

Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to  
Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in Two School  
Districts in Virginia

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**ABSTRACT**

English Learner (ELs) are the fastest growing student population in the United States. With this increase of ELs, come many challenges at the federal, state, and local level. Research shows that teachers and administrators are ill-equipped to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. English learners face inequities in today's school- lack of qualified and trained teachers and administrators, ineffective language support programs, persistent achievement gaps compared to their non-EL peers, lack of access to advanced courses as well as institutional marginalization, segregation and racism. School administrators are key in ensuring success for all students, particularly for ELs. Administrators who are knowledgeable about issues of equity and marginalization promote social justice in their schools and increase student achievement for marginalized student populations including ELs. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. The study was conducted in two school divisions in Virginia. This study used a survey of 25 Likert-scale statements. The survey used was adapted and modified from the Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) study. This study used quantitative analyses techniques to analyze the data, to include descriptive statistics, and comparative analysis using ANOVA. This study yielded nine findings and seven implications. One of the major finding was that there was no difference between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. One major implication is that school districts ought to provide principals and assistant principals the necessary professional development to equip them to serve ELs as an ever-growing and changing student population.

Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in a Two School Districts in Virginia

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**GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT**

Schools across the United States have experienced an increase of English Learner (ELs) students. Many schools today struggle to meet the needs of ELs. The challenges ELs face as well as the leadership traits and skills necessary for their success were identified in the literature. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify principal and assistant principal self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs in the school setting. Data were collected using quantitative methodologies. Principals and assistant principals from two school divisions in Virginia were the participants in this study. The study yielded nine findings and seven implications for practice. A suggestion for future study would be to conduct the study across the Commonwealth of Virginia in order to gain a better understanding of the self-reported levels of preparedness for principals and assistant principals and to develop a state-wide comprehensive professional development plan to address their needs.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving, supportive, and funny husband, John, and our miracle princess, Sofía. It would not have been possible to complete this dissertation without your endless love, support, understanding, patience, and motivation.

To my one and only, Sofía. I hope that mommy makes you proud. I hope that you know and understand that the many weekends and nights away were to complete this task and make you proud. I wanted to show you that you can achieve all things through hard work, dedication, and commitment. I am proud to be your mommy. I know you will continue to become an amazing person and do great things. You make me happy and proud. I love you!

To my mother, María, my sister, my brother, Abuela Mandy, and Abuelo Angel Luis- thank you. Thank you for never giving up on me and for always encouraging me to complete this task. Thank you for taking care of Sofia so that I can read, research, do homework, and/or write my dissertation. Thank you for talking to me on the phone while I commuted to and from class each week. And, most importantly, thank you for praying for me all the time, especially when I walked into each examination defense or simply felt like giving up.

To my stepchildren, Haley, Kensley, and Brody. I love you and appreciate the support you have shown me during this time. Each of you is very special to me.

As an educator, I have had the honor to serve our most vulnerable children. As a teacher and administrator, I have advocated for all students to have an inclusive and equitable education. All students are deserving of access to high-quality programs, high expectations, loving and supportive relationships, and tireless advocates to fight for them and their needs every single day. I would like to think that I have done that and will continue to do so today and forever.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Although the public education system aims to provide all students high-quality instruction and education opportunities, growing academic and social inequities exist in U.S. public schools (Cooper, 2009). According to Theoharis (2007), “it is essential to remember that as a nation we are failing to adequately educate many of our most marginalized students” (p. 4). As a result, a growing body of literature is emerging on the need for educational leaders to become social justice leaders and to examine social and educational systems, as well as to promote practices that support equity and justice (Bogotch & Shields, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). As Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) noted, “school leaders today face one of the most important opportunities to influence social justice” (p. 208); their study focused on English Learners, the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools today (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). The increasing enrollment of English Learners is projected to continue over decades (Krogstad & Fry, 2014), and education leaders have an opportunity to address the challenges and inequities English Learners face – from structural racism, educational inequities, achievement gaps, to academic tracking, and segregation.

#### **Overview of the Study**

This chapter introduces the reader to the historical perspective, problem statement, justification of study, and the research questions to familiarize the reader with the study. This chapter also includes the conceptual framework that serves as the basis of this study. Key terminology is defined in this chapter, as well. Study limitations and delimitations are outlined in the chapter, too. The chapter concludes with an overview of the organization of the study.

The study was a non-random, quantitative study in which a survey tool was used. The survey was a compilation of 25 Likert-scale questions. The survey tool had been adapted and modified from the original study conducted by Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018). The study aligned with tenets of social justice leadership -- specifically, with the tenets of access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The survey questions were aligned to each of these tenets. The purpose of this study was to identify principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school

setting. There were two intended outcomes. Each outcome was aligned to one of the research questions in this study. The following section provides the historical perspective for the study.

## **Historical Perspective**

Changes in demographics are occurring across U.S. public schools (Whitenack, 2015). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2011), one of the most notable changes in U.S. demographics has been the increase of English Learners (ELs) or English Language Learners (ELLs). According to McFarland, Hussar, de Brey, Snyder, Wang, Wilkinson-Flicker, and Hinz, (2017), the percentage of ELs in public schools increased by 4.6 million learners from 2004-2005 to 2014-2015. The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) data show that 1 in 10 students in U.S. public schools is classified as an English Learner. Hussar and Bailey (2013) projected that by 2022, one-third of the U.S. student population will be identified as English Learners.

U.S. schools face challenges with the rapid growth of English Learners in their schools. According to research, U.S. schools report that teachers are underprepared for these challenges (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018) and so are principals (Brown, 2004). Other challenges include the following:

- persistent achievement gaps between ELs and non-ELs (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014);
- unequal opportunities for learning (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010);
- English learners with limited and interrupted education (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015);  
and
- limited resources (Fry, 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Prior to key landmark cases in the United States, ELs and immigrant students did not have many federal protections (Zacarian, 2012). Rulings from landmark cases such as *Lau v. Nichols, 1974*, *Plyer v. Doe, 1982*, and *Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981, 1986* ensure that English learners and immigrant students are not denied equal access to education based on their language proficiency level, that they receive appropriate language support services to ensure they gain English while mastering content instruction, and that their legal status does not deprive them of the right to an education. The following section will discuss the statement of the problem.

## Statement of the Problem

Research shows English Learners face inequities in U.S. schools. English Learners arrive at school with diverse experiences, including diverse and varying experiences in familial situations, prior schooling, content-area knowledge, habits, skills, and native-language literacy (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Although ELs bring many assets to the classroom, educators often do not recognize the social, cognitive, and linguistic strengths ELs bring to school (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). Research shows that educators link academic abilities to their English proficiency and limit their academic exposure until they have mastered English (Dabach, 2014). Research demonstrates that ELs are tracked at disproportionate levels into lower-level classes (Estrada, 2014; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Thompson, 2017b; Umansky, 2016a), and according to Gándara and Orfield (2010), ELs are tracked into lower-level classes that do not yield credit for graduation. Some scholars have found that English as a Second Language (ESL) courses tend to impede access to advanced courses (Callahan & Hopkins, 2017). Furthermore, research has found that a student's EL status/label causes teachers, counselors, and students themselves to have lower expectations for academic success (Dabach, 2014; Kanno & Kangas, 2014).

ELs and Latino students are increasingly segregated in the United States. According to Gándara and Orfield (2010), "Latino students account for the vast majority of EL students and are now the country's most segregated minority, with important consequences for unequal education" (p. 4). Beyond segregation in schools, ELs and Latino students are likely to experience high levels of segregation in their neighborhoods (Iceland & Scopolliti, 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008) and face high levels of poverty (Fry, 2008). In addition to segregation in school and at home, ELs are underachieving compared to their native English-speaking peers (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). The 2019 *Condition of Education Report* created by the USDE showed that ELs scored lower than their English-speaking peers in mathematics and reading, especially if the students attended high-poverty schools. Data obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics support the findings of the 2019 *Condition of Education Report*. Data show achievement gaps for English Learners in mathematics for grade 4 and grade 8 and in reading for grades 4 and 8 compared to their English-speaking peers (NCES, 2019; NCES, 2017). The following section describes the significance of the study.

## **Significance of the Study**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's education law. One of the goals of ESSA (2015) is to "advance equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students." (USDE, 2019). English Learners fall under America's disadvantaged and high-need students. ESSA requires that each state submit their ESSA state plans, specifying how they plan to meet the requirements set forth in the law. As required by law, Virginia's ESSA plan focuses on academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rates, progress in English Learners gaining language proficiency, and school quality (Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2017). Virginia's ESSA Plan outlines short- and long-term benchmark goals that each school division must meet in regard to English Learner progress and proficiency, as well as their performance on Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments (VDOE, 2017). English learners are one of the eight subgroups reported under ESSA and have increasingly gained focus at the local, state, and national level. The following section will explain the purpose of the study.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. The study had two intended outcomes that align with the two research questions. The first outcome was to determine principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners. The second intended outcome was to determine whether a difference exists in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their school. The following section details the justification for the study.

## **Justification of the Study**

Effective, strong leadership is vital to ELs' success (Reyes, 2006; Walquí, 2000). Research has shown that a lack of shared responsibility among leaders, teachers, and other educators result in marginalization of English Learners (McGee, Haworth, & MacIntyre, 2015). In order for English Learners to thrive and be successful, the staff working with ELs must be invested (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) found that teachers have

historically reported feeling underprepared to meet the academic needs of English Learners. In their study, Sampson and Collins (2012) emphasized that all teachers need to be equipped to address the needs of ELs. Similar to the research on teacher preparation, school leaders reported concerns about how to serve ELLs (Uro & Barrio, 2013). According to Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2016), principals are not able to provide quality instructional supervision for ELL instruction due to their lack of expertise and preparation. Gándara et al. (2005) argued that building-level and division leadership need to have deeper understandings about the challenges and solutions of working with EL students. However, research related to leadership, EL and ESL is limited (McGee et al., 2015). Suttmiller and González (2006) contended that schools could no longer ignore the increasing number of ELs in mainstream classrooms and the necessary support and leadership teachers need in order to work directly with diverse students.

The study provided quantitative data on principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners. As evidenced by research, the work of supporting ELs begins with leaders supporting the instructional staff directly working with these students. The following section will list the research questions for the study.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?
2. What differences, if any, exist between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?

The following section outlines the conceptual framework used to guide this study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The review of pertinent research demonstrated that social justice leaders have fundamental beliefs or dispositions that guide their work. The beliefs or dispositions that will guide this study are tenets derived from the work of scholars in the field of social justice leadership. These beliefs or dispositions include the following:

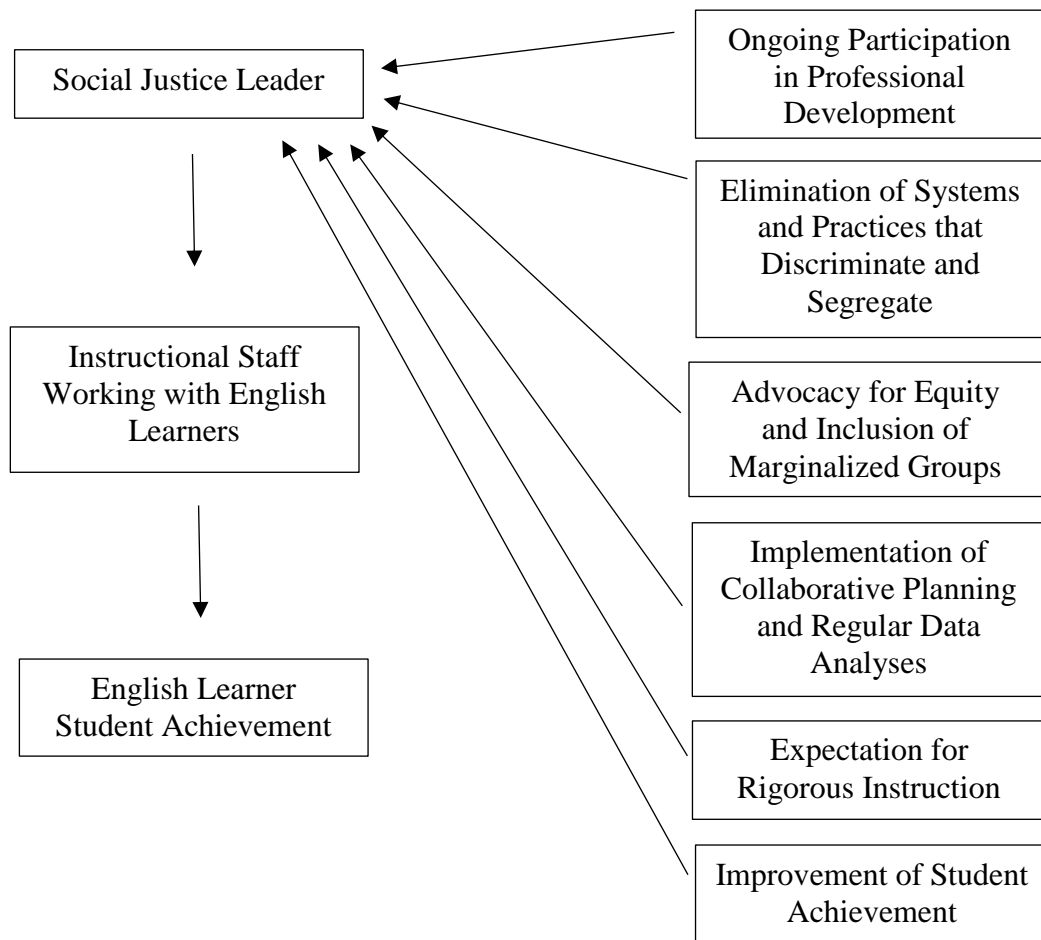
- Increased staff capacity through ongoing professional development;

- Elimination of systems and practices that discriminate and segregate;
- Advocacy for equity and inclusion for marginalized groups;
- Implementation of collaborative planning and regular data analyses;
- Expectation for high-quality and rigorous instruction;
- Improvement of student achievement.

Within the above-mentioned dispositions, access and inclusion, instruction and professional development will be the primary tenets guiding this study. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework used for this study.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*



The following section will define critical terms used in this study.



## Definition of Terms

The terms listed below are vital to this study. Each of the terms is defined to ensure reader clarity as it relates to this study.

***Access.*** The removal of systemic structures that tend to impede the effort to ensure full, meaningful, and equal participation in all school programs.

***Assistant Principals.*** Any person employed by school division in a leadership position at the school-level with the exception of the principal position (Pope, 2015).

***English Learners.*** Immigrant or US-born students in need of appropriate language assistance services to become proficient in English and to participate equally in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time (DOJ & USDE, 2015, p. 12).

***Inclusion.*** The fundamental rejection of exclusion (Slee, 2007) and segregation of marginalized populations, such as English Learners. In this study, inclusion encompasses co-teaching, collaborative teaching, and inclusive schooling practices.

***Instruction.*** The processes of teaching and learning curricular standards.

***Preparedness.*** Degree to which participants feel knowledgeable and competent in the subject matter and possess the necessary skills to support others in their work.

***Principals.*** The chief leader of the school responsible for all school-related operations, decisions, and personnel.

***Professional Development.*** The ongoing pursuit to grow and develop as a leader. In this study, the term professional development is synonymous with training, conference, and other professional learning activities that seek to enhance and expand the school leader's abilities to support instructional staff working with English Learners.

***Social Justice Leader.*** The deliberate pursuit of and leadership for justice, equity, inclusion, and access for all students, but particularly for marginalized and underserved students.

The following section will detail the limitations and delimitations of the study.

## Limitations/Delimitations

There were three limitations that could affect the study. Limitations are factors for which the researcher has no control. First, the researcher served as an assistant principal in one of the selected school divisions, and this could have had an impact on participants' answers. Thus, the survey was voluntary and anonymous for all participants. Second, there were limitations with the

validity and reliability of the study due to the reliance of participants' self-reported levels of preparedness. Third, there were participants' bias when responding to the survey which are impossible to control and remove.

There were two delimitations in this study. Delimitations are factors that the researcher determined to use in this study. First, this study was conducted in two school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, thus it could not represent the self-reported levels of preparedness of principals and assistant principals across the Commonwealth or the Nation. Second, the researcher collected the self-reported levels of preparedness of principals and assistant principals. Therefore, this was the only perspective provided in this study. The perceptions of principals and assistant principals do not illustrate those of other school staff, specifically instructional staff working with English Learners. The following section will outline the organization of the study.

### **Organization of Study**

The study is organized in five chapters. Chapter One includes the following: (a) introduction, (b) overview of the study, (c) historical perspective, (d) statement of the problem, (e) significance of the study, (f) purpose of the study, (g) justification of the study, (h) research questions, (i) conceptual framework, (j) definition of terms, (k) limitations/delimitations, and (l) organization of the study. Chapter Two includes the literature review in six major areas: (a) instructional leadership, (b) social justice leadership, (c) leading English learners and immigrant students in U.S. schools, (d) social justice leadership for English learners, (e) building capacity of administrators and teachers of ELs, and (f) missing pieces in school leadership programs. Chapter Three contains the methodology which includes (a) purpose of the study, (b) research design and methodology, (c) research design and justification, (d) research questions, (e) site and sample selection, (f) data collection and gathering procedures, (g) instrument design, (h) instrument validation, (i) data treatment and management, (j) data analysis techniques, (k) timeline, and (l) methodology summary. Chapter Four contains the analysis of data that includes the following: (a) introduction of the purpose of the study, (b) description of participant data, (c) data reporting, (d) data analysis, and (e) summary. Lastly, Chapter Five includes the study's findings and conclusions. Chapter Five includes: (a) introduction of the purpose of the study, (b) summary of findings and implications, (c) discussion of findings, (d) implications of findings, (e) conclusions, (f) implications for practice, (g) suggestions for future studies, and (h) researcher reflections.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

English Learners are the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools (Horsford & Sampson, 2013; Sheng, Sheng, & Anderson, 2011). The growth in English Learners brings challenges at all levels- federal, state, and district, as they try to accommodate the needs of English Learner students (Sheng, Sheng, & Anderson, 2011). The challenges include underprepared teachers (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018) and principals (Brown, 2004; Dantely, 2002; Lyman & Villabi, 2002; Marshall, 2004a; Rapp, 2002), persistent achievement gap between English learners and non-English learners (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Fry, 2007), unequal opportunities for learning (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010), English learners with limited and interrupted education (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015), and limited resources (Fry, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorva, 2008). To address the challenges, research has emerged on the need and importance of social justice leaders in schools (Bogotch & Shields, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012). Social justice leaders create equitable access and opportunities for marginalized student populations, such as English Learners (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Theoharis, 2007; 2008). Research suggests that in the quest for social justice, leaders challenge status quo, promote inclusion, and address systemic inequities for marginalized student populations (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). The literature review will serve as a review of the existing literature in the fields of instructional leadership, social justice leadership, English Learners, school leadership programs, and English Learner professional development for teachers and administrations.

The literature review is divided into six major sections. The sections include the following: (1) instructional leadership, (2) social justice leadership, (3) leadership of English Learners and immigrant students in U.S. schools, (4) social justice leadership for English Learners, (5) capacity building for administrators and teachers of ELs, and (6) the missing pieces in School Leadership Programs. Each section provides an analysis of the literature in the field. The first section centers on the role of the principal as an instructional leader and the various definitions of instructional leadership. The second section discusses leading through social justice. The definition of social justice is included in this section along with the essential traits for social justice leadership and barriers to social justice work. This section also discusses

strategies for overcoming the barriers to social justice work. The third section focuses on leading English Learners and immigrant students in U.S. schools. This section illustrates the changing demographics in today's schools, landmark court cases that protect English learners, conditions leading to inequities; the interconnectedness of social justice leadership and English Learners is also discussed in this section. The fourth section discusses the literature on school leadership programs, specifically with a focus on social justice leadership and English Learners. The fifth section discusses the importance of, and need for, building capacity for administrators and teachers of English Learners. The final section focuses on the available research related to school leadership programs and the limited research in this area. The literature review concludes with a summary of the chapter.

