A Study of Principals' Self-Efficacy and Leadership Practices in Schools Serving Students Who Are Economically Disadvantaged

by Pamela Farrell

B.A. in Fine Arts, May 1982, Mary Baldwin College
M.A. in Arts Education, December 2003, Virginia Commonwealth University
Ed.S. in Supervision and Administration, May 2009, University of Virginia

A Dissertation submitted to

The Faculty of
The Graduate School of Education and Human Development
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

May 15, 2022

Dissertation directed by

Christine W. Nganga
Assistant Professor of Education Administration

The Graduate School of Education and Human Development of The George Washington University certifies that Pamela Farrell has passed the Final Examination for the degree of Doctor of Education as of January 31, 2022. This is the final and approved form of the dissertation.

A Study of Principals' Self-Efficacy and Leadership Practices
in Schools Serving Students Who Are Economically Disadvantaged

Pamela Farrell

Dissertation Research Committee:

Christine W. Nganga, Assistant Professor of Education Administration, Dissertation Director

Jennifer K. Clayton, Associate Professor of Education Administration, Committee Member

Abebayehu A. Tekleselassie, Associate Professor of Education Administration, Committee Member

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving husband, Bart, who has been my inspiration and has given me unconditional love and support throughout my life. Your belief in me has always been much greater than my belief in myself. I never would have been able to complete this journey without you. I am forever grateful for all that you have given me in my life. One lifetime with you is not enough.

To Alton and Ilona, know that you can achieve anything in life if you believe in yourself and have others believe in you. Follow your dreams always.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation and doctoral journey were completed with hard work, persistence, self-efficacy, resilience, and generous contributions from the following individuals and groups.

In memory of Harry and Jane. Although you never had the opportunity to attend college, you always instilled in your children the value of education. I am thankful to my family; you supported me throughout each of my graduate journeys, especially my doctoral journey.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Christine W. Nganga, my dissertation chair, for her time, guidance, feedback, and overall belief in my ability to achieve my doctorate. Your belief and positive feedback about my work increased my self-efficacy in being diligent and persistent in achieving this milestone.

I am also thankful to Dr. Jennifer K. Clayton, committee member, professor, and my dissertation methodologist for her time, insight, and expertise in guiding my work. Your energy is inspiring, and your feedback greatly contributed to my scholarly work.

I am thankful to Dr. Abebayehu Tekleselassie, committee member, professor, and cohort advisor. Your insight, conceptual thinking, and feedback strengthened my work throughout the process.

I am thankful to Dr. Kelly Sherrill Linkous, my professor and program cohort advisor. You accepted me into the GWU cohort and supported me throughout my journey.

I am appreciative of my outside examiners, Dr. Kimberly Jamison and Dr. Jeanette Allen, for your time, expertise, and your thought-provoking questions during my defense, which contributed to my final work.

I am inspired by all of my colleagues in AXCohort15 who have also worked so hard and diligently on their journey to achieving their doctorate.

Finally, I am grateful to the 11 principals of Title I schools who participated in this research study. Thank you for your time and willingness to share your experiences and expertise in leading a Title I school.

Abstract of Dissertation

A Study of Principals' Self-Efficacy and Leadership Practices
in Schools Serving Students Who Are Economically Disadvantaged

Research has shown that principal leadership is strongly connected to student achievement and plays a pivotal role in creating schools in which students and staff can achieve successful outcomes. Research has also shown the role of self-efficacy in approaching and completing difficult and challenging tasks. Title I schools include many risk factors that impact student learning, teacher retention, and access to necessary resources. There is limited research on how school principals' efficacy impacts their leadership behaviors in leading a Title I school.

Using a basic qualitative interpretive design, I examined 11 principals of Title I schools in Northern Virginia to determine how they perceived their own self-efficacy, the impact of their self-efficacy on their leadership behaviors, how the risk factors associated with leading a Title I school impacted their self-efficacy, and how they conceptualized their leadership efficacy. The conceptual framework used for this study was based on self-efficacy, leadership practices, and transformative and social justice tenets.

Based on the data collected, principals perceived that their self-efficacy was at the center of their leadership practices, which included building relationships, working collaboratively with staff, and empowering teachers. Principals developed their self-efficacy through belief of others and personal and work experiences, including vicarious and mastery experiences, and articulated that their belief in themselves was paramount to leading a Title I school. Finally, principals with high self-efficacy were motivated by risk factors associated with student poverty and used transformative leadership to mitigate

these factors to create more socially just schools. These principals exhibited moral courage to advance inclusion, access, and opportunity for all and created deep and equitable change.

The key findings from this study suggest that principals' behaviors, beliefs, and efficacy were formed and influenced by their personal and professional experiences. Principals often drew upon experiences they had with mentors and role models to influence their self-efficacy and inform their leadership practices. The implications are that these insights might (a) inform policy in recruitment and placement of principals in Title I schools, (b) impact leadership development practices through professional learning and formal mentor or intern programs for Title I principals, (c) showcase the influence of professional experiences on principals' efficacy, (d) help understand how principals' beliefs and behaviors are influenced by their experiences, and (e) offer strategies to create more equitable and socially just schools. Additional research is needed to connect principals' self-efficacy with high-performing high-poverty schools.

Table of Contents

Page

Dedication ..... **iii**

Acknowledgments ..... **iv**

Abstract of Dissertation ..... **vi**

List of Figures ..... **xiv**

List of Tables ..... **xv**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION **1**

Overview 1

Statement of the Problem 2

Purpose and Research Questions 5

Potential Significance 6

Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Framework 7

Summary of the Methodology 11

Limitations 12

Delimitations 14

Definition of Key Terms 14

Conclusion 16

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE **17**

High-Poverty Schools 19

Poverty, Schools, and Federal Accountability Reforms 21

Theoretical Perspectives on Self-Efficacy 24

Locus of Control 24
Social Cognitive Theory 26
Self-Efficacy Theory 27
Sources of Self-Efficacy 29
Principal Self-Efficacy 30
Teacher Self-Efficacy 35
Collective Efficacy 37
Principal Leadership 39
The Principal and Student Achievement 39
Turnaround Leadership 41
Principal Leadership and Teacher Learning 43
Leadership Behaviors and Efficacy 44
Leadership in High-Performing High-Poverty Schools 48
Leadership Beliefs and Dispositions 50
Social Justice and Transformative Leadership 54
Summary and Inferences 57

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 60
Research Design 61
Epistemology 62
Theoretical Perspective 63
Conceptual Framework 64
Choice of a Basic Interpretive Approach 64
Sampling 65

Data Collection 66
Interview Protocol 66
Pilot Interviews 67
Transcripts and Field Notes 68
Data Handling 68
Data Analysis 69
Step 3: Developing Categories and Themes for Analysis 72
Trustworthiness 75
Internal Validity 75
External Validity and Generalizability 76
Subjectivity Statement 77
Human Participants and Ethics Precautions 78
Chapter Summary 78

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS 80

Participant Profiles 81
Pam 83
Harry 83
Miguel 84
McKenna 85
Clara 85
Abigail 86
Riley 87
Shannon 87

Donna 88
Sasha 88
Reid 89
Coding Results 89
Theme 1: Principals Develop Self-Efficacy Through Personal and Work Experiences ... 91
Childhood Upbringing/Personal Experiences 91
Belief in Self 93
Belief of Others 95
Leadership Experiences That Lead to Self-Efficacy 97
Summary 102
Theme 2: Principals' Self-Efficacy Is at the Center of Their Leadership Practices 103
Collaborating 103
Building Relationships 106
Empowering Staff and Sharing Power 108
Summary 110
Theme 3: Principals with Self-Efficacy Respond to Risk Factors with Transformative and Social Justice Leadership Practices 110
Motivation 111
Persistence 114
Advancing Inclusion, Access, and Opportunity for All 117
Effecting Deep and Equitable Change 123
Moral Courage 126
Summary 130

Theme 4: Principals with Self-Efficacy Have a Clearly Defined Shared Vision and High Expectations for All 130
Being Strategic and Decisive 131
Having Shared Vision and Responsibility 132
Modeling Expectations and Leading by Example 134
Having High Expectations for Success for All Students 135
Summary 140
Chapter Summary 140

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS 141

Summary of Findings 142
Discussion of the Findings 144
Theme 1: Principals Develop Self-Efficacy Through Personal and Work Experiences 144
Theme 2: Principals' Self-Efficacy Is at the Center of Their Leadership Practices .. 148
Theme 3: Principals with Self-Efficacy Respond to Risk Factors with Transformative and Social Justice Leadership Practices 152
Theme 4: Principals with Self-Efficacy Have a Clearly Defined Shared Vision and High Expectations for All 156
Revisiting the Conceptual Framework 158
Conclusions 161
Conclusion 1: Principals' Self-Efficacy Has an Impact on Title I Schools and Can Be Developed Through Personal and Work Experiences 161

Conclusion 2: Transformative Leadership Practices in Title I Schools Require Self-Efficacy 162

Recommendations for Practice 163

Recommendations for Future Research 168

Summary 170

REFERENCES 173

APPENDIX A: Email Invitation to Participate in Study 195

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Telephone Script 196

APPENDIX C: Thank You for Participating Email 197

APPENDIX D: First Interview Protocol 198

APPENDIX E: Demographic and Background Information Questionnaire 200

APPENDIX F: Informed Consent Form 201

APPENDIX G: Email Request for Audio Recording Reflection 203

APPENDIX H: Audio/Visual Consent Form Research Project 204

List of Figures

Page

1.1. The Study's Conceptual Framework 8

2.1. The Study's Conceptual Framework 58

3.1. Steps in the Data Analysis 69

3.2. Highlighted Passages Assigned to Number Letter Code 72

3.3. Example of Coding Categories and Emergent Themes 72

3.4. Assigning Categories to Theoretical Codes 73

5.1. Updated Conceptual Framework 160

List of Tables

Page

3.1. Sample Categories and Potential Themes 73

3.2. Sample Categories Developed from the Interview Protocol 74

4.1. Participant Characteristics 82

4.2. Student Demographics at School Sites 82

4.3. Matrix of Research Questions, Assigned Categories, and Themes 89

5.1. Answers to the Study's Research Questions 143

5.2. Sample Interview Questions for Hiring a Principal for a Title I 167

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In 1983, the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* revealed that the U.S. educational system was failing to meet the needs of its students by giving them a mediocre education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). As a response to the report, the U.S. Department of Education began to develop programs and standards to improve public schools. Although some academic gains have been made since that report was published more than 36 years ago, we are still failing our students with the highest need. Poverty continues to be a significant factor that contributes to the achievement gap among students (Parrett & Budge, 2009).

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (Jiang et al., 2017), about 12.5 million children in the United States—19% of all children—live in poor families with incomes below the federal policy threshold. Poverty impacts children's ability to learn and can contribute to other health issues such as poor social-emotional well-being and poor mental and physical health. Prior research has shown that students living in poverty do not achieve at the same rate as their more prosperous peers (Jensen, 2009). Hernandez (2011) reported that 22% of students who live in poverty do not graduate from high school compared with 6% of students who have never been poor. For those students who have spent half their childhood in poverty, the percentage of high school dropout is higher, at 32%. Students from poverty also have less supportive networks than their peers, live in lower socioeconomic housing, have fewer resources and

educational materials, and spend much of their time trying to survive rather than focusing on school (Kumanyika & Grier, 2006).

The National Center for Educational Statistics (2017) defined high-poverty schools as those in which 75% of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals. These schools face many challenges, including limited resources and difficulties recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Machtinger, 2007; Parrett & Budge, 2009). Poverty serves as an early indicator of academic deficiencies for many young students and setting high standards for every student is critical to reducing the impact of poverty and other external factors (Porter et al., 2008). Research also shows that school poverty has a larger impact on student achievement than individual student poverty (Breger, 2017; Dell'Angelo, 2016; Perry & McConney, 2010; Sivernail et al., 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Researchers investigating school reform initiatives to improve student achievement have shown that the principal is the most influential factor in school effectiveness (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). Effective school principals create environments that support student learning and attract, retain, and develop highly effective teachers (Leithwood et al., 2004). Developing school environments that support continuous school improvement is a complex and important task of principals (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014). Leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged requires confidence, adaptability, and persistence to promote and support student achievement; further, principals and teachers must believe that they can be change agents for students to succeed in spite of their poverty.

In this era of accountability and school reform, the role of the principal has become increasingly more important. Schools cannot achieve their academic mission and vision without effective principal leadership focused on student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). McCollum and Kajs (2009) asserted that self-efficacy is an important component in developing effective principal leadership. They also noted that self-efficacy is tied to principals' success in school-oriented tasks and performance (McCollum & Kajs, 2009). In acknowledgment of the changing role of the principal and complex demands placed on school administrators, school districts are focused on improving the recruitment, professional development, and retention of high-quality school administrators (Fullan, 2006). Thus, the problem of practice addressed by this study is what type of leaders make a difference in leading Title I schools.

A plethora of research is available on teacher efficacy and teacher collective efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Less research addresses principals' sense of efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004):

> The principal is seen as a key agent at the school level, initiating change by raising the level of expectations for both teachers and students. One promising but unexplored avenue to understanding principals' motivation and behavior is principals' sense of efficacy. Self-efficacy is a perceived judgment of one's ability to effect change, which may be viewed as a foundational characteristic of an effective school leader. (p. 573)

Often overlooked is principals' self-beliefs related to capabilities. Bandura (2000) stated that "when faced with obstacles, setbacks, and failures, those who doubt their capabilities slacken their efforts, give up, or settle for mediocre solutions. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities redouble their effort to master the challenge" (p. 120). To meet the challenging expectations of leading schools serving students who

are economically disadvantaged, understanding the self-efficacy beliefs of principals in meeting these challenges is essential. According to Bandura (1986), principals' self-efficacy beliefs have a great impact on their level of aspiration and goal setting, adaptability, effort, and persistence. Additionally, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) supported Bandura's conclusions by positing:

> Principals' efficacy beliefs influence the level of effort and persistence they put forth in their daily work, as well as their resilience in the face of setbacks. It is not enough to hire and retain the most capable principals—they must also believe that they can successfully meet the challenges of the task at hand. (p. 582)

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) added that principals' sense of self-efficacy is a promising, yet not fully explored, area to understand principals' behavior and motivation. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), principals' leadership efforts to raise student achievement are essential for a school to succeed. Principals who lead high-poverty schools face many obstacles and challenging environments, including low achievement, low parental involvement, lack of resources, and staff turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Many studies that have been conducted were quantitative and used single survey instruments or questionnaires to assess the role of efficacy in leading schools. Several methods have been developed to assess self-efficacy, including the Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004); Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES) by Smith, Guarino, Strom, and Adams (2006); and School Administrator Efficacy Scale (SAES) by McCollum, Kajs, and Minter (2006). The instruments are reliable and have been used in many quantitative studies. As examples, some studies have examined the role of principal efficacy in creating professional learning communities (Leithwood et al., 2010; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008), in affecting teacher efficacy (Hipp,

1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011), as related to the use of power (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004), and as affecting reading achievement (Goddard, 2001; Rice, 2010).

Nevertheless, the quantitative studies do not capture the voice and perceptions of principals regarding their own self-efficacy in leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged, and qualitative research on principal self-efficacy is limited. Research is scant on the perceptions of principals regarding how efficacy informs their leadership practice and the impact of the conditions of schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged has on their efficacy to lead and how they conceptualize their leadership efficacy. None of the existing studies focused on the voice of principals in naming their own self-efficacy and leadership practices as they lead schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this basic qualitative interpretive study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged, the challenges they encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership behaviors and practices, and how they conceptualize leadership efficacy. This study addressed two research questions with two sub-questions:

1. What is the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?

a. Do principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so, how?
b. What risk factors influence principals' leadership efficacy in Title I schools?

2. How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?

For this study, leadership practices refer to transformative aspects such as collaboration, power sharing, relationship building, communication, adaptability, and a goal and process orientation.

Potential Significance

According to Ravitch and Carl (2019), studies are significant in influencing practice, affecting policy, or creating future research. The study's findings can inform how principals leading a Title I school perceive their self-efficacy and its impact on their leadership practices. Moreover, this research can provide examples of how principals with self-efficacy used transformational leadership to mitigate risk factors associated with Title I schools and how work experiences developed their self-efficacy. Specifically, this research can show how principals with self-efficacy created schools that focused on students, collaboration, equity, and inclusion. Limited studies address the connection between principals' self-efficacy and the leadership practices needed to lead a Title I school. This study has pragmatic importance for the leadership behaviors and practices of Title I schools. Gaining insights from principals could impact future principals in understanding the connection between self-efficacy beliefs and leadership practices and assist current principals in increasing their self-efficacy with vicarious and mastery

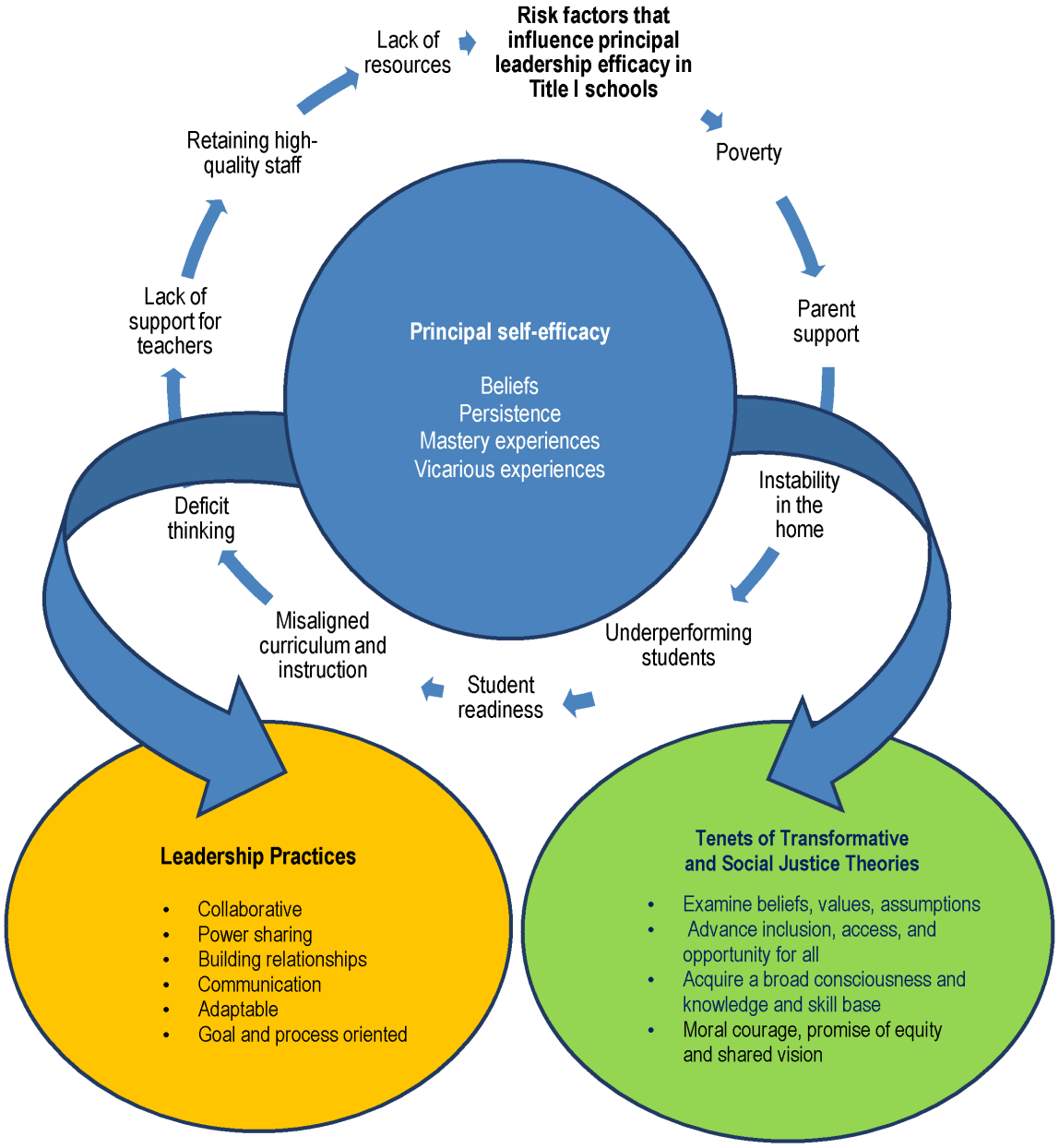
experiences. To mitigate risk factors associated with leading Title I schools, principals with self-efficacy are needed.

Evidence of Title I principals' perceptions and beliefs in their abilities to effectively lead a Title I school could assist school districts in designing effective policies related to hiring and developing effective principals to lead Title I schools. The results could positively impact high-poverty schools, including matching principals with high efficacy beliefs with high-poverty schools. Professional learning may also include a mentor program for principals and a vast array of work experiences before becoming a principal. This study also adds to the literature in qualitative analysis related to principal efficacy and its impact on leadership practices and student success.

Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Framework

The primary goal of this study was to examine the connection between principals' self-efficacy and how their understanding of their efficacy transforms the processes and practices that contribute to leading high-poverty schools. The study sought to understand how their leadership practices and behaviors contribute to creating educational equity and excellence for all students. The conceptual framework used for this study is based on self-efficacy, leadership practices, transformative justice, and social justice tenets (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1
The Study's Conceptual Framework



Bandura explained that a sense of efficacy is one's belief in one's ability to affect a course of actions resulting in specific outcomes. Self-efficacy comes from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological arousal

(Bandura, 1994). Mastery experiences require individuals to successfully complete a task or series of tasks, but also to attribute the success of the task to their own effort rather than external forces. Vicarious experiences, which involve watching and imitating other people, increase self-efficacy in demonstrating that the goal can be accomplished. Social persuasion is quantified through encouragement and praise and is more effective when individuals have confidence in the persuader. Lastly, arousal or psychological response relates to one's emotional state in regard to a task. Feeling stressed about the task lowers individuals' self-efficacy and creates vulnerability, whereas welcoming the challenge or task increases self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

The conceptual framework was also informed by social justice and transformative leadership theories. When considering factors that contribute to principal practice and behaviors that lead to educational equity and excellence for all students, research has indicated that principal self-efficacy, personal beliefs, and transformational leadership practices can impact educational excellence for all students.

The first factor is the role of principal self-efficacy and leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged. Personal efficacy affects behavior directly, impacting beliefs, goals, outcomes, and perceptions of impediments and opportunities (Bandura, 2000). Schools cannot achieve their academic mission and vision without effective principal leadership focused on student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). McCollum and Kajs (2009) asserted that self-efficacy is an important component in developing effective principal leadership. They also noted that self-efficacy

is tied to principals' success in school-oriented tasks and performance (McCollum & Kajs, 2009).

The second factor established in social justice research is a leader's personal beliefs in establishing equitable and excellent schools (Delpit, 1995; Theoharis, 2004, 2010). Leading high-poverty schools requires social justice leaders who address the needs of high-poverty schools, including poverty, language deficits, gender, race, and ethnicity. Social justice leaders understand the knowledge, necessary materials, and training needed to develop collective efficacy and practices to support social justice. Social justice leaders in high-performing high-poverty schools are willing to challenge the conventional norms and think outside the box (Elmore, 2006). Additionally, social justice leaders look at policies, practices, structures, and cultures that can impede this goal. Social justice leaders do not accept the status quo and consistently find ways to challenge those who do. It is important to understand the culture of poverty to ensure all students are provided opportunities for success. Payne (2005) argued that to move out of poverty, students need access to resources, and education and relationships are critical to achieving that goal.

The third factor is established in transformative leadership theory and involves the tenets of educational equity; examination of beliefs, values, and assumptions; moral courage; and shared vision. Transformational leadership creates conditions under which everyone can grow and participate, creating school communities that are socially just and academically excellent (Shields, 2013). This educational leadership approach requires that educators focus on power and privilege and deconstruction of knowledge frameworks that impede equity and excellence for all students. Educators must

reconstruct these frameworks to be more inclusive. Shields (2010) posited that "it is the essential work of the educational leader to create learning contexts or communities in which social, political and cultural capital is enhanced" (p. 572). Shields (2010) also argued that reflective analysis is required of school leaders, in which they engage in committed and challenging work. A transformational leader must build relationships and promote reflective dialogue if critical consciousness is to occur (Shields, 2009, 2010). Theoharis (2007) noted that principals who want to make our society more equitable begin by "addressing issues of race, providing ongoing staff development focused on building equity, developing staff investment in social justice, hiring and supervising for justice, and empowering staff" (p. 235). These tasks are essential for creating equitable and excellent learning environments and opportunities for all students.

Consideration of both transformative leadership and social justice leadership in relation to Bandura's self-efficacy theory is relevant to this study, as the study was designed to establish the relationship between how principals perceive their own self-efficacy beliefs as having an impact or influence on their leadership practices and behaviors in leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged.

Summary of the Methodology

To gather information for this basic qualitative interpretive study, I conducted semi-structured interviews to examine and understand the participants' perspectives as they construct their reality and meaning from their experiences (Maxwell, 2005). These interviews followed an interview protocol with 15 main questions and additional sub-questions. As noted by Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2012), sub-questions served as probes in the event the interviewees' responses did not cover my area of interest. Pilot

testing of the interview questions allowed for their refinement and decreased possible bias. The interview questions were tested with colleagues, so I could address my reflexivity and minimize potential bias. I protected the confidentiality of the participants by assigning pseudonyms, keeping all data in locked storage or password-protected files, and destroying data after 5 years, as recommended by Sieber (1993).

I recruited participants for this study from two school districts in northern Virginia. All participants were principals of Title I schools; a questionnaire sent with the recruitment letter collected their background information. I interviewed each principal once, scheduling a follow-up interview if needed, and transcribed the audio-recorded interviews using a transcribing software. Participants reviewed transcripts for accuracy and intent (Guest et al., 2012). Trustworthiness techniques included this member check process as well as peer review, memos, and a subjectivity statement. When conducting qualitative research, it is essential for the researcher to use "bracketing," a self-reflective practice that acknowledges possible bias (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Through this process, I examined and tracked my thoughts as I examined the data. After the interviews were complete, I analyzed the data, developing codes or categories and looking for emerging themes.

Limitations

This qualitative interpretive study addressed principal efficacy and its impact on leadership practices and student success. The research purpose was not to generalize results but to add to the existing body of knowledge. Because of the small sample size and the focus on two Title I elementary schools within two Virginia districts, the findings are not generalizable, and participants' perspectives were limited based on their

experiences and years in administration. Based on the sampling design, everyone demonstrated high self-efficacy, though in varying degrees. Although participants' responses varied based on their educational background, personal and work experiences, and school context, which informed their leadership practices, this sampling design by its nature has limitations that may lead to confirmatory bias. Another limitation to be considered is the impact of leadership development or mentoring programs in each district that may exist to varying degrees and impact the outcomes of this study. Although this study addressed a gap in the literature—as most self-efficacy studies have focused on teachers rather than principals—the size and design of the study limit its transferability.

Another limitation relates to the fact that I am an administrator in one of the study school districts. My familiarity with the district and the study's participants could have led to bias in my interpretation of the data and could have affected participants' transparency during the interviews. This familiarity could have also been beneficial, in that participants may have been more at ease during the interview and provided more depth in their responses. Since I had no evaluative relationship with the participants, they should have felt comfortable sharing their experiences, successes, and challenges. In qualitative studies, research bias is part of the methodology and cannot be completely eliminated. I took steps to decrease bias through reflection memos, member checking, and peer review. I recorded notes during the interview process to reflect on my personal experiences and how they might affect my interpretations of the data and their findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Delimitations

For the purpose of this study, data collection was limited to Title I school principals in Northern Virginia. Specifically, the study was delimited to include only 11 Title I principals from two school districts in Northern Virginia. School. Principals of non–Title I schools were not included, as the purpose of this study was to understand the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices and how the risk factors associated with leading a Title I school impacted their self-efficacy and leadership practices.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following key terms were identified.

Collective efficacy: Teachers' perceptions of whether the group can have an impact on student achievement (Goddard & Goddard, 2001).

Coronavirus (COVID-19): A large family of viruses that causes mild and chronic upper respiratory infections in humans and some animals (Wu & McGoogan, 2020). It is spread by coughing, sneezing, or having close personal contact with someone with the virus (Wu & McGoogan, 2020).

High-poverty schools: For the purpose of this study, Title I schools that meet the criterion of having at least 35% of students receiving free and reduced meals (Virginia Department of Education, 2017).

Instructional leadership: Leadership activities focused on teaching and learning, including giving teachers feedback on performance (Calik et al., 2012).

Leadership practices: For the purpose of this study, transformational leadership practices such as collaboration, power sharing, relationship building, communication, adaptability, and a goal and process orientation.

Locus of control: The extent of control individuals perceive they have over the expectancies or outcomes in their lives (Rotter, 1966).

No Child Left Behind Act: A standards-based education law with heavy emphasis on school accountability and learning for all students.

Phenomenology: Inquiry wherein the researcher attempts to identify the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by the participants (Creswell et al., 2003). This approach is particularly appropriate to address meanings and perspectives of research participants.

Principal efficacy: The principal's belief in his or her personal capabilities to develop a course of action that will result in desired outcomes in the school (Bandura, 1977).

Qualitative research: A holistic approach that involves discovery; an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

School turnaround. "A dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization" (Wallace Foundation, 2010, p. 4).

Self-efficacy: The belief in one's own ability to achieve a goal or perform a task. It is not individuals' actual ability to perform the task but their belief that they are able to perform the task (Bandura, 1997).

Social cognitive theory: The belief in human agency and in individuals' capability to make things happen. The theory views people as proactive, self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-reflecting, rather than as only reactive organisms (Bandura, 1986).

Title I: A federal program that provides grants to enhance learning for students who are economically disadvantaged, so they can meet benchmarks in math and reading. The purpose of Title I is for all students to have fair, equal, and significant opportunities to secure a high-quality education and meet a minimum proficiency on all state academic assessments (Virginia Department of Education, 2017).

Conclusion

There is the need to understand principals' leadership and self-efficacy in high-poverty schools so as to recruit and develop effective principals. Although studies have addressed these topics, none of the studies focused on the voice of the principal. The current study addressed the questions, "What is the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?" and "How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?" The qualitative study involved interviews of elementary principals in two districts. The conceptual framework used for this study was based on self-efficacy, transformational leadership practices, and transformative and social justice tenets. The next chapter reviews the literature that informs this study.

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature that examined the role of self-efficacy in educational settings, particularly principal self-efficacy, and leadership behaviors and practices in schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged. I utilized multiple educational resources: educational books, peer reviewed resources, scholarly articles, and educational research databases to gain relevant literature for this research study. The following educational databases were explored: Gelman Library System Educational Source Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) JSTOR ProQuest Research Library. The literature search included sources found in the Educational Research Information Dissertation Abstracts International, and Premier Sources (EBSCO), as well as reference lists from articles and dissertations, World Wide Web internet searches, and books on leadership and education. I used the individual and combined terminology of "self-efficacy," "teacher efficacy," "principal efficacy," and "principal leadership," and "high poverty school." By combining terms, other research topics emerged such as "leadership behaviors," "teacher perceptions," and "student achievement," "turnaround schools," and I delimited my research literature on self-efficacy and leadership by using inclusionary criteria such as research based books and peer reviewed articles that spanned from 1991-2019 except for fourteen articles from 1966, 1968, 1977, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1988 and 1989 which presented important concepts or notions in educational research literature that used several key words or phrases: self-efficacy, teacher efficacy, principal efficacy, student efficacy, collective efficacy, student achievement, poverty, leadership behaviors, leadership beliefs and dispositions, No Child

Left Behind (NCLB), turnaround schools, school improvement, underperforming schools, high-poverty schools, and student achievement. The review also included literature on styles of leadership, including social justice, transformational, transformative, and culturally responsive. Additionally, it included Bandura's social cognitive theory, including self-efficacy theory, and Rotter's locus of control theory. The span of literature viewed was vast, as earlier work of Bandura and Rotter was essential in understanding how social cognitive, self-efficacy, and locus of control theories relate to principals' beliefs, behaviors, and practices in leading high-poverty schools. I started my research on self-efficacy, teacher efficacy, collective efficacy and leadership behaviors. Through the research literature it became evident that self-efficacy could impact student and teacher outcomes. However, there was limited research on the voice of the principal and the role of self-efficacy impacting leadership behaviors and practices. To understand what type of leader is needed to lead a high poverty school it was necessary to examine principals' perception of their self-efficacy in leading a Title I school and its impact on their leadership behaviors. I constructed open-ended research questions based on the following concepts: principal leadership and behaviors, self-efficacy, transformative and social justice leadership, and high poverty schools.

The chapter begins by discussing the context of the study—high-poverty schools—and discussing such schools in relation to federal accountability reforms. The next section of the literature review addresses theoretical perspectives on self-efficacy, including locus of control, social cognitive theory, self-efficacy theory, and sources of self-efficacy. That section also reviews available literature on principal self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, and collective efficacy. The third section describes the leadership of

principals, focusing on leadership behaviors and efficacy, leadership in high-performing high-poverty schools, leadership beliefs and dispositions, and transformative justice and social justice leadership in relation to leading high-poverty schools. The chapter closes with a summary.

