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Building a School Culture of Success for Multilingual Learners: A Multiple Case Study of Perspectives from Secondary School Leaders

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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Abstract

The present study seeks to address achievement and opportunity gaps for Multilingual Learners (MLs) by studying secondary schools who have established a school culture that prioritizes ML support and success. It draws on existing literature in the fields of ML best practices, educational leadership, and school culture research to study case schools in order to distill from their lived experiences recommendation for practitioners. The author used a multiple case study methodology to delve into four case schools identified as exemplars of cultures for ML success. The author used in-depth qualitative interviews to find out if leaders in any secondary schools in Virginia report elements of a school culture that centers ML success, what they report characterizes their schools, and what transpired in those schools as that culture emerged and solidified. According to the diverse and knowledgeable participants, there are secondary schools with a school culture that centers ML support and success in Virginia. They are characterized by common elements such as a welcoming environment, frequent interactions between MLs and their peers, teamwork, strong leadership, high expectations and collective ownership of MLs education from the whole school. Additional elements that seem to be a factor are the use of scheduling for inclusion and creative pathways for MLs, a family-like school feel, innovative programming, community outreaching and an emphasis on fun and laughter in this serious work. Participants point to leadership--particularly transformational, distributed, and flexible leadership--as a factor in how these school cultures emerged, but also that it happened via a process where proximity to MLs and experience led to confidence and success. Future research should expand from this exploratory study by expanding the scope, adding quantitative methods or development grounded theory based on the findings from this work.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background: Multilingual Learners and the American Education System

Multilingual Learners (MLs) represent the fastest growing student group in the American education system (Horsford & Samson, 2013), and today more than 5 million students or 10% of the nation's public-school children speak a first language other than English (Fayon, Goff and Duranczyk, 2010; Calderon, Slavin & Sanchez, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2018). For decades, scholars have reported that number will continue to rise, and it has, with Thomas and Collier (2002) predicting that MLs would make up 40% of the student population by 2030. With these statistics, it is undeniable that the future of the nation depends on the educational system serving its MLs adequately. It is not.

Instructional programs for MLs, currently known as Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEP), take on many forms across the country with varying degrees of success. Differences in success for MLs can be explained by many factors including available resources, program model, whether the school is situated in new destinations for MLs, and, as this paper will address, whether the school has a culture that centers support and success for its Multilingual Learners (Aleman, 2009). Despite the significant and growing population of this group and an increasing focus on ML achievement for school leaders and scholars, countless studies indicate that Multilingual Learners are not achieving at the level of their peers by almost every measure of educational achievement and across subject areas. (McEneaney, López, & Nieswandt, 2014; Pardini, 2006; Jimenez-Castellanos, 2017; Kim, 2017). Achievement gaps on standardized tests, lower graduation rates, and other markers of student achievement reveal that MLs, who are expected to perform at the same level as their native-speaking peers by federal law, are not consistently receiving the necessary supports and that many of America's schools

are not providing an adequate education for this student group (Miley & Farmer, 2017; Jimenez-Castellanos, 2017). This and any gap in academic achievement correlates with lower lifetime income, higher incarceration rates, and even greater health risks and lower life expectancy (Olshansky SJ, et al., 2012), and any achievement gap represents a loss in earnings and economic benefit for the country as a whole, costing the American economy trillions of dollars per year (Hancock & Laboissiere, 2009). It is a national educational emergency that such a large and growing portion of our student population is being left behind. It is time to rethink how America is educating our Multilingual Learners. Beyond being harmful for kids and for the country, the under-resourcing of LIEP is becoming an immediate problem for educational leaders given that adequate education for all students is a right guaranteed by most state constitutions, including Virginia's (Brimley, Verstegen & Garfield, 2016), and that federal policy allows for schools and districts to only be fully accredited if each subgroup, including MLs, is performing to the state standard. (ESSA, 2015). An obligation exists for schools to improve the educational supports and outcomes for their Multilingual Learners. Despite the bleak national outlook for MLs, some learning institutions appear to have developed a school culture that centers ML support and success, resulting in a narrowing of the gap for Multilingual Learners.

LIEP and Educational Leadership Research: School Culture Matters

There is a substantial body of research devoted to best practices in serving MLs across many different research fields, including language acquisition, LIEP classroom pedagogy, and social justice. There exists a more recent but growing body of research at the intersection of LIEP and educational leadership, and contained within that body are several studies that espouse best practices for schools to better serve MLs and reduce the achievement gap for language minority students. There is a very limited amount of research into the intersection of LIEP and

school leadership that discusses school culture as a theoretical framework or specifically studies these phenomena in secondary schools. This study bridges that gap by exploring secondary schools that have demonstrated a culture of ML support and success and analyzing those settings through a school leadership and school culture theory lens.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, educational leadership research argues that school leadership matters and has an impact on student achievement. The emerging literature around Leadership and LIEP programs argues that for MLs in particular, school leadership significantly impacts success (August & Hakuta, 1998; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Christison & Murray, 2009; Marzano, 2005). It logically follows then, that the study of the leadership practices in settings where MLs are finding educational success is an important line of inquiry, and several studies exist on that topic.

A common finding in these inquiries is that in places where MLs are finding success, the school as a whole and its many stakeholders take responsibility for supporting the needs of the LIEP program. Success for Learners is not the exclusive responsibility of those designated as LIEP teachers or even of those who teach classes that serve bilingual students; it is the responsibility of the whole school in these settings. Schools that have developed a culture to support the success of this student group stand the best chance of overcoming this achievement gap. (Thoharis & O'Toole, 2011; August & Hakuta, 1998; McLaughlin & McLeod, 1996; Suttmiller & Gonzales, 2006). It would be beneficial for school leaders in the field to know how this culture for ML success came into being, how it was strengthened and maintained. In other words, if building a school culture around LIEP has been effective for supporting students who need it, how did these schools do this?

This observed phenomena, that some schools have adopted into their ethos a focus on ML achievement (Aleman, 2009) leads to questions about school culture and how culture is formed, strengthened, and maintained and requires a deep understanding of school culture as a concept, for which a significant amount of research exists (Schein, 1985, Deal & Peterson, 2016).

This study connects the construct of school culture and its development with schools that have become known for a specific school culture, that of support and success for MLs. I explored what the school leaders in these settings believe led to a strong culture so that those seeking to replicate this to better serve their students might be able to apply the concepts to other schools.

The study analyzes literature surrounding school and organizational culture to inform a qualitative look at how culture is formed in the context of supporting LIEP success. I conducted 21 interviews with school leaders who were present during the formation of a culture that embraced LIEP, as measured by expert recommendation, achievement data, and evidence from qualitative interviews with school leaders, and then I used school culture theory to distill key themes from those interviews.

There exists a significant body of research regarding effective practices in the classroom for Multilingual Learners. There are fewer studies, though a growing number over the last decade, that sit at the intersection between school leadership and LIEP. While several of them point to leadership qualities and strategies for success, few delve into culture-building as the means for supporting Multilingual Learners. Very few specifically address the specific needs of secondary students with an ML designation. Despite this lack of a body of literature on how best

to build a culture of support for Multilingual Learners, there is evidence that it is occurring. This study probed those involved for how they believe such a culture was built.

Rationale

This study focuses on a student group, MLs, that is rapidly growing yet on the wrong end of a significant achievement gap. It aims to make a contribution to an emerging field in a way that is unique for two reasons, its focus on secondary schools plus the involvement of school culture as its theoretical foundation. The findings and recommendations are immediately applicable to practitioners as well as future researchers due to the exploratory nature of this study. Additionally, there exists urgency for this type of work as gaps in student achievement and lack of practitioner understanding are contributing to significant inequalities in America's education system at a moment when policy and demographic changes have brought the topic to the forefront of school leaders' minds.

Limited research in this field necessitates this study. The scholarship on the application of the discipline of educational leadership to LIEP programs is relatively young and, given the stakes, there is a surprising amount of room for more research. As McGee, Haworth and MacIntyre (2015) stated in their report on these intersecting fields (LIEP, which they refer to as ESOL, and school leadership):

> "A search of the literature shows that there is limited research about leadership in the field of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Traditionally, research related to ESOL has been located in the field of applied linguistics and education, placing the focus on language and language teaching and learning. However, there has been a growing call for more research with a focus on leadership." (p. 93).

While some leadership minded LIEP research has emerged over the last few decades, these authors are correct that searches yield very limited results. For middle and high schools, there is a dearth of inquiry into leadership for secondary schools faced with challenges associated with late-arriving MLs, for example, and most studies devoted to best practices and learning from strong LIEP-minded leaders fail to introduce educational leadership theory or bring in the theoretical concept of school culture. The primary argument for the presence of this study is that it does not yet exist and is situated in a field that is in need of more research.

The lack of research on this topic is surprising given the clear need for more work in this field based on student performance. The significant achievement gap that is leaving a rapidly growing subgroup behind is a compelling rationale for more study into how to best serve Multilingual Learners. The present study will contribute to a field focused on bettering outcomes for MLs, which demands the attention of the educational leadership community due to the growing numbers, sizeable achievement gap and growing importance to school leaders. Beyond the moral need to level the playing field for MLs, school leaders are also more focused on this subgroup due to recent changes in federal policies. . English language instruction began in earnest in America following the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (BEA). In the decades following this law, challenges in court slowly led to federal policies mandating that language minority students receive an adequate education. The BEA and the courts dictated that MLs should receive an appropriate education, but in practice, it was easy for school and division leaders to ignore this small subset of their population. For one, immigrant settlement patterns meant that many schools and even states had such a small population that poor-performing MLs were either such a small part of the school population or did not even register on accreditation reports that they did not impact their school quality reports. The transient nature of the group

often meant that individuals who transferred mid-year did not factor into accreditation. Much of that changed in the early 2000s with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. Specifically, as the accountability movement drives federal and state educational policies with NCLB and ESSA, students who are labeled in defined gap-groups, such as Multilingual Learners, have become a more visible component to the reported success of individual public schools and school districts. MLs (called ESL students at that time) were first named and reported on through NCLB at the behest of the civil rights community. ESSA compels schools and districts to report achievement gaps for MLs and to make measurable yearly progress to close those gaps. As a result, it is common to read in studies produced since 2015 that the standards-based focus on MLs has brought new urgency to school leaders' desire for success in their language learning programs (Hoo-Ballade, 2005; Rudnik, 2012; Schug, 2015) and, therefore, more urgency for research in the intersection of LIEP and school leadership.

This study is situated in a compelling field, but is also important due to novel elements, including a focus on secondary schools, an area that is often eclipsed by elementary schools in the LIEP research field because they serve a larger number of MLs. Secondary schools, however, have unique challenges as late-arriving MLs and long-term MLs often face significant obstacles to achievement. (Kim, 2017). This study's focus on school culture as a conceptual framework for supporting MLs is another unique element to this study and a significant reason that it will contribute to the field.

Lastly, the findings from this research will have resonance with practitioners in school leadership roles working with MLs and hoping to build a culture to support their success. This is important because as demographics change, school leaders who have not had to develop the

necessary skills and knowledge for LIEP program success are rapidly thrust into a position where such skills are a necessity. MLs tend to settle in clustered housing patterns, and the link between neighborhood residence and school assignment means wide variation in the ML student population, ranging from some districts or schools having very few immigrant families to others being majority ML (Hall, 2012). As Zehler, Yin and Donovan (2012) describe, "Immigration patterns across the United States are changing, and regions of the country unaccustomed to populations from different lingual and cultural backgrounds are now seeing an increase in immigrant families" (p. 1). This is concerning because school leaders report being undertrained in how best to do this (Medina & Cobarrubias, 2009). This study aims to provide some information to these school leaders as they learn on their own how other educators believe a culture for ML success emerged in another setting.

In summary, this study applies the concept of school culture to ask school leaders in secondary schools that have built a culture for ML achievement what they believe led to that culture's formation. Researchers and practitioners will find that this study fills a gap in the literature as it provides a bridge from school culture literature to best practices for LIEP leadership, resulting in recommendations for a subgroup that is growing rapidly yet underachieving in American schools. The study is a logical next step for an emerging field that has identified the formation of a culture of support as a correlation to success for MLs but has yet to apply school culture research to how an environment for LIEP success is formed, specifically in secondary schools.

Literature Overview

The theoretical and research roots of this study rest in several fields of research, some of which are established and wide-ranging and others emerging and fertile for exploration. Each of

the following fields of study provide the necessary foundation from which this work and its research questions emerge.

First, an understanding of the historical arc of LIEP research is necessary, beginning as far back as the first policy changes that brought about English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in America and the subsequent work to advise bilingual education. While this study will provide a brief timeline of works, it is easy to veer into one of the many sub-branches of this complex field of study, including linguistics, classroom pedagogy, and social justice and critical theory. My pragmatist paradigm and school leadership background influence some of the research decisions, including where to focus the literature review as it pertains to LIEP. For example, while there are merits to exploring how critical theorists would view the slow pace of reform and politicization for instruction for immigrant groups as a clear example of a power imbalance exploiting a marginalized group of students, that is not the focus of this study and is therefore omitted from the literature review. The massive and multi-field reach of LIEP research, with its tentacles stretching into other areas of study require that such choices are made with a focus on the literature that will inform me in the study's key decisions as well as provide the reader with the background to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and the context of the results. The literature review of this paper will begin with a brief exploration of the work of Collier, Genesee, Miller & Endo and others to establish a working knowledge of the LIEP field.

Simultaneously, a working knowledge of the theoretical foundations and evolution of educational leadership is important for this study. Because the focus is on school culture, inextricably tied to school leadership, and its impact on LIEP and MLs, an understanding of school leadership literature is necessary to inform the study and interpret its findings. Tracing

educational leadership from its roots in educational management through its business-world leadership phase into its instructional leadership and emphasis on organizational culture and transformational change will be important to crafting interview questions and interpreting responses. Seminal works in the discipline, including those of Jack Culbertson and James Burns, provides the starting point and give way to Greenleaf, Spillane, Marzano et al., and other influential researchers in the educational leadership field. The literature review will highlight Oplatka's work as well as that of Wang, both of whom conducted comprehensive meta-analyses of the educational leadership cannon. This understanding will inform how I and the reader examine school leadership in the LIEP context.

The blend of these two bodies of literature into an emerging field, educational leadership for LIEP is also key to crafting this study. This growing body of research, which emerged in name around the turn of the most recent century, blends educational leadership ideas and best practices for LIEP, offering recommendations for school leaders looking to support MLs. Surprisingly, this field does not have a sizeable research history. Genesee et al (2006) wrote in their 230-page synthesis of research evidence for English Language Learners, "One might have expected to find a fairly large body of research that examined the effects of different type of programs and instructional models on [ELs] oral language development. In fact, no such body of research exists." (p. 23). This may be an exaggeration but is rooted in an understanding that there is less research on this intersection than is warranted. Murray, August and Hakuta (1998) and Christison & Murray (2009) composed important texts in this intersectional field. There have been multiple studies informed by their work over the last two decades, and many examined successful LIEP schools or districts attempting to distill the programs, practices, and policies that led to high achievement. (Medina & Cobarrubias 2009; Alcantar-Martinez, 2014; Hoo-Ballade,

2004; Ngo, 2017). Several studies suggest that the leadership characteristics and structures can have a significant impact on closing the achievement gap for students for whom English is a new language. (Albrecht, 2014; Watson, 2018; Arroyo, 2013). One such finding is the concept that some schools that saw positive results for MLs had undergone a shift in the very culture of the organization toward support for their LIEP efforts. (Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Aleman, et al., 2009).

With this in mind, it was necessary to understand the literature around the concept of school culture, which has been studied for almost a century (Waller, 1932), but it is difficult to find consensus on the precise definition of the concept. This study required a firm understanding of the literature surrounding school culture as a construct, its formation, how it is strengthened and is maintained, how it interfaces with school leadership and how it impacts students. Such a foundation allowed me to apply that knowledge to the novel setting of LIEP efforts in schools that seem to have built that culture that centers support and success for its MLs. Deal and Peterson (2009), Schein (1985); Trice & Beyer (1993) and the works of Albert Bandura will help inform us in the exploration of the concept of school culture. This knowledge will be applied to the practical LIEP settings of the participants in an effort to distill what they believe led to the development of a culture that centers the success for the MLs they work with, informing participant selection, question generation, and analysis of results.

Problem Statement

There is a compelling need in the American education system to better educate our fastest-growing yet very vulnerable group of students, our Multilingual Learners. Some schools are doing just that by building a school culture that centers support for ML achievement. While we know this is happening, we do not know how to replicate this because we have not applied

the theoretical frameworks of school leadership, LIEP best practices and school culture to these exemplar schools and shared those findings with school leaders who wish to replicate their success. This gap in the research represents a problem for school leaders and their students who would benefit from learning from the lived experiences of those in school cultures that support ML achievement.

Research Questions

- Are there secondary schools in Virginia where school leaders believe they have a school culture that centers ML support and success?
- What characterizes the culture of these schools?
- How do school leaders involved with each believe such a culture was developed?

Research Methods

In order to address the questions above, this inquiry applies the theoretical frameworks of effective school leadership and school culture to the practices associated with supporting Multilingual Learners in secondary school settings. To do that, the study examined the lived experiences of individuals who were in a position to observe how a strong culture of success for MLs was formed or maintained. Ascertaining what specific elements of school culture are present and attributing reasons for their existence is a difficult task. Such an undertaking involved careful selection of participants (of schools for study and individuals to interview) and a research methodology that was designed to dive deeply into lived experiences of participants and draw out the often ephemeral elements of school culture. For this reason, this study followed a qualitative research design using in-depth, semi-structured interviews that searched for elements of school culture as it relates to Multilingual Learners.

Choosing appropriate participants for this study was a significant challenge because so much of this study is dependent on selection, and the most significant threats to validity for this

inquiry lie in this step. When discussing participants for this study, I must break this into two levels, schools of study and participants for interview. First, I examined schools. I identified several schools for which a strong argument can be made that they have developed a school culture of support and success for Multilingual Learners. Using quantitative methods to make this case, as previous works have done, is not sufficient at capturing something as elusive--and as we will see, hard to define--as school culture and its elements. Instead, this study used quantitative measures, such as changes to graduation rate, standardized test scores and English proficiency test scores, as measures to verify and triangulate school participant recommendations made through chain selection. The primary method for school participant selection in this version of chain referral selection was accomplished through the network of Title III specialists, often the LIEP specialist for each school district. Those recommendations led to a short list of divisions and schools that were narrowed for participant selection by triangulating with this publicly available school and division level data.

