as an extension of the learning of the community and a way to address the barriers that are specific to that local context. These concepts reinforced the guiding principle that effective community schools should leverage the assets that local community organizations and members bring to the table.

Blank, Berg, and Melaville (2006) asserted that all community schools share the following six traits:

1. The school has a core instructional program, with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.
2. Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.
3. The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
4. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff.
5. Community engagement and effective collaboration helps promote a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful, and that connects students to a broader learning community.
6. Early childhood development is fostered through high-quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development. (p. 2)

Table 1 shows the six guiding principles of a community school and the six traits of community schools side-by-side. The italicized portions of the table are the elements used to create two of the three *structural elements* of a community school that have been identified as part of this

study. Note that, for the purpose of answering the research questions, this study is grounded primarily in the six guiding principles of an effective community school, especially for the development of the data collection instruments.

Table 2.1

*Comparison of Research on Community School Guiding Principles and Traits*

<b>Guiding Principles of an Effective Community School</b> (Potapchuck, 2013)	<b>Community School Traits</b> (Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006)
They have a clear and shared vision and are accountable for results.	The school has a core instructional program, with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.
<i>Their collaborative partners share resources and expertise.</i>	Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings, during and after school.
There are high expectations and standards.	<i>The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.</i>
<i>The schools align the assets of local organizations and the community members who live and work in the community.</i>	<i>There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff.</i>
They respect the diversity and identity of community members with diverse backgrounds.	<i>Community engagement and effective collaboration helps promote a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.</i>
<i>They share the decision-making power with local community leaders and families.</i>	Early childhood development is fostered through high-quality, comprehensive programs that nurture learning and development.

*Note.* The italicized portions of the table are the elements used to create two of the three structural elements of a community school that have been developed as part of this study.

**Structural Elements of Community Schools**

Based on the literature on community school traits and guiding principles, this study has created three structural elements of community schools. These three structural elements are discussed in greater detail in the next section. The structural elements served as the key components of the methodological framework, which is described in more detail in the next chapter. The first structural element focused on the condition that community schools leverage partnerships to provide holistic supports to address students’ multiple needs that extend beyond academics. These services and resources must be integrated and coordinated with the traditional

functions of a school. The second structural element suggested that there must be strong collaboration among school staff and members of the community. There must be systems in place for teachers, parents, community partners, businesses, and neighborhood community members to collaborate and participate in shared decision-making at the school. Community members must be meaningfully engaged. Finally, the third structural element that is important to the success of a community school and the selection of the school sites for this study required the presence of a full-time community school coordinator on the school site, who is responsible for supporting the first two structural elements. This coordinator is essential because the school principal cannot do this work alone. Each structural element is described in further detail in the next section.

**Structural element 1: Partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports.**

Community schools were founded on the idea that students need more holistic supports in school in order to ensure their success in the classroom. Later in this chapter, Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory is discussed, which emphasized that a child is directly impacted by the various levels of relationships and experiences, in which the child comes into contact. Santiago, Ferrara, and Quinn (2012) applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to Whole Child Education, which they described as five developmental domains of a child: physical, social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual. The authors argued that ecological systems theory claims that a student's academic achievement is not simply based on genetics *or* what happens within the classroom or at school. There are a series of outside influences that can also impact a child's achievement and overall development. "The underlying assumption of an 'educational ecosystem' is that any of these environmental layers will positively or adversely

impact the child’s growth and development as they directly or indirectly interact with one another” (Santiago et al., 2012, p. 3). The authors proposed that understanding Whole Child Education and providing caring and healthy environmental systems for children within and outside of school is a vital to improving student achievement.

Community schools offer services that are determined by and tailored to the community (Williams-Boyd, 2010). They can provide the holistic supports necessary for children to have their basic needs met, like food, clothing, and adequate family housing through services like a family resource center on the school site (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). “Health care providers, case managers, additional social workers, and volunteer mentors can be brought into the school setting, and their services integrated with existing (and often minimal) pupil personnel services” (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002, p. 10). A community school can bring together fragmented services and programs, and organize them into an integrated package at the school site with common systems and centralized records (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). The key to this structural element is that the holistic supports and services the community school has with partners must be integrated and cohesive in order for the service delivery to be effective for students and families.

**Structural element 2: Collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making.** Community schools are built on relationships between partners who collaborate to bring in resources, expertise, services, goods, and other assets to the school. In order to ensure the success of students and the health of families and their communities, community schools “tap into a community’s social and cultural assets and build mutually beneficial bridges to families and to the larger neighborhood” (Williams-Boyd, 2010, p. 9). A collaborative leadership structure for community schools involves a community-wide leadership group—with

membership composed of public agencies, private business and philanthropies, unions, school districts, nonprofit organizations, higher education, students and families, residents, and community organizations—which develops a shared vision for the school, contributes expertise where needed, and aligns resources accordingly (Blank, Jacobsen, & Melaville, 2012; Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012; Lubell, 2011). This community-wide leadership group, also known as a *community site team*, fosters a culture of inclusion and shared influence and decision-making.

School principals employ *cross-boundary leadership* practices when they work alongside community members to make decisions (Blank et al., 2012; Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012). This is not always the case at traditional district schools, especially because school principals are given a great deal of discretion and authority to run their schools. At school sites where cross-boundary leadership is practiced, the membership of a community site team is more localized to the school, and the responsibilities involve planning, implementation, and continuous improvement. Beyond the school site, community school leaders must engage other community members who can help provide meaningful resources, programs, or knowledge to support students and families. Blank et al. (2006) defined public engagement as “a process of convening groups, conducting surveys and interviews, and listening to the public that exposes leaders to community residents’ values, beliefs and behaviors, helping those leaders make decisions that more fully reflect the will of citizens” (p. 21). In this case, leadership is shared. Meaningful collaboration between school staff, administration, resource partners, families, and community members is critical for the success of a community school initiative.

Community school principals are cross-boundary leaders who believe that, in order to build agency for change inside and outside of the school, schools must create a network of

shared responsibility among different partners within the community site team (Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012). According to Blank et al. (2006), cross-boundary leaders believe that in order to best serve the complex needs of families, entire communities must be responsible for the learning of children. Cross-boundary principals must build working relationships and bring the leaders of different organizations together around a shared vision that extends beyond the school walls. Ultimately, the fundamental belief of cross-boundary leadership is that “schools are nested in communities, and communities are closely tied to schools” (Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012, p. 298). Community school coordinators are also cross-boundary leaders who are focused on building and integrating the supports of the larger community. The roles of the community school coordinator and the school principal are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

**Structural element 3: Full-time community school coordinator to support the principal.** The presence of a full-time community school coordinator on the school site relieves some of the responsibility of the principal. The community school coordinator supports the school principal by managing the external community partnerships on the campus.

*The role of the principal leader at community schools.* Most people would agree that school leadership is important to the success of the school. Blank et al. (2006) described three levels of cross-boundary leadership at community schools—community leaders, leaders in the middle, and leaders on the ground. *Community leaders* include school, government, civic, and advocacy leaders whose power and influence comes from the clout they have as organizers of communities (Blank et al., 2006). The authors continued to describe *leaders in the middle* as managers within organizations and institutions that build structures to support community schools and to keep them focused. *Leaders on the ground* are considered practitioners and

community members at school sites that connect families and students to resources and opportunities through relationships these school leaders have developed with partners (Blank et al., 2006). These leaders include principals, teachers, parents, community members, and community school leaders.

This research study focused mainly on the leaders on the ground and leaders in the middle. The selection of the two community schools for this study considered those that partner with community partner organizations, which means the community schools had leaders in the middle that they work with from these partner organizations; however, this chapter focuses primarily on the leaders on the ground.

***The role of the community school coordinator.*** In addition to the importance of a having an effective principal at every community school, a strong community school is not possible without the support of a community school coordinator (Blank et al., 2006; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012). In fact, many community school approaches have a full-time coordinator at the school site (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002; Lubell, 2011). In community schools that are operated by the school and an intermediary agency, the coordinator is usually employed by the lead, intermediary agency itself. Jean-Marie and Curry described a community school coordinator as an individual who “facilitates the development, implementation, and management of the community school efforts as they evolve from the school site team” (p. 291), which is comprised of principals, teachers, families, community and business partners, and community residents, as previously discussed. The coordinator is the “person responsible for putting all the pieces together and making sure they are integrating into the school” (Dryfoos, 2005, p. 12).

Thus, the community school coordinator is critical to ensuring the community schools strategy and vision on the school site is integrated, coordinated, and successful.

Community school coordinators are important assets that support principals by taking on some of their management demands and allow principals to focus on teaching and learning in the school (Blank et al., 2006; Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012).

Someone has to be in the school building along with the principal to share the responsibility of keeping the doors open for extended hours. Someone has to make sure that all the various activities are in place as scheduled and that all the staff are performing according to standards. (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002, p. 87)

Community school coordinators are integral in building strong connections among members of the school community and forming social bonds between the school and larger community (Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012). Their essential functions are to ensure that the resources brought into the school through community partnerships actually meet the identified needs of the students and families and are aligned to the school's instructional program (Lubell, 2011). This emphasis on partnerships with community organizations is a driving force for the inclusion of partners in this study. Given that not all traditional district schools prioritize the inclusion of external partnerships, full-time community school coordinators are not typically available at these school sites. In many cases, it is the traditional district principal that is making and sustaining these relationships and partnerships.

The existence of a full-time community school coordinator is included in this study's conceptual framework as the third key structural element of community schools. This study focused on three elements of community schools that must be in place for a community school to be effective and successful. These three elements served as the foundation for the selection of the



Los Angeles community schools for this research study. The next section describes the evolution of the community schools movement from the 1800s to the present.

### **History of Community Schools**

The community school movement has been evolving since the 19th century. Very little literature exists on the history of community schools. The research of Rogers (1998) has provided the most extensive literature on community schools. Rogers stated, “Community schooling emerges (again and again in the 20th century) as a reform against the idea that schools should play a narrow academic role, set apart from local experiences and social life” (p. 9). During this long history, the purpose of schools was examined and reevaluated constantly. This section describes how the community school movement evolved from the settlement house movement into its current form.

**The settlement house movement (late 19th century).** Dryfoos (1998) cited the influence of the settlement house movement of the late 1800s as the precursor to today’s full-service community school, due to the fact that neighborhood institutions brought programs and services to poor families to help ensure positive youth development, good physical and mental health, and family and community well-being (Santiago et al., 2012). Following the Civil War, the Charity Organization Societies (COS) was created to coordinate the efforts of hundreds of charities and service groups to address the growing needs of freed slaves, displaced families, and orphaned children (Williams-Boyd, 2010). The success of COS and the reduction in income disparity and social disorder, led to the first settlement house, which opened in New York in 1886, soon followed by the Hull House in Chicago (Williams-Boyd, 2010). Settlement house reformers brought community social services to the school site. The broad and inclusive

community-oriented focus is what made them so successful (Williams-Boyd, 2010). This movement trickled into the early 1900s, during which “John Dewey’s concept of the ‘school as a social center’ encouraged advocates to bring these opportunities into public schools” (Blank et al., 2003, p. 3). Dewey’s daughter, Evelyn Dewey, and his student, Elise Clapp, implemented the tenets of his theory in the 1910s and 1920s, with a community school in rural Mississippi and community schools in Kentucky and West Virginia.

**The social center movement (1900–1916).** In the early 20th century, the Progressive Movement brought health and social services into schools. Hunter (1905) asserted, “The time has come for a new conception of the responsibilities of a school. If the school does not assume the responsibility for bringing up children, how shall the work be done?” (p. 200) During the social center movement from 1900 to 1916, many schools initially opened their doors for community use after school hours. For example, the public could attend lectures or engage in recreational or leisurely activities. Some social center leaders also used the schools to promote health measures, like providing showers at school gyms to encourage regular bathing or attempting to educate families on proper hygiene techniques. There was some opposition to the efforts put forth by social center leaders for a variety of reasons. Some argued that the social centers were too expensive, diverted attention away from cognitive development, and that schools should play a narrower role (Rogers, 1998). The community became divided into those in favor of the movement and those opposed. Ultimately, the movement unraveled when the United States entered into World War I. The call for social unity intensified, but instead some people focused their unity in support of—or in opposition to—the war (Rogers, 1998). By the end of the war, there was an increase in bureaucratization, and the social center movement ceased to exist.

**Social reconstructionism (1930s).** Rogers (1998) described the social reconstructionism movement as the push for community curriculum during the Great Depression. Social reconstructionists believed that schools could be places where society should be taught about pressing problems and their underlying causes. Public schools were seen as places where the public could learn about community problems, act upon them, and improve community living and social order. The goal was to make schools the “social, educational, and recreational anchors of their communities” (Blank et al., 2003, p. 3) in the social reconstructionism period.

In the 1930s, Harold Rugg wrote a social studies textbook series that connected common local experiences to the problems of living. Rogers (1998) described how the textbooks offered a different understanding than previous textbooks of American history and society, including writings critical of the slave trade, comparisons of the experiences of the rich and poor, and support that women could be scientists and professionals. The textbooks stirred up a heavy debate, and conservatives began to view Rugg as anti-American. “In this increasingly conservative political climate, social constructionism fell out of favor, and with it went the political thrust of community studies” (Rogers, 1998, p. 51). The movement dissipated and community curriculum no longer had a strong role in education.

**The community school movement (1964–1973).** During the late 1960s and early 1970s, groups supporting different models of community schooling all rallied around the idea that community schools could help enhance power and address social problems. Rogers (1998) argued that the Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in *Brown v Board of Education* “placed education at the center of the struggle for racial equality in America...opened up political space for grassroots advocates and political leaders to initiate civil disobedience and mass mobilization”

(p. 55), and fostered a new federal role in education. President Lyndon B. Johnson imagined that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would be one of the steppingstones to a Great Society (Rogers, 1998).

Advocates of the Great Society believed that schools were a way that youth and citizens could participate in the economic and political order, but one barrier “lay in the ‘cultural deprivation’ facing youth in low income communities” (Rogers, 1998, p. 57). During this period, compensatory education programs were meant to supplement education for low-income youth. This movement was influenced by Great Society’s commitment to expanding social programs and increasing civic engagement. Rogers argued that the movement’s supporters made many promises to different constituencies yet could not live up to those expectations. “Many reformers found it easy to sign on to this reform which seemed to offer much and cost little” (Rogers, 1998, p. 58). There was little funding set aside for these efforts.

In the 1970s, community schools gained federal support with the passage of the Community Schools Act and the Community Schools and Comprehensive Education Act in the 1970s (Blank et al., 2003). The community control movement became more popular, especially for poor people of color. Desegregation and compensatory education were not working, so people turned to direct community participation. Advocates of community control wanted parents and community members to play a greater role in the schools. “The most controversial aspect of the community control model was its call for parents and community members to take on roles presently being served by professional educators” (Rogers, 1998, pp. 62–63).

Ultimately, tension between educators and community control advocates led to a lack of political support for wide-scale programs.

**Community schools after the 1970s.** Richardson (2009) argued that community schools reemerged as a politically supported intervention in the late 1980s and 1990s. By the 1990s, people realized that many programs and interventions were needed to address people's needs, resulting in the emergence of many holistic and community services (Williams-Boyd, 2010). Dryfoos (2005) argued that, even though the concept of a community school is not new, "the current crop of community schools has grown out of adversity, with the decay of the inner city and the widening of the achievement gap" (p. 11). The *full-service community school* concept comes from

Florida's innovative legislation in 1991 that called for integration of educational, medical, and social and/or human services in a manner designed to meet the needs of children and youth and their families on school grounds or in easily accessible locations. (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002, p. 19)

The National Center for Community Schools (NCCS) began in 1994 to order to support other community school practitioners. NCCS is a practice- and research-based organization that assists national and international community school initiatives in building capacity (Lubell, 2011).

In 1998, the federal government established the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers Program. The new initiative promoted the development of after-school programs as a way to develop community schools. The program's financial support of \$1 billion in 2002 "brought increased visibility to the community schools movement and renewed the federal government's support for a strengthened community role in public education" (Blank et al., 2003, p. 3). Additionally, in 1998, many leaders of individual efforts, like the Children's Aid Society, came together to launch the national Coalition for Community Schools (Coalition), with the support of the Institute for Educational Leadership. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has been working since 1964 to "build the

capacity of people, organizations, and systems—in education and related fields—to cross boundaries and work together to attain better results for children and youth” (Blank et al., 2012, n.p.). The Coalition, housed at IEL, is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations that represent the variety of areas that impact community schools (e.g., housing community development, health and mental services, government, etc.) (Blank et al., 2003). According to the IEL website, Martin Blank, cited numerous times throughout this paper, was the Director of the Coalition in 2017. Currently, there are over 170 “participating organizations representing the educational establishment and unions, youth development organizations, health and welfare agencies, and other interested parties” (Dryfoos, 2005, p. 11).

The community schools movement is continuing to grow throughout the country. The research by Oakes, Maier, and Daniel (2017) revealed the alignment of the community school strategy with federal legislation. “Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), community schools can be implemented as a targeted or comprehensive intervention for improving student and school outcomes” (p. 3), as long as the strategy demonstrates that it is an evidence-based intervention based on high-quality research or positive, ongoing evaluation efforts. There is increased attention on the way that community schools provide integrated support, expand learning opportunities, engage families and community members, and collaborate through a distributive leadership approach (Oakes et al., 2017).

The following section discusses the impacts that a community school strategy can have on student learning and the school effectiveness. Research on community schools has also studied the impacts on families and communities, but this study focused on the two former impacts to narrow the focus to the direct impacts a community school can have on students and

schools. Examples of community school models are also described to provide a clearer understanding of what community schools look like in the current context. Research on the three structural elements of community schools is also provided for each example.

### **Community School Impacts on Student Learning and School Effectiveness**

Different community schools have shown varying levels of success. Some community schools across the country have had positive impacts on students, families, and communities. For example, at Marquette Elementary School in Southwest Chicago, student mobility decreased from 41% to 22% in five years. At East Hartford High School in Connecticut, the dropout rate has decreased from 22% to less than 2% annually over the last six years. At St. Paul High School in Virginia, 94% of students graduate, 90% meet state reading and writing requirements, and 90% pass state exams in biology and geometry (Blank et al., 2003).

Potapchuck (2013) argued, “Firmly anchored in their neighborhoods, community schools are organized around education as the means to a productive future for children, families, schools, and communities” (p. 3). Community schools can make a difference in four main areas: student learning, school effectiveness, family engagement, and community vitality (Blank et al., 2003; Lubell, 2011). Based on the review, some of these areas have a substantial amount of research available, while others have limited research. As previously mentioned, this study highlighted the impacts community schools have on student learning and school effectiveness. The following section delves deeper into the impacts of community schools because the study’s research questions are focused on practices and impacts. Broad descriptions of impacts are provided below through specific examples of various community school initiatives.

**Student learning.** The greatest amount of research and studies has been conducted on data points that capture the impact of community schools on student learning. According to Blank et al. (2003), student learning includes academic achievement and nonacademic development. Some data points used to measure student learning include academic scores, attendance and graduation rates, suspensions, self-perceptions, and engagement. Depending on the types of resources and partnerships available at a community school, students can build social capital through mentorships, work experiences, and relationships with adults (Blank et al., 2003).

**School effectiveness.** According to Blank et al. (2003), school effectiveness looks at the strength of the parent-teacher relationships, teacher satisfaction, and the climate of the school environment. For the purposes of this chapter, attendance and graduation rates were classified under school effectiveness, and not under student learning, because these data points are often used to report out on a school's progress, success, or effectiveness.

**Family engagement and community vitality.** There is more research available on student achievement and school effectiveness measures than on family engagement and community vitality measures. While the literature identified some impacts on family engagement and community vitality for the specific examples that are described below, this study did not focus on these areas; however, as a reference, family engagement metrics examine whether families show increased stability, communication with teachers, and a greater responsibility for their children's learning (Blank et al., 2003). According to research, community vitality measures can include a heightened sense of community pride, stronger relationships among students and neighborhood residents, better use of school buildings as a community impact,



better rapport between students and residents, and social investment on return of community schools (Blank et al., 2003; Martinez, Hayes, & Siloway, 2013).

### **Context Matters: Examples of Different Types of Community School Initiatives**

Community school initiatives look different depending on the local context of the community in which they are situated. Researchers have classified community school initiatives in terms of their size and the reach their programs have, such as national models, state-funded initiatives, and local initiatives (Blank et al., 2003; Blank et al., 2006; Blank et al., 2012; Dryfoos, 2000). This section describes three examples of community school initiatives to provide readers with tangible examples. Dryfoos and Maguire (2002) described three stages of the community schools movement. The movement originated at the local, grassroots level. The next stage involved the emergence of intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance. The last stage was that community schools proliferated throughout the entire system (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). The Harlem Children's Zone is a community school initiative that started as a grassroots effort. The Children's Aid Society is an intermediary organization that provides technical assistance to over 100 schools across the country. The Schools Uniting Neighborhoods initiative started as a few schools and has materialized into a system-wide strategy in Portland, Oregon. Table 2.2 summarizes three different types of community school initiatives to further illustrate the differences between each.

Table 2.2

*Examples of Different Types of Community Schools*

Community School Initiative	Type of Initiative	Location	Description
Harlem Children’s Zone	Bottom-Up Approach	Central Harlem, New York City	Neighborhood initiative, with mostly private funding
Children’s Aid Society	An Intermediary Organization	Nationwide. Began in New York	Multiple adapted models nationally and internationally, while following similar principles
Schools Uniting Neighborhoods	A System-Wide Approach	Portland, OR / Multnomah County	Local initiative with schools in multiple districts, with mostly public funding

*Note.* The type of initiative describes the different ways in which the community schools strategy can be implemented. Each example (e.g., Harlem Children’s Society, Children’s Aid Society, Schools Uniting Neighborhoods) implements the community schools strategy differently.

The following section explores each of these three initiatives in greater detail. Each section provides some background information on the initiative, the application of the three structural elements of community schools, and the impact that current research has shown these community school initiatives have had on student learning and school effectiveness.

**The Harlem Children’s Zone, New York City – A bottom-up approach.** When many people think about community schools that provide comprehensive social, educational, and health services to students and families, the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) may be one of the first models that come to mind. For nearly two decades, the HCZ has had an impact on thousands of students and their families. Interestingly enough, current literature and reports do not necessarily include the Harlem Children’s Zone initiative in its findings. Most of the available literature described the HCZ initiative in isolation, or in conjunction with other place-based initiatives. For the sake of this study, the HCZ initiative is included in this chapter as a “bottom up” approach because HCZ originated in, and continues to directly serve, Central Harlem, New York City. The HCZ initiative shared many of the community school components researchers have described, especially the first two structural elements—partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports; and collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making.

**Background.** Harlem Children’s Zone began in 1970 as afterschool programs, truancy prevention services, and anti-violence training for teenagers (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). Dobbie and Fryer described how the disintegration of central Harlem—due to the crack epidemic in the 1980s and 1990s—led the organization to reconsider its piecemeal approach and instead develop a more comprehensive strategy that would be focused on improving communities and schools. Formerly known as the Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families, the Harlem Children’s Zone non-profit organization began in 2000 and, at the time, served 3,000 students in a 24-block area in Central Harlem, New York (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; HCZ, 2009).

The HCZ Promise Academy charter schools began in 2004. As mentioned earlier, community schools can be traditional district or charter schools. The schools in the HCZ Promise Academies are charter schools, which means that students participated in a lottery to determine whether they can attend the HCZ schools; however, even though students living within the Zone may not attend Promise Academy Charter Schools, the students and their families can still benefit from services offered by HCZ if they live within the HCZ region. If a student lived outside of the boundaries of the Zone, the student could only participate in the charter school component and would be ineligible for the HCZ package of social and community supports (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010). As of 2009, the HCZ Promise Academies had an extended school day and school year, with coordinated tutoring services and remediation classes on Saturdays (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009).

By 2015, HCZ was more visibly a community-wide effort that served over 13,000 students in a 97-block area (Harlem Children’s Zone [HCZ], n.d.). According to the Harlem Children’s Zone (2009), the HCZ model focused on the social, educational, and health

development of children, and also provided wrap-around programs that improve the children's family and neighborhood environments. In 2013, private funding (i.e., corporations, foundations, individuals) made up 83% of the revenue HCZ received to run its schools and programs (Harlem Children's Zone [HCZ], 2013).

According to the Harlem Children's Zone (2009), the HCZ theory of change focused on five core principles: (a) HCZ must serve an entire neighborhood, such that it reaches a significant number of children, transforms the child's physical and social environment, and creates programs to meet the local need; (b) HCZ must create a pipeline of support from prenatal programs to college graduation programs to support families and the larger community; (c) HCZ must collaborate with community residents, institutions, and stakeholders; (d) HCZ must evaluate its program outcomes based on continuous feedback; and (e) HCZ must cultivate a culture of success. Former President Barack Obama replicated the HCZ model across the nation through the development of the Promise Zones and Choice Neighborhoods program (HCZ, 2015; Moore, Murphey, Emig, Hamilton, Hadley, & Sidorowicz, 2009).

***Community school structural elements.*** The remainder of this section on the Harlem Children's Zone focuses on the three structural elements of community schools, including any potential alignment with the Harlem Children's Zone's efforts.

*Structural element 1: Partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports.* HCZ connected students and families to services that can help them deal with the trauma many of the students face everyday. HCZ provided community social-services programs and had over 100 trained social workers, family workers, and caseworkers that counsel students and families and connect them to services that meet their needs (HCZ, 2015). Through a partnership with the

Children’s Health Fund, HCZ Promise Academies provided free medical, dental, and mental-health services, including regular check-ups (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). Additionally, HCZ offered a Healthy Harlem childhood obesity program, which served 7,000 children and 3,000 adults by 2015 (HCZ, 2015). Students and adults could take classes, could get fresh produce at subsidized farmers markets, and could participate in activities in the evenings and on the weekends. HCZ resources and services extended to areas often not viewed as common, such as emergency food provision; free tax preparation; purchase or donation of cribs, strollers, beds, or other furniture; or legal, financial, and benefits counseling (HCZ, 2015). HCZ extended its partnerships beyond the pre-K–12 experience. HCZ’s Academic Case Management team monitored all students within the HCZ zone even though they may not have attended HCZ schools. The team monitored their academic progress and social-emotional development, beginning in kindergarten (HCZ, 2015). Additionally, once students went to college, they were assigned an advisor from the College Success Office to monitor their academic, social, and emotional progress. The advisor also helped them obtain internships or deal with financial aid (HCZ, 2015).