### **Search Process**

The Virginia Tech *University Library* website was utilized to conduct all research. Electronic databases such as Ebscohost, ERIC, JSTOR, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar were utilized to find the articles reviewed. Keywords or phrases used to research were *instructional leadership, social justice leadership, culturally responsive leadership, English Learners, ESL instructional models, leadership programs, and professional development for teachers of English Learners*. The online searches took place between December 2018 and April 2020. The initial searches were limited to a 10-year period, from 2009 to 2019. In order to provide a comprehensive literature review and a historical perspective on topics studied, scholarly articles older than 10 years were also reviewed and included. The “and” search feature and truncations were used with key words or phrases to narrow the scope of the research. In the search, there were 13,604 articles related to social justice leadership and English learners. There were 2,921 articles related to social justice leadership, English learners, and principal preparation programs. There were 5,536 articles related to culturally responsive leadership, social justice leadership, and English learners. Initially, only full text, scholarly journals, and peer-reviewed articles were chosen and reviewed. To obtain the most current and relevant research, each article's reference page was reviewed, and additional articles and books were selected from the references cited in the original articles. Of the 80 scholarly articles reviewed for the literature review, only those cited in the reference page were included. Books, reports, and data sets were included in the literature review as well.

## **Community of Scholars**

During the search process, a number of scholars were predominately cited by researchers. For this reason, these scholars are recognized as the authorities in their respective fields of study: instructional leadership, social justice, and English Learners. Leithwood, Louis, Fullan, and Hallinger are prominent instructional leadership scholars. Prominent scholars in social justice include DeMatthews, Theoharis, Marshall, Scheurich, and Shields. Each of the authors have published a number of articles related to social justice leadership. Most scholarly research reference the abovementioned social justice lead researchers. As evident in the literature review, Gándara, de Jong, and Harper are prominent scholars in the field of English learners.

## **Instructional Leadership**

### ***The Principal as an Instructional Leader***

Research suggests there is a positive relationship between high-quality leadership and successful schools (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). In fact, according to Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008), “school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (p. 28). Studies conducted by Cherian and Daniel (2008) and Pugach, Blanton, Correa, McLeskey and Langley (2009), identified the school principal as a key participant in leading school change and creating schools that support teachers to meet the needs of all students. Similarly, Leithwood and Louis (2012) concluded that principals who focused on student learning and instruction were the principals who had the most impact on student learning. Specifically, principals who focus on building teacher knowledge, skills, and motivation also ensure supportive working conditions that include time for collaboration (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). Therefore, school leaders are positioned to effect change especially when focusing on the relationship between teaching and learning (Klar & Brewer, 2013; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 34 studies to examine student outcomes and school leadership. They concluded that “the leadership dimension that is most strongly associated with positive student outcomes is that of promoting and participating in teacher learning and development” (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008, p. 667). Similarly, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies to examine which school leader actions have a positive impact on student achievement. Marzano, Waters,

and McNulty (2005) found that instructional leaders to have a stronger positive impact on student achievement. Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) also suggested there is a relationship between the principal's influence and teachers' practice and instructional changes that result in student learning. Hitt and Tucker (2016) asserted that instructional leadership relates to how principals can "enable teachers to improve student achievement" (p. 531). According to Mestry (2017), principals should focus on instruction, assessment, and curriculum so that student achievement is enhanced.

### ***Instructional Leadership Defined***

The definition of instructional leadership is evolving and can vary by context (Neumerski, 2012). As early as 1991, Fullan defined instructional leadership to be collaborative and active. Fullan (1991) emphasized that principals work collaboratively with teachers to create shared goals, develop joint professional learning, and enhance student learning. Alig-Mielcarek (2003) defined instructional leadership as the principal's actions and behaviors that lead to high levels of achievement for all students.

Moreover, Yu (2009) asserted there are direct and indirect principal behaviors that impact instruction and student learning. Spillane, Hallet, and Diamond (2003) contended instructional leaders motivate, enable, and support teacher learning and the improvement of instructional practices. Hallinger and Wang (2015) provided a comprehensive definition of instructional leadership. Hallinger and Wang (2015) defined instructional leadership as the following:

a collaborative process between principals, teachers, and other stakeholders who serve to (1) define the school's mission, (2) promote a positive school learning climate, and (3) manage the instructional program through (a) the development of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (b) the use of data to guide instruction; (c) the use of technology to support instruction; and (d) feedback through the supervision and evaluation of the teaching process (p. 225).

According to Glick (2011), instructional leadership is a developed skill set to assist teachers to continually improve their practice. Printy, Marks, and Bowers (2009) stated that instructional leadership aims to enable teachers' professional learning and growth. Furthermore, Fullan (2014) argued that the "principal's role is to lead the school's teachers in a process of learning to improve their learning, while learning alongside them about what works and what

doesn't" (p. 55). Therefore, according to Fullan (2014), principals need to map their learning and check their progress towards learning if they want to improve their leadership skills.

In a study conducted by Urick and Bowers (2017), principals and teachers defined instructional leadership as leadership focused on “setting goals and vision for the organization, promoting and leading professional development of teachers, and supervising instruction” (p. 2). In a study conducted by Campbell, Chaseling, Boyd, and Shipway (2019), principals (n=6) were asked to share their understanding of the term instructional leadership. The participants’ understanding of instructional leadership included a focus on improving student outcomes, collaboration, professional learning, and the use of student data (Campbell et. al, 2019, p. 283). Comparably, Leithwood and Louis (2011) emphasized principals who are instructional leaders set direction, build staff capacity, develop organizational culture, and manage instructional programs practices that impact student academic achievement.

Research shows that effective leadership positively impacts student achievement. Principals who are instructional leaders focus on establishing goals for success, collaboration, professional development, and data-driven decision making. Instructional leaders motivate and engage teachers in the improvement of instruction for all students. The next section will discuss social justice leadership.

## **Social Justice Leadership**

### ***Social Justice Leadership Defined***

The definition of social justice is complex (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). DeMatthews, Edwards, and Rincones (2016) stated, “a clear definition of social justice remains elusive” (p. 757). Gewirtz (1998) contended social justice is centered on disrupting and destabilizing arrangements that promote marginalization. Marshall and Oliva (2009) emphasized that social justice leadership is rooted on an awareness of the perpetual inequitable experiences and outcomes for students who are denied access and opportunity. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) contended social justice leadership is intentional and attempts to resist historical inequities and marginalization. As such, Marshall and Olivia (2009) asserted, “social justice leadership is a mindset that requires action” (p. 9).

Theoharis (2007) defined social justice leadership as advocating, leading, and confronting issues of historically marginalized students. Theoharis (2007) emphasized that this definition of social justice is not excluded from inclusive practices with English learners, students with

disabilities, and other historically marginalized groups. Social justice is about “fighting and altering institutional inequities, discrimination, and injustices that only benefit a few students” (Turhan, 2010, p. 1360). Similarly, Marshall and Ward (2004) stated that social justice is the cyclical practice of deconstructing inequity to reconstruct just processes and outcomes.

While there is no consistent definition for social justice leadership, there are traits and characteristics leaderships exhibit. Social justice leaders are aware of inequities, oppression, and marginalization. Social justice leaders have an inclusive mindset and challenge systems that discriminate and segregate. Social justice leaders advocate for underserved students. The following section will illustrate social justice leadership in action.

### **Social Justice Leadership in Action**

Academic and social inequities permeate public schools although the U.S. public education system aims to provide all students high-quality instruction and educational opportunities (Cooper, 2009). Theoharis (2007) agreed with Cooper, and stated, “it is essential to remember that as a nation we are failing to adequately educate many of our most marginalized students” (p. 4). As a result, a growing body of research calls for leaders to be social justice leaders that examine current social and educational systems and promote practices or strategies that support justice and equity (Bogotch & Shields, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012). Specifically, principals are in a position that enables them to address these inequities (Newcomer & Cowin, 2018). Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) noted that “school leaders today face one of the most important opportunities to influence social justice” (p. 208).

School leaders with tendencies aligned to social justice orientation investigate inequities and marginalization of class, gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, and other forms of diversity (Dantlely & Tillman, 2006; Theoharis, 2007). According to Brooks and Miles (2010), social justice leaders are aware of issues regarding exclusion, oppression, and marginalization. According to DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014), social justice-oriented leaders recognize unequal circumstances of marginalized groups and take action to eliminate those inequities. Social justice leadership requires continuous improvement and refinement of ongoing actions, decisions, skills, and competencies (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014).

Shields (2014) asserted social justice leaders have high achievement expectations and strong relationships with students from diverse backgrounds and ability levels. Marshall and



Ward (2004) contended social justice ensures individuals' rights are observed and students have access to educational services available. Wang (2018) maintained social justice centers on practices that are inclusive, democratic, and transformative that promote justice and equity in schools.

Furman and Gruenewald (2004) identified a strong effect of social justice on the achievement and economic well-being of students in marginalized groups. Research maintains that social justice requires questioning school policies, cultures, and community expectations, identifying practices that are oppressive and unjust, and creating practices that are culturally responsive and equitable (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Furman, 2012; Theoharis, 2007; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011). Further, research shows that social justice leaders are activists committed to change in their schools (Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, & Hodgins, 2007; Jansen, 2006; Jean-Marie, 2008; Theoharis, 2007).

Theoharis (2007) conducted a qualitative study in which he examined principals who pursued school leadership to enact social justice. In the study, he performed various in-depth interviews, reviewed documents, kept a detailed field log, and held meetings with the principal participants in a group setting and identified key practices for leaders leading through social justice. These key practices included the following:

- raising student achievement,
- recentering and enhancing staff capacity,
- strengthening school culture and community, and
- improving school structures by eliminating practices that discriminate and segregate (Theoharis, 2007, p. 231).

Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) examined real-life examples of social justice leaders (n=7) to determine “what motivates them to do this work and in what ways did these principals share common dispositions” (p. 6). They found that all of the leaders possessed three common leadership traits (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). These common leadership traits include (a) arrogant humility, (b) passionate visionary, and (c) tenacious commitment to justice (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) define arrogant humility as the combination of acknowledging being right and a willingness to admit being wrong. A passionate visionary is one who is defined as “caring so deeply, having such commitment, and maintaining such enthusiasm, about this work that there is little separation

between the leadership and the leader” (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008, p. 16). Furthermore, these leaders exemplified tenacious commitment to social justice when creating and maintaining a commitment to their vision (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Specifically, these principals maintained a solid vision of equity and justice despite the resistance they felt (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). As a result of this study, Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) contended that social justice is “ingrained into the very being of the social justice leader” (p. 20).

In their study, Theoharis and O’Toole (2011), examined ways social-justice oriented principals (n=2) enacted change and created inclusive services for English learners (ELs). Specifically, they studied ways in which principals created opportunities for English learners that were collaborative, inclusive, and focused on an asset-based approach (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). This study serves as a model of what social justice leadership looks like in practice (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). The principals in this study believed that English Learners were the responsibility of all teachers and all teachers embraced all students as our students (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). These inclusive principals eliminated pullout or segregated programs and eliminated academic tracking to ensure excellent and equitable educational opportunities for English learners (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). This study provided specific examples of social justice leaders creating inclusive, equitable socially-just schools (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). These are specific examples:

- supporting an inclusive and welcoming environment for all stakeholders,
- making an effort to deepen relationships with English learner families,
- requiring collaborative planning and ongoing professional development sessions to enhance staff capacity, and
- conducting regular data analyses to better understand issues of race, disability, and equity (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011, p. 679).

Another example of a social justice leader in action is found in the DeMatthews, Edwards, and Rincones (2016) study. The researchers explored a school leader’s enactment of social justice along the U.S.-Mexico Border. The DeMatthews et al. (2016) study described how the leader delved into the community to understand its needs. The study also examined how the school leader addressed outside challenges that influenced student achievement and the students’

well-being in effort to enhance social justice (DeMatthews et al., 2016). The study took place in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, a city known for its impoverished housing and living conditions that present academic and well-being challenges to students (DeMatthews et al., 2016). These challenges include (a) high levels of illiteracy for adults, (b) limited access to quality public schools; (c) high levels of poverty; gang and domestic violence; (e) governmental corruption; and (f) lack of cohesion and solidarity (Bejarano, 2002; DeMatthews et al., 2016; Hernandez & Grineski, 2012; Heyman & Campbell, 2004; Hill, 2003).

DeMatthews et al. (2016) found that the school leader enacted social justice by (a) creating a safe, caring, and supporting environment; (b) creating meaningful experiences, supports, and learning opportunities; and (c) developing critically engaged leaders (p. 771). The leader created a safe, caring, and supportive environment by building relationships with staff, students, and families, having a “can do” attitude, and by doing simple acts of kindness (DeMatthews et al., 2016). The leader created meaningful experiences for her students, their families, and the community by integrating service and community learning into the curriculum (DeMatthews et al., 2016). Additionally, the leader created opportunities for the students to witness their parents taking ownership of the school and learning (DeMatthews et al., 2016). The leader engaged parents by helping them navigate the structures and access resources they needed, building trust and rapport with parents, and establishing a culture of empathy, helpfulness, collaboration, and respect between parents and the school (DeMatthews et al., 2016, pp. 778-779). As DeMatthews et al. (2016) contended, this leader’s approach demonstrates that social justice leadership is a leader’s desire for change and the dissatisfaction with status quo.

As evidenced by research, social justice leaders address inequities for historically marginalized student populations. The literature shows that social justice leaders have high expectations for all students, develop strong relationships with students from diverse backgrounds and their respective communities. Social justice leaders question systemic structures that are exclusive and oppressive. Social justice leaders promote equity and justice through continuous reflection and professional development for self and their staff. The following section will focus on the essential traits for social justice leadership.

## **Essential Traits for Social Justice Leadership**

### ***Critical Consciousness***

Social justice leaders raise awareness of critical consciousness among their students and staff (McKenzie, Christman, Hernandez, Fierro, Capper, Dantley, González, Cambron-McCabe & Scheurich, 2008). According to McKenzie et al. (2008), leaders with critical consciousness understand privilege, power, and inequities in school and society. Further, leaders with critical consciousness ensure that all students feel safe in school (McKenzie et al., 2008). Dantley (2005b) contended that critical consciousness is ongoing, and constantly evolving. As such, critical consciousness manifests itself in an ongoing developmental journey for the leader (McKenzie et al., 2008).

### ***Support Inclusion***

The core of social justice is inclusion (Ryan, 2006). Ryan (2006) contended that more traditional forms of leadership are not consistent with inclusion. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) contended inclusion begins with the school leader being aware of marginalization and social justice issues. Sapon-Shevin (2003) asserted that inclusive school practices could not be separate from social justice. In order for inclusive leadership to occur, inclusive ideals need to be seen and practiced through collective processes that promote inclusion (Ryan, 2006). As such, inclusive schooling is the fundamental rejection of exclusion (Slee, 2007). According to Brown (2004b), leaders for social justice aim to develop learning communities that are inclusive and reject traditional ways of educating marginalized populations. DeMatthews and Mawhinney (2014) argued that “principals who choose to segregate students cannot promote inclusion and do not reflect values of social justice” (p. 851).

Katzman (2007) defined inclusive schooling as an educational philosophy of providing high-quality, age-appropriate, inclusive instruction for all students in their general education classes in their neighborhood schools. As such, inclusive schools have a shared commitment and strong culture for improving achievement for all students (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson, & Gallannaugh, 2004). According to Lewis and Doorlag (2003), school leaders who promote inclusion influence the school culture by clearly conveying attitudes, sharing common beliefs, communicating values, modeling expected behaviors, providing supports, and addressing concerns and issues related to inclusive schooling. Marshall and Olivia (2009) stated that “social justice leaders aspire to create caring communities where relationships matter” (p. 9). Therefore,

according to Rivera-McCutchen (2014), inclusivity becomes the foundation for creating caring relationships between the students they serve and the schools.

### ***Transformative Leadership***

Transformative leadership focuses on equity and democracy while critiquing inequitable practices (Shields, 2010). According to Shields (2010), inclusive and socially-just leadership and transformative leadership are interrelated terms. Cooper (2009) stated, transformative leadership “involves one’s engaging in self-reflection, systematically analyzing schools, and then confronting inequities regarding race, class, gender, language, ability, and/or sexual orientation” (p. 696). According to Mafora (2013), transformative leadership is centered on questioning conditions of inequities, marginalization, oppression, and leading change in schools and the larger community. Astin and Astin (2000) claimed the purpose of transformative leadership is to enhance equity and social justice. Further, Astin and Astin (2000) asserted that transformative leadership promotes harmony, sustainability, and improves overall quality of life.

Dantley and Tillman (2006) asserted transformative leadership is morally transformative, activist-oriented, and focused on enacting equity. Dantley (2003) stated, transformative leadership focuses on building relationships, enhancing influence, and some notions of virtue or rectitude. In general, there is agreement amongst scholars that transformative leadership is based on self-awareness, courage, passion, courage, commitment, and risk-taking (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Marshall, 2004b; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005; Theoharis, 2007). Transformative leadership is about having the courage to engage and facilitate difficult conversations about class, race, language, culture, and inequality with staff and make decisions that enhance and promote equity and cultural responsiveness (Cooper, 2009). Furthermore, Cooper (2009) contended that “basic care along in the midst of cultural change, segregation, and conflict is not adequate or transformative for schools” (p. 710).

### ***Culturally Responsive, Socially Just Leadership***

Culturally responsive, socially just leadership (CRSJL) is complex (Newcomer & Cowin, 2018). Newcomer and Cowin (2018) merged two frameworks in their study. They merged the Theoharis’ (2008) social justice framework and the Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis’ (2016) culturally responsive framework. Newcomer and Cowin (2018) argued that there is an overlap in both frameworks. Similar to transformative leadership, culturally responsive, socially just leaders promote cultural responsiveness and inclusion (Khalifa et al., 2016; Riehl, 2000). Culturally

responsive, socially just leaders serve as advocates for students and families (Khalifa et al., 2016). According to Trujillo and Cooper (2014), culturally responsive, socially just leaders question educational policies, who the beneficiaries of such policies are, and how these policies may create further inequities.

Theoharis (2008) claimed that culturally responsive leadership is at the core of CRSJ leaders and social justice as the work is “ingrained in the very being” (p. 20). As such, culturally responsive leaders possess the moral stance to serve their students and their families first and foremost (Johnson, 2007). In their daily work, culturally responsive leaders affirm students’ home cultures, support academic achievement, empower parents in economically and culturally diverse neighborhood, and act as activists for change in society (Johnson, 2006). Culturally responsive, socially just leaders are aware of issues of marginalization and maintain these central to their work (Theoharis, 2007). Culturally responsive, socially just leaders create school environments and curricula that align and respond to the political, educational, cultural, and social needs of their students (Khalifa et al., 2016).

In Riehl’s (2000) work on the principal’s role in developing inclusive schools, she identified three actions for culturally responsive leaders. These three actions are (1) foster new definitions of diversity, (2) build home-school-connections, and (3) promote inclusive instructional practices. Through this lens, culturally responsive leaders help empower parents and make the school curriculum more multicultural (Johnson, 2007). For English Learners, language is often a marginalization factor in schools (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010). Therefore, according to Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2013), culturally responsive, socially just leaders support students’ linguistic and cultural identities as this results in higher levels of self-esteem and social adjustment. In their work to support teachers and students, CRSJ leaders promote professional development that is collaborative, job-embedded, and specific to their context in order to help make sense of issues of class, gender, race, ability, and other marginalizing conditions (Theoharis, 2007).

Research shows that social justice leaders are aware of privilege, racism, and inequities. Social justice leaders reject segregation and advocate for inclusion. Social justice leaders are culturally responsive and celebrate multiculturalism. Social justice leaders make decisions through an equity-lens, promote inclusive instructional practices, and engage in difficult

conversations about equity, gender, class, and race. The following section will focus on barriers to social justice leadership.

### **Barriers to Social Justice Leadership**

Wang (2018) contended barriers to social justice work take different forms. Theoharis (2007) asserted that “social justice leaders are constantly navigating rough waters as they face countervailing pressures” (p. 4). Specifically, in his study, Theoharis (2007) found that principals faced six barriers or countervailing pressures. These barriers were “(1) deficit-thinking status quo, (2) marginalization of areas of difference, (3) preference for technical leadership, (4) particular national and local policies, (5) burden of seeking social justice, and (6) lack of equity focus on administrator preparation programs” (p. 10). In Wang’s (2018) study, barriers reported were resources (materials, facilities, money, time, and personnel), teachers’ deficit thinking about students, staff turnover, racial remarks, and socioeconomic inequities. Furthermore, DeMatthews (2015), identified teacher attitudes, lack of planning, unpreparedness, and resistance to inclusive teaching as barriers to social justice leadership. Moreover, a study by Newcomer and Cowin (2018), found that CRSJ leaders face five major challenges in their work. These challenges were (1) shifting the language and culture of the school, (2) engaging parents and the community, (3) strengthening curriculum and instruction, (4) negotiating district, state and federal policies, and (5) continuing to lead after retirement.