The second aspect of participant selection was that of individuals, also accomplished through chain selection. School culture theory points out that while leadership is a strong determining factor for school culture, there are many individuals in any organization who could be determinants for school culture (Deal &Peterson, 2009). School culture may form because of a principal's leadership, in spite of his or her leadership, or concurrently. The author of this study targeted the culture drivers in these exemplar schools and talked directly with them, learning the lived experiences of those who were in a position to closely observe the actions, decisions, moments and elements that led to the formation or maintenance of the school culture that supported MLs in that setting. I used pre-interviews with several stakeholders to determine the appropriate participants for the long-form, semi-structured interviews that served as the

primary source of data for analysis and interpretation. In Chapter 3, I have carefully outlined the steps I took to select participants –the chain in chain selection—and provided deep detail on how participants were selected for interviews.

A qualitative research design was chosen based on the research questions that emerged from the literature review. In order to determine if schools exist with this ML-focused culture, how school leaders perceive that the culture was formed or maintained from their lived experiences, and how school culture research and theory explain those experiences, there was not a better choice for methodology than qualitative design. The study's goals, to learn about the rich experiences of those who experienced life in these schools, coupled with the application of an idea as intangible as school culture, clearly align with those of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A survey or analysis of existing data set would provide only surface-level information. I was able to distill themes from this work that practitioners can use to help in their work, which makes a single case study less appealing, because it would increase the likelihood that the reader's setting would be drastically different from the single school analyzed. In other words, I hope to provide slightly more generalizability to the work by distilling themes from the experiences of several participating schools in differing situations. For these reasons and more that will be discussed in Chapter 3, a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews was selected.

These interviews were informed by research in best practices for LIEP, educational leadership and school culture literature. The author's research into these separate fields were instrumental in crafting the interview protocols, both prepared questions and follow-ups to gain more detail, and the interpretation of the data as themes and conclusions were drawn across participant responses. These interviews took place virtually using a video conferencing software

due to department of health restrictions. (This study was conducted from 2020 to 2021, during the COVID-19 global pandemic). Interviews were transcribed by the author and then coded using Atlas.ti and categorized to search for connections and commonalities in the responses. The themes that emerge were analyzed using the conceptual framework from school culture and educational leadership research to inform the findings, conclusions and recommendations sections of the paper.

In order to control for researcher bias and improve validity, I used a second coder to audit the coding and themes. This second researcher with qualitative research experience read and coded a portion of the transcripts to determine if he found similar themes and drew similar conclusions. For the few discrepancies we found, those sections were be re-coded and the two researchers (he and I) reached a consensus on how to best interpret the data.

Implications for Understanding, Policy and Practice.

This study will be beneficial to both researchers and practitioners. As the literature review illustrates, this work is an extension of previous studies that assert that building a school culture that involves supporting Multilingual Learners is an essential element for ML success at the secondary level, but there is a lack of research at this intersection of educational leadership, school culture, and best practices for LIEP. This work adds to that body of knowledge and intends to push forward the work in this research field. Additionally, this study is intended for school leaders who seek to better serve the Multilingual Learners under their charge. This examination of schools who have gained a reputation of success for MLs can be a resource for school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders who seek to better educate their language minority students and transform their school cultures to better serve this group of students. While this work does not produce a prescriptive “how-to” list of what those school leaders

should do, it does describe the lived experiences, with all their accompanying context, of those who witnessed the formation or continuation of such a school culture. Readers are able to take knowledge from that experience to help inform their work.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In order to study and understand the formation of strong school cultures for LIEP success, it is necessary to examine each component of the complex interconnected tapestry of elements that converge in that topic. To be able to ask the right questions, interpret data wisely, and even select the right participants, an understanding of several bodies of research is necessary. First, we must have a firm grasp on the history of literature relating to the broad field of LIEP. Next, a review of school leadership research and theory is critical, as is the intersection of LIEP and educational leadership. Lastly, we will see that those areas of study led to a necessary review of theory and inquiry related to the concept of school culture and how it is shaped and maintained. The following chapter will travel through each of these fields providing a review of what has been studied and indicating areas for future research in each, so that we can emerge with clear research questions to guide this study.

Review of LIEP Research

The research body surrounding the intersection of educational leadership and English to speakers of other languages is both limited and relatively young, so a review of LIEP (or ESOL, ESL, or ELL as the field has been called throughout its history) literature is an appropriate starting point. Before that, we must understand the history of ML education in America. English language instruction for Multilingual Learners began in earnest in America following the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, and saw pockets of effective instruction emerge in places like New York City and San Francisco, both of which saw landmark court cases inform their practice. In *Lau v. Nichols (1974)* the court ruled that the city of San Francisco had violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by not providing an adequate education to 1,800 students of Chinese descent who were not proficient in English. In *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), the United States Supreme

Court's landmark decision ruled that a student's immigration status could not be a factor in denying an adequate education. The 1983 *Nation at Risk* publication seems to have marked a steep increase in national attention to the plight of the nation's public school students for whom English is not their first language. That report, and many since, indicated a marked achievement gap between Multilingual Learners and their peers. **(**United States, 1983) Pioneers in the field of LIEP teaching and learning emerged in the 1980s and 1990s and took varied approaches. Virginia Collier's works of the 1980s regarding best practices in the teaching of Multilingual Learners, and rate of language acquisition, challenges, and effective practices therein, are among the most referenced sources in the field. Miller and Endo (2004) and others employed frequent use of narratives in their research to best illustrate the challenges associated with navigating school as an English learner. Today's researchers in the LIEP field still frequently reference those pieces.

Much of the work in the LIEP field is concentrated on effective practices in the classroom or in other interactions between teachers and students as a means for improving language acquisition and academic achievement. Genesee and colleagues' (2006) report for The Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence summarized 13 researchers' extensive analysis of hundreds of empirical inquiries into effective practices for English learning. The resulting two hundred and thirty pages of literature synthesis is a tremendous tool for practitioners looking to boost achievement for Multilingual Learners in their schools and for researchers looking for gaps in existing research. Some interesting findings include the benefits of dual immersion language programs, some benefits of peer tutoring, instructional gains associated with the use of technology in the LIEP classroom, as well as conflicting research regarding bilingual instruction as compared to English language immersion programs. (Genesee

et al., 2006). These studies are indicative of the LIEP field as practitioners and researchers look for best practices and programs to address the tremendous challenge of bridging the achievement gap between native speakers and Multilingual Learners and for providing equal educational opportunities for the latter.

Educational Leadership Overview

While it is important to have a basic knowledge of the historical underpinnings of LIEP literature and theory, more background knowledge is necessary to properly unpack how cultures that support MLs are formed inside particular secondary schools. As I will outline, this often has a lot to do with school leadership (Schein, 1985). Therefore, a review of literature and theory with the field of educational leadership is warranted. This study sits at the intersection of three fields, LIEP, educational leadership and school culture. We will now explore the literature foundations of educational leadership.

Defining educational leadership as a field of study proved to be a more complex task than expected. The field is simultaneously hard to define, unusually broad, and in the midst of an identity crisis. Gunter (2002) points out that even the name of the discipline has shifted over the years from "educational administration" and "educational management" to its current state with a focus on leading instead of managing. A call for papers for a 2009 academic journal of educational leadership stated, "In calling for papers, the editors warn of confusion and lack of agreement among academics and institutions on the exact nature of educational leadership and management as a discipline." (Ribbins, 2006, p. 1). Given that the discipline is difficult to define and continues to evolve, this section will attempt to summarize this broad field with a particular focus on theory and application of school-based leadership.

The work of Oplatka (2009) and Wang (2018) were particularly valuable as they traced the decades of evolution in the field of educational leadership. Wang's recent paper proclaims itself an extension of Oplatka's 2009 seminal history of educational leadership research. Oplatka outlines the history of the discipline, which he calls Educational Administration, from the 1960s through the start of the 2000s. While not a foundational text, this is a cornerstone document for researchers in this field. As I've discussed, educational leadership is diverse, broad, controversial and evolving, so a thorough understanding of the history of the discipline is essential for any researcher, and Oplatka's (2009) and Wang's (2018) texts provide exactly that.

Leadership Styles and Characteristics

Much of the theory regarding educational research involves leadership styles and leadership characteristics, both of which borrow heavily from other fields, such as business leadership and politics (Santamaria, 2016). Educational leadership scholars consider the work involving leadership styles and qualities as the foundation of the discipline. In the 1970s Jack Culbertson, a pioneer in educational administration research, and others, led a theory movement in educational leadership including role theory, social system theory and eventually instructional leadership. That gave way in the 1990s to business-world theories of leadership styles and qualities, including transformative leadership, distributive leadership, democratic leadership and participatory leadership. Finally, ideas around moral leadership and social justice theory emerged in educational leadership literature in the early 2000s (Oplatka, 2009).

Leadership theories, characteristics, and traits in the educational space can be categorized into themes, and it is possible to draw lines across decades to influential writers and texts to distill some common refrains in the field across time. James Burns authored a seminal work in this field in 1978, a book titled *Leadership*. In this widely read and cited text with origins in

politics, Burns discusses the difference between Transactional and Transformational theories of leadership. Both styles impact the LIEP field (Christison & Murray, 2009). With transactional leadership, leaders are focused on managing the organization and maintaining the status quo or making incremental improvement through rewards and punishment (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders, on the other hand, work to transform the individuals they work with into achieving results that surpassed their own expectations. His theory of transformational leadership has been applied to education and is considered by many an ideal form of school leadership. (Den Hartzog, et al., 1999).

Servant leadership, proposed by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 is also important to review to set the foundation for Leadership in LIEP. Covey (1990) and Spillane and others (2001) extended this idea, theorizing that effective leaders must be focused on helping those in the organization and nurturing others to lead. This idea has much in common with distributive and sustainable leadership, which Hargreaves and Fink (2004) wrote about a decade later.

Educational leadership scholars often discuss instructional leadership, yet this term is so broad and used in such varied ways that it is hard to define. A 1989 paper defined the roles of an instructional leader as "resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence (Smith & Andrews, 1989). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty listed "involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment" and "knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment" as two of their 21 essential leadership traits in their landmark 2006 work, indicating the importance of instructional leadership. That work builds on Burns' 1978 writing on transformational leadership, indicating transformational-type competencies for a strong school leader, including being an effective change agent, a culture-builder, having a focus on goals and

vision while using relationship-building talents to transform those around you to reach desired ends. (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006.).

Marzano, Waters & McNulty's list of competencies also seems to build on the work of Blanchard and Hershey (1996) who argued that a leader must adapt to the context (time, place and people) of the situation. Inherent in this theory, an effective leader must be able to read and interpret each aspect of a situation and have the skill set to respond. This is similar to the traits of "situational awareness" and "flexibility" espoused by Marzano, et al. ten years later. This will intersect with a cultural responsiveness and social justice in this paper's discussion about how these educational leadership theories emerge in the LIEP field.

Educational Leadership Today

Today, educational leadership continues to evolve, just as Dewey and Kuhn suggested it would. As stated above, some would argue that it is undergoing an identity crisis as it continues to wrestle with the tension between theory and practice. Wang (2018) addressed this point and offered an unprecedented view of the discipline, indicating a diminished role for theory in the decades since 2000. In Wang's inquiry, the author analyzed 1300+ empirical articles from the four most prominent educational leadership publications between 2005 and 2014 and coded every study from that decade; he then conducted statistical analyses to judge their connectedness and to search for frequency of subject matter and theory. (Wang, 2018). This is a clever quantitative method for judging current trends in educational leadership research. Of the 295 concepts present in those reports, some stood out as the most influential subjects for study in the discipline. He categorized these frequently-published concepts into four themes, representing the four areas that got the most ink over the last decade. The most prevalent were Leadership Approaches, such as distributive leadership, transformational leadership, and others;

Organizational Elements, like school culture and organization theory; Psychological and Social Perspectives including trust, collective efficacy, and social network theory; and Issues surrounding Social Justice and Critical Race Theory. (Wang, 2018). This list of varied subjects illustrates that educational leadership is truly an interdisciplinary field with reach into many corners of the educational research world. It also demonstrates the evolving nature of the discipline, as many of these topics, now the most published in the field, would not have garnered much attention even a few decades ago.

Intersection of Educational Leadership and LIEP

After examining the appropriate research underpinnings of LIEP as a field of study and educational leadership, it is necessary to examine where these fields have converged in the body of literature. Diving into that field of inquiry will help guide researcher and reader toward the right questions and data interpretations to unearth what is driving cultures of ML success in some secondary schools.

A search for—and review of—the literature using the terms Leadership and Language Instruction Educational Programs brings one only back to the early 2000s when authors such as Denise Murray began publishing on the topic, but a closer look into published papers and other texts in the LIEP field reveals that in their discussion of best practices in the classroom, authors prior to the turn of the last century such as August and Hakuta, Echeverria, Gandara, Goldenberg and Sullivan, sought to link school leadership with success for Multilingual Learners and distill the qualities and characteristics of that leadership that were most effective. August and Hakuta wrote, in 1998, about effective LIEP programs, “At least half of the studies reviewed name leadership, often the principal’s, as an important factor.” These works from the 1990s argued for the use of native language in LIEP classes (Henderson and Landesman, 1992; Hernandez, 1991;

Muniz-Swicegood, 1994; Lucas et al., 1990; Berman et al., 1995; Rosebery et al., 1992, Tikunoff, 1983; Pease-Alvarez et al., 1991; Calderon et al., 1996), LIEP staff development for all teachers in a school (Carter and Chatfield, 1986; Lucas et al., 1990; Minicucci and Olsen, 1992; Berman et al., 1995) and outreach to community and families of MLs (Goldenberg, 1993). These findings are categorized as works in the LIEP field, but their content is of practical use to school leaders as much as, if not more, than for LIEP teachers and policymakers. They are cited here as evidence that the field of study that features the intersection of LIEP and educational leadership has been continually active for more than 30 years. In the early 2000s, however, several important works emerged.

Christison & Murray published an important text in this intersectional field, *Leadership in English language education: Theoretical foundations and practical skills for changing times*. (Christison & Murray, 2009). This useful text features a series of essays written by the authors and other experts that the authors invited to contribute and accomplishes exactly what its title promises. The text devotes its three sections to educational leadership theory, the skills necessary for effective leadership, and English language learning leadership skills "In Practice." (Christison & Murray, 2009). The various authors in this text speak from experience as both researchers and practitioners with backgrounds in educational leadership. Christison's essay on "The Role of Emotional Intelligence in ELT Leadership" and Julie Padernal's essay about "Servant Leadership" were exemplars in this balance of leadership theory and practice directing English language teaching and learning.

Perhaps more researchers are noticing this gap in the literature, and several recent papers have emerged in the research catalogue that seek to define effective educational leadership. Many follow a similar pattern: The authors find a school that is teaching English Language

Learning effectively, interview an educational leader (usually the principal) and report the findings (Medina & Cobarrubias 2009; Alcantar-Martinez, 2014; Hoo-Ballade, 2004; Ngo, 2017). Others examine those in leadership for LIEP and assess their background, knowledge and training in the field. (Albrecht, 2014; Watson, 2018; Arroyo, 2013). To varying degrees, each is a valuable resource for practitioners seeking proven strategies for achievement for Multilingual Learners at their own schools. The next section will summarize the findings from these recent works related to LIEP and educational leadership.

LIEP and Leadership in Practice

This section will distill the findings from recent works in educational leadership for LIEP into four categories, informed by the review of educational leadership literature in previous sections of this paper. Based on an extensive review of the research, an effective school leader for LIEP success demonstrates *transformational leadership*, *distributive servant leadership*, *culturally responsive leadership* and *knowledgeable instructional leadership*. Foundational educational leadership texts indicated these traits beginning in the 1970s (Burns, 1978) and these themes continued to emerge both in educational leadership research and leadership for LIEP for the 40 subsequent years.

Effective LIEP leaders are transformational leaders. While recent studies have not always used the terminology from Burns (1978), recent scholars in the leadership for LIEP field have pointed to a set of characteristics and qualities that fit his description of what made political leaders most effective. Such leaders are successful when they are goal-oriented, identifying a vision for the school and clearly articulating it to teachers and the community. (McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2014; Aleman, et al., 2009). They are program builders, creating a school-wide culture for advancement of ML proficiency (Heck & Hallinger, 2005). They create and use a

supportive climate and a culture of appreciation, influence their teams to achieve at a high level for their students (Aleman, et al., 2009) and they are focused on achieving the high expectations they set as outcomes for learners (Augusta & Hakuta, 1998) rather than on maintaining the status quo. Finally, these transformational leaders are focused on innovation (Christison & Murray, 2009). Burns first proposed the term transformational leadership in 1978 to describe effective political leaders, and decades later, the research demonstrates the same set of characteristics make for effective educational leaders who serve MLs and LIEP programs.

Effective LIEP leaders are also distributive servant leaders. One of the most influential authors of this century in the field of LIEP leadership, Denise Murray, discusses leaders for LIEP as distributive leaders who must develop other leaders, particularly teacher-leaders (Murray, 2005). Others indicate the need to distribute leadership as a means for sustaining leadership over time (McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2014; Christison & Murray, 2008; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; August & Hakuta, 1998; Wynne, 2001). One way to distribute leadership is through facilitating collaboration amongst schools or between LIEP teachers and the rest of the school. Through distribution of leadership, strong LIEP leaders are building school cultures that support MLs (August & Hakuta, 1998). School culture, a significant part of school leadership as will be discussed in a later section, is shaped by every member of the organization, so a distributive leadership style empowers others in the school or organization to positively affect school culture. (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2003). In *Shaping School Culture*, Deal and Peterson write, "Ideally, everyone in a school should share leadership. Leadership in successful schools is parceled out generously to staff and community members and, at times, students. (2016, p. 227).

Effective LIEP Leaders are knowledgeable instructional leaders. This trend emerges from case studies and other inquiries into effective LIEP leadership competencies, beginning

with foundational texts and reported several times over the decades. Marzano and others included it in their key competencies (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2006), but it had been a part of the canon of research in this field since the 1970s (Greenleaf, 1970; Spillane, et al., 2001). School leaders must be familiar with best practices for engagement and assessing MLs (Suttmiller & Gonzales. 2006). They must understand the linguistic intricacies of teaching English to students of different languages and be able to design and manage a balanced curriculum (August & Hakuta, 1998). They must be able to recognize effective instruction for MLs (Aleman et al., 2009), and they must insist on a challenging and meaningful curriculum (Genesee, Lindolm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2005). Effective professional development for teachers is essential and emerges over and over again in the literature for what makes some schools more effective for MLs. (McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2014; August & Hakuta, 1998; Eccheverria, 2006; Reyes, 2006; Walqui, 2000).