*Structural element 2: Collaboration, community engagement and shared decision-making.* Several times a year, HCZ senior managers would hold a forum, called HCZ Stat, where “program staff go over case histories of the most-challenged students, making sure each child is receiving an effective combination of services” (HCZ, 2015). In these open forums, program staff members problem solved together and dialogued openly. HCZ (2009) claimed that community building and engagement is an essential part of the HCZ model. “Residents have advised us on local needs and guided our growth at every stage” (HCZ, 2009). HCZ community members engaged in a community-building program, Community Pride, which employed four

main strategies: community organizing, leadership development, neighborhood revitalization, and referrals to social services (HCZ, 2009). In 2009, HCZ had more than 1,400 staff members, many of whom worked part-time. HCZ team members have shared values and work together with a common purpose to ensure that all children succeed (HCZ, 2009).

*Structural element 3: Full-time community school coordinator to support the principal.*

The HCZ approach was unique because it focused on serving all students and families who lived within the Zone, regardless of whether they attended the Promise Academy Charter Schools. Additionally, the schools did not necessarily have a full-time community school coordinator because their programs and services extended well beyond the walls of the school. Instead, the HCZ team had a diverse range of support personnel, including social workers, family workers, and caseworkers, and college advisors, as previously mentioned.

Even though HCZ did not necessarily have designated community school coordinators, this study highlighted the HCZ initiative because it shared many of the other components of community schools and because of its notoriety among those who are less familiar with the community schools movement; however, it is important to note that many community school initiatives start by focusing on the school and expanding into the community. HCZ, on the other hand, focused on the 97-block community of Central Harlem and also happened to operate charter schools within that Zone. Table 2.3 summarizes the structural elements for the Harlem Children's Zone initiative.

Table 2.3

*Community School Structural Elements of the Harlem Children’s Zone*

HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE – “A Bottom Up Approach”

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Structural Elements of a Community School

Partnerships, Integrated Services, & Holistic Supports	Collaboration, Community Engagement, & Shared Decision-Making	Full-Time Community School Coordinator to Support the Principal
<p>HCZ provided community-based social-service programs and had over 100 trained social workers, family workers, and caseworkers who counseled students and families and connected them to services that met their needs (HCZ, 2015).</p> <p>Through a partnership with the Children’s Health Fund, HCZ Promise Academies provided free medical, dental, and mental-health services, including regular check-ups (Dobbie &amp; Fryer, 2009).</p> <p>HCZ resources and services extended to areas often not viewed as common, such as emergency food provision; free tax preparation; purchase or donation of cribs, strollers, beds, or other furniture; or legal, financial, and benefits counseling (HCZ, 2015).</p>	<p>Several times a year, HCZ senior managers would hold a forum, called HCZ Stat, where “program staff go over case histories of the most-challenged students, making sure each child is receiving an effective combination of services” (HCZ, 2015). In these open forums, program staff members problem solved together and dialogued openly.</p> <p>HCZ community members engaged in a community-building program, Community Pride, which employs four main strategies: community organizing, leadership development, neighborhood revitalization, and referrals to social services (HCZ, 2009).</p>	<p>The HCZ Promise Academy Charter Schools did not necessarily have a full-time community school coordinator because their programs and services extended well beyond the walls of the school. Instead, the HCZ team had a diverse range of support personnel, including social workers, family workers, and caseworkers, and college advisors, as previously mentioned.</p> <p>While many community school initiatives started by focusing on the school and expands out into the community, HCZ, on the other hand, focused on the 97-block community of Central Harlem and also happened to operate charter schools within that Zone.</p>

*Note.* The Harlem Children’s Zone is described as a neighborhood initiative with mostly private funding. It began in Harlem, New York.

***Community school impacts.*** The remainder of this section on HCZ focuses on the impacts the initiative had on student learning and school effectiveness.

*Student learning.* Several research studies and evaluations have been conducted on the HCZ model since its inception. Most of the research focused more on student learning and academic achievement data than on anything else. The study by Dobbie and Fryer (2009) examined the impact of the Harlem Children’s Zone on educational outcomes. Their research specifically tried to address whether schools alone could eliminate the achievement gap between

poor minority students or whether the conditions that students from low-income communities bring to the school is too much for educators to overcome. The authors provided the first empirical test of the causal impact of the HCZ model on the educational outcomes of the students who participated. The results of their two statistical models revealed that HCZ is effective at increasing the achievement of the poorest minority children by closing the racial gap between minority children and White children in both English Language Arts and mathematics for elementary students, and math for HCZ middle school students.

Whitehurst and Croft (2010) conducted a longitudinal study on two HCZ schools between the 2007 and 2009 school years using school demographic data and math and English language test scores. The authors specifically wanted to compare the effectiveness of HCZ charter schools to other charter schools in New York City. Compared to the average test scores of charter schools in the Bronx and Manhattan, the authors concluded, HCZ students actually performed lower on the state assessments than some charter schools, making it a “middle of the pack” charter school; however, HCZ students did better compared to students of similar backgrounds in typical public schools in New York City (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010). In their research, Whitehurst and Croft did not explain the meaning behind this difference; however, the results are relevant because community schools across the country can either be traditional district schools or charter schools. Future research could explore what conditions exist for traditional district and charter schools to provide the ideal academic environment using the community schools strategy.

Importantly, some researchers questioned the impact that the community school services in HCZ had on academic achievement. Dobbie and Fryer (2009) asserted that community



programs available to anyone in the HCZ are not single-handedly responsible for the gains in academic achievement. Participation in student-family services by students who attend HCZ schools increased attendance but had no effect on achievement test scores. The authors suggested that either the “HCZ Promise Academy public charter schools are the main driver of our results or the interaction of the schools and community investments is the impetus for such success” (p. 26). Whitehurst and Croft (2010) agreed that there was no real evidence that neighborhood investments increase student achievement scores, and that, in fact, the most powerful effects came from within the school walls.

*School effectiveness.* The Harlem Children’s Zone had an Academic Case Management team that assigned student advocates to children, beginning in kindergarten, in order to monitor their academic and social progress and to learn what extra services or supports the student may need (HCZ, n.d.). Students at HCZ were less likely to be absent than students who had not attended HCZ schools (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). In 2013, \$20 million was offered to high school seniors who got into college and a total of 841 past HCZ students were attending college (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; HCZ, 2013; Whitehurst & Croft, 2010). In 2015, 93% of high school seniors were accepted to college, and 881 past HCZ students were attending college (HCZ, n.d.). Table 2.4 summarizes the impacts of the Harlem Children’s Zone on student learning and the overall effectiveness of the school.

Table 2.4

*Impacts of the Harlem Children’s Zone Model on Student Learning and School Effectiveness*

HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE – “A Bottom Up Approach”	
Impacts of Community School	
Student Learning	School Effectiveness
Increased achievement of the poorest minority children by closing the racial gap in both English Language Arts and mathematics for elementary students and math for HCZ middle school students (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009).	93% of high school seniors were accepted into college (Harlem Children’s Zone, n.d.). Students at HCZ are also less likely to be absent (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009).
HCZ students performed lower than the test average of other NYC charter schools but higher than students of similar backgrounds in traditional district schools (Whitehurst & Croft, 2010).	\$20 million was offered to high school seniors who got into college and a total of 841 past HCZ students were attending college (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009; HCZ, 2013; Whitehurst & Croft, 2010).

*Note.* This table summarizes the impacts of the Harlem Children’s Zone programs and services on those living in the 97-block area of Central Harlem, New York City, as it pertains to student learning and school effectiveness.

**The Children’s Aid Society, New York City—An intermediary organization.**

Some initiatives that follow a national model of community schools include Beacons, Communities in Schools, and the Children’s Aid Society. National models often have a lead agency that supports the work of the community school at the local level. The lead agency “is a vital partner in this enterprise and usually hires the on-site coordinator” (Dryfoos, 2005, p. 12), which is also known as the community school coordinator. For some community school models, the lead agency replicates its particular strategies across other schools. The initiative often begins in schools in one region, and later expands to other schools across the country. One example of this is the Children’s Aid Society (CAS). The CAS national model is described in greater detail below.

**Background.** The Children’s Aid Society came to fruition in 1989 through a partnership with the New York City Public School District and other community partners. The CAS strategy “is founded on a core belief that focusing on the education of children and the strength of the surrounding community results in a ‘web of support’ for children’s optimal development

(Martinez et al., 2013). CAS schools incorporated a strong core instructional program, increased parent involvement, offered additional learning opportunities and activities after school, and provided access to a full range of physical and mental health services designed to remove barriers to learning and equip students for adulthood (Blank et al., 2003; Williams-Boyd, 2010). In 1994, CAS responded to widespread interest in its schools and founded the National Center for Community Schools to help others implement the CAS community school strategy (Lubell, 2011). The first CAS schools began in 1992 with schools in Washington Heights in New York City, but the model has been adapted at least 21 schools in New York City, and to about 100 sites nationally and internationally (Blank et al., 2003; Dryfoos, 2003; Lubell, 2011). In this particular model, the funding burden falls on CAS (Dryfoos, 2002).

***Community school structural elements.*** The remainder of this description on the Children's Aid Society focuses on the three structural elements of community schools.

*Structural element 1: Partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports.* In New York, CAS had school-based health centers that provided comprehensive services for students to mitigate health problems that may act as obstacles to learning (Lubell, 2011). The schools had Family Resource Centers, medical and dental services, and extended hours of operation. They also had social workers and mental health counselors that served families and provided age-appropriate counseling to youth (Blank et al., 2003; Lubell, 2011). CAS school programs focused on increasing parent engagement, offering additional learning opportunities after school and providing consistent access to health, dental, and mental health services (Williams-Boyd, 2010). CAS worked closely with school authorities to link classroom work to before- and after-school programs and to integrate support services with educational interventions (Dryfoos,

2002). Additionally, CAS middle school students were divided into academies; each academy was assigned a CAS social worker. Evaluations conducted of CAS schools in New York City reported that CAS worked with various levels of district leadership to address issues involving community school partners and providers (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005). The CAS community schools were built on long-term partnerships with the New York City Department of Education, parents, community organizations, and service providers (Lubell, 2011).

*Structural element 2: Collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making.* CAS had a full-time presence employed in each school. CAS staff and the community schools coordinator were “fully integrated into the school’s governance and decision-making bodies, such as the School Leadership Team, Principal’s Cabinet, and School Safety Committee” (Lubell, 2011, p. 24). A parent coordinator, who often spoke the parents’ language, and family resource room were found in every CAS community school (Lubell, 2011). As an example of how CAS was building parent and family leadership skills, CAS created the year-long Ercilla Pepín Parent Leadership Institute to train parents on how to be proactive in advocating for their children (Lubell, 2011). CAS school-parent coordinators ran the wide variety of programs and workshops offered by the institute.

*Structural element 3: Full-time community school coordinator to support the principal.* In the CAS model, community school coordinators (known as community school directors) were full-time employees of CAS (Lubell, 2011). They had a formal relationship with the principal. The community school director engaged in regular joint planning with the principal and school staff (Lubell, 2011). The CAS partnership involved formal written agreements between the

principal and the coordinator (Dryfoos, 2002). The district was also formally involved in the partnership. Table 2.5 summarizes the three structural elements of the CAS initiative.

Table 2.5

*Community School Structural Elements of the Children’s Aid Society*

CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETY – “An Intermediary Organization”		
Structural Elements of Community School		
Partnerships, Integrated Services, & Holistic Supports	Collaboration, Community Engagement, & Shared Decision-Making	Full-Time Community School Coordinator to Support the Principal
In New York, CAS had school-based health centers that provided comprehensive services for students to mitigate health problems that may act as obstacles to learning (Lubell, 2011).	CAS staff members were “fully integrated into the school’s governance and decision-making bodies, such as the School Leadership Team, Principal’s Cabinet, and School Safety Committee” (Lubell, 2011, p. 24).	Community school directors are full-time employees and had a formal relationship with the principal (Lubell, 2011).
Schools had Family Resource Centers, medical and dental services, extended hours of operation, and social workers and mental health counselors that serve families and youth (Blank et al., 2003; Lubell, 2011).	A parent coordinator and family resource room were found in every CAS school (Lubell, 2011).	The CAS partnership involved formal written agreements between the principal and the coordinator (Dryfoos, 2002). The district was also formally involved in this partnership.
CAS worked with school authorities to integrate support services with educational interventions (Dryfoos, 2002).		

*Note.* The Children’s Aid Society (CAS) is an intermediary organization that began in New York and now has national and international sites. All CAS sites have adopted the model yet follow similar principles.

**Community school impacts.** The remainder of this section on the Children’s Aid Society focuses on the impacts the community schools have had on student learning and the overall effectiveness of the school.

*Student learning.* According to a three-year evaluation of an elementary school (PS 5) and middle school (IS 218) in their third year of CAS implementation, students showed steady improvement in their math and reading test scores, but there was no particular difference in improvements compared to demographically similar noncommunity schools (Blank et al., 2003; Dryfoos et al. 2005; Santiago et al., 2012; Williams-Boyd, 2010). Regarding nonacademic developmental results, the authors used data from student surveys to report that CAS students’

self-perceptions of their own appearance and behavior were higher than those of the comparison group at the elementary school (Blank et al., 2003). CAS students' attitudes toward school were also higher (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005; Dryfoos, 2000), as they had an increased sense of personal control over academic success (Blank et al., 2003). Additionally, children were receiving high-quality medical, dental, and mental health care at CAS schools (Dryfoos, 2000).

*School effectiveness.* Beyond the impacts on students, the evaluation found that the CAS schools had school environments that were more welcoming and cheerful, felt safer, and had little to no violence or graffiti (Blank et al., 2003; Clark & Grimaldi, 2005; Melaville, 1998). CAS schools also have virtually no truancy (Melaville, 1998). CAS teachers had greater attendance and also spent more time on class preparation and working with students (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005). Blank et al. (2003) also noted that teachers at CAS community schools had better attendance rates than district schools. Furthermore, teachers reported that there was an improved school climate and staff dedication to student learning (Dryfoos, 2000). CAS schools also saw a decrease in special education referrals (Williams-Boyd, 2010). Lastly, attendance rates were higher at the CAS elementary and middle school than the respective averages in New York City (Blank et al., 2003). Some critical findings of the evaluations found that teachers were unclear about the priorities of the community school, and a culture gap existed between teachers and the philosophy of community schools (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005). Table 2.6 summarizes the impacts of the Children's Aid Society initiative on student learning and school effectiveness.

Table 2.6

*Impacts of the Children’s Aid Society on Student Learning and School Effectiveness*

CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETY – “An Intermediary Organization” Impacts of Community School	
Student Learning	School Effectiveness
Increased academic achievement as measured by math and reading proficiency levels in selected grades, and improved student behavior (Blank et al., 2003; Dryfoos, 2006; Santiago et al., 2012; Williams-Boyd, 2010).	Decreased dropout rates, increased graduation rates, and increased student attendance (Blank et al., 2003; Santiago et al., 2012).
Students had more positive attitudes toward school experiences (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005; Dryfoos, 2000).	Teachers reported improved school climate and staff dedication to student learning (Dryfoos, 2000; Lubell, 2011; Santiago et al., 2012).
Students’ self-perceptions and sense of personal control over academic success improved (Blank et al., 2003).	The buildings were full of parents throughout the day and evening, engaged in a wide array of activities, and children were receiving high-quality medical, dental, and mental health care (Dryfoos, 2000).
	Schools had no graffiti, no serious incidents of violence, and virtually no truancy (Clark & Grimaldi, 2005; Melaville, 1998).
	School environments were more cheerful and orderly; increased perception of safety; teachers spent more time on class preparation and working with students; and improved teacher attendance (Blank et al., 2003; Clark & Grimaldi, 2005).

*Note.* This table summarizes the impacts of the Children’s Aid Society on student learning and school effectiveness.

**Schools Uniting Neighborhoods, Multnomah County, Oregon—A system-wide approach.** Besides the Harlem Children’s Zone, other local-level initiatives include Boston Excels, Achievement Plus in Minnesota, the Dallas Youth and Family Centers Program, the Polk Brothers Full Service School Initiative in Chicago, and the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods initiative in Oregon. While HCZ relied heavily on private funding, other local initiatives, like the SUN community schools initiative in Multnomah County, Oregon, relied on public dollars, grants, and contributions from community partners. Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) community schools were funded by Multnomah County, the City of Portland, and the Children’s Investment Fund, which was created by an income-tax levy in Portland (Blank et al., 2006; Frankl, 2016). The direct investments from local governments and policies and systems that were in place to support the initiative were the reasons this study categorized the SUN initiative as a *system-wide approach*.

**Background.** The SUN initiative was founded in 1999 by the City of Portland and Multnomah County, in partnership with the State of Oregon and Multnomah County Public School Districts. The SUN initiative was developed in response to problems the Multnomah County and Portland were facing, including “shrinking budgets, growing cultural and linguistic diversity, and a widening achievement gap in schools” (Blank et al., 2012). The schools were open from 7 AM to 9 PM everyday and offered an array of services and activities for families, students, and community members.

Multnomah County established structures and policies to support the SUN initiative. Diane Linn, Chair of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, established the Office of School and Community Partnerships to strengthen existing services and align school-based services. The county established a School Age Policy Framework in 2003 to set priorities, and reallocated about \$12.5 million from other county programs to fund SUN efforts. This was the largest county investment in community schools in the nation (Blank et al., 2006). The initiative also relied on federal dollars, funding from the City of Portland, and funds from a tax-supported Children’s Investment Fund (Blank et al., 2006). This funding has helped SUN schools by giving them resources to hire a site manager and a part-time case manager, and to support extended-day programming. SUN began with eight schools in 1999, with the goal of creating community-centered schools (Dryfoos, 2000). As of 2016, the initiative had grown to 85 community schools (Frankl, 2016). The main goals of SUN community schools were three-fold: to achieve educational success, to provide access to health and social services, and to offer recreational and educational programs in an extended day (Dryfoos, 2000).



***Community school structural elements.*** The remainder of this section on the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods example focuses on the three structural elements of community schools.

*Structural element 1: Partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports.* Cross-sector partnerships were a key component of the SUN initiative because it allowed all partners to build a comprehensive, service-delivery system for students and families. Within the first few years of the initiative, partnerships grew from 70 to 120, with partners contributing more time and resources (i.e., materials, supplies, or equipment) to SUN programs (Blank et al., 2003). SUN schools provided services through partnerships with libraries, parks, community centers, churches, neighborhood health clinics, and businesses (Blank et al., 2003; Blank et al., 2006; Potapchuck, 2013).

*Structural element 2: Collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making.* Before the SUN initiative was expanded countywide, Multnomah County leaders held community conversations to build support for access to services and resources in schools (Blank et al., 2006). The planning process was intensive and involved a review of community school models from around the country (Dryfoos, 2002). The SUN Coordinating Council, a community-wide council that included businesses, community organizations, and city, county, and state leaders, had fully accepted the vision that all 150 county schools are community schools (Blank et al., 2012). The council met monthly to “share decision-making on issues such as system alignment, allocation, budget, performance, and sustainability” (Potapchuck, 2013, p. 20). Intergovernmental agreements, signed by the superintendent and relevant city and county leadership, required the district to provide partners with rent-free access to school sites.

Additionally, partners were required to align programs with the school's existing services and improvement plans (Blank et al., 2012).

*Structural element 3: Full-time community school coordinator to support the principal.*

SUN community school coordinators were usually employed by the Portland Parks and Recreation Bureau or a community organization and were responsible for nurturing the school-based collaboration (Potapchuck, 2013). “They coordinate extended supports, including school-based case management services, health opportunities, parent outreach programs, afterschool enrichment programs, and homework clubs” (Blank et al., 2006, p. 10). SUN community school coordinators focused on providing culturally specific services and equitable interventions, and ensured that schools and families were connected to service providers that would help them deal with issues of poverty and safety (Frankl, 2016). Table 2.7 summarizes the structural elements of the SUN initiative.

Table 2.7

*Community School Structural Elements of Schools Uniting Neighborhoods*

SCHOOLS UNITING NEIGHBORHOODS – “A System-Wide Approach”		
Structural Elements of Community School		
Partnerships, Integrated Services, & Holistic Supports	Collaboration, Community Engagement, & Shared Decision-Making	Full-Time Community School Coordinator to Support the Principal
<p>Within the first few years of the initiative, partnerships grew from 70 to 120, with partners contributing more time and resources, (i.e., materials, supplies, or equipment) to SUN programs (Blank et al., 2003).</p> <p>SUN schools provided services through partnerships with libraries, parks, community centers, churches, neighborhood health clinics and businesses (Blank et al., 2003; Blank et al., 2006; Potapchuck, 2013).</p>	<p>The Council met monthly to “share decision-making on issues such as system alignment, allocation, budget, performance, and sustainability” (Potapchuck, 2013, p. 20).</p> <p>Intergovernmental agreements, signed by the superintendent and relevant city and county leadership, required the district to provide partners with rent-free access to school sites.</p> <p>Partners were required to align programs with the school’s existing services and improvement plans (Blank et al., 2012).</p>	<p>SUN community school coordinators were usually employed by the Portland Parks and Recreation Bureau or a community organization and were responsible for nurturing the school-based collaboration (Potapchuck, 2013).</p> <p>SUN community school coordinators extended supports, including school-based case management services, health opportunities, parent outreach programs, afterschool enrichment programs, and homework clubs (Blank et al., 2006).</p>

*Note.* Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) is a local initiative with schools in multiple districts, with mostly public funding. The SUN schools are located in Portland, Oregon and Multnomah County.

***Community school impacts.*** The remainder of this section focuses on the impact the SUN community schools have had on student learning and overall school effectiveness.

*Student learning.* Academic results in SUN schools were mixed. In elementary schools, math scores were higher but were lower in middle schools. Some evaluation results of the SUN initiative showed students with strong gains in academics, with upward trends in reading and math scores (Blank et al., 2006; Blank et al., 2012). Scores increased in grades three and four, but decreased in grades six and eight. There was also an upward trend in reading scores in grades three to five. Additionally, the Multnomah County Department of County Human Services (2013) reported that 87% of students indicated that they learned school subjects in fun ways at SUN community schools.

*School effectiveness.* According to Blank et al. (2003), SUN coordinators in Multnomah County, hired by Portland Parks and Recreation and other community partner organizations, worked with school principals to “coordinate extended supports, including school-based case management services, health opportunities, parent outreach programs, afterschool enrichment programs and homework clubs” (p. 10). Evaluations also showed mixed results with regard to attendance and disciplinary referrals (Blank et al., 2003; Blank et al., 2006). One study showed that SUN high school students earned more credits toward graduation than their peers who were not in SUN schools (Potapchuck, 2013). The Multnomah County Department of County Human Services (2013) reported that 79% of 12th graders graduated and another 11% returned for a fifth year of high school. Students at SUN community schools had a lower percentage of chronic absences (12.4%), compared to the district’s average of 18% (Multnomah County, 2014). Additionally, the county reported that high school students at SUN schools earned an average of 6.6 college credits during the school year. Table 2.8 describes the impacts of the SUN community schools on student learning and school effectiveness.

Table 2.8

*Impacts of Schools Uniting Neighborhoods on Student Learning and School Effectiveness*

SCHOOLS UNITING NEIGHBORHOODS – “A System-Wide Approach”  
Impacts of Community School

Student Learning	School Effectiveness
Increased academic achievement scores in reading and math in elementary school but lower in middle school (Department of County Human Services, 2013).	Evaluations showed mixed results in regards to attendance and disciplinary referrals (Blank et al., 2003; Blank et al., 2006).
Eighty-seven percent of students indicated that they learned school subjects in fun ways at SUN Community Schools (Department of County Human Services, 2013).	SUN high school students earned more credits toward graduation than their peers who were not in SUN schools (Potapchuck, 2013).
	79% of 12th graders graduated and another 11% returned for a fifth year of high school (Department of County Human Services, 2013).
	Improved student attendance (Department of County Human Services, 2013).
	SUN schools earned an average of 6.6 college credits during the school year (Department of County Human Services, 2013).

*Note.* This table summarizes the impacts of the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) initiative on student learning and school effectiveness. SUN is a local initiative with schools in multiple districts, with mostly public funding. The SUN schools are located in Portland, Oregon and Multnomah County.

Table 2.9 summarizes the various types of impacts community schools can have on student learning and school effectiveness, as captured from the literature on the Harlem Children’s Zone, the Children’s Aid Society, and the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods initiative.

Table 2.9

*Summary of Impacts of Community Schools on Student Learning and School Effectiveness*

Summary of Impacts of Community Schools	
Student Learning	School Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increased achievement in English Language Arts</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased achievement in mathematics</i></li> <li>• Improved student behavior</li> <li>• Students had more positive attitudes toward school experiences</li> <li>• Students' self-perceptions improved</li> <li>• Students' sense of personal control over academic success improved</li> <li>• Percentage of students indicating that they learn school subjects in fun ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school seniors accepted into college</li> <li>• <i>Increased student attendance</i></li> <li>• Money offered to high school seniors who got into college</li> <li>• Number of students from community school that now attend college</li> <li>• <i>Decreased dropout rates</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased graduation rates</i></li> <li>• Percentage of students earning graduation credits</li> <li>• Virtually no truancy</li> <li>• Teachers spent more time on class preparation and working with students</li> <li>• Improved teacher attendance</li> <li>• Teachers reported improved school climate</li> <li>• Increased staff dedication to student learning</li> <li>• Children received high-quality medical, dental, and mental health care</li> <li>• Schools had no graffiti</li> <li>• School had no serious incidents of violence</li> <li>• School environments were more cheerful and orderly</li> <li>• <i>Increased perception of safety</i></li> </ul>

*Note.* The italicized portions in the table reflect the impacts that were cited more than once by the three school initiatives discussed in this chapter.

**Conceptual Framework**

The following section describes the components of this study's conceptual framework. The earlier discussion of the traits of a community school mentioned the importance of collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making to ensure that schools are places that connect students to the broader learning community. Research has shown that multiple environments can directly and indirectly impact the growth of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This section describes Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), which posits that different levels of an individual's environment can impact the individual. The remainder of this section focuses on another component of the conceptual framework: Transformative Leadership Theory (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011; Shields, 2011; Starratt, 2011). Transformative Leadership Theory is integrated into the conceptual framework because

the study focused on the leaders of community schools and the perceptions they had about the impacts of those practices. Successful schools often have strong leaders. To create effective learning conditions within a school, school leaders must navigate the multiple layers of systems they encounter while attempting to effectively serve students.