High-Poverty Schools

Ruby Payne noted that "poverty" applies to anyone who carries the "mindset" of the "poverty culture" (Bomer et al., 2008). Poverty creates many challenges for principals and staff working in Title I schools. Students in poverty tend to have less language and social skills when entering school. Students of poverty are often lower achievers academically than students of higher socioeconomic status. Students of poverty also have additional risk factors associated with poverty, which may include one-parent households, parents working more than one job, mental health diagnoses, drug use, and lack of proper nutrition.

Students can come from situational poverty or generational poverty. Families growing up in situational poverty have to make different decisions than families with means, such as whether to go to work or attend a parent-teacher conference or whether to pay for a field trip or purchase groceries (Payne, 2009). Situational poverty puts students at a disadvantage in accessing school and community opportunities, as often this poverty is brought about by loss of job, divorce, death, or incarceration. Situational poverty is defined as a lack of resources due to a particular event (Payne, 2005, p. 45).

Generational poverty, in which students and families have been affected with poverty by more than two generations, usually has a greater impact on education than situational poverty (Payne, 2005). Students and parents in generational poverty tend to

look at short-term solutions and often operate in survival mode. Payne (2005) noted that to serve students from generational poverty, we must be able to rethink how these students can be served. Education is a way for students to move away from poverty, and it is the responsibility of the educational system to give students the resources (Payne, 2005).

High-poverty schools face many challenges, including having less high-quality staff and a higher staff turnover rate than other schools (Machtinger, 2007). Another challenge is deficit thinking, where staff may believe that students of lower achievement do not make an effort rather than understanding the impact of poverty on their ability to learn (Taylor, 2005). Many high-poverty schools also lack funding and resources; they have less funding per student than schools of higher socioeconomic means (Machtinger, 2007). In Title I schools, the teacher turnover rate is 50% higher than for non–Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). This high turnover rate impacts many areas, including the cohesiveness of grade-level teams, time invested in training teachers, and consistency in building relationships with students who need stability.

Students from poverty often lack access to fundamental resources such as food, clothing, housing, health care, and early childhood education (Hernandez, 2011). Students from poverty have a significant disadvantage when starting school; in addition, their social and environmental factors can impact their academic success. Students from poverty are also in need of caring adults who believe in them. The impact of poverty on the adults in their lives often creates situations that include exposure to drugs, alcohol, and mental health problems (Evans & Anderson, 2013). Based on these environmental factors, students from poverty often present behavior problems due to the instability in

the home and need additional support from strong, caring role models (Yoshikawa et al., 2012).

Most student behavior issues can be positively impacted by building strong relationships with students. Educators also need to look at how they see students from poverty and how they imagine their roles in these students' lives (Pianta & Walsh, 2014). Students from poverty need school to be a stable place to counteract the instability of the home, and they need strong relationships with teachers and administrators who see their potential, believe all students can learn, and look beyond the circumstances of poverty (Jensen, 2013).

Poverty, Schools, and Federal Accountability Reforms

In 1965, the 89th U.S. Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law. Originally created as a civil rights law in response to poverty and inequity in education across the country, ESEA provided federal grants to districts serving low-income students and provided grants for scholarships for low-income college students, books, and education centers. President Johnson stated that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal" (Wardlow, 2016, p. 1). In 1968, Congress expanded ESEA to include new programs (and titles) that serve at-risk migrant and neglected children. This amendment to ESEA became known as the Bilingual Education Act.

In the 1980s, the government reduced federal funding for ESEA; this meant serving fewer educationally disadvantaged children than in the 1970s (Wardlow, 2016). In 1988, Congress passed a new version of ESEA that included mandatory student testing, accountability, and district assessments to measure and report effectiveness

annually. Schools that did not meet expected adequate progress had to develop plans for improvement. In 1994, Congress amended ESEA and required states to develop standards and aligned assessments for all students. This amendment, known as the Improving America's School Act of 1994, also required districts to report schools that were not making adequate yearly progress (Wardlow, 2016).

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law another ESEA amendment, the No Child Left Behind Act, a standards-based education law with heavy emphasis on school accountability and learning for all students and established a 12-year timeline to achieve results. During this time, researchers analyzed standardized test scores for the achievement of individual students as well as subgroups. They categorized these groups by race, gender, learning disability, socioeconomic class, and whether the student's native language was English. The data revealed that many student subgroups were not achieving at the same level as other groups. Harris (2007) noted that despite great efforts, "inequities in educational outcomes across racial and income groups are still large" (p. 367). In 2014, NCLB failed to meet its expectations.

In 2015, Congress reauthorized ESEA and included needed shifts in accountability and assessment. This new version, which President Obama signed into law as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, is the most recent attempt to achieve equity and excellence for all students. ESSA includes alternative assessments other than high-stakes testing while maintaining accountability measures for all. It allows for school districts to use creative ways to teach and assess student learning as well as provide high-quality pre-K experiences (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The goal

of ESSA is to provide equitable high-quality education, including high accountability for schools that serve marginalized students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Over 50 years ago, *The Coleman Report* (Coleman et al., 1966) brought to the forefront the connection between students' academic achievement and their level of poverty. Recent studies have also shown a relationship between poverty and academic achievement; although the association has lessened, it is still present (Harwell et al., 2017; Sirin, 2005).

School reform efforts have tried to improve student achievement among students who are economically disadvantaged, but students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds continue to achieve at a higher level. Poverty and underachievement continue to be among the most concerning issues in education (Ladd, 2012; Smyth & Wrigley, 2013). As poverty rates rise, students who are economically disadvantaged continue to achieve at lower levels than their more affluent peers (Parrett & Budge, 2009). Educators, principals, and local, state, and federal entities struggle in meeting the educational needs of these marginalized students. Schools with large populations of low socioeconomic students receive financial assistance from federal programs such as Title I to address the needs of these students.

Through Title I, Part A of the different iterations of the ESEA, the federal government provides grants to be used to enhance learning for students who are economically disadvantaged to meet the benchmarks in math and reading. The purpose of Title I is for all students to have fair, equal, and additional opportunities to secure a high-quality education and meet a minimum proficiency on all state academic assessments (Virginia Department of Education, 2017). In order to qualify for Title I funds, a school

must have at least 35% of students receiving free and reduced-price meals; however, the program does not measure the students' level of poverty and requires students to self-identify. Since 1965, Title I programs have focused mostly on closing the achievement gap and ensuring that economically disadvantaged students receive equitable opportunities for academic success (Hoang, 2010).

With the movement toward increased accountability, there has been a focus on academic improvement for socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The failure of NCLB to bring all students to proficiency by 2014 has shed light on the need for educational improvement. The spotlight shines directly on principals' and teachers' capacity to improve student performance and create equitable schools and practices resulting in high achievement for all students. McCollum and Kajs (2009) asserted that self-efficacy is an important component in developing effective principal leadership, and the next section discusses this component.

Theoretical Perspectives on Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy theory is derived from Bandura's social cognitive theory. This section reviews the relevant literature related to locus of control, social cognitive theory, self-efficacy theory, the relevance of self-efficacy to principal leadership practices, and self-efficacy as applied to the educational setting to include principal efficacy, teacher efficacy, and collective efficacy.

Locus of Control

In 1966, Rotter developed the locus of control or general expectancies theory. Within the theory he outlined that individuals' beliefs in achieving their expected goals

affect how they perform tasks (Rotter, 1966). Rotter (1966) defined locus of control as the extent of control individuals perceive they have over the expectancies or outcomes in their lives. Internal locus of control is situated in the belief that outcomes are a result of one's own behavior (Kane Lewis & Lawrence-Patterson, 1989). External locus of control refers to the belief that outcomes are due to chance, external influences, or fate (Kane Lewis & Lawrence-Patterson, 1989). How individuals perceive their control over events in their lives is directly correlated to whether they believe that they have the ability to influence the outcomes.

Motivation, behavior, and learning are all classified under locus of control. According to the theory of locus of control, individuals who believe they have a higher level of control over their successes and failures are more inclined to take on more difficult tasks and exhibit more persistence than those who believe their actions have little or no impact outcomes (Connor, 1995). These findings suggest that the more successes one has, the higher the level of internal control, whereas multiple failures could result in an external locus of control.

Middleton and Midgley (1997) executed a study of external locus of control by examining 341 students in fifth grade and again when they were in sixth grade in middle school. Findings showed that students with an external locus of control were more likely to react to failure by giving up or putting little effort into the task. Those students also believed that their poor academic performance resulted from external factors—such as poverty and lack of resources—that were beyond their control. When students react to failure and put little effort into a task, that can also impact the perceptions of teachers and their ability to move students towards success (Middleton & Midgley, 1997).

Hoover (2000) examined the effect of college entrance scores, self-efficacy, locus of control, and student grade expectations on college performance. Findings showed a significant correlation ($r = .69$, $p < .01$) between high self-efficacy, college-specific locus of control, and students' academic achievement. Additionally, the findings showed a correlation with academic performance and general locus of control and self-efficacy.

Bandura (1983) stated locus of control interrelates with self-efficacy to have an impact on behaviors and emotions. Locus of control refers to one's belief about the outcome, whereas self-efficacy is the perception of one's ability to take action. In summary, individuals with more internal locus of control will have higher self-efficacy than those with a more external locus of control (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura (1986) developed social cognitive theory in response to his uneasiness with the principles of behaviorism. The foundation for his theory was the belief in human agency and in individuals' capability to make things happen. According to Bandura (1986), people are proactive, self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-reflecting; therefore, they are not only reactive organisms.

Bandura added to social learning theory by including observational learning. Bandura (1977) also added self-belief to his social learning theory. Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory creates a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. Within the theory, human behavior is an interchange of several sources of influence, including (a) behavior, (b) personal factors, and (c) the environment (Bandura, 1986, 1997). These sources interact with each other bio-directionally. The interaction of these sources does not happen at the same time, and the weight of each

source's power is not equivalent. Wood and Bandura (1989) concluded that due to bio-directionality, people are products and creators of their environment at the same time. Individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives are central to not only meeting their goals but attempting them. The interchange between self-efficacy and outcome expectancies is the basis for social cognitive theory.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy is the belief in one's own ability (self-efficacy), or the ability of one's colleagues collectively (collective efficacy), to achieve a goal or perform a task. It is not individuals' actual ability to perform the task but their belief that they are able to perform the task. Bandura (1995) explained self-efficacy as follows:

> The belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to manage prospective situations. It influences the choices we make, the efforts we put forth, how long we persist when we confront obstacles and in the face of failure, how we feel. (p. 2)

Efficacy beliefs affect the amount of effort or perseverance an individual applies to a given task. Individuals also gain efficacy beliefs through experiences (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy, as stated by Bandura (1998), involves three dimensions: complexity, generality, and strength. Complexity speaks to the complex nature of the task. Generality is defined as a wide range of activities or tasks versus a very specific task focus. Lastly, strength refers to how strong a person's efficacy beliefs are, suggesting that the greater the belief, the more persistence with the task. Additionally, efficacy beliefs are also based on perceptions of a task's difficulty and the effort required for the task. One's own

experiences in regard to a particular task are also tied to perceptions of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Perceived efficacy, as stated by Bandura (2000), is a significant factor in the way humans function. It affects behavior directly, but also has an impact on other components, such as outcome expectations and goals and aspirations. Additionally, Bandura (1997) suggested that perceived beliefs and judgments about one's personal capabilities can motivate people to accomplish goals aside from having the actual skills to achieve these goals. Wagner (2008) posited that self-efficacy is a critical component in the path people take to complete their goals and overcome obstacles.

According to Bandura (1993), those with a low level of belief in controlling their environment exhibit little change. On the contrary, those with a high level of belief find ways through innovation, persistence, and ingenuity to have some control over challenging environments and show effective change. Additional categories of self-efficacy relate to whether individuals attribute it to inherent capability or acquired skill. With the inherent view, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) indicated that leaders would lose their level of self-efficacy when challenging situations arise and would demonstrate lower aspirations and less problem-solving ability. The researchers also noted that they would hold lower aspirations not only for themselves, but also for their colleagues—which, in the case of principals, would affect students' performance and teachers' efficacy (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). However, if leaders believe that efficacy is an acquired skill, they would continue to have high self-efficacy beliefs when challenging situations arise and therefore set challenging goals and use a high level of problem solving in addressing challenging situations. These leaders would have strong belief in

their ability to meet these challenges, which in turn could impact the individual beliefs of teachers and the collective beliefs and efficacy of an entire school, having a positive impact on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura's theory of efficacy includes four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological arousal. Mastery experiences are the most effective source of efficacy. Mastery experiences require individuals to successfully complete a task or series of tasks, but also to attribute the success of the task to their own effort rather than to external forces. It is assumed that higher levels of self-efficacy relate to successful past experiences. In contrast, efficacy would be low if past experiences have failed (Bandura, 1997). In support of Bandura's findings, Pajares (2002) found that successful experiences increase self-efficacy and failures decrease it. Mastery experiences have a lasting effect on one's self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

The second source, vicarious experiences, results from watching and imitating other people. Through observation, people learn to imitate behaviors and apply these behaviors to various situations. Bandura (1986) suggested that those who experience vicariously generally have weaker experiences than mastery experiences. However, he went on to state that vicarious experiences can still can produce substantial change. They increase self-efficacy in demonstrating that the goal can be accomplished through little effort. Bandura (1977) noted that this source of efficacy increases when individuals observe a person they perceive to be similar to them persevere and experience an ability to achieve his or her goals. This source of efficacy is important in influencing efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1997).

The third source for efficacy development is social persuasion and is quantified through encouragement and praise. According to Versland (2016), positive feedback about individuals' capabilities increases their perception of themselves and can improve their performance. Bandura (1986) also suggested that negative feedback can affect performance that was once considered adequate. Bandura (1997) stated that verbal and social persuasion are more effective when individuals have confidence in the persuader. Confidence in the skills and abilities of the persuader can create a belief within individuals being persuaded in their own beliefs and capabilities (Bandura, 1997). In contrast, Usher and Pajares (2008) noted that negative persuaders can also erode one's self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1997) added that encouragement that is insincere or too general can also defeat one's self-efficacy beliefs.

Arousal or psychological response is the final efficacy source and relates to one's emotional state in regard to a task. Feeling stressed or ill about the task lowers self-efficacy and creates vulnerability; on the other hand, if the challenge or task is welcomed, self-efficacy rises (Bandura, 1997). Emotional arousal can increase, or decrease based on the person's successes or failures with previous experiences. Pajares (2002) concluded that negative thoughts and fears that individuals experience based on their perceived inability to achieve a goal can cause stress that can negatively impact their performance.

Principal Self-Efficacy

In this era of accountability and school reform, the role of the principal has become increasingly more significant (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Schools cannot achieve their academic mission and vision without effective principal leadership focused on student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). McCollum and

Kajs (2009) asserted that self-efficacy is an important component in developing effective principal leadership. They also noted that self-efficacy is tied to principals' success in school-oriented tasks and performance (McCollum & Kajs, 2009). Bandura (1977) stated that a principal's sense of self-efficacy is related to his or her belief in personal capabilities to develop a course of action that will result in desired outcomes in the school. Researchers have conducted a plethora of studies on teacher efficacy and collective efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Collier, 2005; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001), but less research on principals' sense of efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004):

> Enhancing leadership self-efficacy should be an important objective for those responsible for improving the quality of leadership in school. The study of principal self-efficacy beliefs is a promising new line of research. Efficacy beliefs of school leaders are likely to be fruitful avenues of study. (p. 583)

Lyons and Murphy (1994) looked at the relationship between the power bases that principals use and their own self-efficacy. A total of 121 elementary, middle, and high school principals were surveyed in an urban area. The survey measured principal self-efficacy and use of power. The researchers defined power as the ability to influence behavior. Findings from this study suggested that high-efficacy principals used internal or personal power sources to influence teachers, and these principals led by example. The principals did not rely on external power sources such as policies, rewards, negative rewards, or regulations to influence teachers. They also found that principals with high self-efficacy more often used internal-based power in their instructional leadership role. In contrast, principals with low self-efficacy used coercive power with their staff to influence behavior and outcomes. Principals who use coercive or forceful power are

generally interested in their own goals and achievements rather than the needs of their staff (Hogg, 2001). Principals who use external sources of power had low efficacy and did not believe in their ability as an instructional leader to impact student achievement (Lyons & Murphy, 1994).

Osterman and Sullivan (1996) performed an analysis of 12 newly appointed principals in New York City Public Schools. This analysis included whether personal or organizational factors supported or impeded principals' efforts to create school change. The findings showed that both internal and external factors influenced the principals' leadership behaviors. Osterman and Sullivan noted that the greatest difference between principals with low and high efficacy was in their problem-solving steps. Principals with high self-efficacy maintained their goals and could easily adapt changeable positions. The authors further stated that behaviors exhibited by highly efficacious principals were adaptability, flexibility, and collaboration in the change process. They also found that these principals showed more persistence in pursuit of their own and school goals (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996).

Smith et al. (2006) conducted a study of principal self-efficacy beliefs and the creation of effective instructional learning environments in schools. The study comprised 284 principals throughout 12 states. The research questions addressed (a) the relationship between different principal efficacy beliefs and demographic factors, (b) differences between their perception of beliefs, (c) practices of principals to facilitate effective teaching and learning, and (d) outcomes expected from their practices. Findings showed that female principals spent more time on instructional leadership issues and also had higher self-efficacy in instructional leadership (Smith et al., 2006). Further, principal

efficacy beliefs increased in more complex organizational structures such as larger schools. These principals had higher efficacy scores than others in the sample population. Smith et al. (2006) added that highly efficacious principals were more likely to spend additional time on instructional issues, show more perseverance and energy, and have more adaptability and resilience when experiencing obstacles or setbacks. Smith et al., (2006) summarized that principals with high levels of efficacy in instructional leadership could benefit schools for lower socioeconomic students. This study supported Bandura's (1997) study, in which he listed several self-efficacy influences:

> (1) which behavior people choose to pursue
> (2) how much effort they'll spend
> (3) how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures
> (4) their resilience to difficulties. (p. 3)

Isik and Derinbay (2015) used two independent samples of administrators from Turkey. Participants were drawn from 420 schools. The first survey group consisted of 150 school principals (11% women, 89% men). The second sample consisted of 150 school principals (10% women, 90% men). The Turkish version of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES-T) was used, with the categories of Efficacy for Management, Efficacy for Instruction, and Efficacy for Moral Leadership (Isik & Derinbay, 2015). Results of the study aligned with Tschannen-Moran and Gareis's (2004) study showing a high level of connection with social support within the school and principal self-efficacy, as well as a medium level of correlation between support from out of school and principal self-efficacy. Years at the school and school level did not significantly correlate with principal self-efficacy—which further strengthened the validity of this tool. These findings correlate with Bandura's (1977) analysis that an individual's experiences, particularly mastery experiences, are significant factors that shape self-efficacy.

Fisher's (2011) study included 150 aspiring principals from five academic colleges and universities in Israel. Participants completed a questionnaire during the first month of a training program and after completion of the 2-year training. Results showed that participants' perception of the role of principal remained unchanged; however, their perceived self-efficacy did change following the 2-year training program (Fisher, 2011). These findings suggest that self-efficacy can be developed through training and mastery experiences. Self-efficacy questionnaires such as those used in this study could be used in interviewing principals and hiring those who have high self-efficacy. They could also assist in developing current principals in training programs. Lastly, in alignment with Smith et al.'s (2006) study showing that principals with high levels of efficacy in instructional leadership could benefit economically disadvantaged schools, the findings of this study suggest that matching highly efficacious principals with a high level of mastery experiences with high-need schools could positively impact student achievement.

According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), behaviors among principals can raise teacher self-efficacy. The principal behaviors noted were (a) modeling appropriate behavior, (b) providing rewards based on performance, (c) fostering a healthy school climate through creating order, and (d) allowing teachers flexibility and autonomy over classroom issues. The ability to develop teachers' self-efficacy is not about the position but rather is a result of the principal being able to inspire teachers to individually and collectively support and carry out the vision of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Teacher self-efficacy is a type of efficacy that is described as the extent to which a teacher feels capable to help students learn (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) explored the relationships among faculty trust in the principal, principal leadership behaviors, school climate, and student achievement. The study involved 64 elementary, middle, and high schools in two school districts. The researchers found that the collegial leadership behaviors of the principal were strongly related to faculty trust in the principal ($r = 0.92$, $p < 0.01$), and also to elements of school climate such as teacher professionalism, academic press, and community engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). They also found a correlation with student achievement, which included trust, principal leadership behaviors, and school climate. The findings of this study infer that principals must create and maintain trust in order to lead schools effectively. Essentially, trust has both interpersonal and task-oriented dimensions (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Research has shown the connection between principals' behaviors and self-efficacy and their impact on teachers' self-efficacy. Principals are in a position to create and nurture an environment that develops teachers' efficacy. These principals' must first develop a level of trust with their teachers and inspire a vision among teachers and staff to support student outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Efficacy researchers have documented the connection between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Teachers' self-efficacy can also influence students' motivation and self-efficacy, resulting in student achievement (Chong et al., 2010). Additional research done by Collier (2005) indicated that teachers who have high efficacy beliefs have increased student achievement.

Ross and Bruce (2007) stated that teachers who score high in efficacy beliefs consistently demonstrate high levels of persistence when working with low-achieving students, use more innovative instructional techniques, have highly effective classroom management strategies, and have greater achievement success with low-ability students. Furthermore, Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004), and Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) attribute higher levels of student achievement to teachers with high efficacy beliefs than teachers with low efficacy beliefs.

Ashton and Webb (1986) studied the relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement. Findings showed that, compared with teachers with low efficacy, teachers with high efficacy were more likely to take responsibility for student learning and believe that all students can learn. This study described highly efficacious teachers as those who (a) were more attentive to student behavior (b) spent more time on instruction, (c) encouraged their students more frequently, (d) coached students, (e) praised students more often, and (f) ran a more orderly and efficient classroom.

Guskey and Passaro (1994) studied teacher efficacy beliefs of 342 teachers and their influence on student learning. The researchers noted that there was a difference in beliefs about the influence teachers have or do not have on student learning. Guskey and Passaro (1994) identified self-efficacy as the determining factor. Teachers who believed they could impact student achievement regardless of external factors had higher self-efficacy.

Research has also shown the positive impact of teacher self-efficacy on student achievement among students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

Collective Efficacy

Goddard and Goddard (2001) noted that their construct of collective teacher efficacy built on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy formulation and the model of teacher efficacy developed by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998). Goddard and Goddard (2001) defined collective teacher efficacy as teachers' perceptions of whether the group can have an impact on student achievement. Based on this definition, it seems possible that a group of teachers with high collective efficacy would be more determined to secure high student achievement even when faced with obstacles (Goddard, 2002). Bandura (1977) articulated that the strength of an institution relies in part on a shared ability and interest in solving problems. Collective efficacy is an important factor in meeting this goal. Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) noted that collective efficacy reflects the belief of a group that it is able to organize their actions in order to complete a task. Collective efficacy beliefs rely in part on the mutual relationship among collective efficacy beliefs, teachers' own perception of self-efficacy, teachers' practice, and teachers' influence over instructional school decisions (Goddard et al., 2004). What this definition does not include are other valuable members of staff that contribute to collective efficacy within a school setting such as counselors, social workers and school leaders. There are other staff members that should be included when discussing collective efficacy on student achievement, as they not only contribute to student achievement, they also contribute to teachers' efficacy and therefore collective efficacy.

Goddard and Goddard (2001) conducted a study of 438 teachers in 47 schools in a large urban school district. The researchers wanted to determine a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher collective efficacy. Findings showed that individual

teacher self-efficacy was higher in schools where teacher collective efficacy was more extensive (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Goddard and Goddard (2001) described collective teacher efficacy as the belief teachers have about the ability of a collective group of teachers in one school to impact student achievement. Teacher collective efficacy is a strong predictor of student achievement, including in schools with high socioeconomic needs (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Goddard et al. (2004) noted that there was a strong correlation between collective efficacy and student academic outcomes and further noted that collective efficacy was also important to goal attainment.

Ross and Gray (2006) created a study with 3,042 teachers in 205 schools in Ontario to determine if principals have an effect on teacher commitment and collective efficacy. The researchers posited that principals who gave teachers opportunities to develop goals in relationship to improving their practice had higher commitment. The researchers further asserted that teacher efficacy and teacher collective efficacy can be strengthened if principals create professional development opportunities to address specific instructional needs. Additionally, principals can influence collective efficacy by setting attainable goals and by linking teacher actions to student outcomes (Ross & Gray, 2006).

Collective efficacy is essential to an organization because the effectiveness of the organization depends on the shared ability and willingness to solve problems (Bandura, 1997). Teacher collective efficacy has been a strong component in creating a school environment with strong academic focus Chong et al., 2010). Collective efficacy starts with buy in from individuals in a shared vision. Principals build the leadership capacity of their staff through creating an encouraging educational environment in which all staff

works collaboratively to identify and solve problems and achieve a shared vision (Nettles & Harrington, 2007).

Principal Leadership

Principal leadership plays an important role in student achievement (Kafka, 2009). The role of principals has evolved from a "manager" in their building to an "instructional leader." The expectations and changes associated with the role of principal started in 1983 with the release of *A Nation at Risk.* Guthrie and Springer (2004) noted that this was the start of significant federally funded changes in American public schools resulting in the principals' changing role. Studies have shown that principal leadership indirectly affects student achievement, mostly through its impact on teacher practices (Goddard et al., 2015; Stein et al., 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

The Principal and Student Achievement

Researchers and educational policy makers have begun examining the role of principal and school leadership on student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Ross & Gray, 2006). External variables are abundant in high-poverty schools, but understanding how leaders perceive these barriers, their ability to face these challenges, and what practices they implement is essential in understanding how they lead in high-poverty schools. After classroom instruction, principal leadership is the second most influential factor impacting student achievement (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Waters et al., 2003). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) stated that leadership had a direct impact on student achievement. Effective school leaders impact student achievement by creating supportive environments for their

teachers, providing professional development, and using their influence in effective school processes and outcomes (Davis et al., 2005).

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty's *Balanced Leadership* (2003) analyzed over 5,000 studies affecting student achievement. From that meta-analysis, they identified 66 principal behaviors and 21 principal responsibilities that have solidified our understanding of the complexity of the role of principal. Included in the 21 responsibilities are fostering shared beliefs and a sense of community, setting clear goals, actively challenging the status quo, and communicating and operating from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling (Waters et al., 2003). The study found a relationship between leadership and student achievement; the average effect size was 0.25. This correlation suggests that if a principal improved his or her abilities in all 21 responsibilities by one standard deviation point, that would translate into mean student achievement that was 10 percentile points higher. The study found not only that principal leadership matters, but also that the application of leadership responsibilities has a strong correlation to student achievement. However, it also found that leaders who were perceived as strong did not always have a positive impact on student achievement, suggesting that they did not focus on what needed to be done. Being perceived as a strong leader does not necessarily mean you are having strong impact. Possessing the necessary skills and behaviors assessed whether principals were perceived as strong but having the ability to apply the knowledge and skills to situations when leading a school creates the impact needed to improve instruction and positively impact student learning. Additionally, schools requiring significant improvement needed leaders who were committed to a vision of success for all students and to the realization of that vision. Out of this study, McRel's Leadership

Framework was developed to include four components: (a) leadership, (b) focus of change, (c) magnitude of change, and (d) purposeful community.

Within purposeful community, leaders accomplish purposes and outcomes that matter to all, use all available assets, have agreed-upon processes, and build collective efficacy. Developing collective efficacy will help schools' resilience when facing challenges in order to accomplish their intended outcomes and realize their vision (Waters et al., 2003). Collective efficacy is essential in leading high-poverty schools in improving student achievement, removing deficit thinking, and turning low-performing schools into high-performing schools.

Turnaround Leadership

Leithwood and Strauss (2009) looked at the central factors in successful turnaround leadership in schools. During the first stage of their study, they interviewed participants from four elementary and four secondary schools. In the second phase, they sent surveys to 472 teachers and 36 administrators in 11 elementary schools and three secondary schools. The results showed that low-performing schools require effective leadership for turnaround. Specifically, Leithwood and Strauss (2009) found eight elements in successful turnaround leadership: (a) low-performing schools require effective leadership to turn around; (b) 'core' leadership practices are the keys to success; (c) the core leadership practices include most of what is required to successfully lead a school turnaround; (d) as the school turnaround process evolves, the core leadership practices are enacted differently; (e) effective turnaround school leadership is narrowly distributed; (f) as turnaround processes evolve, the nature and number of sources of leadership change; (g) the leadership challenges in beginning the turnaround process are

predictable; and (h) leaders change their schools around by changing teachers' attitudes and cultures (pp. 27-29). Often high-poverty schools are also low-performing schools and therefore require leadership practices that have a positive impact on teacher practices and school culture.

Parrett and Budge (2009) examined leaders in high-poverty high-performing schools in a study that looked at how school leaders' actions and practices influenced a turnaround in six low-performing high-poverty schools. The purpose of the study was to gain insight into what actions are needed by school leaders for a successful turnaround. The results showed that schools can overcome the significant effects poverty has on student learning. Findings indicated that leaders in high-poverty high-performing schools focus on (a) building leadership capacity, (b) teachers' everyday work on student and professional learning, and (c) creating a safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment. Principals in these schools ask questions and make decisions to create the environments and conditions necessary for all students to be successful. Their decisions and actions align with their beliefs and vision. In alignment with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, these findings support the view that principals with high efficacy beliefs create environments conducive to learning, which build teachers' self-efficacy and therefore collective efficacy (Pfitzner-Eden, 2016). What is not known is if these principals understood the role of their self-efficacy in relation to their actions and behaviors.

Finnigan and Stewart (2009) studied principal leadership in 10 low-performing schools in Chicago. Findings confirmed that principals directly affect and improve student achievement when they use the following processes: (a) articulate a school vision,

(b) develop commitment to goals, (c) provide support and resources to teachers, and (d) manage the school. Through these necessary factors, principals were able to turn around a school in a short period of time. These findings align with Bandura (1986), who asserted that leaders' goal setting, persistence, and adaptability are impacted by their self-efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, additional research showed that how principals think is directly correlated to what principals do (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991; Leithwood et al., 1995).

In his review of the literature from organizational sciences, Murphy (2008) created the story of turnaround leadership. "Turnaround" refers to moving from failure to success. The most important factor in the turnaround equation is leadership—leadership that is achievement oriented, knowledgeable, and confident that goals can be met (Murphy, 2008). Confidence in one's ability as a leader directly correlates to one's self-efficacy: the more principals believe they can move a school from failing to successful, the more confident they become in their capabilities. This achievement-oriented leadership is essential to improve both student and teacher learning and is defined as strong instructional leadership.

Principal Leadership and Teacher Learning

Liu and Hallinger (2018) investigated the mediated effects design of principal instructional leadership and teacher learning. The researchers collected survey data from 3,414 eighth-grade teachers and 186 middle school principals in Qingdao, China. The teachers survey was used to understand practices related to teacher self-efficacy, professional learning, and the principals' instructional leadership. A separate survey was used to assess principals' time management skills and self-efficacy (Liu & Hallinger,

2018). Data collected from principals suggested that principals who manage their time effectively feel more confident in addressing challenges in their daily role (Liu & Hallinger, 2018). This finding also suggests that higher self-efficacy and confidence could contribute to a more effective instructional leadership role. Results from the teacher data found no substantial connection between principals' self-efficacy and teachers' self-efficacy. The survey instruments used in this quantitative study did not provide the opportunity to have in-depth discussions or observations to determine how principals' behaviors could influence teachers' self-efficacy or how principals believed their self-efficacy influenced teacher efficacy.

Leadership Behaviors and Efficacy

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) noted the connection between the leadership of the principal and teachers' self-efficacy. Through their position, principals can create an environment where teachers can develop strong self-efficacy beliefs. The ability to develop teachers' self-efficacy is not about the position but rather is a result of the principal being able to inspire teachers to individually and collectively support and carry out the vision of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

In their study, Stein, Macaluso, and Stanulis (2017) examined the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher leader efficacy within three urban elementary schools. Findings showed a variation in teacher efficacy both across and within all schools and also showed that the principal's leadership style had many ways of shaping efficacy among teacher leaders. Principals' leadership cultivated school culture; therefore, principals must create an environment that promotes authentic teacher leadership. Once principals create and support these opportunities, teacher leadership

efficacy takes shape and increases teachers' feelings of success (Stein et al., 2017). Findings also suggested that teacher leader efficacy is rooted both in the teacher leaders' self-perceptions and how those perceptions influence and are influenced by principals' expectations and leadership behaviors. To develop teacher leadership, principals must be aware of the model of leadership they use and how that encourages or discourages teachers to embrace leadership. The interaction between principal and teacher can have a direct effect on building teacher efficacy. The influence of teacher leadership on school change depends highly on the actions and beliefs of school principals. Additionally, the study suggests that principals may need support to develop a leadership style that provides opportunities for teachers to have a positive effect on the practice and culture of their school (Stein et al., 2017).