Effective LIEP leaders are culturally responsive. This finding emerges from several qualitative studies where individuals report that effective leadership emerges from individuals and teams that promote social justice and equity as priorities in their schools (Shields, 2004; Cambron-McCable & McCarthy, 2005) and believe in inclusivity (Reihl, 2000). August and Hakuta (1998) found that those who valued the students' home language and home culture saw positive outcomes, and Suttmiller & Gonozales, (2006) discovered that recognizing the community context was an important factor for school leaders working with MLs or any diverse population. Earlier researchers might have called this situational awareness (Blanchard & Hershey, 1996). This ability to respond to the community and adapt leadership to meet its needs requires leaders to be focused on community and family outreach, which was another leadership

trait reported from the literature seen as a positive quality in effective LIEP school leaders (Suttmiller & Gonzales, 2006; August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, et al. 1990).

Using educational leadership theory as a framework and placing that lens upon the last few decades of LIEP leadership research, it is evident that the leadership traits most associated with success for MLs include transformational leadership, distributive servant leadership, knowledgeable instructional leadership and culturally responsive leadership. These qualities line up with research and theory related to the field of school culture, which will be discussed in a later section. The formation of a strong school culture that influences school improvement involves transformational leadership. School culture is not often the result of one person, so distributing leadership and empowering others is critical in culture development (Deal & Peterson, 2016), matching the distributive leadership style that these recent works found effective. Trust is a key component in forming and maintaining a positive school culture (Schein, 1985), which logically follows leadership that is both culturally responsive and pedagogically knowledgeable. For this study, this list of the key characteristics for effective leadership for ML success led to questions about school culture and an examination of school culture leadership.

Gaps in Research for LIEP, Educational Leadership, and the Intersection Thereof

The series of inquiries described and categorized above are useful to both the researchers and the practitioner attempting to advance the growing field of educational leadership for LIEP and to learn from the successes of others. Possible critiques of these fine works, however, might be the difficulty to which one can claim "success" in this field, which makes holding certain schools or districts up as exemplars a dangerous enterprise. Most studies use success on standardized tests for English proficiency as their methodology for choosing which leaders to be the subjects of a study, and using those state mandated tests as a synonym for successful teaching

and leadership is both philosophically and empirically murky. (Genesee et al., 2006). Another criticism is that each chose a principal or LIEP coordinator as the representative of leadership for English language learning. Those individuals must certainly play a role in leadership for ML achievement, but someone in that post might be so removed from what is happening at the student level that one would question the reliability of a qualitative analysis of his or her opinion of effective leadership for LIEP programs. Lastly, there is a noticeable lack of educational leadership theory in this collection of new research, mostly by new researchers. This is less a criticism than an illustration on the direction of the field, as previously noted by Wang in his meta-analysis. Many of these studies offer practical, mostly proven, action steps for the practicing educational leader to enact at their school, if appropriate. In a field like educational leadership whose thinkers attempt to straddle the gap between theory and practice, the collection of research studies emerging from the field seems to lean more heavily toward practice, and there are very few that embed those practical strategies within educational leadership theoretical context.

Future research in this field might explore two directions. First, researchers would be wise to look for more ways to measure success for Multilingual Learners and LIEP programs, beyond advancement in English proficiency, comparisons of standardized test results and graduation rates. Such measures are dependent on so many factors, it is problematic to use them as a foundation for a study hoping to gain insights into effective leadership for LIEP. Further triangulation of that success is necessary, perhaps using climate-survey data from multiple stakeholder sources over time or moments of leadership transition in a research design that isolates the leadership as a variable more independently.

Secondly, future research is necessary in secondary school LIEP leadership. Many of the studies looked at district-level leadership, collections of mixed levels, or predominantly elementary schools. When newcomers arrive as teenagers and must navigate learning English with high-school level courses and contexts, they face many significant challenges, which necessitates specific school leadership skills and characteristics. While it is likely that the same skills, transformational leadership, distributive leadership, instructional leadership and cultural responsiveness are still valuable, further research is necessary to determine if these findings hold up when measured using other metrics and when isolated to secondary school leadership for LIEP.

School Culture Research

The findings related to best practices for educational leadership as it relates to LIEP programs has led this research to another field of study which must be examined in order to understand how MLs in some school settings are finding extraordinary success. A common current is found in each of the leadership characteristics included above at the intersection of educational leadership and Language Instruction Educational Programs. A review of literature surrounding the concept of school culture is necessary in order to understand what is happening in schools where leadership and LIEP are intersecting. The literature expressly names this hidden quality of school culture in some cases (Aleman, 2009), uses different terms in a few and dances around it in others. The descriptions of effective school leaders each line up with the theory and literature related to a leader's ability to impact school culture. For practitioners wishing to improve how their schools educate their MLs and change the grim statistics cited earlier in this paper, they must align their school's culture to that aim. School culture is inextricably linked with reform and change. As the text *Shaping School Culture* explains, "Later

studies of school change have identified culture as critical to the successful improvement of teaching and learning (Fullan, 1998, 2001a, 2011; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Russoman, Corbett & Firestone, 1998; Smylie, 2009) In study after study, when cultural patterns did not support and encourage reform, changes did not take place." (Deal & Peterson, 2016, p. 10). It seems, therefore, that we must unpack the concept of school culture and its theoretical underpinnings if we are to understand effective school leadership for MLs.

For a term used as often as it is, there is a surprising lack of consistency within research studies that purport to study school culture. The term has been in the literature for more than a century, as we will see when we trace its historical trends, but it has also walked alongside a variety of synonyms, depending on the author and often, the decade. These synonymous constructs include school climate, environment, and ethos and make an attempt at a comprehensive literature review on the topic difficult. In fact, scholars argue over the difference between school culture and school climate, and a significant number of pages and words are spent parsing the language to determine if the two are synonymous, separate or different levels of the same construct (Van Houtte, 2005; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). For the purpose of this study, we will not spend time looking for a distinction between the two or working toward a consensus on which term is the preferred construct. Instead, we will use school culture as a proxy for both terms and attempt to define it as a construct so that we can use it in our analysis of leadership for LIEP programs.

History of School Culture Research.

In this review, we will trace a high-level historical arc of the study of school culture, attempt to find a working definition of the concepts distilled from the literature and appropriate to guide this study's work, and draw from several authors to organize the many elements of

school culture in a way that will guide the qualitative inquiry of this study as well as interpretation of results, allowing me and the reader to frame the findings in the context of school culture. This is necessary for two reasons, first, because school leadership is profoundly intertwined with the concept of school culture. As Schein (1985) wrote, "Culture and Leadership are two sides of the same coin." (p. 1) and "It can be argued that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture." (p. 11). Secondly, as noted in a previous section, school leadership that supports the success of Multilingual Learners depends on leadership that involves multiple elements of school culture. Before we attempt to illustrate school culture in this study, however, we must get a clearer picture of school culture as a concept and as a study of research over the past century.

References to school culture date back a long way though the systematic study of this concept seems to be mostly clustered in the few decades around the turn of the last century. In 1932 Waller wrote about schools having distinctive cultures that differentiate one from another. A few studies reference school norms and values in the next few decades (Barnard, 1938; Mayo, 1945; Selznick, 1957). While the term culture is borrowed from and remains actively routed in anthropology and the study of societies as a whole, it jumped closer to the educational space and became enmeshed with organizational theory and the study of organizational culture in the 1950s and then was expanded in the in the 1960s and 70s, most notably with the advent of the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCQD) in 1962 developed by Haplin and Croft. They borrowed the concept from the organizational culture theorists and applied it to elementary schools, hoping that their measure could illustrate and reveal the personality of the school. (Hoy, 1991, Schoen & Teddlie, 2008***).*** This naturally led to inquiry into the measurement of climate and cultures of schools, for example the School Climate Index, employed in the UK in

the early 1970s. In 1979, a key study out of the UK named school "ethos" as a significant factor in student achievement, listing school norms, values and traditions as a part of that ethos. (Rutter, Maughan, Morrtimore, Outson & Smith, 1979).

Articulation of and inquiry into school climate and culture grew in the 1980s, along with many earnest and lasting attempts to define the concept. This movement in schools mirrored a similar increased interest in the business world around organizational culture. Several notable works from this period continue to drive our understanding of organizational and school culture. The work of Schein, including the seminal 1985 book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* resides in the reference pages of nearly every school culture paper of the following three decades. Schein appears to be the first to inextricably link organizational culture and leadership, curate and organize the emerging field of study in a systematic way, and catalogue the many elements of organizational culture. According to Schein, an organization's culture is pervasive, "it influences all aspects of how an organization deals with its primary task." (Schein, 1985, p. 4) It is deep—so deep it is often unconscious and invisible despite its massive influence. Additionally, Schein argues that the primary responsibility of all leaders is managing culture. This link between leadership, results, and school culture, famously articulated by Schein in his works in the 1980s through today, informs many of the decisions of this study including elements of methodology, interview protocol development and data interpretation.

Wayne Hoy became a leading voice in the field of organizational climate and school culture in the 1990s. His research, papers and books brought together theory and inquiry on these topics as well as introduced a method for organizing the various elements of school culture by level of abstractness, an organizational method I've adopted to help inform this study.

Terrance Deal emerged in this same era as a renowned voice in school culture research, beginning like many others in the field of organizational research. His collaboration with Kent Peterson, an educational leadership scholar, resulted in a seminal work, a book titled *Shaping School Culture,* that has tremendous impact on this work. Starting in the late 1990s, the authors visited dozens of schools around the country, interviewed stakeholders and examined artifacts and observed daily life through their organizational culture and school leadership research lens. Their text examines the varying elements, artifacts, stories and rituals of school culture using the schools they visited as examples to illustrate them. They then applied their educational leadership research background to demonstrate the role school leaders play in shaping, building and reinforcing a school's culture. Their approach, using schools of varying types and applying what they know about school culture to those settings to learn more and distill themes informs this study as much as their contribution to the school culture literature.

Defining School Culture

For a concept that has been written about for almost a hundred years, it is remarkably difficult to find an agreed-upon definition of school culture as a concept. Deal and Peterson state in their seminal book *Shaping School Culture ,*"Of the many different conceptions of culture, none is universally accepted as the one best definition." (2009, p. 8). School leaders and education leadership researchers talk about school culture regularly, yet even scholars who study it refer to it as "curious," and "confusing" (Hoy, 1991; Tartar & Kottkamp,1991). And "elusive" (Schein, 1985). 25 years ago, one scholar writes, "Definitions of culture have historically been fraught with conceptual complexity and confusion." (Loup, 1994, p. 63) and the decades of attempts to clarify it have added to some of that complexity and confusion. Many have worked to define the concept, often incorporating a list of its elements, and there are many notable

commonalities and contrasts within these definitions. We will examine a few definitions from noted scholars as a starting point and then unpack the elements of school culture to build a conceptual framework to guide our inquiry and interpretations in this study.

As we apply the tenets of school culture to LIEP program in this study, it is necessary to establish a conceptual framework for school culture for this paper. Using the literature for this is challenging because there are as many definitions for the concept as there are papers on the topic. Schein, who wrote multiple books on the subject of organizational culture, admits it is nearly impossible to define (Schein, 1985), though so important that it must be examined and is critical to focus on. Despite these challenges, this section will examine several definitions from across the body of research in order to distill a framework to apply to this study.

The earliest definition for school culture comes from Waller (1932) when he writes,

> "Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are, in the school, complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of folkways, mores, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based upon them. There are games, which are sublimated wars, teams, and an elaborate set of ceremonies concerning them. There are traditions, and traditionalists waging their world-old battle against innovators…"

Almost ninety years ago, Waller is illustrating a common practice in attempts to define school culture, the need to list out varying elements that make up the construct. In this case, "folkways" and "mores" are unique to Waller and spot on, but "rituals" and "traditions" will be included in most similar lists. Over the next decade, Barnard (1938) and Mayo (1945) add "norms," "values", and "emergent interactions" to the list of elements included in school culture conceptual frameworks.

The Organizational Culture movement in the 1980s brought several attempts to define the concept, which can be related to school culture in this study. In this era, scholars began to see culture as what makes an organization unique from others, including the organization or school's ideology, "a system of beliefs about the organization shared by its members that distinguishes it from other organizations." (Mintzberg, 1983). Similarly, Wilkins and Patterson include "beliefs," but instead imply that an organizational culture involves beliefs about attaining individual's goals, stating, "an organizational culture consists largely of what people believe about what works and what does not," (Wilkins & Patterson, 1985).

Schein's definition of organizational culture demonstrates his belief that defining the term brings with it conceptual complexity and confusion. In his paragraph-long definition. Schein writes,

> "The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." (Schein, 2000, p.17).

One can see the influence of earlier organizational culture work on his description of the construct. He describes that a group discovers its culture in what works to solve its problems and the interactions between members of the group as a means for reinforcing culture. Schein adds to the literature by arguing that culture includes many of the elements often listed, such as traditions, ceremonies, norms and rituals, but goes on to argue that culture involves deeper, unconscious elements that are ingrained and taken for granted by group members (Hoy, 1991). This addition to the many definitions is of interest to this study as I plan to interview members of

a school as a method for deconstructing their school culture and must be considered in crafting interview protocols and questions.

This study is informed by all of these definitions, which guided selection, interviews, document analysis and data interpretation, but the long, cumbersome definitions by Schein and others are not as useful as a concise, clear conceptual construct that it easy to keep at the forefront of the mind. (Kose, 2011). This is similar to the classic school leadership practice of creating a school's mission statement or vision. School websites and front office counters around the country are too often adorned with paragraph-long, all inclusive, run-on sentences that serve as the school's flowery mission statement. These near-essays were built by committee and do not fulfill their purpose as the north star they are supposed to be for their organization. Instead, leadership scholars advise short, concise, clear visions for organizations and schools that all stakeholders can recall quickly. For this study, a similar approach seems necessary with regard to a definition for school culture. With that in mind, I appreciate the simplicity of Bower's 1966 definition of organizational culture as "the way we do things around here." (Bower, 1966). Obviously this would not be sufficient as the totality of our concept of school culture, but its elegant simplicity and intentionally ephemeral nature matches many aspects of school culture. The use of "way" is reminiscent of translations of the Tao, a mystical hard-to-define force that Taoists believe runs through all things. Without such a belief in western culture, the English language uses "way" in most definitions and translations. Bower's inclusion of "we" is illustrative of the communal and collaborative nature of school culture referenced in longer forms of the definition. "things," a word choice that normally is considered lazy and overly broad in most writing contexts is appropriate here to encompass the infinite number of elements, actions, beliefs, symbols and language that make up a school's culture. Mintzberg

and Wilkins and Patterson would approve of "around here" as they asserted that school culture is defined by its unique nature when compared with other schools or organizations. I particularly resonate with the overall informality of this definition that matches the informal way with which school culture is formed, reinforced and changed. Direct school leadership actions have some influence on school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2016), but it is but one-way school culture is developed. Often, school culture is not intentionally formed, developed, or maintained; instead, it is just "the way we do things around here."

The Elements of School Culture

While Bower's "The way we do things around here" definition serves as an intentionally broad starting point for our understanding of school culture, a more detailed accounting for the many elements of the concept is required for the formation of interview protocols and questions and for interpreting the qualitative results of this study. The literature around school culture tends to focus on components that act as indicators, factors and symptoms of a school's culture. The hundreds of studies on the topic includes dozens of elements of school culture; the most common listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

List of Common Elements of School Culture

Common Elements of School Culture		
Architecture	Ideology	Routines
Artifacts	Language	Rules
Assumptions	Mental models	Stories
Behaviors	Mores	Symbols
Beliefs	Norms	Traditions
Ceremonies	Philosophy	Values
Expectations	Rituals	

(Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein, 1985; Mintzberg, 1983; Waller, 1932; Hoy, 1991; Maslowski, 1996; Van Houtte, 2005).

Again, the century of work on the subject informs this research with a surplus of language to guide the formation of our construct of school culture. It is necessary, however, to better organize these elements as a means for conceptualizing the construct of school culture for application in this work. Like other literature reviews (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008), this paper borrows from Hoy (1991) and Schein (1985) to organize the overwhelming list of factors that could be included. Hoy's work on school climate, which for our purposes could be written with the word culture substituted throughout, and Schein's on organizational culture organize the varying elements of the concept by what I will call *levels of abstractness*. This study will do the same to name and organize the observable phenomena that combine to form, reinforce and illustrate school culture.

There are elements of school culture that are directly observable to visitors and school community members. These aspects of "how we do things around here" are not always associated with school culture by those experiencing them, but they are powerful indicators and symptoms of the ethos of an organization. This includes behaviors, interactions and routines, the daily actions of participants, all of which may be the result of policy, common law, or habit. This might be whether or not teachers greet students at the classroom door, how often colleagues say hello when they pass each other in the hallway, and if teachers teach with the blinds open or closed. Language is an observable indicator and element of school culture, such as how students are talked about during lunch and words used to describe the school, students, and colleagues. Traditions and ceremonies serve the purpose of reinforcing what is important to a school's culture. An advanced placement "cool to be smart" ceremony in North Carolina reinforces a school culture that values rigor (Deal & Peterson 2009), a Thanksgiving ceremony where the principal cooks and feeds the community communicates a culture of togetherness and servant

leadership (Reitzug & Reeves, 1992) an exciting kick-off celebrations to start the year communicates that a school culture should be fun. (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Objects in plain sight are also indicators and drivers of school culture, like the architecture of the building itself, artifacts on display, and symbols associated with the school. (Deal &Peterson, 2009). The school culture literature cites several examples of symbols that represent and reinforce school culture from a ceremonial totem pole on display at a school serving Native Americans in Oklahoma to a mascot and name change in the rural South (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Schools' symbols can be attached, for good or bad, to deeply routed elements of school culture. These tangible elements of an organizations DNA represent an interesting aspect of the construct in their hidden in plain sight nature. These elements are all around us and obvious, but so obvious that school and organization members do not realize their impact on and reflection of the culture of the school.