### **The Role of the Ecological Systems Theory in Education**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued, “The ecological environment is conceived as extending far beyond the immediate situation directly affecting the developing person—the objects to which he responds or the people with whom he interacts on a face-to-face basis” (p. 7). As previously mentioned, ecological systems theory is a theory of environmental connectedness and the impacts of these environments on the growth of an individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to the theory, people are dynamic entities upon whom environments exert influence; people and their environment reciprocally interact, creating a need to accommodate each other; and environments and developmental processes extend between broad and narrow settings (Richardson, 2009). As a review, Figure 2.2 graphically depicts the ecological systems theory.

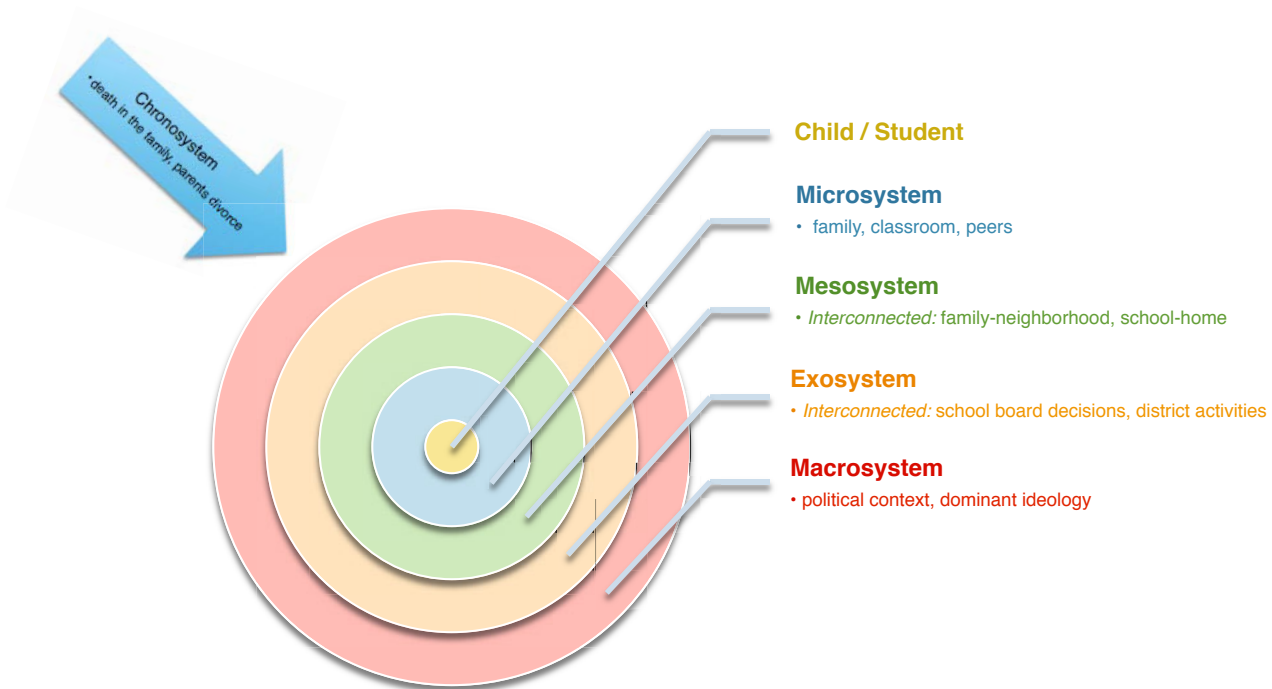


Figure 2.2. Ecological systems theory.

Note. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979), this figure illustrates the multiple systems that come into contact with the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) described several different systems that affect a child's development: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The *micosystem* refers to the interactions within the child's immediate setting that may directly influence the child's development. This can include the child's family, classroom, and peer group. The *mesosystem* and *exosystem* refer to interconnected settings. The *mesosystem* is the local context in which the child actively participates. This can include the family-neighborhood and home-school contexts. The child may never participate in the *exosystem*—which includes local, state, and federal educational policy makers, such as school boards, school districts, state education departments—but the events that occur within it can impact what happens in the child's immediate environment. The *macrosystem* refers to the overarching cultural, ideological,



and political context, in which the child may not directly participate. Santiago et al. (2012) stated that the macrosystem includes national culture, laws, demographic patterns, and economic and ideological trends. Lastly, the *chronosystem* refers to the evolution of external systems over time, such as a death in the family or a divorce. The ecological systems theory “explains why schools are important and should not be thought of as compartmentalized from the rest of the child’s life” (Richardson, 2009, p. 46). All of the five systems impact a child’s development, either directly or indirectly.

**Levels of influence.** Komro, Flay, and Biglan (2011) described a science-based intervention framework to significantly increase the successful development proportion of young people in high-poverty neighborhoods. This framework suggested that distal influences (income and resources, social cohesion, and physical environment) impacts proximal influences from a child’s family, school, and peers, which ultimately leads to primary outcomes related to cognitive development, social-emotional competence, absence of psychological and behavioral patterns, and physical health. Komro et al. concluded, “community-wide efforts—integrating strategies to improve the social and physical environments within families, schools, peer groups, and neighborhoods—are vital in promoting optimal child health and wellbeing” (p. 125). The case studies presented earlier—the Harlem Children’s Zone, the SUN community schools, and the Children’s Aid Society—were all examples of this kind of community-wide effort the authors spoke about.

Ecological systems theory states that the environment with which a child comes into contact, either directly or indirectly, will impact the child’s development. As previously stated, this study focused on community schools that have three structural elements: programs, services,

and partnerships focused on meeting students' holistic needs; collaborative and shared leadership between the school and community; and a full-time community school coordinator. These elements were used as selection criteria for the two schools that participated in the study. Because of these defining traits, community schools come into direct contact with a student (i.e., in the microsystem) and are directly connected to the local context with which the student interacts (i.e., the mesosystem).

### **Transformative Leadership Theory**

As previously mentioned, transformative leadership theory was an important lens through which the data were analyzed. There are many overlapping areas with regard to the impact that community schools can have on students and schools, and the impact that transformative leaders hope to have at schools. The following section describes transformative leadership more thoroughly, and explains the four tenets by which the data were analyzed.

**Transformative leadership tenets.** Shields (2010) explored how the work of transformative leadership has the potential to “offer a more inclusive, equitable, and deeply democratic conception of education” (p. 559). She argued that transformative leadership recognizes that “the inequities and struggles experienced in the wider society affect one’s ability to both perform and to succeed within an organizational context” (p. 568). Transformative Leadership Theory looks beyond the school and examines larger societal inequities. Shields identified seven tenets that are basic to transformative leadership: acknowledging power and privilege; articulating both individual and collective purposes (public and private good); deconstructing social-cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity and reconstructing them; balancing critique and promise; effecting deep and equitable change; working toward

transformation: liberty, emancipation, democracy, equity, and excellence; and demonstrating moral courage and activism (Shields, 2011).

For the sake of this study, ecological systems theory was applied to four specific tenets to determine whether each had a direct impact on a child through the microsystem or the mesosystem. Adapted from Shields (2011), the study and conceptual framework focused on the following four tenets of transformative leadership:

1. acknowledging power and privilege;
2. working towards democracy;
3. articulating individual and collective purpose; and
4. demonstrating cultural competence (p. 5).

The following section presents research that further describes each of these tenets, and includes different strategies school leaders may use to encourage these respective tenets in their schools. This section provides the foundation for the operational definitions used in this study's analysis of the data.

***Acknowledging power and privilege.*** Transformative leaders are concerned with the manner in which the power and privilege of individuals and institutions continue to marginalize disadvantaged groups. Shields (2011) asserted that transformative leaders must take into account how material realities and disparities can impinge on the abilities of individuals and organizations to be successful. An imbalance of power and privilege can get in the way of the abilities of students and schools to be successful. Avant (2011) argued that it is critical that leaders examine how systematic inequalities of power can perpetuate “hegemonic and dominating behaviors, cultures, and structures” (p. 118). Unless systematic inequalities are

addressed, the dominating culture will persist and will continue to marginalize disadvantaged groups and empower privileged ones.

Additionally, it is important for transformative leaders not to encourage hegemonic stances that reinforce dominant culture of the privilege because not everyone is a part of this culture (Shields, 2011). “Deconstructing inappropriate attitudes and assumptions, including common wisdom that has been passed on for years, is one of the primary tasks of the transformative leader” (Shields, 2011, p. 8). Leaders may need to examine how they currently perceive others who have been marginalized to truly make progress toward achieving deep and equitable social change. Part of this work requires that leaders acknowledge power and privilege.

*Working toward democracy.* Many transformative leaders are concerned about democratic participation and ensuring that schools are places of democracy where individuals can think critically and gain a sense of agency (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011; Shields, 2011; Starratt, 2011). Jun argued that schools should be places of democracy that offer students opportunities to grow personally and collectively and to participate in society or a community. A student’s academic achievement should not be the only focus of schools. Transformative leaders can create a democratic community by promoting “the ideal of a self-governing community, with representative from the student body, the parents, and the teachers involved in discussions and decisions that promote the primary agenda of the school – the agenda of teaching and learning” (Starratt, 2011, p. 133). Excellent schools should also teach and empower students to voice their opinions and participate in the democratic process.

Shields (2011) asserted that transformative leadership emphasizes the need for educational organizations or leaders to strive for equitable change. As mentioned earlier, equity

is embedded in each of the guiding principles of effective community schools. Avant (2011) stated, “Social change efforts focus primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social justice” (p. 118). Transformative leaders keep social injustices at the forefront of their minds, so that they could work toward rectifying them. Transformative schools address issues of equity and seek to advance individual students and the larger community as a whole.

*Articulating individual and collective purpose.* Transformative leaders must be able to articulate both an individual and a collective purpose. Shields (2011) stated that in order to accomplish societal change, transformative leaders must have a “clear conception of the purposes of their endeavor, but also that they engage with others to ensure that the sense of purpose is shared” (p. 7). Shields described this tenet further by emphasizing the importance of arousing a child’s curiosity and passion; however, it is just as important to teach students how to be contributing members of society and to strive for individual and collective advancement.

While dismantling assumptions that promote the dominant culture, it is also important to prepare students to be global citizens that help transform the world. Shields (2011) described this importance even further:

This goal not only asks leaders to help students understand and develop their own potential, but includes the need to recognize and address the inequities in their school, community, and around the world and to learn to live and act in such a way as to make a difference. (pp. 8–9)

It is important that schools find that balance between providing a rich academic curriculum, while also developing students’ potential beyond the school walls. The academic curriculum should connect the subject matter to students’ personal experiences, futures, and to the local community context (Starratt, 2011).

*Demonstrating cultural competence.* Lastly, transformative leaders must demonstrate cultural competence. Avant (2011) argued that transformative leaders demonstrate cultural competence and integrate that knowledge into their practices and policies, so that they can function within the cultural context. Culture extends beyond race, gender, ability, and religion. Avant believed that culture is an experience, in which some may have experienced more privileges and opportunities than others. Students must be encouraged to identify experiences that shape them as people and must voice their opinions and speak out against injustices (Jun, 2011). The importance of a student’s voice, culture, and experience is a common thread among researchers who study transformative leadership because students can become agents in the political and democratic process, in order to ultimately change the institutional structures that reinforce social inequalities (Jun, 2011).

The next section contextualizes the study by describing the participating district, the State of California’s focus on education funding, the LAUSD pilot school model, and the Linked Learning approach.

### **The Los Angeles Unified School District Context**

According to the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Strategic Plan (2016), the district’s vision statement describes itself as “a progressive global leader in education, providing a dynamic and inspiring learning experience where all students graduate ready for success” (p. 1). In order to achieve LAUSD’s goal of 100% graduation, the district has set in place the following objectives: proficiency for all; 100% attendance; parent, community, and student engagement; school safety; and the building of a solid foundation for early learners.

Currently, the school district is comprised of 1,302 district schools, which spans across a 710 square-mile radius, and includes most of the City of Los Angeles and all or portions of 26 cities and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (LAUSD, n.d.). It is the second-largest school district in the United States, with an enrollment of approximately 664,000 students, including independent charter school students, but not including adult education students. Additionally, 75.7% of LAUSD students qualify for free- or reduced-price meals. Ninety-four languages, other than English, are spoken in LAUSD. Seventy-four percent of students are classified as Latino, followed by 9.8% as White, 8.4% as Black, and six percent as Asian.

**Comparison of participating schools.** The two schools that participated in this study—Community School 1 (CS1) and Community School 2 (CS2)—shared similar demographic characteristics as the district overall. Community School 1 had just over 400 students enrolled, of which 97% of students were Latino, and 90% were considered to be socioeconomically disadvantaged. At Community School 2, the total enrollment was well over 500. According to the CS2 School Report Card for 2015–2016, approximately 80% of students were Latino, followed by 12% Asian/Filipino, 4% White, and one percent Black. Over 90% of CS2 students were considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. Compared to some comprehensive, nonpilot high schools, the student populations at both CS1 and CS2 were quite small. Some comprehensive high schools have over 2,000 students on its campus. Thus, this study acknowledged that the pilot schools does not necessarily represent the conditions of large, comprehensive high schools.

**Education funding that is focused on equity and local control.** In 2013, the California Legislature approved the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) as a new way to tackle school

finance and governance. According to the introduction of the LCFF by EdSource (2016), the formula encompassed three broad principles: “funding schools more equitably, based on student needs; making more decisions at a local level; and measuring school achievement using multiple metrics, not just test scores, and supporting schools so they improve rather than punishing them for failing” (EdSource, 2016, p. 3). While all school districts in California received a *base grant*, districts that served high-needs students received a *supplemental grant*. And, if those high-needs students made up 55% or more of the district’s enrollment, then the district received an additional *concentration grant* on top of the base grant and supplemental grant (EdSource, 2016, p. 5). According to the state, “high-needs students” are foster youth, English learners, and students living in poverty. Given that the L.A. Unified has a high number of high-need students, the LAUSD benefits greatly from the LCFF formula in terms of revenue generated from these students. According to the state, school districts would be considered to be fully funded by the 2020–2021 school year.

Coupled with the new funding formula is an accountability plan called the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) that is required for each school district. The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the district’s goals and how it will improve student outcomes through its programs and investments to meet those goals. In LAUSD’s case, the LCAP also focused on improving outcomes for the high-needs students for whom the district is receiving extra supplemental and concentration dollars. The LCAP organizes the state’s eight priorities into the following three areas: conditions for learning (i.e., basic school conditions, implementation of state standards, access to a broad course of study), pupil outcomes (i.e., student achievement, other student outcomes), and engagement (i.e., student engagement, parent involvement, school



climate). Under this funding formula and corresponding accountability plan, many school districts across the state, including L.A. Unified, are being forced to think about equity in terms of the way it allocates dollars and resources to individual schools.

**The community schools dialogue in Los Angeles.** At the time this study was being completed, LAUSD had unanimously passed a Board of Education policy that would embrace community school strategies in selective schools across the district. According to the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) (n.d.), community schools often include curriculum that is culturally relevant and challenging, educators who have a voice in professional development, improved student assessments, wrap-around services, positive discipline practices, and full engagement of educators, school staff, parents, students, and community members in decision-making. “Basically, Community Schools leverage public schools to become hubs of educational, recreational, cultural, health, and civic partnerships, improving the education of children in the community and furthering the revitalization of the entire community” (United Teachers Los Angeles, n.d.). UTLA has stated that it is committed to high-quality sustainable community schools and a more holistic approach to schooling than currently exists in traditional district schools in Los Angeles. UTLA publicly supported the recently passed board resolution.

UTLA is also part of the California Alliance for Community Schools, which is comprised of teachers unions from eight of California’s largest cities, including Anaheim, Los Angeles, Oakland, Richmond, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose. The Alliance is “fighting for well-resourced, community-centered, publicly funded and democratically run schools that prepare our students with the intellectual, social, and emotional skills necessary for success in a changing and often turbulent world” (UTLA, 2017, para. 2). The Alliance’s focus is

aligned with the research on the guiding principles and traits of community schools.

Additionally, UTLA is part of “Reclaim Our Schools L.A.,” a coalition of labor unions, faith-based organizations, and social-justice groups. The coalition relied on the following six strategies described by Frankl (2016) as aspirational goals for community schools: curricula that are engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging; an emphasis on high-quality teaching, not on high-stakes testing; wrap-around supports and opportunities; positive discipline practices, such as restorative justice; authentic parent and community engagement; and inclusive school leadership. According to the Reclaim Our Schools LA Coalition (2016):

Reclaim Our Schools LA believes that a successfully implemented and transformative community schools program provides a new way forward to increase access to educational opportunities for all students. The individual design and implementation, uniquely tailored by each school community, are key to the success of a system-wide community schools approach. (p. 8)

The coalition believes a system-wide community schools approach is possible. As supporters of the policy resolution, they founded their work on the four pillars of community schools, as described by Oakes et al. (2017): integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. In order to implement a transformational community school, schools must conduct an asset and needs assessment, create a strategic plan, engage partners, and have community school coordinators (Frankl, 2016). Per the direction of the Board of Education, the district had begun to do this work beginning in the fall of 2017.

**School models and initiatives.** L.A. Unified has a variety of school models and initiatives that were prominent throughout the district. This section examines two of which are

critical to understanding the participating schools involved in this study—the pilot school model and the Linked Learning approach.

***Pilot schools.*** Pilot schools were first established in 2007 through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the LAUSD and the United Teachers of Los Angeles. Subsequently, the Public School Choice Board Resolution in 2009 and the Stabilization and Empowerment Agreement between LAUSD and UTLA in 2011 allowed for any LAUSD school to adopt this model. According to the LAUSD Office of School Choice Pilot Schools Manual (2016), pilot schools were established to provide models of educational innovation and design that others can learn from. In accordance with the attendance boundaries for neighborhood schools, pilot schools are open to all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, language needs, or disabilities (LAUSD, Office of School Choice, 2016).

In an agreement between LAUSD, UTLA, and the Association of Administrators of Los Angeles, pilot schools were given autonomy over five key areas: staffing, budget, curriculum and assessment, governance, and school calendar or scheduling. In 2017, there were 48 pilot schools throughout the district. Out of the 48 pilot schools, 33 were high schools, not including span schools. The two LAUSD schools that participated in this study were pilot high schools that opened in the earlier years of the pilot school movement.

According to the pilot school manual, the six essential features of a pilot school are equitable, collaborative, autonomous, accountable, personalization, and innovative (LAUSD, n.d.). Pilot schools are—they create safe and inclusive environments where everyone feels respected. Pilot schools have a collaborative school culture that emphasizes shared decision-making. Teachers work in teams and “teachers, school staff, parents, and community members

have expanded leadership roles” (LAUSD, n.d., p. 12). In exchange for the increased autonomy that pilot schools have, they are held to high levels of accountability to student engagement, attendance, and academic performance measures, which is expected to exceed the district averages. Pilot schools create personalized learning environments, in which students engage in interactive learning with authentic assessments. Lastly, pilot schools are innovative and set high expectations for students and staff.

Pilot schools form a Governing School Council (GSC) that sets and maintains the school vision, evaluates the principal, approves the annual budget, approves the annual Election-to-Work Agreement (EWA), and establishes bylaws and school policies. The GSC is composed of the principal, teachers, school personnel, students, parents, community members, and representatives from community-based organizations or universities. According to the Office of School Choice (2016), the community representatives “are important additions, as they are able to widen the council’s perspective and can leverage resources for the school” (p. 51). Representation from the community is valued by pilot school GSC’s.

The Election-to-Work Agreement outlines the working conditions of the school, including the length of the instructional day and school year, the amount of additional time or responsibilities an employee is required to do beyond the instructional day or year, and any additional duties or evaluation measures that is expected of the employee. The EWA is approved by two-thirds of the certificated staff. It also describes the vision of the school to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the environment in which they are choosing to work. The ability to hire whomever the school wants to be on staff is a significant structural component of the pilot

school model because it allows the school to hire teaching staff who share a vision. All certificated employees are required to sign the document before agreeing to work at the school.

***Linked Learning.*** According to the James Irvine Foundation (2016), the Linked Learning approach integrates four core components that research shows improve student outcomes: rigorous academics, work-based learning in real-world workplaces, career-technical education courses in sequence, and comprehensive support services. “Linked Learning is delivered through career pathways, comprehensive programs of study that connect learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside school” (Guha et al., 2014, p. 2). A strong feature of the Linked Learning approach is that rigorous academics are connected to real-world learning that happens outside the school grounds. In this study, Community School 2 was certified as a Linked Learning school; however, to preserve the anonymity of the school and its participants, the specific pathway will not be identified in this paper. According to the LAUSD Linked Learning Office’s website (n.d.), the vision of the office is for students to “graduate as efficacious, worldly-wise, influential, and adaptable citizens prepared to succeed in their educational and career paths and to improve the quality of life in their communities” (“Vision”, para. 1). This vision reinforces the expectation that students will ultimately be contributing members of society and their communities.

### **Conclusion**

Community schools have been around since the late 19th century and have taken many forms, but always with the premise that schools must provide additional programs, supports, and services to meet the holistic needs of the student. The research questions of this study were focused on the practices community school leaders employ to implement the guiding principles

of an effective community school and the perceived impacts of such practices. This chapter began with a discussion of the traits and guiding principles of community schools. These principles and traits were essential in the creation of the instruments to answer both of the study's research questions.

Additionally, in this chapter, the literature was organized to develop three structural elements of a community school, in which this study is grounded—partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports; collaboration, community engagement, and shared-decision-making; and a full-time community school coordinator. A community school can have a variety of impacts, including impacts on student learning and school effectiveness. To further highlight these types of impacts, three examples of community school initiatives were explored—the Harlem Children's Zone, the Children's Aid Society initiative, and the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods initiative. For each of these initiatives, the three structural elements of a community school were described, including their impacts on student learning and school effectiveness.

The Harlem Children's Zone, a bottom-up approach, is an initiative that many people may have heard of; however, HCZ does not necessarily represent the average community school initiative for two reasons: it did not have specifically have a full-time community school coordinator, and it is a community initiative that has schools, instead of a school that extends into the community. The Children's Aid Society community schools began in New York City and have been adapted by other schools across the country. CAS acted as an intermediary organization that supported schools nation-wide and also employed the full-time community school coordinator in these schools. This type of approach is the focus of this study. Lastly, in

the SUN community schools initiative, SUN started in a few schools and ultimately spread throughout the Portland, Oregon, and Multnomah County school systems.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory was introduced to reemphasize the impact community schools can have because schools are part of a system of environments that are connected and come into direct and indirect contact with the student. Two of the ecological systems—the microsystem and mesosystem—were applied to the transformative leadership theory to narrow down the research to four tenets of transformative leadership theory that directly affect children and the school. This chapter concluded with information on the Los Angeles Unified School District, including demographical information, the current climate around community schools, the state's focus on equitable funding and governance, the pilot school model, and the Linked Learning approach.

The next chapter describes the study's methodological framework. Data were collected from interviews, focus groups, and documents in order to answer the two research questions. As explained earlier, community school initiatives can take many forms. The two schools that participated in this study fall under the *intermediary organization* model of community schools. The participant selection, data collection, and data analysis processes will be described in greater detail in chapter three.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Community Schools implement evidence-based strategy to bring together the resources of school, family, and community in order to make schools stronger and help young people thrive.

—Frankl, 2016

Community schools in Los Angeles, and throughout the nation, look very different. Like any school, each of them uniquely represents of the needs, assets, interests, and vision of the school community. This study selected two community schools that were part of the Los Angeles Unified School District. This qualitative, cross-site case study analysis explored the various practices and perceived impacts within each school, as it related to six guiding principles of an effective community school. Multiple perspectives were captured as part of this study—employees of LAUSD, leaders who worked *at* the school but were funded by a community partner, and leaders who collaborated *with* the school but were employed by a community partner. The multiple methods used to code the data, and the multiple lenses used to analyze the data, increased the strength and complexity of the findings.

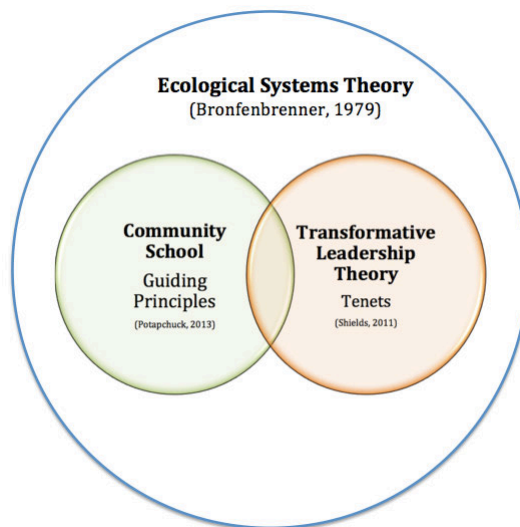
#### **Overview of Purpose and Research Questions**

As it relates to education, ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suggests that a child’s environments, and the people, entities, or things within them, influence a child’s overall development. This theory, particularly the microsystem (i.e., child’s interactions with family, classroom, and peer group) and mesosystem (i.e., family-neighborhood and home-school contexts) is the foundation for this study’s conceptual and methodological frameworks. This study was centered on the with which students come into contact. Leaders involved in community schools can be seen as pushing *out* (by forming partnerships with community



members) and pushing *in* (by bringing outside resources into the school). School-site personnel within community schools can be seen as pushing out because, in order to be truly successful, they must reach out beyond the school walls to partners, community members, and nonschool personnel to form relationships that bring resources, services, and supports into the school. If they are successful, many of these partners and community members may be willing to push supports into the school, if the work of the school aligns with their mission and if resources permit.

The research questions are two-fold: What practices do community school leaders employ to implement guiding principles of a community school? What impacts do community school leaders perceive these practices have? To review, Figure 3.1 illustrates the purpose of this study and the lens in which the data were analyzed. This conceptual framework situates a community school within the context of ecological systems theory. Transformative leadership theory is an additional lens in which the data were analyzed.



*Figure 3.1.* Conceptual framework.

Successful schools often have strong leaders serving different, but important, roles. In order to create effective learning conditions within a school, leaders must navigate the multiple layers of systems that they encounter while they are attempting to serve students, families, and community members. Inherent to the community school strategy is the idea of integrated services (Dryfoos & Maguire, 2002). Leaders, especially those who work within the community school and those who partner with it, must navigate multiple systems in order to bring services and resources that can support the needs of the whole child. The research questions sought to identify the practices community school leaders employed to implement the guiding principles of a community school and the perceived impacts of such practices. To answer these questions, this study focused on leaders of two community schools and on leaders employed by local community organizations that partnered with each school. Focus groups and interviews were conducted in order to identify some of these practices and perceived impacts. Additionally, documents were analyzed to attempt to verify the perceived impacts of these practices.

### **Methodology**

This section describes the research design, setting, participants, instrument protocols, data collection procedures and analysis, and the validity of the data.