Versland (2016) conducted a study on how principal self-efficacy is developed through principal preparation programs. This study examined data from principals in the state of Nevada on their perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs and their principal self-efficacy. Findings showed the development of self-efficacy when principals create environments where teachers collaborate and have a role in leading others in school improvement (Versland, 2016). Through the use of sound instructional methods and authentic practice, this development can be achieved. This study found evidence of Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological response—and findings showed that effective practices in principal preparation programs can influence self-efficacy growth (Versland, 2016). When principals provide opportunities for authentic

collaboration among teachers, it has a positive effect on improving their instruction and increasing teacher and collective efficacy.

Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, and Miller (2015) looked at the connection among principal leadership, teacher collaboration for instructional improvement, collective efficacy beliefs, and student achievement. Teachers' collaboration to improve instruction was determined by the principals' instructional leadership. Principals who frequently monitored instruction, as reported by teachers, were most likely to be characterized as engaging in a high level of collective work among teachers to improve instruction. Leadership had a direct effect on teacher collaboration for instructional improvement (Goddard et al., 2015). Achievement differences among schools directly related to collective efficacy beliefs and indirectly related to instructional leadership and teacher collaboration. Strong instructional leadership can create environments that facilitate teachers' work in ways that strengthen their collective belief systems and improve student learning.

Principals' instructional leadership may support the degree to which teachers work together to improve instruction, and together leadership and teacher collaboration may contribute to school effectiveness by strengthening collective efficacy beliefs (Goddard et al., 2015). The strong correlation between principals' leadership and teachers' collaboration suggests the need for strong instructional leadership for teachers' collaborative work and school improvement. Instructional leadership has a positive influence on collective efficacy beliefs through its effect on teachers' collaborative work. Collective efficacy continues to be a strong indicator of school effectiveness based on both previous research and this study. The results suggest that by promoting a culture of

collaboration around instructional improvement, leaders have the potential to support school improvement in ways that positively influence teachers' collective efficacy and beliefs and thus promote student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard & Goddard, 2001).

Versland and Erickson (2017) looked at teachers' perceptions of how self-efficacy beliefs and actions of the principal contributed to the school's collective efficacy in a high-poverty rural middle school with very high levels of achievement. The investigation of collective efficacy showed that experiences contributed to collective self-efficacy and that the principal's self-efficacy influenced collective efficacy. Building relationships with teachers and having fidelity of instructional implementation created an instructional focus and developed teacher leadership within the school. Principals who display high self-efficacy and lead by example significantly influence collective efficacy. In addition to the importance of learning technical skills, Orr (2003) suggested that how principals believe in their ability and how they identify with the principal role are also important to their success.

Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) discussed organizational factors that influence collective teacher efficacy. Among these factors was the role of the principal in promoting teacher collective efficacy. This role included providing opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues who had achieved high student achievement and using verbal praise to provide reinforcement for teachers who had achieved high student success (Pierce, 2014). This finding aligns with Bandura's sources of self-efficacy, which include verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences.

Seashore Louis et al. (2010) determined that principals with strong self-efficacy are more likely to accept the challenges of school improvement processes and that efficacious leaders develop and promote a sense of collective efficacy that positively affects teaching and learning. The role of the principal is essential in building teacher and collective efficacy and improving student success. Leading high-poverty schools in need of school improvement requires leaders who can navigate challenging environments and believe that they can meet these challenges and improve student learning.

Leadership in High-Performing High-Poverty Schools

Leithwood et al. (2004) posited that leadership is the key to successful implementation of any large-scale school reform effort. Fullan (2003) shared the belief that principal leadership in high-poverty schools should advance a moral imperative. In his study on high-performing high-poverty schools, Elmore (2006) noted that "school leaders had clearly articulated expectations for student learning, coupled with a sense of urgency about improvement: they adopted challenging curriculum and invested heavily in professional development" (p. 44). Additionally, he noted that school principals expected classrooms to be open to other teachers, administrators, and outside observers in order to analyze teachers' work and practices.

In his study on high-performing high-poverty schools, Elmore also found collective efficacy and responsivity towards student achievement, which started with the efficacy of the principal in the school. Social justice leaders have high self-efficacy and create environments where teachers challenge their beliefs, analyze their practice, and participate in a continuous cycle of self-reflection which transfers to continuous improvement in student achievement. Social justice leaders in high-performing high-

poverty schools were willing to challenge the conventional norms and think outside the box (Elmore, 2006). They discussed students' work, looked critically at beliefs and bias, and sought ways to focus on students and teachers with the greatest need.

Through their study on high-achieving high-poverty schools, Tilley et al., (2011) noted several key factors. They found that schools' leadership, culture, and programs contributed to schools' success. The researchers conducted a case study of a rural Florida school that had achieved an A rating in the state accountability system for 7 years. In the school, 65% of students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs. Participants in the study consisted of faculty, students, and administrators. Data were collected through interviews, observations, field notes, and surveys, including the School Culture Survey (Quinn et al., 1999) and Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED; Condon & Clifford, 2010).

Findings from the study showed that leaders of high-poverty schools should focus on collaboration and instructional best practices, including emphasis on small-group instruction. In addition, leaders' holding high expectations for students and staff is essential in leading high-poverty schools to high achievement (Tilley et al., 2011). Results of the surveys showed that students and teachers perceived that principals' holding high expectations was an essential component for them in striving for excellence. Additionally, a key component for leading high-poverty high-achieving schools was for principals to create a culture of caring and pride, including caring for students and staff and caring for high expectations and achievement (Tilley et al., 2011). Lastly, the study noted that additional support for students in high-poverty schools was essential for their

success. Including extra support for students outside of the typical school day could fill a critical gap for students of high poverty (Tilley et al., 2011).

Woods and Martin (2016) studied leadership behaviors that were demonstrated by the principal in a high-poverty high-performing school. This case study involved a rural elementary school in Missouri in which 75% of students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs; within that subgroup, 65% achieved at the top two levels of achievement on the Missouri Assessment Program. Study participants included one principal, one superintendent, five teachers, and five parents. Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and observations (Woods & Martin, 2016). Findings from this study identified two overarching themes: educating the whole child and holding high expectations of stakeholders. Throughout the data analysis, the principal role was perceived by stakeholders as a "change agent, a vision creator and supporter, and a provider of whatever support and strategies it takes to make students of poverty successful" (Woods & Martin, 2016, p. 10). Additionally, it was noted that the principal created an environment of learning in which all staff met not only the academic needs of the students, but also the needs of the whole child (Woods & Martin, 2016). Results indicated that the role of the principal can have a positive impact on student achievement for students from high poverty, and principals' behaviors as change agents can create a positive environment for learning for all students and staff.

Leadership Beliefs and Dispositions

The research on the effectiveness of school leaders has also explored the beliefs and dispositions of effective leaders (Brown, 2005; Green & Cooper, 2013; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Critical reflection is essential when examining beliefs, bias,

and judgment and should be an ongoing process that begins with the design and development of school leadership preparation programs (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). In addition to school leadership preservice preparation programs, teacher leadership programs within schools' help develop the capacity of school leaders and an understanding of how individuals can modify their attitudes, values, interests, self-concept, and motivation as they gather experiences (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989).

Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008) examined the critical dispositions needed and the curriculum and pedagogy used to foster these dispositions in order to prepare leaders to develop and lead inclusive schools. Citing the work of several inclusive leadership researchers, this work derived from a qualitative study of three university experts teaching courses in leadership preparation and professional development specifically designed to address ways to build and maintain inclusive schools (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). Building upon the research done by Theoharis and Causton-Theoharis (2008), Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) created a theoretical framework for designing and evaluating administrative preparation programs to prepare leaders for social justice.

The researchers collected qualitative data through weekly reflective analysis journals to recognize and define thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perspectives, worldviews, challenges, hopes, and aspirations. The journals served as an introspective tool for personal growth and critical self-reflection connected to thought (Brown, 2005). The document review included syllabi, readings, class agendas, instructional materials, and detailed field logs (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). These experts intentionally

selected a curriculum and used teaching strategies to develop the essential dispositions to lead inclusive schools. The experts' description of the critical dispositions needed for school leaders to create and sustain inclusive schools aligns with research on principals' efficacy, which describes principals having a vision and a sense of agency. Included in the findings were three key dispositions of inclusive leaders: taking a global theoretical perspective on schools and inclusion, possessing a bold and imaginative vision, and embracing the sense of agency. Having a vision and a sense of agency are both essential in leading high-poverty schools. High-poverty schools are often in the process of school improvement, and having these critical dispositions is essential in improving student achievement. These dispositions connect with Bandura's (1986) personal agency, in which people have the capacity to make things happen.

Facilitating the acquisition of these dispositions is a layered and continual process (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). The study suggested that there is much to be learned and shared from university faculty teaching courses to prepare administrators to create and lead inclusive schools (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008). The authors indicated that preparing administrators to be inclusive leaders will require changing coursework and professional development to include discussion and reflection on transformational leadership and the impact of beliefs, values, and practices. The study also suggested the need for ongoing professional development for administrators to become inclusive leaders.

In their study, Green and Cooper (2013) identified dispositions of effective leaders that most frequently appear in the literature and determined dispositions that leaders of today's schools believe to be the most preferred in their leadership (Green &

Cooper, 2013). This study applied the perspective of transformational leadership theory describing the behaviors of leaders in relationship to their followers (Northouse, 2012) and used disposition indicators to show the individual's values, beliefs, and type of commitment most effective in a school environment. Out of 49 dispositions selected, the 16 ranked most frequently were character, commitment, communication, compassion, consistency, courage, ethics, honesty, fairness, integrity, openness, passion, rapport, respect, trust, and vision. Those were then narrowed down to six dispositions most preferred by leaders of today's schools: vision, integrity, character, trust, ethics, and communication. Results of the study did not show a correlation between the dispositions identified by school leaders as preferred and school performance data (Green & Cooper, 2013).

Hunzicker (2013) examined dispositions of emerging teacher leadership through a qualitative study of teacher leadership prerequisites through lived experience exemplars. The study used Danielson's (2007) framework to look at teachers who go beyond the classroom and work as a team (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007). Participants included eight practicing elementary and middle school teachers. The complete study resulted in three factors that contributed to developing teacher leadership: increased teacher self-efficacy, working beyond the classroom, and looking at research-based practices (Hunzicker, 2013). The leaders studied reflected that they actively sought leadership roles and that this practice increased their self-efficacy. Danielson (2007) identified nine dispositions of teacher leadership: optimism and enthusiasm, deep commitment to student learning, open-mindedness and humility, courage and willingness to take risks, confidence and decisiveness, tolerance and ambiguity, creativity and flexibility, perseverance, and a

willingness to work hard (Hunzicker, 2013). In addition to being influenced by personal dispositions, Hunzicker (2013) noted that leadership is affected by the school's and district's circumstances and conditions.

Using qualitative research methods, Brown (2005) assessed the viable effects of transformational learning strategies on preservice administrators' personal beliefs and subsequent professional behaviors toward issues of justice in education. Throughout the 2-year study, student participants engaged in coursework and internships created to help adult learners engage in reflective practice. Participants used journals as a self-examining tool for personal growth and critical self-reflection. Through content analysis, the researcher analyzed, described, and interpreted more than 1200 entries, although due to lack of structural uniformity within the entries, she included only a small sample in the study (Brown, 2005). Results indicated that all participants changed in some way as a result of participating in the adult learning activities. While not all of the students' thinking, values, and behavior were transformed, every participant found and expressed value in at least one of the eight strategies (Brown, 2005). The study suggests that leaders' dispositions can have a positive influence, even within negative school cultures, in building collective efficacy.

Social Justice and Transformative Leadership

Social justice leadership is a social influence to ensure social justice in society or a certain organization (Theoharis, 2007). The role of school leaders and school systems is to provide equity and access for all students and to advocate for typically marginalized students. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to examine and address longstanding practices, policies, culture, and subcultures to ensure that traditional power

structures no longer perpetuate a system that has privileged some students while neglecting others (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Marshall (2004) argued that educational administrators can define the social justice values and skills of current and future administrators; however, traditional policy, systems, leadership training, licensure preparation, and selection processes for school and school system leaders do not provide a systematic approach to change that will ensure social justice.

DeMatthews and Izquierdo (2017) discussed authentic and social justice leadership to confront the social justice difficulties and social reform associated with high-stakes testing. Their qualitative study examined leadership styles and actions adopted by a principal along the U.S.-Mexico border. They collected data through interviews and observations of the principal, parents, teachers, and district administrators. First-round codes in the data analysis were context, self-awareness, core values, and empowering behaviors. The principal advocated for social justice within the school, community, and district. She effectively communicated her passion and social justice advocacy to all, including prioritizing the needs of marginalized students (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2017). Her ability to build meaningful relationships also assisted with identifying and addressing racism, poverty, and segregation. The principal focused on continual school improvement by developing partnerships with teachers and parents in order to create a school of social justice. It is important to note that her longstanding tenure within the school and community assisted her with navigating the political terrain, gaining political capital, challenging the status quo, and advocating for local and state policies to support her vision of social justice for all. This research has important implications for teacher and principal preparation programs as well as school system

policies and practices. These programs should include exposure to dual-language education, authentic and social justice leadership practices, and ways to effectively advocate and lead within districts and communities (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2017).

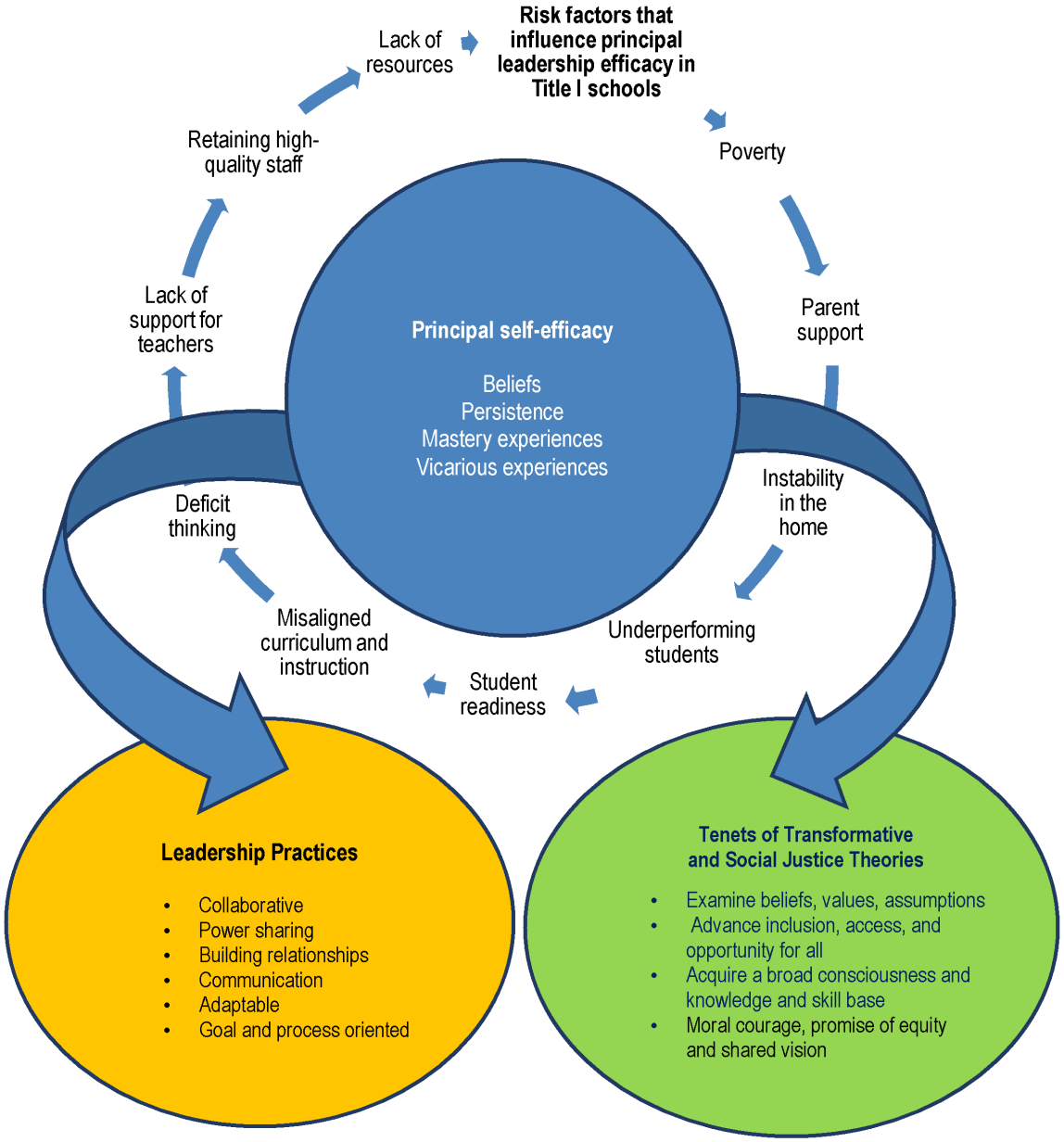
Archambault and Garon (2013) studied how principals in urban schools in Montréal, Canada, exercised transformative leadership for social justice. Included in the study were 45 elementary school principals in disadvantaged areas. The decision to work with these school principals came from literature on high-performing schools in disadvantaged areas, where leadership for social justice was prevalent as a factor (Flessa, 2007; Normore & Bianco, 2008; Portelli et al., 2007). For the working definition of social justice, the authors relied on Ayers, Quinn, and Stovall's (2009, p. iv) principles and guidelines, which include equity, the principle of fairness; activism, the principle of agency; and social literacy, the principle of relevance (Archambault & Garon, 2013). Social justice leaders have political capital and access the necessary resources in order to improve student achievement. These leaders challenge the status quo and create a growth mindset among staff that builds collective efficacy. Social justice leaders also build coalitions of support with parents, staff, and community. All of this creates political capital that allows social justice leaders to acquire the resources they need to improve students' opportunities and achievement. Social justice leaders create environments where teachers challenge their beliefs, analyze their practice, and participate in a continuous cycle of self-reflection, which transfers to continuous improvement in student achievement. Social justice leaders in high-performing high-poverty schools are willing to challenge the conventional norms and think outside the box (Elmore, 2006).

Summary and Inferences

This chapter discussed the role of self-efficacy, the connections between principals' efficacy and leadership behaviors and practices, and the impact of principal efficacy behaviors and practices in application of transformative justice and social justice leadership in leading high-poverty schools. The chapter reviewed self-efficacy and its sources through the theoretical perspectives on self-efficacy theory. Studies discussed the importance of principal self-efficacy, critical dispositions and leadership behaviors, teacher efficacy, collective efficacy, and student achievement. The principal plays an essential role in developing and carrying out the vision for the school, creating a learning environment where all students can achieve, and ensuring that all teachers have a shared belief in the vision. Social justice leaders create environments where teachers challenge their beliefs, analyze their practice, and participate in a continuous cycle of self-reflection, which transfers to continuous improvement in student achievement (Shields, 2013).

When considering factors that contribute to principal practices and behaviors that lead to educational equity and excellence for all students, research has indicated that principal self-efficacy, personal beliefs, and transformational leadership practices can impact educational excellence for all students. Thus, in addition to the focus on self-efficacy, the conceptual framework used for this study considered the impact of risk factors principals face in leading Title I schools, how such risk factors impact their own self-efficacy, how their self-efficacy contributes to their leadership practices, and whether these leadership practices include transformative and social justice tenets (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1
The Study's Conceptual Framework



Placing self-efficacy at the center of the framework surrounded by some of the risk factors associated with leading a Title I school, the model proposes that a principal leading a Title I school must have self-efficacy in order to mitigate risk factors. In addition, Title I schools require a leader who uses transformative and social justice

leadership so that students can overcome challenges, including an unstable home, lack of money and resources, mental health problems, and poor nutrition. Students attending Title I schools need leaders who challenge the status quo and look for ways to not only level the playing field for their students but also extend it.

Self-efficacy has been widely researched, but existing studies focused mainly on teacher efficacy and collective efficacy. Research has not adequately addressed the principals' voice in understanding the role of principal efficacy in leading Title I schools and their own leadership behaviors and practices. This qualitative study was designed to fill that gap. This study sought to understand the connection between principals' self-efficacy and how their understanding of their efficacy transforms the processes and practices that contribute to leading high-poverty schools. The study sought to understand how their leadership practices and behaviors contribute to creating educational equity and excellence for all students. The conceptual framework used for this study was based on self-efficacy, transformational leadership practices, and transformative and social justice tenets. The next chapter explains the research design and data collection and analysis methods used in this interpretive study.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

Merriam (2009) suggested that all qualitative studies are designed to understand how participants interpret, construct, and make meaning from their world. This study examined how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged, the challenges they encounter, the risk factors that influence their leadership/efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership practices. For this study, I defined leadership practices as transformational leadership aspects such as collaboration, power sharing, relationship building, communication, adaptability, and a goal and process orientation. Research in the area of understanding principals' perception of their own self-efficacy in leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged has been limited. Most of the research has been quantitative and has not captured the voice of the principal (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

I utilized an interpretive study as my basic qualitative design. Through semi-structured interviews, I sought to develop and construct patterns and meaning (Moustakas, 1994). The data analysis included coding in two stages, first cycle and second cycle. First-cycle codes applied to chunks of data, and second-cycle codes interacted with first-cycle codes (Miles et al., 2014). Through cutting and sorting of data and the use of Atlas.ti, I developed and organized themes.

I sought to understand the principals' perceptions of the role of self-efficacy in leading Title I schools. In Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs are regulated through cognitive, motivational, affective, and decision-making processes

(Bandura, 2001). Sources of self-efficacy as defined by Bandura (1997) include mastery experiences (actual performance), vicarious experiences (through modeling), persuasion (verbal and other sources), and psychological sources at the time of the experiences (strengths and capability). In addition to relying on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, I interpreted the data through the lens of transformative leadership and social justice theories. These theories helped inform my analysis of the effect of principals' self-efficacy on their leadership practices.

Understanding how principals leading Title I schools perceive their own self-efficacy, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and its impact on their leadership practices could assist districts in selecting, placing, and developing principals who can meet the challenges of economically disadvantaged schools. This chapter begins by presenting the study's research design, outlining the rationale for the methodology and the assumptions and theories informing it. It then describes the selection of the participants, procedures for data collection and data analysis, and efforts to ensure the study's trustworthiness and application of ethical principles.

Research Design

The research design was built on the research questions, which "explain specifically what your study will attempt to learn or understand" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 67). This interpretive study addressed two research questions with two sub-questions:

1. What is the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?
    a. Do principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so, how?

b. What risk factors influence principals' leadership efficacy in Title I schools?

2. How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?

As noted above, the data on leadership practices focused on aspects such as collaboration, power sharing, relationship building, communication, adaptability, and a goal and process orientation. My goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged, the risk factors they encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership behaviors and practices. The research design was built on a constructivist epistemology, Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, and a conceptual framework informed by social justice and transformative leadership theories. I chose an interpretive qualitative methodology as the best way to address the research questions.

Epistemology

Creswell (2009) described qualitative research as "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4). Crotty (1998) stated, "What constructivism claims is that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage in the world they are interpreting" (p. 43). Merriam (2009) posited that researchers do not *find* knowledge; rather, they *construct* it as they interpret data. The basic qualitative design of this study aligned with a constructivist philosophy, which views individuals as building learning and knowledge through their experiences and refection and constructing their own learning of the world (Merriam, 2009). Using the lens of constructivism allowed me to understand how principals view

and interpret the role of their own self-efficacy in leading Title I schools. This qualitative interpretive study created a written narrative of how the participants identify, approach, and resolve challenges in leading Title I schools. The different experiences, beliefs, and efficacy of each participant created different interpretations, allowing me to understand the issue from different perspectives and make meaning and connections based on the data.

Theoretical Perspective

I utilized Bandura's theory of self-efficacy in this research study. Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy is the belief in one's own ability (self-efficacy), or the ability of one's colleagues collectively (collective efficacy), to achieve a goal or perform a task. It is not individuals' actual ability to perform the task but their belief that they are able to perform the task. Bandura (1995) explained self-efficacy as follows:

> The belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to manage prospective situations. It influences the choices we make, the efforts we put forth, how long we persist when we confront obstacles and in the face of failure, how we feel. (p. 2)

Efficacy beliefs affect the amount of effort or perseverance put forth for a given task. Efficacy beliefs are also learned through experiences (Bandura, 1997). Bandura's theory of efficacy includes four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological arousal. I investigated how principals leading Title I schools perceive their own self-efficacy, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and its impact on their leadership behaviors and practices.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework for this study was informed by social justice and transformative leadership theories. When considering factors that impact principals' practices and behaviors that lead to educational equity and excellence for all students, research has highlighted the role of principal self-efficacy, personal beliefs, and transformational leadership practices (McCollum & Kajs, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Additionally, social justice research has indicated that a leader's personal beliefs play in role in establishing equitable and excellent schools (Delpit, 1995; Theoharis, 2004, 2010). Based on transformational leadership theory, the study examined the tenets of educational equity; beliefs, values, and assumptions; moral courage; and shared vision. Shields (2013) posited that transformative leadership creates conditions under which everyone can grow and participate, creating school communities that are socially just and academically excellent. I developed some initial codes from this conceptual framework for use during the data analysis.

Choice of a Basic Interpretive Approach

I conducted the research using a basic qualitative interpretive design as my methodology. Thorne, Kirkham, and MacDonald-Emes (1997) developed interpretive description to meet the needs of nursing research to draw on experience and evidence of clinical practice that could translate back to the practice setting. The interpretive approach was appropriate for this study, as it was intended to construct meaning from participants' experiences to apply to a practice setting (Hunt, 2009). According to Thorne, Kirkham, and O'Flynn-Magee (2004), researchers using interpretive description "seek understanding of clinical phenomena that illuminates their characteristics, patterns

and structure in some theoretically useful manner" (p. 3). Interpretive description relies on constructivist epistemological assumptions (Kahlke, 2014). Through this methodology, knowledge is not absolute but is "socially constructed through the subjective person who experiences it" (Thorne, 2008, p. 49).

Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used for this study, i.e., I selected principals who were most likely to provide in-depth information that enhanced the study (Cohen et al., 2000). For purposeful sampling in qualitative studies, large sample sizes are not needed as they are with quantitative studies with random sampling. Saturation occurs when no more themes or are categories emerge from the data.

To participate in this study, a principal had to lead a Title I school in the state of Virginia. I selected principals from two school districts in northern Virginia. I chose these districts due to the number of Title I schools. This also facilitated access as a form of convenience sampling. The goal was to have a sample size that did not exceed 20 participants.

I invited principals to participate in the study through an e-mail invitation that described the study, stressed that participation was voluntary, and described the commitment for the study. The e-mail invitation (Appendix A) also included a link to a demographic and background information survey to collect information such as race, gender, years as a principal, and years as a principal in a Title I school (Appendix E). A follow-up phone call was made to potential participants (see Appendix B). I conducted one semi-structured interview of approximately 90 minutes in length with each participant by phone, Zoom, Facetime, or Google Hangout, or in person at a location of

their choosing. The interview protocol appears in Appendix D. The protocol allowed for the possibility of follow-up interviews if they were needed after reviewing the initial data. Each participant was also asked to audio record a reflection within 24 hours of the interview to then be transcribed and emailed to me (see Appendix G).

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected primarily through interviews, with field notes as an additional source of data. The field notes, labeled by date and participant pseudonym, were used to make meaning from the interview and provide reflection from the researcher. Interviewing is essential for observing and understanding behavior, emotions, and people's interpretation of the world around them (Merriam, 1998). Patton (2002) posited that "we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe" (p. 340). Through interviews, a researcher acquires insights into participants' behavior and the reasoning behind their actions (Seidman, 2006). Patton (1990) suggested using a semi-structured interview if a researcher seeks to understand what is on someone's mind.

Interview Protocol

Based on the study's research questions, I designed an interview protocol with 15 questions and sub-questions as needed to understand participants' perception of their own self-efficacy and how they lead Title I schools (Appendix D). As noted by Guest et al., (2012), sub-questions are used only if the interviewees' responses do not cover the researcher's area of interest and allow participants to broaden their perspective of the phenomenon. Additionally, I asked each principal to audio record a brief reflection after

each interview. This recording was to be done within 2 days of the interview, and the length was based on the participant's own thoughts and refection. The purpose was for participants to have a chance to reflect on the questions and to add additional insights they may have had after the interview. If a participant did not complete a reflection, his or her interview was still used and coded. The reflections were not coded but were used to make connections or bring out the participants' voice throughout the data collection and analysis. Although principals were asked to record a reflection if they had additional thoughts or insights not covered during the interview, only one principal completed this voluntary request. It is the opinion of the researcher that this request was not completed due to the time commitment and complications associated with the principals' work during COVID-19. They didn't have either the time or bandwidth to add this to their already complicated day, trying to have students and teachers become adept at virtual learning while balancing their own personal family's needs.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested that the interviewer should not control the content of the interview too tightly, as such an approach does not allow participants to tell their own story in their own words. Merriam (2009) stated that good interview questions produce descriptive data and open-ended stories.

Pilot Interviews

The interview questions were peer reviewed and piloted prior to data collection. I conducted two exploratory interviews to assess whether my interview questions yielded rich descriptive data to answer my research questions. During this time, I interviewed assistant principals; based on the transcriptions, I was able to reframe my interview questions and check for bias. These exploratory interviews also allowed me to understand

the connection between my interview questions and the research questions, practice my role as an interviewer, become familiar with the recording and transcribing software, and attempt to sort, code, and analyze data. Additionally, these interviews provided me with the opportunity to think about my current and past experiences and how those experiences shape my interpretations and possible bias (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transcripts and Field Notes

Within 24 hours of interviews, I transcribed audio recordings using the app Temi. I then reviewed the transcripts to check for accuracy. In addition, I sent the final transcript to the participant for a member check.

Whereas the transcripts are meant to accurately capture participants' interview responses, the field notes add additional information. I took field notes throughout the interviews to add context or clarity to the transcriptions. Saldana (2016) asserted that the notes should not summarize the data but expound on it. The self-reflection audio recordings from the participants were also transcribed using the transcribing app Temi.

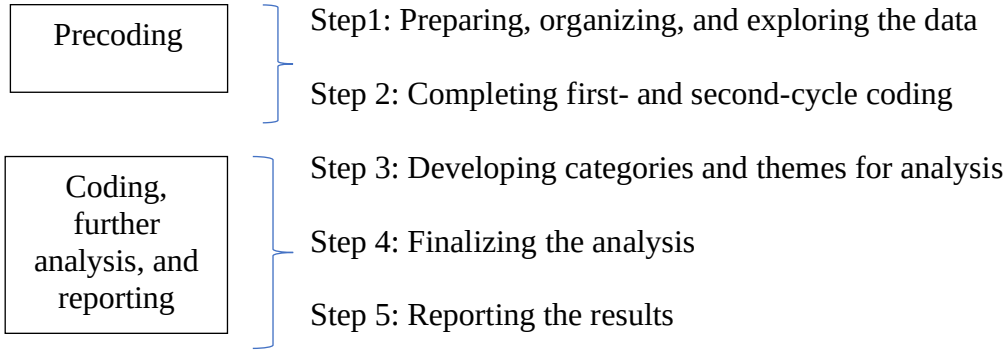
Data Handling

To protect the rights and privacy of participants, I assigned pseudonyms to each participant, school, and school district. All printed transcripts were kept in a locked storage area, and digital transcripts were kept in separate password-protected files. Following the advice of Sieber (1993), I will destroy data 5 years after the research has been completed.

Data Analysis

Figure 3.1 displays the data analysis procedures used in this study. Codes and themes were developed to describe the influence of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices.

Figure 3.1
Steps in the Data Analysis



Step 1: Preparing, Organizing, and Exploring the Data

Data analysis began during the interview process as I took field notes. I followed Seidman's (2006) suggestion to use these notes to record salient points but wait to analyze the data after all interviews were complete. This approach allowed me to avoid imposing meaning from one interview to the next.

In Step 1, I uploaded each recorded interview and transcribed it through Temi. I then read and reread the transcripts while listening to the audio recording. This process allowed me to immerse myself in the text and the meaning conveyed by the participants. I read the transcript several times while listening to the audio to ensure the accuracy of the transcription and an accurate understanding of the feelings and stories shared by the

participants. The goal of this step was to familiarize myself with each transcript and to organize the documents for further analysis.

Although I uploaded each transcript to Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software, I was not successful in using Atlas.ti to analyze the data. I found it too confusing to keep track of each interview and, as a visual learner, struggled to make comparisons or connections while the text was not in view. Instead, I printed and made multiple copies of each interview, where I highlighted each interview question that preceded each response, clearly numbering each interview question in the transcript.