Following Hoy's and Schein's organizational model using levels of abstractness, the next group of elements of school culture are harder to directly observe, but just as powerful in driving and revealing a school or organizations culture. Schein stated that school culture exists below the surface, calling it powerful but invisible (Schein, 1985). The unwritten rules, norms, and expectations of the building are key parts of a school's ethos and shaping and even identifying such ethereal concepts is difficult. These expectations that shape human behavior in an organization can also be shaped by leadership or by cultural drivers in other positions. In a school they are often passed from veteran teachers to new teachers and learned by observing "the way things are done around here." These norms might include which policies are followed and which are not, whether questions are asked at meetings, or if teachers typically stay late or arrive early. Scholars refer to these elements differently with terms like "rules of the game" or "the ropes," or as has been mentioned, "the way we do things around here." (Schein, 1985, Bower,

1966). Regardless of the term, scholars also acknowledge that while powerful, these visible signs of a school's ethos are often manifestations of deeper, underlying elements of school culture.

Venturing further in to the abstract but important elements of school culture, one starts to see that the underlying core values, beliefs, mental models and ideologies of an organization's people are significant determinants of its culture, as they shape the actions and interactions at all times. Schein called organizational culture itself an abstraction, but the forces that stem from that abstraction have tangible consequences (Ott, 1989, Smylie, 2009; Schein, 1985). Schwarts and Davis argued that a school's culture is shaped by these abstract ideals that then manifest themselves in the daily actions that define the organization, defining school culture as "a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organizations members that produce norms that powerfully shape the behaviors of individuals or groups." (Schwarts & Davis, 1981). Core beliefs about whether all students can learn, if it's right to share ideas with your colleagues, and the fundamental purpose of school are powerful drivers of the interactions, language, rituals, actions and symbols of daily life in an organization or school.

As ethereal as the concepts of values, beliefs, mental models and philosophy appear to be, it is interesting to note that they also emerge from the literature as elements of school culture that are shaped by the more visible and tangible elements. In other words, while beliefs and values drive behaviors, scholars point out that behaviors, ceremonies, rituals and actions can also drive beliefs. (Deal & Peterson, 2016). This two-way nature of the varying levels of school culture is important to understand in any study that hopes to understand a school's culture and extrapolate how it was formed and maintained.

Much has been written on the elements of school culture and nearly every text on the subject lists out some combination of these aspects of the construct, often with examples of how they appear in schools. These elements of culture are important to this study as we worked to piece together the "tapestry of the school culture," (Deal & Peterson, 2016) as it relates to Multilingual Learners for the schools we study from interviews and document analyses. The ability to recognize these elements, point them out to the participants, and dive deeper once they emerge in the interview setting was critical to the qualitative approach of this study. Without such an understanding of the elements of school culture, it would have been difficult to find the signal of school culture in the noise of all that this happening and has happened in the course of a secondary school over the years. Hoy's organization of those elements, which this study borrows, informed the nature of the data gathering through qualitative interviews and the data analysis through coding and grouping into themes.

The present study not only examines the elements of school culture that exist in exemplar schools, but also what transpired, from the views of school leaders and teachers, in those schools that brought this culture into being or maintained it over time. This aspect of the study requires some examination of what the literature says about the formation and maintenance of school culture. This next step in this literature path reunites us to the work of educational leadership researchers that was mentioned before. Schein, referencing the evolution of educational leadership as a field that has evolved over time from a management discipline to one of transformational and instructional leadership, wrote about a leader's role as it relates to school culture, "Leadership creates and changes culture while management and administration act within a culture" (Schien, 1985). Before we set about interviewing those who were in a position to see a school culture of support for MLs formed and maintained, it is worth exploring what the

literature says about a school leader's role in shaping school culture. This work relies on Deal and Peterson's *Shaping School Culture* as a starting point for this line of inquiry. These school culture and leadership scholars recommend the following research-based effective practices for this topic. Leaders seeking to affect culture must first build trust within their staff and community. Without trust, the following steps and strategies will not be effective (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). From trust, school leaders can set about defining and sharing their school's brand, a concept that is growing in popularity over the last two decades. According to Fog, Butz, and Yakaboylu (2005), "A brand is the perceived added value that a company or product represents, making us loyal in our preferences both to the company and its products. A strong brand is a combination of facts and emotions" (p. 20) (From Deal & Peterson, 2016). School leaders can shape that brand, the outward manifestation of its culture by setting and communicating a strong vision, using history, stories and symbols to intentionally shape the culture and ceremonies and events to lift up elements that he or she wishes to become cornerstones of the school's culture. School leaders should also recognize, study and use informal networks to communicate key elements of the culture and to redirect away from negative aspects of school culture through the use of renewal strategies, which are often ceremonies, symbols or new traditions. (Deal & Peterson, 2016). In summary, school leaders seeking to build, shift, affect, or firm up a school culture must be knowledgeable about the elements of school culture and intentional about which elements to emphasize, which to shift, which to phase out and which are toxic and must go. They should continuously build trust and take advantage of leaders around them to help in this effort through a distributed and transformational leadership style. Understanding the elements of school culture and purposefully engaging with them is critical to school leadership and leadership of various aspects of a school,

such as the LIEP program examined in this study. Ultimately, as Deal and Peterson write, "People create culture, thereafter, it shapes them." (2016, p. 223).

School Culture Research Today

Much of the literature referenced in this chapter is several decades old, but it is foundational to current trends in the study of school culture, which has seen significant splintering and cross-over into other fields. Over the last decade, most of the school culture literature incorporates specific elements of school culture or asks how school culture can influence a specific discipline of study. This can be seen in titles like, "Understanding School Culture and its Relation to Farm to School Programming," (Cirillo & Morra, 2018), "Influence of School Culture and Classroom Environment in Improving Soft Skills Amongst Secondary Schoolers," (Ahmad, Et al., 2019), and "Mock Elections as a Way to Cultivate Democratic Development and a Democratic School Culture." (deGroot & Eidhof, 2019). An ERIC data base search of peer reviewed publications that include "School Culture" in the title reveal a 10 to 1 ratio of specialized, intersectional uses of the term when compared to studies seeking to directly define, explain, or explore theoretical construct of school culture. It may be that the proliferation of such works in between 1985 and 2010 and the subsequent remaining ambiguity of the title have led to an environment where applying the concept of school culture, using the works of Schein, Hoy, Deal & Peterson and other referenced in this paper is a more fruitful path for the field of study.

This project falls in line with this current trend, using the construct of school culture as a tool for examining leadership for Multilingual Learners' success. Among this large group of studies that examines school culture theoretical framework and applies it to a specialty area, I did

not discover any study that did so for LIEP program leadership. This gap in the school culture body of research provides further justification for this study.

Conclusion and Research Questions

This literature review has explored several topics in order to inform the research and the reader as we embark on answering our research questions. In fact, the research questions themselves have emerged from, and are informed, by the literature. Multilingual Learners face many challenges and their success, and that of the LIEP programs that aim to serve them, depends in part on effective school leadership. The literature around school leadership and the research on the intersection of school leadership and MLs points to the need for transformative, distributive, knowledgeable and culturally responsive school leaders. These leadership practices have an impact on school culture, and the schools with the most effective programs to support MLs involve much more than leaders and LIEP teachers; they have built a school culture that centers ML success. School culture, as the literature suggests, is both hard to define and challenging to influence. There is no exact definition of the construct just as there is not magic silver bullet for affecting positive change to school culture. Yet, there are schools in which MLs are achieving at a high level. This study intends to answer the following research questions as a way of extending the body of research in these three fields, LIEP, Educational Leadership, and School Culture:

- Are there secondary schools who have formed a school culture for English Learner achievement?
- In such schools, how do school leaders believe such a culture emerged and was maintained?
- How does school culture research inform how school leaders interpret the formation of a culture for LIEP success?

The study used qualitative methodology to answer them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I will explain the multiple case study qualitative research design I used, which effectively addresses the research questions that emerged from review of the literature in the previous chapter. Next, I'll explain my positionality as a researcher and how that has informed some of the decisions in this study as well as how that could affect the validity of this work. This chapter will then outline the research methods and project design, which is informed by Merriam (1998), Maxwell (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016). I will then explore the matter of participant selection, which was particularly important to this study as a key distinguishing element from other studies and as a possible source of validity threats. We will explore in greater detail the primary means of generating qualitative data in this project, the long-form semi-structured interview, to carefully outline the process I used. Other threats to validity will be explored before, lastly, I propose a justification and defense for the research methodology decisions of this study, making the case that qualitative interviews was the best way to achieve the stated goals of the project and effectively answer our research questions.

Research Questions

This study will used qualitative research methodology, specifically semi-structured interviews, in order to answer the following research questions:

- Are there secondary schools in Virginia where school leaders believe they have a school culture that centers ML support and success?
- What characterizes the culture of these schools?
- How do school leaders involved with each believe such a culture was developed?

Paradigm and Positionality

In order to frame the research methods decisions of this study, it is important to frame the positionality of the author. I am a researcher and practitioner, serving as the principal of a large high school that serves a diverse inner-ring suburb of a medium-sized southern city with many

students for whom English is not their first language. This position as a school leader and career-long secondary school educator frames my work considerably and informs my research interests. As a school leader, research in educational leadership and school culture informs my daily practice and resonates with personal interests in shaping the culture of the institution I am charged with leading. That school is wonderfully diverse—37 different countries of origin are represented in our student population with 51 different languages spoken in our students' homes—with a sizable and growing population of Multilingual Learners; My students drive my interest in best practices in leadership that supports MLs and LIEP programs. My relative inexperience working with MLs and leading LIEP programs prior to being appointed to my current professional position also informs my work; I realized a significant need for more practical research that will be helpful to others in a similar situation. This positionality of a school leader has led to passion for these research interests and also shapes the paradigm through which I view knowledge, truth, and research.

A defining quality of educational leadership as a discipline is a position that both the researcher and the practitioner have value. In the introduction of their textbook for educational leadership researchers, Coleman and Briggs (2002) explain, "One of the main themes of this book is that research in educational management and leadership is that research is likely embedded in practice." (p. xiii) This tenet of educational leadership is interwoven into each educational leadership journal, textbook and paper and is one reason that educational leadership is at least partially aligned with the pragmatism paradigm. Some educational leadership researchers operate with a positivist lens and others take an interpretivist paradigm with them to their research (Coleman & Briggs, 2002). For me, the more appropriate approach is to operate in the space between those camps. If our goal as educational leaders is to create, manage and lead

systems to better serve students, then the only truth and knowledge that matter to us should be that which is associated with action, purpose, and results. Literature from a pragmatism paradigm, including the seminal work of John Dewey, aligns with an interactional approach to knowledge. (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). If a peer tutoring program is producing positive student outcomes for MLs, then it is not productive to debate if that outcome is objectively true, or if we all interpret those results so differently that nothing is true. Instead, we should collect as much evidence as possible to make the best warranted assertion possible (Dewey, 1941) so that we might learn from that program to help more kids and be more effective leaders. This pragmatist paradigm informs my work and approach and is a common perspective for educational leadership researchers. (Hoy, 1996).

This positionality as a pragmatist researcher and practitioner also must be acknowledged as a source for possible bias. As was discussed in Chapter 2, school leaders have an influence on school culture and educational outcomes for students, but they are far from the only factor. A school leader may be more inclined to overstate the role of school leadership in driving culture and impacting students. It may incline a researcher to notice actions by school leaders more than other forces that drive culture. I will discuss these more as they relate to threats to validity later in this chapter, but it is important to recognize that my position and lived experiences both led me to this research study and could affect my ability to properly interpret the qualitative data and draw out appropriate conclusions.

It is also important to note my positionality as a white male, native English-speaker studying multilingual students, many of which are from immigrant families and are students of color. This likely impacted my approach to the field of study and influenced interviews and interpretations of findings.

Data Collection Methods

The goal of this study is to examine the beliefs of school leaders who were a part of the establishment of school cultures that centers ML success in secondary schools. There are many research design options from which researchers can choose to gather data to address a studies problem statement and answer its research questions. In selecting the proper research design, I considered the purpose of the inquiry, the goals of the study and the context of potential participants. Practical considerations and the philosophical perspective of the researcher are also factors in this decision. As Maxwell writes, "[Research Methods] selection depends not only on your research questions but also on the actual research situation and what will work most effectively in that situation to give you the data that you will need." (2013, p. 100).

Using guidance from Maxwell (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I chose a qualitative design. Through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (interview questions are included as Appendix A) to draw out narrative responses and then probing questions to extract fine details, I attempted to distill what took place in these schools as school leaders formed, strengthened, and maintained a culture that supports the MLs in their secondary schools. Qualitative research design uses an inductive research strategy (Merriam, 1998), which matches the purpose of this study. While I used knowledge of LIEP, educational leadership and school culture theory to inform data collection and interpretation, I approached the participants and data with no hypothesis, instead I built towards conclusions based on the data I discovered. Three schools of differing demographic and geographic characteristics (including urban/suburban, size, and diversity in ML population) were examined to provide a breadth of data to analyze from which to distill patterns and themes. The goal of the data collection phase

was rich descriptions of lived experiences and varied document analyses to triangulate and confirm the knowledge gained therein.

Qualitative Interviews and Data Analysis

After carefully selecting participants, I conducted four case studies of separate secondary schools using lengthy semi-structured interviews. These interviews took place during the Summer and Fall of 2021 via virtual video conferencing because of health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricting travel. Developing interview protocols were critically important to gathering appropriate data that addresses the research questions. These interviews were semi-structured, which allowed me to change course when it was necessary in order to get the most rich and appropriate data. In qualitative design, the researcher is a part of the data gathering process, so sticking to a formulaic and prescribed set of interview questions may not yield the best data (Maxwell, 2013, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Instead, I used an interview protocol with questions grouped by themes and possible follow-up questions. This allowed proper preparation for these vital questions. As Maxwell writes,

> "The development of good interview questions (and observational strategies) requires creativity and insight, rather than a mechanical conversation of the research questions into an interview guide or observation schedule, and depends fundamentally on your understanding of the context of the research (including you participants' definitions of this) and how the interview questions and observational strategies will actually work in practice." (Maxwell, 2013, p. 101).

This is one reason that the review of the literature was so important to this study. LIEP best practices history, educational leadership theory, and school culture theory informed the development of the interview questions and of the decisions made during the interviews. In a

qualitative study, the researcher is the data collection instrument, so it was important in this inquiry that I was fully informed and used the literature to properly inform data collection decisions.

The participants in this study are scattered around the commonwealth and lead very busy lives running schools during a pandemic, so it was likely that I would only get one chance to interview them. This raised the stakes of the development of interview protocols and necessitated the use of pilot testing, and strategy supported by qualitative scholars to ensure worthy interview protocols, wording of questions, and skill required to gain appropriately rich and on-topic responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The core interview protocols are included as Appendix A of this paper. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording program on my computer, transcribed by the author, and then coded using Atlas.ti and categorized to search for connections and commonalities in the responses. The themes that emerged were analyzed using the conceptual framework from school culture and educational leadership research to inform the findings, conclusions and recommendations sections of this paper. Those themes were used to report on connections learned from this inquiry based on participant responses and school culture, school leadership, and LIEP research theory. Based on that research, the author approached these conversations with a lens informed by qualities of effective school leaders and best practices for LEIP and elements of strong school culture (Schein 1985, Deal & Peterson, 2016). Those lenses were a key part to the study as the interviewer attempted to draw out the lived experiences of participants who may have been witness to elements of strong school culture, effective school leadership or best practices for LIEP, but who may not have the language necessary to identify those elements if they were present. This literature informed the planned questions (Appendix A) but also the follow-up questions and probing attempts to draw

out more details depending on the direction of the interview based on the lived experiences of the participants.

Selection

This study used non-probabilistic, purposeful, criteria-based, two-tier, network sampling. Probabilistic sampling, a common form of which is random sampling and is used in many quantitative studies, is not appropriate given the goals, scope, and format of this inquiry. “Since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not justifiable in qualitative research.” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Instead, this study searched for the schools that stand out as cases with unique circumstance of bucking the trend in ML achievement and school culture, a form of non-probabilistic, purposeful, criteria-based selection.

There were two levels to the sampling procedure for this study, choosing the correct schools to study and choosing the appropriate individuals within those schools to interview. The driving motivation in choosing both is to select the participants who will yield the most information-rich responses to generate data to inform answers to the research questions. Both levels, or tiers, in the sampling process used similar techniques, informed by the nature of the study. Schools and school leaders for study were selected by multiple measures of school effectiveness, including chain selection based on recommendation from experts in the field. First, I conducted pre-interviews with multiple members of the LIEP community looking for independent recommendations for schools who’ve built a culture of support for MLs. These pre-interviews were documented to demonstrate the rationale for selection to the reader. This was possible by using a network of LIEP specialists and Title III coordinators to which I have tangential access.

Using these recommendations, I selected schools that serve as the best cases to inform practitioners and researchers who will benefit from knowledge of the lived experiences within these schools. I used multiple criteria to triangulate information and better inform the selection. Scholars refer to this process as criteria-based sampling. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first criteria made use of network sampling, also known as chain sampling or snowball sampling. In network sampling, participants who meet certain criteria are found and then in early pre-interviews, they recommended other participants to be interviewed. Once a pool of possible participants is generated from recommendations from this network, I used multiple measures of school-based Multilingual Learner achievement to select possible participant schools, involving quantitative measures for ML success including publicly-available school graduation rate for MLs, achievement gap data as measured by standardized test scores, and indicators of progress for English proficiency, the WIDA ACCESS test. This quantitative data served as a cross-reference—as a means of triangulation--for the recommendations from the LIEP specialist network. This selection process and its multiple measures for selection is intentional and a deviation from similar works in the literature that use only quantitative means for identifying exemplar schools for study. I view this as a limitation of those studies as the use of only standardized test scores, graduation rates or ACCESS test performance may identify schools whose MLs are performing at a high level, but that performance may be a result of many other factors besides school leadership or the existence of a school culture for LIEP success. The socioeconomic levels, countries of origin, overall school performance, numbers of MLs and resources available are shown to be factors that influence student performance, so limiting the study to only those highest achieving schools by quantitative measures fraught with compounding variables would be a mistake. Instead, I intentionally used chain selection to

narrow the field of possible schools and individuals to serve as participants with recommendations from experts deeply familiar with the cultures of schools they serve as the primary method for participant selection, using standardized test score and graduation data as a means to solidify the recommendations from pre-interview conversations. I included demographic and geographic data as additional criteria for participant and school selection in order to provide a variety of settings for schools in this study so that the results may be more generalizable and to minimize threats to validity. The criteria for school selection can be seen in Figure 1.