#### **Research Design**

This study was a qualitative, cross-site case study analysis of two community schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. “The use of multiple case studies in educational research is a common strategy for improving the external validity or generalizability of the research” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 449). The cross-site analysis was an attempt to

establish a range of generality and a set of conditions that were present in both cases. These conditions made it easier for certain practices to be identified.

### **Setting and Research Sites**

The study focused on two community schools that are part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second largest school district in the nation, and the largest district with an elected school board of education. Gay et al. (2010) stated that researchers need to develop a rationale for the selection of the case and determine the unit of analysis. For the purpose of this study, the selected sites needed to have the three structural elements that were identified in the previous chapter: partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports; collaboration, community engagement, and shared decision-making; and a full-time community school coordinator working with at the school. Both of the participating schools met these requirements.

To ensure that the conditions of the schools, staff, and students were similar, the demographical data for the two schools participating schools were considered. Both schools were pilot schools with an enrollment fewer than 600, a Title I percentage above 90%, and a student body that was primarily comprised of Latino students. As discussed in the previous chapter, community school initiatives can take many forms. This study selected two community schools that relied on an intermediary organization, similar to the Children's Aid Society, to implement their community schools initiative. The intermediary partners funded the community school coordinator positions at both sites. While intermediary partners may have different systems by which they operate, the selection of the two community schools was based on the fact that the intermediary community partners acknowledged and implemented according to the six guiding

principles of effective community schools. These guiding principles informed the development of the interview and focus group protocols.

In order to gain access to these two schools, an application to Loyola Marymount University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was submitted for approval of the study. Simultaneously, a research proposal was submitted to the LAUSD Committee for External Research Review, which is housed in the LAUSD Research Unit of the Office of Data and Accountability. The participation of the two school principals was requested via email, and a consent letter was also submitted via email to each of the community partners requesting their participation in the study.

### **Participants and Criteria for Selection**

**Selection of participating school sites.** This study focused on two pilot high schools in LAUSD. It is important to note that Community School 1 (CS1) was recognized as a community school by Los Angeles community partner organizations that support community schools. Additionally, the CS1 principal considered the school to be implementing the community school strategy. On the other hand, Community School 2 (CS2) was not readily considered to be a community school; however, in the process of attempting to identify a school site comparable to CS1, Community School 2 was brought up for consideration. After the six guiding principles and three structural elements were described to the principal of CS2, it was mutually determined that CS2 was employing the community school strategy.

Another important note to make about the two district schools that participated in the study is that they were *pilot schools*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, pilot schools have autonomy over five specific areas: staffing, budget, curriculum and assessment, governance, and

school calendar/scheduling. These autonomies were established through an agreement between the district and labor partners. Most traditional district schools do not necessarily have the same autonomies or flexibility. For the purposes of this study, the thematic pathway that is the main focus of each school site (e.g., health science, art and media, business and finance, engineering, etc.) was not identified, in an effort not to compromise the anonymity of the schools since there were only 48 pilot schools in the LAUSD in 2017.

**Selection of individual participants.** The participants that were the focus of this study were people who had been identified as community school leaders, including the principal and the full-time community school coordinator at each site. The principals and community school coordinators were interviewed because of their unique and important perspectives, especially because they are the individuals most responsible for whether they are following the guiding principles of community schools. For the sake of this study, community school leaders also included leaders within local organizations that have formal partnerships with the school. The sample was limited to six community partner organizations. Community partner leaders were selected to participate in the study because they are directly connected to the three structural elements of community schools that have been identified: they provide holistic services, they are collaborative partners, and they may be the agency that employs the full-time community school coordinator.

The school principal made the recommendations as to which school-site staff members she or he felt should participate in the focus group. Principals were simply told that the focus group participants needed to be individuals the principals believed were critical for the effective implementation of their specific community school strategy. The focus group was restricted to

school staff and personnel and did not include the community partners. In both cases, both schools selected a group of teachers to participate in the focus group.

In order to have all of these aforementioned people participate in the study, a letter of consent was sent to the school principals to gain their buy-in to work with their community school coordinator and partner organizations. The principals also assisted by providing the contact information of all of their community partners. Letters of consent were then sent out to all of the community partner organizations, asking if they would be willing to allow a member of their organization, that works directly with the school site, to participate in the research study. A few community partners were not selected as participants because of the extensive approval processes that were required to participate. Others declined to participate due to the confidential nature of their data. It is important to note that other community partners were mentioned during the interviews and focus groups; however, they did not formally participate in the study, and, thus, the information the participants provided on these community partners could not be verified by the organizations themselves.

All community partners were given pseudonyms, for anonymity purposes, which were based on the type of collaborative work that is done with the school. All organizations were described as “partners” and the pseudonyms were referred to in capital letters, as if they were proper nouns. The following are the pseudonyms, and respective descriptions, of CS1’s six community partners, including the intermediary organization, that participated in the study:

- ***Professional Development Partner*** – This partner worked directly with the teachers on campus across all grades.

- ***Industry Professional Partner*** – This partner worked with teachers and supplemented the curriculum by sending volunteers to teach specific class lessons, and also organized an annual fair with the help of the volunteers and students.
- ***Thematic Funding Partner*** – This partner provided funding for thematic-related school projects and also thematic-related internships for students.
- ***Mental Health Partner*** – This partner used government funding to employ therapists that worked directly on the school’s campus.
- ***Museum Partner*** – This partner offered free admission to students and their families and also organized field trips for teachers and students.
- ***Community School Intermediary Partner*** – This partner funded the community school coordinator on the site and also provided other services like workshops and career-related resources.

The following are the six community partners, including the intermediary organization, which worked with Community School 2 and participated in this study:

- ***Professional Development Partner*** – This partner provided professional development services for teachers, conducted a whole-school retreat, and organized a summer bridge program for incoming ninth graders.
- ***Industry Professional Partner*** – This partner sent volunteers to the school campus to work with students.
- ***Internship Partner*** – This partner used grant dollars to fund internships for students and placed students at thematic-related host sites, while monitoring students’ progress throughout the year.

- ***Project-Based Partner*** – This partner offered stipends to teachers and an industry mentor, so that students could participate in a project that was aimed at improving their community.
- ***Mentorship Partner*** – This partner worked with specific grade levels during advisory class to provide students with mentors from thematic-related industries.
- ***Community School Intermediary Partner*** – This partner funded the community school coordinator, and also coordinated the other community organizations that collaborated with the school. This partner also funded other partners, like the Mentorship Partner.

Given that both schools had a *Professional Development* partner and an *Industry Professional* partner, the associated school is referenced whenever these partners are mentioned in this paper.

### **Instrumentation**

The data collection began with interviews with the principals at each of the school sites. For CS1, the focus group was conducted after all of the interviews associated with the school had already been completed. For CS2, the focus group was conducted on the same day as the interview with the principal. The difference in the order in which the data were collected was simply due to scheduling and availability.

The research on community schools presents a variety of traits, principles, and essential strategies (Blank et al., 2006; Frankl, 2016; Potapchuck, 2013). The instrument questions for the focus group and interviews were specifically focused on the six guiding principles offered by Potapchuck for three reasons: these principles are considered essential for *effective* community schools; these guiding principles are equity-focused and emphasize collaboration and collective



impact; and the research was a collaborative effort with the Coalition for Community Schools, PolicyLink, the Institute for Educational Leadership, and the West Coast Collaborative.

Separate data collection protocols were created for the interviews with the school principals or community school coordinators, the interviews with the community partner leaders, and the focus groups. Each instrument was field-tested before being administered. For the interviews and focus groups that involved the school principals or community school coordinators, the instruments were informally field-tested with a LAUSD principal that did not participate in the actual study. For the interviews with the community partner organizations, the instrument was field-tested with a representative of a community organization that works with LAUSD schools, but was not a participant in the actual study. During both field tests, the participating schools and community organizations remained anonymous. The field tests increased the overall validity of the instruments because some instrument questions were revised based on how they were misinterpreted during the field tests. Additionally, the timing and length was monitored during each field test to ensure that the interview and focus group would not exceed one hour, as indicated on the consent forms.

It was made clear to all participants that their identity would remain anonymous and all of the information collected from the study would not have any identifying factors. Anonymity was important, so that participants would not feel like they were not putting themselves at risk of exposing any of their practices, ideas, beliefs, values, suggestions, or lack thereof.

### **Data Collection Protocols and Procedures**

This following section focuses on the protocols and procedures for each data collection method used as part of this study.

**Interviews of school site leaders.** The study began by conducting individual interviews with the school principal and the community school coordinator at each site. They knew the school intimately, like any other school staff member, and both had been at the school for several years. Research on community schools identifies the principal and the full-time community school coordinators as positions that are critical to the success of a community school initiative.

Responsive interviewing was conducted in order to allow the principal investigator to change the questioning techniques and to probe accordingly. Six questions were asked of the principal and community school coordinator, and nine of the representatives of the community partner organizations. (See Appendix A for the interview instrument and questions.) The interviews did not exceed one hour. While the interview questions were similar to the focus group questions, the questions asked of the principals and community school coordinators were intended to go deeper. Gay et al. (2012) argued that researchers can collect in-depth data about participants' feelings, experiences, attitudes, interests, feelings, concerns, and values through interviews. The interviews of both principals were conducted at the school site. The interview of the CS1 community school coordinator was also conducted at the school site, and the interview of the CS2 community school coordinator was conducted off campus because CS2 was not in session. Notes were taken during the interviews and focus groups, and they were also recorded for transcription purposes. Participants were not given the questions in advance of the focus group. While no follow-up interviews were conducted with any of the participants in person, both principals provided additional information via email.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups were also conducted on the schools' campuses. School principals were given discretion over who they thought should participate in the focus group.

Teachers were selected to be part of both focus groups. The CS1 focus group also included the assistant principal. Community School 1 had six focus group members, including the principal, the assistant principal, and four teachers from different subject matters—special education, science, English, and math—who had all happened to be together to complete a self-assessment to prepare for an upcoming review of the school. Community School 2 had four focus group members, including the principal, a lead teacher, and two teachers who were part of the pilot school’s Community Outreach committee. Other members of the committee were unable to join the focus group at the last minute. Both of the focus groups were conducted on the school campus while the school was not in session.

**Interviews of community partner organizations.** Interviews were also conducted with individuals that work at or with the school site but were employed by external community partner organizations that work with the school. The school principals identified which partners they thought should participate in the study based on their work with the school. The interviews were conducted at the location that was most convenient and comfortable for the community partner. In most cases, the interviews were conducted at their place of employment. Two interviews were conducted at other locations that the participants had deemed were most convenient for them.

**Document analysis.** Some researchers have claimed that community schools could have impacts on student learning and school effectiveness (Blank et al., 2003; Lubell, 2011). Documents were reviewed in an attempt to provide background information on each school and to verify some of the impacts mentioned during the interview and focus group. Regarding the participating schools themselves, the school report cards and school experience surveys were

obtained from L.A. Unified’s website. The years examined in the documents were the 2013–2014, 2014–2015, and 2015–2016 academic years. Due to the unavailability of some data, this study reported data for specific categories for the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 academic years, thus, omitting one year. The 2013–2014 data were not omitted in their entirety, in order to examine a longer period of time, when possible. Additionally, the participants themselves provided some data, after the interview or focus group took place. The schools’ mission and vision statements and Student Learner Outcomes were also reviewed during the analysis. Regarding the community partner organizations, the mission and vision statements were retrieved from all of the partners’ websites. Additionally, the study participants themselves provided some data to verify some of the impacts they had previously mentioned during the interview.

### **Data Analysis and Procedures**

Three sources data were chosen to be part of the data collection—interviews, focus groups, and documents—in order to increase the strength of my research. “Triangulation is the process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied and to cross-check information” (Gay et al., 2012, p. 393). The triangulation of this data allowed the study to rely on multiple forms of data instead of just one, thereby, increasing the validity of the data. Immediately after completing each interview and focus group, the transcripts were transcribed, either by the researcher or by a paid entity. The NVivo® Qualitative Data Analysis software was used to assist with the organization and coding of the data.

To analyze the qualitative data collected, pattern coding was first conducted through a deductive analysis by categorizing the data to see if they fell within any of the six community school guiding principles or any of the four transformative leadership tenets. Gay et al. (2012) claimed that deductive reasoning involves arriving at specific conclusions based on observations, experiences, or general principles. Some data were able to fit multiple guiding principles. Simultaneously, the data were coded as either a practice or an impact to directly answer the research questions. The operational definitions for each guiding principle and transformative leadership tenet were critical during the coding process.

Next, the coded data were reduced to the most salient examples of practices and impacts, using inductive analysis. This round of open coding and analysis allowed for the organic emergence of categories to organize the data (Flick, 2014; Warren & Karner, 2015). In order to have a deeper understanding of qualitative case studies, the researcher must engage in continuous attention and ongoing interpretation, which often involves going back and forth between deductive and inductive thinking (Flick, 2014; Stake, 1995). Special attention was paid to the second and fourth guiding principles because both principles focused on community partnerships. An additional round of coding was used for these two principles, which involved inductive reasoning, resulting in the second guiding principle's focus to be on the assets the community partner brought to the school, while the fourth guiding principle focused on the schools' efforts to align and coordinate these assets.

While the participants in the study identified many practices for each guiding principle, the data revealed that participants were only able to identify a limited number of impacts. In many cases, the participants admitted that some of the impacts were merely their hopes, wants,

or goals; however, in many cases, no anecdotal, qualitative, or quantitative data could be collected in order to verify if these impacts were, in fact, achieved. The impacts selected for this study were only those that related directly to the practices that had been identified by participants. Additionally, *transformative impacts* were identified for each of these themes, which were aligned to the four transformative leadership tenets that had been identified in the previous chapter—acknowledging power and privilege; working towards democracy; articulating individual and collective purpose; and demonstrating cultural competence (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011; Shields, 2011; Starratt, 2011).

### **Methodological Framework Summary**

To recap, the two participating schools were selected through the use of the three structural elements: partnerships, integrated services, and holistic supports; collaboration, community engagement and shared decision-making; and the presence of a full-time community school coordinator. The bulk of the qualitative data was collected through interviews, focus groups, and documents. The data collection instruments were developed around the guiding principles of an effective community school. The data was analyzed based on these principles as well as the four tenets of transformative leadership theory. Figure 3.2 graphically summarizes the overall methodological framework of this research study. This figure describes the components of the methodological framework, including the structural elements that are part of the site selection criteria, the instrumentation and data collection processes for this study, and the lenses through which the data were analyzed. The selection of the community schools and the instruments used to interview the participants focused on the guiding principles of community

schools. An additional layer of analysis—using Transformative Leadership Theory—was applied.

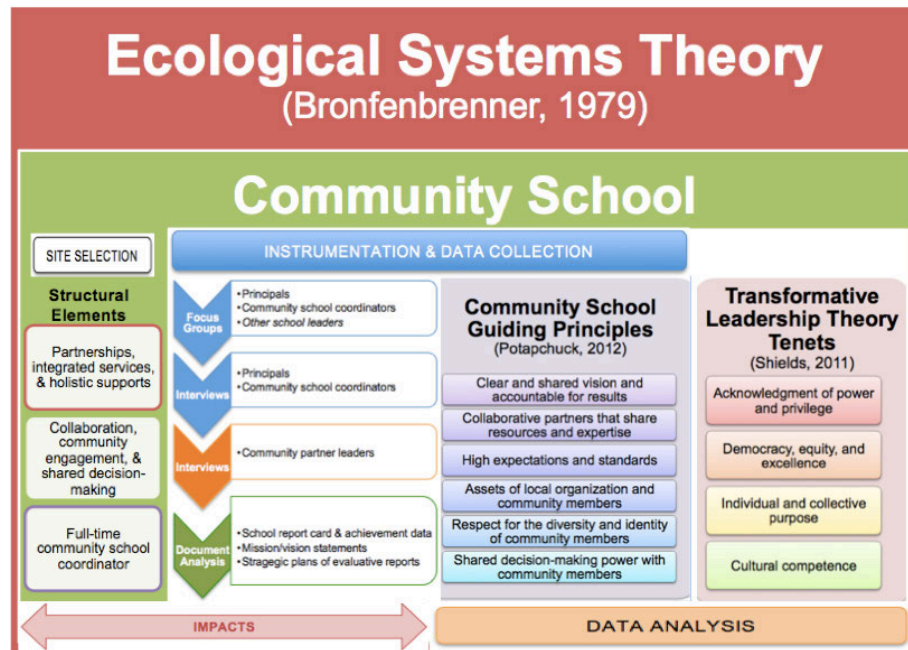


Figure 3.2. Methodological framework.

### Validity and Trustworthiness

Gay et al. (2012) stated that validity, also known as trustworthiness, is “the degree to which qualitative data accurately gauge what we are trying to measure” (p. 391). Gay et al. explained that trustworthiness can be established by addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Because this study did not involve random sampling for the selection of the participants, triangulation of the data collected was used to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data.

### Conclusion

Ecological systems theory, as it pertains to education, states that children are impacted by the multiple systems (environments) that they either come into contact with directly or indirectly.

If children have a negative experience with the environments that directly impact them (microsystem and mesosystem), they are unlikely to be as successful as peers who may not be experiencing similar challenges. Community schools can mitigate some of those barriers by tapping into the community's assets and building bridges between the school and families and the surrounding community. This holistic approach recognizes that some students may have many barriers in life, while others are privileged to have less.

This study sought to identify what practices are being employed in community schools and what leaders see as impacts of these practices. The participant selection was two-fold: community school leaders that push *out* (i.e., school administrators and community school coordinators) by connecting with outside community members and groups, and leaders from community partner organizations that push *in* by bringing services and supports into the schools. The data collected in this study were analyzed using both deductive and inductive analysis methods. Ultimately, the coded data were reduced to the most salient examples of practices and impacts, as it pertains to the guiding principles of effective community schools and transformative leadership tenets. The next chapter describes these themes of practices and impacts in greater detail.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Being part of a community school means that we can't do it alone. Teachers cannot do it alone. As a community school coordinator, I cannot do it alone. So, including the community neighbors and sharing the responsibility of the success of the students. It becomes this big community movement. We are seeing that if students are not succeeding, how do we all take responsibility for that?

—CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 27, 2016

#### Study Background

The purpose of this cross-site case study was to identify practices that community school leaders employed, in alignment with nationally recognized guiding principles of community schools, and the perceived impacts of such practices. By June 2017, the LAUSD had barely formally recognized the community schools strategy in the district; however, the two schools that participated in this study had already been implementing the six guiding principles in their schools. This chapter explores each of these guiding principles, and the respective practices, in greater detail.

Additionally, the data were examined to explore four transformative leadership tenets, in relation to the perceived impacts of the identified practices. While this analysis may seem unrelated to the research questions, the analysis was conducted in a way that used four tenets of transformative leadership theory to operationally define four types of transformative impacts. It is worth noting that, in the case of both analyses, all impacts were *perceived* impacts.

Triangulation of the data through interviews, focus groups, and document reviews helped ensure the validity of the data; however, this study does not imply any causation between practices and impacts.

As previously discussed, the study included interviews of various community school leaders. These leaders included the principal and community school coordinator at each school site, as well as representatives of community partner organizations that had direct contact with each school. While many of the community partners did not view themselves as community school leaders, as the researcher, I told them they were being considered as such, given their level of involvement with the community school. Additionally, one focus group per school site was conducted at the respective school site. Lastly, documents were reviewed, specifically as they pertained to the impacts that were discussed during the interviews and focus groups.

This chapter is organized according to the six guiding principles of a community school. Each section includes two to four identified practices per guiding principle, followed by impacts of each practice. These impacts were either stated by the participants during the interview or focus group, were captured from a review of relevant documents, or were considered transformative impacts, according to four tenets of transformative leadership theory. To review, this study was based on the following six guiding principles of a community school:

1. They have a clear and shared vision and are accountable for results.
2. Their collaborative partners share resources and expertise.
3. There are high expectations and standards.
4. They align the assets of local organizations and the community members who live and work in the community.
5. They respect the diversity and identity of community members with diverse backgrounds.

6. They share the decision-making power with local community leaders and families.

(Potapchuck, 2013, p. 5)

Additionally, this study analyzed the data according to the following four transformative leadership theory tenets:

1. acknowledging power and privilege;
2. working towards democracy;
3. articulating individual and collective purpose; and
4. demonstrating cultural competence (Shields, 2011, p. 5).

### **Data Analysis**

The data were first analyzed using a deductive approach by coding the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups to see if they fell within any of the six community school guiding principles or any of the four transformative leadership tenets. When coding for the six guiding principles, data were also categorized as a practice or an impact, in order to answer the two research questions. The operational definitions for each guiding principle and transformative leadership tenet were critical during the coding process. Next, the coded data were reduced to the most salient examples of practices and impacts. Special attention was paid to the second and fourth guiding principles because both principles focused on community partnerships, so it was important that these operational definitions were clear. The data were reduced even further using an inductive approach to determine the salient themes within each guiding principle under which many practices could be categorized. The impacts selected for this chapter were only those that related directly to the practices that fell within these themes.

While the participants in the study identified many practices for each guiding principle, the data revealed that participants were only able to identify a limited number of impacts. In many cases, the participants admitted that some of the impacts were merely their hopes, wants, or goals. Documents (e.g., school report cards, school experience surveys, and mission statements from websites) were also reviewed to attempt to verify the data collected from participants. There were several instances in which no anecdotal, qualitative, or quantitative data could be collected to verify if these impacts were, in fact, achieved. The interview and focus group data were analyzed during a second round to identify the transformative impacts the school had had on its students and families as they pertained to the various themes of practices. Additionally, the document review allowed for the acknowledgement of other impacts the practices may have had on students and the school overall.

### **Summary of Findings**

After looking at perceived impacts, relevant public documents, and the transformative impacts, as derived from transformative leadership theory, this study revealed more impacts, especially transformative impacts of the employed practices than may have been perceived by the participants. Many specific practices were identified for the following themes: the provision of relevant, real-world learning opportunities for students; the alignment of school-level teaching practices to ensure high expectations; and formal structures for shared-decision making. The guiding principles that had the greatest number of identified practices were the third and sixth guiding principles, which focused on high expectations and shared decision-making power. Additionally, the transformative impact that was mentioned the most across multiple themes of practices was the third tenet that focused on articulating individual and collective purpose,

especially as the practices related to shared purpose and the connection between students' academics and their personal experiences.

The following sections are organized by the six guiding principles of community schools and the categories of the types of practices employed under each. Each section begins with a brief operational definition of the guiding principle, as the principles have already been defined in Chapter 2. Additionally, each guiding principle, and the respective practices, is followed by a discussion of impacts, if any, quantitative, anecdotal, or transformative. The qualitative data captured from the participants from the two community schools—Community School 1 (CS1) and Community School 2 (CS2)—were integrated into each of the themes within the guiding principle. While this chapter provides a selection data and findings from the study, the next and final chapter engages in a deeper analysis of these findings.

### **Guiding Principle 1: Clear and Shared Vision and Accountability for Results**

The first community school guiding principle emphasized that the school must have a clear and shared vision and must be held accountable for results. This section first explores the stated and perceived vision of each school, followed by the specific practices the school community employed to achieve the shared vision. As previously mentioned, the specific thematic pathways (e.g., health science, art and media, engineering, etc.) are not named in this study, in order to maintain the anonymity of the participating schools.

Part of ensuring that a shared vision existed requires having formal agreements of some kind in order to hold partners accountable (Potapchuck, 2013). For the purposes of this study, participating community partners were asked what types of formal or informal agreements they had with the school. For Community School 1, four of the five community partners that

participated in this study had formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the school. Of the four partners, the principal signed all MOUs, three of which were also signed by teachers. Additionally, one of the four community partners had a MOU with the school and a contract with LAUSD to allow for an exchange of money for services. One partner organization had no formal agreement. Several partners mentioned the difficulty they experienced in navigating the district's requirements and processes to acquire these agreements.

For Community School 2, there was a range in the type of agreements the school had with community partners. One of the community partners had a formal MOU with the school, which was signed by the principal. The Project-Based Partner had a contract with individual teachers because the teachers received stipends directly from the partner. The Mentorship Partner had an agreement with, and was funded by, the Community School Intermediary Partner. The Intermediary Partner also funded the community school coordinator at CS2. Two of the community partners had no formal, written agreements. The agreements were merely verbal. The Professional Development Partner had an MOU with the school and a contract with the district, especially because there was an exchange of money for services. "The agreements, I think, really hold us to a certain structure and timeline and business-type of relationship that we have to follow and does very clearly outline goals and objectives," stated the Professional Development Partner (CS2 Professional Development Partner, interview, December 21, 2016). Clearly outlined goals and objectives made it easier to hold partners accountable.

Based on the data collected from the interviews, focus groups, and documents, the two community schools shared similar focuses. They both strived for academic excellence through challenging curriculum. They both integrated real-world learning experiences into teaching and

learning. And, they both worked to prepare students for college and career. The commitment to individual and collective purposes, and the provision of real-world experiences, were aligned with the third transformative leadership tenet. Additionally, a word frequency analysis was conducted of the mission statements of the six community partner organizations that participated in the study, including the Intermediate Partners that funded the community school coordinators at each site. Both CS1 and CS2 shared the following seven high-frequency words according to this analysis: education, students, partner, development, provide, communities, and community. It is also interesting to note that two of the six community partners for each school had the word “transform” in their mission statements. Also, with regard to CS1’s target audience, four community partners’ mission statements emphasized that they targeted audiences described as “underserved,” “at-risk,” or “high poverty.” For CS2, four community partners targeted audiences described as “disadvantaged,” “underserved,” “minority,” or in “poverty.”

**Mission and vision for Community School 1.** According to its website,<sup>1</sup> the vision of Community School 1 was to use a thematic approach and pathway to provide students with an opportunity to participate in challenging, interdisciplinary learning experiences. The school also sought to empower students through project-based learning using the thematic pathway as an inspiration. In the individual interview before the focus group, the principal stated that CS1 engaged in interdisciplinary, thematic work across grade levels, which is supported by the professional development that was provided to teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> CS1’s website was not cited to protect the anonymity of the school.

<sup>2</sup> CS2’s website was not cited to protect the anonymity of the school.

<sup>3</sup> The CS1 and CS2 restorative justice partners did not formally participate in this study.

CS1 had a set of Student Learner Outcomes (SLOs) that the school community also strived to achieve. These SLOs were focused on ensuring that students were civically engaged in their school and the local and global community; showed respect, accepted responsibility for their actions, and maintained an inclusive school community; communicated effectively and were biliterate; engaged in challenging curriculum; developed technological proficiency; and participated in interdisciplinary, thematic learning.