Step 2: Completing First- and Second-Cycle Coding

To reduce and analyze the text, I marked with brackets sections of text that were interesting (Seidman, 2006). Marshall (1985) posited that recognizing meaningful chunks of text is based on the researcher's sense of what is important. During this phase of data analysis, it is important for researchers to acknowledge they are making judgments about the data (Seidman, 2006). Member checking with the participants can help correct any inaccuracies, but it does not substitute for the researcher's initial judgment. Miles et al. (2014) recommended coding in two stages: first cycle and second cycle.

There are three methods of coding: (1) descriptive, (2) in vivo, and (3) process coding. For this study, I used mixed coding that included descriptive, in vivo, and theoretical codes. Descriptive codes allowed me to label basic topics within the transcription. In vivo coding provided me with the opportunity to share the participant's voice (Saldana, 2016). Theoretical coding allowed me to create themes related to the theories of self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and social justice. I started this coding process of bracketing by writing a word to represent a category in the margins

(Rallis & Rossman, 2012). This helped to generate descriptions and themes. In order to avoid seeing theoretical codes before they emerged, I did the theoretical coding last and used key words that are used within the theory. I also used analytic memos to reflect on my coding process and code choice (Saldana, 2016).

Text passages were marked in color and labeled based on an assigned category or subcategory, with categories assigned a number and subcategories a letter. Often text passages supported more than one category; thus, overlapping codes were developed. Passages from the participants that overwhelmingly supported a category or gave a strong voice to the participants were labeled as "quote" within the category so I knew to use the entire quote or entire phrase in my findings.

Through the use of second-level pattern coding, I identified emergent themes, constructs, and explanations. Pattern coding allows the researcher to reduce large amounts of data and group the summaries of data in first-cycle coding into categories or themes (Saldana, 2016). Pattern coding creates more meaningful units of analysis and has four significant functions: (1) it condenses data into analytical units; (2) it allows the researcher to analyze data during data collection; (3) it assists the researcher in developing a cognitive map; and (4) it provides the groundwork for cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Figure 3.2 shows highlighted passages and first-cycle coding. Figure 3.3 shows how each category and subcategory were typed and printed, laid out on a table, and placed below the category sheet. I read through each category and made decisions to keep, move, or create a new category.

Figure 3.2
Highlighted Passages Assigned to Number Letter Code

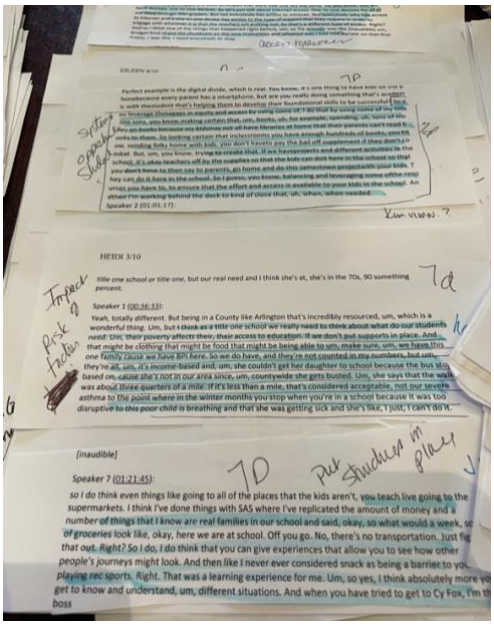
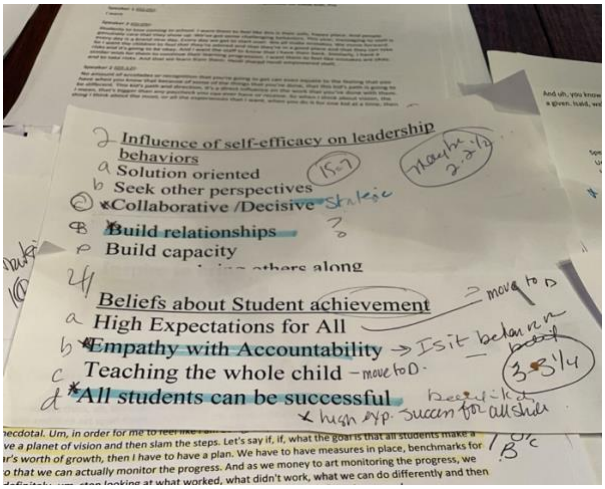


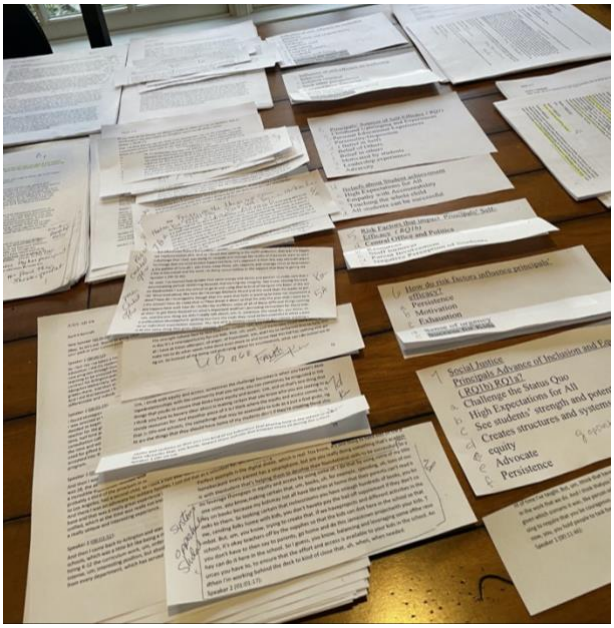
Figure 3.3
Example of Coding Categories and Emergent Themes



Step 3: Developing Categories and Themes for Analysis

After labeling basic topics within the transcripts and highlighting text passages, marking specific quotations to be considered, I used the cutting and sorting technique to create possible categories and subcategories (Figure 3.4). I looked for overlap in a category or subcategory and then combined some categories and removed others that lacked sufficient data. I then compared these categories and passages with my research questions using a similar cutting and sorting technique, laying the research questions on top of the categories that answered the questions.

Figure 3.4
Assigning Categories to Theoretical Codes



As shown in Table 3.1, I created preliminary themes and then connected the preliminary themes to some of the tenets (e.g., collaborative, power sharing, persistence, moral courage, shared vision, experiences) of my theoretical frameworks (i.e.., transformative and social justice) as my preliminary categories.

Table 3.1
Sample Categories and Potential Themes

Category	Theme
• Collaborative • Build relationships	• Influence of efficacy on leadership practices
• Motivation • Persistence	• Impact of risk factors on leadership behaviors
• Strategic and decisive • Shared vision and responsibility	• Influence of efficacy on leadership behaviors

Table 3.2 shows how categories were developed from the interview protocol. These categories helped me collect data that connected to my research questions. These categories also helped me make connections between all participants, strengthening the validity and importance of the category.

Table 3.2
Sample Categories Developed from the Interview Protocol

Sample questions in the interview protocol	Category
1. What leadership traits are important to you, and how do you model these traits and apply them to your practices in your school?	Collaborative
2. The term *self-efficacy* means the belief in one's ability to meet goals and challenges. How do you conceptualize your leadership efficacy in your role as a principal leading a Title I school?	High expectations
3. Tell me about your experiences that provided you with the confidence, skills, beliefs, attitudes, and persistence to lead a Title I school,	Mastery experiences Vicarious experiences
4. What are the risk factors you face in leading a Title I school?	Poverty Trauma Lack of parent support
5. How much does your belief in your own ability to overcome risk factors impact or contribute to your leadership?	The core of my leadership Need for a strong belief in yourself
6. Can you tell me what equity and access looks like in your school?	Promise of equity

I created reflective memos during the data analysis process. Whereas field notes provide contextual information on the interview, such as noting participants' nonverbal communication, analytical or reflective memos capture my notes, thoughts, and overall reflection on the interview and data analysis process. These memos assisted me in uncovering emerging themes, patterns, and concepts (Saldana, 2016). Additionally, these memos were available to assist in developing follow-up questions, refining my interview protocol in order to answer my research questions, and reflecting on key ideas, emotions, or themes (Creswell, 2009).

Step 4: Final Analysis

In Step 4, I selected categories that aligned with those themes that identified principal leadership behaviors that impacted leadership practices in leading Title I schools, connecting each theme to the theoretical framework used throughout this study.

Step 5: Reporting the Results

After the data analysis, I presented the findings. I used the themes as headings followed by the categories as subheadings to support each theme. The findings are presented in depth in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Miller (2000) asserted that the validity, trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility of qualitative research are based on whether the findings are accurate based on the viewpoint of the researcher and participant. Guba (1981) recommended using four criteria for establishing trustworthiness: credibility (internal validity), transferability (generalizability), dependability (reliability), and conformability (objectivity). To ensure the validity of the findings, I used the procedures of member check, peer review, reflective memos, a subjectivity statement, and bracketing.

Internal Validity

Creswell and Miller (2000) posited that validity in qualitative research is based on whether the findings are accurate from the perspective of the participants, researcher, and reader. I used member checking to ensure I accurately interpret participants' voice throughout the study (Merriam, 2009). Specifically, I sent transcripts to the participants to review for accuracy and intent and revise the transcripts when necessary based on their

feedback (Guest et al., 2012). In addition, I used reflective memos to ensure I was analyzing and interpreting the data without personal bias. These memos assisted me in developing codes and themes from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The subjectivity statement below acknowledges my bias in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I engaged in a self-reflective practice to examine and track my own thoughts as I examined the data, "bracketing" my own views to keep my focus on the viewpoints of the participants (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Finally, I used peer review by having colleagues review my coding and emergent themes to ensure I was coding consistently and my findings were consistent throughout (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Saturation was achieved when no additional themes emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

External Validity and Generalizability

External validity, as noted by Saldana (2016), is the extent to which conclusions of a study are transferable to other contexts. Erickson (1986) asserted that the transferability of a study's findings to other contexts is not the responsibility of the researcher but rather the reader. Clarke (2005) posited that the ability to construct theory and generalize the findings is problematic due to site-specific conditions. In contrast, Glaser (2005) stated that concepts and abstractions are developed through this methodology that are transferable to other contexts and populations. Creswell (2009) indicated that qualitative research's value is in relationship to its specific site and participants. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I provide rich, thick description of the study so readers can assess the possible transferability for their own settings (Saldana, 2016).

Subjectivity Statement

As an educator since 1994 and an administrator since 2008, I have worked with students, teachers, and administrators for 28 years, which brings a deeply personal and professional interest in this research. I have also worked in schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged and have always struggled with the differences amongst principal and teachers to lead these schools and meet the needs of the students. As a teacher and administrator, I have first-hand experiences of how these differences affect students for better or for worse. I also have experienced how teachers and administrators' perspectives on students who are economically disadvantaged has affected student achievement. I have always been curious as to what are the contributing factors that shape these differences. Is it experiences, bias, self-efficacy, persistence?

Familiarity with one of the two districts involved in the study and with participants from that district could have led to bias in interpretation of data and lack of participant transparency during the interviews. This personal connection could have also been beneficial to the research, in that familiarity with the participants could allow me to probe deeper when follow-up questions are needed and possibly put the participants at ease during the interview, as a relationship of trust has already been established. Since I am a colleague with no evaluative relationship with them, participants should feel comfortable sharing their experiences, successes, and challenges. Through the use of reflective memos, I recorded notes during the interview process and reflected on my own personal experiences and how they might affect my interpretations of the data and therefore my findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Human Participants and Ethics Precautions

Data collection did not begin until the study was approved by the institutional review board and the two school divisions and the participants provided informed consent (Appendix F). The confidentiality of each participant was protected. The participants' names, schools, and school districts were kept private by assigning pseudonyms, and the key linking pseudonyms to actual names was locked in a secure location and password protected on my computer.

I informed participants both verbally and in the informed consent form that participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To minimize disruptions at the participants' work sites, they were allowed to choose where the interview would take place, whether in person or by phone, Google Hangout, or Zoom (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I acknowledged the potential power imbalance and displayed sensitivity in regard to the possible perception of the interview being seen as a moral inquiry (Kvale, 2006). In order to reduce stress among the participants, I reassured them that they would have the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy and interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To avoid exploitation of the participants, I shared the report with them.

Chapter Summary

This study examined how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged, the challenges they encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership/efficacy, how they conceptualize leadership efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership practices (e.g., collaboration, power sharing, relationship building,

communication, adaptability, and goal and process orientation). The research design was built on a constructivist epistemology, Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, and a conceptual framework informed by social justice and transformative leadership theories. I utilized an interpretive study as my basic qualitative design with a focus on semi-structured interviews. The interviews were about 90 minutes each and followed an interview protocol that was pilot tested. Participants included purposefully selected principals from Title I schools in two districts in Virginia. I engaged in two cycles of coding during data analysis, leading to themes. The study complied with all requirements of the institutional review board and use pseudonyms to protect participants' confidentiality. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, I used strategies such as member check, peer review, reflective memos, a subjectivity statement, bracketing, and thick, rich description. The emerging themes and findings of the study are presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

Researchers investigating school reform initiatives to improve student achievement have shown that the principal is the most influential factor in school effectiveness (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). Effective school principals create environments that support student learning and attract, retain, and develop highly effective teachers (Leithwood et al., 2004). Developing school environments that support continuous school improvement is a complex and important task of principals (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014). Leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students requires confidence, adaptability, and persistence to promote and support student achievement; further, principals must believe that they can be change agents for students to succeed in spite of their poverty. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), principals' leadership efforts to raise student achievement are essential for a school to succeed. Principals who lead high-poverty schools face many obstacles and challenging environments, including low achievement, low parental involvement, lack of resources, and staff turnover (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

This chapter presents the findings of this basic qualitative interpretive study designed to understand how principals' self-efficacy contributes to their leadership practices and behaviors and the impact it has on leading a Title I school. The conceptual framework used for this study is based on self-efficacy, leadership practices, and transformative and social justice tenets. Results based on the lived experiences of 11 participants who serve as Title I elementary school principals in Northern Virginia address the following research questions.

1. What is the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?
    a. Do principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so, how?
    b. What risk factors influence principals' leadership efficacy in Title I schools?
2. How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?

The chapter consists of opening sections on participant profiles and the coding and theme development process, followed by the presentation of four themes: (a) Principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences; (b) Principals' self-efficacy is at the center of their leadership practices; (c) Principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices; and (d) Principals with self-efficacy have a clearly defined shared vision and high expectations for all.

Participant Profiles

As shown in Table 4.1, 11 principals—three males and eight females—participated in the study. Five had less than 5 years of experience as a principal, and seven had more than 5 years of experience. All had been working within the field of education for at least 15 years.

Table 4.1
Participant Characteristics

	Experience (years)			
Pseudonym	Principal	Education	Gender	Race
Pam	10+	25+	Female	Black/African American
Harry	1+	18+	Male	White/Non-Hispanic
Miguel	2+	23+	Male	American Indian/White
McKenna	8+	20+	Female	White/Non-Hispanic
Clara	2+	15+	Female	White/Non-Hispanic
Abigail	10+	34+	Female	White/Non-Hispanic
Riley	1+	15+	Female	Black/African American
Shannon	10+	30+	Female	White/Non-Hispanic
Donna	3+	17+	Female	White/Non-Hispanic
Sasha	11+	35+	Female	Black/African American
Reid	5+	20+	Male	White/Non-Hispanic

All participants led schools where most (64% to 94%) students were minorities (Table 4.2). The percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch ranged from 43% to 86%.

Table 4.2
Student Demographics at School Sites

School principal	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Hawaiian	Multi-race	% Free, reduced lunch
Pam	0.5	8.3	34.4	37.6	14.9		4.3	47.56
Harry	0	8.8	18.7	30.0	36.2		6.3	43.19
Miguel	0.5	8.3	20.3	54.0	14.7		2.2	85.60
McKenna	0	8.3	14.3	36.5	33.0		8.8	49.15
Clara	0.2	24.4	20.7	24.2	21.2		9.2	51.37
Abigail	0	5.2	11.4	52.2	24.9		6.2	67.65
Riley	0	8.0	8.0	56.0	26.8		5.2	77.90
Shannon	0.2	10.9	12.5	67.9	5.7		2.8	80.56
Donna	0.2	11.5	42.2	29.6	12.8	.03	3.6	54.95
Sasha	0	2.6	30.6	36.8	21.7		2.1	69.98
Reid	0.3	8.7	24.1	55.3	9.7		1.9	78.00

Each participant is described in a brief narrative.

Pam

Pam had 10 years of experience as a principal and over 25 years of experience in education. She was in her second year as principal at her current school. Pam had been asked to transfer to this school after successfully turning around a failing Title I elementary school. She appeared confident, direct, outgoing, and passionate about her work, her staff, and her students. Pam referenced her upbringing as increasing her grit and perseverance. She reflected on a conversation where her father discussed joining a sport in high school: "My dad said, 'If you try out for this team, remember we don't quit; you follow it through to the end.'" Pam described how this view affected her attitude and belief in herself and her work. She reflected on these experiences as she took on a new challenge in a new school, stating, "I want to see this through. I want my current school to be just as successful as my previous school." Throughout her interview, she also mentioned many mentors who influenced her. In one example, Pam reflected, "My grandmother always stressed the importance of an education, especially since she was denied one. As I look back, these are the memories of what formed my path of where I would go."

Harry

Harry was a new principal in his first year at his school. Previously, he had been an assistant principal for 3 years. Harry was soft spoken and thoughtful with his responses, taking time to craft his statements and delivering them in a somewhat controlled manner or with some reservation. Harry had 18 years of experience in education and described himself as a collaborative leader. He remarked, "I don't think I have all the answers. I need other people's expertise to make sure I get the decisions

right." He continued, "I want people I am leading to know that I care about them, that I value their feedback and opinion." Harry also believed that those leading a Title I school had to prioritize and focus on what they could control. Harry shared:

> There are going to be a lot of days when you feel completely overwhelmed. I think the first year you have to keep your eye on what's most important at the moment. I want to keep my focus on what's important, being an educator and being a principal at a school, and not get too wrapped up in other things, because there is only so much time and energy we all have.

Miguel

Miguel was in his second year as a principal and had served as an assistant principal for 3 years at a different school in the same district. He appeared passionate, reflective, optimistic, and positive when he spoke throughout the interview. Miguel had 23 years' experience in education. He described himself as a reflective and inclusive leader: "I really like to hear everyone's voices. I want to hear everyone's opinion and then make an informed decision. I feel I am a nurturing leader." Prior to becoming a principal, Miguel taught all grade levels—elementary, middle school, and high school. When he described himself, he shared, "I'm pretty much a bookworm. I love reading books, always doing research, understanding what new ways of doing things are out there, but I also value personal relationships. Lots and lots of research but also learning from good role models." He also referenced the importance of having a mentor: "Sometimes I just needed someone to listen to me, but also it was her expertise that I tapped into."

McKenna

McKenna had 20 years' experience in education, 8 years as a principal in her current school, and 6 years as an assistant principal in a non-Title I school. McKenna had a commanding presence and was self-assured, direct, and confident. She described herself as "not warm and fuzzy. I'm strategic, a planner. My leadership is not based on big symbolic moments, it's the small decisions that culminate over time. Being showy is not my jam." McKenna also referenced her upbringing as having an effect on her leadership style. She stated, "I definitely have a strong set of internal ethics that I won't budge on. We were raised law-and-order Catholics. I'm the person who stops at a yellow light." She also referenced negative role models: "I probably wouldn't have become a principal had I not had such poor models early on." McKenna stressed that later in her career she did find a positive role model who had a no-nonsense approach similar to hers. McKenna went on to clarify, "When I saw people like Olivia, I wanted to be her when I grow up, because when there's a problem, people see her and feel like she's going to solve it. That's what I want to emulate."

Clara

Clara was in her second year as principal and had 15 years' experience in education. She was currently the principal at the school where she originally started as a teacher. She described herself as a collaborative leader who "prefers to bring people in to have a conversation and weigh the pros and cons and the really coming to consensus based on the data that's presented." She also shared, "I am proactive, resilient. I am not willing to take no for an answer. We can think about it differently, but I need a solution." Clara appeared passionate and thoughtful through her responses, but not always

confident. She spoke extensively about mentors that she had and reflected on how much she learned from them. She moved quickly through administration as an assistant principal due to much turnover in leadership positions. She reflected that "I wish I could've had more time with Julie. In hindsight, that would've been very helpful. Then maybe I would've been able to step in rather than on-the-job training. The challenge is it's a constant game of catch up."

Abigail

Abigail had been a principal for 10 years, 3 years in her current position. She had 34 years in education and was asked to move to her current school after the successful work she had done at her previous school. Her background was in elementary education, with additional certifications in gifted and special education. She appeared confident, passionate, self-assured, and very knowledgeable in her field. Abigail referenced that she had strong training as an assistant principal. She described her biggest belief as a leader as having "an absolute commitment and belief that all children are capable of higher levels of learning and that it's up to us to figure out how to make that happen." She went on to state, "I greatly admire innovation and risk-taking, and I think I model that for my staff a lot." Abigail also indicated that her sometimes difficult upbringing provided her with a level of empathy for the students and families she served at her school. Abigail described the job as "one of vocation and mission and therefore the hours and the time, while exhausting, is worth it."

Riley

Riley was a first-year principal with 2 years' experience as an assistant principal and a total of 15 years in education. Riley presented as a confident and energetic person. She had first worked in the business sector, was a bit into politics, and believed it was "helpful to have a business mindset and business background, understanding the finance and the organizational structure." When talking about her current position, she also shared that "I feel like when I go to work and I'm working with children who would not have a chance otherwise and you're making difference, you're helping someone." She considered herself an approachable administrator and believed that "you have to be accessible to people who you lead, because otherwise the communication is a problem." Riley also noted that "I believe you have to have a bit of chutzpa to do this job." Additionally, she referenced principals that she worked for having a tremendous impact on her as a teacher and a principal.

Shannon

Shannon had 30 years' experience in education, 10 years as a principal, and 3 years as a principal in her current position. She began her career as a teacher at the elementary level, and throughout her 17 years as a teacher she taught all grade levels—elementary, middle, and high school. Shannon also had additional certifications in special education and gifted education. She presented herself as having great passion and empathy for her students and providing opportunities for her staff to grow and develop. She considered herself a collaborative leader: "I am instructionally knowledgeable, calm under pressure. I have a great sense of humor, and I can be a little feisty Irish." Shannon also shared how proud she was of the work she had done over the past 3 years to bring collaborative

leadership teams together at her school. She appeared strategic in providing opportunities for teachers to attend conferences focused on leadership to equip them with the skills needed to run collaborative leadership teams. She stated, “I brought several teachers to a leadership conference in Syracuse so that they are adept at facilitating their meetings.”

Donna

Donna had 17 total years of experience in education and was in her third year as principal. Her background was in elementary education with additional certification in special education. She presented herself as confident and self-assured. She described herself as a collaborative leader and shared that “I am very systems oriented. I have put into place a lot of systems for collaboration and input.” Donna also reflected on many amazing leaders to whom she attributed her success in becoming a principal. She noted that “they would pull me aside and point out qualities or point out things that they thought I could do well and be honest with me about areas where I could improve. They were always very encouraging.”

Sasha

Sasha had 36 years’ experience in education and had been in her current position for 11 years. She started in elementary education and had additional certifications in special education and language arts. Sasha presented herself as a force—determined, confident, fierce, and extremely knowledgeable—and had a take-charge presence. She described herself as a leader who believes that “no building is going to be successful if people don’t want to come to work every day. So, I create an environment where we are taking care of each other, and the school climate is very important.” She further

explained: “It takes time, but over time you start to build, you do things that build a climate of trust and respect.” She also credited her first mentor as having a significant impact on her and the leader she is today.

Reid

Reid had 20 years’ experience in education and had been in his current position for 5 years. He presented himself as extremely confident, knowledgeable, and passionate about his students and his work. Reid shared that he had always wanted to be a teacher. He noted that he had strong experiences before becoming a principal: he was an administrative intern for 2 years and an assistant principal for 6 years. His leadership style focused on building relationships and empowering his staff. He described himself: “I am a leader that never pretends to know everything. I want to hear everybody out. Ultimately I am happy to make difficult decisions and take the responsibility for them.”

Coding Results

Table 4.3 shows a matrix of the categories and themes I assigned to answer my research questions and sub-questions.

Table 4.3
Matrix of Research Questions, Assigned Categories, and Themes

Research Questions (RQ)	Categories	Themes
RSQ1: What is the perceived impact of principals’ self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?	• Collaborating • Building relationships • Empowering staff and sharing power	• Theme 2: Principals’ self-efficacy is at the center of their leadership practices.
	• Motivation • Persistence • Advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for all	• Theme 3: Principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices.

Research Questions (RQ)	Categories	Themes
	• Effecting deep and equitable change • Moral courage • Childhood upbringing/ experience • Belief in self • Belief of others • Leadership experiences	• Theme 1: Principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences.
RSQ1a: Do principals' efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so how?	• Motivation • Persistence • Advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for all • Effecting deep and equitable change • Moral courage	• Theme 3: Principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices.
RSQ1b: How do risk factors influence leadership efficacy in Title I elementary schools?	• Motivation • Persistence • Advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for all • Effecting deep and equitable change • Moral courage	• Theme 3: Principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices.
RSQ2: How do principals leading Title I schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?	• Childhood upbringing/ experience • Belief in self • Belief of others • Leadership experiences that lead to self-efficacy	• Theme 1: Principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences.
	• Being strategic and decisive • Having a shared vision and responsibility • Modeling expectations and leading by example • Having high expectations for success for all students	• Theme 4: Principals with self-efficacy have a clearly defined shared vision and high expectations for all.

As shown, there were four themes, with 13 categories. The first theme is presented below.

Theme 1: Principals Develop Self-Efficacy Through Personal and Work Experiences

Throughout the interviews, participants shared stories about their upbringing, family values, and experiences of adversity as well as their career experiences. As we continued to discuss their leadership efficacy, other sources emerged, creating a total of four subthemes: childhood upbringing/personal experiences, belief in self, belief of others, and leadership experiences.

Childhood Upbringing/Personal Experiences

Most of the principals participating in this study shared their belief that their efficacy started with their upbringing and other personal experiences that were both positive and negative. Some connected efficacy to ethics, how they were raised, and the values they were taught, including working hard and never quitting until you finish the job. When asked about her sources of efficacy, McKenna responded without hesitation, "I think that they're just from my upbringing." Her experiences are captured by the following quote:

> I have a strong internal sense of ethics that I won't budge. My brother is in law enforcement and I'm a school administrator. We were sort of raised law-and-order Catholics. I think, you know, I'm a person that stops at yellow lights, things like that. I think that's probably just who I am, my beliefs. So, when I was a teacher, I think whatever job I would be in, I would have the same sort of core values, which I do think help when decision-making and whether or not you give up.

McKenna believed that self-efficacy starts with your upbringing and is at the foundation of your behaviors in life. She connected her self-efficacy with her students' needs and the amount of energy she gave to the tasks needed to support them. Her responses suggested a moral imperative associated with her efficacy and how she led her

school. Similarly, Pam attributed her self-efficacy to experiences in her childhood. When she was asked about the sources of her self-efficacy, she stated, “What I learned at home.” Pam described in detail:

> When I wanted to quit, I just remember my dad saying, “No, you’re going to practice. You’re going to go to practice and you’re going to finish this.” He said, “Next time you could get something, you’ll think about twice about doing it, because you’ll have to think about what it takes to see it to the end.” Those are the things I think of when I think about the challenge that I take on each day. It would be very easy to give up. But the work I’ve been doing, I don’t want to just maintain it; I just want the school to be successful.

Abigail also drew upon her childhood and indicated that adverse experiences built her self-efficacy. She discussed how her own experiences, positive and negative, as a student from lower socioeconomic means had an impact:

> There were teachers who I clearly remember made fun of my sister’s clothing because it looked like rags; however, I also remember teachers who said and did things and talked about my future that had a huge impact on me. So, I think a lot of my personal experiences allowed me to see through some kids’ behaviors and maybe a way to look at their root causes and believe I can make a difference for them.

Similarly, Miguel described his adversity during his childhood as a source of his self-efficacy and his perseverance; he indicated his upbringing was tied to his moral compass and ethics in doing what is right. He also referenced doing things that his parents would be proud of and shared the importance of family values. Miguel explained that his dad passed away when he was young, and his family had to navigate many obstacles and challenges. He noted that these experiences created a sense of persistence that he used in his work today. He tied his self-efficacy as a principal to overcoming adverse situations as a child and leading with a moral purpose. Miguel also stated he had an “inner drive to succeed” that came from these childhood experiences.

Belief in Self

Most participants shared that their most important source of efficacy to lead Title I schools was a belief in themselves. They connected their belief in themselves to goals they wanted to accomplish and shared that without that belief you will not be successful. They all shared that you had to believe you can make a difference, that you can change anything that needed to be changed. Principals responded with phrases such as "making a difference," "believe you can make a change," "I have got this," "believe in your heart." For example, Pam perceived this as paramount to doing the work when she stated, "You have to have the desire to do it; otherwise, you're not going to get things done. In some ways, if you don't have the belief in that and that you can get it done, it's not going to be done."

Sasha also recounted the essential need to believe in yourself in order to lead a Title I school. She shared that you needed to have heart and passion and the belief that everyone can learn before you are able to lead and do the work. Her belief was that you could teach someone leadership skills or how to be an effective leader with at-risk kids. However, to do the work and be an effective leader, you

> had to believe you could do it, they could make it. You got to believe that you can change anything because otherwise you can teach all you want and it's not going to be effective. It won't go to effectiveness until you believe in that.

McKenna also shared that believing in yourself was at the core of doing the difficult work in leading a Title I school. She described the work as improving student achievement scores, developing and retaining teachers, and moving everyone along so that they show growth and improvement. She expanded that the work was more difficult in a Title I school than a non-Title I school due to the many risk factors associated with a

Title I school such as student homelessness, mental health and substance abuse issues, and domestic violence. She stated that if you believed you could overcome the risk factors, with that belief you would provide students and staff with everything they needed. Her belief in herself also transferred to her belief in students and staff to be successful. She shared, “There’s kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy at some level, but you know, we can do this and we’re going to get through it and we’re going to be fine, and it kind of feeds into more success.” She acknowledged that having a belief that you can lead a successful Title I School transfers to confidence and provides a model for staff and students.

Like McKenna, Riley believed you could learn skills and find support to work through any issue or process you were trying to solve or implement. However, in order to be successful in the task, you had to “believe in your heart of hearts, like in your whole soul, down to your very, very toes that you were meant to do something, that you have the capacity to do it.” She also referenced her job as a “calling,” noting that it was something she was “supposed to do.” She asserted with confidence, “I do believe that I can do this. There really has to be a belief that you can do it because without that, it’s just over before it starts.” Sasha echoed the need to have passion, heart, and belief in yourself and your students to lead a Title I school. She shared: “There are some people who have the pedagogy in the field, but they don’t really have the heart or the belief that you can make a difference in a child’s life. You have to believe that you can do this work.”

Shannon observed that it was her “inner drive to succeed” and her need to “prove to myself that I can do it” that supported her self-efficacy. She believed that you had to be passionate about what you believed in as a leader; you had to believe in yourself and

believe in the things you wanted to accomplish. She also alluded to the ability of a leader's belief in himself or herself to impact the belief of others: "If you don't believe in the things that you want to accomplish, and you don't feel that they're important, how in the world do you expect other people to feel that way?" She too believed that acquiring skills was important but not as important as believing in yourself and your capacity to lead a Title I school.

Belief of Others

Most participants shared their view that the belief of others had a significant impact on their own self-efficacy to lead Title I schools. Many also discussed that the belief of others whom they wanted to emulate had a substantial impact on their leadership trajectory and their leadership style. These principals shared that others' belief in them increased their efficacy and belief in themselves. Although principals discussed their upbringing and childhood experiences as a source of efficacy, none of them identified their parents' belief in them as a source of efficacy; rather, it was the experiences they had during their upbringing. During these interviews, the belief of others was connected to other administrators, mentors, and role models.

Clara shared that the experiences that gave her the greatest self-efficacy as a teacher were those where multiple administrators pushed her out of her comfort zone. That gave her a can-do attitude and belief in herself. She felt support from her administrator, which gave her a safety net. She also shared that the confidence her administrator placed in her helped her gain confidence and belief in her teaching and translated to her belief in herself as an administrator. She noted that when "others believe in you, it propelled me forward." Clara was fast-tracked into administration through the

beliefs of her administrator; she shared that she felt that "if they believed in me, I must be able to do it."

Similarly, Riley discussed how her principal's belief in her transferred to her own self-efficacy. Her principal, Diana, was considered a "master practitioner" by other principals and administrators in her district. Riley shared that she watched from the sideline how Diana worked and led her team to find solutions to improve student achievement and find ways for teachers to work smarter rather than harder. During this time, Riley was supporting her principal's work and helping to carry out her vision. She described how she was impressed with Diana's ability to "figure out where to start in a situation" and "wanted to get to that point herself." She remarked that one day Diana asked Riley to lead the meeting and do the coaching. She stated, "There's a point that it switched because when she saw the impact of the work that I was carrying out for her, she started bringing me in on decision-making and planning processes and asking for ideas that were implemented." Riley also reflected that if her principal believed she could do it, she must be able to provide instructional coaching to teachers and lead the meeting. She then remarked, "When I was recognized, it was powerful."