As evidenced by research, social justice leadership is challenging. Social justice leaders face barriers, from a deficit-thinking mindset, limited resources, and underprepared staff to resistant staff and systemic policies. Social justice leaders work to change the narrative and shift the school language and culture around underserved, marginalized students. The following section will focus on how social justice leaders overcome the above-mentioned barriers.

### **Overcoming Barriers to Social Justice Leadership**

Persistence and commitment to social justice are key traits when social justice leaders confront resistance (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014). Research has shown that leaders committed to social justice carry conceptions of justice and preexisting values (Jean-Marie, 2008) that enable them to continue social-justice oriented work despite navigating “rough waters” (Theoharis, 2007). Moreover, social justice leaders have a willingness to take risks on behalf of social justice (Jansen, 2006). Research has shown that social justice work takes a

physical and personal toll on leaders (Vibert & Portelli, 2000). In order to continue their work, social justice leaders need to be able to sustain themselves by engaging in ongoing reflection (Jansen, 2006) or to develop strategies to maintain their commitment (Theoharis, 2007). More specifically, Theoharis (2007) asserted that social justice leaders should develop administrative networks, seek out energizing activities, and develop and share decision-making techniques.

Theoharis (2007) contended that in order to overcome the daily barriers, leaders for social justice should do three things: learn, infuse, and sustain. First, to enact social justice, leaders should be well-informed and understand deep, complex issues (Blackmore, 2002; Lyman & Villani, 2002; Rapp 2002; Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Second, social justice leaders need to infuse social justice and equity in the decision-making process, school culture, and in interactions with staff and community members (Theoharis, 2007). Consequently, Theoharis (2007) asserted “equity and justice in schools could not be add-ons but a reconceptualized part of everyday work and thinking in schools” (p. 19). Third, social justice leaders need to utilize and develop strategies that will keep their personal and professional sanity (Theoharis, 2007). According to research, although social justice leaders face many daily challenges, research has shown that these leaders resist, survive, and transform schools (Rapp, 2002; Riester et al., 2002; Scheurich, 1998; Strachan, 1997).

Research shows that social justice leaders are committed to justice and equity despite the challenges they face. Social justice leaders overcome barriers by infusing a social justice, equity-based lens in their daily interactions and decision making. Social justice leaders are willing to take risks and engage regular reflection which help them overcome the barriers they face. The following section will discuss demographic changes in U.S. schools and discuss landmark cases that provide federal protections for English Learners, and immigrant students, as well as, documented English Learner inequities and achievement gaps.

## **Leadership of English Learners and Immigrant Students in U.S. Schools**

### ***Changing Demographics***

Demographic shifts are occurring in the student population in U.S. public schools (Whitenack, 2015). One of the most notable shifts in U.S. demographics over the last 25 years is the increase of the English Learner (EL) student or English Language Learner (ELL) population, which has more than doubled with growth continuing to be expected (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Approximately 1 in 5 students in the K-12 public schools in the



United States speaks another language other than English at home (Ryan, 2013) and 1 in 10 is classified as an English Learner (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Similarly, Cellante and Donne (2013) noted that about 5 million students are identified as ELs in the U.S.

In 2010, the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) statistics showed the total number of English Learners in the U.S. school system had increased by 64%. Furthermore, Whitenack (2015) stated that “the number of public-school students in the U.S. participating in programs for English Language Learners increased by more than 400,000 between 2003-2012” (p. 69). Hussar and Bailey (2013) projected that by 2022 one-third of the student population in the U.S. would be English Learners. Similarly, by 2025, many demographers predict that approximately 20% to 25% of students enrolled in K-12 schools will have limited English proficiency (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

More minority students are enrolled in U.S. public schools today than ever before, and this growth is expected to continue in the next few decades (Sheng et al., 2011). Elfers and Stritikus (2014) stated that immigration in the last two decades has brought a number of challenges for schools and district leaders and their English Learner students. Some of these challenges include inequitable resources, school conditions, segregated schools and classrooms, and the lack of experienced, highly qualified, or trained teachers to serve the unique needs of English Learners (Gándara & Rumberger, 2004). These challenges are not unique to individual school districts, as Sheng et al. (2011) stated, this growth in population brings challenges at the federal, state, and district-level as they try to accommodate the needs of English Learner students.

The face of today’s classroom is continuously evolving. As data show, ELs are the fastest growing student population in the United States. As shown by research and educational statistical data, the number of ELs will continue to increase. These changes in demographics have brought challenges at all levels- federal, state, and district. The following section will discuss landmark court cases that provide legal protections for ELs and immigrant students.

### **Landmark Court Cases, English Learners, and Immigrant Students**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 stated that public schools take affirmative action in ensuring that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students had meaningful access to services and educational programs (*Title VI, Civil Rights Act, 1964*). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bans discrimination based “on the grounds of race, color, or national origin” in “any

program or activity that receive federal financial assistance” (pp. 787-789). These regulatory requirements have been interpreted to prohibit language minority students being denied equal access to education based on their limited English proficiency (*Title VI, Civil Rights Act, 1964*).

In addition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, other key court cases have resulted in the development of federal regulations regarding the education of English learners. According to Zacarian (2012), many of the federal protections for English learners are the result of lawsuits filed against local courts across the U.S. that were appealed at the United States Supreme Court. These key court cases were *Lau v. Nichols*, *Plyler v. Doe*, *Castañeda v. Pickard*, and *Castañeda by Castañeda v. Pickard*.

#### ***Lau v. Nichols, 1974***

In the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that public schools were obligated to support English Learners with an instructional program that guarantees equal access to education (Zacarian, 2012). As such, in order to provide these students’ rights, public schools need to provide language support services to ensure that they gain English and access to content instruction (*Lau v. Nichols, 1974*). The only Supreme Court decision to deal specifically with the meaning of equal educational opportunity as applied to linguistic minorities is *Lau v. Nichols* (Salomone, 1986). As *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) stated, “there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education” (p. 788).

#### ***Plyler v. Doe, 1982***

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Texas statute which allowed school divisions to exclude educating Mexican children who had entered the United States illegally was unconstitutional (*Plyler v. Doe, 1982*). Specifically, the Supreme Court held that:

- (1) the illegal aliens who were the plaintiffs could claim the benefit of equal protection clause which provides that no state shall deny to any person the benefit of jurisdiction in the equal protections of laws;
- (2) the discrimination contained in the Texas statute which withheld from local school district any state funds for the education of children who were not “legally admitted” into the United States and which authorized local school districts to deny enrollment to such children could not be considered rational unless it furthered some substantial goal of the state;
- (3) the undocumented status of the children *vel non* did not establish a sufficient rational basis for denying the benefits that the state afforded

other residents; (4) there is no national policy that might justify the state in denying children an elementary education; and (5) the Texas statute could not be sustained as furthering the interest in the preservation of the state's limited resources for the education of its lawful residents (*Plyer v. Doe*, 1982, p. 2382)

### ***Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981***

Prior to the *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) landmark case, school divisions provided language support services as a result of the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) case with minimal federal guidance. To address this, *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) established the three-pronged test that serves as the basis for implementation of language support programs in ensuring equitable access. Language support programs must meet all three-prongs. These are (1) a program must be informed by “an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or, at least, deemed a legitimate experimental strategy;” (2) a program must be reasonably calculated and implemented effectively, and (3) schools must ensure that the “program produce results indicating that the language barriers confronting students are actually being overcome” (pp. 1009-1010). To ensure compliance with civil rights laws and the effective implementation of a language support program, the *Castañeda* test is used as part of the federal monitoring programs in U.S. schools (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016).

### ***Castañeda by Castañeda v. Pickard, 1986***

In *Castañeda by Castañeda v. Pickard* (1986), the plaintiffs, Mexican-American children brought action against the Raymondville Independent School District (RISD) alleging that the district “engaged in policies and practices of racial discrimination against Mexican-Americans depriving plaintiffs and their class of rights in violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (1976)” (p. 7). Specifically, the plaintiffs claimed that “the school district unlawfully discriminated against them by using an ability grouping system for classroom assignment which was based on racially and ethnically discriminatory criteria and resulted in impermissible classroom segregation” (pp. 7-8). The trial court ruled that “high percentage of Mexican-American students attending one school was not a vestige of discrimination were not clearly erroneous given fact that the Mexican-American students constituted at least 88% of the student population of district” (p. 3). Further, the district court found that the school district did not discriminate against Mexican Americans in its ability grouping. On appeal, the Court of Appeals affirmed the district court's finding that RISD has not violated its duty under the 14<sup>th</sup>

Amendment, Title VI or the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (*Castañeda by Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1986, p. 16).

The above-mentioned landmark cases provide legal protections for ELs and immigrant students. These legal protections ensure that these students are not discriminated against nor denied enrollment due to citizenship status. These legal protections also ensure that these students receive meaningful access to core curriculum and receive the language services they need to be successful. The following section will discuss the conditions for inequities for English Learners.

### **Conditions for Inequities for English Learners**

#### ***Language Support Services***

Neither *Lau* nor *Castañeda* specify a particular language support model needed to meet the need of English learners (Gándara, Moran, & Garcia, 2004). Therefore, school leaders and school divisions work locally to identify and develop instructional programs to meet the needs of English learners (Gándara, Moran, & Garcia, 2004). As detailed in the 2015 *Joint Dear Colleague Letter* published by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), school divisions have the flexibility to provide language services that best meet the needs of their English learners and meet all civil rights requirements. However, when selecting a program, districts must ensure English as a Second Language (ESL) services and programs enable English Learners to attain English proficiency and parity of participation in the mainstream instructional program within a reasonable amount of time (Department of Justice [DOJ] & U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2015). According to Thompson (2013), effective programs for English Learners require careful design and implementation as to balance between the provision of ESL services and segregation.

English Learners arrive to school with a variety of skills, habits, levels of literacy in their native language and in English, varied levels of content-area knowledge and varied schooling and family experiences (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). However, according to Gutiérrez and Orellana (2006), English Learners are frequently positioned according to their perceived English language proficiency deficit. Often times, educators link academic abilities with English proficiency and limit English Learner's academic exposure until they learn English (Callahan, 2005; Dabach, 2014). As a result, often times, ESL instructional programs marginalize the

students they are designed to support by maintaining them at the boundaries of the educational system, creating perpetual equity traps (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016).

McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) cautioned educators about a deficit mindset as it may lead to an equity trap. Callahan and Shifrer (2016) stated that equity traps occur when teachers develop a false sense of the students' abilities that validate their low academic expectations for English Learners due to their limited English proficiency. "An equity trap allows teachers to equate limited English proficiency with limited intelligence, liberating themselves from the responsibility to engage their students in rigorous academic instruction" (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016, p. 468). As such, educators do not recognize the social, cognitive, and linguistic strengths English Learners bring to school (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). Furthermore, Berzins and López (2001) used the phrase the "pobrecito syndrome" which refers to educators expecting less of English Learners due to the barriers and challenges they perceive these students face. In addition to the low expectations, several studies have shown that newly arrived immigrant students experience difficulties related to social marginalization and institutional racism by their teachers and classmates (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

### ***School Scheduling***

It can be challenging to develop language support programs in elementary and secondary schools (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). Most English learners at the elementary level are best served in general education classrooms (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). Further, Elfers and Stritikus (2014) asserted that the nature of elementary lends itself so that English Learners could be distributed across classrooms. It is common for leaders to cluster English Learners and provide targeted teacher supports for teachers who work with the majority of the English learners (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). In contrast, most secondary programs provide linguistic support through ESL courses, sheltered content area courses, a stand-alone program, or a combination of all of these (Calderón, Slavin, & Sánchez, 2011).

Scholars have found that ESL courses tend to impede access to advanced courses for English learners (Callahan & Hopkins, 2017; Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010; Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009). Other research has demonstrated that ELs are disproportionately tracked into lower-level classes (Estrada, 2014; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Thompson, 2017b; Umansky, 2016a). According to Umansky (2016a), ELs have inferior access to courses compared to their English proficient students for four reasons. These are (1) prior

achievement, (2) institutional constraints, (3) English proficiency, and (4) EL classification (p. 1796). Research shows that a student's EL status label has caused teachers, counselors, and students themselves to have lower expectations for academic achievement (Dabach, 2014; Kanno & Kangas, 2014). In kind, Gándara and Orfield (2010) asserted, "English learners, because of their perceived handicap of not speaking English fluently, are typically consigned to courses that are not only not college preparatory, but in fact often do not even yield credit for graduation" (p. 11). Because English language development (ELD) courses often times take up at least two or more class periods a day, ELs are often left out of mathematics, science, and other courses needed for graduation (Lillie, Markos, Arias, & Wiley, 2012). As a result, data show that only 67% of ELs graduate on time, and fewer than 20% of ELs attend 4-year colleges after graduation (ED Data Express, 2018; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Therefore, secondary ELs represent an underserved student population in terms of high dropout rates and limited college preparation courses (Callahan, 2013; Nunez, Rios-Aguilar, Kanno, & Flores, 2016).

Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, and Frisco (2009) examined "the effect of ESL placement on academic progress and how it varies across school contexts" (p. 2). Specifically, they examined high school transcripts and other educational data in 26 high schools that offered ESL courses (Callahan et al., 2009). Callahan et al. (2009) suggested that ESL placement might have negative effects such as social and institutional marginalization in certain courses, especially in schools with few immigrant students. Consequently, Callahan et al. (2009) stated that if ESL services constrain immigrant access to academic coursework, there may be substantial cumulative effects. In kind, Gándara and Orfield (2010) stated "perhaps the most ironic aspect of this is that English learners' achievement is more dependent on the courses they are offered in high school than on their English language proficiency" (p. 11).

Research has found that high school course placement contributes to educational achievement, attainment, and postsecondary opportunities (Adelman, 2006; Muller, Riegle-Crumb, Schiller, Wilkinson, & Frank, 2010). As such, the ability to ensure appropriate course placement for the ELs is critical to their success (Callahan & Hopkins, 2017). Recent data showed that only 2% of the English Learners in high school are enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2014). Additionally, at the national level, only 20% of ELs complete higher math courses, such as Algebra II or higher (Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010). In fact, only 58%

of ELs who graduate from high school have successfully completed Algebra II in comparison to 76% for their non-EL peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Furthermore, ELs are less likely to complete two of three required science courses by graduation compared to their English-speaking peers (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). As Callahan and Shifrer (2016) claimed, a measure of equity of access to advanced classes and college preparatory courses lies in the proportion of a high school student's schedule.

Research showed that students' lack of opportunities in their educational careers is linked to less positive outcomes (Gándara & Orfield, 2010). A study conducted by Suárez-Orozco et al., (2008), found that the best predictor of an immigrant student developing proficiency and mastery of English and doing well in school occurred when the student had a friend that is a native-English speaker. Furthermore, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2008) asserted that without this natural language support, it could be difficult to acquire the academic levels of English needed to be successful in school. Similarly, according to Sheng et al. (2011), an English learners' proficiency level in English is directly related to academic performance and grade retention. Further, English Learners' English proficiency is a significant determinant of potential high school dropout (Sheng et al., 2011).

### ***Segregation of English Learners***

The number of African American and Latino/a students is growing increasingly more segregated in schools today than they did in the past 20 years, even though U.S. schools are increasingly racially diverse (Orfield, 2009). As Arias (2007) stated, "the last two decades have transformed the demography of every school district across the nation, so that Latino students are represented in every state of the country. Along with increasing numbers, has come increasing segregation" (p. 5). Gándara and Orfield (2010) concurred with Arias, as they asserted segregation of English learners and Latino students is an increasing problem in the nation. According to Valdés (2001), today's schools mirror the Mexican schools from the 1930's, as English Learners of Latino descent are isolated from their English peers in the ESL ghettos. Similarly, Orfield and Lee (2004) contended that the fastest and most segregated minority groups include English Learners, Latino students, and fluent English speakers. "Latino students account for the vast majority of EL students and are now the country's most segregated minority, with important consequences for unequal education" (Gándara & Orfield, 2010, p. 4).

Beyond school segregation, research has found that English learners, as a subgroup of Latino/a, are more likely to experience high levels of housing and schooling segregation because they tend to live in segregated neighborhoods and attend segregated schools compared to their peers born in the United States (Iceland & Scopolliti, 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding, and Clewell (2005), found that English Learners were more likely to be enrolled in urban centers, with large enrollments and class sizes, greater racial and ethnic diversity, greater reliance on unqualified teachers, lower levels of parent involvement, greater discipline issues, and higher levels of poverty. Two years later, Cosentino de Cohen and Clewell (2007), also found that English Learners are more likely to attend larger urban schools segregated with other English Learners. Fry (2008) and Gándara et al. (2003) asserted that English Learners attend high poverty urban schools with fewer teachers compared to their English-speaking peers. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2008) found that English Learners experience triple segregation as they are segregated by color, poverty, and language. In their study, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2008), found that school settings that are highly segregated provide a “separate and not equal education environment” (p. 92). According to Wells and Crain (1994), segregation has a lasting and profound impact on student achievement in school and beyond. Therefore, it is critical to organize instruction for English Learners in ways that address segregation issues, them not worsen (Gándara & Orfield, 2010).

### ***Achievement Gap***

There is an achievement gap between English Language Learners and non-English Language Learners, or students whose native language is English or have met English proficient status but no longer require language support services (Staehr Fenner, 2014). Specifically, the achievement gaps in reading and in mathematics persist between English learners and their English-speaking peers (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). In 2015, the NAEP reported a 25-point gap between English language learners and English-speaking peers in Grade 4 and a 38-point gap in Grade 8 mathematics between English language learners and English-speaking peers. In 2017, for 4<sup>th</sup>-grade reading, there was a 26-point gap between ELLs and non-ELLs and a 40-point gap between ELLs and non-ELLs for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade mathematics (NCES, 2019). In 2019, NAEP data showed that 81% of 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students performed at or above basic achievement level in mathematics compared to 59% of ELLs performing at basic levels of mathematics (NCES,



2019). The same report showed that 69% of 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students performed at or above basic achievement levels in mathematics compared to 28% of ELLs at the same level (NCES, 2019).

Similar gaps exist in reading as well. The 2015 NAEP report showed a 37-point gap in Grade 4 reading between English language learners and English-speaking peers and a 45-point gap in Grade 8. In 2017, for 4<sup>th</sup>-grade reading, there was a 37-point gap between ELLs and non-ELLs and a 43-point gap between ELLs and non-ELLs for 8<sup>th</sup>-grade reading (NCES, 2019). The 2019 NAEP report showed that 66% of 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students performed at or above basic reading level compared to 35% of ELLs reading at basic level (NCES, 2019). The same report showed that 73% of 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students performed at or above basic reading compared to 28% of ELLs reading at basic level (NCES, 2019). Similar to Fry (2008), the *2019 The Condition of Education Report* generated by the USDE, showed that English language learners tended to score lower than their English-speaking peers in mathematics and reading, especially if students attend high-poverty schools.

In a longitudinal analysis conducted by U.S. Department of Education in 2018 as reported in the *Report*, nationally, there were small increases in the percentage of ELs reaching proficiency in Grade 4 and Grade 8 in reading and mathematics between 2009 and 2017 (USDE, 2018). However, in Virginia, there was an 11.4% decrease in Grade 4 mathematics proficiency for ELs and a 7.6% decrease in Grade 8 mathematics proficiency for ELs between 2009 and 2017 (USDE, 2018). Similarly, in reading, Virginia experienced a 4.8% decrease in Grade 4 reading for ELs from 2009 to 2017 and a 6.7% decrease in reading for Grade 8 for ELs from 2009 to 2017 (USDE, 2018).

More recently, researchers argue that only focusing on the scores of current English learners could produce misleading conclusions about whether our educational systems is meeting or failing to meet the needs of these students (Hopkins, Thompson, Linquanti, Hakuta, & August, 2013; Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012). Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) argued that the gap between current English learners and English-speaking peers “can’t go away” because current English learners have not yet mastered English. According to the National Research Council (1999), “when students are not proficient in the language of the assessment (English), their scores on a test in English will not accurately reflect their knowledge of the subject being assessed” (p. 214).

Kieffer and Thompson (2018) sought out to challenge the dominant storyline of EL underperformance in reading and in mathematics by comparing the achievement of multilingual and monolingual students alike. For the purpose of their study, multilingual students included three groups of students: (1) current English learners; (2) English Learners who have acquired native-like English proficiency; and (3) never English Learners (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). Kieffer and Thompson (2018) examined NAEP achievement differences for multilingual and monolingual students between 2003 and 2015. As part of their study, they also examined trends of current EL scores as compared to the multilingual students (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). Kieffer and Thompson (2018) found that the gap between monolingual and multilingual students had decreased from 24% and 27% in reading and 37% and 39% in mathematics, for Grades 4 and 8 (p. 393). Further, they found that while monolingual scores increased over time, multilingual students had greater increases over time (Kieffer & Thompson, 2018). Specifically, multilingual students increased almost twice as much for reading and mathematics in Grade 4, more than three times in Grade 8 reading, and more than twice as much in Grade 8 mathematics (p. 393). Kieffer and Thompson (2018) concluded that their findings demonstrate that multilingual students have made academic progress in recent years contrary to dominant perceptions. Despite these improvements, the achievement gap is substantial and puts EL students further behind their non-EL peers (Gándara & Rumberger, 2004).