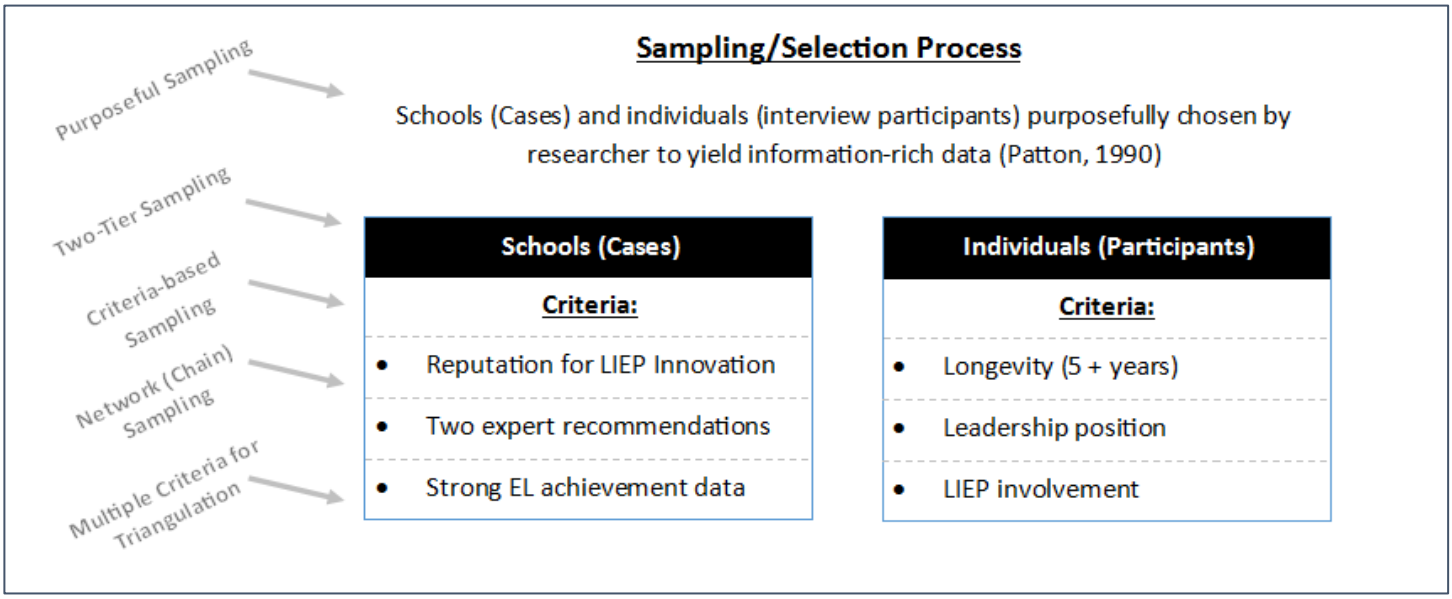
A similar strategy was used to select individual participants for qualitative interviews. Initial pre-interviews asked for recommendations of individuals who were uniquely positioned to witness the development and maintenance of a culture for ML success. I preferred and prioritized individuals who had been a part of the school or district community for at least five years to ensure that they have a grasp of the school culture (borrowed from Bierema's 1996 study on organizational culture) and must hold a position that allows them to view multiple levels of the organization, which includes teacher-leaders, school leaders and division-level leadership. During the network selection, I asked about individuals with leadership positions, longevity within the organization and who have been in a position to witness how the school engages MLs and even been privy to how elements of school culture were developed.

This is a common form of sampling for studies of this nature; nonprobability sampling is the most widely used in qualitative inquiries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and network sampling may be the most widely used form of purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Even still, the selection process in any qualitative study presents multiple significant threats to rigor and validity and is a significant limitation of the study. I participated in frequent

memoing in order to document those decisions for the reader and share the rationale for each decision in the final report to ensure transparency.

Figure 1

Sampling/Selection Process with Criteria and Methods



Profile of Participants

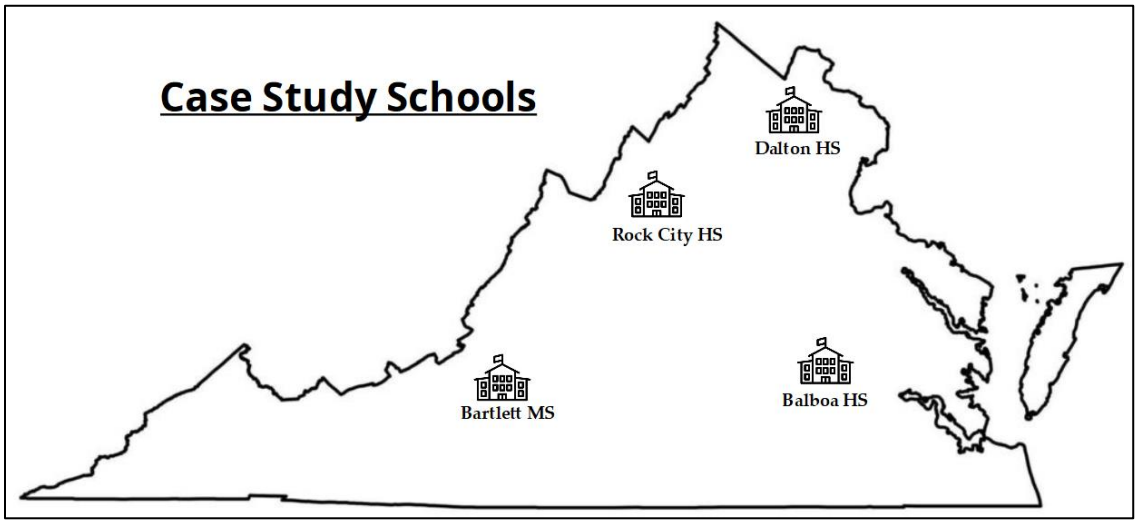
Twenty-one school and division leaders and staff across four schools in different regions of the commonwealth were interviewed for this study, selected via the methods described above. While their formal title and position were not necessarily a determinant of their participation, their proximity and knowledge of the culture of the selected schools was important. School officials were chosen because of their intimate knowledge of the workings of the case-study schools and therefore, the greater potential that they were aware of, part of, or witness to elements of school culture. That is not to suggest that other possible participant pools would not be aware of school culture elements, just that their scope is likely more limited than school officials who are in a position to witness actions and be aware of beliefs and values of all stakeholders. The participants are: five current or former school division LIEP specialists, six

current or former school principals, one assistant principal, three school-level LIEP department leaders, one school-based director of student services, and two LEIP teachers, two core-content teachers and one librarian.

The four participant schools differ from each other in many ways. Geographically, the four case study schools occupy different regions of the state (as noted in Figure 2, a map indicating the location of the four schools).

Figure 2

Map of Virginia Indicating Case Study Schools



This multiple case study involved two schools from localities designated as urban districts, and two designated as suburban. Three of the four are in or very near major metropolitan centers with the fourth in a more sparsely populated portion of the commonwealth. Hailing from four separate divisions, their school divisions are dramatically different in size, including one of the most populated counties in Virginia and another division with roughly 1/30th of that population. The four schools are each secondary schools, in keeping with the scope of the study, and represent three high schools and one middle school. The schools themselves vary in size, with the middle school serving roughly 650 students and each high school serving roughly three times

as many students. Despite these differences, the schools chosen for this study have each earned a reputation among their peers and experts in the field for their all-in support for the 20-40% of their students for whom English is a second language.

Introduction to Dalton High School

Dalton High School, the largest school in our study, serves more than 2,000 ninth through twelfth grade students in a highly populated division in Northern Virginia, the most populated region in the commonwealth. Dalton High School opened in the 1950s serving the white residents of a relatively rural community but now proudly serves one of the most racially and ethnically diverse student bodies in all of Northern Virginia. While the shift to a diverse population has been constant as the area around Dalton High School has developed over the last six decades, according to the DHS administration team, roughly ten years ago, school boundary changes in Dalton's division led to a significant change in the demographics of its student body. Currently, about 45% of Dalton's students are receiving services as MLs with 50% of the population identifying as Hispanic. Roughly 20% of Dalton students are Asian and just above 15% are Black. White students comprise 13% of the school's population. About half of Dalton's student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch (VA Department of Education, 2021). Dalton supports a rigorous academic program offering International Baccalaureate classes, Advanced Placement courses. Dalton was home to several now-famous former students, including Grammy winners, famous actors and actresses, politicians, and professional athletes.

DHS is an accredited high school and has been praised by world-famous leaders as an example of a wonderfully diverse American high school. Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, which disrupted Virginia's system of accountability, DHS's student body, as a whole, was achieving success on the Virginia Standards of Learning, the commonwealth's

accountability system measured by student performance on an End of Course test in many high school classes. Dalton students as a whole tend to perform at or above the state average on these high-stakes tests. While an achievement gap does exist at DHS, its MLs performed well above the state benchmark in English/Language Arts achievement as well as math. MLs are graduating from Dalton at a 79% on-time graduation rate, which has increased each of the last three years while the state-wide average has trended the opposite direction to 71%. According to publicly available data, Dalton High School serves a very large population of MLs and is managing to do so better than much of the state, improving in student achievement over the last decade, meeting the challenge presented by a significant demographic shift.

Introduction to Bartlett Middle School

From the largest school in our study to the smallest, Bartlett Middle (BMS) houses 630 sixth through eighth grade students in an urban division in Southwest Virginia. It is also home to the smallest percentage of MLs (around 20%) of the four schools in this study, which makes it an interesting case; other schools will report that the near-majority of international families required attention and resources, but you won't find that at Bartlett, which requires a different type of leadership and prioritization. Bartlett is located within an established neighborhood, and staff and community members report a close-knit family-like feel to the school. Its diverse student body is made up primarily of Black (about 40%) and White (about 40%) students with around 15% Hispanic students. More than half of the students at BMS are listed as economically disadvantaged.

According to multiple individuals interviewed for this study, Bartlett and its division recently shifted how they would educate MLs at the middle school level, taking a zoned approach to its two schools. Bartlett would be home to all upper level and long term MLs, taking

every level 3 or 4 ML in the division regardless of which school boundary each resided in. The other middle school in the district took level-one and level-two students. This unique approach, which is only a few years old, caught my attention as a researcher and helps explain some of the significant interventions that BMS has put into place.

Students at BMS, particularly MLs, have performed strongly on state assessments. Bartlett was fully accredited based on student achievement when Virginia last reported accreditation in 2019, and its Multilingual Learners exceeded the state benchmarks in math and English by significant margins; MLs even performed better than native speaking peers on state assessments in math and English.

Introduction to Balboa High School

Balboa High School (BHS) serves 1,700 ninth through twelfth grade students in a large suburban school district in Central Virginia. Balboa has a rich history, established in 1963 and with a long list of notable alumni that include professional athletes, members of Congress, a Virginia governor, CEOs, musicians, and artists. Extremely proud of its diversity—the first thing the principal mentions in his message to the community on the school website—Balboa serves the most diverse student body in its division, region and maybe the state with 65 different countries of origins represented who speak more than 35 different languages. Balboa is also home to an International Baccalaureate program, a program for dual enrollment with a nearby community college, and a center for language immersion, primarily occupied by native English speakers.

Important for this study, Balboa once housed the division's zoned ML program before this program was dissolved to return MLs to their neighborhood schools, but BHS is still the physical home of the district's "welcome center" where ML newcomers are first processed and

undergo testing and orientation before enrolling in their home school. Just under 20% of Balboa's students receive services as MLs. A quarter of its students report as Hispanic, another fourth are Black and about 15% are of an Asian ethnicity. Less than a third are White. The majority of Balboa students are classified as economically-disadvantaged. According to the two principals interviewed for this study, totaling close to 50 years of service at Balboa, the ethnic and socio-economic demographics of their school have changed significantly over the last two decades when two other high schools were established in affluent areas of the Balboa school boundary zone. While the presence of MLs and immigrant students has been a constant since the early 1970s beginning with refugees from Vietnam, the shifting demographic around them has been significant.

Balboa's students achieve at a high level compared to state averages and benchmarks on most high stakes standardized tests, with its MLs exceeding benchmarks on Science and Math, exhibiting a 96% pass rate on the latter.

Introduction to Rock City High School

Rock City High School is a comprehensive high school that has been in continuous existence for more than 130 years. RCHS is the only high school in its division, serving approximately 1800 students in an urban district of the same name surrounded by rural areas in the western part of the commonwealth. For much of its history, Rock City and its schools were majority White and native-speaking, but, according to several of our participants, that changed drastically around the turn of the most recent century, with a significant migration of families from Latin America settling in the region, particularly in the urban center that RCHS serves. Today, half of Rock City students are classified as Hispanic and roughly a third currently receive services as Multilingual Learners. Almost 70% of the students at Rock City are classified as

economically disadvantaged. Rock City's school division has among the highest percentage of MLs in the commonwealth, with more than 40% of division students receiving services as MLs. It ranks in the top three in Virginia in ML population density (Sugarman & Geary, 2018).

Students at RCHS score above state benchmarks on accountability measures for English and math, with MLs surpassing both the state average and state benchmarks. MLs even outpace their native speaking peers on math state standardized tests. Students at RCHS consistently complete high school just ahead of the state benchmark, with an on-time graduation rate of 89.5; Rock City has exceeded that benchmark every year that we have data for. With a higher percentage of ML population than any other school division in this case study, Rock City students achieve at a similar level as each of the other schools I've explored. RCHS seems to over achieve compared to what one might expect from a first look at demographics and national trends regarding achievement gaps.

Justification of Methodology

In order to understand the experiences of those who exist in a setting where culture of ML achievement has emerged, I selected qualitative research design. Patton writes, "[Qualitative research] is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. The understanding is an end in itself…attempting…to understand the nature of that setting…and the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting…The analysis strives for dept of understanding" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6 quoting Patton, 1990, p. 1).

This study used semi-structured interviews in order to get a full sense of the experiences and beliefs of school leaders on how a culture of LIEP support emerged in their educational setting. School leaders at the building-level in case schools were and are in a unique position

and the interview questions were designed to allow the reader to understand the details of what occurred in that setting as this culture organically emerged. Those lived experiences, combined with the theoretical framework provided by a review of the literature surrounding LIEP, educational leadership and school culture, allowed me to apply elements of those concepts to the narratives, stories and memories of those who were witness to what happened in the school setting. A qualitative interview is the most effective method to gain that perspective. Schein rejected the use questionnaires as a method to learn tacit assumptions because such a method would only get surface-level espoused values. Instead, he recommends collecting multiple forms of data in attempts to study school culture, these might include artifacts and rich descriptions of critical events. (Hoy, et al. 1991). Data from a quantitative study might reveal some trends and patterns demonstrating a trend towards ML success, but it would be very challenging to capture something as ethereal as the concept of school culture, which involves personal beliefs and feelings of connectedness (Deal & Peterson, 2016). While a quantitative analysis of the research questions may be a logical next step, it is reasonable for the first step into this line of inquiry to be one that relies on the experiences and beliefs of experts, the school leaders who were present in that setting. A survey might provide surface level data on the emotions or feelings of these school leaders, but it might be too prescriptive in language, limiting the depth of understanding to language chosen by the survey's author. A focus group might go a little deeper, but the group-think and generalizations would not provide the same depth. An interview and the narrative responses that this study hopes to elicit will allow the reader to see the detailed moments that illustrate the lived experience of the educators who witnessed the culture formation first-hand. For this reason, the I selected a multiple case study with qualitative interviews as the method for this study.

Limitations

Throughout the research design process and during the research phase, it is important to constantly consider threats to validity. This is true in quantitative research when one would control for as many variables as possible in an effort to control for any possible alternative explanation for a conclusion. It may be even more important in qualitative research where the researcher must be constantly identifying specific threats to validity due to the non-experimental nature of the methodology. As a school leader of a school with a significant ML population I acknowledge a likelihood that I may see actions by school leaders as more impactful than they were. It is possible that this position would make one more likely to attribute student or school success, or even a strong school culture, to leaders' actions. This positionality is one limitation to this study and to any qualitative research, so I made efforts to bracket that potential bias when crafting interview questions, conducting interviews and analyzing data.

This bias could have also influenced the creation of the questions, in demeanor or body language during the interview, or in other subtle ways as to influence the responses. It also could have influenced how I interpreted the interview data, choosing the answers that fit a preconceived hypothesis. I attempted to identify and bracket that bias in this project through reflective memos. In addition, it was helpful to involve others in planning the project and interpreting, checking the interview questions for any bias and reviewing interpretations of the data to make sure a different researcher would glean the same story from the responses.

A second category of validity threat, reactivity, involves the researcher's effect on the interviewees. In this project, the subjects will likely be aware of the author's intentions both as a researcher and practitioner. The very fact that I am studying the participating schools and drawing attention to the development of the school culture could have led to answers that

inflated the role that various actions of the participants' lived experiences played in its development. This is important to note to the reader and was referenced to the participants prior to the interviews; I reminded respondents of this tendency so they, too, could attempt to bracket that bias and the interviewer could draw out accurate answers. Additionally, I worked to attain rich data to address this validity threat by seeking multiple narratives and responses from each subject.

Lastly, this study approaches the work of finding success for MLs with a particularly positive viewpoint, attempting to find and describe schools that are having success in this field. As I will discuss, there is improvement to be made in every school's work with every student, particularly MLs, and those shortcomings are not fully described in these pages. The focus of this work was to describe the good, but emphasizing only the positive represents a limitation of this work and an area of future study.

Research Ethics Concerns

The goal of this study, to get a sense of the experiences of the LIEP leaders as the school developed a sense of culture surrounding its MLs, required a careful interview and significant trust, time, and willingness on the part of the participants to contribute to the study. I took time to explain the purpose of study, to gain the trust of the interviewees, and to explain the safeguards put into place for the benefit of the participants.

Confidentiality

Safeguards were put into practice in this report to ensure anonymity for the participants of the study and for the students referenced. Schools were identified by pseudonyms known only to me. Participants are identified by pseudonyms with their true identities known only to me. The interview recordings were kept in a password-protected hard drive and then destroyed once

transcribed. The study hinges on the participants' openness and willingness to share, so putting these human subjects' protections in place and maintaining their trust was paramount. Participants were made aware of their anonymity in part to elicit honest, unfiltered responses to interview questions without fear that their responses will be shared while attached to their identity or identifying characteristics. I made the choice not to include ethnicity, race or country of origins in describing participants to protect anonymity as some of these characteristics could be individually identifying.