Donna also discussed how support and belief from administrators impacted her belief in herself. She described the importance of having strong relationships so that conversations could be had about her potential or areas of growth. She indicated how she felt "so supported" throughout her career, and that support and belief of others was "encouraging and that I could do it."

Reid also shared that his principal worked in a way that he wanted to "model." Since he believed his principal "genuinely appreciated" his "perspective," he felt like he

could do the work of an administrator. Clara also included in her response that the belief of others impacted her self-efficacy and belief in herself:

> I can't believe that they believed I was so capable of that. And so, if they believe it, then maybe I am. And so, let me see if I can do it and then go ahead and do it. I think about multiple positions that I've had in my life, multiple, even some years ago, how they would say: Of course, you can; you're smart and capable. So, I think I can. Well, then, if you think I can, then I can, you know, so I think that drives me and gives me self-efficacy that I now believe that I can do it. That's what somebody pointed out in myself. I've seen this in you, or I think you have this capability.

Leadership Experiences That Lead to Self-Efficacy

Most of the principals who participated in this study shared both vicarious and mastery leadership experiences that strengthened their self-efficacy to lead Title I schools. According to Bandura (1997), mastery experiences require individuals to successfully complete a task or series of tasks, and those individuals attribute the success of the task to their own efforts rather than external influences. Principals also shared how vicarious experiences, learning from others including colleagues and mentors, provided them with the experiences and role models that built and strengthened their efficacy to lead a Title I school. Many principals modeled their leadership behaviors on leaders they learned from and therefore wanted to emulate. Bandura (1997) noted that vicarious experiences are important in influencing efficacy expectations. Through observation, people learn to imitate behaviors and apply those behaviors to various situations. These experiences contributed to participants' belief in themselves to lead a Title I school.

McKenna attributed her self-efficacy to leadership experiences where she had opportunities as an assistant principal to be in charge of something from the beginning to the end. She described how she was in charge of the master schedule and had the

responsibility to learn and manage the whole process. She felt that these were "really good learning experiences," where she was accountable for the work and where "the buck stops with you." She went on to describe many mastery leadership experiences such as summer school, budgeting, staffing, and transportation that impacted her self-efficacy. She shared that you learn something from each experience and that "over time they add up and add to your belief that you can do this." She added that these experiences were things that you could add to your "toolkit" and use in other situations.

Pam discussed the impact that leadership successes had on her efficacy when she said, "It's definitely helped, my successes, with efficacy." She believed that everyone comes to work wanting to do a good job, and that having successes builds your confidence and belief in doing a good job. She stated, "When you feel like you've mastered, it starts to build your belief in yourself, that you can do it." She also noted that less experienced teachers did not have the same level of belief in their capacity to teach, but successes or accolades would "pump them up." She felt it was important to build teachers' successes the way she built her successes, which layered her belief in herself over time.

Similarly, Clara also indicated that her self-efficacy was built over time with successes through leadership experiences when she said, "Each thing builds up to kind of the next level." She went on to describe how she was hired as an assistant principal and said that all of the experiences she had built her efficacy and gave her the confidence and experience to apply and be selected. She said that because of this, she "didn't doubt her ability to do the job."

Sasha described how “models of leaders” influenced her efficacy and leadership style. She went on to share that her experiences included working in many different schools, which provided her with a vast array of experiences and leaders to learn from. She developed her own leadership style through taking on leadership behaviors she wanted to emulate. She shared that she lacked “confidence” in the beginning as an administrator, but through strong models she built her efficacy over time through “learning from others.” She noted that she took bits and pieces from each model and experience.

Clara discussed how vicarious experiences or learning from others built her self-efficacy when she said, “Mentorship is key for me.” She shared how her administrators served as role models or “mentors” when she was a teacher, and their belief in her encouraged her to become an administrator. She discussed her admiration for her principal and how she led her school. The principal included her in leadership opportunities, including presenting together at conferences, allowing her to build her repertoire and confidence. Learning from her principal who served in a mentoring role gave her experiences that she drew upon now as a principal. She discussed the invaluable experiences that she said “greatly impacted my efficacy in leading a Title I school.” Clara also discussed that she had another mentor after her principal Sydney, who also was a great leader whom she now modeled her leadership behaviors after. She noted that experiences are key to the success of a Title I principal and lamented that she “wished that I had more time with Julie; in hindsight, that would have been very helpful.”

Similarly, Sasha shared the importance of learning from others when she described how she learned from her mentor to hold held high expectations for students in

leading a Title I school. She described how she modeled these behaviors and wanted to be "just like" her when she grew up. She described how this mentor embodied everything that she wanted to be as an administrator: her initiative, how she cared about kids, how she held high expectations for all of her students. Her experience with her mentor impacted her self-efficacy through vicarious experiences that helped her form her leadership behaviors and leadership efficacy. She described her mentor like this:

> I don't care if they are the worst kids in the school. She said she would walk right up to them and say: "Get your butts in school right now. And I'm telling you because I care about you. And when you need something, come here; I'll give it to you." And so, the ability to do that, the ability to let a kid know I'm going to expect you to do what I expect you to do, but I'm here for you if you need me.

Reid discussed how important it was to learn from role models in building his leadership efficacy. He also noted the importance of learning "what not to do from other leaders." He described how he looked for role models throughout his career as a teacher and then an administrator. He discussed the many opportunities he had to learn from many leaders that he worked for. He talked about his extensive experiences as an administrative intern and the impact they had on his self-efficacy and leadership efficacy. He stated, "I was an administrative intern for 7 years. I had great teachers there. I felt like this was it. I had a great principal, just a great leader, kind of reflective and very engaging." He also shared the impact that these role models had on students and staff, forming a cohesive group. He went on to state that when his role model valued his opinion and saw his perspective on issues, "that just gave me the self-confidence to do the work." As a Title I principal, he continued to model those behaviors through building a collaborative culture at his school where his "staff feels valued." The leadership

experiences Reid had through interning and mentorship positively influenced his leadership efficacy and leadership behaviors in leading a Title I school.

Clara also shared how having a mentor, a role model, built her leadership efficacy and her belief in herself:

> Diana is really good at mentoring people, into seeing what they don't know they want to do. Next, she's very much took me by the hand. And it was like, you're my instructional leader. You're going to be my leader in this school. And that really helped me continue to grow my experience. She taught me a lot about culture and climate and the idea of professional learning communities or collaborative learning team structure, how to move forward.

McKenna also discussed wanting to emulate her mentor when she described, "It's their confidence." She discussed how her leadership efficacy was impacted through these experiences. She wanted to emulate everything about them that "worked." She had admiration for one mentor in particular because she had a plan, was strategic, and could execute, assess, and "move on." She described how she was impressed with how she "managed" people and could transfer her skills to "any" situation and make it a success. She went on to describe: "I thought I want to be her when I grew up, because when there's a problem, people see her, and they feel that she's going to solve it." Knowing that her mentor could do it increased McKenna's self-efficacy and impacted her leadership behaviors through observing and modeling the same behaviors as her role model.

Abigail also discussed her importance of learning from others, specifically colleagues, in building her self-efficacy and leadership behaviors to lead a Title I school. She conveyed this in the following statement:

> I've been able to kind of gather and learn from that. So, all of them, I've just had been incredibly fortunate that all of the people whom I've worked with and I've

> been able to learn from them. So collectively all of that allows me, I think, to lead a Title I school.

Riley reflected on the importance of colleagues and mentors as positively impacting her self-efficacy. She recounted learning from others through a variety of experiences, where each allows you to "learn how to grab what you need from a mentor and from somebody that's informing your practice without fundamentally changing who you are as a person, and then that goes through into your leadership." She discussed how she had a strong belief in her capacity to be good at her job but acknowledged the important role these experiences played in building her self-efficacy and leadership behaviors in leading a Title I school.

Like Riley, Shannon also described how her experience with a role model strengthened her leadership efficacy. She shared that she worked with a highly effective principal whom she learned a great deal from, and these experiences made a big difference in her trajectory into administration and also impacted her belief in herself and her leadership. She remarked that she wanted to be

> someplace where there's people that are smarter and better than me, so I can learn from them. I don't want to be the smartest person. That's a big part of my leadership, that I've been able to seek out and find people to get support from, learn from others.

Summary

All of the principals who participated in this study shared stories about personal and professional experiences as sources of their self-efficacy and described how these experiences impacted their own self-efficacy and leadership behaviors. Principals discussed their belief in themselves as the number one source of efficacy in leading Title I schools. Other sources included the belief of others, including mentors and role models,

through vicarious experiences. They discussed how these mentors impacted their self-efficacy and became role models for their leadership behaviors. Principals also shared the impact of mastery professional experiences that built their self-efficacy. Very little emphasis was put on accolades (social persuasion) or arousal (psychological response) as having an impact on their self-efficacy.

Theme 2: Principals' Self-Efficacy Is at the Center of Their Leadership Practices

Although principals gave many descriptions of themselves as leaders, their leadership practices, and their belief in their ability to lead Title I schools, the overall theme was that their self-efficacy was at the center of their leadership practices. Their self-efficacy transferred to leadership behaviors and practices that included three subthemes: collaborating, building relationships, and empowering staff and sharing power.

Collaborating

The most prominent subtheme shared by all participants in this study was the importance of collaboration in decision making and within the culture of their schools. Strong instructional leadership can create environments that facilitate teachers' work in ways that strengthen their collective belief systems and improve student learning. Principals in this study used phrases such as "collaborative culture," "reflection," "consensus," "shared decision making," and "supportive environments." This quote from Clara described her leadership practice and how she collaborated with her staff to build consensus based on facts rather than assumptions: "I prefer bringing in people and having a conversation and weighing the pros and cons and then really coming to a consensus

based on the data that's presented—not on the feelings in the room." She emphasized that her need for collaboration was authentic and that she did not have all of the answers. Her collaborative approach to leadership recognized her staff's expertise and was an example of shared responsibility for students and learning outcomes. Miguel also described collaborative decision-making as a leadership practice and supported Clara's approach of shared responsibility when he stated:

> I'm definitely collaborative. And that's something that I feel I've been able to do. I feel like I'm very good at hiring people and finding the right people for the job and building collaborative teams where I'm able to distribute decision-making and leadership across teams.

Reid also discussed how collaboration was at the core of his leadership through discussions, shared decision-making, and reflective practice. He commented on how collaboration and reflection were essential to building a strong culture of collaboration and trust in his school, adding that his staff's response to the collaboration model impacted his confidence to do the work. He viewed himself as a strong leader when people were willing to take risks, reflect, collaborate, and believe in his vision. The strong relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' collaboration suggests the need for strong instructional leadership for teachers' collaborative work and school improvement. Most principals in this study discussed the importance of creating collaborative learning teams, improving student achievement, and building a culture of collaboration throughout their school. Effective leaders impact student achievement by creating supportive environments for their teachers.

Shannon, McKenna, Abigail, and Donna discussed the importance of putting structures in place to ensure collaborative learning teams were created and then showing the importance of these meetings by scheduling them as part of the master schedule.

These leadership behaviors highlighted the value that the principals placed on collaboration and staff input in decision-making. Having teachers facilitate the work was important to Shannon: “The team leaders really facilitate the meetings. I want to hear and listen [to] what’s going on.” She went on to emphasize that to build a collaborative culture and have student success, the collaborative learning teams needed to “meet one day a week in our coaching corners and attend all those meetings.” McKenna also described the importance and purpose of these collaborative teams: “It is about creating systems of support to help teachers to be successful, being really serious about how we assess and determine what kids need.” Both Shannon and McKenna valued collaboration and created supportive environments to improve outcomes for students and staff.

Abigail and Donna also described their leadership as collaborative but included the need to have systems in place to make sure the collaboration is effective. Both shared a similar perspective that collaboration needed to be “structured and supported” in order to have the best outcomes. Abigail built formal grade level collaboration time for (CLT) into the master schedule so that teachers could work together and “make a difference for kids.” Donna also shared that she was “system oriented” and put together collaborative learning teams and a “leadership advisory team that meets monthly.” Both Donna and Abigail shared that these structures were essential to “building capacity” within their staff.

Harry and Miguel also shared that although they were the leader in their schools, they become more reflective and make better decisions, strengthening their leadership, when they listen to other perspectives. Harry stated, “I make sure I get as many voices as I can to be heard, recognize I might be the leader, but that doesn’t mean I’m the only

person that matters." Miguel stated, "When you do hear others, whether it's positive or not, it always gives you the opportunity to reflect and be a better practitioner." Finally, Harry stated, "I shouldn't be the loudest voice in the sandwich. Everyone needs to figure out how to get from point A to point B."

Building Relationships

Most principals participating in this study described the importance of building relationships with students, staff, families, and the central office. Although all participants discussed the importance of building relationships, each had a different slant on the purpose. Principals reflected on their own experiences that contributed to their self-efficacy, where relationships were necessary in moving the work forward, accessing resources, reaching out to the community, and ultimately achieving student success; however, within the discussions, some also connected the importance of building relationships with accessing resources to create equity and opportunities for students. Principals in this study believed that building relationships was essential in successfully leading a Title I school. Clara shared her perspective regarding the importance of building relationships to establish trust within her school and community and with colleagues and the district office. She stated, "A lot of things can happen just because sometimes just being able to pick up the phone and call someone, you know, someone who can understand or help or that you are trying to really help support a school and move it forward." Her focus on building relationships was to access what her students, staff, and community needed to be successful. Shannon also felt that relationships were "the most important thing, that if you do not have the relationship, you really cannot get the real work done without it." Similarly, Donna also put time in to building

relationships, so she could access what was needed for students. She stated, “I have done enough work to develop those relationships, so I think it works out okay. I lean on relationships and persistence, doing whatever it takes in the best interest of students.”

Some participants shared their belief that relationships needed to be at the “heart” of everything they do. They discussed how relationships were needed to “build trust” and empower staff, students, and families. Many responded with phrases such as “caring,” “connecting,” “feeling valued and important.” Harry described that it was all about “relationship building” and making sure staff and students knew that he “cared about them.” Sasha shared the idea that relationships preceded anything else when she described how building relationships could be more important than pedagogy: “There are some people who have the best pedagogy, but that is what’s important to them to create the best lessons. They have to have a heart and understanding of how to build relationships.” Sasha also described the need to have “relationships with parents in order to build trust” so that they know you “deeply care” about their children. She shared the need for parents and educators to be on the same side in order for “students to reach their full potential.” Reid also described the importance of having relationships with students in order to “see students’ strengths and potential.” He believed and modeled for his staff that “relationships are more important at our school than your content knowledge.” He stated:

> Your ability to form relationships and understand students, to understand their trauma, build a collaborative learning environment around them. We get students and their peers to collaboratively function together, [which] is way more important than content.

Abigail also articulated that principals needed relationships in order to leverage resources. She shared that her belief in students was essential to her work; showing

students that she cared for and believed in them demonstrated her commitment to their well-being. Harry echoed similar beliefs that caring and valuing students and staff was at the core of his leadership beliefs and practices. Shannon also shared: "I think relationships are everything—relationships with people at your school, with people in the community, relationships with district office and principals."

Empowering Staff and Sharing Power

Most of the principals participating in this study shared how their self-efficacy influenced their leadership behaviors in the way they empowered staff. Their belief in empowering staff was evident through efforts in professional learning, collaborative decision-making, and teacher leadership opportunities. Principals described how they empowered staff with phrases such as "leadership opportunities," "leadership teams," "risk-taking," and providing a "safe environment." These leadership practices empowered staff, creating opportunities for power sharing, which can also increase teachers' confidence and self-efficacy as well as the school's collective efficacy.

Shannon described the importance of "building strong teacher leadership groups." She discussed how she empowered staff through leadership opportunities where staff could work in a lead teacher role. She provided professional development, so they could acquire leadership skills to lead groups or worked side by side with teachers in a coaching model. She further described these efforts:

> We all participated in adaptive schools training and cognitive coaching. We meet once a week; we do professional reading and conversations. That group really is an amazing committee and are supportive of the staff. And then we also have leadership team that includes lead coaches, classroom teachers, and lead teachers for each grade level. That work as a team leaders and coaches has really pushed us along.

Sasha discussed her leadership philosophy as shared leadership, "empowering teachers and encouraging them to take on leadership roles" while she provided the support for them to be successful. She believed that "all voices should be heard" and her staff would look at challenges from a leadership team perspective, challenging assumptions while making best shared decisions for students and staff.

Abigail shared that providing teachers with opportunities to take risks empowered them to try new ideas with students while feeling supported by their principals. She described how she was adept at seeing teachers' potential and ability, often "before they can see it." She articulated how she encouraged staff to "bring their ideas" to her and how much she "valued risk-taking and innovation." She went on to say that she also modeled risk-taking for her staff. Clara similarly described the importance of risk-taking and how it allows staff to continue their own learning progression; however, she clarified that she needed to provide a safe environment for them to try new things, emphasizing the need to build trust and relationships. Clara explained:

> I want them to feel like mistakes are okay and to take risks. Trying to say that I'm hoping staff also feels like in a safe environment for them, they can try new things. Something we implemented this year was everyone goes through a coaching cycle to work with either a literacy coach or a math coach or give to resource for the gifted resource teacher. Really kind of helped teachers to build their self-efficacy, their practice in their classroom, and being okay to say being there as their trusted adult.

Miguel discussed his ability as a leader to innovate and provide the necessary support for staff to feel comfortable taking risks. He shared that he was driven by finding ways to improve things and find innovative solutions. He shared that he was always open to listening to other ideas and that he was "driven" to find new solutions and better ways of doing things. Like Clara, Miguel modeled for staff the value of risk-taking and felt he

"empowered my staff through risk-taking." Abigail also believed in empowering staff and shared her perspective that she was really good at figuring out what people are good at and placing them in places where they can make a difference.

Summary

All of the principals who participated in this study worked diligently to create and maintain a collaborative climate and culture to support student learning. This effort included creating collaborative learning teams that focused on student learning and social-emotional well-being. Principals focused on building relationships with students, staff, and families in order to move the work forward. Principals' practice prioritized empowering staff through leadership opportunities, professional learning, and shared decision-making.

Theme 3: Principals with Self-Efficacy Respond to Risk Factors with Transformative and Social Justice Leadership Practices

Principals were asked to describe the risk factors that they faced in leading Title I schools and how these factors impacted their leadership efficacy. The participants discussed how student poverty was the number one challenge they faced, but they also described many of the risk factors associated with students and their families living in poverty as being of great significance, including mental health issues, trauma, addiction, hunger, lack of parental involvement, and lack of resources and opportunities for students. They continually shared that it was not poverty that was the greatest challenge, but all that comes with families of poverty. Overcoming these risk factors was vitally important for these principals to effectively lead a Title I school. Responses from

principals included “it is about the students,” “if not me then who,” “no child should have to live in poverty,” and “I don’t want poverty to define them.” At the center of their efficacy was their students.

In addition to describing these risk factors, the principals also discussed their response to them. All shared a high level of belief that they could overcome these obstacles. Their self-efficacy allowed them to find ways to mitigate these risk factors. Five subthemes were associated with these descriptions: motivation; persistence; advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for all; effecting deep and equitable change; and moral courage.

Motivation

Most principals who participated in this study described how they felt motivated by the risk factors they faced in leading a Title I school. They viewed these risk factors as challenges they needed to overcome in order to meet students’ basic needs, ensure academic and social-emotional success, advance inclusion, and provide access and opportunity for all. Miguel described how poverty was not just about socioeconomic means but impacted many other areas in students’ success. He shared that he viewed “these risk factors as a challenge,” and his belief in himself allowed him to conquer it. He also described that although poverty was a big challenge, “it’s not the fact that it’s poverty as such. It’s what comes with it.” He added that poverty does not mean that parents do not care about their kids’ schooling; rather, due to poverty, parents are not always able to be available to support students’ schoolwork because they are often working multiple jobs. Miguel looked for the root cause for an issue rather than making an assumption that all families from poverty do not care about their child’s schooling.

> Chances are that they have one, two, or three shifts or one, two, or three jobs to really make ends meet. They're really sometimes not that available to support their kids. It's not that they don't care. They care a lot.

McKenna similarly described her motivation but also acknowledged the "stress" associated with these risk factors. Specifically, she noted the level of trauma and mental health issues some of her students lived with, as well as domestic violence. She shared that the risk factors created a stress or tension that motivated her and often her staff working in Title I schools. She described a scenario her first year as principal: "I remember I had two students get evicted on the same day and become whole homeless, but that is a typical day in a Title I school." She discussed how the risk factors motivated her to focus on students:

> The foremost concern in my brain is that we are going to fail children and that is an absolute deal breaker. So, everything that happens at my school, the teachers know, the parents know, the students know. Every decision that is made is going to be focused on how does this impact students and everything else has to go from there.

Clara also elaborated on the impact of poverty and her role in meeting students' basic needs when she stated, "Poverty is hard." She went on to describe the trauma many students face in their homes and how difficult that makes learning for students when they are at school. She discussed how she was motivated to help students access learning and help to provide basic resources for students. Clara shared: "They're missing school. They're failing further and further behind. If their child is in a situation where there's violence, whether it's based on poverty or trauma within that family system, they can't access what we're doing here." She also commented that many parents in poverty are trying to do their best for their children, but due to lack of money they have to make difficult choices on food and shelter. Clara felt a sense of urgency and motivation to help

mitigate these factors. Her self-efficacy beliefs gave her the motivation and confidence to take on these risk factors.

Similarly, Donna described her response to risk factors associated with poverty as motivation to meet students' basic needs. She acknowledged that it was a tremendous challenge, especially with 83% of her students living below the poverty line and 87% of them speaking a language other than English at home.

Shannon acknowledged risk factors as difficult when she said, "Don't think there aren't times I feel discouraged." She further discussed that she felt motivated because her role was to advocate for her students. She shared that it can be easy to get caught up in the trauma and poverty, especially since her school was a "community school," which meant that families were "school dependent" for more than academics. She noted that these risk factors could increase the difficulty to focus on academics but felt strongly that her school needed to give students' academic opportunities in addition to social and emotional support while trying to mitigate the risk factors. She stated, "But for the most part, I usually feel very motivated that we can, you know, keep moving up."

Similarly, Harry acknowledged the impact of risk factors on his efficacy when he noted, "It's also exhausting work." He continued:

> You've got kids who are on learning all day every day. We have some kids that haven't eaten. So how do we meet all those needs at once? The challenges, what's exciting and the reason, you know, specifically, you know, that I acquired this job. . . I feel like it would be easier if kids were all the same, but there's so many kids in different places in poverty. Obviously, poverty mobility of students who don't stay in home situation. The challenges . . . of these students motivate me, but they also wear you out—how life works, right.

Pam also felt motivated by the risk factors and described the need to exercise control where possible and to not solely focus on the obstacles and risk factors that her

students faced. She shared the importance of looking beyond poverty and helping her staff do so as well. She talked about how she needed to look at ways to make a difference in her students' lives and help staff not get bogged down in the emotion and heartbreak of some of her students' situations. She felt motivated to not feed the cycle of holding lower expectations for students based on their socioeconomic status. She eloquently stated, "If you look at these kids for who they are, not about who they can become, then you're constantly going to be feeding the system and the cycle of what they're going to be like." Pam's leadership behaviors looked at balancing critique and promise of students while also deconstructing social/cultural knowledge frameworks that continue to generate inequity (Shield, 2013).

Persistence

According to Bandura (1993), those with high self-efficacy are more persistent with tasks than those with lower self-efficacy. Participants in this study were asked if they possessed persistence and, if so, to give examples of the role of persistence in leading a Title I school. Most principals who participated in this study felt they had persistence. These principals understood the role self-efficacy played in their belief in themselves to be persistent when faced with many challenges associated with leading a Title I school and to overcome these challenges. They discussed not only the need to have a sense of urgency but also the perseverance it takes to get basic resources for students and families, create equity, and do what's best for students. They also emphasized the need to be selective in choosing when to be persistent and when to pull back, always balancing their relationships with staff, the central office, and the community. Through their use of persistence, they also demonstrated resilience.

Harry shared the need for being persistent but also stressed "making sure you're persistent on the right things." He discussed the role of persistence as an educational leader and making sure that his leadership behaviors were enacting significant change for his students. He referenced the need "to filter out the noise for staff" and focus on things that make a difference. He further remarked:

> You need a sense of urgency, you know, kind of persistent and consistent kind of in that same vein that you're continuing the message, making sure you're checking up on the right things. Like what are you going to hold everyone accountable for?

McKenna echoed the need to have persistence on the right things when she shared, "You have to pick your battles." She commented on the need to help staff focus on what is important. McKenna shared that often staff get bogged down in the little things and can become too empathetic, creating a lack of focus on the big picture. She saw her role as pivotal in leading her staff to focus on what was important. McKenna focused her persistence on issues that impact one's safety and well-being or civil rights:

> I'm going to be a dog with a bone and I would push as much on some stuff. . . . So being persistent about the things that really matter, what might even seem small, but I was not going to let go. And then something else I might say, I don't have the energy for that. . . . I'm not going to pick that battle because it doesn't impact anyone else's access or civil rights.

Abigail described the need for persistence in overcoming risk factors for students but also acknowledged that "persistence takes time." She discussed how difficult it is to make changes that would benefit her students and families due to how risk factors associated with poverty impact families and also impact a principal. She described this scenario:

> So, you have to make calls on off hours. Most of the parents are working jobs where they can't take calls, and you have to call several times and then you have

> to use the language line. It sounds dramatic, but like everything about the experience is different. It really does, because even a phone call trying to contact a parent is so difficult because unless you use the language line, they cannot understand what you're telling them. Rarely do parents have the same phone number because a lot of them are on plans where you buy a phone and you get so many minutes and they've been disconnected. I can count the number of times where I've gone into a student's account and dialed the phone number and it doesn't work. It's mind-blowing.

Abigail's example shows both the persistence that is needed in leading a Title I school and the role that self-efficacy has in taking on difficult tasks and following through. Abigail provided solutions to the inequity faced by students in Title I schools. Calling during off hours and using the language line assisted her in leveling the playing field for families who have often been marginalized. She also noted the amount of time required to do this and the toll it took on her.

Similarly, Sasha described the role of persistence and the need to have a sense of urgency in addressing risk factors associated with leading a Title I school:

> So, the persistence comes in going back to the sense of urgency that I cannot afford one seed, one bad apple to interrupt this work. So, I'm going to face it head on, face equity and things that impact our culture.

She focused on persistence to provide equity for students, sharing that "anything less than that was a disservice to the kids who need you." She went on to state:

> Anything that makes someone think that doing something different for a child who needs it is wrong. When you see it every day, you have to deal with it every day, head on. If you don't, then you're doing a disservice to the kids who need you. And the Title I school, the persistence is every day. Be persistent and never let your guard down. And every time that institution or whatever you've built up is threatened in any way, you know, equity and issues, that you deal with it head on. And you make sure that you, that everyone understands the goal and the mission of the school and that they're on board.

Reid also shared his ability to be persistent in "making sure that we have a sense of urgency about your whole life. To make sure that this institution is about improvement

of children and that you address every single solitary thing that goes on that threatens that." Both Reid and Sasha's responses reflected a moral purpose in doing what was right for all students. Riley demonstrated persistence when working through district initiatives that needed to be more flexible and adaptive to meet all students' needs. He described how maintaining persistence was necessary when issues directly impact students, "especially students that are challenged for many reasons." Like Reid and Sasha, Riley's use of persistence was student centered.

Donna also discussed the importance of being persistent "every single day" to provide resources for students. Her use of persistence was also student-centered:

> I can't impress upon you how important this is. You know, all of the things have just been just out of that persistence or teachers being persistent in terms of trying to get students to services and the supports they need and advocating for all of them. It's being persistent with every single thing that comes your way. Those things happen at all levels for our students, but it's exhausting. But you know that when the kids get what they need, it's really powerful.

Advancing Inclusion, Access, and Opportunity for All

Most principals participating in this study shared their commitment to advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for their students. They discussed their overwhelming commitment to create more opportunities for their students and to provide an equitable playing field to help decrease the impact of risk factors on students' academic performance and overall well-being. Their self-efficacy transferred to leadership behaviors that challenged inequity and created more inclusive opportunities for students. Due to the COVID pandemic and schools transitioning to distance learning, much of the conversation about equity focused on distance learning and the inequity of devices, internet bandwidth, access to food, and parent support, bringing to the forefront the

difference between access and equity. Even though students had access to a mobile internet hotspot, they did not always have the resources to take advantage of the curriculum.

Miguel observed how inequity still existed even after all students were given devices for virtual learning and advocated for no new content to be taught to students during this time. Miguel continued to advocate for a balance between new curriculum content delivery and review. He noted that many of his students' home situations were not conducive to learning, and often there was a lack of parental support to facilitate the technology and content learning. He felt that teaching new curriculum content was an inequitable practice during this time and would adversely affect his students' academic success and well-being.

Miguel used his self-efficacy to take on the challenge of advocating for change that would support all students. He further discussed the need to equal the playing field in order to close the equity gap:

> Creating equity is a work in progress every single day. It's a daily fight, for lack of a better term, just to ensure that there is equity. For example, the most recent things I've been advocating about is equity in terms of internet access, access of technology during these times of distance learning.

Riley also looked at the inequity of learning related to students' internet bandwidth. He continued to advocate for more MiFi devices for students but also worked with his district leaders to make arrangements with Comcast to improve and strengthen the internet speed for families who needed it. Riley showed high self-efficacy through his persistence in challenging the status quo to provide what was needed for his students. He explained:

> I think it's usually difficult in this day and age to create equity for kids. So, let's look at equity. Yes, all kids have devices. Let's talk about the internet access one-to-one devices for all of our third through fifth, but not everybody has access to the internet, that not everybody who has access to the internet or one-to-one devices has access to the type of support that they require in order to engage in whatever it is the teachers are putting out.

Sasha acknowledged inequity in access to resources and how risk factors have impacted student learning during COVID. Some students did not have internet access, and others had slow-speed Internet, which impacted their ability to log in for virtual learning and stay on throughout the day. She described how problems with "access to basic resources create a disadvantage every day for her students." She described how her school had previously started work on equity which created "difficult conversations with staff" to understand their role in creating equity for students. She described how the pandemic created a better understanding of inequity, as "half of these kids can't access the information we are trying to give them, let alone having food or money." She added, "These students don't have access to basic resources necessary for them to focus at school."

Similarly, Abigail described the impact of risk factors that created inequity of the basic experiences that students and parents have in Title I schools. She discussed how the same amount of time was allocated in parent-teacher conferences for a native English speaker as for a parent for whom English was a second language. She focused on providing equity and used her self-efficacy and power to challenge the current parent-teacher conference format and advocate for more time for parents who needed language support.

> I don't know if you'd say institutional racism, but for example, just some super simple things. Parent-teacher conferences, there are 20 minutes. So, if you're a native speaker, you get 20 minutes to build a relationship with a teacher, right? If

> you're a Spanish speaker, you get about 8 minutes to accomplish the same goals because you have an interpreter. If you do not have the luxury of understanding American schools, you have a far less than 8 minutes; you have about 4. So even something as simple as parent-teacher conferences or vastly different experiences, you're English speaking. So that adds up over time and even something as little as that makes a huge difference, right?

Similarly, Clara shared how her response to risk factors that impact students' ability to participate in after-school activities was to provide equity and access. Clara was intentional and used her self-efficacy to challenge the status quo. Through her leadership behaviors, she transformed how the PTA offered opportunities for students. She used her power to create opportunities for all students, not just a select few. She explained:

> So, it very much became that the haves all went to after-school programs and the have-nots went to soccer because that was the grades that we offered soccer to. So, one of the things I said to the PTA was we're changing vendors. I'm fine with you offering things, but only if we can find a way for our students whose parents can, cannot afford $200 for an after-school program to be able to attend.

Clara's use of power acknowledged the privilege of some and the disadvantage of others. She made sure that the vendor the PTA chose to provide extracurricular opportunities for students at her school provided scholarships for students who were unable to pay. The PTA lost money on these endeavors; however, all students had access to these opportunities. Clara stated, "Basically, half of the kids paid, and half of the kids did not pay. What was important to me was if we're going to offer something, how can we make it accessible to everyone who comes to our school."

Sasha also described the impact of risk factors as students having a "lack of access to resources." She described at length the difference between *equity* and *equal*:

> So, it's getting people to understand that sometimes we're going to give students something different and other people may look at it as something more, but we need to do something and give them something more or different so that we can get them on the same playing field so that they can access the curriculum. So, it's

> the whole equity piece of getting your schools and your parents and your community to understand we're not going to treat everyone the same because our goal isn't to make, you know, those who can learn, learn; our main goal is to give everyone the same opportunities so that the whole understanding that we give everybody what they need.