### ***Feeling “Other”***

According to Callahan (2005), internal segregation in schools impacts students’ aspirations and identity. Several studies have shown that English Learners feel stigmatized and inferior when separated into classrooms for English instruction (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009). Dabach (2010) interviewed 22 teachers who instructed English learners in specialized courses. The study showed how the students’ perceptions of their worthiness and intelligence was impacted by internalized stigmas about themselves (Dabach, 2010). Teachers in this study shared that students talked about feeling inferior to other students in the school and often questioned their abilities. Often, English Learners develop a separate identity from other students in school and become “those kids” (Valenzuela, 1999).

Research shows that educators perceive ELs with a deficit mindset and do not recognize the diverse experiences these students bring to the classroom. ELs face racism, social marginalization, and academic tracking. Literature shows that ELs are often enrolled in remedial

level classes and underrepresented in advanced classes. Research also shows that there are inconsistencies with ESL services and that these services are often offered in isolation and in segregated settings. National education statistics show persistent gaps between ELs and non-ELs in reading and mathematics. The following section will discuss social justice leadership for English Learners.

### **Social Justice Leadership for ELs**

Social justice does not occur by chance, and it goes beyond what has been known as good leadership (Theoharis, 2007). Unless leaders and schools change on behalf of marginalized students, these students will never receive the education they deserve (Theoharis, 2007). Therefore, “administrators must be at the front of the line in transforming schools into more equitable and just places” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 250). Scholars have found that English learners have been marginalized in their access and achievement of the curriculum, as well as their social standing in the United States (Crawford, 2004; Walquí, 2000). Therefore, effective, strong leadership is critical to English Learners’ success (Reyes, 2006; Shaw, 2003; Walquí, 2000). Social justice leaders for English Learner students question issues of equity (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005), promote social justice in their schools (Shields, 2004), and support practices that are inclusive in order to meet the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Riehl, 2000).

In order to lead through social justice, leaders must understand content, language, and topics that are not part of the traditional topics discussed in leadership preparation programs (Marshall, 2004a). Therefore, “leaders need to know about special education, English Learners, curriculum, differentiation, using data to drive instruction, presentational skills, race, poverty, working with diverse families, and global perspectives” (Theoharis, 2007, p. 250). In their study, McGee, Haworth, and MacIntyre (2015) found four successful leadership practices for ESL. These include “(1) establishing ESL goals and direction, (2) enabling leaders to be role models with credibility through knowledge of ESL, (3) providing ESL professional learning for teachers and leaders, and (4) empowering ESL teaching and learning” (p.101-104). Further, McGee (2008) emphasizes the need to “promote a culture of learning” (p. 56). A lack of shared responsibility among leaders, teachers, and other educators results in marginalization of ELs (McGee, Haworth, & MacIntyre, 2015).

Leaders for social justice follow an asset-based perspective and possess knowledge of research on second language acquisition (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). Social justice leaders for English Learners, view language as a right and work to provide these students with meaningful, equal access to educational opportunities (Crawford, 2004). On the contrary, leaders who view language as a deficit, view students as having a problem that needs to be fixed (Crawford, 2004). For English Learners to thrive and be successful, the staff and the teachers must be invested as well (Theoharis & O’Toole, 2011). Most successful ESL programs are a result of schoolwide efforts to support the students (Suttmiller & González, 2006).

Elfers and Stritikus (2014) examined ways district and building level leaders developed systems of support for general education teachers working with English Learners. Specifically, they examined building and district level leadership actions in four districts serving different concentrations of English learners (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). Five different themes emerged from this study (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). These themes were “(1) resolving the fragmentation by focusing on high-quality instruction, (2) creating a productive blend of district- and school-level leadership initiatives, (3) communicating a compelling rationale, (4) differentiating support systems at elementary and secondary levels, and (5) using data for instructional purposes” (p. 306). Table 1 below expands on each of the themes to provide specific actionable items for school and district-level leadership to support classroom teachers’ work with English learners.

**Table 1**

***School and District Leadership Actions That Support Classroom Teachers' Work with EL Students.***

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Focus on high-quality instruction

- Leaders directly engage in teaching and learning initiatives
- Professional development targets classroom teachers
- Instructional decisions take into account the teachers of EL students
- Leaders align, integrate, and coordinate supports for teachers

Blend district- and school-level initiatives

- Focus on district workforce development practices
- Create opportunities for staff to work collaboratively
- Leverage local expertise in schools and communities to serve EL students
- Engage in strong two-way communication between school and district leaders

Communicate a compelling rationale

- Making instruction of EL students a priority
- Encourage staff responsibility to serve EL students
- Focus on instructional practices to serve diverse learners

Differentiate support systems at elementary and secondary levels

- Prioritize supports for those serving the largest number of EL students
- Value students' language and culture in instruction
- Model ways that instructional leaders can serve EL students

Use data for instructional improvement

- Support data-based discussions of individual student progress
- Use data to identify areas of improvement, shape professional development, and support a culture of learning

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Note. Adapted from "How School and District Leaders Support Classroom Teachers' Work with English Learners" by A. M. Elfers and T. Stritikus, 2014, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(2), p. 319.

Effective school leadership is vital for student success, particularly for English Learners.

Social justice leaders for ELs exhibit the following:

- embrace culturally and linguistically diverse students and their diverse experiences,
- have an asset-based perspective,
- create an environment and culture in which all staff members are responsible for their success,

- provide targeted, ongoing professional development to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge on how to meet the needs of these students, and
- possess knowledge on second language acquisition and research-based instructional practices.

The following section will discuss the importance and need for capacity building for administrators and teachers of English Learners.

### **Capacity Building for Administrators and Teachers of ELs**

Given that English learners are the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools (Sheng et al., 2011), professional development targeting their needs is critical (Shin, 2012). However, research has shown that few teachers have received training on how to effectively meet the diverse linguistic and academic needs of English Learners (Gándara et al., 2003; Samson & Collins, 2012). The Latino Educational Opportunity Report (2007) found that as the concentration of English Learners increases, the number of qualified teachers to serve them decreases. Russell (2018) asserted that many communities and schools in the U.S. are overwhelmed by the growing diverse population around them, and teachers reported not knowing what to do with their growing ethnically and linguistically classroom. It is the lack of teaching capacity along with various school conditions that create equity issues for leaders in their work with English Learners (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014).

Several studies reviewed illustrated a need for professional development that will enhance teachers' skills to work with ethnically, linguistically, racially, sexually, and economically diverse students (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). Research has shown that teacher quality is critical to the students' academic achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hattie, 2003) and professional learning and coursework can result in increased student achievement (Bos, Sanchez, Tseng, Rayyes, Ortiz, & Sinicrope, 2012; Hattie, 2003). Therefore, Grant and Wong (2003) and de Jong and Harper (2005) contended that effective teaching strategies used for English-speaking students are not enough to address the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of English Learners. According to Gándara and Orfield (2010), exposure to academic models of English in a natural setting, grade-level instruction in core subjects, and high-quality instruction that promotes academic English are key elements to educating English Learners. Harper et al. (2008) recommended that professional development or

ESL coursework be offered to all teachers in order to meet the needs of English Learners. Studies by Abbate-Vaughn (2008), Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy (2008), de Jong and Harper (2008), Colombo, McMakin, Jacobs, and Shestock (2013), Samson and Collins (2012), and Staehr Fenner and Kuhlman (2012) made similar recommendations to those by Harper et al. (2008). In their study, Samson and Collins (2012), emphasized that all teachers should be equipped to address the needs of English Learners. While research supports the overall importance of teacher quality, a focus on EL-specific training for in-service and pre-service has not been a priority at the national level (Ballantyne et al., 2008; Samson & Collins, 2012). In fact, according to Staehr Fenner (2014), only 20 states mandate that teachers working with English Learners receive training, and the quality of the training varies across contexts (Ballantyne et al., 2008). As Samson and Collins (2012) contended, while it is necessary for pre-service and in-service teachers to be equipped to teach the increasing population of English Learners, the majority of the teachers have not received training on how to effectively meet the needs of English Learners either through teacher preparation programs or in-service professional development.

Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) asserted in-service teachers have historically reported not feeling underprepared to meet the academic needs of English Learners. Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004) reported that while non-ESL teachers felt confident in their abilities to teach, many reported not feeling underprepared to teach English Learners. Furthermore, Reeves (2006) found that 81.7% of the teachers (n=279) disagreed with the statement “I have adequate training to work with ESL students” (p. 134). Reeves also found that 45% of the teachers were not interested in receiving ESL training while 53% of the teachers in her study reported being interested (Reeves, 2006).

Stecher and Bohrnstedt (2000) found that the levels of professional development offered to teachers with large numbers of English Learners in their classroom is limited. In their study, Gándara and Rumburger (2003) found that in 1999-2000, about 7% of the teachers’ professional development time was focused on instruction for English Learners. Teachers who had more than 50% of English Learners in their classroom received about 10% of professional development focused on instruction for English Learners (Gándara & Rumburger, 2003). In 2011, The National School and Staffing Survey found that only 24% of K-12 teachers reported receiving ESL professional development (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, 2013). The findings of this survey

were consistent with the findings of the National Education Association in 2011 that reported that fewer than 30% of teachers had received more than 1-day training of in-service professional development related to EL instruction.

Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) sought to examine the perceived levels of preparedness for in-service teachers working with English Learners. They surveyed 884 K-12 in-service teachers in a Midwestern state. There was a 14.25% response rate (126 responses) for the survey. In their study, Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018), found that approximately 59% of the teachers reported not having received any ESL training and those who had (43%), had only received between 1 to 8 contact hours (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). Furthermore, of the 52 participants who had participated in ESL-specific professional development, 69% reported that the training had some effect on their teaching while 21% of the participants reported it affected their instruction a great deal.

Based on this data, Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) concluded that professional development on instruction for English Learners, even in small quantities, could positively impact teaching. These findings are consistent with those in other research studies (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2001; Samson & Collins, 2012).

Teachers need training in differentiated instruction, ready to use strategies, understanding state placement and assessment, equitable grading practices, and on how to differentiate between second language acquisition and a disability (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). Staehr Fenner (2014) asserted that in effort to avoid potential misclassification of English Learners for special education, professional development on the identification of English Learners for special education could benefit teachers in differentiating between learning and language concerns. To accomplish this task, school leaders are key to supporting in-service teacher ESL professional development (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2011). School administrators advocate for English Learners when they ensure teachers and staff receive EL professional development (Staehr Fenner, 2014). Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2016), suggested that school leaders could ensure ongoing, sustained professional development by adding (1) EL professional development to the building or district calendar; (2) implementing and monitoring support structures that allow ESL and non-ESL teachers to create lesson plans and collaborate; and (3) analyze language and content data. School leaders who advocate for and offer ESL professional development commit



to ensuring English Learners are supported and taught by teachers who are skilled to meet their diverse academic, linguistic, and cultural needs (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2016).

Social justice principals advocate for professional development toward socially just teaching and student learning (Kose, 2009). Kose (2009) found that socially just principals (a) affirm, model, and possess high expectations for all students, specifically those traditionally marginalized; (b) align professional development to school goals; (c) create structures and align resources to support professional development; (d) foster a culture of shared norms, values and dispositions; and (e) intentionally recruit personnel with diverse backgrounds. In their work as socially justice leaders, principals develop and communicate a transformative vision, create formal learning teams, structure inclusive service-delivery models, foster collaboration and collective responsibility for all students, and build school-wide support for change decisions (Kose, 2009, p. 639). Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2011) asserted, “the principal of the school will set the culture for continuous professional learning, create a timetable or speed of change, and create expectations for teachers” (p. 9). Beyond creating structures and supports, Fratt (2007) asserted, administrators need to participate in training, so that they could understand the issues and nurture systemic change.

According to Theoharis and O’Toole (2011), principals for social justice respond to new challenges and demands of instructional and non-instructional staff by offering ongoing, targeted professional development (Calderón & Carreon, 2000; Reyes, 2006; Stritikus, 2006; Walquí, 2000). Professional development enhances instructional staff’s quality of instruction for English Learners that lead to students’ academic achievement (Stritikus, 2006). To support these ongoing efforts, principals for English Learners make time to engage in efforts to support English Learners (Walquí, 2000).

### **Curriculum and Home-School Connections**

Social justice leaders for English Learners understand the critical role curriculum plays in English Learners’ success (August & Hakuta, 1998). Therefore, leaders for English Learners ensure that curriculum is aligned to English Learners’ linguistic and conceptual understandings and one in which high expectations for English Learners is evident (August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 2004). As Valdés (1998) pointed out, student learning and language acquisition is limited unless schools ensure students access grade-level content curriculum and participate in appropriate learning environments for language acquisition. Moreover, principals

need to understand the connection of home-school relations (August & Hakuta, 1998). As such, principals for English Learners bridge the language divide by hiring bilingual staff who can communicate with the students (August & Hakuta, 1998; Kose, 2009). Further, these leaders place a high value on family and community engagement and create innovative opportunities for families to be involved in school (McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996).

According to literature in the field, teachers report not feeling prepared or equipped to teach their ever-changing ethnically diverse student population as few teachers receive professional development in this area. Research shows that professional development and teacher quality have a positive impact on student achievement. According to experts in the field, all teachers need to be equipped with strategies to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Administrators are key in supporting teachers receive the professional development they need and advocating for teachers. Administrators should not only advocate for the professional development teachers need, but they need to participate in professional development opportunities so that they can support teachers working directly with ELs. Administrators are also responsible for recruiting multicultural and multilingual personnel to support home-school relationships and partnerships. The following section will discuss the absent literature in school leadership programs.

## **The Missing Pieces in School Leadership Programs**

### ***Social Justice Leadership***

Today's principal preparation programs are preparing principals to be managers of what is in a school, rather than what a school could be (Dantley, 2002, Marshall, 2004a; & Rapp, 2002). Research has found that most leadership preparation programs do not focus on engaging aspiring leaders in equity and social-justice work (Brown, 2004a; Lyman & Villani, 2002; Marshall, 2004a; Rapp, 2002; Rusch, 2004). Theoharis (2007) found that principals (n=7) reported that their principal preparation program did not provide them the skills to lead for social justice.

Agosto and Karanxha (2012) examined 34 statements of interest of aspiring leaders applying to a leadership preparation program. They found that relatively few (n=7) principal candidates enter their leadership program with a social-justice oriented mindset (Agosto & Karanxha, 2012). Moreover, Hernandez and Marshall (2017) found that a small number of leadership candidates (n=10) were willing to place themselves in new cultural contexts, be

uncomfortable and have discussions about White privilege, despite, however, most of them expressing an interest in discussing and reflecting on topics related to diversity, equity, and social justice. In a study conducted by Cooper (2009), data showed that principals and other members of the community grapple with accepting and responding to cultural and social change in an equitable manner. Furthermore, according to Cooper (2009), data indicated principals do not fully understand how social tensions and cultural biases can undermine the effectiveness of a culturally diverse learning community. To address this issue, according to Rivera-McCutchen (2014), leadership preparation programs should assist students in identifying their own biases and assumptions and highlight structural inequities in effort to develop social justice leaders.

Furthermore, Theoharis (2007) stated, “for principals to be able to navigate the rough waters, leadership preparation programs should address issues of social justice and equity” (p. 20). Additional research affirmed the gap of equity-oriented and social justice leadership preparation in programs for aspiring administrators (Brown, 2004; Dantely, 2002; Lyman & Villabi, 2002; Marshall, 2004a; Rapp, 2002). In response to this lack of preparation, a growing body of literature is emerging on how to equip leaders for social justice (Brown, 2004; Marshall, 2004b; Shoho, 2006; Tillman, Brown, Campbell-Jones, & Gonzalez, 2006). To that end, McKenzie et al. (2008) developed foundational components needed for a comprehensive school leadership program focused on social justice. McKenzie et al. (2008) contended that leaders for social justice must focus on three goals: (1) raise student achievement for all students (in form of high stakes testing), (2) prepare students to live as critical citizens in society, and (3) assign students to inclusive, heterogeneous classrooms that provide all students access to rich and engaging curriculum (p. 111). In making these goals a reality, school leadership programs need to address three key components: candidate selection, candidate knowledge, and content for educating social justice leaders (McKenzie et al., 2008). McKenzie et al. (2008) recommended that school leadership programs select candidates who could, at a minimum, question inequities present in today’s schools. Furthermore, Rivera-McCutchen’s (2014) study suggested that school leaders who possess a predisposition for fighting injustice and addressing equity issues may be better prepared to advance social justice.

In addition to having a social justice orientation, Cambron-McCabe and McCarthy (2005) contended that leadership programs should select candidates who were strong teachers themselves. Furthermore, McKenzie et al. (2008) suggested that students should be able to

demonstrate a deep understanding of teaching and learning and how to help others become better teachers. McKenzie et al. (2008) suggested embedding aspects of social justice in all program coursework with a focus on (a) inclusive practices, (b) creating systems of supports for teachers, (c) reallocation of resources, and (d) a comprehensive professional development system to build teacher capacity in teaching diverse student populations (pp. 126-128). In kind, as Rivera-McCutchen (2014) argued, leadership programs cannot limit teaching about social justice to one or two courses; rather, it should be embedded in the “fabric of the coursework and curricular content so future leaders understand that all aspects of their work should be approached with a social justice lens” (p. 760).

### ***Leadership for English Learners***

Given that English Learners are the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools today, there is a growing sense of urgency for school leaders to address their needs (Darling-Hammond, 2010; García, Jensen, & Scribner, 2009). Nationally, school leaders are concerned about how to support specialized instruction for ELLs’ language development and learning (Uro & Barrio, 2013). Research consistently showed that leadership education programs underprepare students to meet the specific needs of English Learner students (Buysse, Castro, West, & Skinner, 2005; Gándara et al., 2005; McCarthy & Forsyth, 2009; Mohr & Mohr, 2009). As a result, school leaders often do not possess deep knowledge or background in language acquisition and English Learners (Frattura & Capper 2007; Theoharis, 2004). Suttmilller and González (2006) stressed that principals and other leaders must understand the needs of English Learners in order to support these students. Specifically, Suttmilller and González (2006) asserted “few school districts have the leadership or instructional capacity to understand the needs of ELs” (p. 168). Due to the of lack of expertise in supporting ELLs, principals are not being able to provide quality instructional supervision for ELL instruction (Baecher, Knoll, & Patti, 2016). As such, Gándara et al. (2005) noted the importance for building-level and division leadership to develop a deeper understanding about challenges and solutions of working with English Learner students. Therefore, principals should possess an understanding of effective language programing, determine professional development opportunities for teachers working with ELs (Padron & Waxman, 2016), and make informed decisions on how to best serve ELs in their school (Menken & Solorza, 2013).

Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2013) conducted a study to examine to which degree school leaders were prepared to work with English Learners. They focused on English Learners “within an eight-course, 32-credit post-masters advanced certificate program in administration and supervision” (Baecher et al., 2013, p. 6). The researchers examined course syllabi, qualitative, and quantitative survey responses (Baecher et al., 2013). In their analysis, Baecher et al. (2013) found there was overall minimal attention to English Learners in the course curriculum, although some candidates reported that English learners had been discussed briefly in course activities. Furthermore, candidates reported not knowing how to effectively communicate with English Learner families, provide reading support, address discrimination against immigrants, and provide instruction for long-term ELs and ELs with limited or interrupted formal education (Baecher et al., 2013).

Leadership preparation programs responsible for preparing future school leaders need to focus on English Learners (Baecher et al., 2013). Reyes (2006) suggested that in order for graduates to embrace the responsibility for English Learner achievement, leadership preparation programs must foster an orientation to leadership for English Learners. Baecher et al. (2013) found similar to those of Shields (2004) and Theoharis and O’Toole (2011) suggested that principal preparation programs need to focus on selecting candidates that possess an awareness related to decisions about ESL programming. Further, Baecher et al. (2013) argued that

for a supervisor to offer meaningful and constructive feedback to teachers of ELs, they must possess some basic familiarity with language development methodologies and be able to support and identify content sheltering and differentiation techniques to promote their implementation in a building (p. 17).