During the focus group—comprised of four teachers, the principal, and assistant principal—all of the participants agreed that the vision was for every student to have a plan when they graduated. The participants also stated that they believed the goal of the school was to help students meet their potential and to take leadership roles at the school. The principal of CS1 emphasized during the interview that education is more than just the academic learning in classrooms:

We see education as something bigger than just what happens at school. We see education as tied to these other cultural institutions in this great city. We think that education has to do with relationships – building relationships with adults and with peers. (CS1 principal, interview, October, 21, 2016)

The participants from the CS1 staff shared a commitment to a greater purpose for the education of CS1 students.

The CS1 community school coordinator believed that the school’s vision and mission was to educate the students through thematic pathways, so that they graduated, finished their university high school requirement courses, and went to higher education or some technical trade (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016). This vision of college and career preparedness was shared by a couple of the community partner organizations. According to the LAUSD School Report Card for CS1, in the 2015–2016 school year, 60% of students



stated that they planned to complete a four-year college, compared to 65% the previous year. In 2015–2016, 6% stated that they wanted to complete technical or vocational school or two year-college, compared to 7% in the previous year. Thus, almost three-fourths of the student population indicated that they wanted to go to college after graduating from high school.

**Mission and vision for Community School 2.** The mission of Community School 2 was to achieve academic excellence through a strong instructional program, enrichment activities and holistic supports, and a comprehensive thematic focus, as indicated on the school’s website.<sup>2</sup> CS2’s vision was for students to experience a challenging curriculum that would prepare them for postsecondary education. Additionally, according to its website, CS2 parents were actively engaged in their child’s learning, there was strong community and business support, and teachers believed that their improved practice would lead to improved student learning.

CS2 had its own set of Student Learner Outcomes that the school community strived to achieve. These SLOs were focused on ensuring that students were self-directed learners who were reflective and engaged in challenging educational pursuits in and out of the classroom; communicators who worked cooperatively with others; designers who collected and analyzed data and constructed evidence-based arguments; and digitally literate learners who effectively applied technological tools and resources in diverse and dynamic environments.

According to the Internship Partner, part of the CS2’s vision was to “give the kids as many opportunities and as many experiences, and exposure to things as possible” (CS2

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<sup>2</sup> CS2’s website was not cited to protect the anonymity of the school.

Internship Partner, interview, December 21, 2016). Through internships provided by the partner, students were exposed to new opportunities and experiences. Additionally, the partner's goal with the school was to have a high number of students graduating and attainments.

Like CS1, Community School 2 was dedicated to ensuring students were prepared for college and career. The principal stated that their graduation rates had risen over the last several years. According to the graduation rate data provided by CS2's School Report Card, the graduation rate in the 2013–2014 academic year was 69%. In the 2014–2015 school year, it rose to 79%, and rose even more, to 93%, by the 2015–2016 school year. It is worth noting that CS1's graduation rates also increased over the last years, moving from 87% in 2013–2014 to 91% in 2014–2015. It remained at 91% the following year.

The two main practices identified in this study for the first guiding principle were that the schools integrated the thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning experiences and the schools created a positive culture and climate. Each practice, along with any relevant impacts, is described more below.

**Practice 1: Integrated the thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning experiences.** Both schools had partners that helped them integrate the theme into teaching and learning on- and off-campus. CS1's Thematic Funding Partner provided the school with school-wide funding in order to allow the school to build, refine, or integrate the theme. The Industry Professional Partners at both CS1 and CS2 integrated real-world learning directly through courses offered on the campuses by having theme-based industry professionals come into classrooms to support the curriculum. CS2's Mentorship Partner also brought industry professionals to the campus to work with students. The Thematic Funding Partner at CS1 funded

job placements for students in thematic-related fields. The Internship Partner at CS2 also provided students with real-world learning opportunities at host sites in the thematic-related field. Similarly, a CS1 partnership with a community college connected students in a science class to theme-based industry professionals. In the same class, students took ownership of their learning and worked with industry professionals to organize opportunities through networking opportunities and field trips. According to CS1's School Experience Survey, 71% of students agreed (a little or a lot) that their science teacher showed them how science helped them understand the world around them, compared to 68% in the previous year. The integration of real-world experiences into the schools' curricula was evidence that the schools attempted to balance academic and world experiences.

**Practice 2: Created a positive culture and climate.** Community School 1 principal believed that the school had a very strong sense of community both among the adults and the students. During the focus group, the principal stated, "Parents feel comfortable with their kids here. They feel like their kids are well attended to here. They bring their siblings here. They bring their cousins here" (CS1 principal, focus group, December, 19, 2016). Additionally, the CS1 principal (interview, October 21, 2016) stated that CS1 had low teacher turnover because the teachers were drawn to the kind of work that the school was doing. Data received by the principal revealed that in the previous three years, between two to three teachers had turned over each year. Out of the 19 teachers total, this resulted in a turnover rate of 10.5% and 15.7%, respectively, in the last two years. The CS1 principal believed that the low attrition rates were due to the fact that teachers wanted to be at the school. Also during the focus group, the CS1 Special Education teacher (focus group, December 19, 2016) described how students stayed at

the school after school hours a lot, whether it was working or talking with teachers, or being part of sports, clubs, or extracurricular activities. The focus group said that many of the students even came back to visit the school after they graduated. Similarly for Community School 2, the CS2 focus group participants said that many students also stayed late on campus after the school day ended.

Additionally, both schools had a relationship with a community partner that offered a restorative justice program on campus.<sup>3</sup> Through these partnerships, both schools were able to organize restorative justice circles on campus, which contributed to the positive school culture at each school. CS1's restorative justice partner funded a restorative justice coordinator and also provided the school with extra personnel to run their school-wide circles. At CS2, the community school coordinator described the restorative justice circles further and said, "There was mutual teaching and learning from teachers and students and there wasn't a sense of punishment, but restoration" (CS2 community school coordinator, interview, December 22, 2016).

Like CS2, the CS1 English teacher described the mutual impact the restorative justice work had on students and adults. During the focus group, the CS1 English teacher stated, "The shift towards a restorative justice model for our school has had a positive impact on our students, and our staff, and the environment of the school as a whole," CS1 English teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016). The CS1 principal agreed with the larger impact of the restorative justice work, by emphasizing the impact the work has had on families:

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<sup>3</sup> The CS1 and CS2 restorative justice partners did not formally participate in this study.

I think that's another one that's had a big impact on families, too, because it's changed our discipline quite significantly. Families see the impact of that because they see us working to resolve harm and conflict differently with kids. We've had parents come in and participate in harm and conflict circles. I think it's been positive modeling for families, but also just a relief for families to see a school taking an approach that is more solution-oriented than punitive. (CS1 principal, focus group, December 19, 2016)

The restorative justice work has helped create a positive culture on campus, among students, teachers, and families. According to the CS1's school experience survey for the 2015–2016 school year, 93% of parents in 2015–2016 agreed or strongly agreed that discipline was fair, compared to 84% in the previous year. Table 4.1 summarizes the practices, and the respective impacts, employed to implement this community school guiding principle.

Table 4.1

*Guiding Principle #1: Shared Vision and Accountability – Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Integrated the thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning	CS1 Thematic Funding Partner and CS2 Internship Partners provided funding for internships. At both CS1 and CS2, Industry professionals mentored students. At both CS1 and CS2, Industry professionals taught classes on campus.	CS1's SES: <sup>a</sup> 71% of students agreed that their science teacher showed them how science helps them understand the world around them, compared to 68% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>b</sup> Provided students with real-world learning opportunities. Impact on student learning.
Created a positive culture and climate	At both CS1 and CS2, the schools offered clubs, sports, and extracurricular activities. At both CS1 and CS2, teachers stayed with students after the school day ended. At CS1, teachers continued working at the school, showing a low attrition rate. At both CS1 and CS2, restorative justice emphasized positive solutions over punishment.	CS1's SES: In the 2015-2016 school year, 93% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that discipline was fair, compared to 84% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> Ensured a shared commitment and purpose. Impact on school effectiveness.

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>b</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

## **Guiding Principle 2: Collaborative Partners that Share Resources and Expertise**

The second guiding principle of a community school is that it has collaborative partners that share resources and expertise. Community partners collaborated with the school and with each other to design a successful community school. For the purposes of this study, this guiding principle was operationally defined in a way that focused more on the partners and the resources and services they shared with the school to enrich the schools' programs overall.

When all of the community partners were asked in the interviews if they collaborated with other partners on campus, most of the partners from both schools said no. While it is expected that the community school coordinator, and, thus, the Intermediary Partner that funds the coordinator, would partner with most of the groups, the groups did not necessarily partner with each other. The partner organizations may have had their own set of partners that they worked with, especially the mentorship- and apprenticeship-type partners, but oftentimes, these external partners may have served as host-site entities as internship providers but may not have partnered with the school directly beyond that relationship.

The three main practices identified in this study for the second guiding principle were that the collaboration between the school and the community partner: enhanced teaching and learning on campus, provided off-site learning experiences, and addressed needs with holistic supports. Each practice, along with any relevant impacts, is described more below.

**Practice 1: Provided greater capacity that enhanced teaching and learning on campus.** This practice explored how partners supplemented classroom learning that happened between students and teachers. Both schools had partnerships with community colleges that

offered courses on campus. The CS1 principal said that the community college partnership allowed the school to offer courses they did not have:

They are offering four additional courses that we don't teach here. And for a small school that's huge. It really gives us the elective options that we wouldn't have otherwise. It has a great impact. It gives students a sense of choice and freedom, and they earn actual college credit. (CS1 principal, focus group, December 19, 2016)

The principal described the impact as being less about the cost of college and getting the credits out of the way, and more about having a real understanding about what it really means to be a college student. According to the CS1 principal (interview, October 21, 2016), this partnership resulted in over 50% of seniors who had taken at least two college classes before they graduated. Additionally, in the previous three years, more than 50% of seniors were enrolled in at least one college course. These impacts were verified by data provided by the principal that were captured by the district's centralized data management system.

During the focus group, the CS2 principal mentioned that CS2's community college partner provided support for competency-based learning in order to ensure students were prepared for the expectations to obtain specific certificates (CS2 principal, focus group, October 27, 2016). The community college also created performance tests to measure the student's mastery of the competencies. The CS2 principal reported that 27 out of 35 students who took the performance tests successfully passed their performance tests. This data could not be verified with any documents.

**Practice 2: Provided relevant, real-world learning opportunities.** Both schools provided students with opportunities to engage in learning experiences off campus. Through CS2's partnership with the Internship Partner, the school provided students with direct work experience at off-campus, thematic-related host sites. CS1's Museum Partner offered free

admission to CS1 students and up to six family members, which addressed the fact that material disparities for some of these students may have prevented them from visiting the museum in the first place. During the CS1 focus group, the English teacher also described a program “where students get to go on a three-week backpacking, camping, and documentary film-making excursions” (CS1 English teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016). Other CS1 participants confirmed that the school had pushed to get students off campus and into the world through off-site learning opportunities.

Community School 2 also offered students relevant real-world experiences. CS2’s Mentorship Partner supported ninth-grade students during their advisory period, organized off-campus field trips, and arranged for guest speakers in classes. These guest speakers were professionals working in fields related to the school’s thematic pathway. CS2’s Internship Partner provided students with work preparedness opportunities, postsecondary preparedness, and workshops (e.g., resume, career exploration, college information, and college financial aid). According to CS2’s 2015–2016 School Report Card, 85% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the school encouraged them to work hard so that they could be successful in college or at the job they chose. This percentage was up by 4% from the previous year.

**Practice 3: Addressed social-emotional needs and trauma with holistic supports.**

The Mental Health Partner at CS1 provided individual, family, and collateral mental health services, and substance-use programs. The partner provided services for identified youth and families, but also for the entire school, if needed. During the interview, the CS1 community school coordinator argued the Mental Health Partner is one of the school’s biggest partners



because of the wide influence the partner had on the entire school community, especially since services were provided directly on campus:

This is a bus community. How are our students going to feel comfortable going into another community when they might get hit up by a rival gang? They just don't want to deal with that stress. That is an additional stress... So, when we have the services on campus we just abolish all of that. Now, they're getting the services here. (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016)

The CS1 community school coordinator described how the Mental Health Partner offered services on campus, so that students would not need to miss school to get services elsewhere (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016). This on-campus service minimized any issues of access. The coordinator perceived that students felt like school was a place for which they could find safety and care. In 2015–2016, 77% of CS1 teachers reported that social-emotional skills were either taught school wide or by some teachers, compared to 65% in the previous year. Similarly, CS2 addressed students' social-emotional needs through its partnership with the Community School Intermediary Partner by providing wraparound services to ensure the school was helping the students that were falling through the gaps. In 2014–2015, 59% of CS2 teachers reported that social-emotional skills were either taught school wide or by some teachers. Data were not available for CS2 from the 2015-2016 academic year.

The community school coordinator of CS1 also discussed how the trauma of the parents impacted their own children:

A lot of our parents are immigrants, so a lot of our parents haven't seen their parents in the past 20 years. A lot of our parents are never going to see their parents again... Our parents' trauma is affecting the students, and they are not going off to college because they think that they need to stick around to help their parents... We've redefined what the American Dream looks like. 'How do you not want to go to college—have you seen your parents' hands?' These kids are scared because they know their parents are undocumented. (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 29, 2016)

During the interview, the CS1 community school coordinator described an observation she had that many students were not going to college because their parents were undocumented, and they wanted to stay behind to help them. The students' desire to stay behind was coupled with the fact that their parents did not want to let them go off to college in the first place. The CS1 community school coordinator described how the school responded by focusing senior night on the Chicano education pipeline. This response was aimed at encouraging students to go to college and to addressing their parents' hesitations and concerns. As a reference point, CS1's School Experience Survey for the 2015–2016 school year revealed that 60% of students stated that they plan to complete a four-year college degree or higher, compared to 65% of students reporting in the previous year.

**Practice 4: Navigated district requirements and policies to support schools.**

Community partners from both CS1 and CS2 mentioned instances in which they needed to interact with the LAUSD to support the schools. The CS1 Mental Health Partner needed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the district to provide mental health and substance use services. The CS2 Professional Development Partner needed an MOU for services that involved an exchange of money between the school and the partner for professional development provided to the entire staff during a summer retreat. The partner mentioned how they needed to increase their familiarity with the district's Procurement Services Division requirements and needed to plan for the fact that approval could take anywhere between four to six months. The CS1 Thematic Funding Partner also described how they shared costs with the district by paying for programmatic resources and supports while the district covered some capital upgrades to the infrastructure. The community partners did not always choose to work with the district's

requirements, mostly due to limited organizational capacity. CS2’s Professional Development Partner and CS1’s Industry Professional Partner both described the desire to gather data to assess the effectiveness of their programs, but added that their organizations had too limited capacity to go through the district’s approval process to obtain a data sharing agreement. Table 4.2 summarizes the practices and the respective impacts, employed to implement the second community school guiding principle.

Table 4.2

*Guiding Principle #2: Collaborative Partners that Share Resources and Expertise – Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Provided greater capacity that enhanced teaching and learning on campus	At CS1, community college partners offered college courses on campus. At CS2, community college offered competency-learning performance tests.	Over 50% of seniors took at least two college classes before they graduated, and more than 50% of seniors were enrolled in at least one college course (CS1 principal, interview, 10/21/16)  At CS2, 27 out of 35 students that took the performance tests successfully passed their performance tests (CS2 principal, focus group, October 27, 2016).	<b>TLT 3:<sup>a</sup></b> Connected academics to students' experiences and futures.  Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.
Provided relevant, real-world learning opportunities	CS2 Internship Partner provided direct work experience at thematic-related host sites. CS1 Museum Partner offered free admission to students and families. CS2 Mentorship Partner organized off-campus field trips and arranged for guest speakers in classes. CS2 Internship Partner provided students with work preparedness opportunities and post-secondary preparedness.	CS2’s SRC <sup>b</sup> (2015-2016): 85% of students agreed that the school encouraged them to work hard, so that they could be successful in college or at the job they chose. This percentage was up by four percent from the previous year.	<b>TLT 1:<sup>c</sup></b> Addressed material disparities.  <b>TLT 3:</b> Balanced academics and real-world experiences.  Impact on school effectiveness.

Table 4.2, continued

Addressed social-emotional needs and trauma with holistic supports	CS1 and CS2 partners provided mental health, social-emotional, and other wraparound services directly on the school's campus to address students' and parents' needs and traumatic experiences.	CS1 SES <sup>d</sup> (2015-2016): 77% of CS1 teachers reported that social-emotional skills were taught school wide or by teachers, compared to 65% in the previous year.  CS2 SES (2015-2016): 59% of teachers reported that social-emotional skills were either taught school wide or by some teachers.	<b>TLT 1:</b> Provided holistic services and combatted marginalization of groups by institutions.  Impact on student learning.
Navigated district requirements and policies to support schools	CS2 Professional Development and CS1 Mental Health Partners completed MOUs to provide services.  CS1 Thematic Funding Partner shared costs with the district to supplement the thematic program.	<i>No data on impacts were available because this practice was viewed more as a way for partners to work with the school.</i>	<b>TLT 1:</b> Acknowledged the district's institutional requirements to provide services to the school.  Impact on school effectiveness.

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

<sup>b</sup>SRC = School Report Card (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>c</sup>TLT 1 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 1 (acknowledging power and privilege).

<sup>d</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

### Guiding Principle 3: High Expectations and Standards

For the purposes of this study, this guiding principle examined the extent to which high expectations and standards existed for teaching and learning because community schools want all students and adults to learn to high standards and to become contributing members of their community. The three main practices identified in this study for the third guiding principle were that the community schools: aligned school-level teaching practices, placed students at the center of teaching, and supported students to become contributing members to their local community.

**Practice 1: Aligned school-level teaching practices.** Both schools used their professional development partners to support teachers in developing and delivering their curriculum. According to the Professional Development Partner at CS1 (interview, October 25, 2016), the partner helped create effective, interdisciplinary units. Regarding impacts, the

Professional Development Partner believed their work helped improve feelings around teaching. “I think we have improved teaching enthusiasm from the teachers and it's been reenergizing for them. That in turn has really helped students have a very thoughtful and reflective voice,” (CS1 Professional Development Partner, interview, October 25, 2016). CS1’s Professional Development Partner perceived that they had positive impacts on teachers, and, ultimately, the students. A national evaluation study on the partner’s impact on teachers and students was conducted in 2010.<sup>4</sup> The data showed that teachers who received the professional development services provided by the partner demonstrated greater efficacy in promoting student-centered classrooms, historical understanding, and civic learning. The study also showed that the heightened efficacy corresponded with statistically significant student outcomes.

The Professional Development Partner for CS2 provided technical assistance and coaching for the teachers. During the interview, CS2’s Professional Development Partner stated that they organized a summer bridge program that sought to prepare incoming ninth graders for high school and to familiarize them with the thematic pathways of the school. Upper class students acted as peer mentors to incoming students. The CS2 Professional Development Partner described the impact of this summer bridge program:

I would like to think that we’ve been able to improve retention... attendance and the grade point average of ninth graders. I’d like to think that we’ve helped prepare several generations of students to be more successful in high school. (CS2 Professional Development Partner, interview, December 21, 2016)

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<sup>4</sup> The source of the national evaluation study data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the Professional Development Partner.

While no documents were available to verify an increase in attendance and students' GPA due to the program, a review of the partner's 2016 pre- and post-program survey data revealed increases in students' perceptions related to graduation as a result of the program.<sup>5</sup> According to the survey, 59% of the students surveyed said they knew the requirements to graduate from high school (compared to 55% before the program), and 67% said they felt prepared to go to college or find a career after they graduated (compared to 61% before the program). These percentages included responses under the choices "very much like me" and "much like me" on the survey.

During the interview, the CS1 principal stated that faculty engaged in vertical planning to ensure students were college and career ready. The CS1 principal (interview, October 21, 2016) also shared the school's commitment to devoting a good portion of weekly professional development to curricular planning. In the interview, the CS1 principal stated that the principal and assistant principal reviewed all significant assessments that teachers used with their coursework, reviewed the curricular units with the interdisciplinary teams, and sat with teachers while they were norming the grading, (e.g., grading for English essays). According to data collected from CS1's School Experience Surveys, 77% of teachers stated that they "always" or "often" worked in grade-level or department-level teams to review and align grading practices, in both the 2015–2016 and 2014–2015 academic school years.

It was stated (focus group, October 27, 2016) that CS2 regularly analyzed student achievement data and teachers did instructional rounds to collect data from each other's

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<sup>5</sup> The source of the pre- and post-survey data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the Professional Development Partner.

classrooms. Additionally, CS2 subject departments came together to design and implement interim assessments, evaluated the data, and shared back with the staff. According to CS2's School Experience Survey in 2014–2015, 42% of teachers said that they examined evidence of student understanding or mastery. In terms of advisory classes, it was stated that teachers stayed with their advisory students for all four years. Advisory teachers created intervention lists every five weeks to ensure students were on track to graduate, and worked with intervention students when advisory classes met twice a week.

**Practice 2: Placed students at the center of teaching.** During the focus group, the Community School 1 Science teacher described the shift away from teacher-driven instruction, to student-driven, inquiry-based instruction that incorporated practices into the content:

We have our students performing much higher-level skills, like thinking critically, designing scientific investigations, making claims using evidence and reasoning. Shifting away from the old way, the teacher-driven way of teaching. I think that's really increased the rigor of the curriculum, definitely. (CS1 science teacher, focus group, October 19, 2016)

Other participants in the CS1 focus group agreed that the school had shifted more toward student-driven instruction. According to CS1's 2015–2016 School Experience Survey, 93% of teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that students used evidence from content-rich, nonfiction texts to support their ideas.

Additionally, during the focus group, the CS1 math teacher described how students completed self-assessments on their mastery of the standards and later asked for the support they thought they needed from teachers. The math teacher perceived that the self-assessments encouraged students to take ownership of their own learning. The CS1 community school coordinator confirmed in the interview that students had learned how to advocate for themselves.

When asked how the students learned this self-advocacy, the coordinator attributed it to the personalized learning environment: “I think it is the personalization with the teachers. It is not overcrowded here. Every teacher knows every student. The principal knows the name of every student,” (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016). The personalized environment was partly due to the fact that school faculty members knew every student’s name, which is expected to be easier in a small school setting.

**Practice 3: Supported students to become contributing members to their local community.** Practices at each school showed a focus to ensure that students connected with and gave back to their own local community. Community School 2 worked with a Project-Based Partner that provided a stipend to individual teachers to support student-based projects that aimed to improve the local community. At Community School 1, the school’s Industry Professional Partner had professionals that taught some of the science classes on campus. The Industry Professional Partner described how general public health data were used to determine the type of lectures to deliver based on the things that affected that community the most. The partner made a conscious effort to recruit members that shared similar backgrounds with the students of CS1. The partner said that the hope was that the students would see a bit of themselves in the presenters and would also become more interested in careers in medicine, outside of being a doctor or nurse, especially in their own communities (CS1 Industry Professional Partner, interview, October 21, 2016). Table 4.3 summarizes the practices, and the respective impacts, employed to implement this community school guiding principle.



Table 4.3

*Guiding Principle #3: High Expectations and Standards – Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Aligned school-level teaching practices	<p>CS1 PD Partner<sup>a</sup> created effective, interdisciplinary curricular units.</p> <p>CS2 PD Partner provided teachers with technical assistance and coaching.</p> <p>CS2 PD Partner organized a summer bridge program for incoming ninth graders.</p> <p>CS1 school faculty engaged in vertical planning.</p> <p>CS1 school administration reviewed assessments, curricular units, and norms for grades on assignments.</p> <p>CS2 teachers did instructional rounds and collected data in each other’s classrooms.</p> <p>Both CS1 and CS2 advisory teachers stayed with students for all four years of high school.</p> <p>CS2 advisory teachers focused on intervention with specific students during the periods.</p>	<p>An evaluative study<sup>b</sup> revealed that the CS1 professional development services increased teacher’s efficacy in promoting student-centered classrooms, historical understanding, and civic learning, which corresponded with statistically significant student outcomes.</p> <p>A survey<sup>d</sup> found that 59% of students surveyed said they knew the requirements to graduate from high school (compared to 55% before the program), and 67% said they felt prepared to go to college or find a career after they graduated (compared to 61% before the program).</p> <p>CS1 SES:<sup>e</sup> 77% of teachers stated that they “always” or “often” worked in grade-level or department-level teams to review and align grading practices, in both the 2015–2016 and 2014–2015 school years.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2014-2015): 42% of teachers said that they examined evidence of student understanding or mastery.</p>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b><sup>c</sup> Connected academics to personal experiences and shared commitment to high-quality teaching and learning.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness.</p>
Placed students at the center of teaching	<p>CS1 shifted to student-driven, inquiry-based instruction.</p> <p>CS1 math students completed self-assessments on their mastery of the standards.</p> <p>CS1 school faculty knew every student’s name.</p>	<p>CS1 SES (2015-2016): 93% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students used evidence from content-rich non-fiction text to support their ideas.</p>	<p><b>TLT 2:</b><sup>f</sup> Students voiced their opinions and advocated for themselves.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.</p>

Table 4.3, continued

Supported students to become contributing members to their local community	<p>CS2 Project-Based Partner provided stipends to teachers, so students could develop projects that focused on improving their local community.</p> <p>CS1 Industry Professional Partner exposed students to professionals that shared similar backgrounds to encourage them to enter similar fields.</p>	<i>No data were available.</i>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b> Connected academics to students' futures and the local community context.</p> <p>Impact on student learning.</p>
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*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column. Italics were used if no impacts could be identified.

<sup>a</sup>PD Partner = Professional Development Partner.

<sup>b</sup>The source of the national evaluation study data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the Professional Development Partner.

<sup>c</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

<sup>d</sup>The source of the pre- and post-survey data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the CS2 Professional Development Partner.

<sup>e</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>f</sup>TLT 2 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 2 (working towards democracy).

### **Guiding Principle 4: Align the Assets of Local Community Organizations and Members**

This community school guiding principle focuses on how the school organized the assets of the entire community to meet the school's vision and needs. The second guiding principle was focused on the partners and the resources they provided in order to enrich the school's programming. For the purposes of this study, the fourth guiding principle was operationally defined in a way that placed greater importance on the school's actions to coordinate and organize relevant partners that were brought in to meet specific needs. Additionally, while the second guiding principle focused only on community partner organizations, the fourth guiding principle focused on partner organizations and local people in the community. The results of the study primarily encompassed the involvement of community partner organizations and captured little to no data on the collaboration with individual members of the community.