Informed Consent

All procedures required by respective school divisions were accounted for prior to the study, which involved written permission from division-level personnel in each division. Participants were provided with an informed consent form to complete prior to interviews that were developed in cooperation with school division personnel.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

Introduction and Organization of the Chapter

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are secondary schools in Virginia where support of MLs is ingrained in their school cultures, to learn the most important characteristics of those places, and to learn how such a culture may have been formed from the perspective of key personnel familiar with each school. Three research questions guided this research:

- Are there secondary schools in Virginia where school leaders believe they have a school culture that centers ML support and success?
- What characterizes the culture of these schools?
- How do school leaders involved with each believe such a culture was developed?

In order to answer these questions, I used chain sampling and a network of LIEP specialists throughout the state of Virginia to identify school divisions and then individual secondary schools that have gained a reputation for success in this field. I cross-referenced those expert recommendations with publicly available demographic and student achievement data in selecting or eliminating schools to be chosen as case studies for this project. This process led to the identification of four secondary schools that serve as case studies for this work. Through twenty-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with individuals who are closely familiar with each school, I was able to distill very clear themes, several common to all localities, that indicate these schools are very similar in terms of school culture and support for MLs. It also became apparent through these conversations with school and division personnel, quite by accident, that the schools in this study represent different moments on a journey toward a long-lasting and entrenched school culture for ML support and success, with two only recently emerging, one more ingrained but still progressing, and one firmly in place for many years.

In this chapter, I will present the data from qualitative interviews. First, I will present a broad overview of the qualitative interviews themselves, the list of codes that were used in the qualitative analysis and the most prevalent themes that emerged when those codes were grouped together.

Secondly, I will explore each of the four cases and examine its school culture. First, school by school, I will provide context for the reader about the building, its students, staff and history and simultaneously present data from qualitative interviews to address RQ1: Do those familiar with the school report that each school has formed a culture that centers ML support and success? We can answer that question using Hoy's, and also Schein's, framework for school culture, which identifies a school's culture by identifying key elements starting with the most observable elements and progressing deeper into three levels of abstractness (Hoy, 1991; Schein, 1985). I will present each school separately in order to present evidence that the type of school culture we are interested in, one with ML support and success deeply ingrained, is present there.

Thirdly, this chapter will address RQ2: What characterizes the culture of these schools, where support and success for MLs is so central? In this section, rather than going school by school in isolation, I'll zoom out and look for common themes and patterns across the data to illustrate the key findings from the research, analyzing what signal emerges from noise in the hundreds of pages of qualitative interview transcripts. Once again, I'll use the levels of abstractness framework provided by Hoy and also by Schein to organize that analysis.

Lastly, this chapter will do another pass through the data looking for what emerged when the third research question is applied to it. With the case made for the presence of a school culture of support for MLs and the common characteristics established, what do the school leaders in and around those buildings believe led to the emergence of such a culture? As in the

previous section, this will not be a school-by-school tour, but a review of the distilled themes and elements from across the interview data. In this section, I'll dive more deeply into a position that the schools in this study represent different levels of progression on a journey to a firmly ingrained and rich school culture for ML support and success.

Overview of Participant Interview Data

Twenty-one in-depth interviews were conducted with school or division officials working in or around the four case-study schools. Table 2 illustrates those interviews indicating job title and group by case study school, listed with the school in the order each interview took place.

Table 2

List of Interview Participants and Duration of Interviews

Northern Virginia - Dalton HS

Participant	Job Title/Relationship	Interview Duration
Mr. Quinn	Division level LIEP specialist	Pt 1 - 33:31, Pt 2 - 38:53
Mr. Evans	Principal	65:13
Mr. Ingram	Director of scholar services	45:49
Dr. Foster	Assistant principal	53:29

Southwest VA - Bartlett MS

Participant	Job Title/Relationship	Interview Duration
Mr. Brown	Division level LIEP specialist	48:34
Mr. King	Principal	75:24
Mrs. Davis	LIEP department leader	60:44
Ms. Nelson	Librarian	50:07

Western Virginia - Rock City HS

Participant	Job Title/Relationship	Interview Duration
Ms. Garcia	Division level LIEP specialist	43:55
Mrs. Fisher	LIEP department leader	67:14
Mrs. Taylor	LIEP teacher	40:14
Mr. Nichols	Math teacher	50:59

Central Virginia - Balboa HS

Participant	Job Title/Relationship	Interview Duration
Mrs. Harris	Former LIEP specialist, employee of Balboa HS	40:16
Ms.Newman	Current division LIEP specialist	66:10
Mr. Smith	Principal	82:15
Coach Ellis	English teacher, soccer coach	72:11
Mrs. Dunn	LIEP department leader	77:57
Mrs. Peterson	LIEP teacher	54:02
Mr. Dixon	Former principal	88:25
Dr. Quigley	Former AP, principal of feeder school	67:01
Mrs. Scott	Principal of nearby elementary school	53:33

These interviews produced hundreds of transcribed pages of text of more than 21 hours of interviews, the initial inductive coding produced more than 150 different codes. Second and third passes through the data led to the merging of some codes and elimination of others, leaving 90 distinct codes with 3 or more entries each from participant responses. Those codes can be seen in Appendix B for reference, listed by the number of times each appears in the data.

For the purpose of this study, I grouped each of those 90 codes into code groups to help us answer our three research questions. By doing so, we can pull out only the data that helps with the specific research questions. Those three groups are: "Do Schools with ML School culture exist?" "Characteristics," and "Culture development." A fourth code, "Obstacles" was included as conversations invariably turned to challenges or difficulties that stood in the way of supporting MLs or still exist in their continued progression.

Table 3

Code Groups from Inductive Coding of Interview Transcripts

Code Group	Number of Codes Within Group	Frequency
Do ML School Cultures Exist?	19	205
Characteristics	69	503
Culture development	41	385
Obstacles	6	30

This demonstrates that through the conversations with 21 school and division officials, our conversations were able to yield data on all three research questions. This is an important finding, because if the conversation had stayed focused on whether such schools exist, or on obstacles, for example, we might not be able to claim clear findings regarding all research questions. With more than 200 entries for each facet of this study, we can proceed to look at the results based on each research focus.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Are There Secondary Schools in Virginia Where School Leaders Believe They Have a School Culture that Centers ML Support and Success?

For RQ1, the following codes are useful to our quest to determine if there are secondary schools in Virginia that have developed ML support and success as a part of their school culture. I have listed the raw data in Table 4 and will delve more deeply into each. I'll introduce each of our schools in the following paragraphs.

Table 4

Inductive Codes that relate to RQ1 by School

Code	All Interviews	Dalton High School	Rock City HS	Balboa HS	Bartlett MS
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job/ Fell on Everybody (widespread)	33	8	1	9	15
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	17	6	2	9	0
Part of our core values	16	10	1	5	0
Sense of family	16	0	0	6	10
School culture evidence referenced	15	3	3	5	4
MLs "not invisible"	14	4	2	7	1
Prioritizing the needs of MLs as a school	14	9	2	2	1
Can't tell who is ML: "They are just part of our school"	13	2	1	0	10
Intrinsic quality of the teacher as the factor	12	1	2	4	5
"It's central to what we do"	10	0	0	10	0
Collective ownership: The whole school takes responsibility	10	2	0	3	5
Access scores as indicator of success	6	1	1	1	3
"Not an afterthought" "not the second conversation"	4	3	1	0	0
The work with MLs is 'Tied to Everything'	3	1	0	2	0

As you can see from the table above, the schools in our study report, over and over again, that focusing on MLs is a part of everyone's job, with this being the most frequent code mentioned throughout the study and leading the list of codes in this code group. The table above also illustrates that at each of the case study schools, students being "seen" is a priority, with the codes of "not invisible" and "can't ignore due to demographics" being among the most frequently mentioned and one common to all schools in the study. Each school in our study also had participants point to systems and developments in their school that I coded as "innovative programming," demonstrating a commitment for making a positive impact on MLs through innovation. Conversely, each school also had at least one—mostly several—participants, who spoke about how much of the day-to-day success for MLs comes about because of intrinsic qualities of the teacher, like kindness and love of students, and each school spoke specifically of individuals in their buildings who fit that description.

Lastly, officials in each school cited specific examples of how ML support and success were a part of their school culture and articulated, in many different ways, how they are "prioritizing the needs of ELs as a school."

The chart above and frequency with which participants mentioned the specific codes only tells part of the story of each school, so a closer examination of each case study is necessary, for the purpose of examining whether each school matches our description of having a school culture of success and support for MLs.

A School Culture of ML Support and Success at Dalton High

In depth interviews with members of the Dalton High School (DHS) team and division level support personnel surfaced an emerging culture for which success and support for MLs was a central element. Network sampling led me to the highly populated and ML-dense school

division where DHS is one of a few hundred schools. Two LIEP specialists listed Dalton's division as one with an innovative work occurring therein, and the most populated, with twice as many students designated as ML than the second highest ML populated county (Sugarman & Geary, 2018). With expert recommendations and the importance of this school division to the study of Virginia's Multilingual Learners, I felt compelled to include it in this study; not doing so would have been a significant omission. Fortunately, network sampling led me to Mr. Quinn, ESOL director for this large division as well as a strong reference for a secondary school that fit the study's scope with student achievement data to back it up.

As we look to the interview data to support an answer to the first RQ, about whether there are schools in Virginia that have a school culture for ML support and success, Mr. Quinn, the director of ESOL for the division that supports the most MLs in Virginia, provides some evidence:

> "I would point you to Dalton High School. Really [I recommend] Dalton. The principal has hired a few former ESL teachers as assistant principals. He's really, just academically, the social emotional side, involving parents, I think he is trying to… create a culture where [MLs succeed] …. understanding that it's really a collaborative effort for English learners to succeed especially at high school level right now, between the ESL teachers, counselors, administrators, classroom teachers, you know, school psychologists, social workers, families... I think that school is really doing a fabulous job."

What I found when I interviewed three of the most important figures at Dalton HS was exactly what Mr. Quinn alluded to, a dynamic leader with strong support staff working to build a culture of support and success for the almost a thousand MLs under his care. In three in-depth semi-structured interviews about Dalton High School, the following themes emerged around the question regarding the presence of such a culture.

Table 5

"Do schools with this culture exist?" codes in Dalton HS Interviews

Code	Dr. Foster (Assistant Principal)	Mr. Ingram (Director of Student Services)	Mr. Quinn (Division LIEP Director)	Mr. Evans (Principal)	Totals for DHS
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	1	1	0	4	6
Can't tell who is ML: "They are just part of our school"	0	1	0	1	2
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job/ Fell on Everybody (widespread)	2	1	4	1	8
MLs "not invisible"	1	0	2	1	4
Part of our Core Values	0	1	0	9	10
Prioritizing the needs of MLs as a school	4	0	0	5	9
School culture Definition or evidence referenced	2	1	0	0	3
Sense of Family	0	0	0	0	0
MLs as an asset	1	0	1	1	3

Dalton's school leaders have observed a school culture for ML support and success emerge over the last few years as they have transitioned to their new principal and leadership team. It was evident in each conversation that the leadership of DHS viewed the presence of MLs and an international and diverse student body as a true asset to their school and community. As evident in Table 4, each member of the team referenced these in separate interviews. Dr. Foster, assistant principal and former LIEP teacher put it this way,

> I think the other thing that we're noticing now that we have transitioned to more inclusive settings is just the interactions and experiences that our English learners bring are so rich, and they have these opportunities to share them with these non-EL peers. It's not like…they're the only ones benefiting. These non-El peers are also benefiting from having these students with these backgrounds in their classrooms, and really learning from them as well. So I think it's reciprocal, and that both groups of students are benefiting from that.

It also quickly became evident that the leadership of the school recognized the challenges facing them and was on a mission to make it the business of every member of the school and community to support their MLs. Despite dynamic and strong leadership from the principal,

each member of the team expressed the need to "build capacity" and spread the vision across the culture of the school. Mr. Quinn, LIEP specialist for the division and former principal, shared,

> And then you come to find out as principal…you can only do that so much eventually, the real hard work, the best work is the hard work of long term, growing capacity, of everyone making sure that everyone's on board, making sure that everyone has the knowledge and expertise to help the students that are in front of them, whether they're special ed students or ELs.

Mr. Evans, the current Dalton Principal put it more succinctly, "It can't just be the Mr. Evans vision…" This distributive leadership at Dalton resulted in widespread support for MLs at Dalton so that it became a part of the school culture. Participants cited math teachers, English teachers, history teachers, school counselors, reading specialists, academic coaches, the LIEP team, support staff and others as being instrumental in the mission to improve academic outcomes for MLs at Dalton. This rapid, widespread support is evidence of a school in the process of building a culture of support and success for MLs. It seemed from each conversation that supporting the success of their MLs was non-negotiable for those we spoke to. Mr. Evans further shared "I would like to think that we have no choice but to ensure that our ESOL population and our special ed population, some of our most at risk groups are, we're prioritizing them." Dr. Foster believes the same thing, "Because that's the mindset that we have as a school. It's like, this is who our kids are…. and what we need to do for them. This is us as a school."

One way this is tangibly evident to an observer is by the number of MLs interacting with their native-speaker peers. In other schools or previously in DHS's history, MLs were tracked into separate classes, often with good intentions to separate in order to provide necessary supports, but with detrimental effects for the learners in terms

of language development and school connectedness (Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005). Mr. Ingram described this practice at Dalton prior to some recent sweeping changes: “We were putting them in courses that were completely sheltered…So not only are we segregating these students, but we're, we are actually like, shouting to the rooftops… these kids can't do it. Um, and that just, that didn't sit well with me.” Assistant principal, Dr. Foster, mentioned this as well.

> “But here, it's been a culture shift. So with the number of ELLs that we've had, that has been the culture, at least when I started here was that, they’re our babies, we get to protect them…everything was kind of… isolated. And I know it's negative, but it really was and that the students didn't interact with non ELL peers, they had their teachers, ESL teachers teach all of the content area classes for them… there was just no interaction and inclusiveness.”

Principal Evans reports that “The students really notice a difference… when they were freshmen, they were totally separate. And now they're not and they feel a difference. There's a greater connection…to our community. And that wasn't there before.”

It is clear from expert recommendations, student achievement data, and information gleaned from in-depth interviews that Dalton High School is developing a culture of ML support and success, and further studying the characteristics of DHS is warranted. But for now, we will travel to a completely different region of the state and a completely different situation, visiting Bartlett High school in Southwest Virginia.

A School Culture of ML Support and Success at Bartlett Middle School

I was surprised that network sampling brought this study to this part of the state and Bartlett’s school division, but two LIEP specialists interviewed for this study independently pointed me to this school division and its innovative leader at the central office level. As stated previously, the relatively small percentage of MLs, while still at 20% at BMS, also made this an attractive case study in that it provided variety from the other schools, and perhaps such variety

will provide readers with more generalizability in the next chapter. The network of experts was not hesitant to recommend Bartlett's division; Mrs. Harris shared, "But there's some people that I think that it would be good to talk to. One is Mr. Brown in [Bartlett's school division] …They have used some of their funds and have a parent liaison for high school. And he said it made a huge difference in their graduation rate. I don't think their graduation rate is even a problem anymore." Another LIEP specialist, Mrs. Newman, shared, "I keep hearing great things out of [Bartlett's school division,] with Mr. Brown. He is just always coming up with innovative approaches and using resources in a surprising way…"

With those recommendations, a conversation with Mr. Brown led me to Bartlett Middle. This was one of two schools he recommended, but Bartlett stood out because the purpose of its clustering program was so that students were infused into the rest of the school, not isolated in LIEP classrooms, and this would lead to and even require a whole-school approach to serving MLs. Mr. Brown described this moment and the culture at BMS like this, "…bringing in a lot of students who don't necessarily speak fluent English and all of a sudden you see staff rallying around…'ok this is a new challenge, we can do this.' And so that starts to build a culture…"

Much like at Dalton High School, Bartlett staff members I interviewed perceive a school involved in an emerging culture of ML support and success. With the change in how their division clusters MLs a few years ago, the staff at the affected schools experienced a shift in population and the school culture was affected by it. The ethos of Bartlett today is one of family and support for every student. In an effort to establish if such a school culture exists in this building, I looked at the same specific code group, this time within the subset of participant interviews in and around BMS.

Table 6

"Do schools with an ML culture exist?" codes in Bartlett MS Interviews

Code	Ms. Dunn (LIEP Dept Leader)	Mr. King (Principal)	Mr. Brown (LIEP specialist)	Ms. Nelson (librarian)	Totals for BMS
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	0	0	0	0	0
Can't tell who is ML:"They are just part of our school"	6	2	0	2	10
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job/ it fell on everybody (widespread)	2	4	6	3	15
Innovative programming	0	2	2	1	5
MLs "not invisible"	0	1	0	0	1
Part of our core values	0	0	0	0	0
Prioritizing the needs of MLs as a school	0	0	0	1	1
School culture definition or evidence referenced	0	0	4	0	4
Sense of family	1	8	0	1	10
"Whatever it takes," grit	3	4	1	0	8

The first look at the data in Table 6 shows significantly smaller numbers when compared to Dalton or other schools with much larger ML populations or a school like Balboa High School with a longer history of working with this group of students. No participant from Bartlett Middle, for example, shared information that I could code under "Can't Ignore due to demographics of the school," which makes sense given that BMS contains 80% native speakers. Given this population and the clustering program at Bartlett, it would not be hard to imagine a school that isolated its MLs, had the specialized staff focus on those kids while the majority of the school educated the 80% native speakers. That is not the case at Bartlett Middle, where each of our interviewees brought multiple evidence that I coded under "Focusing on MLs became

everyone's job/ Fell on Everybody (widespread)". According to those I interviewed, at BMS, this shift in population led to the entire school rallying around this group of students. Their leaders and teachers report that serving MLs became the job of the whole school, it became a part of their school culture. As principal, Mr. King, said, "It really just kind of fell on everybody." When asked if there was resistance from staff given this change in population and the challenges of working with students with a language barrier, Mr. King continued, "It was actually quite the opposite. We saw a lot of people wanting to engage and to assist the English language learners to the best of their ability … There was really no evidence of reluctance."

The LIEP department leader at Bartlett, Mrs. Davis, described her colleagues as clear advocates for all kids, "I am very fortunate to have some awesome staff members who are extreme advocates for all kids, … like we really have some great people that are on the side of the kids who really need it." Participants named school counselors who went above and beyond in helping ML families, two Spanish teachers who assist regularly with translation, interpretation and family outreach, a family liaison, the school librarian and media specialist, and several other staff members who embraced the mission of working with MLs and their families as a benefit to their school and role as an educator.