McKenna acknowledged lack of equity and through her self-efficacy she took on the challenge of deconstructing knowledge frameworks and practices such as homework and projects to be completed at home. McKenna provided students access to resources including adult support, materials, and a quiet space at school so they could be successful completing homework assignments. She also worked with staff to understand the difference between performance and ability (opportunity and ability to learn) by reinforcing to them that it was "okay for students to do it here." She described this effort:

> So, trying to create that if we have projects and different activities in school, it's okay for teachers to give the supplies to the kids and that they can do it here at the school. So, they don't have to say to their parents at home, I have to do this project. They can do it here in the school, you know, bouncing and leveraging some of the resources that you have to ensure that the equity and access is available to your kids in your school. I'm working from behind the deck, kind of close when needed to create equitable opportunities for students.

Sasha also worked with teachers to not marginalize students because of their home situations that may affect their performance, balancing critique and promise. She reiterated the importance of holding high expectations for students but also the importance of giving students what they need rather than giving all students the same thing:

> It's really the biggest challenge when families don't have access to basic resources that are necessary for them to focus on school. We started a lot of our equity work because there are fifth-grade teachers with very high expectations and these are good for kids, but they're wondering why this child didn't come back with their diorama or their model of the universe done. That lack of resources every day that puts them at a disadvantage every day.

Clara described the need to solve problems for families who needed access to resources including services. Clara believed that "as a principal of a Title I school, that's something I need to take care of; it's part of your role to ensure that every kid makes it to school every day and that they are in bed when they make it home every day. Providing services as well as an education."

She discussed how her students' poverty affected their access to education and the need to put supports in place including food and clothing, putting the basic needs of students before academics. She discussed how she had a family at her school that had a daughter with health needs and the bus service the county was providing required her student to walk too far due to her health condition. Through her self-efficacy to take on difficult challenges, Clara used her power to require change from the county. She also demonstrated moral courage by challenging the county's policies for transportation, which stated that a less than a mile walk was acceptable. The student lived three-quarters of a mile away. Clara worked with a social worker, and after numerous phone calls they found another bus that drove right past the student's apartment.

Reid described the inequity of experiences students in Title I schools have compared to students of higher socioeconomic means. He described the inequity when he shared:

> I'd say the hard thing is field trips because you have them, but you can't give them the amount of field trips that a family with socioeconomic share capital can to enrich their children's lives. You can't compete with that.

Reid reallocated resources where needed using his Title I funds, which could include extended learning activities. Reid used innovative thinking to create a level playing field for students.

Effecting Deep and Equitable Change

Most of the principals who participated in this study discussed the need to create systems and structures that would lessen the impact of risk factors and create deep and equitable change. These systems and structures were put into place to provide students access to basic needs and educational resources, improve student learning, and create continued equity and access for students. Participants felt it was not enough to address the inequity; they needed to create sustainable systems and structures to limit the impact of risk factors and create sustainable solutions that would affect deep and equitable change (Shields, 2013). McKenna stated that "creating systems and structures especially was a key priority." She further explained:

> Initially it was really about behavior structures, procedures, basics, and then getting more and more specific over time. If we had talked about learning targets and quality work, the first-year people would have been lost because they weren't ready for it. You know, they needed to have time and be more empowered in the classroom, get kids engaged before we could do this, like next-level kind of things. You have to have a system in place before you can make progress.

The quote by McKenna showed her as leader who used critical reflection and analysis before addressing a problem. She understood the need to scaffold this change; she understood the role of self-efficacy, with her teachers needing more experience in the classroom before they had the confidence to address learning targets and take on work that would create sustained change.

Pam discussed the need to focus on the potential of the child and to look beyond the circumstances the child came from. She focused on the child's promise rather than deficit thinking and created systems of support to ensure students' success. She shared:

> So that all those things, wonderful things can be done and can be continued to be done, [it is] important to create systems and structures, so that once you've gotten

> that culture in place where we're here for these kids, we believe in them, we're going to help them learn how to persevere and have grit and get beyond some of these circumstances that they now have, you know it will continue long after you're gone.

Donna discussed the need to "think differently" in order to "minimize barriers" and create sustained change. She shared how lack of resources, including time, money, and physical resources, created barriers that affect students' opportunities and experiences. She looked for ways to eliminate these barriers and come up with innovative solutions and systems that could create deep and equitable change. She stated, "When you try and eliminate or minimize barriers, instead of trying to accommodate, you're going to start to think differently about instruction and think differently about student successes." She had a strong belief that all students should have access to playing an instrument, and language and monetary barriers should not impact this opportunity for students. She created a checkout system where every student had an opportunity for a couple nights a week to take their instrument home and practice and bring it back the following day. She created a buddy system where students shared instruments every other day. Through her self-efficacy and leadership, she provided opportunities for many students to feel successful and provided a system that could create and sustain deep equity and change.

Miguel described how he created a system of protocols to support both student and parent learning. He saw the number of parents who came to events who didn't have English as a first language and could not fully participate. Knowing that two of his learning outcomes were students reading and increasing parent involvement, he came up with an innovative plan to address both. He instituted a nonnegotiable with his staff that every community event had to have a learning purpose. Miguel deconstructed and

reconstructed social/cultural knowledge frameworks in order to create sustained change that would benefit his students and families. He described this effort:

> We had reading nights, and it was more than an adult reading out loud to kids. Then that parents, we are going to read to you. And then we're going to take turns so that you can also learn to read aloud with your child and to ask them comprehension questions. So, we did work on that with parents. We also did this year numeracy and literacy.

Pam discussed the need to create structures and systems that "try and balance out that playing field in the school for students." She went on to describe the need to create systems and structures so that students could overcome the obstacles they face with poverty. She described how the obstacles students face outside of school should not impact them in school. Through her self-efficacy and leadership practices, she balanced critique and promise of students as she created after-school opportunities in which students had homework support, sports teams, social-emotional support through connection with a safe adult in her building, and weekend backpack food programs where students picked up a backpack each Friday to have food over the weekend, as they would not be getting breakfast and lunch through school.

Reid observed the need to create systems to support and improve student learning. He discussed in detail the importance of having a system to look at students' data and hold teachers accountable for the work. He also discussed how this connected to the collaborative learning teams he created. Before he arrived at his school, he described how everything was done through paper-collected data, which also created inequities. Having everything aligned also created an equitable playing field for all staff to review and share student data. He described:

> You could see their reading level, you could see their socioeconomic status. So, we had the complete data picture of how well they did on their reading tests. We color-coded it. And then we looked, so we created systems within the data that would help us support student learning.

Abigail described how she created systems that supported student learning. Many students were playing sick at 8:15 in the morning. She realized this when talking with a few different moms who shared that they had to get to work; if they stayed home, they didn't get paid, so they let their children stay home. Through her self-efficacy, she looked at ways to solve the problem with innovation rather than judgment of the parents. By her actions she challenged structural norms in order to provide an opportunity for students to be in school and learn. These students did not have the opportunity to learn but did have the ability if she created a new system and structure to get students to school: If there was a question of whether the student was sick, parents would bring the student to school at 8:15 and the nurse would check their temperature. If they were able to go to class, they would, and if they had a fever the clinic would tend to them. She explained:

> Once you figure out some of the perspective and the problems and the challenges that other people are living with, you can help to problem solve. So, once we figured out what our attendance was being impacted by, because parents had to make decisions at 8:15 in the morning, we created this system where kids were brought to the nurse. . . . The parents didn't have to lose work, and the kids were in school. The same as once I understood about the snack issue where parents didn't sign their kids up for soccer even though we had the fee waived, because they couldn't afford to bring the snack for the team. I worked with and created a snack bank that parents could pick up. We had snacks we made available.

Moral Courage

Most of the principals who participated in this study described the importance of advocacy and challenging the status quo in leading a Title I school. Through their self-efficacy, they took on difficult challenges and did not shy away from confrontation when

it would benefit their students, staff, and families. The principals also spoke about the need to know when to push and when to hold back, balancing compliance and advocacy.

Pam described the need to challenge the status quo when district decisions were not benefitting her students. She shared that this was the time she needed to push back and use persistence because her students needed "something different" to help them be successful. She discussed the importance of knowing when to "push," acknowledging the role of "compliance" in supporting your school system but finding the courage when you know it's not what's best for your students. She explained:

> When we are instructed to implement something in our school with our students that we know is not going to work, it's having a balance—being compliant with the direction of the school system, but also finding in persevering to know that kids that you serve are going to need something different to help them be successful. Sometimes it's going to require for you to be courageous and push the envelope.

Sasha shared that challenging the status quo meant standing up for what is right when "it doesn't work for everybody." She went on to describe a PTA meeting in which a parent was vocalizing how much better the "system" worked for students when they used a "tracking system" for student placement based on "ability." This system left students of color at a disadvantage and placed them in a lifelong track. Sasha shared that she "couldn't hold back" when she spoke up and said, "Worked for who? . . . It doesn't work for anybody. I said there was kind of silence in the room, but you know, you want to have to stick up for all of these kids and all of the fake news and whatever you call it." Through her self-efficacy and leadership behaviors, Sasha showed moral courage and was deconstructing social and cultural knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity.

Abigail also shared the need to push, have courage, and not accept no for an answer. In this effort, she described the "advantage of having longstanding relationships."

She reflected on how her colleagues saw her as a leader who did her part, and therefore they were "willing to at least listen and consider my request or try to make it work." She said that she would rather be "criticized for going above the bar than below it."

Miguel described the need to challenge the status quo when food distribution sites were not accessible by his families. When COVID closed the schools, many families who rely on food distribution from their schools were left without access to food. Miguel was worried that many of his families couldn't get to those sites because most of his students walked to school. He used his parent liaison and social workers to start contacting families and they started "finding out many stories of people losing their jobs or getting their hours reduced, and that's where the food insecurity came in." The county Miguel worked for set up food distribution sites in "central" locations. Families could not get to the first two distribution sites because they lived outside of that area. He realized families were not coming because it was too far to walk to and the bus cost $4.00 round trip. Miguel challenged the status quo:

> So, I advocated to have an additional food distribution site because the families at my school, I said, we need to get these people walking site. So as soon as we opened the site at our school, we started to have students and parents and families started coming out of the woodwork to collect their food.

Harry also discussed how he often needed to challenge the status quo. He gave the example of all students not being able to access the "gifted curriculum." He shared how conversations about equity were hard to have and could be "messy" and then reflected that "the real challenge is putting it into practice." Harry shared that he had no problem challenging the status quo when it came to "doing what's best for students. All students should have access to this curriculum, regardless of whether they are identified gifted." He continued.

> I just had a conversation with my resource teacher for the gifted, because she doesn't want to open up her online platform for students who are not identified as gifted. You know what, if kids want to access the gifted curriculum, they should be able to. I told her to make sure that would happen.

Harry exhibited moral courage in challenging the status quo to create equitable opportunities for all students.

McKenna also challenged the status quo and promoted inclusion in how students were selected to be part of a school performance. When she first became the principal at her school, she recognized the importance of the school musical within her school culture and noticed the lack of inclusion, where the cast did not mirror her student population. She shared that her priority was inclusion, not the "perfect performance." She worked with her faculty to build trust and take risks:

> If a student with autism is in the show and has a meltdown, what's important is that they were included. We're going to put a higher premium on the exclusivity piece, which I feel like is that equity. Instead of worrying about the perfection, which maybe is more aligned with excellence, maybe excellence is that different people can differently be excellent, and that everyone was able to access this opportunity.

Through her self-efficacy and leadership behaviors, she challenged the school culture regarding the musical and created a more inclusive opportunity for all students; she also allowed her teachers to take risks and feel supported. She engaged in difficult conversations to change the assumption that a school play was for the highest-level student rather than for all students. She deconstructed and reconstructed social/cultural knowledge frameworks to advance inclusion.

Summary

The principals who participated in this study showed high self-efficacy in responding to risk factors and took on difficult challenges to support students and staff. These principals felt motivated by the risk factors associated with leading Title I schools. Overwhelmingly, they shared how they were motivated by these factors and took them on as a challenge. Their self-efficacy informed and influenced their leadership practices in challenging the status quo and displaying moral courage in order to support their students' social, emotional, socioeconomic, and academic needs. They discussed the role of persistence in leading a Title I school in order to access resources to meet students' and families' basic needs. They also acknowledged the amount of time it takes to be persistent; however, the reward was worth it. Principals' practice focused on advancing inclusion, access, and opportunity for all, creating a more level playing field for all students. Additionally, they described how it was not enough to create opportunities for students; rather, it was a moral imperative to create systems and structures that would continue to create more equity, access, and opportunity for all students.

Theme 4: Principals with Self-Efficacy Have a Clearly Defined Shared Vision and High Expectations for All

Principals gave examples of how their leadership beliefs or descriptions of themselves as leaders transferred into practices in leading Title I schools. Principals who participated in this study were able to articulate direct relationships between their self-efficacy and their leadership beliefs and practices. Four subthemes were associated with these descriptions: being strategic and decisive, having a shared vision and responsibility,

modeling expectations and leading by example, and having high expectations for success for all students.

Being Strategic and Decisive

Most participants stressed the importance of being strategic and decisive. They valued collaboration, but also articulated the need for strategic planning, vision, and the ability to make tough decisions.

Miguel discussed the importance of having a plan to move the work forward when he stated, "I think first of all, I have to have a plan, a vision, and then the necessary steps to take." He further described that if the goal was "that all students make a year's worth of growth, then I have to have a plan. We have to have measures in place, benchmarks for us so that we can actually monitor the progress." Being strategic allowed Miguel to monitor students' progress through "using data, either numerical or anecdotal." He shared that this process was strategic and essential to looking at what worked and did not work in order for students to show growth.

McKenna described the importance of planning and having focus. She discussed how there were so many issues to attend to in a Title I school that it was easy to become "distracted" and not focus on the "priorities." She also discussed the need to focus on what matters and be very "explicit with staff and parents." Riley shared a similar response when she voiced her belief that a leader needs to be "accessible but decisive." Although Riley saw herself as a collaborative leader, she also felt her responsibility as a leader to be able to make decisions that needed to be made after looking at feedback from collaboration.

Sasha felt that teachers wanted collaboration but also looked to her to make decisions; she reflected that "this means I have to be very decisive." Clara shared the

need to be both collaborative and decisive: “I am comfortable making it, so that you know we can move forward.” Clara also described how important it was for a leader to make decisions and stick with them: “I guess it’s knowing what you believe in and how you are going to move that forward.”

McKenna discussed the importance of focusing on the right things, staying the course, and not getting distracted by things that didn’t impact student outcomes:

> It’s about focusing on the things that we do have control over, because if we spend our time being impacted by all of the things that are the obstacles that our kids face, we’re never going to spend our energy on the right things. You have to have a plan to obtain that goal. In my experience, I’d rather focus on a handful of things and do them well than try to focus on too many things.

Having Shared Vision and Responsibility

Most participants expressed the importance of having shared vision and responsibility for all students. Sasha described how “even though your kids aren’t performing low or your kids aren’t performing poorly, you have a responsibility and a commitment to the kids that aren’t.” Reid described the importance of creating a shared vision and school culture around everyone’s success.

> We frame everything around our metaphor “when one star shines we all shine.” The students are our stars. I call the staff “star makers.” We’re thinking that all the time, we’re on a journey with these kids. We’re on a road to success, success for all students, lighting up the entire sky.

Sasha also described the need for shared vision and responsibility for students and families. She shared that the success of the whole school matters when she said, “The whole school does fine when everyone does fine. The whole school fails when one student fails.” Sasha added:

> So, the whole school success is what matters. One school, you cannot do it by yourself. Even in a Title I school, you have to understand that you have families that can do it. And you have to make sure that they know that their child, whoever fails, they failed. You've got to bring them up. We all have to bring each other up.

Shannon also said, "we are all in this," describing the importance of having a shared vision and accountability for all students. She believed in collective responsibility for "turning all kids around." She described the need for all staff to share the vision of "turning those at-risk kids around," and she modeled for staff the effort that takes and provided needed support. She noted that all staff needed to take responsibility and were "accountable for these students, and if you are not pushing as hard as me, then we have a problem."

Like Shannon, Pam discussed the need to have a shared vision and collective responsibility when she told her staff they were "building a home and it's what we must do for every kid." She discussed how it was the responsibility of herself and her staff to get students whatever they needed, one student at a time, creating a "synergy" within her staff. She understood how her leadership played an important role in creating this as a reality for her students. Pam's leadership behaviors showed she understood her power in leading this work: "It was not just happenstance; it's what we must do. We get them whatever they need, we do whatever it takes." She wanted all students to feel and be successful, and she looked at the individual and collective good. Pam wanted all staff to "feel it, believe it, and know that we have the ability, that potential, the charge and the responsibility to make a difference in the lives of these kids."

Miguel discussed shared vision in having every staff member and student "become a better version of themselves." He felt that having a shared vision helped students and staff grow academically and emotionally. He emphasized creating a "shared

vision and creating a climate" that acknowledged that there was something very special about their school. Abigail summed up shared vision and responsibility when she said, "Whenever one of them is not meeting success, then you worry about all of them. Success for all—the success of all kids matters for me."

Modeling Expectations and Leading by Example

Most of the principals participating in this study perceived modeling expectations and leading by example as essential to their leadership and success for all. Shannon stated, "My assistant principal and I try to do a lot of things to support teachers, to help keep them motivated, keep talking about why we do this and what we do and why it's important." Shannon reflected:

> I think if you were to ask them, you know, what do I believe in? I think they would know what those things are. They're important to me because those are the things that when we're looking at expectations for teachers, those expectations are there. We constantly model them each day.

Abigail also reflected at length on the need to model expectations and how personal the work was to her and therefore should be for all through "modeling expectations" for staff. She also indicated that she modeled the expectation that staff need to take student success "personally":

> I think my leadership style with staff and that my leadership with kids and knowing that over the long-term we'll get there. It comes back to that belief to do, to do this work, to take it personally. I think I've always been in a position where myself and my assistant principal takes it personally; we take kids' success—and by success, I mean social, emotional success, academic, all of it—we take it personally and so we demonstrate that.

Riley modeled expectations and led by example by showing staff she was willing to do whatever it takes. She felt it was important to model expectations for staff through

her actions. She believed that if she "took ownership" and "did whatever was necessary," that would transfer to her staff and their understanding of those expectations. She shared that she would "clean bathrooms" if necessary. She went on to note:

> I really try to encourage with my staff, keep that training going, encourage staff to have those practices in mind. I think one of the best ways to do that is to model it very, very concretely and directly for staff. I don't think that it should be inauthentic. I look for opportunities to use authentic modeling of practices that I want staff to be implementing in their classrooms and with students.

McKenna also described the importance of leading by example and doing "undesirable tasks." She felt that showing her staff she was willing to do whatever it took to do the job would transfer to her staff "feeling better about those tasks" they may not want to do. Through her modeling, she was also showing the expectation that everyone should do whatever it takes.

Clara shared the importance of staff knowing that they could count on her and that she was always "available and present" for them to "meet their needs." She described how this was "just good leadership." She went on to indicate that "you have to meet the needs of your people. You have to model what the expectations are. That's what a good leader does."

Similarly, Reid described the need for staff to have "respect" for him and his decisions and said that he had to model that respect through his interactions with staff. He modeled these expectations through being a "transparent and fair" leader who was open to feedback.

Having High Expectations for Success for All Students

Most participants believed in all students' potential—that all students can learn and be successful. The participants discussed holding high expectations for themselves,

students, and staff. These leaders did not place the blame on students and families for their differences; they took ownership of their role in making sure all students were successful. Abigail described at length a story about having high expectations, to include seeing the potential in all students.

> Some students still hadn't passed the SOL [Standards of Learning Assessment] in their fifth-grade year. I think passing a SOL is hugely important because the student knows that it is possible. And once they've done it, I think they know they can. And then their parents begin to expect that they should almost demand for what can we do to make sure that happens. So, these boys I'm mentioning had struggled, struggled with these tests. They both had IEP [individualized educational plans] for some learning disabilities that were significant. Another thing I believe that's important is to be honest with kids to say, look, school's going to be harder than you think. I really wish it wasn't, but that's the reality. So, we had really worked with these two students. I proctored the exam for one of them. He took 5 hours to complete it, but he passed. Both of these students ended up passing the SOL. And when we told them, they both started crying and they grabbed me. And one of them said: How did you know we could do it? You knew before we did. So, I think like that's sort of the essence of our job, right? To see the potential there is in students and to convince the kids that they have it.

Shannon also described holding high expectations, seeing students' potential and the need for inclusion so all students could reach their potential. When she first became the principal at the school, most of the fourth- and fifth-grade students were in self-contained classrooms due to behavior issues. She didn't feel these students were placed accurately or that they could reach their full potential in these settings. She noted that they "didn't eat lunch with other kids. They were completely self-contained. After they were included this past year and they absolutely were thriving. They made huge academic gains and made friends."

Pam also shared a story about the lack of inclusion and high expectations for all students when she started as a principal at her school. Through her leadership, she moved

students who had been in self-contained settings for years into inclusive settings. They assimilated quickly to the new setting, and that made everyone "feel great." Pam added:

> So, it's definitely a great sense, you know, that we've really accomplished something success for all, making certain that all of the tears you've cried about what's happening with this kid and that you're now using that to regenerate yourself and the next day, to make sure that you have an awesome lesson for that student. I guess, coming in and trying to look behind beyond the circumstances of these students, making your focus on the potential that that child has.

Through Pam's leadership behaviors, she modeled for her staff her belief of advancing inclusion and having high expectations for all students. Her belief that all students could be successful translated to her leadership practices.

Shannon also indicated the need to hold high expectations for all students and to make sure they were exposed to "higher-order thinking skills." She discussed the need to "change the mindset" of her school from a deficit thinking model to a talent development model. She indicated that they relied heavily on interventions for students who were English as second language learners and used a one-size-fits-all model.

> That's a deficit model—thinking you're learning another language, there's something wrong with you. But actually, it's more of a talent development. We kind of moved away from intervention, focusing on pulling and looking at our data and how we can really move kids forward. When I interviewed teachers, I make it clear: What are the characteristics of our school and what are the expectations? And what's important to us as a school?

Not only did she dismantle deficit thinking, she also looked to provide sustainable change by making sure teachers interested in teaching at her school understood the mindset and expectations if they were hired to work there.

Sasha similarly described seeing a student's potential and holding high expectations for all students when she stated:

> It means doing whatever it takes for kids. From a student's standpoint, [it] is seeing through what seems challenging on the surface and doing whatever it takes to reach the kid inside for the student. It's about looking beyond the outside, finding out strength on the inside and not giving up until they reach their potential.

Miguel shared his belief in holding high expectations for success for all students:

> I want all kids to succeed. I want them all to succeed; it's the inner driving force for me. It's the kids succeeding, right? And that means that teachers are going to feel great and it means I'm going to feel great.

Riley also talked about success for all students as a primary focus of her leadership in leading a Title I school. She discussed how she weighed every decision on "how it will impact students." She also described the importance of the success of all students when she stated,

> I absolutely wish that every single one of our students would go to college and be able to graduate and go forward. But whatever it is that they want to do, I want them to be successful. There's one major risk factor, and that is we're going to fail children. That worries me. The first and foremost concern on my brain is not failing our children. That's an absolute deal breaker.

Riley went on to discuss the balance needed in working with students and families in Title I schools, to have empathy but still hold high expectations and have accountability for students, staff, and themselves:

> I think you really have to be able to have empathy and compassion and understanding for all of these situations in order to affect change for all of them. Hearing the level of concern from a parent regarding academic or behavior with the child, they are desperately clinging to trying to figure out how to make sure that their head is above water. Being able to do that without carrying judgment or stigma towards the family and supporting staff who very often have had that type of life experience, it's being able to have empathy for them yet still hold everybody accountable.

Pam addressed the need to not get "lost in being too compassionate":

> If you keep looking at these poor black and brown kids who can't speak English or whose parents aren't coming from X environment, then that's where your focus is. All you're doing is reinforcing and delving more into what the world is going to be for this child versus let's take away the things we can't control. Like I wish I could make all of their homes non-dysfunctional and . . . go in and make all these factors go away, but I can't. But you can control the time that we have with them.
>
> And so how do we shift the paradigm thinking, you know, the environment we have with these kids. We have to, we have control over that the time we have with these kids in school. So, for all of the hurt and disappointment and dismay that you may feel, channel that into providing quality experiences for that child in your classroom. And then, you know, he can come to school ready to learn and we can solve the other things that happen.
>
> But that's the hard part. People who have compassion have a hard time with that as drawing the line, because you can get lost in being compassionate and also wanting to hold kids accountable and helping teachers through that. . . . Teachers are kind. People should feel for their kids and be worried about them. And you want that kind of people to work with your kids who feel empathy, but also not to sit in the classroom, crying about it all the time. We're not going to get anything done. We're not going to get to where we need to be.

Pam understood the need for deconstructing social/cultural knowledge frameworks that continue to generate inequity and the significance that role identity has for her students and their future.

Shannon also understood the need to have high expectations and not let empathy create deficit thinking or place identity constraints on someone. Too much empathy could adversely affect students' identity now and in the future. Shannon shared the need for balancing compassion and high expectations:

> Sometimes I think it can be feeling overwhelming, but you have to be careful that sometimes when people feel overwhelmed by that, then they want to kind of move into that "oh, you poor thing"—comfort you. And you know, the most important thing for our kids and what their families want more than anything is for them to get a first-class education, especially with immigrant families, you know, there's immigrant communities. I find that there's, it's as hard as it is and been very hard. The last couple of years with this presidential administration, family and kids are so much uncertainty, so much anxiety.

Summary

All of the principals who participated in this study actively worked to create a culture of shared vision and responsibility. Their beliefs translated into leadership practices that emphasized success for all students and the responsibility of all students and staff to ensure this happened. Principals' behaviors and practice focused on modeling expectations, leading by example, and holding high expectations for themselves, staff, and students. Through consistent modeling of expectations and development of staff, principals were able to build capacity. Principals' practice also included the need to have a plan and to be strategic and decisive in order to reach intended goals and outcomes for students, staff, and themselves.

Chapter Summary

Using thick, rich description and quotes from the participants, this chapter has provided a detailed summary of the findings of principals' perspectives of leading a Title I school. From interviews with 11 principals, four major themes emerged: (a) principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences; (b) principals' self-efficacy is at the center of their leadership practices; (c) principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices; and (d) principals with self-efficacy have a clearly defined shared vision and high expectations for all. Chapter 5 discusses these findings and their implications.

CHAPTER 5:

INTERPRETATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand how principals' self-efficacy contributes to their leadership practices in leading a Title I school. Specifically, the aims were to understand principals' perceptions of their own self-efficacy, the impact of their self-efficacy on their leadership behaviors, how the risk factors associated with leading a Title I school impact their self-efficacy, and how they conceptualize their leadership efficacy.

The risk factors associated with lower socioeconomic schools can include poverty, staff turnover, mental health problems, instability in the home, lack of resources, and deficit thinking. Poverty serves as an early indicator of academic deficiencies for many young students and setting high standards for every student is critical to reducing the impact of poverty and other external factors (Porter et al., 2008). Research has also shown that school poverty has a larger impact on student achievement than individual student poverty (Perry & McConney, 2010). Researchers investigating school reform initiatives to improve student achievement have shown that the principal is the most influential factor in school effectiveness (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). The findings of this qualitative study may assist school districts in making informed decisions about placing principals in Title I schools and providing the necessary professional development and support needed to increase their self-efficacy to effectively lead a Title I school.

Utilizing a qualitative interpretive research design, I interviewed 11 Title I principals in Northern Virginia to collect thick and rich descriptive data. Transcripts were hand coded and categorized into major themes after several phases of coding and recoding. The data collected were analyzed to understand the experiences of Title I principals, addressing two research questions and two sub-questions:

1. What is the perceived impact of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on their leadership practices as they lead Title I elementary schools?
    a. Do principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so, how?
    b. What risk factors influence principals' leadership efficacy in Title I schools?
2. How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?

This final chapter of the study summarizes and discusses the findings, revisits the conceptual framework, presents conclusions, and offers recommendations for practice as well as for future research. The chapter closes with a conclusion summarizing the study's main findings and noting its implications.

Summary of Findings

Table 5.1 lists the research questions and summarizes the response based on the study's findings.

Table 5.1
Answers to the Study's Research Questions

Research question	Answer
1a. Do principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their leadership practice in Title I schools? If so, how?	Findings showed a direct relationship between principals' self-efficacy beliefs and their leadership practices. Principals in this study described their self-efficacy beliefs, including belief in themselves, belief in students, and belief of others. They were dedicated to creating school environments that were collaborative and built strong relationships with students, staff, families, and communities. These principals empowered staff through leadership development and created safe environments where risk-taking was encouraged for teachers to improve and reflect upon their practices. Additionally, these leaders believed in the importance of shared power to create collaborative and inclusive schools where staff felt valued and student well-being was at the center of their leadership practices.
1b. What risk factors influence principals' leadership efficacy in Title I schools?	It appears that risk factors associated with leading Title I schools motivated principals and increased their persistence and resilience in trying to mitigate these factors. All principals in this study shared that the risk factors were difficult; however, they shared a common belief that they had no choice but to respond to them, because "if not them, then who." All principals talked about the impact of the risk factors on their students more than the impact on their leadership efficacy. Because of their strong belief in their students and themselves, they were motivated and showed persistence in mitigating these risk factors.
2. How do principals leading Title I elementary schools conceptualize their leadership efficacy?	Principals conceptualized their leadership efficacy as acquiring self-efficacy through childhood and personal experiences and then creating a strong belief in themselves, impacted by a belief of others. Principals also developed their leadership efficacy through vicarious and mastery experiences that included mentors or role models. All of these experiences significantly contributed to their leadership efficacy. Their strong belief in themselves and others allowed them to create their leadership efficacy based on previous experiences. Leadership behaviors and practices associated with their leadership efficacy included being strategic and decisive, having a shared vision and responsibility, modeling expectations and leading by example, and having high expectations for the success for all students.

Discussion of the Findings

In this section I discuss the findings based on the data from the interviews, including the four themes:

1. Principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences**.**
2. Principals' self-efficacy is at the center of their leadership practices.
3. Principals with high self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices.
4. Principals with self-efficacy have a clearly defined shared vision and high expectations for all.

Although participants' experiences and educational journeys differed, all four findings were significant in the participants' self-efficacy and leadership behaviors. The themes emerged based on Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy and were informed by leadership behaviors and tenets from transformative and social justice theories.

Theme 1: Principals Develop Self-Efficacy Through Personal and Work Experiences

Self-efficacy affects behavior directly, impacting beliefs, goals, outcomes, and perceptions of impediments and opportunities (Bandura, 2000). Bandura's theory identified four sources of efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological arousal. The findings revealed that all participants believed that self-efficacy could be developed through personal and work experiences. If leaders believe that efficacy is an acquired skill, they will continue to have high efficacy beliefs when challenging situations arise and therefore will set challenging goals and use a high

level of problem solving in addressing challenging situations. These leaders will have a strong belief in their ability to meet these challenges, which in turn can impact their individual beliefs and the collective beliefs and efficacy of an entire school, with a positive impact on student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004).

Early Experiences and Internal Sources

Although all participants shared the point of view that their self-efficacy was developed through experiences, they described different types of experiences. For instance, a few principals connected their self-efficacy to their upbringing, including expectations from parents and religion (e.g., Pam and McKenna). Others believed that adversity in their lives played a significant role in developing their self-efficacy (e.g., Miguel and Abigail). On the other hand, some principals shared how having passion and an inner drive was part of their self-efficacy (e.g., Shannon and Sasha). Participant responses suggest that self-efficacy started from earlier experiences and an internal source.

Work Experience

All principals described many work experiences, including leadership roles, that increased their self-efficacy. These experiences included both vicarious and mastery experiences. According to Bandura, mastery experiences are the most effective source of efficacy. Mastery experiences require individuals to successfully complete a task or series of tasks, but also to attribute the success of the task to their own effort rather than to external forces. It is assumed that higher levels of self-efficacy relate to successful past experiences. In contrast, efficacy would be low if past experiences have failed (Bandura,

1997). Previous research has shown that mastery experiences have a lasting effect on self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Some principals shared the impact of mastery experiences that developed their self-efficacy. McKenna discussed her experiences creating the master schedule, coordinating summer school, and creating budgets as mastery experiences that increased her self-efficacy. Reid also discussed the impact of being an intern for 7 years, which provided him with many mastery experiences that impacted his self-efficacy. Abigail reflected on her experiences in summer school and transportation as impacting her self-efficacy. Clara also indicated that her self-efficacy was built over time with successes through leadership experiences when she said, "Each thing builds up to kind of the next level."