To ensure aspiring leaders are prepared to work with English Learners, programs need to determine what aspects of the English Learner curriculum should be embedded into principal preparation programs (Baecher et al., 2013). To this end, Jean-Marie et al. (2009) contended that several factors are needed to effectively prepare future school leaders for the work they face in today’s increasingly diverse schools. First, preparation programs could give a needs assessment to determine candidates’ preparation in working with English Learners (Baecher et al., 2013). Second, faculty could conduct focus groups or seek feedback from local administrators with experience and expertise in English Learners to support them determine if the candidates are prepared to work with English Learners (Baecher et al., 2013). Third, faculty could collaborate

with colleagues from other programs to share expertise through coursework (Baecher et al., 2013). By supporting aspiring leaders, candidates would develop an understanding of what effective instruction and supports look like for English Learners (Baecher et al., 2013). In essence, “school leadership candidates can benefit from preparation programs that address the needs of ELLs and may then be better able to apply their knowledge in ways that advantage this student population” (Baecher et al., 2016, p. 213).

According to the research, most school leadership preparation programs do not focus on equity, social justice, and English Learner supervision. Experts suggest that leaders who have a predisposition for fighting injustice and addressing equity issues will likely advance social justice in their schools. Other experts suggest that social justice leadership should be embedded in all courses in a school leadership program. Data and research show that leaders often do not possess deep knowledge in language acquisition, English Learner programs, and could not provide quality instructional supervision for staff working with English Learners. In general, research suggests that aspiring leaders need to be comfortable confronting their own biases, assumptions, having conversations about White privilege, race, and poverty in order to support the ever-changing classroom demographics. The following section will discuss the gaps in literature.

### **Gaps in Literature**

Research shows that studies related to the leadership of ESL is limited (McGee et al., 2015) regardless of the growing need for effective teaching and learning for English Learners (Christison & Murray, 2008; Johnson & Burton, 2000). Scanlan and López (2012) concurred that literature on the role of leaders and its impact on learning of English Learners is relatively absent despite a number of studies across different countries has found a strong relationship between students’ success and leadership (Christison & Lindahl, 2009; Wong & Evers, 2001). Suttmiller and González (2006) stated that schools could no longer ignore the increasing number of English Learners in mainstream classrooms and the necessary support and leadership teachers need in order to directly work with diverse students. In essence, “principals have received very limited EL instruction during their teacher certification programs, and the training gap continues in their principal credentialing programs” (Louie, Pughe, Camey Kuo, & Björling, 2019, p. 685).

## **Summary**

The literature review provided an analysis of research in six major sections: (1) instructional leadership, (2) social justice leadership, (3) leading English Learners and immigrant students in U.S. schools, (4) social justice leadership for English Learners, (5) building capacity for administrators and teachers of ELs, and (6) the missing pieces in School Leadership Programs. The first section discussed the role of the school principal as an instructional leader. The second section discussed the principal leading through social justice. This section focused on the definition of social justice leadership, traits or characteristics for social justice leadership, and described barriers to this work and strategies to continue the work of social justice leadership. The third section presented statistical data regarding today's changing schools, specifically the growing number of English Learners and immigrant students in K-12 public schools. This section also covered landmark court cases that protect English Learners, conditions leading to inequities, the interconnectedness of social justice leadership and English Learners. The fourth section discussed missing pieces of school leadership programs, specifically social justice leadership and leadership for English Learners. The fifth section discussed the importance and growing need to build capacity for administrators and teachers of English Learners. The sixth section focused on the missing pieces in school leadership programs.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study's foci aligned with tenets of social justice leadership. The social justice guiding tenets in this study were access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The study methodology included the following: (a) purpose of the study, (b) research design and methodology, (c) research design and justification, (d) research questions, (e) site and sample selection, (f) data collection and gathering procedures, (g) instrument design, (h) instrument validation, (i) data treatment and management, (j) data analysis techniques, (k) timeline, and (l) methodology summary.

#### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. This study had two intended outcomes. The first intended outcome of this study was to determine principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting, specifically in the areas of access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The second intended outcome was to determine if a difference exists between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools.

#### **Research Design and Methodology**

The study was a quantitative study that used a survey questionnaire. The survey included a compilation of 25 Likert-scale questions in three areas: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. Some of the survey questions were extracted and modified from the Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) study. The purpose of the Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) study was to determine the perceived levels of preparedness of in-service teachers working with English Learners. This study sought to determine the perceived levels of preparedness of principals and assistant principals to support instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting. Written permission was obtained to adapt and modify survey questions from Hiatt and Fairbairn on March 22, 2020 and received approval on March 23, 2020. The written approval is in Appendix A.



The original survey from Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) included 36 items that were driven by research. The survey was divided into three parts. Part 1 collected background information about the participants. Part 2 collected in-service teachers' perceived levels of preparation in the language, culture, instruction, and assessment domains and corresponding standards using the *TESOL P-12 Professional Teaching Standards*. Part 3 focused on in-service teachers' perceived levels of knowledge and frequency of practice in the area of professionalism and open-ended feedback about the challenges and priorities for English language learner professional development (p. 235). The survey from Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) was validated in a pilot study conducted with elementary and middle school teachers who were not participating in the study. The feedback from the pilot study allowed the researchers to modify and delete questions to ensure coherence, flow, brevity and overall relevance to research questions (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018). Further, the researchers ensured content-related evidence of validity using qualitative and quantitative methods, specifically factor analysis (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018).

The researcher used the same scale of 1 to 5 to describe the levels of preparedness as the Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) study; the researcher adapted and modified questions 1, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 16 of part of 2 of the original survey.

### **Research Design and Justification**

The research design for this study was a nonexperimental, comparative quantitative design. Quantitative research uses numerical calculators to summarize, describe, and explore relationships among traits (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), a nonexperimental study is “one in which there is no control over what may influence the subjects' responses” (p. 4). Nonexperimental studies are designed to describe phenomena and uncover relationships (McMillian & Wergin, 2010). The purpose of comparative research was to “provide an accurate description of how two or more groups differ on some phenomenon” (McMillan & Wergin, 2010, p. 15). In this study, principals and assistant principals were the two groups being compared.

### **Research Questions**

The following two questions guided this study.

1. What are principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?

2. What differences, if any, exist between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?

The research and null hypotheses for research question two are as follows:

- There is significant difference in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools.
- There is no significant difference in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools.

### **Site and Sample Selection**

The study design used a non-random, convenience sampling strategy. Participants for this study were chosen from all schools within the selected two school divisions in Virginia. Each participant currently serves as principal or assistant principal in the selected school divisions. Participants selected for this study had diverse experiences working with English Learners, both as a teacher and administrator. To ensure an adequate sample size, no principal or assistant was excluded from the study.

School division A selected for this study was a K-12 suburban school division in northern Virginia. The school system is located north of Fredericksburg, Virginia and close to Washington D.C. According to the 2019 Census Quick Facts, school division A had nearly 153,000 residents. The total student population of the school district was about 30,000 students. Student demographics for school division A were as follows: 20% Black, 46.2% White, 21.3% Hispanic, 3.5% Asian, 8.3% Two or More Races, and 0.3% American Indian. District-wide, approximately 31.1% of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch and 10.3% of the students were identified as English Learners.

School division B selected for this study was a K-12 urban school district in Central Virginia. According to the 2019 Census Quick Facts, school division B had approximately 29,000 residents. The total K-12 student population for the school division B was about 3,500 students. Student demographics for school division B were as follows: 33.3% Black, 27.0% White, 23.4% Hispanic, 7.9% Multiple Races, 7.8% Asian, 0.3% American Indian, and 0.2

Native Hawaiian. District-wide, 81.5% of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch and 20.5% of the students were identified as English Learners.

### **Data Collection and Gathering Procedures**

The Likert-scale survey questionnaire was utilized to collect data for this study. The researcher completed the required modules aligned to Social and Behavioral Research on July 16, 2019. A *Certificate of Completion* is included in Appendix B. The *IRB Application* was submitted during the 2020 summer semester. The *IRB Application Approval Letter* from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University is found in Appendix C. The study began shortly after the IRB Application and the approval from the superintendents of the selected school divisions were obtained. The *Cover Letter to the District Superintendent* is included in Appendix D. The *District B Consent Form* signed by the division superintendent is included in Appendix E. A *Participant Recruitment Email* (see Appendix F) with the *Implied Consent Agreement* (see Appendix G) was sent electronically via email to all participants in this study explaining the researcher's interest in the topic and directions on how to complete the survey and the timeline for completion. A follow-up email was sent to all of the participants one week after the initial email (see Appendix H).

### **Instrument Design**

The study was a quantitative study that used a survey questionnaire. The survey was divided into two parts. Part 1 identified participants' background information. Part 2 included a compilation of 25 Likert-type questions to measure principals' and assistant principals' self-reported perceived levels of preparedness to support instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting in three areas. The areas included access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The Likert-type questions used a scale of 1 to 5 to capture the self-reported preparedness levels of principals and assistant principals to support instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting, specifically in the areas of access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The scale 1 to 5 was as follows: *1- very poorly prepared, 2- poorly prepared, 3- somewhat prepared, 4- prepared, and 5- extremely well prepared*. Participants read each of the declarative statements and selected one answer per statement. Participants selected the response that closest aligns with their perceived levels of

preparedness for each of the statements. The participants did not have the capability to select more than one answer per statement.

Table 2 below outlines the two questions that were asked of participants to collect background information. This information allowed the researcher to conduct comparative analyses between groups. Question 1 asked for participants to select their current role. Question 2 asked the participants to select from the options provided the percentage of English Learners in their school. The question provided a range of percentages of ELs, from 0-50% or more.

**Table 2**  
*Survey Participant Demographic Information*

Demographic Information	
Current Role	
Principal	
Assistant Principal	
Percentage of English Learners in Your School	
0-5%	
6-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
50% +	

Table 3 below illustrates the survey participant demographic information and its alignment to the research questions.

**Table 3**  
*Survey Participant Demographic Information Relevant to Research Questions*

Demographic Information	Research Question
Current Role	1 & 2
Principal	
Assistant Principal	
Percentage of English Learners in Your School	2
0-5%	
6-10%	
11-20%	
21-30%	
31-40%	
50% +	

Table 4 below lists the 25 Likert-scale questions aligned to three tenets of social justice leadership. The three tenets are these: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. The Likert-scale questions below will use the following scale: *1- very poorly prepared, 2- poorly prepared, 3- somewhat prepared, 4- prepared, and 5- extremely well prepared*. Questions 1-8 were embedded under the access and inclusion tenet. Questions 9-19 were related to the instruction tenet. Questions 20-25 related to the professional development tenet.

**Table 4**

***Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness: Access & Inclusion, Instruction, and Professional Development***

	1	2	3	4	5
Access and Inclusion	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
1. Understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					
2. Ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.					
3. Understanding of systemic structures such as: segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.					
4. Ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.					
5. Ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)					

(continued)

**Table 4 (cont.)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Access and Inclusion	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
6. Ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.					
7. Ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.					
8. Ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.					
Instruction	1 Very Poorly Prepared	2 Poorly Prepared	3 Somewhat Prepared	4 Prepared	5 Extremely Well Prepared
9. Ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.					
10. Understanding of how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.					
11. Ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5-proficient).					

(continued)

**Table 4 (cont.)**

Instruction	1 Very Poorly Prepared	2 Poorly Prepared	3 Somewhat Prepared	4 Prepared	5 Extremely Well Prepared
12. Understanding on how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/content across the curriculum.					
13. Understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.					
14. Understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
15. Ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.					
16. Ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.					
17. Possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.					
18. Ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.					
19. Ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.					

(continued)

**Table 4 (cont.)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Development	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
20. Ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.					
21. Ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.					
22. Ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.					
23. Ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.					
24. Ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
25. Ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					

Table 5 below explains which Likert-scale question corresponds to which research question in the study.

**Table 5*****Survey Questions Relevant to Research Questions***

Access and Inclusion	Research Question
1. Understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	1 & 2
2. Ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.	1 & 2

(continued)



**Table 5 (cont.)**

Access and Inclusion	Research Question
3. Understanding of systemic structures such as: segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.	1 & 2
4. Ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.	1 & 2
5. Ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)	1 & 2
6. Ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.	1 & 2
7. Ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.	1 & 2
8. Ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.	1 & 2
Instruction	Research Question
9. Ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.	1 & 2
10. Understanding of how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.	1 & 2
11. Ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5- proficient)	1 & 2
12. Understanding on how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/content across the curriculum.	1 & 2
13. Understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.	1 & 2

(continued)

**Table 5 (cont.)**

Instruction	Research Question
14. Understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	1 & 2
15. Ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.	1 & 2
16. Ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.	1 & 2
17. Possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.	1 & 2
18. Ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.	1 & 2
19. Ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.	1 & 2
Professional Development	Research Question
20. Ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.	1 & 2
21. Ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.	1 & 2
22. Ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.	1 & 2
23. Ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.	1 & 2
24. Ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	1 & 2
25. Ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	1 & 2

### **Instrument Validation**

A survey validation instrument was used to measure construct validity of the researcher-developed survey questions for this study. The survey validation instrument included all possible survey questions. The instrument validation process was conducted with a cohort of doctoral

students who hold administrative roles at the school or division-level and with a group of five division-level English Learner program supervisors across Virginia. The doctoral students and EL division leaders did not participate in this study.

The purpose of the instrument validation process was to gather feedback from school-based and district-level leaders and division-level EL program supervisors regarding whether the research questions were aligned with the purpose of the study, whether the questions asked in the survey answered all of the research questions, whether the null and alternate hypotheses aligned with the research questions, and to provide additional feedback on formatting, organization, and wording. The panel of doctoral students and English Learner program supervisors had one week to review and provide feedback to the researcher via email. The feedback from the instrument validation process was utilized to modify questions to ensure relevance and alignment to the research questions. The purpose of the instrument validation process was to make modifications and changes that will improve the survey.

### **Data Treatment and Management**

The data collected through this study were kept confidential and under strict security to maintain the integrity of the study, as well as the anonymity of the participants. Only the researcher and committee chair had access to the Virginia Tech Qualtrics platform. All data were analyzed electronically. All paper files and data sheets were secured and locked up in a file cabinet in the researcher's home office. Only the researcher held a key to the file cabinet. All related documents, data, and forms will be maintained under strict security until able to discard appropriately and safely upon completion of the dissertation.

All study participants were informed of their implied consent when completing in the survey. The *Implied Consent Agreement* (see Appendix G) was included in an email received by each identified participant. Once a participant clicked on the link to the survey, consent to participate in the survey was implied upon the electronic submission of responses. Once participants completed the survey and pressed the submit button, their responses automatically populate to the Virginia Tech Qualtrics platform. Furthermore, all participants were notified of their rights and the option to participate or decline at any time during the study.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

The survey was distributed to participants electronically through email. Participant responses were returned electronically through the Virginia Tech Qualtrics platform. Qualtrics provided the researcher with data as the survey responses automatically populated into the database. All data collected through the Qualtrics platform were analyzed to answer each of the research questions of the study. The use of descriptive statistics, including mean, frequencies, and standard deviations for each group of subjects was utilized in response to Research Question One. Furthermore, in response to Research Question Two, comparative analysis with the use of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to determine statistical significance since more than two levels in the independent variable exist (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). The independent variable was the percentage of ELs in their school. The dependent variable was the principals' and assistant principals' self-perceived levels of preparedness in each of the three categories: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development.

## **Timeline**

The initial draft survey for this study was developed in the Spring 2020 semester. The draft survey had the validation process completed during the summer of 2020. Once the survey validation process was completed, the survey was submitted to the dissertation chair for review and additional feedback. Finally, the researcher submitted the survey to the Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board during the summer of 2020. The survey was distributed in the Fall 2020 semester. The survey response collection closed in two weeks from the initial survey distribution. A reminder to all participants was sent a week after the initial survey email to encourage their participation and inform them of the survey closing date approaching. The survey responses were analyzed during the remainder of the Fall 2020 semester.

## **Methodology Summary**

The methodology for this quantitative study was non-experimental. The purpose of the study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. The survey was divided into two parts: (1) participant background information and (2) Likert-type questions in three areas: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. There were two intended outcomes for this study. These included the following: (1) determine principals' and

assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting, specifically in the areas of access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development and (2) determine whether a difference exists in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. The study participants were principals and assistant principals in two selected school divisions in Virginia. The researcher used quantitative analyses techniques to analyze the data, to include descriptive statistics, and comparative analysis using ANOVA.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS OF STUDY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. The study had two intended outcomes that align with the two research questions. The first outcome was to determine principals' and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners. The second intended outcome was to determine whether a difference existed in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their school. There were two research questions that guided this study. The research questions were as follows:

1. What are principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?
2. What differences, if any, exist between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?

The survey was divided into two parts. Part 1 identified participants' background information, including current role and percentage of English Learners in their school. Part 2 included a compilation of 25 Likert-type statements to measure principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting in three areas. The Likert-type questions used a scale of 1 to 5 to capture the self-reported preparedness level of principals and assistant principals to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting, specifically in the areas of access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development for supporting instructional staff working with English Learners. The scale 1 to 5 was as follows: *1- very poorly prepared, 2- poorly prepared, 3- somewhat prepared, 4- prepared, and 5- extremely well prepared*. Study participants read each of the declarative statements and selected one answer per statement. Participants selected the response that closest aligned with their perceived level of preparedness for each of the statements. The participants did not have the capability to select more than one

answer per statement. However, it is critical to note that there were participants who did not respond to all of the statements.

Participant responses were collected and returned to the researcher electronically through the Virginia Tech Qualtrics platform. Qualtrics provided the researcher with data as the survey responses automatically populated into the database. All data collected through the Qualtrics platform were analyzed to answer each of the research questions of the study. The researcher used descriptive statistics, including  $n$  count, frequencies, mean, and standard deviations scores. The researcher used comparative analysis with the use of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether there was a statistical difference in principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff based on the percentage of ELs in their school. A Cronbach Alpha reliability test was conducted. The survey had a Cronbach Alpha of .967. Based on this value, the researcher concluded that the survey results were very reliable, as the closer the Cronbach Alpha is to 1.0 the more reliable the data.

### **Description of Participant Data**

This study was conducted with two selected school divisions in Virginia. School division A has a total of four schools. There are two elementary schools, one middle, and one high school. School division B has a total of 30 schools. There are 17 elementary schools, eight middle schools, and five high schools. There was a total of 12 participants for school division A. Of the 12 participants, four were principals and eight were assistant principals. For school division B there were a total of 86 participants. Of the 86 participants, 30 were principals and 56 were assistant principals. The total sample size for this study was 98 participants.

### **Data Reporting**

The researcher used non-random sampling in the study. Principals and assistant principals were the population of interest in the study. The study included principals and assistant principals from two school divisions in Virginia. Consent was implied if the participants completed the survey. The total sample ( $n$ ) size that was identified for the study was 98 participants. Of the 98 participants, 34 were principals and 64 were assistant principals.

The researcher obtained district A consent prior to conducting the study (see Appendix I). The survey was distributed to participants electronically via email on Monday, October 5, 2020. A reminder email was sent to participants on Monday, October 12, 2020. The researcher paused

the collection of responses on Monday, October 19, 2020. At the conclusion of the survey window, there was a response rate of 41.8% (41 of 98). Of the 41 surveys completed, 12 were completed by principals and 29 were completed by assistant principals. The distribution of responses was 29.3% for principals and 70.7% for assistant principals. Of the 41 responses, only 36 were used as there were six surveys submitted that were incomplete. The 6 surveys that were omitted included only responses to the two demographic questions which asked about their current role and the percentage of ELs in their school.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Demographic Data***

In order to answer the two research questions that guided this study, participants were asked two demographic questions. The first demographic question was to identify their current role. The two options were principal and assistant principal. The second demographic question was to identify the percentage of English Learners in their school. The options ranged from 0% to 50% +. Table 6 illustrates the breakdown of participants in two groups: principals and assistant principals.

**Table 6**

### ***Survey Participant's Current Role***

<b>Current Role</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Principal	12	29.3%
Assistant Principal	29	70.7%
Total:	41	100%

Table 6 shows that 41 participants in the study. Twelve of the participants were principals, and 29 were assistant principals. In order to answer the second research question, participants had to select the percentage of ELs in their school. Table 7 below shows the principals' breakdown of percentage of ELs in their school.