I was able to interview that school librarian, referenced as an example by her principal as a staff member who went above and beyond her job requirements in the support of MLs by adding books to the library that were representative of the population she served. She shared the opposite, that she perceived it as a part of her job, "And that's part of my job, in my opinion, is to make sure that our families and our, our kids are represented no matter where they come from, who they are, what their likes and dislikes are like. And I just naturally include the ELL kids in that." This belief that supporting MLs was a part of everyone's duty as an educator at Bartlett

came up more often in interviews at this school than any other code (fifteen times), a surprising piece of data for the school in our study serving the fewest MLs, but a clear indication that a culture of ML support and success is emerging there.

Another data point that emerged from the interview coding process, was a high frequency in Bartlett participants for the code "sense of family," appearing ten times and from the majority of participant interviews. It appears that this sense of family had been a part of the BMS school culture for some time, which could have naturally led to inclusion of MLs into that family.

> A lot of the staff here…the family that came together in this building of 63 staff members at any given moment was like something I've never seen…. seeing the staff come together like that was magical…our middle school has a very strong sense of family……that sense of family and community inside and outside the classroom, you can just tell a difference, to say the least. That has helped us play a huge role in not seeing any reluctance.

Mr. King later added, "this is a fully functioning family unit in a sense and there's buy-in from all around".

It wasn't just the principal who felt this way about Bartlett Middle School. Mrs. Nichols, a teacher, community member and parent elaborated on this part of the BMS ethos, "It has always been very much a neighborhood school…. And then we have kids that get bused in-my kids, my ELLs come from all over. I think the fact that this has always been a neighborhood school has always just caused it to be [a family]." It seems that this sense of family element of school culture melded with the change in demographics to lead to the type of culture that this study is looking for.

Over the past two years, that sense of family and belief that the work of serving MLs rests on everyone at the school manifested in a massive effort to support Bartlett's multilingual learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The school culture led to a "whatever it takes" attitude during the remote learning and the early stages of return to the building, with liaisons and staff

members driving to people's houses, and the school librarian going way outside her job description to assist with MLs in meeting their needs. Staff phone calls, video messages in other languages recorded by the principal and home visits became the norm for many staff members. Mr. King described one school division employee's efforts, "She was all over the place, and I mean she was working 12-hour days 7 days a week driving around the city, doing house checks for us, doing phone calls, knew where certain older siblings worked, would go to their workplace just to see where the younger sibling was." This "whatever it takes" attitude, born out of a sense of family at BMS and an attitude that supporting MLs for success was everyone's job, is a clear indicator of an emerging school culture with ML support as a key element.

Bartlett Middle School is quite different from the other schools in this study. It is the only middle school, a third of the size of each of the others and serves a smaller population of international families. If there was a school that I might expect to deviate from the culture for ML support and success that I was interested in studying, it would have been this one, but based on the evidence collected from expert recommendations, demographic and student achievement data and especially the story told through each qualitative interview with staff members at every level in around BMS, I must conclude that a there is an ingrained focus on the support and success of MLs at Bartlett, one that is rooted in a sense of family, evident from the widespread work from its staff to the service of its more vulnerable population and one on full display over the past two years in challenging circumstances of the pandemic.

A School Culture for ML Support and Success at Balboa High School

The first person interviewed for this study, Mrs. Harris, was the LIEP specialist for Balboa's division, and she quickly directed me to this school as the example that she first thought of when she was aware of the subject of the project. She described it as a school where

"almost all of those involved, starting with Mr. Smith and all the way down to each member, are *there* for the MLs and know that this is central to their work. It's really remarkable how much they live that at Balboa."

Given my previous knowledge of the school and wanting to address concerns that it was chosen merely for access and convenience, I took extra care to establish that this case study should be included by conducting more interviews at Balboa than anywhere else, including with two principals and two LIEP specialists (former and current). The resulting rich set of data in Table 7 more than backs up Ms. Harris's recommendation.

Table 7:

"Does an ML Culture Exist?" Codes and Balboa HS

Group 1: "Does an ML culture exist?" Codes	Total Group 1 Codes in Balboa HS Interview Document Group	Mr. Smith (Principal)	Mr. Dixon (Former Principal)	Ms. Peterson (LIEP Teacher)	Ms. Dunn (LIEP Dept Leader)	Ms. Harris (Former LIEP Division Specialist)	Coach. Ellis (English Teacher, Soccer Coach)
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	10	8	0	0	1	0	1
Can't tell who is ML:"They are just part of our school"	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job/ Fell on everybody (widespread)	12	3	0	4	2	0	3
It's central to what we do	11	6	0	0	4	0	1
MLs "not invisible"	7	3	0	0	4	0	0
Part of our core values	7	3	0	0	2	0	2
Prioritizing the needs of EL's as a school	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
School culture definition or evidence referenced	7	1	4	0	0	0	2
Sense of family	9	3	0	6	0	0	3
The work with MLs is 'Tied to everything'	3	2	0	0	0	0	1

Participants from Balboa High School are quick to share that they consider it everyone at BHS's job to engage and support the MLs and that it has been that way for a long time. Despite one of the smallest percentages of MLs in our study, participants do not believe that Balboa rests

the “important work” (citation) of ML support on just a few members of its team. The frequency with which participants expressed this in the data set is misleading, because they said it so clearly that conversations quickly moved to characteristics and development (the study’s other two research questions) in nearly every conversation with those working in and around Balboa. Ms. C, LIEP Department leader, expressed that it was a part of every school leadership conversation, “And in everything, like every conversation we have as a leadership team, every faculty meeting, there's always something that has to do [with MLs].” Participants cited dozens of other staff members who are instrumental in this work, including the members of the world languages department, an administrative aide, school counselors, the director of the immersion center, teachers’ aides, instructional coaches, athletics coaches, cafeteria workers and support personnel. The work of supporting MLs touches everyone at Balboa, something that is both indicative of and a product of a culture of ML support and success.

Retired principal Mr. Dixon, who served in Balboa administration for almost 30 years, shared proudly that “we continue to have an incredible program of taking those kids and giving them a foundation in education.”

Principal Smith shared, “I mean it’s just hard NOT to talk about [supporting MLs] because it’s just so tied into everything.” As we’ve seen with defining and articulating a school culture, Mr. Smith had trouble putting into words how much ML support and success were and are a part of the school culture at Balboa, “it’s not a program or a slogan thing, it’s just kind of like what we do.” Speaking of MLs and the need for the entire Balboa community to adjust their practice and preconceived notions of education and do whatever it takes to support them and serve these students, Mr. Smith simply paused and said, “They are our kids… we have to… we have to be immersed in [the work] ourselves.”

This has been the culture at Balboa for a long time. Mr. Smith stated, "The DNA of this school, has been, since the 1970s, a very immigrant-friendly environment." And Mr. Dixon supported that statement with a history (and supportive and welcoming response from Balboa staff and community) of the immigration waves to the school, beginning with refugees of the Vietnam war, with waves in different moments over the decades from The Sudan, Nepal, the Philippines, Central America and now Afghanistan, among many other groups. It's not hard to imagine a school that would be resistant to the challenges of working with an ever-changing but steady influx of newcomers and having to create an educational setting different from that of their own upbringing, but this has not been the case at Balboa. "I've been here a long time," Mr. Smith stated from his principal's desk, as a former BHS teacher and assistant principal, "have never picked up on a resistance to the kids… I'd say there's always been a sense of pride in our diversity." It appears that for a long time, Balboa has had a culture that supports the success of its MLs, believes them to be assets to the school and its culture and embraces and welcomes MLs as a part of the Balboa Family.

The last two characteristics, both of which we will visit in the next section, are important to note here as we examine if a culture of ML support and success exists at Balboa High School. They jump out from the pages of almost every Balboa interview transcript, occurring time and time again with the school leaders associated with BHS. This is clearly a characteristic and belongs in a different code group, but its presence can also be a litmus test. A school whose officials repeatedly discuss its abnormally welcoming environment and who consistently communicate that they and their colleagues naturally view the presence of international families as a clear net positive for the school, is one that we should consider as making our list of possible school cultures for ML support and success. Balboa High School respondents' transcripts

contained more responses I coded as "Welcoming Environment"--a very frequent code across schools--than any other school in our study, with their principal leading the entire interview set, emphasizing this as a key part of that hard-to-define concept of school culture at Balboa.

BHS was also the only school in our set to have each participant independently assert that the diversity of the school and the MLs therein were an asset to the institution and community, something that likely most if not all participants feel, but was interesting that Balboa interviewees articulated in this context despite no direct questions that led them to do so. This stated belief may indicate a consistent messaging or common refrain around the halls of BHS that indicate a strong culture for support and success of the international students they are proud to serve.

A Culture of ML Support and Success at Rock City High School

Nearly every conversation with ML or LIEP experts in the state includes a mention of Rock City's school division because of its unique demographics and geographical position and its innovative programming and dynamic leadership for LIEP. Rock City's name was mentioned, without prompting, in half of the conversations with LIEP specialists, almost as an assumed destination for a study like this, with Mrs. Harris's "of course, Rock City is doing unique things…" echoed by other colleagues. Mr. Baker, the LIEP specialist in Bartlett Middle School's division, discussed site visits that his team did with Rock City High School to learn about their innovative programming with regard to the social studies curriculum for MLs. Rock City's unique geography, demographics and innovative practices have led to a reputation as an innovative one in the LIEP field and multiple published studies in this area of study. (O'Brien, 2012; Cuevasa, 2018;). Rock City's dual language immersion program, which began with a cohort of kindergartners who are now juniors in high school has gained national attention as a

model for other divisions. (Garcia & Carnock, 2016). Just like with Dalton's division due to its size, any study of LIEP programs in Virginia would be remiss if it did not at least explore Rock City's due to its history and reputation in the community of experts in the field.

This question, does Rock City High School have a school culture for ML support and success, proved to be one of the most interesting quandaries of this study. What I found as I looked closer is a division that almost refused to say out loud that it had formed an ingrained culture of ML support and success, but that, in practice, appears to have the most comprehensive and widespread school culture of this type in the commonwealth. I'll start with what the data says from four qualitative interviews on the subject. Using the previously identified Code Group 1, "Does an ML culture exist?" and only the codes therein, and applying it only to those interviews in and around Rock City, tells an interesting story.

Table 8

Does an ML school culture exist codes for Rock City High School

Group 1 Codes:	Mrs. Taylor (Teacher)	Mrs. Fisher (LIEP Dept Leader	Mr. Nichols (Math Teacher)	Mrs. Garcia (LIEP Division Specialist)	Totals
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	0	2	0	1	3
Can't tell who is ML:"They are just part of our school"	0	1	0	1	2
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job/ Fell on everybody (widespread)	4	2	0	0	6
Innovative programming	6	3	5	6	20
MLs "not invisible"	2	0	0	1	3
Part of our core values	1	0	0	0	1
Prioritizing the needs of MLs as a school	0	0	0	2	2
School culture definition or evidence referenced	0	3	0	5	8
Sense of family	0	0	0	0	0
Whatever it takes/ grit	0	0	2	0	2

More than any other school in this study, the participants from Rock City High School did not frequently share that the work for supporting MLs had "become everyone's job," (three total coded entries in the data) or that the demographics of their school were such that those around them "couldn't ignore" this group of students (two total entries) or that RCHS was "Prioritizing the needs of MLs as a school" (two total entries). Only one respondent alluded to serving MLs as a part of the school's core values when she cited the school's mission statement, which mentions "diverse learners" as the defining term for its students. One influential study participant even directly contrasted this concept, that one could claim that ML support and success was central to Rock City school culture. When asked directly about this claim, Ms. Garcia, the division specialist stated,

> "I think we're talking the talk but we're not always walking the walk. We like to talk about our diversity, we like to pat ourselves on the back about our diversity. But the reality is, when we make schedules, we do the things that actually show our values, deep, deep failures. I**t still feels a little bit like an add on…**If every decision that you make doesn't stem first and foremost for that need, then you're just all talk.

She cited scheduling, messaging to families, teacher lesson planning and staffing as areas where RCHS and the division have made significant strides but are still not prioritizing MLs on a level where she'd be comfortable making such a claim about the school and the district she serves.

While this sentiment must be acknowledged, it is worth exploring other evidence that runs counter to this stated claim as I attempt to establish if we can include Rock City in our list of schools with a culture of ML support and success. Some of the interview data supports that such a culture exists, contrary to the claims of Ms. Garcia. The code "Innovative programming," not included in Code Group 1: "Does ML culture exist?" when I originally created code groups for analysis of this research question, emerged more frequently from the Rock City data than any

other school in this study by a significant margin and more than any other code for the four schools in this case study.

Table 9

"Innovative Programming" Across Case Schools

Code	All Interviews	Dalton High School	Rock City HS	Balboa HS	Bartlett MS
Innovative Programming	30	2	20	3	5

The four participants mentioned more than a dozen innovative programs that demonstrated Rock City as a leader in supports for MLs. The division's dual language immersion program (now a part of RCHS) is a model for the state and not to be taken for granted as truly unique and forward-thinking. Even Mrs. Garcia had to acknowledge that "And that's something that's been super helpful for our students in terms of…valuing the home language, seeing themselves earlier on as being academic, valuing that home experience. And I think that's been really good for us." Mr. Nichols and his team's dynamic, differentiated, and student-centered approach to preparing newcomers success in high-school math is a drastic positive deviation from the norm in Virginia high schools, and his program was a variation of another innovative approach in the school. Rock City HS was the only school in the study who mentioned content classes being taught in Spanish, work programs for under-credited over-aged students, home-school liaisons, interpreter's club, a writing club for MLs, JROTC taught in multiple languages and refugee trauma supports. From my limited perspective after dozens of interviews around the state, significant research in the field and a decade and a half in education, there is no high school and no division in Virginia with as much or as dynamic innovative work in the LIEP field as Rock City.

A school's culture is more than just a list of impressive programs, however. It must be widespread, diffused across individuals, levels, and time. It must be "the way we do things around here." (Bowers, 1966). Innovative programming would not be enough to declare a culture of ML support and success if it came from one source or was isolated to one part of the building of one level of leadership. That is not the case according to the data collected from Rock City; members of this school culture report that significant steps forward in the service of MLs has come from all levels of the organizations. An examination of three codes, "Leadership from Teachers," "Leadership from Central Office" and "Admin Support/Autonomy" demonstrates that finding ways to support this population at RCHS is something diffused across multiple levels of leadership. Table 10 shows the codes related to distributed leadership from the interviews related to Rock City High School.

Table 10

Distributed Leadership Codes and Rock City High School Interviews

Code	Total Codes from RCHS	Ms. Taylor (English Teacher)	Ms. Fisher (LIEP Dept Leader)	Mr. Nichols (Math Teacher)	Ms. Garcia (LIEP division specialist
Admin Support & Autonomy for teachers	3	0	0	3	0
Leadership (Teacher)	7	2	1	3	1
Leadership from central office (division)	9	1	3	2	3

Two unique actions, 15 years apart, illustrate this trend clearly. The first, shared by Ms. Fisher, who has been a part of RCHS in different roles since 2006, illustrates strong and impactful leadership from the division. In a remarkably significant step for the school division to take, as the population shifted significantly in early 2006, Rock City required every teacher in the division to undergo ESL intro courses, which Ms. Fisher described as "pretty intense." The

subject matter of those courses became common language for all the teachers in the district and a foundation for more innovation and supports for MLs. Ms. Fisher reported it as having a significant effect on the types of conversations among teachers and communicating to teachers that this was going to be the focus of the school and division going forward. Since that time, she reported,

> So it's almost to the point, right now the population in our city having been this way for a while, when you put in your application to [Rock City] High School, you know… there's going to be immigrants in your classes. So and I think that's, as more people retire and there's that turnover, the pockets of folks who have signed on to do this work and weren't only there to teach white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants... It's getting smaller. I think probably the conversations become quieter for the negative comments as time progresses a bit more hushed because I think our larger pockets of colleague pressure us not to have them.

From this passage, it's hard to argue against a culture that is all in for the support and success of the immigrant community it serves. You see that a division's actions have created an expectation that Ms. Fisher feels is a non-negotiable to all who join the division. You also see a shift where the teachers themselves police those who would go against this ethos, with "colleague pressure" now doing the work that division mandate once had to.

A second example of how infused and far reaching the culture spreads comes from this past year and a teacher-led program that is a game-changer for students. While all participants cited that central office leadership is a driving force--when asked what's at the heart of the dynamic work at RCHS, Mrs. Fisher simply responded, "It's Mrs. Garcia. (the division specialist); It's her." The work of the division has led to a staff that is producing grassroots changes in multiple areas, including differentiated pathways in English, science and social studies. I was encouraged, however, to talk with Mr. Nichols whose "Algebra Explorations" class demonstrates a grassroots, teacher-led development that is a clear illustration of a far-reaching school culture. This course is representative of the ability and propensity for RCHS

teachers to develop them into reality but also the belief that they should do "whatever it takes," including providing differentiated multiple pathways for the success of their MLs. This course combines the efforts of three or more teachers in a given block to create pre-algebra curriculum geared toward multiple levels of new arrival MLs, including some with significant gaps in educational history, with undiagnosed learning disabilities and others with high levels of education and only a true language barrier as an obstacle. I bring it up here because it is entirely teacher led and teacher driven. As Mr. Nichols shared, "This is teacher led with the blessing of everybody above who just sort of goes, I don't care how the sausage is made, as long as the sausage is made." When pressed about where this teacher-leadership came from, Mr. Nichols answered, "So I tried to say we all need to be leaders, and we all need to rise to some leadership within whatever domain we are in…all along we need leaders. And so as a classroom leader I have a certain role in this and so I tried to keep the vision going." Mr. Nichols and his team seem to have developed an impactful innovative program to support MLs in the same spirit and with the blessing of other levels of leadership in the organization, but very much outside their active participation. They are not alone, Ms. Fisher described another teacher exhibiting such leadership, "One of the teachers who was teaching a sheltered world I class, of his own volition, formed his own Professional Learning Community (PLC) of teachers who shared kids. Little things like that are inspiring."