Vicarious experience results from watching and imitating other people. Through observation, people learn to imitate behaviors and apply these behaviors to various situations. Although principals attributed the development of their self-efficacy to different experiences, all shared that learning from mentors and role models was influential in building their self-efficacy in leading a Title I school. Some expressed the desire to emulate these mentors' leadership behaviors and described how the mentors informed their leadership efficacy. Reid discussed how he emulated his mentor's ability to build a collaborative culture and created collaborative learning teams that focused on student learning. Similarly, McKenna shared that she had confidence in her mentor's ability to transfer skills and leadership behaviors to any situation. McKenna shared that she learned how to be strategic and confident through her experiences with her mentor. Shannon also shared how she modeled her leadership behaviors such as building relationships through her experiences with her mentor. Several principals in this study

described how mentors who showed belief in them, made them part of leadership teams, and offered positive encouragement and feedback developed their self-efficacy and belief in themselves. Clara described how her experiences with her mentor impacted her belief in herself. She reflected on how being asked by her mentor to be a part of a leadership team, and implement professional learning for staff, increased her belief in herself. Riley also described how her mentor's belief in her ability increased her self-efficacy when she was asked to be an instructional coach and lead team meetings. Donna indicated how she felt "so supported" throughout her career, adding that support and belief of others was "encouraging and that I could do it." Bandura (1986) suggested that vicarious experience is generally weaker than mastery experience. However, this source of efficacy is stronger when individuals observe a person they perceive to be similar to themselves persevere and experience an ability to achieve his or her goals (Bandura, 1977).

Belief of Others

The results suggested that principals found that vicarious experiences influenced their self-efficacy more than mastery experiences when they had a role model or mentor who provided praise and encouragement and/or whose leadership behaviors they wanted to emulate. Thus, the vicarious experience was joined with the belief of others. The principals believed that experiences where they received encouragement or praise as a teacher and then as an administrator increased their own self-efficacy in their current position and other positions that they were encouraged to take on (e.g., Riley, Clara, and Reid). Bandura (1997) suggested that perceived beliefs and judgments about one's personal capabilities can motivate people to accomplish goals aside from having the actual skills to accomplish these goals. According to Versland (2016), positive feedback

about individuals' capabilities increases their perception of themselves and can improve their performance. Although social persuasion was evident through mentors and role models, none of the principals was motivated by external praise or recognition. All noted that "although nice to hear," it didn't affect how they led their schools. All principals described the need to believe in themselves as the most necessary source of efficacy.

Theme 2: Principals' Self-Efficacy Is at the Center of Their Leadership Practices

The findings revealed that principals' self-efficacy was at the center of their leadership practices. All principals in this study believed in their ability to successfully lead a Title I school and were in touch with how their own self-efficacy was connected to their belief in others and belief in themselves and influenced their leadership practices. All principals in this study used transformative leadership to build an organizational culture through collaborating, building relationships, empowering staff, and sharing power.

Collaborating and Fostering Collective Efficacy

Transformative leadership creates conditions under which everyone can grow and participate in creating school communities that are socially just and academically excellent (Shields, 2013). Participants in this study strongly believed in collaboration as an essential leadership behavior and practice. Some principals believed in the importance of bringing people together and shared decision-making in order to improve student learning and ensure all voices were heard (e.g., Clara, Harry, and Miguel). Some principals enacted change through collaborative learning teams where teachers worked together to improve their teaching and student achievement, through data analysis and reflective practice (e.g., Shannon, McKenna, Abigail, Donna, and Michael). Schools

cannot achieve their academic mission and vision without effective principal leadership focused on student achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

Findings in this study also suggested that principals' efficacy influenced their leadership behaviors in being collaborative leaders. Principals' instructional leadership may support the degree to which teachers work together to improve instruction, and together leadership and teacher collaboration may contribute to school effectiveness by strengthening collective efficacy beliefs (Goddard et al., 2015). Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004) noted that collective efficacy reflects the belief of a group that it is able to organize their actions in order to complete a task. Collective efficacy beliefs rely in part on the mutual relationship among collective efficacy beliefs, teachers' own perception of self-efficacy, teachers' practice, and teachers' influence over instructional school decisions (Goddard et al., 2004).

Instructional leadership has a positive influence on collective efficacy beliefs through its effect on teachers' collaborative work. Collective efficacy continues to be a strong indicator of school effectiveness based on both previous research and this study. The results suggest that by promoting a culture of collaboration around instructional improvement, leaders have the potential to support school improvement in ways that positively influence teachers' collective efficacy and beliefs and thus promote student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000; Goddard & Goddard, 2001).

Seashore Louis et al. (2010) determined that principals with strong self-efficacy are more likely to accept the challenges of school improvement processes and that efficacious leaders develop and promote a sense of collective efficacy that positively affects teaching and learning. The role of the principal is essential in building teacher and

collective efficacy and improving student success. Leading high-poverty schools requires leaders who can navigate challenging environments and believe that they can meet these challenges and improve student learning.

Teachers who feel valued are less likely to leave a school. Teacher turnover has always been a risk factor in schools serving lower socioeconomic students; in Title I schools, the teacher turnover rate is 50% higher than for non–Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Collaboration and shared leadership build relationships with staff, therefore impacting school climate and student achievement. Transformative leaders create environments where teachers challenge their beliefs, analyze their practice, and participate in a continual cycle of self-reflection that transfers to continuous improvement in student achievement. These principals provided opportunities for staff to meet, confer, and reflect on their practices and analyze student data. They built these practices within their schools and modeled for staff the importance of this work. This finding aligns with research by Osterman and Sullivan (1996), which found that principals who were highly efficacious were more flexible and adaptable, more likely to use collaboration in the change process, and more persistent in the pursuit of their goals.

Building Relationships

Findings from this research suggest that principals' self-efficacy enabled them to build relationships with students, staff, families, the central office, and the community. Some principals discussed the importance of building these relationships to move the work forward and access resources (e.g., Clara, Shannon, and Donna). Others discussed how relationships were even more important than pedagogy (e.g., Reid and Sasha). A

transformative leader must build relationships and promote reflective dialogue if critical consciousness is to occur (Shields, 2009, 2010). Some principals reflected on how building relationships with staff and students showed that you cared about them (e.g., Harry and Abigail). Shields (2013) stated, "It is the act of establishing positive relationships that foster one's ability to engage in the kind of respectful dialogue that permits growth, despite—or perhaps even because of—differences, that I am associating here with transformative leadership." Some principals also reflected on the connections between developing relationships and building trust that allowed teachers to be willing to take risks and feel safe (e.g., Clara and Abigail).

Empowering Staff and Sharing Power

Principals articulated the importance of empowering staff and power sharing as a leadership belief. Many principals in this study provided teachers with leadership opportunities that empowered them and enabled them to be part of shared decision-making (e.g., Shannon and Sasha). In their study, Stein, Macaluso, and Stanulis (2017) found that principals' leadership style had many ways of shaping efficacy among teachers. Since principals cultivate school culture, they must create environments that promote authentic teacher leadership. Once principals create and support these opportunities, teacher leadership efficacy takes shape and increases teachers' feelings of success (Stein et al., 2017).

Findings also suggested that teacher leader efficacy is rooted both in the teacher leaders' self-perceptions and how those perceptions influence and are influenced by principals' expectations and leadership behaviors. To develop teacher leadership, principals must be aware of the model of leadership they use and how that encourages or

discourages teachers to embrace leadership. The interaction between principal and teacher can have a direct effect on building teacher efficacy. The influence of teacher leadership on school change depends highly on the actions and beliefs of school principals.

Additionally, the study suggests that principals may need support to develop a leadership style that provides opportunities for teachers to have a positive effect on the practice and culture of their school (Stein et al., 2017). Some principals created safe environments where teachers could take risks and try new things without judgment, which empowered staff to look reflectively at their teaching (e.g., Clara, Abigail, and Riley). Some principals also empowered staff through risk taking when staff were able to implement innovative solutions to problems (e.g., Harry and Miguel). Davis et al. (2005) conducted s study that showed that school leaders impact student achievement by creating supportive environments for their teachers and use their influence in effective school processes and outcomes.

Theme 3: Principals with Self-Efficacy Respond to Risk Factors with Transformative and Social Justice Leadership Practices

Bandura (1993) noted that those with a high level of belief in themselves find ways through innovation, persistence, and ingenuity to have some control over challenging environments and show effective change. Personal efficacy affects behavior directly, impacting beliefs, goals, outcomes, and perception of impediments and opportunities (Bandura, 2000). All participants in this study believed that the risk factors associated with poverty were not a barrier that they could not overcome, because their strong self-efficacy allowed them to mitigate these factors. These principals had a high

level of efficacy and belief in their ability to mitigate these risk factors. Participants in this study looked beyond poverty and did not use poverty as a "catch all" to explain student and parent behaviors and promote deficit thinking. Rather, they looked for the root cause and tried to mitigate these factors and enact changes to support their students and families (e.g., Miguel and Clara).

Challenges and Motivation

Many principals in this study were motivated by the risk factors (e.g., Clara, Donna, and McKenna); through their strong self-efficacy and belief in themselves, they looked beyond poverty and used their transformative leadership behaviors and power to benefit their students, staff, and families (e.g., Pam, Sasha, and Abigail). Pam felt motivated "not to feed the cycle of holding lower expectations for students of lower-socioeconomic status." Pam's leadership behaviors when mitigating risk factors looked at balancing critique and promise of students while also deconstructing social/cultural knowledge frameworks that continue to generate inequity. Overwhelmingly, all principals in this study were extremely motivated and felt a sense of urgency that impacted their motivation and persistence to do what was best for students. At the same time, those with less experience as a principal acknowledged the stress and fatigue associated with trying to overcome challenges. Bandura (1997) asserted that welcoming a challenge or task increases self-efficacy, while feeling stressed over a task or challenge can create vulnerability and lowers one's self-efficacy.

Persistence

Findings from this study suggest that persistence plays a significant role in being a transformative leader. Sasha, for example, focused on persistence to provide equity for

students, sharing that “anything less than that was a disservice to the kids who need you.” Many principals understood the role self-efficacy played in their belief in themselves to be persistent when faced with the many challenges associated with leading a Title I school (e.g., McKenna, Harry, Sasha, and Abigail). Some principals also described the persistence needed to access basic resources for students and the persistence needed in challenging central office practices that negatively impacted students in Title I schools (e.g., Riley and Donna).

Social Justice

Most participants in this study believed in and were committed to social justice and leading schools that provided equity and opportunities for all students. Data from this study showed that principals with high self-efficacy used transformative leadership practices and found ways to create a more equitable playing field to decrease the impact of risk factors on students’ academic performance and overall well-being (e.g., Miguel, Riley, and Harry). Their self-efficacy transferred to transformative leadership behaviors that challenged inequity and created more inclusive opportunities for students. Some principals challenged the inequity of the basic experiences that students and parents have in Title I schools (e.g., Abigail and Clara); others advocated for additional resources for students (e.g., Riley, Miguel, and Sasha). Many principals used transformative leadership when they deconstructed knowledge frameworks and practices that further created inequity and lack of opportunities for students (e.g., Sasha, McKenna, Abigail, and Clara).

Most of the participants created systems and structures to lessen the impact of risk factors and create deep and equitable change. These systems and structures were put into

place to provide students access to basic needs and educational resources, improve student learning, and create continued equity and access for students. Many participants felt it was not enough to address the inequity; they needed to create sustainable systems and structures to limit the impact of risk factors and create sustainable solutions that would affect deep and equitable change (e.g., Pam, Abigail, McKenna, and Donna). Some principals put in systems and structures that impacted both students and parents (e.g., Abigail and Miguel). Others put systems in place that impacted student learning outcomes (e.g., Michael, Abigail, and Pam). Others put systems and structures in place that increased students' access and equity to resources within school and outside of school (e.g., Abigail, McKenna, Donna, Shannon, and Pam).

Social justice leaders in high-performing high-poverty schools are willing to challenge conventional norms and think outside the box (Elmore, 2006). Transformative leaders look at ways to effect deep and equitable change through acknowledging power and privilege. They pay attention to what happens to students and families outside of school (Shields, 2013).

Moral Courage

Transformative leaders use moral courage to challenge the assumptions of the group and create a more equitable and inclusive environment for all students (Shields, 2013). Fullan (2001) defined moral purpose as "acting with the intention of making a positive change" (p. 13). Transformative leadership requires the courage to create deep equitable change (Shields, 2013).

Many principals worked with staff to decrease deficit thinking and to avoid marginalizing students because of their home situations that may affect their

performance, balancing critique and promise (e.g., Sasha, Abigail, McKenna, Clara, and Pam). Many used their power and moral courage to challenge the status quo, including district policies, in order to create equity and access for students (e.g., Miguel, Harry, Abigail, McKenna, Sasha, and Clara). Other principals showed moral courage when challenging parent-teacher association practices that were not inclusive of all students and created more inequity (e.g., Sasha, Abigail, and Clara). As other examples, principals showed moral courage when challenging the curriculum and access to resources for all (e.g., David and Harry) and discussed that they had a moral purpose to be persistent and do what was best for students (e.g., Reid and Sasha).

The findings in this study align with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and how efficacy impacts response to challenges. The findings also align with Shields' (2013) research, which found that transformative leaders use moral courage and activism to create more equitable and inclusive schools and advocate for systemic change to include policies, practices, and opportunities for students.

Theme 4: Principals with Self-Efficacy Have a Clearly Defined Shared Vision and High Expectations for All

Most principals in this study believed in having a clearly defined shared vision of all students experiencing success (e.g., Miguel, McKenna, Pam, and Abigail). A leader must be able to envision a future with exciting and uplifting possibilities and then enlist others in a common vision by appealing to the group's aspirations (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2010).

The Vision

The vision entailed believing in all students' potential, advancing inclusion, and holding high expectations for all students (e.g., Pam and Abigail). Many principals looked at students' potential rather than the circumstances they came from and consistently balanced critique and promise (e.g., Sasha and Pam). Some principals in this study believed in holding high expectations for all students and focused on having empathy with accountability (e.g., Pam, Sasha, Abigail, McKenna, and Miguel).

Principals wanted to decrease deficit thinking and change the mindset of students and staff (e.g., Pam, Abigail, and Shannon). Wagstaff and Fusarelli (1995) found that the single most important factor in the academic achievement of minoritized students is the explicit refection of deficit thinking. Similarly, Shields (2013) indicated that transformative leaders eliminate deficit thinking and reconstruct positive images of students. Transformative leadership dismantles contemporary deficit thinking and focuses on changing the setting for students who have been unsuccessful in their current context (Shields et al., 2005).

The principals felt it was imperative to model expectations for staff so that they did not show compassion and empathy by lowering expectations. Transformative leaders understand the complexities of both individual and group identity construction and understand the importance of deconstructing negative perceptions that can affect individuals' opportunities and outcomes (Shields, 2013). Too much empathy could adversely affect students' identity now and in the future. These principals understood the need for deconstructing social/cultural knowledge frameworks that continue to generate inequity and the significance that role identity has for students and their future.

According to Giroux (1998), “How others see us, becomes in part how we see ourselves” (p.15). Similarly, Shields (2013) stated:

> We must reflect on what images of groups . . . we might hold, because, in part how we think about them affects how they see themselves; what we communicate to them about their place in society affects the roles they take on for themselves. (p. 91)

Building Relationships and Modeling Expectations

Creating a clearly defined shared vision required principals to build relationships with students, staff, and families and to model expectations. Most principals believed that it was imperative to lead by example (e.g., Shannon, Abigail, and McKenna). Some principals embraced the idea of doing whatever it takes and making sure that staff saw them willing to do any task (e.g., Riley, McKenna, and Abigail). Many expressed the need to model how “personal” the work was for them and should be for staff (e.g., Pam, Sasha, and Abigail).

With power defined as the ability to influence behavior (Lyons & Murphy, 1994), high-efficacy principals in this study used internal or personal power to influence teachers. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004), behaviors of principals, including the modeling of appropriate behavior, can raise teachers’ self-efficacy. The ability to develop teachers’ self-efficacy is not about the position but the ability to inspire teachers to individually and collectively support and carry out the vision of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

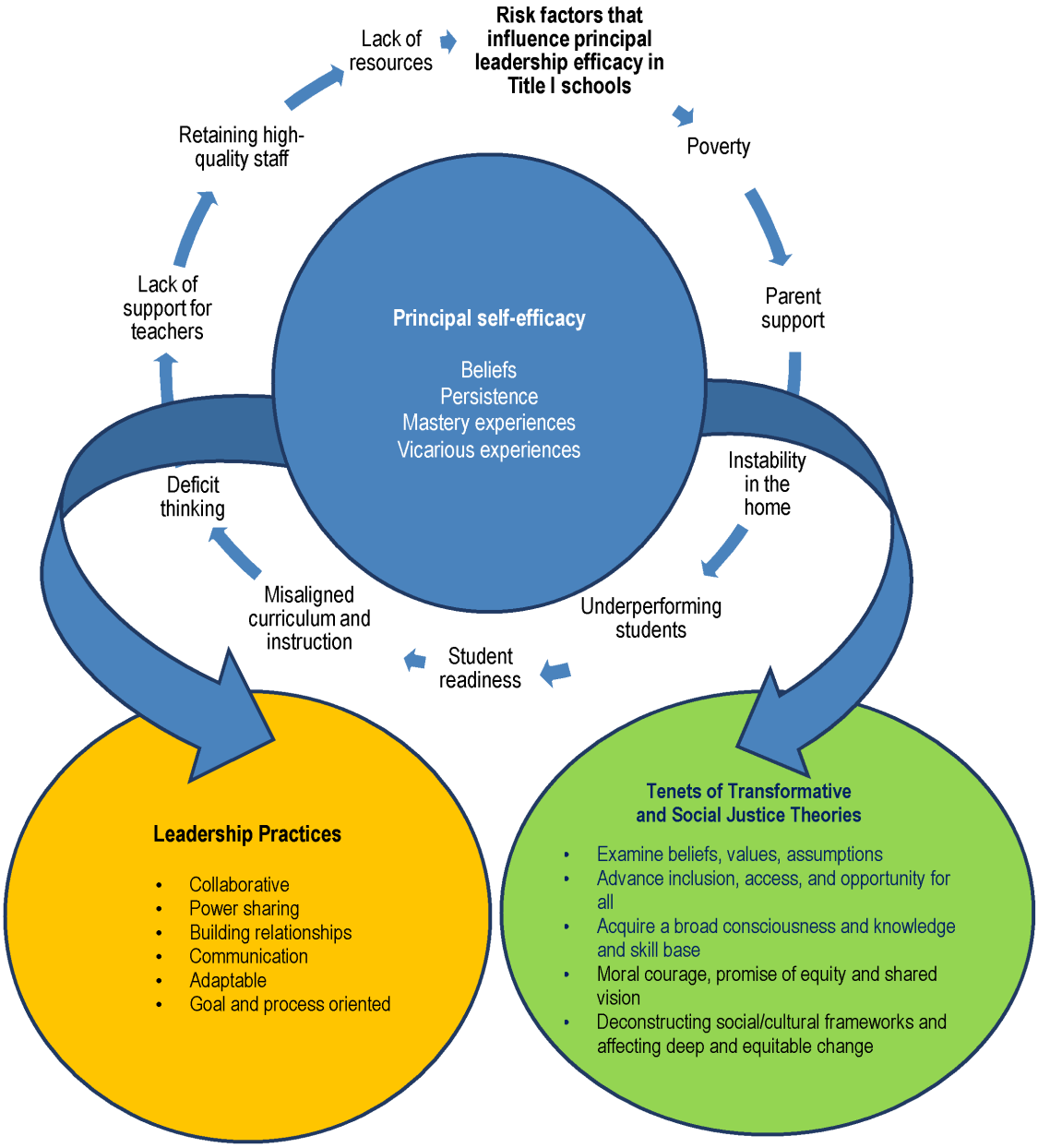
Findings in this study align with the conceptual framework in which a principal’s self-efficacy is at the center of his or her leadership behaviors and is essential in

mitigating risk factors associated with leading schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged. Findings from this study also identified some differences in risk factors originally listed. Principals in this study did not identify misaligned curriculum and instruction or lack of support for teachers as a risk factor they dealt with. However, this could be due to the fact that principals have already made these adjustments, as they are steeped in it and their districts are well resourced. Additionally, when discussing lack of resources, principals associated basic needs, food, housing, etc. as lack of resources needed for students and their families. Findings from this study also identified effecting deep and equitable change and deconstructing social and cultural knowledge frameworks as additional transformative tenets that principals in this study utilized, as shown in the revised conceptual framework (Figure 5.1).

In this regard, given the findings from this study and the conceptual framework that I used below is an emerging profile of a transformative, highly efficacious leader.

- Leads with an equity lens in mind
- Believes in self and others in ways that challenge existing frameworks
- Utilizes mastery and vicarious experiences to build one's leadership capacity
- Works at removing obstacles that obstruct equity and opportunities for all
- Deconstructs social/cultural knowledge frameworks to address deficit assumptions
- Leads with courage and a moral purpose
- Is motivated by challenges and not deterred by existing risk factors

Figure 5.1
Updated Conceptual Framework



Conclusions

Previously, researchers had not analyzed the role that self-efficacy plays in influencing leadership practices in Title I schools. The connection between self-efficacy and the type of leader needed to lead a Title I school was not known. While challenges in a Title I school setting vary for different reasons, all principals in this study articulated the risk factors associated with poverty as significant challenges that they needed to overcome. The research problem involved a gap in the literature that reflected an understanding of the role of self-efficacy and leadership behaviors and practices in leading Title I schools. These findings showed that self-efficacy is developed through personal and work experiences and that a leader with high self-efficacy is able to lead with transformative leadership practices.

Conclusion 1: Principals' Self-Efficacy Has an Impact on Title I Schools and Can Be Developed Through Personal and Work Experiences

All participants believed that principals would not be successful in leading a Title I school if they did not have an unwavering belief in themselves to do the job. McCollum and Kajs (2009) asserted that self-efficacy is an important component in developing effective principal leadership. They also noted that self-efficacy is tied to principals' success in school-oriented tasks and performance (McCollum & Kajs, 2009). Smith et al.'s (2006) study showed that principals with high levels of efficacy in instructional leadership could benefit economically disadvantaged schools. In addition, other studies have confirmed that principals' self-efficacy can be developed; for example, Fisher's (2011) study involving 150 aspiring principals in a 2-year training program showed that self-efficacy improved through training and mastery experiences. Bandura (1977) stated

that a principal's sense of self-efficacy is related to his or her belief in personal capabilities to develop a course of action that will result in desired outcomes in the school.

Conclusion 2: Transformative Leadership Practices in Title I Schools Require Self-Efficacy

For leaders to mitigate the risk factors associated with Title I schools, they must lead with transformative leadership practices. Based on these findings, transformative leadership practices are shown when a principal has high self-efficacy; therefore, the two constructs are contingent upon one another. Principals need experiences that build their self-efficacy before they are able to implement transformative leadership practices. Leadership skills can be taught, but self-efficacy needs to be developed for one to have the confidence and persistence needed to enact transformative leadership practices and lead with social justice.

Failure to understand the role of self-efficacy in building effective principals to lead a Title I school can limit the ability in our field to shape how principals' leadership behaviors and practices are developed and how the influence of learning from experiences impacts their self-efficacy. Therefore, how principals' self-efficacy is developed and impacts their leadership practices is an important contribution in this area of principal leadership and self-efficacy research. If our goal in education is to have principals who are transformative, then we must first develop their self-efficacy.

Recommendations for Practice

My findings show that principals' high self-efficacy transferred to transformative and social justice leadership practices needed to lead Title I schools. By using the research from my study, school districts can develop hiring protocols, as well as professional learning and leadership experiences that can increase self-efficacy in Title I principals to then mitigate the risk factors associated with lower socioeconomic schools.

1. Hiring administrators with experience. Findings from this study show that experience matters, and context also matters; experience in one school does not necessarily guarantee success in another school, especially if the leader does not have experience in a Title I school. Administrators with little or no experience should not be placed in Title I schools because they are being set up for failure. School divisions must start with a comprehensive plan to professionally develop administrators and place administrators with high self-efficacy in Title I schools or schools with the most challenges and highest need. Findings from this study also show that principals with high self-efficacy had been in their schools for many years and had political capital in the schools they were serving, which provided them with the ability to be transformative leaders. Therefore, in addition to having different types of experiences, longevity in the position matters, and districts should not rotate principals to improve another school but develop all principals to be highly efficacious and effective.

2. Offering l**eadership preparation programs.** Findings from this study show that principals need high self-efficacy to mitigate risk factors associated with poverty and lead with transformative leadership practices. In order to develop their self-efficacy, they need many mastery and vicarious experiences. If our goal is to develop transformative

leaders, then leadership preparation programs should include coursework on poverty and efficacy. Leadership preparation programs should utilize within their coursework the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) so that future administrators understand their efficacy score and how it can be increased. It is essential for future administrators to understand the complexity of poverty and the impact it has on students, staff, and the community. To mitigate these complexities, principals need to be in touch with their own self-efficacy, how it can be developed, and how it can contribute to teacher efficacy, student efficacy, and collective efficacy. Additionally, these preparation programs should include a comprehensive structured internship component that includes a cooperating administrator, much like the student teaching model. This structure would provide opportunities for interns to develop their efficacy through vicarious and mastery experiences. The selection process for a cooperating administrator should also be structured to include leadership metrics that would provide the most accomplished administrators to serve as cooperating mentors. Often summer is used for these internships, which does not accurately reflect the work of an administrator that takes place during the school year. It is essential for leadership preparation programs to align their coursework and internships with the expected outcomes of a transformative leader.

3. Developing teacher leaders. School districts should consider not depleting their teacher talent pool by promoting highly qualified teachers to administrative positions too quickly, making an assumption that great teachers make effective administrators. Highly effective teachers have honed their skills through experience, mentors, and professional learning, specifically designed for teachers, which has also

impacted their efficacy as a teacher. School districts should develop teacher leadership programs that aim to develop the necessary leadership skills and dispositions needed to be an effective administrator through a variety of leadership roles, experiences, and internship opportunities that impact their self-efficacy and prepare them to be administrators.

4. Developing internships for aspiring leaders at the district level. School districts should consider using the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) to assess aspiring leaders' level of self-efficacy before starting their internship program. This may assist in designing their internship program to increase efficacy. School systems should develop an intern program where potential administrators receive training to hone their skills through experiences as an intern with effective administrators through a rotation cycle in order to increase their self-efficacy. Teachers looking to move into administration should be part of an administrator intern program, where they would train under a highly qualified administrator in different areas—for example, spending 12 weeks with an administrator who has proven practice with special education and spending another 12 weeks with an administrator who understands how to put systems and structures in place to create equity and opportunities for all students. In addition to imparting the necessary knowledge and skills through this process, school districts should also provide professional learning on poverty and equity to prepare future administrators with an in-depth understanding of the effects of poverty on students, staff, and the community and the need to lead with an equity lens. It is also necessary for school districts to develop soft skills for future administrators such as advocacy and efficacy. Most of the participants shared in their interviews the importance

of having work experiences that increased their self-efficacy and also the importance of having a mentor or role model in developing their leadership efficacy, behaviors, and practices. They also discussed having a mentor they respected. It is essential that the school districts have a structured process for developing and identifying highly efficacious and effective principals who are transformative leaders to serve in these mentorship roles. It is also important to provide the support and resources necessary to create these opportunities, which would include additional staffing. Findings from this study show that through the participants' experiences, their level of self-efficacy directly impacted their leadership behaviors, moving them from transactional to transformative leadership.

5. Focusing on diversity and efficacy when hiring principals. A diverse faculty is important in providing students with many role models they can identify with, and who have experiences that they can connect with. Although race and gender may contribute to certain lived experiences, it should not be the sole factor in hiring for Title 1 schools. In addition to hiring a diverse faculty, principals also need to have strong self-efficacy, starting with a belief in themselves to lead a Title I school. The ability to believe in oneself was the most noted criterion by all participants to successfully lead a Title I school, along with the amount of vicarious and mastery experiences. Therefore, the capacity to build equitable institutional practices and systems requires not only being critically reflective of lived experiences, but also knowledge, skills, and opportunities to develop efficacy that are acquired through vicarious and mastery experiences (Theoharis, 2008).

6. Assessing potential administrators' self-efficacy and providing release time for a personalized professional learning plan. School districts need to invest in their leadership and develop highly efficacious leaders who can be transformative leaders. In order to do this, school districts should consider using the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) to match principals with high self-efficacy with the highest-needs schools. School districts should assess candidates' internal beliefs, judgments, bias, and efficacy as well as their knowledge and skills. Human Resources within a school district should also consider developing interview questions that can assist with assessing a potential administrator's efficacy and the leadership behaviors needed to lead a Title I school. Sample questions are provided in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
Sample Interview Questions for Hiring a Principal for a Title I School

1. How does your belief in yourself impact your leadership practices?
2. How would you conceptualize your own self-efficacy?
3. What experiences have you had that have increased or decreased your self-efficacy?
4. Describe your leadership practices and how they impact your school's culture.
5. If you were hired to be a principal in a Title I school, how would you provide equity and opportunities for all students?
6. Give an example of how you have challenged the status quo.
7. What does leading with moral courage look like in your school?

Potential administrators with lower self-efficacy scores would be given targeted professional development as well as a mentor or role model in order to assist in increasing their self-efficacy through vicarious and mastery experiences. It is very possible that some administrators are not successful in leading a Title I school but have the potential to be highly qualified administrators if given targeted support to build their self-efficacy, therefore transferring to their leadership behaviors and practices. When school districts hire principals, they should also have a professional development plan.

School districts should provide 1 day a week release time for principals in their first few years to attend professional learning to increase their knowledge and skills, as well as time to work with a mentor to increase their self-efficacy through vicarious experiences. School districts should also avoid moving highly effective principals around in a district.

7. Teaching about poverty. Administrators who lead Title I schools need professional development to understand poverty and its impact on students' ability to learn and achieve; they need to be able to identify how risk factors impact families and overall community. School districts should also provide training in equity and inclusion to assist principals in understanding the connection between poverty and inequity and lack of opportunities and inclusion.

8. Including the principals' voice in policy making. Based on the findings of this study, school districts should include principals in policy-making processes. Principals in this study discussed the need to challenge some policies that created greater inequity in their Title I schools. If school districts want inclusive policies and implementation practices, then they must listen to the voice of principals who are in Title I schools daily and understand first hand the risk factors and complexities of running these schools and how some districtwide policies adversely impact them. School districts should design policy processes to include collaborative interactive procedures, including a continuous cycle of feedback.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Connecting quantitative self-efficacy scores with qualitative interview responses. This study did not focus on connecting a self-efficacy rating scale with principals' interview responses describing their perceived self-efficacy and leadership

behaviors. Future research might investigate a connection between scores on the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and principals perceived self-efficacy and leadership behaviors. For example, do principals' perception of their self-efficacy align with the rating scale? Is there a relationship to their leadership practices? This exploration might also require achievements and/or climate data to triangulate the impact or effectiveness of a principal's self-efficacy on climate or achievement.

2. Including teachers' perceptions. Another recommendation would be to conduct a study similar to this one but include teachers' perception of principals' leadership behaviors and how principals' perceptions and teachers' perceptions align or misalign.

3. Considering the effect of personal adversity. Future research may interview principals who have faced adversity in their life to determine how that has impacted their self-efficacy.

4. Studying a larger pool. Future researchers could examine a larger pool of participants. A qualitative study of more principals would add insight to differences related to years of experience, gender, and race and their impact in leading a Title I school. A broader study may also offer confirmation of the themes and connections uncovered in this study.

5. Including additional data. Finally, future researchers may include information on school districts' professional learning or mentor programs for administrators to determine if there is a relationship between principals' self-efficacy and district training and/or mentoring programs. Future researchers could also include student achievement

data, climate data, and community satisfaction data in order to look at the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and the actual impact of self-efficacy.

Summary

Research has shown that principals' sense of self-efficacy plays an essential role in their ability to meet the expectations and demands of their position (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Research has been scant on principals' perceptions of how efficacy informs their leadership practice and how the conditions of schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged affect their efficacy to lead. No prior study focused on the voice of principals in describing their own self-efficacy and the leadership practices they used to lead schools serving students who are economically disadvantaged. This qualitative interpretive study of 11 participants focused on principals' perception of their self-efficacy and leadership behaviors in leading a Title I school.

The results suggested four themes related to the role of self-efficacy and leadership behaviors needed to lead a Title I school: (a) principals develop self-efficacy through personal and work experiences; (b) principals' self-efficacy is at the center of their leadership practices; (c) principals with self-efficacy respond to risk factors with transformative and social justice leadership practices; and (d) principals with self-efficacy have a clearly defined shared vision and high expectations for all. These findings based on the responses from the participants in the study provide better understanding of the role of self-efficacy in the leadership practices needed to lead a Title I school. Building self-efficacy in Title I principals is essential to their ability to mitigate risk factors associated with lower socioeconomic schools and to create conditions in which students and staff can be successful.

The study findings suggest that the type of leader needed to lead a Title I school is one with high self-efficacy who uses transformative leadership practices to create more equitable and just schools. To develop high self-efficacy, principals must start with an overwhelming belief in themselves followed by many vicarious and mastery experiences that increase their self-efficacy. These principals are motivated by their students; they have an overwhelming belief in students' ability and a moral purpose to ensure they create more equitable opportunities for students and create environments where all students can be successful in spite of the risk factors they face each day.