**Table 7*****Principals' Percentage of English Learners in their School***

<b>Percentage of ELs</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
0-5%	7	58.3%		
6-10%	0	0.0%		
11-20%	5	41.7%		
21-30%	0	0.0%		
31-40%	0	0.0%		
50%+	0	0.0%		
Total:	12	100%	1.83	0.99

Table 7 illustrates that 58.3% of the principals (7 of 12) who responded to the survey have between 0-5% of English Learners in their school while 41.7% of the principals (5 of 12) have between 11-20% of English Learners in their school. There were no principals who had between 6-10%, 21-30%, 31-40%, or greater than 50% of English Learners in their school.

In order to answer the second research question, participants had to select the percentage of ELs in their school. Table 8 below shows the assistant principals' breakdown of percentage of ELs in their school. Descriptive statistics, including *n* count, frequency (%), mean (M), and standard deviation (SD) of responses were used.

**Table 8*****Assistant Principals' Percentage of English Learners in their School***

<b>Percentage of ELs</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
0-5%	5	17.2%		
6-10%	9	31.0%		
11-20%	10	34.5%		
21-30%	3	10.3%		
31-40%	1	3.5%		
50%+	1	3.5%		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>1.19</b>

Table 8 shows that 34.5% of the assistant principals (10 of 29) have between 11-20% English Learners in their school while 31.0% of the assistant principals (9 of 29) have between 6-10% of English Learners in their school. Furthermore, 17.2% of the assistant principals (5 of 29) have between 0-5% while 10.3% of the assistant principals (3 of 29) have between 21-30%. Only one assistant principal had between 31-40% and 50%+. As illustrated in Table 3, the majority of the participants (82.7%) had between 0-20% English Learners in their school. Only 7% of the assistant principals had at least 31% or more of English Learners in their school.

**Principals' Data Analysis Aligned to Research Question 1**

The following section will show data tables aligned to Research Question 1. Research Question 1 asked “What are principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?” Table 8 below shows the principals’ self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. Table 9 breaks down each of the Likert-scale statements and their corresponding analysis in section one of the survey. Descriptive statistics, including *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation of responses were used. It is critical to note that the *n* count will vary by questions as there were instances in which participants did not answer a question.

**Table 9*****Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Working with ELs in the areas of Access and Inclusion***

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. Understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	9	100%	3.89	0.74
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		
2. Ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.	9	100%	3.67	1.05
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		
3. Understanding of systemic structures such as segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.	9	100%	3.89	0.74
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		

(continued)

**Table 9 (cont.)**

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
4. Ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.	9	100%	4.00	0.67
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		
5. Ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)	9	100%	3.89	0.99
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		
6. Ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.	8	100%	3.63	0.70
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	50.0%		
○ Prepared	3	37.5%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	12.5%		
7. Ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.	9	100%	3.22	0.92
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		

(continued)

**Table 9 (cont.)**

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
8. Ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.	9	100%	4.22	0.63
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		

The data in Table 9 correspond to the first section of the survey tool. There were eight statements in this section of the survey. These statements closely aligned to the areas of access and inclusion. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

Statement 1 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs. There were nine principals who responded to this statement. Of the nine, 44.4% of the principals (4 of 9) reported being prepared in this area while 33.3% of the principals (3 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared. Two of the nine principals (22.2%) reported being extremely well prepared in this area. No principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.74.

Statement 2 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to their ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Of the nine principals who responded, 44.4% of them (4 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while 33.3% of them (3 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared. One principal reported being prepared while another principal reported being poorly prepared in this area. No principals reported feeling very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.05.

Statement 3 asked principals to self-report their preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs as it relates to understanding of systemic structure, such as segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access to ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses. Nine principals answered this question. Of the nine,

44.4% (4 of 9) reported being prepared and another 22.2% (2 of 9) principals reported being extremely well prepared. Three of the nine principals (33.3%) reported being somewhat prepared in this area. There were no principals who reported feeling very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 0.74.

Statement 4 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to their ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 55.6% (5 of 9) reported being prepared and two principals (22.2%) reported being extremely well prepared. Another two principals reported being somewhat prepared to assist instructional staff with creating opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities. None of the principals who answered this statement reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.67.

Statement 5 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.). Nine principals responded to this statement. Six of the 9 principals (66.6%) reported being either prepared or extremely well prepared in this area while two principals (22.2%) reported being somewhat prepared. One of the nine principals (11.1%) reported being poorly prepared to support their instructional staff in coordinating wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support. This statement had a mean of 3.89 and standard deviation of 0.99.

Statement 6 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning. Eight of the nine principals that participated completed this statement. Of the eight, 50.0% of the principals (4 of 8) reported being somewhat prepared while 37.5% of the principals (3 of 8) reported being prepared. One principal reported being extremely well prepared in this area. None of the eight principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 0.70.

Statement 7 asked principals to self-report their levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically about their ability to recognize culturally and

linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 44.4% of principals (4 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while 22.2% of principals (2 of 9) reported being prepared. One principal reported being very well prepared in this area. In contrast, two principals (22.2%) reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 0.92.

Statement 8 asked principals to self-report their levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically about their ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families. Nine principals responded to this statement. Eight of the nine principals (88.9%) reported being prepared (5 of 9) or very well prepared (3 of 9) in this area while only one principal reported being somewhat prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.63.

Table 10 shows the principals’ responses to the second section of the survey tool. The statements included in Table 10 closely aligned with the area of instruction for English Learners. There were 11 statements in section two of the survey. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

**Table 10**

***Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Working with ELs in the area of Instruction***

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
9. Ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.	9	100%	3.78	1.03
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		

(continued)

**Table 10 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
10. Understanding of how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.	9	100%	3.78	0.63
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
11. Ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5- proficient).	9	100%	3.78	0.79
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		
12. Understanding how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/ content across the curriculum.	9	100%	3.56	0.83
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
13. Understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.	9	100%	3.67	0.82
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		

(continued)



**Table 10 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
14. Understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	9	100%	4.00	0.82
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		
15. Ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.	9	100%	3.56	0.68
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
16. Ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.	8	100%	3.63	1.11
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	25.0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	1	12.5%		
○ Prepared	3	37.5%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	25.0%		
17. Possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.	9	100%	3.67	1.15
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	33.3%		

(continued)

**Table 10 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
18. Ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.	9	100%	3.78	0.92
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		
19. Ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.	9	100%	4.11	0.57
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Prepared	6	66.7%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		

The data presented in Table 10 correspond to each of the 11 statements in section two of the survey tool. Statement 10 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically as it relates to their ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds. There were nine principals who responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 33.3% (3 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared and 22.2% (2 of 9) reported being prepared. 33.3% (3 of 9) of the principals reported being somewhat prepared in this area. There was one principal that reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.03.

Statement 10 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it pertains to their understanding of how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, the majority (66.7%) reported being prepared (5 of 9) or extremely well prepared (1 of 9). Three of the nine principals (33.3%) reported being somewhat prepared. No principals

reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.63.

Statement 11 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5- proficient). Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 44.4% (4 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while 55.5% (5 of 9) reported being prepared or extremely well prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.79.

Statement 12 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness in their understanding on how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/ content across the curriculum in order to assist instructional staff working with ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. More than half of the principals (55.5%) reported being prepared (4 of 9) or extremely well prepared (1 of 9) while 33.3% of principals (3 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared. One principal reported being poorly prepared in this area which focuses on understanding on how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/ content across the curriculum. This statement had a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

Statement 13 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 66.7% reported being prepared (5 of 9) or very well prepared (1 of 9). Two principals (22.2%) reported being somewhat prepared and only one principal reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

Statement 14 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically in their understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities. Nine principals responded to this statement. Three of the nine principals (33.3%) reported being somewhat prepared while another 33.3% (3 of 9) reported being prepared. The other 33.3% of the principals reported being very well prepared in this area in their efforts to assist instructional

staff working with English Learners. This statement had a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

Statement 15 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. Data show that 55.6% of the principals (5 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while 33.3% of principals (3 of 9) reported being prepared. One principal reported being extremely well prepared in this area. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.68.

Statement 16 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs. Eight principals responded to this statement. The data show that 25.0% of principals (2 of 8) reported being poorly prepared and 12.5% (1 of 8) reported being somewhat prepared. Three of the eight principals (37.5%) reported being prepared and 25.0% (2 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.63 and a standard deviation of 1.11.

Statement 17 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts. Nine principals responded to this statement. Two of the nine principals (22.2%) reported being poorly prepared while another 22.2% reported being somewhat prepared or prepared. Of the nine principals, three (33.3%) reported being extremely well prepared to assist instructional staff working with ELs to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts. This statement had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.15.

Statement 18 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels. Nine principals responded to this statement. The majority of the principals (66.6%) reported being prepared (4 of 9) or extremely well prepared (2 of 9). Two principals (22.2%) reported being somewhat prepared while one principal reported

being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.92.

Statement 19 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically related to their ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. The majority of the principals (88.8%) reported being prepared (6 of 9) or extremely well prepared (2 of 9). Of the nine principals, only one principal reported being somewhat prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.57.

Table 11 shows the principals’ responses to the third section of the survey tool. The statements included in Table 11 closely aligned with the area of professional development. There were six statements in section three of the survey. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation were included for each of the statements below.

**Table 11**

***Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Working with ELs in the area of Professional Development***

<b>Part III: Professional Development</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
20. Ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.	9	100%	3.33	0.94
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
21. Ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.	9	100%	3.33	0.82
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		

(continued)

**Table 11 (cont.)**

<b>Part III: Professional Development</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
22. Ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.	9	100%	3.67	0.67
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
23. Ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.	9	100%	3.44	0.83
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	4	44.4%		
○ Prepared	3	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		
24. Ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	9	100%	3.44	0.96
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	22.2%		
25. Ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	9	100%	3.33	0.82
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	1	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	5	55.6%		
○ Prepared	2	22.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	11.1%		

The data in Table 11 show the principals' responses for each of the six statements in this section. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

Statement 20 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically related to their ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 33.3% of principals (3 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while 4.44% reported being prepared (3 of 9) or extremely well prepared (1 of 9). One principal reported being poorly prepared to assist instructional staff working with ELs and to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.94.

Statement 21 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas. Nine principals responded to this statement. Over half of the principals (55.6%) reported being somewhat prepared while 33.3% of them (2 of 9) reported being prepared or extremely well prepared (1 of 9). One principal reported being poorly prepared in this area. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

Statement 22 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically related to their ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, five (55.5%) reported being prepared (4 of 9) or extremely well prepared (1 of 9) compared to 44.4% of principals (4 of 9) who reported being somewhat prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared or poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.67.

Statement 23 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness related to their ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels. Nine principals responded to this statement. Of the nine principals, 44.4% of them (4 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared. 33.3% of principals (3 of 9) reported being prepared and 11.1% of principals (1 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared. One principal reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

Statement 24 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language

acquisition and learning disabilities. Nine principals responded to this statement. Over half of the principals, 55.6% specifically, reported being somewhat prepared while 11.1% reported being prepared and 22.2% reported being extremely well prepared. One principal reported being poorly prepared to assist instructional staff working with ELs and to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.44 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

Statement 25 asked principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs. Nine principals responded to this statement. Over half of the principals (5 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared compared to 33.3% of principals that reported being prepared (2 of 9) and extremely well prepared (1 of 9). One principal reported being poorly prepared in this area. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

### **Assistant Principals' Data Analysis Aligned to Research Question 1**

The following section will show data tables aligned to Research Question 1, specifically as it aligns to assistant principals' responses. Research Question 1 asked, "What are principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?" Table 12 shows the assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. Table 12 breaks down each of the Likert-scale statements and their corresponding analysis in section one of the survey. Descriptive statistics, including *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation of responses were used. It is critical to note that the *n* count will vary by questions as there were instances in which participants did not answer a question.



**Table 12*****Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff  
Working with ELs in the areas of Access and Inclusion***

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
1. Understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	27	100%	3.44	0.79
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	7.4%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	14	51.8%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	11.1%		
2. Ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.	27	100%	3.30	0.76
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	4	14.8%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	12	44.4%		
○ Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
3. Understanding of systemic structures, such as segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.	27	100%	3.30	0.90
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	12	44.4%		
○ Prepared	7	25.9%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	11.1%		

(continued)

**Table 12 (cont.)**

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
4. Ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.	27	100%	3.41	0.73
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	7.4%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	14	51.9%		
○ Prepared	9	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		
5. Ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)	26	100%	3.19	0.88
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	6	23.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	11	42.3%		
○ Prepared	7	26.9%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.7%		
6. Ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.	26	100%	3.46	0.75
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.8%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	12	46.2%		
○ Prepared	12	46.2%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.8%		
7. Ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.	25	100%	3.00	0.85
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	8	32.0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	10	40.0%		
○ Prepared	6	24.0%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	4.0%		

(continued)

**Table 12 (cont.)**

<b>Part I: Access &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
8. Ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.	25	100%	4.04	0.66
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	5	20%		
○ Prepared	14	56%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	6	24%		

The data in Table 12 correspond to the first section of the survey tool. There were eight statements in this section of the survey. These statements closely aligned to the areas of access and inclusion. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

Statement 1 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness when it comes to understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Over half of the assistant principals (51.8%) reported being somewhat prepared. Of the 27 assistant principals, 29.6% of them (8 of 27) reported being prepared and 11.1% (3 of 27) reported being extremely well prepared. Two assistant principals reported feeling poorly prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean 3.44 and standard deviation of 0.79.

Statement 2 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness when it comes to their ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Twenty-seven assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 44.4% of them (12 of 27) reported being somewhat prepared while 14.8% (4 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. Data show that 37.0% of the assistant principals (10 of 27) reported being prepared and one assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared in this area. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.76.

Statement 3 asked assistant principals to self-report their level preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs as it relates to understanding of systemic structures, such as

segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access to ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 12 of them (44.4%) reported being somewhat prepared while 5 assistant principals reported being poorly prepared. About 26% of the assistant principals (7 of 27) reported being prepared and three others reported being extremely well prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.90.

Statement 4 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness of their ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities. 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27, over half (51.9%) of them reported being somewhat prepared. Nine of the 27 assistant principals (33.3%) reported being prepared and 7.4% reported being extremely well prepared. Two assistant principals reported being poorly prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.73.

Statement 5 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.). There were 26 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 26 assistant principals, 11 of them (42.3%) reported being somewhat prepared. Seven assistant principals (26.9%) reported being prepared and 2 reported being extremely well prepared while 6 others reported being poorly prepared in this area. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.88.

Statement 6 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning. There were 26 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 26 assistant principals, nearly half (46.2%) of the assistant principals (12 of 26) reported being somewhat prepared. Equally, 12 of 26 of the assistant principals reported being prepared and one assistant principal (3.8%) reported being extremely well prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being poorly prepared in this area although one assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 0.75.

Statement 7 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically about their ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs. A total of 25 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 25 assistant principals, 32% of them (8 of 25) reported being poorly prepared compared to 4.0% being extremely well prepared. 40.0% of the assistant principals (10 of 25) reported being somewhat prepared while 24.0% of assistant principals (6 of 25) reported being prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.85.

Statement 8 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically about their ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families. A total of 25 assistant principals responded to this statement. Over half (56.0%) of the assistant principals reported being prepared and six others reported being extremely well prepared. Five assistant principals (20.0%) reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.66.

Table 13 shows the assistant principals' responses to the second section of the survey tool. The statements included in Table 13 closely aligned with the area of instruction for English Learners. There were 11 statements in section two of the survey. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

**Table 13**

***Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Working with ELs in the area of Instruction***

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
9. Ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.	27	100%	3.30	0.81
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	7.4%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	13	48.1%		
○ Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		

(continued)

**Table 13 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
10. Understanding of how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.	27	100%	3.26	0.93
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	4	14.8%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	11	40.7%		
○ Prepared	9	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		
11. Ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5- proficient).	27	100%	3.11	0.96
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	6	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	11	40.7%		
○ Prepared	7	25.9%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		
12. Understanding how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/ content across the curriculum.	27	100%	3.22	0.74
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	4	14.8%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	14	51.9%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
13. Understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.	27	100%	3.19	0.86
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	6	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	12	44.4%		
○ Prepared	7	25.9%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		

(continued)

**Table 13 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
14. Understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	27	100%	3.37	0.99
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	6	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	9	33.3%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	4	14.8%		
15. Ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.	27	100%	3.19	0.90
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
16. Ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.	27	100%	3.15	0.80
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	6	22.2%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	12	44.4%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
17. Possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.	27	100%	3.11	0.68
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	14	51.9%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	0	0%		

(continued)

**Table 13 (cont.)**

<b>Part II: Instruction</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
18. Ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.	27	100%	3.30	0.71
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	3	11.1%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	14	51.9%		
○ Prepared	9	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
19. Ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.	27	100%	3.56	0.74
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	2	7.4%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Prepared	13	48.1%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		

The data presented in Table 13 correspond to each of the 11 statements included in section two of the survey tool. Statement 9 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically as it related to their ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Nearly half (48.1%) of the assistant principals (13 of 27) reported being somewhat prepared while 11.1% of the assistant principals reported being poorly prepared or very poorly prepared. Of the 27 principals, 10 of them reported being prepared and one assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.81.

Statement 10 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it pertains to their understanding on how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 10 of them reported being prepared and one assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared. 11 of the 27 assistant principals (40.7%) reported being somewhat prepared. Nearly 15.0% of the assistant principals



(2 of 27) reported being poorly prepared and one assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.26 and a standard deviation of 0.93.

Statement 11 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness regarding their ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1- beginner, level 3- intermediate, level 5- proficient). A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 11 of them reported being somewhat prepared in this area while over 25.0% of the assistant principals reported being poorly prepared (6 of 27) or very poorly prepared (1 of 27). Seven of the 27 assistant principals reported being prepared and two others reported being extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.96.

Statement 12 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to their understanding on how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/content across the curriculum. A total of 27 assistant principals answered this statement. Over half (51.9%) of the assistant principals (14 of 27) reported being somewhat prepared in this area while four other assistant principals reported being poorly prepared. Eight assistant principals (29.6%) reported being prepared and one other reported being extremely well prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 0.74.

Statement 13 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically as it relates to their ability to understand to understand the language acquisition process and its impact on learning. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 12 of them (44.4%) reported being somewhat prepared while 6 reported being poorly prepared. No principals reported being very poorly prepared. Seven of the 27 assistant principals (25.9%) reported being prepared and 2 assistant principals (7.4%) reported being extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.86.

Statement 14 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to understand the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 9 of them reported being prepared while 6 reported being poorly prepared. None of

the assistant principals reported being poorly prepared. Nearly 30.0% of the assistant principals (8 of 27) reported being prepared, and 4 others reported being extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 0.99.

Statement 15 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically in regard to their ability to use and provide access to multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Ten of the 27 assistant principals (37.0%) reported being somewhat prepared while another 37.0% of the assistant principals (10 of 27) reported being prepared. One assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared. Five assistant principals reported being poorly prepared and one other reported being very poorly prepared. This statement has a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.90.

Statement 16 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for English Learners. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 12 of them (44.4%) reported being somewhat prepared in this area while six of them (22.2%) reported being poorly prepared. No principals reported being very poorly prepared. Nearly 30.0% of the assistant principals (8 of 27) reported being prepared and one assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.80.

Statement 17 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically as it relates possessing skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, over half (51.9%) of the assistant principals reported being prepared in this area while 18.5% of the assistant principals (5 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. Eight assistant principals reported being prepared in this area. None of the assistant principals reported being extremely well prepared or very poorly prepared in this area.

This statement had a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 0.68.

Statement 18 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for English Learners based on their proficiency levels. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27 assistant principals, 14 of them (51.9%) reported being somewhat prepared while 11.1% assistant principals (3 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. Nine of the 27 assistant principals (33.3%) reported being prepared and one assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.71.

Statement 19 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness in regard to their ability to assist instructional staff working with ELs, specifically as it relates to their ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Ten of the assistant principals (37.0%) reported being somewhat prepared while 7.4% of them (2 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. Of the 27 assistant principals, 13 of them (48.1%) reported being prepared and another 7.4% of them (2 of 27) reported being extremely well prepared. None of the assistant principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.74.

The following data table shows the assistant principals' responses to the third section of the survey tool. The statements included in Table 14 closely aligned to the area of professional development. There were six statements in section three of the survey. The n count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation scores were included for each of the statements below.