This guiding principle also highlighted partnerships that provided services, expertise, or resources without any monetary payment from the school. In the case of CS1, the school had not

paid for the services provided by any of the community partners that participated in this study. The partners either paid for the services through government dollars or grants or through the private dollars the partners had raised. In the case of CS2, most partners had not required the school to pay for the services or expertise, except for one—the Professional Development Partner. The Professional Development Partner charged a fee for training that was done for the entire school staff during a staff retreat in the summer. Other services provided by the Professional Development Partner were provided at no cost to the school.

The three main practices identified in this study for the fourth guiding principle were that the community schools: developed formal structures of coordination, allowed for informal structures of coordination, and tapped into local community assets.

**Practice 1: Developed formal structures of coordination.** Both schools created formal structures to coordinate with and manage their multiple community partners on campus. Community School 1 had monthly meetings that brought together all of the community partners, providers, school counselors, the nurse, the probation officer, and the school police, to coordinate their services and talk about what was happening on the campus in order to ensure everyone was working toward the same goal. The community school coordinator created these meetings and was considered the “go to” person for all partners. Similarly, Community School 2 also held monthly meetings in the morning on campus to convene all partners.

Community School 2 went through a vetting process with each community partner before it brought the partner on board to ensure that all community partners were engaged in a shared purpose. The CS2 community school coordinator, who was integral in this process, described the vetting process: “Once we find the commonalities, then we can create a plan on how we want to

tackle...Then, I bring in the principal and we talk about the schedule. And then we basically try to work it out” (CS2 community school coordinator, interview, December 22, 2016). CS2 had a system in place to ensure that the partner they brought on was aligned with the vision and needs of the school. The coordinator also described that that they did pre- and post-surveys with community partners to gauge the effectiveness of the partnership.

**Practice 2: Allowed for informal structures of coordination.** In addition to formal structures the schools had already put into place, the schools employed informal practices to organize community assets and resources. Community School 1’s principal emphasized the need to refuse partners that did not fit the overall mission:

I think the other big practice, and this has been so hard, is figuring out when to say “no.” A lot of things come down the pike. We are looking for partnerships that are lasting partnerships because they are heavy investments upfront, and we want things to continue. We are looking for partnerships that do meet our overall mission. (CS1 principal, interview, October 21, 2016)

The CS1 principal (interview, October 21, 2016) stated that it was a significant investment of time to form community partnerships, so it was important that the school was careful about selecting partners that met the school’s vision. The Industry Professional Partner at CS2 was an example of a partnership that existed because of its relevance, but more importantly because of the relationship the partner had with the school principal. The partner described the “whatever it takes” mentality:

It’s not that there is an active plan like give “X” amount of dollars to our partners. We just work with them and help them with whatever they need. So, if the principal needs something, he’ll call me, and if I can provide it, I will. If I can’t, we’ll find somebody who can. (CS2 Industry Professional Partner, interview, December 7, 2016)

CS2’s Industry Professional Partner was an example of how some partners did anything they could to support the school.

**Practice 3: Tapped into community assets.** Both community schools employed practices to engage local community groups and available resources. CS2 students engaged in multidisciplinary projects each semester, in which they presented their final projects to a panel of judges. CS2 tapped their partners and industry professionals to evaluate the students' projects. According to the CS1 Special Education teacher, who also taught the yearbook class, students focused one of their yearbooks on their neighborhood by photographing murals in the local community (CS1 Special Education teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016).

The pilot school model allowed the schools to have some flexibility around who was on their campus and what purpose they served. According to the CS1 community school coordinator during the interview, the school also engaged school police officers about their role at the school and the community's perceptions of them:

It is not looking good for people of color and how do we hold them accountable as well because we are not down with the police or sheriffs department to be criminalizing our students when they are coming to school. (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October, 26, 2016)

The CS1 community school coordinator acknowledged the tension that currently existed between students and school police officers in the community and in the larger national context (interview, October 26, 2016). The school was intentional about ensuring that the presence of the local school police officers on the campus was one that was beneficial instead of problematic. Table 4.4 summarizes the practices, and the respective impacts, employed to implement the fourth community school guiding principle.

Table 4.4

*Guiding Principle #4: Align the Assets of Local Community Organizations and Members -- Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Developed formal structures for coordination	Both CS1 and CS2 convened community partners monthly.	<i>None. Identified practices were more about the interaction between school and partner.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>a</sup> Ensured shared purpose amongst all partners.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	Both CS1 and CS2 vetted partners before bringing them on.		
	CS2 conducted pre- and post-surveys.		
Allowed for informal structures for coordination	CS1 learned when to say "no" to a community partner.	<i>None. Identified practices were more about the interaction between school and partner.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> Ensured shared purpose amongst all partners.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS2 principal called on partner whenever a need is identified.		
Tapped into local community assets	CS2 had industry professionals evaluate student projects.	<i>None identified.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> Connected the students to projects and members of the local school community.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS1 focused the yearbook on local murals in the community.		
	CS1 refocused the role of school police officers.		

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column. Impacts were not easily identifiable for this guiding principle because the practices mostly involved interactions between the school and community partners or local community members. Italics were used if no impacts could be identified.

<sup>a</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

**Guiding Principle 5: Respect the Diversity and Identity of Community Members**

The fifth guiding principle of a community school emphasized the importance that schools deeply know the communities in which they are situated. This guiding principle suggested that schools must respect the identity of diverse members of the school community, and must also be committed to the welfare of the larger community as a whole. Part of the manner in which this guiding principle was operationally defined was through the lens that acknowledged that experiences form a student’s identity. Data were coded under this principle if participants indicated that the needs of the school were listened to and considered.

As previously mentioned, several of the partners expressed that they were intentional about asking the school what they needed, in order to see if the partner could fulfill such needs. For Community School 1, the Thematic Funding Partner made sure the resources they provided to the school were relevant and responsive to the student and school's needs. The Professional Development Partner (interview, October 25, 2016) said that listening was essential and that they were always collecting feedback. The Museum Partner reviewed their programming every year to evaluate what worked and what did not. The Mental Health Partner determined the trends and needs of the students at that time, and checked to see if they were able to provide services in any way. While the CS1 Industry Professional Partner listened to the needs of the school, they based their curriculum mostly on community demographic data to determine the primary needs.

Community School 2 also had many partners that listened to and supported the needs of the school. The Professional Development Partner asked what the school needed, listened, and came back with a proposal. The Mentorship Partner also asked what the school needed. The community school coordinator had already vetted the Mentorship Partner and had determined the partner fulfilled a need at the school. The Internship Partner directly supported the school by connecting students to work experiences. The support provided by the Project-Based Partner was actually more individualized and tailored to the teachers that had opted into the project-based program. The CS2 Industry Professional Partner provided was willing to support the principal in any way that they could, within the realm of their expertise.

The four main practices identified in this study for the fifth guiding principle were that the community schools: respected the diverse profiles and experiences of the students and

families, created an inclusive environment, addressed identity through curriculum, and responded to language diversity. Each practice is described in further detail below.

**Practice 1: Respected the diverse profiles and experiences of the students and families.** The CS1 community school coordinator (interview, October 26, 2016) observed that the school had a lot of different profiles of students:

We are dealing with the students that are undocumented. We are dealing with students whose parents are undocumented and they were born here. We are dealing with second and third generation students. We are dealing with second and third generation students in gangs. We have a variety of student profiles. So, we need to be very specific about the services we bring on campus. (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016)

Not all of the CS1 students were the same, so the school needed to bring a wide variety of services to the campus to meet students' needs. Experiences were also part of culture, so CS1 respected the various experiences that students and families brought with them by intentionally providing services that directly met their needs. According to CS1's 2015–2016 School Experience Survey, 97% of teachers said that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that decisions at the school were based on students' needs and interests, compared to 90% in the previous year. Additionally, the CS1 community school coordinator described that both the students and parents had experienced a wide range of traumatic experiences, which was why the school brought the Mental Health Partner to the school in the first place.

**Practice 2: Created an inclusive environment.** Both schools described efforts to create an inclusive environment where all voices were heard, respected, and valued. During the focus group, the CS1 Special Education teacher (focus group, December 19, 2016) described that CS1 had a full inclusion program that integrated students with special needs into the general



education classrooms. In the CS2 focus group, the CS2 principal also described the inclusive nature of its classrooms:

Our students are all together in one classroom, whether they are gifted or general education students or an English language learner or a student with special... They're supported by various aides and by one another. They work in teams I would say 99% of the time. (CS2 principal, focus group, October 27, 2016)

Both schools described inclusion as having all of its students learning together in the same environment. Students learned together and from each other, instead of being isolated based on their needs, skills, or experiences. According to the School Experience Surveys for CS1, 59% of students in 2015–2016 stated that they got along “pretty well” or “extremely well” with students who were different from them, which was down 4% from the previous year. For CS2, 70% of students in the 2015–2016 school year also stated “pretty well” or “extremely well,” which was down 3% from the previous year.

**Practice 3: Addressed identity through curriculum.** As described by CS1’s principal in the focus group, the CS1 Professional Development Partner ensured that identity-based curriculum was part of the students’ learning experiences every year:

In the ninth grade, there really is a focus on identity, a sense of self, and the relationship between self and community. In the tenth grade, there is a greater focus on what it means to be a citizen of the larger community, and the conflict between individual needs and group needs. And in senior year, they [students] really look at questions of global community, globalization. (CS1 principal, focus group, December 19, 2016)

With the support of the CS1 Professional Development Partner, each year the curricula focused on the individual’s relationship to the community. During the focus group, the CS1 English teacher added to the principal’s comments and said that the eleventh grade students focused on “hyphenated spaces”:

So what are all of the spaces that exist in society when we become hyphens? Because there are so many different aspects of our identity and those are treated differently in different spaces. What does it mean to exist in a community that is necessarily on some level a combination of so many different parts? So really taking a kind of intersectional approach to history and American culture. (CS1 English teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016)

The eleventh-grade curriculum focused on how individuals often needed to navigate different spaces in society depending on the multiple aspects of their identity. According to the CS1's School Experience Survey, 98% of teachers reported that they believed students' backgrounds were valued at the school, compared to 95% in the previous year.

**Practice 4: Responded to language diversity.** Lastly, both schools acknowledged how they responded to the language diversity that existed on the campus. At CS1, the primary languages spoken by students and their families were English and Spanish. At CS2, many more languages were represented. CS1 schools ensured that there was translation at all school events and that all communications were sent home in English and Spanish. Given that CS2 had a more diverse range of languages spoken on campus, the school used the district's central communication system to send text messages to families in their respective language, including Tagalog, Korean, Thai, Russian, Armenian, and Spanish (CS2 principal, interview, October 27, 2016). According to the School Experience Surveys for both schools, most parents reported that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the school provided transportation services when they needed it. In 2015–2016, 95% of CS1 parents agreed, compared to 86% in the previous year. Similarly, 94% of CS2 parents agreed in 2015–2016, and 81% agreed in 2014–2015.

Community School 1 also showed that it valued the dominant language spoken by students, other than English, through other practices employed with English Learners. This was particularly evident at Community School 1:

We have support for new English Learners. And in every one of their content level classes, we have bilingual teaching assistants that shadow them throughout the day and provide support. Even in our Advisory classes...most teachers are open to the idea of having kids respond in Spanish, and we provide support for that. (CS1 principal, focus group, December 19, 2016)

CS1 had formal and informal practices that also showed the school's commitment to supporting the language diversity of its students. Table 4.5 summarizes the practices, and the respective impacts, employed to implement this community school guiding principle.

Table 4.5

*Guiding Principle #5: Respect the Diversity and Identity of Community Members – Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Respected the diverse profiles & experiences of students and families	CS1 acknowledged the different profiles of students and families.  At both CS1 and CS2, services were brought to campus based on students' needs.	CS1 SES <sup>a</sup> (2015-2016): 97% of teachers said that they agreed that decisions at the school were based on students' needs and interests, compared to 90% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 4:</b> <sup>b</sup> Respected experiences and tailored services to address needs.  Impact on student learning.
Created an inclusive environment	At both CS1 and CS2, students with special needs were integrated into the general education population.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 59% of students stated that they got along well with students who were different from them, compared to 63% previously.  CS2 SES (2015-2016): 70% of students also indicated they got along well, compared to 73% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>c</sup> Created an environment where all voices are heard and students learn from each other.  Impact on student learning.
Addressed identity through curriculum	With the help of the CS1 PD Partner, <sup>d</sup> the school engaged students in yearly curriculum focused on the relationship between self and the larger community.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 98% of teachers reported that they believed students' backgrounds were valued at the school, compared to 95% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 4:</b> Respected students' experiences and identities.  <b>TLT 3:</b> Connected students to the larger community.  Impact on student learning.

Table 4.5, continued

Celebrated and responded to language diversity	<p>At both CS1 and CS2, translation was offered at every event and all communications were sent home in other dominant languages.</p> <p>At CS2, text messages were sent to communicate with families.</p> <p>At CS1, teaching assistants shadowed and supported English Learners throughout the day.</p> <p>At CS1, students were allowed to respond to questions in Spanish.</p>	<p>CS1 SES (2015-2016): 95% of CS1 parents agreed that the school provided transportation services when they needed it, compared to 86% in the previous year.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2015-2016): 94% of parents agreed that the school provided transportation services when they needed it, compared to 81% in the previous year.</p>	<p><b>TLT 4:</b> Respected students' and families' dominant languages and cultural identity.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.</p>
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*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.  
<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified).  
<sup>b</sup>TLT 4 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 4 (demonstrating cultural competence).  
<sup>c</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).  
<sup>d</sup>PD Partner = Professional Development Partner.

**Guiding Principle 6: Shared Decision-Making Power with Community Members**

The sixth guiding principle of a community school emphasized that the school sought to unleash the power of local communities through shared decision-making that directly involved local leaders. Decisions were made with the input from the school community, including families and neighborhood residents involved at CS1 and CS2. For the purposes of this study, shared decision making was also defined as decision making that involved individuals *beyond* the principal because, as the school leader, the principal constantly made decisions for the entire school. All of the community partners that participated in the study indicated that their work involved collaborating directly with the teachers, in addition to the administrative leadership. This study also focused on the importance of student voice in decision making.

The three main practices identified in this study for the sixth guiding principle were that the community schools: promoted student voice, encouraged teachers to share responsibility, and created formal structures for shared decision-making. All of the practices described below had the transformative impact of working towards democracy.

**Practice 1: Promoted student voice.** Through the focus groups, both of the community schools stated that students created their own clubs on campus. For example, during the CS1 interview, the science teacher described how students started *all* clubs on campus:

I don't know any clubs started by teachers. They are all student-driven. The students came up with these ideas. They wanted to start these clubs, so they went up to a teacher and asked if they could use their classroom. They have a lot of power in creating clubs and afterschool activities. (CS1 science teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016)

The students themselves started all of CS1's clubs. The CS2 faculty also stated that students created their own clubs, including an LGBTQ and a social justice student activist clubs.

Additionally, the CS1 focus group felt that students willingly took on leadership roles at the school. The CS1 English teacher stated, "the students will tell you that they have leadership opportunities here that they never would've had at a big high school" (CS1 English teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016). The teacher was making a distinction between the size of the student population of the pilot school, compared to the large populations at non-pilot, comprehensive high schools in LAUSD. Additionally, CS1 held student-led conferences, so that their parents could see their academic performance through their children's eyes. At CS2, students led the school-wide assemblies and invited the principal to speak, instead of vice versa. Lastly, during the interview, the CS1 community school coordinator argued that students were willing to advocate for the services they needed on campus: "Our students are very good about sharing resources and letting their classmates know if they have received services, what their experiences are, and how did it help them" (CS1 community school coordinator, interview, October 26, 2016). This is another example of how students were encouraged to voice their opinions and needs.

The only data in the School Experience Surveys that could be used to capture the extent to which students felt their voice was valued and heard were questions regarding participation in class. In 2015–2016, 85% of CS1 students “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that teachers gave them a chance to participate in classroom discussions or activities, compared to 77% in the previous year. For CS2, 88% of students reported similar results in 2015–2016, and 86% in the previous year.

**Practice 2: Encouraged teachers to share responsibility.** The professional development partners at both schools helped teachers tangibly share the responsibility of teaching and learning. The CS2 Professional Development Partner (interview, December 21, 2016) described how teachers co-facilitated school-wide professional development sessions, in order to eventually have shared ownership. For CS1, the Professional Development Partner (interview, October 25, 2016) emphasized the benefits of a distributive leadership model in order to ensure that a collaborative relationship existed with the school:

I think especially with the community school it helps with the distribution of leadership at the school where you have multiple voices that are really present and can really step forward to make sure the students are getting all that they can from us. (CS1 Professional Development Partner, interview, October 25, 2016)

Teachers were encouraged to share with the CS1 Professional Development Partner what they needed to best serve their students. The teachers in the CS1 focus group confirmed that their voice was valued. During the focus group, the CS1 Special Education teacher stated, “I feel like any idea that a teacher brings up is definitely considered, if not followed out because ideas are encouraged” (CS1 Special Education teacher, focus group, December 19, 2016). During the focus group, the CS1 principal agreed, “It makes my job easier. I can’t imagine working in a place where there weren’t teachers who cared enough to do the work of running the school

outside of their daily job” (CS1 principal, focus group, December 19, 2016). According to data collected from CS1’s 2015–2016 School Experience Survey, 91% of teachers reported that most or nearly all adults felt a responsibility to improve the school, compared to 90% in the previous year. For CS2 in 2014–2015, this percentage was 93%.

**Practice 3: Created formal structures for shared decision-making.** The two community schools that participated in this study had traditional structures for shared decision making, like an elected student leadership group, the School Site Council, and the English Learner Advisory Committee. The nature of being pilot schools allowed for additional, formal shared decision-making structures and systems to exist. Both schools had a Governing School Council (GSC) comprised of the principal, teachers, school staff, parents, students, community members, and community-based organizations or university partners. According to the LAUSD 2016–2017 Pilot Schools Manual (2016), the GSC is responsible for setting and maintaining the school vision; selecting, supervising, and evaluating the principal; approving the final budget; approving the Election-to-Work Agreement (EWA) for teaching staff; and establishing school policies. CS1’s Governing School Council was comprised of three teachers, three parents, three students, and a non-certificated staff member. CS2’s GSC was also comprised of teachers, students, and parents, and is open to community members. During the interview, CS2’s principal shared how the GSC helped create transparency at the school:

Input is encouraged. And everyone is involved in the decision. We want as much transparency as we can possibly get because I think that is really how we make the best decisions and that our school is always going in the direction that it should, as opposed to leading with a heavy hand, ignoring the needs of those around us. (CS2 principal, interview, October 27, 2016)

Members of the GSC helped ensure that the school met its vision, which was part of the Council's responsibilities in the first place. Regarding teacher hiring, CS1 had a hiring committee that included the principal, assistant principal, and teachers. Prospective CS1 teachers also had to teach a demonstration lesson. At CS2, the interview process for prospective employees involved a teacher, administrator, and student on the hiring panels.

Additionally, both schools required teachers to participate in committees, as part of their Election-to-Work Agreements. As previously discussed, all teachers must sign an Election-to-Work Agreement (EWA) to be part of the specific pilot school. During the interview, CS1 principal shared how a shared vision creates buy-in from the teachers:

The biggest method for sharing it [the mission] is really making sure that we hire staff and hire faculty who share it, so that it's integrated into their practice because kids spend most of the time with teachers. So, if they're in rooms with teachers who believe in the mission of the school, then it's integrated into what they do. (CS1 principal, interview, October 21, 2016)

The EWA helps ensure that the teachers that were brought into the school also shared the school's mission. Additionally, the EWA required pilot school teachers to participate on specific committees. CS1's pilot committees included technology integration, parent involvement, community outreach, and student support. CS2's pilot committees included parent support, student support, community outreach, technology, and instructional leadership. Students also served on CS2 committees, as much as possible. CS2 teachers were provided a variety of ways to participate in the decision-making at the school, especially with regard to curriculum. There were advisory team meetings for grade-level advisories, department meetings for departmental subject teams, and Linked Learning pathway teams that were focused on career technical courses.



According to data collected from CS1’s 2015–2016 School Experience Survey, 95% of teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the school promoted the participation of personnel in decision making that affected the school’s practices and policies. In 2014–2015, this percentage was 75%. In 2014–2015, 93% of CS2 teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the same statement. No data were available for the 2015–2016 school year for CS2. Table 4.6 summarizes the practices and the impacts, employed to implement this community school guiding principle.

Table 4.6

*Guiding Principle #6: Shared Decision-Making Power with Community Members – Practices and Impacts*

Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Promoted student voice	At both CS1 and CS2, clubs were started by students and were driven by their interests. CS1 held student-led conferences. CS2 students led school-wide assemblies and invited principal to participate. CS1 students advocated for services to address their needs.	CS1 SES <sup>a</sup> (2015–2016): 85% of students agreed that teachers gave them a chance to take part in classroom discussions or activities, compared to 77% in the previous year.  CS2 SES (2015–2016): 88% of students reported teachers gave them a chance to take part in classroom discussions or activities, compared to 86% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>b</sup> Encouraged student voice.  Impact on student learning.
Encouraged teachers to share responsibility	CS2 teachers co-facilitated the professional development sessions with the community partner. CS1 teachers brought up ideas, and they were carried out by the administration.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 91% of teachers reported that most or nearly all adults felt a responsibility to improve the school, compared to 90% in the previous year.  CS2 SES (2014-2015): 93% of teachers reported similarly as CS1.	<b>TLT 3:</b> Teachers' voices were valued, and they were involved in the decision-making.  Impact on school effectiveness.

Table 4.6, continued

Created formal structures for shared decision-making	<p>At both CS1 and CS2, formal structures were in place, such as a student leadership group, School Site Council, and English Learner Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Both CS1 and CS2 had pilot school Governing School Councils.</p> <p>As pilot schools, both CS1 and CS2 had an EWA requiring that teachers, students, parents, and others be involved in the hiring of staff and the principal.</p> <p>At both CS1 and CS2, teachers participated in committees as part of the Election-to-Work Agreement.</p>	<p>CS1 SES (2015–2016): 95% of teachers agreed that the school promoted the participation of personnel in decision-making, compared to 75% in the previous year.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2014-2015): 93% of CS2 teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement. (No data were available for the 2015-2016 school year.)</p>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b> Formal systems were in place to ensure transparency, participation, and shared decision-making.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness.</p>
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*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>b</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

As a quick reference, Appendix B is a compilation of all of the tables of practices and impacts related to the six guiding principles. Appendix C organized the themes of practices by the relevant transformative impacts as they pertained to the four transformative leadership tenets referenced in this study. It is worth noting that the transformative impact that contained the most practices was tenet three: articulating individual and collective purpose. This finding is not surprising because this study focused on student learning and school effectiveness and tenet three focused on a shared vision, academics, and students as global citizens.

### Conclusion

The study sought to answer two research questions: *What practices do community school leaders employ to implement the guiding principles of a community school? What impacts do community school leaders perceive these practices have?* The data presented in this chapter were organized by the six guiding principles of community schools. The study’s participants identified several practices, which were reduced into the most salient themes. Each theme and its respective

practices were also analyzed with regard to the transformative impact each had on students, families, and teachers. The practices revealed that the most impacts were on student learning. The guiding principle that had the most practices identified was the third guiding principle, which focused on high expectations and standards. The next guiding principle with the most representation of practices was the sixth guiding principle, which focused on shared decision-making power with community members. The transformative leadership tenet that was the most represented was tenet three, which focused on articulating individual and collective purpose. The next chapter examines these principles and transformative impacts further, especially as they relate to this study's conceptual framework.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATONS

Transformative leadership gives the emphasis to the need to recognize that the inequities experienced in the wider society affect one's ability to perform and succeed within school.

—Møller, 2011

#### Introduction

The study focused on answering two research questions: *What practices do community school leaders employ to implement the guiding principles of a community school? What impacts do the community school leaders perceive these practices have?* To answer these questions, three methods were used to collect data to answer these questions: interviews, focus groups, and a review of documents. The community school leaders that participated in the study either worked at the school site or worked for community partner organizations that collaborated with the school site. Deductive and inductive analyses of the data were conducted to identify practices and perceived impacts of each, as related to the six guiding principles of community schools. Additionally, transformative leadership theory was used to identify any potential transformative impacts on students and families.

The triangulation of this data reveals several findings that are discussed more deeply in this chapter. The five major findings include: pilot schools as a natural avenue to implement the community schools strategy, the intentionality of all stakeholders to meet the needs of students and the school, the recognition of transformative community schools as a specific strategy, the ability of transformative community schools to navigate interconnected ecological systems, and the principal as a transformative community school leader. This chapter explores each of these

findings more deeply and concludes with recommendations for practitioners, policy makers, and community school researchers.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The following section summarizes the five main findings captured from the data. Three of the findings have immediate implications for Los Angeles school: LAUSD pilot schools are an avenue for the community schools strategy, the intentionality of the school to form these partnerships is essential, and the principal is the key to the overall success of a transformative community school. The other two findings have theoretical implications because this study showed a natural alignment between the community school guiding principles and transformative leadership theory tenets. The result of this alignment is a transformative community school, which can help a child navigate the interconnected web of ecological systems. Each of these findings is discussed in further detail below.

#### **The Promise of Pilot Schools that Partner**

The community school strategy is able to thrive more easily in Community School 1 (CS1) and Community School 2 (CS2) because of the nature of being pilot schools. To review, this study was based on the following six guiding principles of an effective community school:

1. They have a clear and shared vision and are accountable for results.
2. Their collaborative partners share resources and expertise.
3. There are high expectations and standards.
4. They align the assets of local organizations and the community members who live and work in the community.

5. They respect the diversity and identity of community members with diverse backgrounds.
6. They share the decision-making power with local community leaders and families.

(Potapchuck, 2013, p. 5)

Pilot schools require shared vision amongst staff members (guiding principle one), high expectations through interdisciplinary curriculum and the integration of real world experiences (guiding principle three), and shared decision-making structures (guiding principle six). Thus, three of the six guiding principles are made possible because the schools that participated in the study were pilot schools. Pilot schools have specific structures in place due to its autonomies—like governance, budget, and staffing—which allow the community schools strategy to thrive.

While the community school strategy can thrive in the LAUSD pilot school model, not every pilot school is guaranteed to be a community school. This study describes various practices that are employed by CS1 and CS2 to implement guiding principles one, three, and six. The three remaining guiding principles—collaborative and organized partners and respect for diversity—and the practices employed for each are critical to the effectiveness of a community school. Partnerships (in regards to guiding principles two and four) are inherent at CS1 because it identified itself as a community school. As the research shows, coordinated and integrated partnerships are critical to the effectiveness of a community school. Partnerships are also inherent at CS2 because it is a Linked Learning school. The Linked Learning approach involves connecting student learning in the classroom to real-world experiences, which often happens through partnerships. Partnerships are critical to both the community school and Linked Learning strategies. Lastly, both schools show that they had respect for the diversity and identity

of their school communities through their creation of inclusive environments and the specific services that met the needs of their respective students and families. This intentionality is explored further in the next section.