These principals created school environments that were inclusive, student centered, allowed for collaboration, shared power, and focused on student well-being. These leadership behaviors empowered teachers and contributed to a shared vision and high expectations for all. The results of this study suggest that principals with high self-efficacy have a belief in their ability to be a change agent for students and staff in a Title I school. Their high efficacy gives them the confidence, persistence, and unwavering belief that they can make a difference. Their beliefs allow them to lead with moral courage to dismantle deficit thinking and take down barriers that impact students' access to opportunities. These principals deconstructed and reconstructed social/cultural knowledge frameworks to advance inclusion for all. Principals in this study who perceived their self-efficacy as high were able to transform their school and their practices because of their strong belief in themselves, their students, and their staff. They didn't necessarily set out to be transformative leaders, but through their self-efficacy and strong belief in themselves and their students, they enacted transformative leadership practices and led with social justice.

This study's findings have several implications for future policy, practice, and research. Insights from principals leading Title I schools can help future principals understand the connection between their self-efficacy beliefs and the leadership practices needed to lead Title I schools. Additionally, this research may assist districts in developing policies, resources, and professional learning that could positively impact a principal's self-efficacy and leadership in high-poverty schools, including matching principals with high efficacy beliefs with high-poverty schools. Finding ways to assist school systems in selecting and developing principals with high self-efficacy and matching them with schools serving students of lower socioeconomic status should be a priority for research, providing insights into how to create equity, opportunities, and overall success for all students.

REFERENCES

Archambault, J., & Garon, R. (2013). How principals exercise transformative leadership in urban schools in disadvantaged areas in Montréal, Canada. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 41*(2), 49-66.

Ashton, P. T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). *Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement*. Longman Publishing Group.

Ayers, W., Quinn, T. M., & Stovall, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of social justice in education*. Routledge.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1983). Self-efficacy determinants of anticipated fears and calamities. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *45*(2), 464-469.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory,* Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*(2), 117-148.

Bandura, A. (1994). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 61-90). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-efficacy in changing societies.* Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control* (pp. 3-604). W. H. Freeman.

Bandura, A. (1998). Personal and collective efficacy in human adaptation and change. *Advances in Psychological Science*, *1*, 51-71.

Bandura, A. (2000). Cultivate self-efficacy for personal and organizational effectiveness. In E. A. Locke (Ed.), *The Blackwell handbook of principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 120-136). Oxford University Press.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 1-26.

Bilingual Education Act of 1968, Pub. L. No. 90-247, 81 Stat. 816 (1968). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-81/pdf/STATUTE-81-Pg783.pdf

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). Data analysis and interpretation. In *Qualitative research of education: An introduction to theory and methods* (4th ed., pp. 159-197). Allyn and Bacon.

Bomer, R., Dworin, J., May, L., & Semingson, P. (2008). Miseducating teachers about the poor: A critical analysis of Ruby Payne. *Teachers College Record, 110*(12), 2497-2531.

Breger, L. (2017). Poverty and student achievement in Chicago public schools. *The American Economist, 62*(2), 206-216.

Brown, K. M. (2005). Transformative adult learning strategies: Assessing the impact on pre-service administrators' beliefs. *Educational Considerations, 32*(2), Art. 4.

Calik, T., Sezgin, F., Kavgaci, H., & Cagatay Kilinc, A. (2012). Examination of relationships between instructional leadership of school principals and self-efficacy of teachers and collective teacher efficacy. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 12*(4), 2498-2504.

Cambron-McCabe, N., & McCarthy, M. M. (2005). Educating school leaders for social justice. *Educational Policy*, *19*(1), 201-222.

Capper, C. A., Theoharis, G., & Sebastian, J. (2006). Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(3), 209-224.

Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it.* Learning Policy Institute.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.

Chong, W. H., Klassen, R. M., Huan, V. S., Wong, I., & Kates, A. D. (2010). The relationships among school types, teacher efficacy beliefs, and academic climate: Perspective from Asian middle schools. *Journal of Educational Research*, *103*(3), 183-190.

Clarke, A. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn.* Sage.

Cohen, M. Z., Kahn, D. L., & Steeves, R. H. (2000). How to analyze the data. In *Hermeneutic phenomenological research: A practical guide for nurse researchers* (pp. 71-83). Sage.

Coleman, J. S., Campbell, E. Q., Hobson, C. J., McPartland, J., Mood, A. M., Weinfeld, F. D., & York, L. R. (1966). *Equality of Educational Opportunity* 2. U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare.

Collier, M. D. (2005). An ethic of caring: The fuel for high teacher efficacy. *The Urban Review*, *37*(4), 351-359.

Condon, C., & Clifford, M. (2010). *Measuring principal performance: How rigorous are commonly used principal performance assessment instruments*. Learning Point Associates.

Connor, M. J. (1995). Locus of control. *Therapeutic Care and Education, 4*, 16-26.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Qualitative procedures. In *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (pp. 173-201). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice, 39*(3), 124-130.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. M. Taskakkori & C. B. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209-240). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage.

Danielson, C. (2007). The many faces of leadership. *Educational Leadership, 65*(1), 14-19.

Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M. T., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs*. Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *Review of research. School leadership study. Developing successful principals.* Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

Davis-Blake, A., & Pfeffer, J. (1989). Just a mirage: The search for dispositional effects in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review, 14*(3), 385-400.

Dell'Angelo, T. (2016). The power of perception: Mediating the impact of poverty on student achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, *48*(3), 245-261.

Delpit, L. (1995). Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review, 65*, 496-510.

DeMatthews, D. E., & Izquierdo, E. (2017). Authentic and social justice leadership: A case study of an exemplary principal along the U.S.-Mexico border. *Journal of School Leadership, 27*(3), 333-360.

Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Pub. L. No. 90-247, 81 Stat. 816 (1968). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-81/pdf/STATUTE-81-Pg783.pdf

Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Pub. L. No. 100-430, 102 Stat. 1619 (1988). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg1619.pdf

Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Pub. L. No. 103-239, 108 Stat. 568 (1994). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-108/pdf/STATUTE-108-Pg568.pdf

Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-107publ110/pdf/PLAW-107publ110.pdf

Elementary Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10 (1965). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg27.pdf

Elmore, R. F. (2006). What (so-called) low-performing schools can teach (so-called) high-performing schools. *The Learning Professional*, *27*(2), 43-45.

Erickson, F. (1986). *Qualitative methods in research on teaching* (pp. 119-162). Institute for Research on Teaching.

Evans, S., & Anderson, W. (2013). Demetrio's story: Socialization and family adjustments based on long-term immersion in a culture of poverty. *Children & Schools*, *35*(4), 244-247.

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 et seq., Pub. L. No. 114-95, 129 Stat. 1802 (2015). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-114publ95/pdf/PLAW-114publ95.pdf

Finnigan, K. S., & Stewart, T. J. (2009). Leading change under pressure: An examination of principal leadership in low-performing schools. *Journal of School Leadership*, *19*(5), 586-621.

Fisher, Y. (2011). The sense of self-efficacy of aspiring principals: Exploration in a dynamic concept. *Social Psychology of Education*, *14*(1), 93-117.

Flessa, J. J. (2007). *Poverty and education: Towards effective action: A review of the literature.* Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Fullan, M. (2001). Whole school reform: Problems and promises. *Chicago, IL: Chicago Community Trust*.

Fullan, M. (Ed.). (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Corwin.

Fullan, M. (2006). Leading professional learning. *School Administrator, 63*(10), 10.

Giroux, H. A. (1998). Education incorporated? *Educational Leadership, 56*(2), 12-17.

Glaser, B. G. (2005). *The grounded theory perspective III: Theoretical coding*. Sociology Press.

Goddard, R. D. (2001). Collective efficacy: A neglected construct in the study of schools and student achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93*(3), 467-476.

Goddard, R. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the measurement of collective efficacy: The development of a short form. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 62*(1), 97-110.

Goddard, R. D., & Goddard, Y. L. (2001). A multilevel analysis of the relationship between teacher and collective efficacy in urban schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(7), 807-818.

Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Sook Kim, E., & Miller, R. (2015). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the roles of instructional leadership, teacher collaboration, and collective efficacy beliefs in support of student learning. *American Journal of Education, 121*(4), 501-530.

Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Woolfolk-Hoy, A. W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(2), 479-507.

Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Woolfolk-Hoy, A. (2004). Collective efficacy beliefs: Theoretical developments, empirical evidence, and future directions. *Educational Researcher, 33*(3), 3-13.

Green, R. L., & Cooper, T. (2013). An identification of the most preferred dispositions of effective school leaders. In *National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal, 26*(1&2).

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 29*(2), 75-91. doi:10.1007/BF02766777

Guest, G., Namey, E. E., & Mitchell, M. L. (2012). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*. Sage.

Guskey, T. R., & Passaro, P. D. (1994). Teacher efficacy: A study of construct dimensions. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(3), 627-643.

Guthrie, J. W., & Springer, M. G. (2004). A Nation at Risk revisited: Did "wrong" reasoning result in "right" results? At what cost? *Peabody Journal of Education, 79*(1), 7-35.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980–1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9*(2), 157-191.

Harris, D. N. (2007). High-flying schools, student disadvantage, and the logic of NCLB. *American Journal of Education, 113*(3), 367-394.

Harwell, M., Maeda, Y., Bishop, K., & Xie, A. (2017). The surprisingly modest relationship between SES and educational achievement. *Journal of Experimental Education, 85*(2), 197-214.

Haycock, K. (2001). Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Leadership, 58*(6), 6-11.

Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Hipp, K. A. (1996). *Teacher efficacy: Influence of principal leadership behavior*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/full text/ED396409.pdf

Hoang, T. (2010). No Child Left Behind: School processes associated with positive changes, collaborative partnership, and principal leadership. *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal, 8*(3), 29.

Hogg, M. A. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5*(3), 184-200.

Hoover, K. (2000). The relationship of locus of control and self-efficacy to academic achievement of college freshman (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 61*(05), 1761.

Hoy, W. K., Sweetland, S. R., & Smith, P. A. (2002). Toward an organizational model of achievement in high schools: The significance of collective efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*(1), 77-93.

Hunt, M. R. (2009). Strengths and challenges in the use of interpretive description: Reflections arising from a study of the moral experience of health professionals in humanitarian work. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(9), 1284-1292.

Hunzicker, J. (2013). Attitude has a lot to do with it: Dispositions of emerging teacher leadership. *Teacher Development, 17*(4), 538-561.

Improving America's School Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 90-247, 81 Stat. 816 (1968). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-81/pdf/STATUTE-81-Pg783.pdf

Isik, A. N., & Derinbay, D. (2015). Turkish version of the Principals' Sense of Efficacy Scale: Validity and reliability study. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 60,* 1-16.

Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H., & Brooks, J. S. (2009). Leadership for social justice: Preparing 21st century school leaders for a new social order. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 4*(1), 1-31.

Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kids' brains and what schools can do about it*. ASCD.

Jensen, E. (2013). How poverty affects classroom engagement. *Educational Leadership, 70*(8), 24-30.

Jiang, Y., Granja, M. R., & Koball, H. (2017). Basic facts about low-income children: Children 6 through 11 years, 2015 [Fact Sheet]. National Center for Children in Poverty.

Kafka, J. (2009). The principalship in historical perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education, 84*(3), 318-330.

Kahlke, R. M. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: Pitfalls and benefits of methodological mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 13*(1), 37-52.

Kane Lewis, S., & Lawrence-Patterson, E. (1989). Locus of control of children with learning disabilities and perceived locus of control by significant others. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *22*(4), 255-257.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2010). The truth about leadership: The no-fads, heart-of-the-matter facts you need to know. *John Wiley & Sons.*

Kumanyika, S. K., & Grier, S. (2006). Targeting interventions for ethnic minority and low-income populations. *The Future of Children*, *16*(1), 187-207.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance through interviews and dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(3), 480-500.

Ladd, H. F. (2012). Education and poverty: Confronting the evidence. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *31*(2), 203-227.

Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *30*(4), 498-518.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(4), 496-528.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbeck, R. (1995). *An organizational learning perspective on school responses to central policy initiatives.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

Leithwood, K., Patten, S., & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(5), 671-706.

Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. National College for School Leadership.

Leithwood, K., Seashore-Lewis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student achievement.* Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota.

Leithwood, K., & Steinbach, R. (1991). Indicators of transformational leadership in the everyday problem solving of school administrators. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 4*(3), 221-244.

Leithwood, K., & Strauss, T. I. I. U. (2009). Turnaround schools: Leadership lessons. *Education Canada*, *49*(2), 26-29.

Lieberman, A., & Friedrich, L. (2007). Changing teaching from within: Teachers as leaders. In *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago* (pp. 9-13).

Liu, S., & Hallinger, P. (2018). Principal instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher professional learning in China: Testing a mediated-effects model. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(4), 501-528.

Lyons, C. A., & Murphy, M. J. (1994). *Principal self-efficacy and the use of power.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/full text/ED373421.pdf

Machtinger, H. (2007). What do we know about high poverty schools? Summary of the high poverty schools conference at UNC-Chapel Hill. *The High School Journal*, *90*(3), 1-8.

Marshall, C. (1985). Appropriate criteria of trustworthiness and goodness for qualitative research on education organizations. *Quality & Quantity*, *19*(4), 353-373.

Marshall, C. (2004). Social justice challenges to educational administration: Introduction to a special issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(1), 3-13.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (Vol. 41). Sage.

McCollum, D. L., & Kajs, L. T. (2009). Examining the relationship between school administrators' efficacy and goal orientations. *Educational Research Quarterly, 32*(3), 29-46.

McCollum, D. L., Kajs, L. T., & Minter, N. (2006). A confirmatory factor analysis of the school administrator efficacy scale (SAES). *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, *10*(3), 105-119.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (Rev. ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). Qualitative case study research. In *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (pp. 39-54). Jossey-Bass.

Middleton, M. J., & Midgley, C. (1997). Avoiding the demonstration of lack of ability: An underexplored aspect of goal theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(4), 710-718.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Murphy, J. (2008). The place of leadership in turnaround schools: Insights from organizational recovery in the public and private sectors. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *46*(1), 74-98.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2017). Number and percentage of students enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by distance education participation, location of student, level of enrollment, and control and level of institution: Fall 2013 and fall 2014. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_311.15.asp

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. *Elementary School Journal*, *84*(2), 113-130.

Nettles, S. M., & Harrington, C. (2007). Revisiting the importance of the direct effects of school leadership on student achievement: The implications for school improvement policy. *Peabody Journal of Education, 82*, 724-736.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2002). Retrieved from https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-107publ110/pdf/PLAW-107publ110.pdf

Normore, A., & Blanco, R. (2008). Leadership for social justice and morality. In *Leadership for social justice: Promoting equity and excellence through inquiry and relative practice* (pp. 215-240). Information Age.

Northouse, P. G. (2012). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Sage.

Orr, M. (2003). *Evaluating educational leadership preparation: A review of empirical, conceptual and methodological literature*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Osterman, K., & Sullivan, S. (1996). New principals in an urban bureaucracy: A sense of efficacy. *Journal of School Leadership, 6*(6), 661-690.

Pajares, F. (2002). *Self-efficacy beliefs in academic contexts: An outline*. Retrieved from http://des.emory.edu/mfp/efftalk.html

Parrett, W. H., & Budge, K. M. (2009). *Turning high-poverty schools into high-performing schools*. ASCD.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative Social Work, 1*(3), 261-283.

Payne, R. K. (2005). *A framework for understanding poverty*. aha! Process.

Payne, R. K. (2009). Moving from middle class to situational poverty—from stability to instability: What you can do to help your students and parents during the present economic downturn. *Instructional Leader, 22*(3), 1-4.

Perry, L. B., & McConney, A. (2010). Does the SES of the school matter? An examination of socioeconomic status and student achievement using PISA 2003. *Teachers College Record*, *112*(4), 1137-1162.

Pfitzner-Eden, F. (2016). I feel less confident, so I quit? Do true changes in teacher self-efficacy predict changes in preservice teachers' intention to quit their teaching degree? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*, 240-254.

Pianta, R., & Walsh, D. (2014). *High-risk children in schools: Constructing sustaining relationships*. Routledge.

Pierce, S. (2014). Examining the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and the emotional intelligence of elementary school principals. *Journal of School Leadership, 24*(2), 311-335.

Portelli, J. P., Vibert, A., & Shields, C. (2007). *Toward an equitable education: Poverty, diversity, and students at risk: The national report*. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Quinn, D., Greunert, S., & Valentine, J. (1999). *Using data for school improvement.* National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Rallis, S. F., & Rossman, G. B. (2012). *The research journey: Introduction to inquiry*. Guilford.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage.

Rice, J. K. (2010). *Principal effectiveness and leadership in an era of accountability: What research says* [Brief 8]. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

Ross, J. A., & Bruce, C. (2007). Professional development effects on teacher efficacy: Results of randomized field trial. *Journal of Educational Research, 101,* 50-60.

Ross, J. A., & Gray, P. (2006). Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17*(2), 179-199.

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs, 80*, 1-28.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.

Sanders-Reio, J., Alexander, P. A., Reio, T. G., Jr., & Newman, I. (2014). Do students' beliefs about writing relate to their writing self-efficacy, apprehension, and performance? *Learning and Instruction*, *33*, 1-11.

Seashore Louis, K., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *21*(3), 315-336.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.

Shields, C. M. (2009). *Courageous leadership for transforming schools: Democratizing practice*. Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558-589.

Shields, C. M. (2013). *Transformative leadership in education: Equitable change in an uncertain and complex world*. Routledge.

Shields, C. M., Bishop, R., & Mazawi, A. E. (2005). Pathologizing practices: An overview. In *Pathologizing practices: The impact of deficit thinking on education* (pp. 1-22). Peter Lang.

Sieber, J. E. (1993). *Planning ethically responsible research: A guide for students and internal review boards*. Sage.

Silvernail, D. L., Sloan, J. E., Paul, C. R., Johnson, A. F., & Stump, E. K. (2014). The Relationships between School Poverty and Student Achievement in Maine. *Center for Education Policy, Applied Research, and Evaluation*.

Simon, N. S., & Johnson, S. M. (2015). Teacher turnover in high-poverty schools: What we know and can do. *Teachers College Record, 117*(3), 1-36.

Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research, 75*(3), 417-453.

Smith, W., Guarino, A., Strom, P., & Adams, O. (2006). Effective teaching and learning environments and principal self-efficacy. *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders, 3*(2), 4-23.

Smyth, J., & Wrigley, T. (2013). *Living on the edge: Rethinking poverty, class and schooling*. Peter Lang Publishing.

Starks, H., & Brown Trinidad, S. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research, 17*(10), 1372-1380.

Stein, K. C., Macaluso, M., & Stanulis, R. N. (2017). The interplay between principal leadership and teacher leader efficacy. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(6), 1002-1032.

Taylor, J. A. (2005). Poverty and student achievement. *Multicultural Education, 12*(4), 53-55.

Theoharis, G. T. (2004). *At no small cost: Social justice leaders and their response to resistance*. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 43*(2), 221-258.

Theoharis, G. (2010). Disrupting injustice: Principals narrate the strategies they use to improve their schools and advance social justice. *Teachers College Record*, *112*(1), 331-373.

Theoharis, G., & Causton-Theoharis, J. N. (2008). Oppressors or emancipators: Critical dispositions for preparing inclusive school leaders. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 41*(2), 230-246.

Thorne, S. (2008). *Interpretive description*. Left Coast Press.

Thorne, S., Kirkham, S. R., & MacDonald-Emes, J. (1997). Interpretive description: A noncategorical qualitative alternative for developing nursing knowledge. *Research in Nursing & Health*, *20*(2), 169-177.

Thorne, S., Kirkham, S. R., & O'Flynn-Magee, K. (2004). The analytic challenge in interpretive description. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *3*(1), 1-11.

Tilley, T. B., Smith, S. J., & Claxton, R. L. (2011). Success despite socioeconomics: A case study of a high-achieving, high-poverty school. *Journal of School Public Relations*, *33*(4), 292-317.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Barr, M. (2004). Fostering student learning: The relationship of collective teacher efficacy and student achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *3*(3), 189-209.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Gareis, C. R. (2004). Principals' sense of efficacy: Assessing a promising construct. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *42*(5), 573-585.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Gareis, C. R. (2015). Faculty trust in the principal: An essential ingredient in high-performing schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*, 66–92.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(6), 944-956.

Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A. W., & Hoy, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research, 68*(2), 202-248.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk-Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *17*(7), 783-805.

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *U.S. Department of Education FY 2015 annual performance report and FY 2017 annual performance plan.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2017plan/2015-2017-apr-app.pdf

Usher, E. L., & Pajares, F. (2008). Sources of self-efficacy in school: Critical review of the literature and future directions. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*(4), 751-796.

Versland, T. M. (2016). Exploring self-efficacy in education leadership programs: What makes the difference? *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *11*(3), 298-320.

Versland, T. M., & Erickson, J. L. (2017). Leading by example: A case study of the influence of principal self-efficacy on collective efficacy. *Cogent Education, 4*(1). doi:10.1080/2331186X.2017.1286765

Virginia Department of Education. (2017). *About Title I, Part A: Improving basic programs operated by local educational agencie*s. Retrieved from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/federal_programs/esea/title1/part_a/index.shtml

Wagner, T. (2008). Even our “best” schools are failing to prepare students for 21st-century careers and citizenship. *Educational Leadership, 66*(2), 20-25.

Wagstaff, L., & Fusarelli, L. (1995). *The racial minority paradox: New leadership for learning in communities of diversity*. Presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Salt Lake City.

Wahlstrom, K. L., & Louis, K. S. (2008). How teachers experience principal leadership: The roles of professional community, trust, efficacy, and shared responsibility. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(4), 458-495.

Wallace Foundation. (2010). Education leadership: An agenda for school improvement. The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/ KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/EducationLeadership/ Page s/education-leadership-an-agenda-for-school-improvement.aspx

Wardlow, L. (2016). *The Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) in historical context.* Retrieved from https://www.pearsoned.com/every-student-succeeds-act-historical/

Ware, H. W., & Kitsantas, A. (2011). Predicting teacher commitment using principal and teacher efficacy variables: An HLM approach. *Journal of Educational Research, 104*(3), 183-193.

Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement. working paper*. McREL. Retrieved from http://www.peecworks.org/peec/ peec_research/I01795EFA.0/Marzano

Wood, R., & Bandura, A. (1989). Impact of conceptions of ability on self-regulatory mechanisms and complex decision making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(3), 407-415.

Woods, E. H. J., & Martin, B. N. (2016). What leadership behaviors were demonstrated by the principal in a high poverty, high achieving elementary school? *Cogent Education, 3*(1), 1172935. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2016.1172935

Wu, Z., & McGoogan, J. M. (2020). Characteristics of and important lessons from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in China: Summary of a report of 72 314 cases from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *JAMA, 323*(13), 1239-1242.

Yoshikawa, H., Aber, J. L., & Beardslee, W. R. (2012). The effects of poverty on the mental, emotional, and behavioral health of children and youth: Implications for prevention. *American Psychologist, 67*(4), 272-284.

APPENDIX A:

EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

This email serves as an invitation for your participation in a study I am conducting at the George Washington University. Your contact information was obtained through your district's Office of Research. And you are being asked to participate because of your position and placement in a Title I school. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to participate or not participate, and if you choose to participate you may choose to end your participation at any time. Further, your professional standing will be in no way affected by your decision.

This study will focus on understanding how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students. Participants will be asked to describe their background, experiences, challenges they encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership behaviors and practices. The researcher will examine how your experiences and your perception of the role of your own self-efficacy in influencing your leadership and behaviors in leading economically disadvantaged schools.

I would like to request a 60-minute interview to take place during between January 2010 and March 2020, with a follow up 60-minute interview as needed. I would like to schedule the first interview during the week of _____. During this time, I can accommodate your schedule and meet with you either by phone, Zoom, Facetime, Google Hangout or meet you at a convenient location. Your response to my interview questions will be dealt with anonymously by assigning a pseudonym. I will refer to you only by your pseudonym (for example, principal A). The interview will be recorded for purposes of transcription, and you will receive a verbatim copy of the interview transcripts for your thorough review. All interview data will be kept in a secure location protected either by a lock or password protected.

After the interview you will be asked to audio record your thoughts and reflection within 48 hours of completion of the interview. Length of this recording is based on your own reflection.

If you would like to participate in this study, please click on the link _____ to complete the initial questionnaire.

You will also be asked to sign an informed consent form.

Please contact me at this email address pfarrell30@gwu.edu, or 571-334-5833. I will follow up with you by phone within a week.
Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Pamela J. Farrell
Doctoral Candidate, The George Washington University

Dissertation Chair: Christine Nganga

APPENDIX B:

RECRUITMENT TELEPHONE SCRIPT

My name is Pam Farrell, and I am a doctoral candidate at the George Washington University. I am following up to an email I sent you requesting your participation in a study I am conducting on how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students. You have been invited to participate based on your position and placement in a Title I school, but your participation is voluntary.

Do you have any questions I can answer before, deciding about participating?

If you don't have any questions have you decided whether you are willing to participate? If you are willing to participate, we can schedule our first interview during the week of _____. This interview will last about 60 minutes, and I can meet you at a time and location that is convenient to you or we can interview by phone, Zoom, FaceTime or Google Hangout.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

APPENDIX C:

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING EMAIL

It is with gratitude that I write to thank you for your participation in my dissertation study for the George Washington University. Your experiences and insight into leading Title I schools will be invaluable to my work and I am extremely grateful for your time, and willingness to participate.

If you have any further questions or concerns after the completion of the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at pfarrell30@gwu.edu or 571-334-5833.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Pamela J. Farrell
Doctoral candidate
The George Washington University

Dissertation Chair:
Christine Nganga

APPENDIX D:

FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. I am a doctoral candidate with at the George Washington University, and I am conducting research on understanding how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students. In our initial interview and possible follow up interview I would like to discuss several topics, pertaining mostly to your experiences leading economically disadvantaged schools, challenges you encounter, what risk factors influence your leadership efficacy, and how your self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence your leadership behaviors and practices.

You were selected to participate in this study because you are a principal at a Title I school. The interview should last approximately 60 minutes. Everything you say will be kept confidential: your name and school will not be associated with any specific comments or conclusions expressed in the study. You will be identified by a pseudonym (example, Principal A), but your school will not be attached to that description. Additionally, the sample includes several participants holding a like position further protecting and shielding your identity. Your school district will also remain anonymous, only being referred to as a central or northern Virginia school district.

I will be recording our interview today for purposes of transcription. Your recording will not be used in any publication or presentation. The files containing the recording will be deidentified as soon as possible and you will have the opportunity to thoroughly review each of the transcripts for accuracy.

Do you have any questions before we start?

First Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your professional journey in education and your path to your current position.

2. How would you describe yourself as a leader?

3. What leadership traits are important to you? How do you model these traits and apply them to your practices within your school? In other words, if collaboration is a key leadership trait, how does that translate into practices at your school?

4. The term *self-efficacy* means the belief in one's ability to meet goals and challenges. How do you conceptualize your leadership efficacy in your role as a principal leading a Title I school?

5. Tell me about your experiences that provided you with the confidence, skills, beliefs, attitude, and persistence to lead a school serving economically disadvantaged students?

6. How did you acquire these beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy? Were there experiences that increased or lowered your level of efficacy?

7. Do you believe self-efficacy can be developed? Were there situations, experiences, or a role model that helped to develop or strengthen your own belief in your ability to lead in challenging circumstances?

8. What are the risk factors you face in leading a school serving economically disadvantaged students?

9. How much does your belief in your own ability to overcome these risk factors impact or contribute to your leadership?

10. What is your vision for your students, staff, and yourself under your leadership?

11. Tell me what equity and access looks like in your school.

12. Is it difficult to create equity and access for all students?

13. Do you possess persistence? If so, can you give an example of when this is needed in leading your school and some outcomes, positive or negative, that came from using persistence?

14. What would you tell a new principal who is assigned to leading a Title I school? What advice would you give them?

15. Is there anything else you would like to share that I have not asked you about?

Thank you for your time today. Just a reminder to record any thoughts or reflections you have within 48 hours of this interview using the Temi app.

Interview 2

Questions will be determined based upon initial data analysis and submitted to IRB in advance.

APPENDIX E:

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

By filling out this survey you are indicating your willingness to participate in this study. Please provide the following demographic information. You may choose to not answer any/all questions on this form.

Race:

_____ Unspecified
_____ American Indian/ Alaska Native
_____Asian
_____Black/African American/Not of Hispanic Origin
_____Hispanic
_____White/Not of Hispanic origin
_____Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Age:

_____20-30
_____31-40
_____41-50
_____51-60
_____ 61-70

Gender:

_____ Female
_____ Male
_____ Unspecified

Name: _____

Employer/school: _____

Employer address: _____

Preferred phone number: _____

Current position/title: _____

Years of experience in current position: _____

Years of experience in education: _____

List your degrees: _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A Study of Principals' Self-Efficacy and Leadership Practices
in Schools Serving Economically Disadvantaged Students
GW IRB number:

Principal Investigator: Christine Nganga, Ed.D. *Telephone number:757-269-2229*
Point of Contact: Pamela J. Farrell *Telephone number: 571-334-5833*

1. Introduction
   You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Christine Nganga, Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, the George Washington University (GWU) and advisee, Pamela J. Farrell. Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. Your status of your employment will not, in any way be affected should you choose not to participate or if you decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

2. Why is this study being done?
   The purpose of this study is to understand how school principals in Title I schools perceive their own self-efficacy in leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a principal in a Title I school.

3. What are the reasons why you may choose to volunteer to participate in this study?
   The results of this study may provide additional information and knowledge to school districts in understanding of how school principals in Title I schools perceive leading schools serving economically disadvantaged students, the challenges they encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership behaviors and practices. As such it may impact professional learning for principals, interview protocol and hiring of principals and possibly placing principals with high self-efficacy in Title I schools.

4. What are the reasons why you may choose not to participate in this study?
   You may have a concern regarding loss of confidentiality, or you may have time limitations affecting your availability.

5. What is involved in the study?
   If you choose to take part in this study, you will participate in one 60-minute interview and a possible 60-minute follow up interview. The following activities are specifically research related: signing the consent form, completing the demographic and information questionnaire, participating in the interview and audio recording a brief reflection within 48 hours after the interview. The total amount of time you will spend in connection with this study is approximately 3 hours. These interviews will be audio recorded. During the interview, and possible follow up interview I will ask

you to discuss several topics, pertaining mostly to your experiences leading economically disadvantaged schools, challenges you encounter, what risk factors influence their leadership efficacy, and how their self-efficacy beliefs impact or influence their leadership behaviors and practices.

6. What are the risks of participating in this study?
   You may feel physical fatigue during the interview and loss of confidentiality. We have worked to protect your confidentiality and can provide breaks as needed during data collection. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential, however this cannot be guaranteed. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may stop your participation in the study at any time. At no time will your employment status be affected should you choose to not participate or withdraw from the study.

7. Will you receive payment for this study?
   You will not receive any type of payment for this study, but the results will be shared with you.

8. How will my privacy be protected?
   If results of this study are reported in publications or presentations the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified. GWU will not release any information about your research involvement without your written permission, unless required by law.

   To minimize the risk that your confidentiality will be compromised, I will erase the audio recording contents after it has been transcribed. Prior to transcription, I will keep the recording device in a secured location with a locked password.

   Direct quotes may be used in written reporting and publication of this information. You will be identified using a pseudonym (example, principal A). You will not be identified or connected to your quotes in any other way

.

9. Questions or concerns
   The office of Human Research of George Washington University, at (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as research participant.
   Additional questions or concerns many be addressed to the principal investigator Dr. Christine Nganga, *757-269-2229* or her advisee, Pamela J. Farrell at (571) 334-5833.

By signing below, you are telling the researcher YES, that you agree to participate in this study.

Participant's printed name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX G:

EMAIL REQUEST FOR AUDIO RECORDING REFLECTION

Thank you for your time and sharing your experiences with me today during our interview. This email serves as a reminder for you to audio record your reflection within 24 hours of our interview. The length of the recording is based on your own thoughts and reflection in regard to your experience during the interview and how you may have reflected on your leadership after we had completed the interview. This audio recording should be done using the Temi app which I used during our interview. The transcription is free and of no cost to you. Please email your reflection transcription once received to pfarrell30@gwu.edu.

APPENDIX H:

AUDIO/VISUAL CONSENT FORM RESEARCH PROJECT

IRB Approval #
Investigator: Pamela J. Farrell (571-334-5833) pfarrell30@gwu.edu
OHR: Christine Nganga (1-757-269-2229) ngangac@gwu.edu

I hereby authorize Pamela J. Farrell to use my audio recording in her project entitled "A Study of Principals' Self-Efficacy and Leadership Practices in Schools Serving Economically Disadvantaged Students." The recordings will not be used in presentations or for any other reason than data analysis as it pertains to this study. I have indicated below the name I wish to use with my voice. I understand that by signing this form, I am allowing her to use my voice for this expressed purpose. I further certify that I am over the age of 18 years old.

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please initial Audio only _____

Name to use when reporting data from audio (please print clearly):

_____

Investigator's Signature: _____