**Table 14**

*Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff  
Working with ELs in the area of Professional Development*

<b>Part III: Professional Development</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
20. Ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.	27	100%	3.19	0.94
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	11	40.7%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		
21. Ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.	27	100%	3.15	0.89
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	11	40.7%		
○ Prepared	9	33.3%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
22. Ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.	27	100%	3.07	0.86
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	13	48.1%		
○ Prepared	7	25.9%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		
23. Ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.	27	100%	3.00	0.82
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	15	55.6%		
○ Prepared	5	18.5%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	1	3.7%		

(continued)

**Table 14 (cont.)**

<b>Part III: Professional Development</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
24. Ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.	27	100%	3.15	0.93
○ Very Poorly Prepared	1	3.7%		
○ Poorly Prepared	4	14.8%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	15	55.6%		
○ Prepared	4	14.8%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	3	11.1%		
25. Ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.	27	100%	3.19	0.90
○ Very Poorly Prepared	0	0%		
○ Poorly Prepared	7	25.9%		
○ Somewhat Prepared	10	37.0%		
○ Prepared	8	29.6%		
○ Extremely Well Prepared	2	7.4%		

The data in Table 14 show the assistant principals' responses for each of the six statements in this section. The *n* count, frequency, mean, and standard deviation were included for each of the statements below.

Statement 20 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically related to their ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27, 40.7% of them (11 of 27) reported being somewhat prepared while 18.5% of assistant principals (5 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. One assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. Nearly 30% of the assistant principals (8 of 27) reported being prepared and two assistant principals reported being extremely well prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.94.

Statement 21 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas. A total of 27 assistant principals responded to this statement. Of the 27, eleven assistant principals (40.7%) reported being somewhat prepared while 18.5% of the assistant principals (5 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. One assistant principal reported

being very poorly prepared. Ten of the 27 of the assistant principals (37%) reported being prepared or extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.89.

Statement 22 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically related to their ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27, 13 assistant principals (48.1%) reported being somewhat prepared. Five assistant principals reported being poorly prepared and one assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. About 30% of the assistant principals (8 of 27) reported being prepared or extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.07 and a standard deviation of 0.86.

Statement 23 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness related to their ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Over half of the assistant principals (55.6%) reported being somewhat prepared while 18.5% of the assistant principals (5 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. One assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. About 19% of the assistant principals reported being prepared. One assistant principal reported being extremely well prepared. This statement had a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

Statement 24 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness, specifically as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Over half of the assistant principals (55.6%) reported being somewhat prepared. Four assistant principals (14.8%) reported being poorly prepared, and one assistant principal reported being very poorly prepared. Four assistant principals (14.8%) reported being prepared and three others reported being extremely well prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.93.

Statement 25 asked assistant principals to self-report their level of preparedness as it relates to their ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs. There were 27 assistant principals who responded to this statement. Of the 27, 8 assistant principals (29.6%) reported being prepared and two principals (7.4%) reported

extremely well prepared. Ten assistant principals (37.0%) reported being somewhat prepared while 25.9% of assistant principals (7 of 27) reported being poorly prepared. None of the principals reported being very poorly prepared in this area. This statement had a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.90.

### **Data Analysis Aligned to Research Question 2**

The following section will show data tables aligned to Research Question 2. Research Question 2 asked, “What differences, if any, exist between principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?” In order to address this question, the researcher conducted three separate One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs). The first ANOVA was to determine whether a difference existed in principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. The second ANOVA was to determine whether a difference existed in assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. The third ANOVA was to determine whether a difference existed between principals and assistant principals as a group based on based the percentage of ELs in their schools.

Each One-way ANOVA data table reported degrees of freedom (df), mean square (MS), f-test (F), and p-values (p). There were two hypotheses for this question. The research hypothesis was that there is significant difference between principals’ and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. The null hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in principals’ and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. In order to reject the null hypothesis, the p-value had to be less than .05 (<.05). In contrast, in order to fail to reject the null hypothesis, the p-value had to be greater than .05 (>.05). Table 15 below reflects the results of the One-way ANOVA for principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of English Learners in their schools.

**Table 15**

*Results of One-Way ANOVA for Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness based on Percentage of ELs in their Schools (N=9)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Access & Inclusion	1	.450	.868	.383
Instruction	1	.008	.013	.913
Professional Development	1	.421	.681	.436

\*p < .05

Table 15 data show the f-test and p-value for the categories of access and inclusion and professional development to be greater than .05 (> .05). Although the f-test for instruction was less than (< .05), the p-value was greater than .05. Since the p-values were greater than .05 (> .05) in all categories, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as data revealed no significant difference in principals' self-reported level of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. Table 16 shows the results of the One-way ANOVA for assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools.

**Table 16**

*Results of One-Way ANOVA for Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness based on Percentage of ELs in their Schools (N=27)*

<b>Category</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Access & Inclusion	5	.245	.751	.594
Instruction	5	.310	.649	.665
Professional Development	5	.350	.458	.803

\*p < .05

Table 16 data show the f-test and p-value to be greater than .05 (> .05) in all categories: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. Given these values, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as data revealed no significant difference in assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their



schools. Table 17 shows the results of the One-way ANOVA for principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools.

**Table 17**

*Results of One-Way ANOVA for Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness based on Percentage of ELs in their Schools (N=36)*

<b>Category</b>		<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Access & Inclusion	Between Groups	5	.329	.852	.524
	Within Groups	30	.386		
Instruction	Between Groups	5	.457	.883	.505
	Within Groups	30	.517		
Professional Development	Between Groups	5	.365	.513	.764
	Within Groups	30	.713		

\*p < .05

Table 17 data show the results of the One-way ANOVA conducted to determine whether a difference existed between principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their schools. The between groups analyses showed the f-tests and p-values were greater than .05 (> .05) in all three categories. As a result of these findings, it was concluded that there is no statistical difference in principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported level of preparedness based on the percentage of English Learners in their school.

### **Summary**

This chapter reported the data collected through the survey focused on gaining the self-reported levels of preparedness from principals and assistant principals who assist instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting. The study’s sample size was 98 participants. The study had a response rate of 41.8% (41 of 98 participants). The survey tool utilized was aligned to two research questions. The first question asked, “what are principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?” The second question asked, “what differences, if any, exist between principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported preparedness

to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?”

The data collected and described within this chapter illustrate the self-reported levels of preparedness for principals and assistant principals in each of the three sections of the survey: access and inclusion, instruction, and professional development. Data aligned to research question two demonstrated no statistically significant difference in principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported level of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their school. A Cronbach Alpha reliability test was conducted. The survey had a Cronbach Alpha of .967. Based on this analysis, it was concluded that the survey results were very reliable. Finally, the data findings aligned to each of the research questions, the implications of this study, and recommendations for future studies are discussed in chapter five.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Research shows that English Learners are the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools (Horsford & Sampson, 2013; Krogstad & Fry, 2014). The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) data show that 1 in 10 students in U.S. public schools is classified as an English Learner. Projections show that by 2022, one-third of the U.S. student population will be identified as English Learners (Hussar & Bailey, 2013). This growth in ELs brings challenges to the school setting as teachers (Hiatt & Fairbairn, 2018) and principals are not prepared (Baecher, Knoll, & Patti 2016) to meet the students' unique needs. Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2016), found that principals are not able to provide quality instructional supervision for ELL instruction due to their lack of expertise and preparation. Suttmilller and González (2006) contended that schools could no longer ignore the increasing number of ELs in mainstream classrooms and the necessary support and leadership teachers need in order to work directly with diverse students. However, according to McGee et al. (2015), research related to leadership, EL and ESL is limited. This study was conducted as a result of the limited research in this area. The purpose of this study was to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

The following two questions guided this study and were answered based on the data collected and analyzed in this study.

1. What are principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting?
2. What differences, if any, exist between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners based on the percentage of ELs in their schools?

#### **Summary of Findings and Implications**

This chapter will detail findings that resulted from this study. Findings for this study were drawn from the data collected and analyzed. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequencies, and standard deviation were used in the data analysis. An Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) was conducted to determine to analyze the findings for research question two. There are nine findings

discussed in this chapter. The implications of practice aligned to the study findings are also discussed in this chapter.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### ***Finding One***

Principals and assistant principals establish a safe, caring, welcoming environment for families of ELs. In response to statement number eight of the access and inclusion section of the survey (see Tables 9 and 12), data demonstrated that 11.1% of principals (1 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared while more than 88.0% of them reported being prepared or extremely well prepared. More specifically, 55.6% (5 of 9) reported being prepared and 33.3% (3 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared. Similar to the principals, 80.0% of the assistant principals reported being prepared or extremely well prepared. Specifically, 56.0% of the assistant principals (14 of 25) reported being prepared and 24.0% (6 of 25) reported being extremely well prepared. Only 20.0% of the assistant principals (5 of 25) reported being somewhat prepared. The statement mean score for principals was 4.22, and the statement mean score for assistant principals was 4.02. Mean scores of a range of 4.0 reflect that principals and assistant principals were prepared overall. This finding aligns with aspects of social justice leaders as outlined in the DeMatthews et al. (2016) study that illustrated a school leader who enacted social justice by (a) creating a safe, caring, and supporting environment; (b) creating meaningful experiences, supports, and learning opportunities; and (c) developing critically engaged leaders (p. 771). Moreover, the leader engaged parents by helping them navigate the structures and access resources they needed, building trust and rapport with parents, and establishing a culture of empathy, helpfulness, collaboration, and respect between parents and the school (DeMatthews et al., 2016, pp. 778-779). This finding is also consistent with literature in the field. According to August and Hakuta (1998), principals need to understand the connection of home-school relations. Moreover, McLaughlin and McLeod (1996) also contended that leaders need to place a high value on family and community engagement and create innovative opportunities for families to be involved in school.

### ***Finding Two***

**Principals and assistant principals are somewhat prepared for communicating with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.** In response to statement number six of the access and inclusion section of the survey

(see Tables 9 and 12), data revealed that 50.0% of the principals (4 of 8) reported being somewhat prepared. Three of the eight principals (37.5%) reported being prepared and 12.5% (1 of 8) reporting being extremely well prepared. Data for assistant principals had greater variance in preparation. Specifically, 3.8% of the assistant principals (1 of 26) reported being poorly prepared while 46.2% (12 of 26) reported being somewhat prepared. Conversely, 46.2% reported being prepared and one assistant principal (3.8%) reported being extremely well prepared. The overall statement mean score for principals was 3.63 and 3.46 for assistant principals. These mean scores represent a preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” This finding places an emphasis on the findings of August and Hakuta (1998), DeMatthews et al. (2016), and McLaughlin and McLeod (1996). The DeMatthews et al. (2016) study shows the importance of home-school relationships, focused on leaders helping parents navigate the school system and provide them with access to resources they need, while at the same time building trust, empathy, collaboration, respect, rapport, and helpfulness.

### ***Finding Three***

**Principals and assistant principals are somewhat prepared to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.** In response to statement 17 of the instruction section of the survey (see Tables 10 and 13), data revealed that 22.2% of the principals (2 of 9) reported being poorly prepared. Two of the nine principals (22.2%) reported being somewhat prepared or prepared, while three of the nine principals (33.3%) reported being extremely well prepared. More than half of the assistant principals (51.9%) reported being somewhat prepared, and 18.5% reported being poorly prepared. Nearly 30.0% of assistant principals (8 of 27) reported being prepared. The statement mean score for principals was 3.67 and 3.11 for assistant principals. These mean scores represent a preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” This finding highlights the importance of one of the findings of the Elfers and Stritikus (2014) study. The findings from the Elfers and Stritikus (2014) study yielded five themes – one of which focused on using data for instructional planning. Elfers and Stritikus (2014) reported that data for instructional planning should be used to support data-based discussions of individual student progress and to identify areas of improvement, shape professional development, and support a culture of learning.

### ***Finding Four***

**Assistant principals are somewhat prepared to understand how to create**

**meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards and grade-level standards.** In response to statement nine of the instruction section of the survey (see Table 13), data demonstrated that 40.0% of the assistant principals reported being somewhat prepared, 14.8% (4 of 27) reported being poorly prepared, and 3.7% (1 of 27) reported being very poorly prepared. In contrast, 33.3% (9 of 27) of the assistant principals reported being prepared and 7.4% (2 of 27) reported being extremely well prepared. The statement mean score was 3.26. This mean score reflects an overall preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” This finding emphasizes the findings of the Gándara and Orfield (2010). According to Gándara and Orfield (2010), exposure to academic models of English in a natural setting, grade-level instruction in core subjects, and high-quality instruction that promotes academic English are key elements to educating English Learners. As early as 1998, Valdés pointed out that student learning and language acquisition is limited unless schools ensure students access grade-level content curriculum and participate in appropriate learning environments for language acquisition. Therefore, it is critical for leaders for English Learners to ensure that curriculum is aligned to English learners’ linguistic and conceptual understandings, and one in which high expectations for English Learners is evident (August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 2004).

#### ***Finding Five***

**Principals and assistant principals are somewhat prepared to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.** In response to statement ten of the instruction section of the survey (see Tables 10 and 13), data revealed that 33.3% of the principals (3 of 9) reported being somewhat prepared, 11.1% (1 of 9) reported being poorly prepared, and 33.3% (3 of 9) reported being extremely well prepared. As for assistant principals, close to 50.0% of them (13 of 27) reported being somewhat prepared while 11.1% (3 of 27) reported being either poorly prepared or very poorly prepared. The statement mean score for principals was 3.78 and 3.30 for assistant principals. These mean scores of 3.0 represent a preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Uro and Barrio (2013) and Baecher, Knoll, and Patti (2016). This finding emphasizes the need for building-level and division leadership to have a deeper understanding about the challenges and solutions of working with EL students (Gándara et al., 2005).

#### ***Finding Six***

**Principals and assistant principals are somewhat prepared to conduct professional**

**development regarding English Learner instruction and academic achievement.** This finding aligns with the responses to statements 20-25 of the professional development section of the survey (see Tables 11 and 14). This study yielded mean scores ranging from 3.33-3.67 for all professional development related statements for principals which reflects a preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” Similarly, data showed that the mean scores of all professional development related statements for assistant principals ranged from 3.00-3.19 which reflects a preparation level of “somewhat prepared.” This finding supports the recommendations of Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2016), Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018), and Theoharis and O’Toole (2011). More specifically, school leaders need to advocate for and offer ESL professional development to ensure English Learners are supported and taught by teachers who are skilled to meet their diverse academic, linguistic, and cultural needs (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2016). Hiatt and Fairbairn (2018) concluded that professional development on instruction for English learners, even in small quantities, could positively impact teaching. Moreover, Theoharis and O’Toole (2011) stated that principals for social justice respond to new challenges and demands of instructional and non-instructional staff by offering ongoing, targeted professional development (Calderón & Carreon, 2000; Reyes, 2006; Stritikus, 2006; Walquí, 2000).

### ***Finding Seven***

**There is no difference between principal and assistant principal self-reported levels of preparedness based on the percentage of ELs in their school.** This finding aligns to the two demographic questions of the survey (see Table 17). The p-values for each category were as follows: access and inclusion (p= .383), instruction (p= .913), and professional development (p= .436). The ANOVA data showed the p-values for principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness in all three components were greater than the alpha value of .05. As a result of this data, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. By doing so, the researcher concluded that no difference exists between principals’ self-reported levels of preparation and the percentage of ELs in their school. Similarly, ANOVA data showed the p-values for assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness in all three categories were greater than the alpha value of 0.05. The p-values for each category were as follows: inclusion (p= .594), instruction (p= .665), and professional development (p= .803). As a result of this data, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. By doing so, the researcher concluded that no difference exists between assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparation and percentage of ELs in their school. Moreover,

as a combined group, principals' and assistant principals' ANOVA results were greater than the alpha value of .05. The data were as follows: between groups ANOVA for access & inclusion:  $p = .524$ , between groups ANOVA for instruction:  $p = .505$ , and between groups ANOVA for PD:  $p = .764$ . It is critical to note that no prior research has been conducted to determine whether a difference exists between principals' and assistant principals' self-reported preparation is based on percentage of ELs in their schools.

### ***Finding Eight***

**Principals and assistant principals with 11-30% ELs in their schools reported the highest levels of preparedness in the areas of access & inclusion and professional development although there is still much to be done.** This finding aligns to the two demographic questions of the survey (see Tables 7 and 8). Data showed that the preparedness mean scores for access inclusion was the highest in populations of 11-20% ELs and 21-30% ELs, with mean scores of 3.67 and 3.80 respectively. Additionally, data showed that the preparedness mean scores in professional development were also the highest in population of 11-20% ELs and 21-30% ELs, with mean scores of 3.25 and 3.66 respectively. It is critical to note that a mean score of 3.0 reflects a preparation level of "somewhat prepared."

### ***Finding Nine***

**Assistant principals with 50% or more ELs in their school reported the lowest levels of preparedness in all three areas: access & inclusion, instruction, and professional development.** This finding aligns to the two demographic questions of the survey (see Tables 7 and 8). Data showed that the preparedness mean scores for all areas were the lowest for assistant principals with 50% or more ELs in their schools. The preparedness mean scores were as follows: 2.8 in access and inclusion, 2.4 in instruction, and 2.8 in professional development. It is critical to note that a mean score of 2.0 reflects a preparation level of "poorly prepared." This finding aligns with research conducted by Russell (2018). According to Russell (2018), many communities and schools in the U.S. are overwhelmed by the growing diverse population around them. This finding emphasizes the importance for implementing the findings of the McGee, Haworth, and MacIntyre (2015) study. In their study, McGee, Haworth, and MacIntyre (2015) found four successful leadership practices for ESL. These include (1) establishing ESL goals and direction, (2) enabling leaders to be role models with credibility through knowledge of ESL, (3)



providing ESL professional learning for teachers and leaders, and (4) empowering ESL teaching and learning.

## **Implications for Practice**

### ***Implication One***

**Principals and assistant principals ought to continue to provide caring, welcoming, and safe environments for families of ELs.** Principals and assistant principals ought to continue to model the expectation and importance of a welcoming, caring, and safe environments. By modeling expected behavior, principals and assistant principals encourage school staff to be supportive of a welcoming, caring, and safe culture at all times. This implication aligns with finding number one.

### ***Implication Two***

**Principals and assistant principals ought to continue to seek ways to enhance their skills and strategies for communicating with families of ELs.** School divisions should encourage principals and assistant principals to take foreign language courses to sharpen their language skills and/or hire bi/multilingual staff that effectively communicate with families, share resources available, and share opportunities for learning. Furthermore, school divisions ought to provide support for principals and assistant principals to ensure communication is sent home in a language that parents understand. Not only is this an OCR requirement, but it is also best practice to engage in meaningful, two-way communication with multilingual parents. School divisions should also provide resources for principals and assistant principals, so they can ensure that teachers and all staff working with EL families use a variety of skills and strategies to communicate. Examples include newsletters, bi/multilingual robocalls, multilingual social media posts, etc. This implication aligns with finding number two.

### ***Implication Three***

**School divisions ought to provide professional development for principals and assistant principals on how to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.** School divisions have an obligation to meet the needs of all students, including ELs. It is critical to provide this type of professional development for principals and assistant principals since ELs are the fastest growing student population and one of the student subgroups reported in federal and state accountability. In Virginia specifically, school divisions should ensure principals and assistant principals use the

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scores to plan instructional lessons and create school improvement efforts. As leaders in their buildings, principals and assistant principals need to know and understand instructional planning for ELs. Effective instructional planning for ELs must be based on the WIDA standards, state grade-level standards, and take into account each student's English language proficiency (ELP) level in order for students to gain meaningful access to the curriculum and be successful. This implication aligns with finding number three.

#### ***Implication Four***

**Assistant principals ought to support and hold teachers accountable for employing effective and meaningful lessons based on ELP and grade-level standards.** As mentioned above, principals and assistant principals need to know and understand that all instructional planning for ELs must be based on the WIDA standards, state grade-level standards, and take into account each student's English language proficiency level in order for students to gain meaningful access to the curriculum and be successful. When assistant principals participate in planning meetings, it is critical for them to know that ELs do not need "watered down" curriculum. Instead, they need meaningful access to the grade-level curriculum, effective instructional strategies, and appropriate scaffolds. This implication aligns with finding number four.

#### ***Implication Five***

**All school districts ought to focus on improving leadership capacity by offering support and professional development centered around supporting instructional planning for diverse learners, with a focus on ELs.** School divisions ought to provide principals and assistant principals professional development on how to support ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds. This is particularly important as ELs are not a monolithic group and bring many assets and challenges to the classroom. Furthermore, principals and assistant principals should utilize their ESL/ESOL teacher(s) to provide professional development to them and the instructional staff on how to effectively plan instruction for ELs. This implication aligns with finding number five.