Effective community schools, as defined by Potapchuck (2013), implement the six previously mentioned guiding principles. The leadership of Community School 1 considered itself a “community school” in name, while the Community School 2 leadership had not; however, both school principals showed a commitment to a shared vision, high expectations, shared decision-making, coordinated partners, and a respect for the diversity of its school community members. Their passion, respect, and love for their schools were evident through the interviews and focus groups. In both focus groups, the teachers also shared a similar passion and commitment to their schools and respect for their school administration. The community partners also shared the school’s vision and a deep respect for each school’s administrators and teachers. As the findings reveal, both schools showed evidence of implementing practices that were aligned to each of the six guiding principles of effective community schools. Thus, schools that successfully implement these six guiding principles should consider themselves community schools, even if they may not have self-identified as one.

### **Intentionality**

The data analysis revealed that many of the guiding principles were connected to each other in some way. Guiding principles two and four emphasized the importance of collaborative partners that are organized by the school to best serve students. The study reveals that what is critical to the effectiveness of a community school is that the school is intentional about working with relevant community partners that collaboratively address the diverse needs that the school

had already identified. This was particularly important to both CS1 and CS2 because both schools served high-need communities, in which many of the families had experienced trauma that left a lasting impression on them. Community-based programming is an essential part of the community schools strategy because the programs serve as an extension of the learning of the community and a way to address the barriers that are specific to that local context (Houser, 2016). Individual students, family members, and community members each have their own diverse needs, and face their own barriers to learning, living, and surviving various challenges and traumatic experiences. Thus, guiding principles two and four are also deeply connected to guiding principle five, which is focused on respecting the diverse needs, identities, and experiences of community members. The two community schools that participated in this study may have needed to acknowledge, address, and celebrate a wider range of identities and needs, than its counterparts that have a more homogenous student body.

Intentionality is also critical because it is a strategy by which a school ensures that all members—students, parents, faculty, staff, community partners, and community members—are committed to the shared purpose, vision, and mission of the school, as indicated in guiding principle one. Having partners that are also working toward the same mission as the school is valuable and extremely useful. For example, as previously discussed, the mission statements of the community partner organizations that worked with each of the community schools shared similar language and focuses. In the case of the community partners that worked with CS1 and CS2, most of the organizations were committed to working with underserved and high-poverty communities. This was somewhat expected because both schools were Title I schools—90% of CS1 students and 94% of CS2 students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. Additionally,





coordinating with the partners. Oftentimes, the principal and community school coordinator needed to vet community partners and say “no” to partners that were not directly serving the schools’ immediate needs. It was their job to ensure that the partners involved with the school were the right fit at the right time. Transformative leadership theory defines the characteristics of transformative leaders. Transformative leaders are the individuals that ensure that these tenets are practiced throughout a system. The school principal is critical to ensuring that the implementation of these guiding principles is aligned with the shared, transformative vision of the school.

### **Transformative Community Schools**

This study showed the clear and natural alignment between many of the community school guiding principles and the transformative leadership tenets selected for this study. To review, the four transformative leadership theory tenets that were used in this study are:

1. acknowledging power and privilege;
2. working towards democracy;
3. articulating individual and collective purpose; and
4. demonstrating cultural competence (Shields, 2011, p. 5).

Transformative leadership tenet three focuses on being engaged in shared purpose, and community school guiding principle one focuses on the importance that all parties have a shared vision for the school. Respect for diversity and identity (guiding principle five) aligns with demonstrating cultural competence (tenet four). Shared decision-making (guiding principle six) aligns with working toward democracy (tenet two). Guiding principles three, high expectations and standards for learning, so that students become contributing members of their community,

aligns with the notion that students should be global citizens (tenet three). Guiding principle five, which focuses on respecting the diversity of communities, also emphasizes a commitment to the welfare of the community. This commitment aligns with the effort to combat the marginalization of groups (tenet one). Lastly, equity is critical for both the guiding principles and the tenets.

Potapchuck (2013) stated that a focus on equity is embedded throughout each of the six guiding principles. Transformative leadership theory is also founded on a commitment to equity and social justice (Avant, 2011; Jun, 2011). Table 5.1 below summarizes the alignment between the guiding principles at tenets.

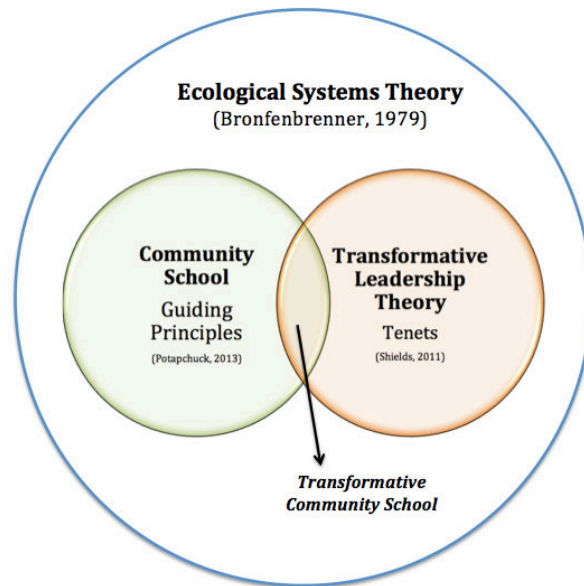
Table 5.1

<i>Alignment of Guiding Principles of Community Schools and Transformative Leadership Tenets</i>			
#	Community School Guiding Principle	#	Transformative Leadership Tenet
1	Shared vision	3	Engaged in shared purpose
5	Respect for diversity and identity	4	Demonstrate cultural competence
6	Shared decision-making	2	Working towards democracy
3	High expectations so students become contributing members of their community	3	Students as global citizens
5	Commitment to welfare of community	1	Combatting the marginalization of groups
All	Equity	All	Equity and social justice

*Note.* Equity is embedded in both the guiding principles and tenets.

The clear alignment of these principles and tenets are the foundation of what this study defines as a transformative community school. This concept of a transformative community school can have implications on how researchers define community schools that have transformative impacts on students. A transformative community school can be defined in many ways, especially since several different tenets have emerged out of the current research on transformative leadership theory. The conceptual framework of this study focused on three main components: the guiding principles of an effective community school, transformative leadership theory, and ecological systems theory. Figure 5.2 depicts the original conceptual framework and labels the intersection of the community school guiding principles and transformative leadership

theory as a transformative community school. This figure is an adaptation of the original conceptual framework that was developed at the beginning of the study. This framework situates a transformative community school within the context of ecological systems theory, and implies that, through the intentional practices by community school leaders, the school can have transformative impacts on students and the school.



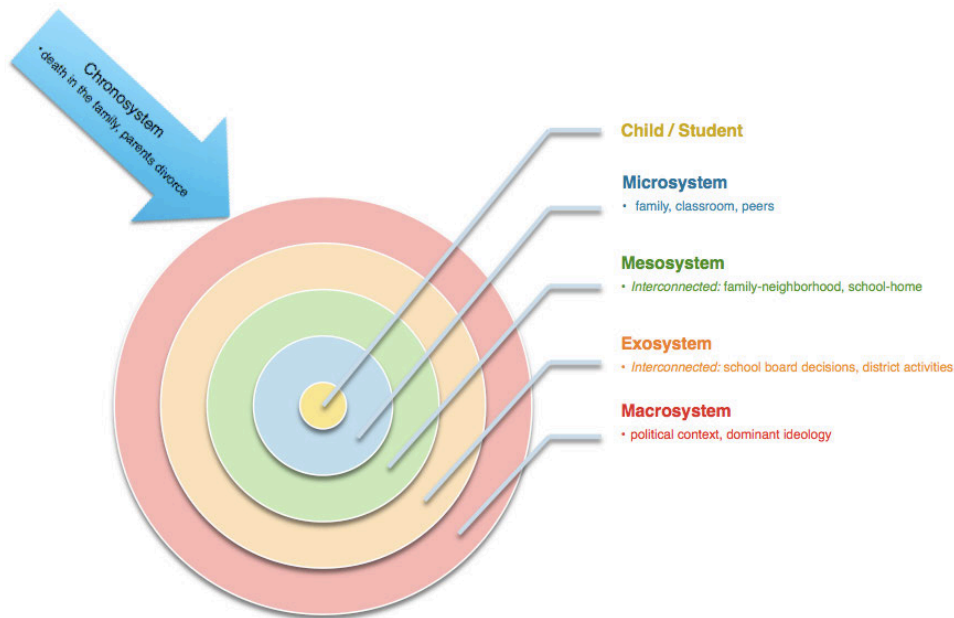
*Figure 5.2.* Transformative community school conceptual framework.

The findings are clear that both Community School 1 and Community School 2 exemplified transformative community schools. Unsurprisingly, the transformative leadership tenet that had the most prominent impact in this study was tenet three, which focused on articulating individual and collective purpose. This tenet focused on balancing academic with real-world learning experiences, connecting academics to students' personal experiences and futures, and engaging students as global citizens who are working toward a larger purpose. This transformative impact was prominent across CS1 and CS2 practices that had impacts on both student learning and the school's overall effectiveness.

Like all current community schools, transformative community schools will look different in every state, district, or local community because the schools should be tailored to the needs of that specific school community and the students that they serve. The next section connects this finding back to the study’s conceptual framework, such that the transformative community schools can help students navigate the conditions and environments with which they interact.

### **Navigating Interconnected Ecological Systems**

A transformative community school helps a student navigate multiple interconnected ecological systems—the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—that can ultimately impact the student’s overall development. To review, figure 5.3 is a graphical example of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).



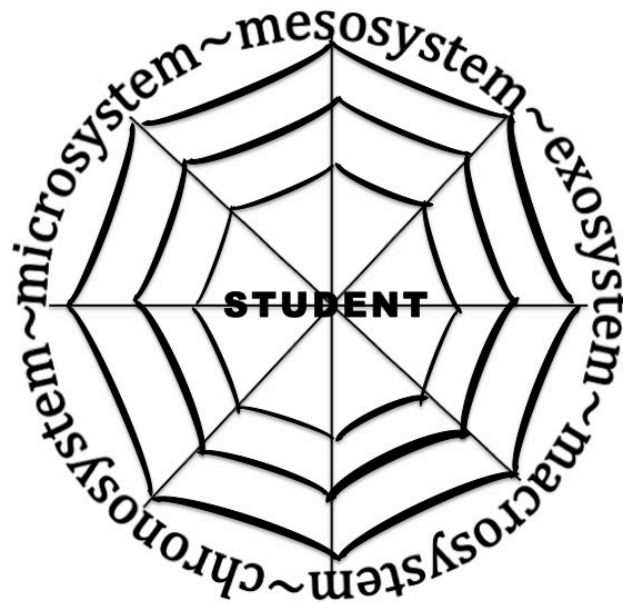
*Figure 5.3.* Ecological systems theory.

In developing the data collection protocols to answer the study’s research questions, the study initially relied on the first two ecological systems (i.e., the direct microsystem and the

interconnected mesosystem) in an effort to draw out the practices that would have the most direct impact on the student; however, throughout the data collection and analysis, it became clear that the practices identified by the study's participants were interacting with *all* ecological system levels, not only the microsystem and mesosystem. For example, when the school engaged community partners to bring in holistic services to help students deal with trauma, the transformative community school was navigating the interconnected mesosystem. Also, the schools interacted with the exosystem when CS1 and CS2 developed formal structures for coordinating community partners, navigated district requirements, and encouraged teachers to share responsibility. Additionally, some of the identified practices also interact with the macrosystem, especially as they were analyzed using the lens of transformative leadership theory. For example, dominant ideology often views discipline in terms of punishment, yet both schools practice restorative justice instead. Lastly, the student and school always interacted with the chronosystem, especially as their needs and school or district policies change over time.

The findings in this study elucidated how interconnected these systems truly are, and that a child may interact with one or more of the systems at any given moment. For example, a student may be experiencing trauma at home, and as a result may not be performing well in school and may be acting out and disrupting class instead. As a response, schools may collaborate with partners to engage students in restorative justice practices that deal with the student's behavior and to provide students with mental health services that deal with the trauma. Thus, this study suggests that these systems are actually interconnected, more like a web than concentric circles. Figure 5.4 is a graphical depiction of these interconnected ecological systems. This figure depicts ecological systems theory as a web of interconnected systems and

environments instead of concentric circles. A student is at the center and may be interacting directly or indirectly with one or multiple systems at the same time.



*Figure 5.4.* Ecological systems theory as a web.

The theory remains the same, but the adapted visualization portrays the complexity of the reactions, processes, and emotions that a student may be experiencing all at the same time with any given experience.

It can be extremely difficult for a student, a developing young adult, to navigate personal experiences while interacting with multiple ecological systems at one time. Thus, this study suggests that a transformative community school helps students navigate the web of interconnected ecological systems. A community school, especially a transformative community school, is constantly interacting with the various ecological system levels directly or indirectly. A transformative community school can be the support system that allows the student to navigate

the multiple systems effectively in order to ultimately achieve positive outcomes. For example, a student that is experiencing trauma at home needs a school that can respond to the cry for help that may be manifesting itself in the student's disruptive behavior at school. The school may choose to offer mental health services on campus or employ restorative justice practices.

Students who believe that the instructional content they are learning in class is irrelevant to their futures need a school that can connect instruction to real-world experiences through classroom lessons or off-site internships and field trips. Students that feel that their voices do not matter may need a school that encourages them to start their own clubs or participate in the decision-making at the school. A transformative community school is structured in a way to provide these experiences for students. The data captured from this study reveal the positive and transformative impacts that the two transformative community schools are having on student learning and the schools' overall effectiveness.

### **The Principal as A Transformative Community School Leader**

At the heart of each of the four findings mentioned above is the school principal. The principal must build trust with all stakeholders. With respect to leading community schools, the principal has the expectation that he or she will publicly promote the school's vision. Teachers at community schools must buy into this vision, but it is the school leader whose job it is to ensure that all decisions align to it. The principal can also choose to share the work of running the school to promote collaboration and transformation. In many traditional district schools, principals and other administrators make the majority of the decisions that involve the instructional vision and operation of the school. Many teachers, parents, and students may participate through formal committees, like School Site Councils; however, at CS1 and CS2,



these transformative community school leaders willingly shared responsibilities with their teachers. The teachers in both focus groups shared that they felt that their voices were heard and they were involved in decisions by their administration.

Additionally, with respect to partnerships, the principals must be open to having outside partners come to their campus to serve their students. Having additional partners on the campus can be overwhelming for some principals because it is more people to manage and monitor. Transformative community school principals view these partnerships and community members as assets to the students' learning and developmental growth, such that the benefit of their presence is believed to outweigh the cost of the additional work. A true transformative community school principal will delegate and lean on the community school coordinator and the teachers to help manage these additional partnerships.

One thread woven throughout this chapter is the importance of intentionality. The transformative community school principals at the two LAUSD high schools in this study showed evidence of intentionality of vision, decision-making, partnerships, and school culture. All decisions were made based on the specific needs of the diverse members of the school communities. The principals listened to their students, teachers, family members, and community members to determine what services, programs, and resources were needed on the campus. At CS1, one example was the mental health provider who was brought to the campus due to the increased psychiatric holds of students that were committing self-harm. At CS2, an example of this intentionality was the Industry Professional Partner that engaged students in work experiences that were relevant to future projects and jobs that soon will be made available in the area directly surrounding the school. All of the partners at CS1 and CS2 were intentionally

brought on by the principal and community school coordinator to serve a specific purpose. These transformative community school leaders led the school toward a shared vision and purpose that the rest of the school community could buy into and follow. The principals were the linchpins that intentionally created the conditions and culture in which everyone else could feel invested.

Regarding the alignment of the six community school guiding principles and the four transformative leadership tenets that were selected for this study, the transformative community school principals of CS1 and CS2 showed evidence of each. Shared vision, respect for diversity, democratic decision-making, high expectations, and a commitment to equity were all characteristics that can be seen through the leadership at both CS1 and CS2. The nature of a transformative community school allowed the school to be a vehicle for students to tackle systemic issues involving marginalization, inequity, and injustice, instead of reinforcing them. The interconnected web of environments that students come into contact with directly and indirectly, both within and beyond the school walls, can be an invisible barrier to their learning and development. While some traditional district school principals may unintentionally build or reinforce barriers to learning and development through hierarchical decision-making or a scattered vision, transformative community school principals intentionally take an opposite approach. A great deal can be learned from the practices that were being employed at CS1 and CS2 under the transformative leadership of the school principals.

### **Implications and Future Research**

As discussed earlier, the study was limited by the fact that data were collected from two schools over a span of three months. This is a notably small sample size, and the limited time frame could have impacted the ability to engage in member checking; however, member

checking was only necessary with the two community school principals. Moreover, the two schools were small pilot schools, and not large comprehensive high schools. The school populations ranged from 450 to 550 students, compared to over 2,000 students at some comprehensive high schools within LAUSD. These factors may have decreased the generalizability of the study's findings across all LAUSD high schools. Future research could include a study of the existence of elements of a community school at comprehensive, nonpilot LAUSD schools.

Additionally, the findings reveal that the participants could identify more practices than impacts, in reference to the two research questions. The study is limited by the instrument questions that were used because the study's research questions already assumed that the data captured would be perceived impacts. In many cases, the participants spoke as representatives of the community partner organizations, and not on behalf of themselves as individuals. Similarly, school faculty often spoke on behalf of the school and not as individuals. Future research could limit participants' responses to practices, programs, and services that have some verifiable or quantifiable data available, thus, disallowing perceived impacts; however, this could potentially make it more difficult for participants to identify specific practices. Researchers could identify specific practices, programs, or services beforehand to narrow the focus.

The impacts that were identified in this study focused on student learning and school effectiveness. As described in Chapter 2, current research argues that community schools can also have an impact on family engagement and community vitality, impacts that extend beyond the student and school boundaries. Future studies could explore these impacts yet also continue to rely on ecological systems theory; however, it can be anticipated that the systems that may

become more prevalent in the findings are the systems that have less of a direct impact on the student (e.g., macrosystem, exosystem, and mesosystem). Additionally, guiding principle four included a focus on coordinating the assets of local community members. This guiding principle could have captured more data on how community members were contributing to the school, and the benefits they received in return; however, the results from this study produced little to no data on the impact of the involvement of individual members of the community, beyond parents or members of community partner organizations. Future studies could design data collection protocols to better capture data on individual members of the local community.

A delimitation of the study was the identification of the four specific transformative leadership tenets. Future studies could select other tenets of transformative leadership theory to apply to a community school. For example, other tenets that could have been selected include: deconstructing social-cultural knowledge frameworks, balancing critique and promise, or demonstrating moral courage and activism (Shields, 2011). An additional delimitation was the selection of the six community school guiding principles. Upon the completion of this study, Oakes et al. (2017) released a report on the four pillars of community schools that emerged from a comprehensive review of the research. These pillars include:

1. integrated student supports;
2. expanded learning time and opportunities;
3. family and community engagement; and
4. collaborative leadership practices (Oakes et al., 2017, p. 5).

These four pillars could have been applied to this study in lieu of the six guiding principles that served as the foundation of this study. A simple application of the four pillars to the practices

identified in this study revealed that Community School 1 and Community School 2 possessed these features, as each of the goals can be found within the data collected from this study.

The Institute for Educational Leadership (2017), in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Schools, produced another report that lay out seven guiding principles for community schools to approach school transformation:

1. pursue equity;
2. invest in a whole-child approach to education;
3. build on community strengths to ensure conditions;
4. use data and community wisdom to guide partnerships, programs, and progress;
5. commit to interdependence and shared accountability;
6. invest in building trusting relationships; and
7. foster a learning organization. (p. 4)

These seven guiding principles could have also been applied to this study instead of the six guiding principles that had been selected, especially because the seven aforementioned principles accompany recently developed community schools standards that are focused on: (a) the structures and functions of a community school and (b) the core elements or programs that occur within community schools (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2017).

### **Recommendations**

This study sought to add to the research on community schools in Los Angeles and to provide the perspective of community partner organizations that collaborate with schools. Several identified practices were either employed by the school staff and faculty or by the community partner organizations. Other schools in Los Angeles can build off of these practices

in order to implement the six guiding principles or to have an influence in the four areas of transformative leadership theory that were discussed in this study. While the previous section offered suggestions for future research that could potentially increase the generalizability of the data and the depth of the knowledge on the impacts of the community school strategy, the following section describes the current implications and recommendations of the study for local practitioners, policy makers, and community school researchers.

### **Recommendations for Practitioners**

**School level.** As previously discussed, principals and educators can be trained to create a culture that embraces the six guiding principles of an effective community school, especially when it comes to developing collaborative relationships with community partners and engaging in shared decision-making with community members and parents. As the literature discussed, cross-boundary leadership is evident when school leaders engage community members, organizations, and businesses that can provide intentional and meaningful resources, programs, or knowledge to support students and families (Blank et al., 2012; Jean-Marie & Curry, 2012). This leadership style is focused on building agency inside and outside of the school. School leaders could seek training programs that develop their skills, so that they can comfortably share the work of running the school with others on staff, as seen by the two transformative community schools that participated in this study. Given that shared decision making aligns with L.A. Unified's work focused on decentralization and local control, the district could provide additional professional development to help principals be cross-boundary leaders.

The role of the principal in a transformative community school is somewhat different than that of a principal in a traditional, nonpilot district school. Principals of transformative

community schools need to prioritize a focus on building and fostering partnerships that meet the specific needs of the students and families that they serve. As the findings of this study exemplify, a transformative community school has a shared vision, respects the diversity and identity of its school community, employs shared decision-making practices, has high expectations of students, is committed to the welfare of the community, and is focused on equity and social justice. Principals of these schools must have a wider perspective that extends beyond the classroom and school walls. This wider perspective requires an intentional focus on one's time and resources, which is where the community school coordinator can be most supportive.

**District level.** On June 13, 2017, the Los Angeles Unified School District formally unanimously adopted a board resolution entitled “Embracing Community School Strategies in the Los Angeles Unified School District” spearheaded by the work of the Reclaim Our Schools LA coalition. The resolution calls for the superintendent to form a Community Schools Implementation Team and prepare a roadmap for implementation within 180 days of the passage of the resolution. Additionally, the United Teachers Los Angeles labor union made the community schools strategy one of the main elements of its platform. These efforts are aligned with the district's commitment to: positive school climates; serving the whole child; culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments; collaboration between district, schools, and community partners; amplifying student voice and involvement; and high-quality instruction in every classroom (LAUSD, 2016). The adoption of the community school strategy captures the district's current commitment and efforts under one universal umbrella.

One of the major findings of this study is that the LAUSD pilot schools have proven to be a natural avenue to implement the community school strategy because of the structures

inherently in place in the pilot school model. With the recent passage of the LAUSD board resolution, the district could select interested pilot schools that already exist to be part of the initial cohort. The elements of the transformative community school could be described in greater detail in the pilot school's Election-to-Work Agreement to ensure that all parties are invested in a shared vision and purpose. Also, a rubric or set of requirements can be developed, for existing or new pilot schools, to gauge how the vision of the pilot school aligns with that of a transformative community school. The community school standards created by the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017) are a good place to start.

Based on the literature, this study presented three structural elements of a community school: partnerships that provide holistic supports to schools, strong collaborative culture and decision-making, and a full-time community school coordinator. Los Angeles Unified's 2016–2019 Strategic Plan describes its commitment to providing a safe learning environment that fosters success by serving the needs of the whole child (LAUSD, 2016). The LAUSD already provides a wide variety of holistic services, but, due to limited resources, it is impossible to provide adequate holistic services at the district's 1,300 schools. This study shows how community partnerships can be leveraged in a way that supplements these services to meet the needs of the whole child; however, to reiterate the findings, these partnerships must be intentional, coordinated, and aligned with the school's specific needs.

The district's strategic plan describes its commitment to promoting a collaborative culture:



Assist schools with developing and sustaining strong partnerships that increase schools' capacity to provide holistic supports for students and families. Develop collaborative District partnerships with early childhood education, higher education, community-based organizations, civic leaders and workforce development partners to support cradle-to-career educational pathways for students. Streamlining processes will lead to expanding school-driven partnerships. (LAUSD, 2016, p. 14)

The district could develop a formal way to support schools that are interested in collaborating with community partners. Some practices could include helping schools intentionally determine the types of partnerships they would need to meet their specific school goals, developing a vetting and evaluation process of partners, expediting the process for community partners to obtain a formal agreement with the district and school, and possibly allocating additional resources to when they are requesting services that may have a cost (e.g., the school-wide summer retreat organized by CS2's Professional Development Partner).

Lastly, as previously mentioned, a full-time community school coordinator is critical to the effectiveness of any community school. In order to implement the community school strategy more systematically, the district would need to consider developing a job description, position requirements, and responsibilities of a community school coordinator and would potentially need to allocate resources to fund these positions at school sites. The community school coordinator is responsible for supporting the school principal, just like other types of LAUSD coordinators currently are, but with a particular focus on expanding the school's capacity and resources through community partnerships. This specific type of coordinator role could be a reimagined version of current district-funded positions and could use federal dollars, like Title I dollars.

**Community partner organizations.** Interviews with the community partner leaders revealed that many of them did not have formal tracking mechanisms to capture data on the impacts of their programs, services, and practices. Community partners could consider assessing

the impacts of their specific programs or services on their target audience. Especially in the case of this study, the pilot schools were given increased autonomy in exchange for a high level of accountability. Partners that are able to exemplify that their programs and services fit a specific need on the campus and have clear, tangible impacts—beyond hopes and desires—can make themselves more appealing to schools. As the findings show, the school principals and community school coordinators in this study were very intentional and selective about which community partners they brought onto their campus. They were attuned to the benefits the school received from community partners in exchange for the limited time and resources committed by school staff.

### **Recommendations for Policy Makers**

While it is important to identify transformative community schools that are focused on larger issues, like equity and social justice, policy makers must understand that *any* school can be a transformative community school. A community school can be a traditional district school (like those in Multnomah County), a charter school (like the schools in the Harlem Children’s Zone), or a district pilot school (like the two schools that were part of this study). A community school can be in a high-poverty community or an affluent neighborhood. Regardless, the school community must identify the specific needs on the campus, the community partners that will support those needs, and the outcomes they hope to achieve. All of this must be centered on the same vision and purpose. Schools, like Community School 2, could be implementing the six guiding principles, but may not necessarily be calling themselves a community school. Given that the notion of a transformative community school could be any school, policy makers should consider how to allocate resources and dollars to support the community schools strategy,

especially regarding the provision of holistic supports and a full-time community school coordinator. Policy makers can also consider how to ease requirements for community organizations and other government agencies to interact with schools.

### **Recommendations for Community School Researchers**

Those who conduct research on community schools could build off of the work of this study by expanding the scope of the study and revisiting the principles themselves. Given that the study focused on the high school grade level, future research could consider examining the effectiveness of feeder patterns of community schools. A longitudinal study that looks for evidence of these practices throughout the student's entire K–12 school experience could produce results that describe how students develop over time in any of these specific areas. For example, one aspirational goal mentioned by Frankl (2016) was that community schools should have curricula that are engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging. A longitudinal study of students who attend community schools could examine the impact that such engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging curriculum has on the students' academic performance or overall engagement in school. Or, a longitudinal study could study the impact that the provision of mental health services and social-emotional supports on campus has on a child from grades kindergarten to 12th grade. A study that followed the student in a community school for several years could produce valuable data for the research community.

In terms of future studies on transformative community schools, an emphasis on family engagement and community vitality could increase the general public's understanding of the impacts of community schools that extend beyond the student and the school. A focus on the family and community could lead to an increased prevalence of transformative impacts that

relate to tenets that have less of a direct impact on the student and school (e.g., acknowledging power and privilege or working toward democracy). Transformative Leadership Theory was applied to this study to operationally define and identify transformative impacts. It is interesting to consider what type of school leader is necessary to lead an effective, transformative community school. The vision and desire of the school leader to achieve larger, societal impacts is also worth exploring. Future studies could apply transformative leadership theory to community schools to attempt to identify the types of characteristics and mindsets school leaders must have, or the actions they must employ, to ultimately influence student learning, school effectiveness, family engagement, or community vitality.

Lastly, future researchers could support efforts to advance the work of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) because Section 4623, Statute 2025 has stated that:

a “full-service community school” means a public elementary school or secondary school that “(A) participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and (B) provides access to services in school to students, families, and the community, such as access during the school year (including before- and after-school hours and weekends), as well as during the summer.”

Given the national attention and support for community schools, researchers could continue to build off of this work. For example, the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017) developed standards and a self-assessment for community school leaders to assess to what extent they are implementing the various components of the community school strategy. This self-assessment elaborated upon the standards and provided a scoring rubric from ranging from ineffective to highly effective. Future research could encourage the creation of tools such as this self-assessment to empower current community school leaders to assess their progress towards

implementing the elements of community schools and to guide new community schools that are still in developmental stages of implementation. Table 5.2 summarizes this study’s recommendations for practitioners, policy makers, and community school researchers.

Table 5.2

*Summary of Recommendations*

School level	Recommendations and Implications			
	District level	Community partner organizations	Policy makers	Community school researchers
Employ any of the practices identified in this study to implement the guiding principles of effective community schools. Train school principals to be cross-boundary leaders. Principals must focus on building and fostering partnerships that meet specific needs.	Potentially begin with pilot schools for the initial cohort of the implementation of the community schools resolution. Develop a rubric or requirements to gauge how the vision of the pilot school aligns with that of a community school. <sup>a</sup> Formally support schools by helping schools determine, vet, evaluate, and fund community partners at school sites. Expedite the process for community partners to obtain formal agreements with the district. Consider developing a job description, position requirements, and responsibilities for a community school coordinator and also allocate resources to fund these positions at school sites.	Assess the impacts (quantitative or qualitative) of specific programs or services on the target audience.	Allocate additional resources and dollars to districts, so that they can provide holistic support services and a full-time community school coordinator at each school site. Ease requirements for community organizations or government agencies to interact with schools.	Longitudinal study on students in K–12 settings. Study the impacts of transformative community schools on family engagement and community vitality. Create tools, like the self-assessment, for current community schools to evaluate their work and to guide the implementation of new community schools. Continue the research on the impacts of ESSA on community schools.

*Note.* Summary of this study’s recommendations and implications for school leaders, district leaders, community partner organizations, policy makers, and community school researchers.

<sup>a</sup>The standards and self-assessment created by the Institute for Educational Leadership (2017) is a good place to start.

## **Conclusion**

Students are going to school with an increasing number of social, emotional, and physical needs. These stressors and other traumatic experiences may be barriers to student learning and the school's ability to effectively educate its students. Many schools have limited resources and time to fully address the vast array of students' needs. The findings of this study identify specific practices that two LAUSD pilot high schools employed to implement the guiding principles of effective community schools, with the goal of meeting their students' needs. Intentional partnerships between the two schools and local community partner organizations enhanced the schools' abilities to address the interconnected web of students' environments. The responsibility of educating the child was not left up to the families, teachers, and school principals. It was shared by community organizations that provided resources, services, time, and energy to the school, mostly at no cost. The entire village shares the responsibility of educating the child.

Moreover, this study reveals that, in addition to mitigating barriers to student learning, the two community schools have greater, transformative impacts. The two transformative community schools in this study address material disparities that students faced, create a democratic environment by giving everyone a voice, articulate a larger purpose for students to be global citizens, and value students' diverse experiences and identities. A transformative community school can be the vehicle that helps students navigate a complex web of environmental systems to ultimately achieve positive learning outcomes. Additionally, the transformative community school can have impacts that extend beyond student learning and the overall effectiveness of the school. The transformative community school can help parents authentically and meaningfully engage in the educational success of their children, and, thus, the

success of their own families. Through the success of individual students and their families, the transformative community school can ultimately be the vehicle that helps marginalized communities navigate dominant power structures, systems, and ideologies, with the goal of increasing community vitality overall. And, in order for the school to accomplish all of this, it needs a transformative community school principal at the helm.

## **EPILOGUE**

### **MY JOURNEY AS A COMMUNITY SCHOOLS RESEARCHER**

I first learned about community schools while working on my master's thesis at the University of California, Berkeley. I participated in a fellowship that allowed me to do research involving an East Oakland high school that employed both the Linked Learning and community school strategies. The Oakland Unified School District had recently adopted a full-service community schools approach throughout the district. At that time, the community schools movement was beginning to expand throughout the nation.

I entered the Loyola Marymount University doctoral program in 2014, fully knowing that I wanted to continue my research on community schools. As a staff member to Los Angeles Unified School District Board Member Ref Rodriguez, I chose to focus on L.A. Unified schools to shine a spotlight on the potential and promise of community schools in the district. When I first started the program, the community schools strategy was most familiar to the nonprofit organizations that worked with them, and not as much by the district, labor partners, or other community partner organizations. Over the course of my three years in the program, I felt myself evolve as a researcher of community schools. At the same time, I watched the field of community school researchers and practitioners expand and evolve, too. By the time I completed the doctoral program, a coalition of labor partners and community organizations had formed in support of community schools. At the same time, the L.A. Unified School District had unanimously approved a board policy that called on the district to embrace community school strategies and to develop an initial cohort to implement such strategies. Everything seemed like it was coming full circle.



I selected my committee members thoughtfully and strategically. Dr. Drew Furedi had experience working within L.A. Unified and also with a charter organization that employed elements of the community schools strategy. Ellen Pais shared with me her professional expertise on community schools because of her experience leading a nonprofit, the Los Angeles Education Partnership, which had been working with community schools for decades. Dr. Mary McCullough, my dissertation committee chair, was a systems thinker and an overall calm presence during my confusing nights when I attempted to distill a clear thought from a maze of complex ideas. At the beginning of the program, Dr. McCullough would tell me that soon I would become an expert. This was hard for me to understand and accept at the time, especially when I was knee deep in my review of the literature. While I still have so much to learn about community schools, especially in regards to what specific approaches look like throughout the country, I have a better sense of the essential elements of community schools because my research questions directly explored six guiding principles: shared vision, collaborative partners, high expectations, aligned resources, respect for diversity, and shared decision-making.

Because the field of education is constantly evolving, I have heard from many Los Angeles educators that they are accustomed to seeing initiatives come and go and be replaced by the next “shiny” program or idea; however, my research made it clear to me that the community schools approach is *not* a new, shiny idea—it dates back to the 1800s and is just the opposite. The concept of holistic services and integrated partnerships has been part of the education conversation since the settlement house movement. The area in which the field of community schools research has evolved is in thinking about the importance of integrated partnerships and holistic supports, coupled with high quality teaching and learning. In this study,

I shifted the dialogue away from the barriers to learning that are outside of a school's control to the actual operation of a school itself to foster high expectations for teaching and learning.

My research questions evolved as I got deeper into the community schools research and my doctoral program's courses that included an examination of transformative leadership theory. At first, I wanted to focus only on the characteristics of a transformative community school leader. I ultimately narrowed my focus to the practices schools leaders were employing on their campuses and the impacts they believed these practices had. I needed to ground my research in theory, so I thought carefully about what drew me most to the community schools strategy. As a former teacher in an inner-city school in Brooklyn, I was drawn to an approach that recognized the need to provide students with support services to offset the barriers to learning that they brought in with them when they walked in my classroom door. They needed social emotional supports, positive discipline strategies, physical and mental health services, and authentic parent engagement. I had read about Whole Child Education and the importance of the holistic development of young people, but I knew community schools was even more than that. I stumbled upon Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, and I became obsessed with the fact that everything is about systems.

My conceptual framework changed multiple times. It went from a Venn diagram within a circle, to a series of concentric circles, to a funnel, and back to a Venn diagram. I knew that the essential elements of my framework would be ecological systems theory, the guiding principles of community schools, and transformative leadership theory—I just kept changing my mind as to the best way to organize these elements. I saw a natural connection between the work of community schools and their focus on equity and democracy, and the tenets of transformative

leadership theory. Thus, after coding the data for the six guiding principles of community schools, I decided to do an extra coding analysis with the lens of transformative leadership theory. As I had expected, the data revealed a great deal of alignment between the theory and the guiding principles of community schools. I found that these community schools were having transformative impacts on students and the school overall, even if neither the participants nor I realized it at the time.

Like many other researchers, I struggled to narrow down which data I would include in my writing. Dr. McCullough reiterated that the most important thing was determining how to tell my story. After countless hours of engaging in deductive and inductive coding and analysis, the data became embedded in my mind which made telling my story in my final chapter one of the easiest parts of my journey. While I know I did not include all of the data I could have, I also accepted, like many had tried to tell me, that this dissertation is not my life's work; however, my completed dissertation has definitely laid the foundation for my life's work and my commitment to the community school strategy moving forward.

I now find myself talking about community schools to anyone who will listen to me. As I mentioned earlier, at the time of publishing this study, the L.A. Unified School board had recently approved a policy resolution that embraced community schools and sought to expand them in the district. Board Member Dr. Ref Rodriguez, my employer, was a co-sponsor of the resolution, so its passage allows our office to closely monitor the implementation of the resolution. I feel quite fortunate that many areas of my life are converging around my research and passion for the community schools strategy. While I do not believe in silver bullets, especially with respect to education initiatives, I remain convinced that the community schools

strategy is an approach by which educators must closely examine its benefits and application to high-need communities that need intentional supports. These supports, resources, and partnerships must be focused on a shared vision for the school that is endorsed by a committed school leader and shared by the entire community.

## *Appendix A*

### **Instrument Questions**

#### Interviews of Principals and Community School Coordinators

1. Can you talk about your vision for your school, how you share it with others, and how you assess it?
  - Think about your community partner groups. What specific practices do you employ to collaborate with them and leverage their time, resources, and expertise?
2. What do you do to ensure that your students are learning to high standards and that your teachers are teaching to high standards? Can you identify any outcomes of these high expectations?
3. Please comment on the collaboration that exists or does not exist among support staff, teachers, and partner organizations.
4. How do you work with community partners to provide resources/services that are focused on the priorities the students, teachers, and school community need the most?
  - As a result, what impacts do you see?
5. What practices does your school employ to show respect for the diversity and identity of all community members?
6. What do you specifically do to ensure that community members engage in shared decision-making?
  - How do you build trust with them and ensure there is two-way communication between the school and community?

#### Focus Groups

1. What is the shared vision of your school?
2. What outcomes do you see as a result of this shared vision?
3. What impacts do you perceive your school partnerships have on your students, staff, and the school community?
4. What do you do to ensure that your students are learning to high standards?
5. What practices does your school employ to show respect for the diversity and identity of your students and families? And, what impacts do you see as a result?
6. In what ways do you ensure that teachers, school community members, and families engage in shared decision-making? And, what impacts do you see as a result?

## Interviews of Community Partner Organization Leaders

1. Can you briefly describe your relationship with the school and how long you've been partnering with them?
2. And how is your organization funded? If school is involved, what is the process for you to get funding?
3. Please describe the school's vision? And, how do you and your organization support that vision through activities, resources, etc.?
4. How does your organization make decisions that are specifically related to the school? What systems have you established for sharing resources and decision making with the school?
5. How do you formalize your relationship with the school to ensure a stable, collaborative relationship?
  - Who is your primary liaison at the school and how often do you talk to them?
6. Do you collaborate with other partners on campus? If so, how often and what does that look like?
  - How is the school integrated in that collaboration?
7. What impacts do you perceive your partnership has on the school, students, staff, and the community?
8. How do you set goals and measure success with this school?
9. How do you ensure that the services you provide are appropriate to the needs of the students, teachers, and the school community?
  - And, what impacts do you see as a result?

**Appendix B**  
**Summary of Practices and Impacts by Guiding Principle**

Table B1

Guiding Principle #1: Shared Vision and Accountability			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Integrated the thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning	CS1 Thematic Funding Partner and CS2 Internship Partners provided funding for internships.	CS1's SES: <sup>a</sup> 71% of students agreed that their science teacher showed them how science helps them understand the world around them, compared to 68% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>b</sup> Provided students with real-world learning opportunities.  Impact on student learning.
	At both CS1 and CS2, Industry professionals mentored students.  At both CS1 and CS2, Industry professionals taught classes on campus		
Created a positive culture and climate	At both CS1 and CS2, the schools offered clubs, sports, and extracurricular activities.	CS1's SES: In the 2015-2016 school year, 93% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that discipline was fair, compared to 84% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> Ensured a shared commitment and purpose.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	At both CS1 and CS2, teachers stayed with students after the school day ended.		
	At CS1, teachers continued working at the school, showing a low attrition rate.		
	At both CS1 and CS2, restorative justice work has emphasized positive solutions over punishment.		

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column. Italics were used if no impacts could be identified.

<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified).

<sup>b</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

Table B2

Guiding Principle #2: Collaborative Partners that Share Resources and Expertise			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Provided greater capacity that enhanced teaching and learning on campus	At CS1, community college partners offered college courses on campus.	Over 50% of seniors took at least two college classes before they graduated, and more than 50% of seniors were enrolled in at least one college course (CS1 principal, interview, 10/21/16)	<b>TLT 3:<sup>a</sup></b> Connected academics to students' experiences and futures.
	At CS2, community college offered competency-learning performance tests.	At CS2, 27 out of 35 students that took the performance tests successfully passed their performance tests (CS2 principal, focus group, October 27, 2016).	Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.
Provided relevant, real-world learning opportunities	CS2 Internship Partner provided direct work experience at thematic-related host sites.	CS2's SRC <sup>b</sup> (2015-2016): 85% of students agreed that the school encouraged them to work hard, so that they could be successful in college or at the job they chose. This percentage was up by four percent from the previous year.	<b>TLT 1:<sup>c</sup></b> Addressed material disparities.
	CS1 Museum Partner offered free admission to students and families.		<b>TLT 3:</b> Balanced academics and real-world experiences.
	CS2 Mentorship Partner organized off-campus field trips and arranged for guest speakers in classes.		Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS2 Internship Partner provided students with work preparedness opportunities and post-secondary preparedness.		
Addressed social-emotional needs and trauma with holistic supports	CS1 and CS2 partners provided mental health, social-emotional, and other wraparound services directly on the school's campus to address students' and parents' needs and traumatic experiences.	CS1 SES <sup>d</sup> (2015-2016): 77% of CS1 teachers reported that social-emotional skills were taught school wide or by teachers, compared to 65% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 1:</b> Provided holistic services and combatted marginalization of groups by institutions.
		CS2 SES (2015-2016): 59% of teachers reported that social-emotional skills were either taught school wide or by some teachers.	Impact on student learning.



Table B2, continued

Navigated district requirements and policies to support schools	CS2 Professional Development and CS1 Mental Health Partners completed MOUs to provide services.  CS1 Thematic Funding Partner shared costs with the district to supplement the thematic program.	<i>No data on impacts were available because this practice was viewed more as a way for partners to work with the school.</i>	<b>TLT 1:</b> Acknowledged the district's institutional requirements to provide services to the school.  Impact on school effectiveness.
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*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

<sup>b</sup>SRC = School Report Card (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>c</sup>TLT 1 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 1 (acknowledging power and privilege).

<sup>d</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

Table B3

Guiding Principle #3: High Expectations and Standards			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Aligned school-level teaching practices	CS1 PD Partner <sup>a</sup> created effective, interdisciplinary curricular units.	An evaluative study <sup>b</sup> revealed that the CS1 professional development services increased teacher’s efficacy in promoting student-centered classrooms, historical understanding, and civic learning, which corresponded with statistically significant student outcomes.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>c</sup> Connected academics to personal experiences and shared commitment to high-quality teaching and learning.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS2 PD Partner provided teachers with technical assistance and coaching.		
Placed students at the center of teaching	CS2 PD Partner organized a summer bridge program for incoming ninth graders.	A survey <sup>d</sup> found that 59% of students surveyed said they knew the requirements to graduate from high school (compared to 55% before the program), and 67% said they felt prepared to go to college or find a career after they graduated (compared to 61% before the program).  CS1 SES <sup>e</sup> : 77% of teachers stated that they “always” or “often” worked in grade-level or department-level teams to review and align grading practices, in both the 2015-2016 and 2014-2015 school years.  CS2 SES (2014-2015): 42% of teachers said that they examined evidence of student understanding or mastery.	<b>TLT 2:</b> <sup>f</sup> Students voiced their opinions and advocated for themselves.  Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.
	CS1 school faculty engaged in vertical planning.		
	CS1 school administration reviewed assessments, curricular units, and norms for grades on assignments.		
	CS2 teachers did instructional rounds and collected data in each other’s classrooms.		
	Both CS1 and CS2 advisory teachers stayed with students for all four years of high school.		
	CS2 advisory teachers focused on intervention with specific students during the periods.		

Table B3, continued

Supported students to become contributing members to their local community	CS2 Project-Based Partner provided stipends to teachers, so students could develop projects that focused on improving their local community.  CS1 Industry Professional Partner exposed students to professionals that shared similar backgrounds to encourage them to enter similar fields.	<i>No data were available.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> Connected academics to students' futures and the local community context.  Impact on student learning.
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*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column. Italics were used if no impacts could be identified.

<sup>a</sup>PD Partner = Professional Development Partner.

<sup>b</sup>The source of the national evaluation study data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the Professional Development Partner.

<sup>c</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

<sup>d</sup>The source of the pre- and post-survey data was not identified in order to maintain the anonymity of the CS2 Professional Development Partner.

<sup>e</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>f</sup>TLT 2 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 2 (working towards democracy).

Table B4

Guiding Principle #4: Align the Assets of Local Community Organizations and Members			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Developed formal structures for coordination	Both CS1 and CS2 convened community partners monthly.	<i>None. Identified practices were more about the interaction between school and partner.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>a</sup> Ensured shared purpose amongst all partners.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	Both CS1 and CS2 vetted partners before bringing them on.		
	CS2 conducted pre- and post-surveys.		
Allowed for informal structures for coordination	CS1 learned when to say "no" to a community partner.	<i>None. Identified practices were more about the interaction between school and partner.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> Ensured shared purpose amongst all partners.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS2 principal called on partner whenever a need is identified.		
Tapped into local community assets	CS2 had industry professionals evaluate student projects.	<i>None identified.</i>	<b>TLT 3:</b> Connected the students to projects and members of the local school community.  Impact on school effectiveness.
	CS1 focused the yearbook on local murals in the community.		
	CS1 refocused the role of school police officers.		

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column. Impacts were not easily identifiable for this guiding principle because the practices mostly involved interactions between the school and community partners or local community members. Italics were used if no impacts could be identified.

<sup>a</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

Table B5

Guiding Principle #5: Respect the Diversity and Identity of Community Members			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Respected the diverse profiles & experiences of students and families	CS1 acknowledged the different profiles of students and families.  At both CS1 and CS2, services were brought to campus based on students' needs.	CS1 SES <sup>a</sup> (2015-2016): 97% of teachers said that they agreed that decisions at the school were based on students' needs and interests, compared to 90% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 4:</b> <sup>b</sup> Respected experiences and tailored services to address needs.  Impact on student learning.
Created an inclusive environment	At both CS1 and CS2, students with special needs were integrated into the general education population.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 59% of students stated that they got along well with students who were different from them, compared to 63% previously.  CS2 SES (2015-2016): 70% of students also indicated they got along well, compared to 73% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 3:</b> <sup>c</sup> Created an environment where all voices are heard and students learn from each other.  Impact on student learning.
Addressed identity through curriculum	With the help of the CS1 PD Partner, <sup>d</sup> the school engaged students in yearly curriculum focused on the relationship between self and the larger community.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 98% of teachers reported that they believed students' backgrounds were valued at the school, compared to 95% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 4:</b> Respected students' experiences and identities.  <b>TLT 3:</b> Connected students to the larger community.  Impact on student learning.
Celebrated and responded to language diversity	At both CS1 and CS2, translation was offered at every event and all communications were sent home in other dominant languages.  At CS2, text messages were sent to communicate with families.  At CS1, teaching assistants shadowed and supported English Learners throughout the day.  At CS1, students were allowed to respond to questions in Spanish.	CS1 SES (2015-2016): 95% of CS1 parents agreed that the school provided transportation services when they needed it, compared to 86% in the previous year.  CS2 SES (2015-2016): 94% of parents agreed that the school provided transportation services when they needed it, compared to 81% in the previous year.	<b>TLT 4:</b> Respected students' and families' dominant languages and cultural identity.  Impact on school effectiveness and student learning.

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified).

<sup>b</sup>TLT 4 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 4 (demonstrating cultural competence).

<sup>c</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

<sup>d</sup>PD Partner = Professional Development Partner.

Table B6

Guiding Principle #6: Shared Decision-Making Power with Community Members			
Theme	Specific practices	Quantitative/ Qualitative impacts	Impacts (transformative; student learning and/or school effectiveness)
Promoted student voice	<p>At both CS1 and CS2, clubs were started by students and were driven by their interests.</p> <p>CS1 held student-led conferences.</p> <p>CS2 students led school-wide assemblies and invited principal to participate.</p> <p>CS1 students advocated for services to address their needs.</p>	<p>CS1 SES<sup>a</sup> (2015-2016): 85% of students agreed that teachers gave them a chance to take part in classroom discussions or activities, compared to 77% in the previous year.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2015-2016): 88% of students reported teachers gave them a chance to take part in classroom discussions or activities, compared to 86% in the previous year.</p>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b><sup>b</sup> Encouraged student voice.</p> <p>Impact on student learning.</p>
Encouraged teachers to share responsibility	<p>CS2 teachers co-facilitated the professional development sessions with the community partner.</p> <p>CS1 teachers brought up ideas, and they were carried out by the administration.</p>	<p>CS1 SES (2015-2016): 91% of teachers reported that most or nearly all adults felt a responsibility to improve the school, compared to 90% in the previous year.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2014-2015): 93% of teachers reported similarly as CS1.</p>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b> Teachers' voices were valued, and they were involved in the decision-making.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness.</p>
Created formal structures for shared decision-making	<p>At both CS1 and CS2, formal structures were in place, such as a student leadership group, School Site Council, and English Learner Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Both CS1 and CS2 had pilot school Governing School Councils.</p> <p>As pilot schools, both CS1 and CS2 had an EWA requiring that teachers, students, parents, and others be involved in the hiring of staff and the principal.</p> <p>At both CS1 and CS2, teachers participated in committees as part of the Election-to-Work Agreement.</p>	<p>CS1 SES (2015-2016): 95% of teachers agreed that the school promoted the participation of personnel in decision-making, compared to 75% in the previous year.</p> <p>CS2 SES (2014-2015): 93% of CS2 teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the same statement. (No data were available for the 2015-2016 school year.)</p>	<p><b>TLT 3:</b> Formal systems were in place to ensure transparency, participation, and shared decision-making.</p> <p>Impact on school effectiveness.</p>

*Note.* Themes in the first column are categories created for the practices, identified by participants, which are listed in the second column.

<sup>a</sup>SES = School Experience Survey (administered by LA Unified)

<sup>b</sup>TLT 3 = Transformative Leadership Tenet 3 (articulating individual and collective purpose).

**Appendix C**  
**Themes of Practices Categorized by Transformative Leadership Tenets**

Transformative Leadership Theory Tenets			
<i>Acknowledging power and privilege</i>	<i>Working towards democracy</i>	<i>Articulating individual and collective purpose</i>	<i>Demonstrating cultural competence</i>
<u>Operational definition:</u> Acknowledging how institutions continue to marginalize groups; Material disparities are hindrances; Perpetuating dominating, hegemonic cultures; Deconstructing assumptions.	<u>Operational definition:</u> Schools are places of democracy where all voices and languages are respected; Self-governing community, with representative from the student body, the parents, and the teachers; Students are empowered to voice their opinions.	<u>Operational definition:</u> Engaged in shared purpose; Students are global citizens; Balance between academics and world experiences; Academics connect students to personal experiences, futures, and local community context.	<u>Operational definition:</u> Experiences are also part of culture; Students identify experiences that shape them; Beyond race, gender, ability, and religion; Differentiating between good/bad stereotypes.
Themes of Practices Identified in This Study by CS1 and CS2			
Provided relevant, real-world learning opportunities  Navigated district requirements and policies to support schools	Placed students at the center of teaching	Integrated the thematic focus into on- and off-campus learning  Created a positive culture and climate  Provided greater capacity that enhanced teaching and learning on campus  Provided relevant, real-world learning opportunities  Addressed social-emotional needs and trauma with holistic supports  Aligned school-level teaching practices  Supported students to become contributing members to their local community  Developed formal structures for coordination  Allowed for informal structures for coordination  Tapped into local community assets  Created an inclusive environment  Addressed identity through curriculum	Respected the diverse profiles & experiences of students and families  Addressed identity through curriculum  Celebrated and responded to language diversity

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Promoted student voice

Encouraged teachers to share  
responsibility

Created formal structures for shared  
decision-making

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*Note.* The operational definitions were used in this study to analyze the data. The themes of practices listed are the categories and not specific practices. The specific practices under each theme can be found in Chapter 4.

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