#### ***Implication Six***

**School divisions ought to provide professional development to all instructional staff, including principals and assistant principals on how to best meet the needs of ELs.** Research continues to illustrate the impact of effective leadership on teacher effectiveness and its positive

impact on student achievement. Therefore, it is critical for principals and assistant principals to continue to seek opportunities to participate and lead professional development for instructional staff working with ELs. By doing so, principals and assistant principals demonstrate their commitment to instructional excellence for all students, particularly those historically marginalized. When principals and assistant principals model and lead professional development, they move past being managers to being an instructional and social justice leaders in their schools. This implication aligns with finding number six.

### ***Implication Seven***

**School divisions ought to anticipate continued EL enrollment growth and prepare school leaders to meet their needs.** When principals and assistant principals are prepared and equipped to serve this student population, they are better at assisting instructional staff working with English Learners in the classroom. In an effort to prepare school leaders, school divisions should develop a comprehensive, targeted professional development plan to effectively meet the needs of ELs. The professional development plan should include co-teaching, using ELP standards and grade-level standards, unbiased and culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment for ELs, differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities, co-teaching methods and strategies for ELs, among other practices. Furthermore, school leadership preparation programs should make a concerted effort to address the needs of ELs in their course work and prepare leaders to serve in ethnically and linguistically diverse communities. This implication aligns with findings seven, eight, and nine.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research in this area is recommended given the ever-growing enrollment of English Learners and the need for leaders to assist instructional staff working with ELs. This study has added to the limited research in this area. One of the limitations of this study was the inability to differentiate participants' responses between the two school divisions selected for this study. However, the findings suggest that there is a need for leadership capacity building, specifically as it relates to English Learners in both school districts.

Future researchers could consider conducting a follow-up qualitative study in schools in which principals and assistant principals reported being prepared or extremely well prepared to determine the level of consistency in their quantitative responses; specifically, to identify whether or not the qualitative data support the quantitative data. Moreover, researchers could

conduct this study across the Commonwealth of Virginia to determine principals' and assistant principals' preparedness across the Commonwealth. Such a survey would provide a greater sample size and possibly different results. The results of a study of this kind could serve as the basis for professional development offered by the Virginia Department of Education. Finally, future researchers could conduct the study as is and add an open-ended question that will ask principals' and assistant principals' self-perceived professional development needs to develop district and school-level professional plans.

### **Researcher Reflections**

As I sit and reflect on this doctoral journey, I cannot help but to feel joyful, hopeful, exhausted, and blessed. The thought of completing a dissertation often seemed impossible and far out of reach. However, this has been a life goal of mine, and I am glad it is approaching its culmination. I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me to complete this research in two school divisions in Virginia and to be able to add to the field of educational leadership, social justice leadership, and English Learner instruction and achievement.

As a former English Learner and former ESL teacher and district Coordinator, I brought biases, experiences, and expertise to this study. Of course, I always made a concerted effort to not let my own experiences and biases intervene in the study. However, as human, I held one bias all along. The bias was the more ELs there were in a school, the better prepared principals and assistant principals would be. I truly believed this because this had been my experience as a teacher and district leader. However, the findings in this study did not support this long-held bias and belief. Furthermore, as I reflect on the design, content, and structure of the survey, I realize that if I had to administer the survey again, I would revise each of the Likert-scale statements. I would revise each statement to begin with a verb to ensure that the statements were clear and actionable. Refer to Appendix J for the revised survey tool.

I feel encouraged and motivated to continue the work to support English Learners in any position that I hold in the future. The findings of this study indicate there is important work to do in regard to preparing school leaders (principals and assistant principals) for the rapid growth of English Learners in today's schools. This study will afford me the opportunity to use these findings and help selected school divisions develop a comprehensive, targeted professional development plan that will align with tenets of Social Justice Leadership and meet the varied needs of English Learners. Had I not completed this study, I would not have been aware of the

need for comprehensive and targeted professional development plans needed. Although much of the data provided evidence that principals and assistant principals were less than prepared to meet the needs of ELs, I am encouraged to continue to work alongside principals and assistant principals to address the preparedness/capacity gaps that can lead to enhanced teacher capacity and improved English Learner academic achievement.

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## APPENDIX A

### PERMISSION REQUEST TO MODIFY EXISTING SURVEY TOOL

4/27/2020

Virginia Tech Mail - Seeking Permission to use Survey as Basis to Dissertation



Brenda Russ <bjruss@vt.edu>

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#### Seeking Permission to use Survey as Basis to Dissertation

---

**Brenda Russ** <bjruss@vt.edu>  
To: jhiatt@heartlandaea.org, shelley.fairbairn@drake.edu

Sun, Mar 22, 2020 at 9:08 PM

Dear Dr. Hiatt and Dr. Fairbairn,

My name is Brenda Russ, a doctoral student at Virginia Tech. I am currently working on my dissertation with a focus on social justice leadership, professional development, and English Learners.

I am writing to respectfully request permission to adapt and modify your 2018 survey titled *In-Service Teacher EL Preparation Survey*. While your study was focused on in-service teachers, I would like to use they survey as a basis to create a similar survey focused on principals' and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to support instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting.

I respectfully request a written response to this email as it will serve as documentation for permission to use the instrument and its publication in my dissertation. I am very excited about conducting this research and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
Brenda Russ



Brenda Russ &lt;bjruss@vt.edu&gt;

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## Seeking Permission to use Survey as Basis to Dissertation

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Janet Eichenberger Hiatt <jhiatt@heartlandaea.org>  
To: Brenda Russ <bjruss@vt.edu>  
Cc: Michele Fairbairn <shelley.fairbairn@drake.edu>

Mon, Mar 23, 2020 at 10:41 AM

Dear Brenda,

If Dr. Fairbairn is also in agreement, I would be comfortable granting permission for you to use and modify our 2018 survey titled *In-Service Teacher EL Preparation Survey* for your dissertation focused on principals' self-reported level of preparedness to support instructional staff working with English Learners in the school setting. This would be a topic of high interest and would add to the body of knowledge for educators serving English Learners.

I would just ask that you cite the source and note any adaptations that were made, and also to share your findings with me and Dr. Fairbairn once completed. If possible, it would also be interesting to have a link or reference for your completed dissertation.

Best to you as you continue your dissertation studies.

Janet Hiatt

[Quoted text hidden]

--



**Janet E. Hiatt, Ph.D.**  
ESL/Diversity Consultant  
Heartland Area Education Agency  
6500 Corporate Drive  
Johnston, IA 50131  
Phone: (515) 270-9030/(800) 362-2720 ext. 14022  
Fax: (515) 270-5383  
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**Our Mission:** To improve the learning outcomes and well-being of all children and youth by providing services and leadership in partnership with families, schools and communities.



Brenda Russ <bjruss@vt.edu>

---

## Seeking Permission to use Survey as Basis to Dissertation

---

**Shelley Fairbairn** <shelley.fairbairn@drake.edu>  
To: Brenda Russ <bjruss@vt.edu>  
Cc: Janet Eichenberger Hiatt <jhiatt@heartlandaea.org>

Mon, Mar 23, 2020 at 11:31 AM

Dear Brenda:

I agree with Dr. Hiatt's "conditions" for the use of the instrument from our 2018 article. I look forward to reading about your findings!

My best,

Shelley Fairbairn

--

Shelley Fairbairn, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Drake University School of Education

Collier-Scripps Hall #107

[2507 University Ave.](#)

[Des Moines, IA 50311](#)

515/271-1954

Preferred pronouns: she/her/hers

**APPENDIX B**

**CITI PROGRAM COURSE CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION**



Completion Date 16-Jul-2019  
Expiration Date 15-Jul-2022  
Record ID 32439577

This is to certify that:

**Brenda Russ**

Has completed the following Citi Program course:

**Social & Behavioral Research** (Curriculum Group)  
**Social & Behavioral Research** (Course Learner Group)  
**1 - Basic Course** (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech)** Institutional Training Initiative



Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w01aeb177-07ad-465b-932a-5aebaeac5e9e-32439577](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w01aeb177-07ad-465b-932a-5aebaeac5e9e-32439577)

## APPENDIX C

### IRB APPLICATION APPROVAL LETTER



Division of Scholarly Integrity and  
Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732  
irb@vt.edu  
<http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp>

#### MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 28, 2020  
**TO:** Carol S Cash, Brenda Jasmine Russ  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires October 29, 2024)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Principals&rsquo; and Assistant Principals&rsquo; Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness To Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in Two School Districts in Virginia  
**IRB NUMBER:** 20-613

Effective July 28, 2020, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category (ies) 2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit an amendment to the HRPP for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

#### PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Determined As: **Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii)**  
Protocol Determination Date: **July 28, 2020**

#### ASSOCIATED FUNDING:

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*

**APPENDIX D**  
**COVER LETTER TO DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

Dear Superintendent of Schools:

English Learners (ELs) are the fastest growing student population in U.S. schools today. According to research, ELs face many inequities when they arrive to school. Some of the inequities include lack of qualified and trained teachers and administrators, ineffective language support programs, persistent achievement gaps compared to their non-EL peers, lack of access to advanced courses, as well as institutional marginalization, segregation and racism.

School administrators are key in ensuring success for all students, particularly for ELs. Administrators who are knowledgeable about issues of equity and marginalization promote social justice in their schools and increase student achievement for marginalized student populations including ELs. The purpose of this quantitative study is to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

We are asking for your support to conduct this study within your school division. The researcher will use a survey of 25 Likert-scale questions. The survey will be distributed and returned electronically. The data collected from this study might be helpful to determine principals and assistant principals needs in supporting instructional staff working with ELs. Furthermore, the data collected from this study will provide insight on professional development needs for principals and assistant principals in the school division.

All information will be kept confidential. We will be willing and available to answer any questions that you may have about this study. We can be contacted by email at [bjruss@vt.edu](mailto:bjruss@vt.edu) or by phone at (804) 263-0783.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Brenda J. Russ, Ed.S.  
Graduate Student  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dr. Carol Cash  
Clinical Professor  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

**APPENDIX E**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT B CONSENT FORM**

Dear Superintendent of Schools:



Thank you for your support of Brenda J. Russ in efforts to obtain the doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Your signature below serves as official approval for Mrs. Russ to collect and analyze all data collected in the study titled "Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in a Two School Districts in Virginia." The purpose of this study is to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

Thank you for your approval and support in this endeavor. It is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Brenda J. Russ, Ed.S.  
Doctoral Candidate  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Dr. Carol Cash  
Clinical Professor  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

  
  
Division Superintendent

**APPENDIX F**  
**PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

[Emailed to each participant]

Greetings,

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am writing a dissertation titled “Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in a Suburban School District in Virginia.”

The purpose of this study is to identify principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting. The results from this study will be used in the researcher’s dissertation. Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choosing not to participate in this study will not have an adverse effect on your current status with your current school division. Conclusion and recommendations from this study may be beneficial to your school division, school divisions across the State, and perhaps, the nation.

I write to you today in hopes that you will agree to participate in this study in which you will complete and submit a survey. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. The link to the electronic survey is below.

[include survey link here]

All participation is anonymous and confidential. Names and other identifying information will not be collected or used in this dissertation. Please note that by completing and submitting the survey you are consenting to participate in this study. You will find the *Implied Consent Form* attached to this email. If you do not wish to participate in this study, simply do not complete the survey.

As an administrator myself, I understand your time is valuable. I greatly appreciate your consideration for participating in this study.

Respectfully,

Brenda J. Russ, Ed.S.  
Doctoral Candidate  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University



## APPENDIX G

### IMPLIED CONSENT AGREEMENT

#### Implied Consent Agreement

**Research Title:** Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in Two School Districts in Virginia (IRB #20-613).

**Researcher:** Brenda J. Russ

**Contact Email:** bjruss@vt.edu

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this quantitative study is to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported level of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

**Participation in the study:** The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All survey responses will be collected electronically using the Virginia Tech Qualtrics platform.

**Anticipated Risks:** There are no anticipated risks to persons who participate in the study.

**Time Period:** The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to participants in this study.

**Confidentiality:** All information collected in this survey will be handled with strict confidentiality. The data generated from the survey and that will be included in the dissertation will contain no identifying information regarding the participants, the participants' school or school division. The survey results will only be available to the researcher and dissertation committee chair. The data collected in the survey will be held for approximately one year following the defense of this dissertation. During this year, the results will only be accessible to the researcher.

**Participation:** Your participation in this study is anonymous and voluntary.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for their participation in this study.

**Right to withdrawal from the study:** You have the right to withdrawal from the study at any time. Your survey responses will be deleted and destroyed at the time of withdrawal. The data will not be included in the final dissertation.

**Process for withdrawal from the study:** If you wish to withdraw from this study, please notify the researcher either by phone or via email using the contact information provided in this *Implied Consent Agreement*.

**Questions or Concerns:** At any point, if you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher or dissertation committee chair at the contact information listed below.

**Researcher Contact Information:**

Brenda J. Russ, Ed.S.  
332 Boxelder Drive  
Stafford, Virginia 22554  
Telephone: (804) 263-0783  
Email: [bjruss@vt.edu](mailto:bjruss@vt.edu)

**Dissertation Committee Chair:**

Dr. Carol S. Cash  
Virginia Tech Richmond Center  
2810 Parham Road, Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23294  
Telephone: (804) 836-3611  
Email: [ccash48@vt.edu](mailto:ccash48@vt.edu)

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may communicate with them at 540-231-3732 or [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu) if:

- You have questions about your rights as a research subject
- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team
- You cannot reach the research team
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team to provide feedback about this research

**Participation Agreement:** Consent is implied by completing and submitting the survey.

**APPENDIX H**  
**SURVEY**

Survey: Principals’ and Assistant Principals’ Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness: Access & Inclusion, Instruction, and Professional Development

**Instructions:**

The following survey questions have been developed to identify principals’ and assistant principals’ self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and by starting this survey, you are providing consent. There is minimum risk involved in participating in this survey. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for this study. Your responses are anonymous. There are two demographic questions and 25 Likert-scale questions. This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

By continuing, you are providing consent and certifying that you are at least 18 years or older. If you do not wish to give consent, please do not complete the survey and close your browser window.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, you can contact me at (804) 263-0783 or via email at [bjruss@vt.edu](mailto:bjruss@vt.edu).

Please complete all of the questions based on your current role and experience. For the Likert-scale questions, please read each of the statements and rate your level of preparedness using a scale from 1 to 5.

*Part I. Demographic Information*

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Current Role
Principal
Assistant Principal
Percentage of English Learners in Your School
0-5%
6-10%
11-20%
21-30%
31-40%
50% +

---

Part II. *Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness: Access & Inclusion, Instruction, and Professional Development*

	1	2	3	4	5
Access and Inclusion	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
1. Understanding and knowledge of different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					
2. Ability to group students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.					
3. Understanding of systemic structures, such as segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.					
4. Ability to create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.					
5. Ability to access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)					
6. Ability to use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.					
7. Ability to recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.					
8. Ability to establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.					

Instruction	1 Very Poorly Prepared	2 Poorly Prepared	3 Somewhat Prepared	4 Prepared	5 Extremely Well Prepared
9. Ability to support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.					
10. Understanding how to create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.					
11. Ability to differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1-beginner, level 3-intermediate, level 5- proficient).					
12. Understanding how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/content across the curriculum.					
13. Understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.					
14. Understanding the differences between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
15. Ability to use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.					
16. Ability to create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.					
17. Possess skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.					

- 18. Ability to differentiate between accommodations, modifications, and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.
- 19. Ability to collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.

	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Development	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
20. Ability to provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.					
21. Ability to provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.					
22. Ability to provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.					
23. Ability to provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.					
24. Ability to provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
25. Ability to provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					

**APPENDIX I**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT A CONSENT LETTER**

To: Brenda Russ, Ed.S.  
From: [REDACTED]  
Re: Research Request  
Date: September 14, 2020

Ms. Brenda Russ,

Your request to conduct the study, *Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness to Assist Instructional Staff Who Work with English Learners in Two School Districts in Virginia*, has been approved by [REDACTED] with the following conditions and understandings:

- (1) Participation will be optional and completely up to each individual educator, and the assent letter will add a sentence to note that if someone chooses not to participate there will be no negative consequence/penalty. All responses will remain anonymous.
- (2) The researcher will not be naming our school district, school, or any individual classrooms in the report; pseudonyms will be used as necessary and anonymity of individual participants, classrooms, schools, and the division at-large will be pro-actively maintained.
- (3) The researcher will provide [REDACTED] with a copy of the final report.
- (4) All data collected will remain confidential and will not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff.
- (5) This approval does not constitute a commitment of resources or endorsement of the study or its findings by [REDACTED] or by the School Board.
- (6) The researcher agrees to abide by all the policies and regulations of [REDACTED] and will conduct this study within the stipulations accompanying any letter of approval.

Please note that approval by the central office does not guarantee participation by [REDACTED] schools or staff, and [REDACTED] reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time should circumstances change. If you have any questions about the approval, please let me know.

Best wishes on your research.

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

**APPENDIX J**  
**REVISED SURVEY:**

Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness: Access & Inclusion,  
Instruction, and Professional Development

**Instructions:**

The following survey questions have been developed to identify principals' and assistant principals' self-reported levels of preparedness to assist instructional staff who work with English Learners in the school setting.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and by starting this survey, you are providing consent. There is minimum risk involved in participating in this survey. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for this study. Your responses are anonymous. There are two demographic questions and 25 Likert-scale questions. This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

By continuing, you are providing consent and certifying that you are at least 18 years or older. If you do not wish to give consent, please do not complete the survey and close your browser window.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, you can contact me at (804) 263-0783 or via email at [bjruss@vt.edu](mailto:bjruss@vt.edu).

Please complete all of the questions based on your current role and experience. For the Likert-scale questions, please read each of the statements and rate your level of preparedness using a scale from 1 to 5.

*Part I. Demographic Information*

---

Current Role

Principal

Assistant Principal

Percentage of English Learners in Your School

0-5%

6-10%

11-20%

21-30%

31-40%

50% +

---



Part II. *Principals' and Assistant Principals' Self-Reported Levels of Preparedness: Access & Inclusion, Instruction, and Professional Development*

	1	2	3	4	5
Access and Inclusion	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
1. Employ different co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					
2. Coordinate the grouping of students based on their educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.					
3. Recognize systemic structures, such as segregation of ELs in self-contained classes, limited access of ELs in advanced classes or special programs, and/or tracking of ELs into remedial courses.					
4. Create opportunities for ELs to participate in a variety of extra and co-curricular programs and activities.					
5. Provide access and/or coordinate wraparound services for ELs in need of additional support (counseling, speech services, vision and hearing, community resources, etc.)					
6. Use effective skills and strategies to communicate with parents and families of ELs to share resources available to them and opportunities for learning.					
7. Recognize culturally and linguistically biased test items and inappropriate assessments for ELs.					
8. Establish a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all families, particularly EL families.					

Instruction	1 Very Poorly Prepared	2 Poorly Prepared	3 Somewhat Prepared	4 Prepared	5 Extremely Well Prepared
9. Support instructional planning for ELs with diverse language, educational, and cultural backgrounds.					
10. Create meaningful lessons that incorporate English Language Proficiency (ELP) and grade-level standards.					
11. Differentiate for ELs based on proficiency levels (i.e., level 1- beginner, level 3- intermediate, level 5- proficient).					
12. Demonstrate understanding of how to incorporate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in every class/grade-level/content across the curriculum.					
13. Demonstrate understanding of the language acquisition process and its impact on learning.					
14. Distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
15. Use and provide access to a variety of multicultural classroom resources and technologies to support instruction for ELs.					
16. Create, access, or use a variety of classroom and district-based assessments to measure content and language proficiency for ELs.					
17. Employ skills to collect, analyze, and interpret language proficiency data to drive instructional planning and school improvement efforts.					
18. Differentiate among accommodations, modifications,					

- and appropriate scaffolds for ELs based on their proficiency levels.
19. Collaborate with and effectively utilize various instructional staff to provide targeted support and interventions for ELs.

	1	2	3	4	5
Professional Development	Very Poorly Prepared	Poorly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Prepared	Extremely Well Prepared
20. Provide professional development on research-based instructional practices for ELs.					
21. Provide professional development on incorporating the four language domains in all content areas.					
22. Provide professional development on the use of language proficiency data and instructional planning.					
23. Provide professional development on scaffolds for ELs by proficiency levels.					
24. Provide professional development on differentiating between language acquisition and learning disabilities.					
25. Provide professional development on co-teaching models and practices for ELs.					