Ms. Taylor took this idea a step even further when she pointed out how the students have come to embrace this long-lasting ethos of a school that is all-in for the support of MLs. She pointed out a recent phenomenon occurring among the staff at Rock City. While the explicit calling cards I established as indicators for the target school culture did not come out of these conversations, the presence of Rock City HS Alumni returning to join RCHS staff and expecting

and hoping to work with MLs in interesting and telling. “The other thing that’s happening is that we are seeing graduates who come back, not necessarily as teachers, but as other roles in the school.” The culture passed down to the students and the next generation of teachers is now a part of carrying it on. If a stable school culture is one that is capable of replicating its own success and not dependent on one person as Schein (1985) would suggest, then I can find no better indication of this than what Ms. Taylor. shared regarding former Rock City students who are now her colleagues.

What explains this discrepancy between the reported belief among key Rock City staff members regarding their school’s culture for ML support and success and the clear evidence of a long lasting and widespread effort to do whatever it takes for this group of students? One possible explanation resides in another reoccurring code that emerged from all 4 case study schools but that I did not include in Code Group 1: “Does an ML Culture Exist?” Personnel from each school, and more so at Rock City than anywhere else, made comments that I classified under the code “Never settle,” later refined to “Not Settling – We’re Not There Yet,” titled after something that Rock City’s Ms. F said. In the next section of this paper, I’ll discuss this as a key characteristic across schools, but it is necessary to address here as we interrogate the data for the presence of ML support in RCHS’s school culture. This idea of not settling and constantly striving to do more and better support MLs is common to each school in the study and is likely a driver of the type of constant reflection and improvement to meet the needs of any underserved population. It jumps off of the transcripts of each interview in and around RCHS. “We’re not there yet,” and “We aren’t walking the walk,” from Ms. Garcia “please know that we mess up way more than we succeed.” From Mr. Nichols. After learning of the innovative programming, both in quantity and research-backed quality of the work that is happening at RCHS, I believe

strongly that this “Never Settle” attitude is a contributor and part of the culture of ML support and success, rather than evidence to the contrary. Later in our interview, Mrs. Garcia even acknowledged this,

> So I'm not to say that there's not great things happening. We have tons of kids who graduate on time, a pile of newcomers who get through in four years, kids who are engaged in lots of different activities. You know, I mean, we're, but we still, it's not, it hasn't become everything for us. So until we decide that we're going to have wraparound services for making sure that immunizations can be done very quickly. So we can start school on time. Until we have that type of wraparound service until spaces, places for families to use this institution as their core institution of support... So until we actually rebuild all of that, with our language learners in mind, then for me, it's not enough. Not good enough.”

She is correct, and we’ll see that attitude from each of our cases as a key characteristics of the schools in this study, but it is possible that two things are true at the same time: That Rock City has established a school culture focused on the support and success of its MLs *and* it has not realized its lofty goals and lived out the mission that that culture has created. In such an environment, we can forgive those impressive educators experiencing this school culture and seeing more of what must be done instead of how far they have come.

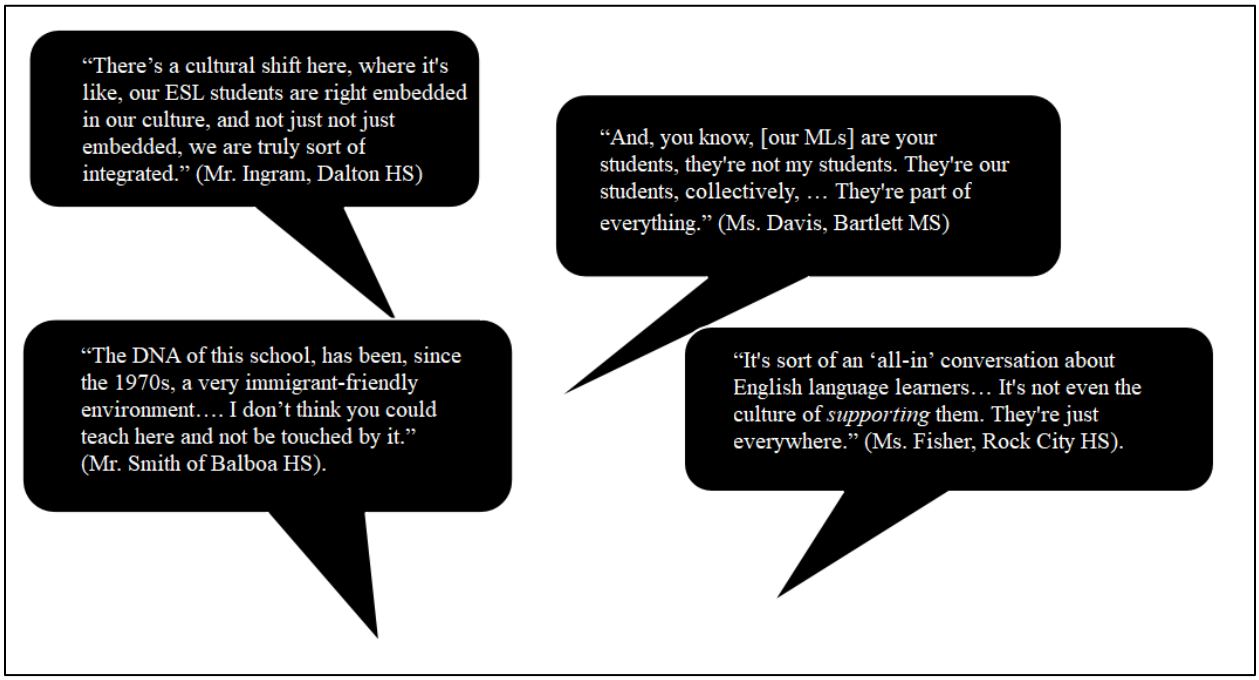
Perhaps it’s the mark of a school with a firmly ingrained culture, that they are never satisfied and that the remarkable work that is happening is so ingrained it doesn’t seem like above and beyond. Ms. Fisher described this aspect of school culture in a way that school culture scholars Hoy, Schein and others would appreciate. “Things become a part of the wallpaper.” The wallpaper at Rock City High school is one where leadership for the support and success of MLs comes from all places around the building and results in remarkably impressive innovative programming that is having a significant impact on the students and families it serves.

RQ1 Conclusions: Are There Secondary Schools in Virginia with a School Culture that Centers ML Support and Success?

The first research question in this study asked "Are there secondary schools in Virginia where participants report a school culture that centers ML support and success?" That was always going to be a challenging question to answer and one impossible to definitively prove given the ethereal and hard-to-define nature of school culture and the culture of an individual school. All that this study can do is submit to the reader what I learned from 21 conversations with experts in the field who are familiar with some of the best candidates for this that the commonwealth has to offer. This resulted in four secondary schools whose key members mostly perceive that MLS support and success is at least a part of the ethos of their school. Participants told me this directly, as the quotations in Figure 3 indicate.

Figure 3

Select Direct Participant Quotations about School Culture and ML Support



Not just taking their word for it, we can also see elements of school culture from the research on display at each location. All of the participants can point to trends, programs, actions, observable markers, and core beliefs of their colleagues that reveal schools that should be classified as ones with such a culture.

In each school, school officials and staff reported observable, programmatic and habits, deeply held beliefs for the support of MLs. In Table 1 of this study, in Chapter 2's review of the literature, I presented a list of commonly-named elements of school culture. Not an exhaustive list, Table 11 displays the top 20 elements cited by researchers in the field.

Table 11

Common elements of School Culture and ML-related Evidence of those Elements at Participant schools:

Elements of School Culture	Level of Abstractness	Elements in Participant Schools Related to MLs
Architecture	Observable Elements	*Design of new Balboa High School with ML Welcome Center front and center.*
Artifacts	Observable Elements	*Directional Signage at Balboa HS, Flags at Bartlett MS,*
Ceremonies	Observable Elements	*ML Back to School Night at Balboa HS*
Symbols	Observable Elements	*"Heart of a Tiger" at Balboa HS*
Behaviors	Practices, Habits and actions	*Welcoming conversations at Balboa, Bartlett, Rock City and Dalton, ML Soccer Academy at Balboa*
Language	Practices, Habits and actions	*Core Values at Dalton HS, Hard conversations at Rock City and Bartlett, leadership meetings at Balboa HS*
Norms	Practices, Habits and actions	*Multi-lingual messages at Balboa and Dalton HS, Home visits at Bartlett MS, ML Intro class at Rock City*
Rituals	Practices, Habits and actions	*Student Equity Ambassadors at Dalton HS,*
Routines	Practices, Habits and actions	*LIEP teachers as part of Content Teams at Rock City, Dalton, and Bartlett, LIEP Teachers as consultants at all schools*
Rules	Practices, Habits and actions	*Cluster program at Bartlett MS*
Traditions	Practices, Habits and actions	*Partnership between specialty center and MLs at Balboa, Coffee and Tea initiative at Bartlett MS,*
Assumptions	Deep beliefs	*"All students can learn" from Dalton HS, Balboa HS,*
Beliefs	Deep beliefs	*MLs and cultural diversity as an assett from each school*
Expectations	Deep beliefs	*High expectations and Deeper Learning at Rock City HS and Balboa HS*
Ideology	Deep beliefs	*Mission Statements from Balboa and Rock City*
Mental models	Deep beliefs	*Rethinking math and English pathways at Rock City, First thought and second thought from Dalton*
Mores	Deep beliefs	*Core beliefs: All students can learn, use of data, relationships at Dalton HS*
Philosophy	Deep beliefs	*Inclusion as a driver of equity at Dalton HS*
Stories	Deep beliefs	*Several stories about the history of immigration and the school's response at Balboa HS*
Values	Deep beliefs	*Heart of a Tiger at Balboa, Core Beliefs at Dalton, Mission statement at Rock City, Inclusivity at Bartlett*

(Deal & Peterson, 2016; Schein, 1985; Mintzberg, 1983; Waller, 1932; Hoy, 1991; Maslowski, 1996; Van Houtte, 2005).

Do Dalton High, Bartlett Middle, Balboa High and Rock City High Schools definitively possess a school culture ingrained with ML support and success? It may be impossible to say for sure. The evidence presented in this chapter does indicate that key school personnel in and around those schools believe that such a culture exists where they work *and* many of the elements identified prior to this study as key indicators of school culture are present in ML-related form at each of the participant schools.

School Culture for ML Support and Success: An Evolving Phenomenon? As this study unfolded, I did not complete each school's interviews as a set and then proceed to the next; instead, the interviews with school and division personnel were mixed together. For example, I might spend Monday interviewing and coding a Balboa administrator, and then Wednesday in conversation with school division personnel in Rock City, then coming back two weeks later to a teacher at Balboa and a teacher at Bartlett. This was done intentionally, since the purpose of the study was not to tell the reader everything about a particular school; instead it was to see what we could learn from the group as a whole. This had an interesting effect however, as I prepared for each interview, creating a mental model that is worth exploring. I found myself needing to orient myself not as to the binary question of whether or not a culture of ML support and success existed in each school, but rather *where on the evolution* of such a culture each school exists at this moment in time. For example, despite similar current demographics, participants from Dalton High School speak about their culture with MLs at the center as being newly and rapidly developing with a long way to go, whereas participants at Balboa discussed the immigrant-friendly DNA existing since the 1970s. Taken a step further, participants at Rock City, with an unmatched reputation for supporting their MLs, reference elements of school culture touted as

evidence of success from other schools on this journey, as indicators that RCHS is not doing enough and should do more.

The participants alluded to this directly in several interviews. At Dalton High School, Dr. Foster, assistant principal, said it outright: “I'm like, we're not there yet. I have to remind myself, we're moving in and… [in] education, you move this much. That's good, but I have to remind myself, there's still so much to do. But yes, we definitely have made a lot of changes that I have felt have been really significant and beneficial for students and stuff.”

Mr. Ingram of Dalton High School shared the same sentiment,” we are literally in the beginning stages, in my mind of what this will, you know, of how we are beginning to shift the culture.” At Bartlett Middle School, the same sense of being along a journey was present, but that they were maybe a step further. Ms. Davis, who was very proud of the welcoming atmosphere, the observables present and the significant strides of content teachers, also illustrated that they are in the midst of making progress regarding scheduling, “And the schedule has not been made in such a way **…** They've been scheduling our resource classes, and then we try to plug ourselves in somewhere, and it really needs to go the other way around. But I think we’ve…realized that this year, we need to do it differently next year.” Ms. Dunn acknowledged some elements of a culture that centers the needs of MLs but is also able to point out the next steps, steps she sees her school taking.

Ms. Garcia from Rock City shared almost the same thing, “but the reality is that when we make schedules, we do the things that actually show our values, deep, deep failures. It still feels a little bit like an add on.”

Balboa High School, which also points out that there is much work to be done, also is quick to reference long-standing elements of their school culture that MLs and international

families are and have been a part of the school for a long time. Not as a burden or an afterthought. "The immigrant population" Mr. Smith reported, "has always been here. But with that comes the infrastructure. They know that this school is going to take care of their kids to a certain extent. . we have multiple generations in some cases… I think we are known as a place that's accepting."

There are several alternative explanations for this phenomenon. One example could be the positionality of the participants. The principal of Balboa has been associated with the school for several decades (first as a teacher there but then leaving to be an administrator elsewhere and returning), but the principal and admin team interviewed from Dalton are all relatively new. It makes sense they might talk about recent significant steps forward as the beginning of something whereas staff at Balboa would talk about it as a continuation of a long-held school culture.

Significantly more work must be done in this field before any claims can be made distilling a theory about the evolution of school culture for ML support and success, but during this study, I repeatedly memo-ed about this feeling that I was observing schools at different points of a messy and zig-zagged evolution along the path of school culture development and renewal. This concept of school culture evolution is supported in the research. Rossman, et al, (1988) point out that school culture is simultaneously and paradoxically deeply ingrained and hard to intentionally change, yet it is constantly in flux when one zooms out to a wider view of time. The constantly evolving nature of school culture is well-documented (Hopkins, et al., 1994, Angus, 1996). As these schools evolve and report out and demonstrate a school culture that centers ML support and success, an important question arises: what do these school leaders and personnel--experts in the field and experiencing entrenched or emerging culture--believe characterizes their schools?

Research Question 2: What Characterizes Schools that have a Culture that Centers ML Support and Success?

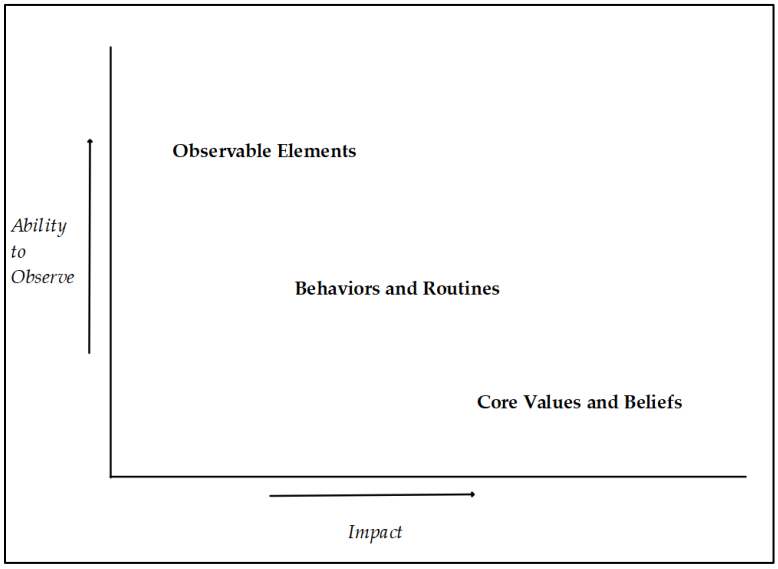
With 21 hours and more than 350 pages of interview transcripts asking school and division personnel to tell me about their schools, the challenge of reporting on the characteristics of the four schools that served as the cases for this study is a challenge of organization and prioritization. In this findings and analysis section I will report all inductive codes that occurred at least five (5) times in the data but will not go into great depth on each. This section begins with those codes in chart form with some explanation. The volume of data required some decisions to be made, which I did so using the research into school culture and LIEP as my guide with the help of frequent memo-ing and consistently re-visiting the data and crystallizing the codes and categories. Some characteristics were obvious and straight-forward, like the presence of professional development or multi-lingual staff members, and therefore did not require as much analysis. Some were obvious but voiced so strongly, consistently, and frequently that I included further analysis in this section, including the belief that all students can learn and an emphasis on teamwork and collaboration, both of which screamed out of the data across every school in the study. Still others were out-right surprising, and while some of the surprising results were not mentioned as frequently as, say professional development, I chose to examine and share them in this section as key findings since they offer a unique contribution to the field, not showing up in the literature elsewhere. Examples of surprising, maybe novel, findings that emerge from this data set include the "importance of fun, games and laughter," and that it is important for key staff to take part in "Hearing their story" or learning firsthand the life story of the MLs and International students in their care.

I've organized this section in two layers, using the framework exhibited by Hoy (1991) and Schein (1985), I'll present the characteristics by level of abstractness, beginning with those

most tangible and proceeding to underlying beliefs and values, which are hard to observe but very impactful. At the same time, within each level of abstractness, I will mention obvious findings that reinforce the literature and require little explanation before highlighting the characteristics that scream from the data in frequency and gravity, and then unpack the surprising findings in each category that may inform the next section and chapter of the paper. Figure 4 demonstrates the three levels of abstractness placed on two axes, one demonstrating our ability to observe the elements in that category and the other with the impact they have on the school culture.

Figure 4

Categories for the Elements of School Culture by Observability and Impact



Observable or Tangible characteristics of school culture

Some characteristics of a school culture can be directly observed, seen, or touched. The participants in this study identified several things you'd see in their schools that they perceive to be indicators of a culture of ML support and success. Table 12 shows those characteristics of the

case study schools that I classified as “Observable or Tangible” elements of school culture, using Hoy’s and Schein’s framework, with relatively high frequency.

Table 12

Observable and Tangible Codes for Characteristics of School Culture

Code	DHS	RCHS	BHS	BMS	Total	Example from Transcript
The importance of the school as a Welcoming Environment	1	2	20	10	33	"In the minute I walked in that office, and that's where it's just happy, happy to see you happy to see the kids. And they, while they may have struggled to communicate their body language, in the main office was always very welcoming." (Ms. Harris, LIEP division specialist)
Innovative programming	2	20	3	5	30	"We actually went to Rock City and the way they were operating some programs for MLs… ...those kind of outside the box little things that… . Let’s look at all the angles and take an action." (Mr. Brown, LIEP division specialist)
MLs "not invisible"	4	3	7	1	15	"[the principal] said 'they were kind of “over there” and now they’ve been kind of coming to the forefront a little bit more, so he started to focus on them a little bit more." Ms. Davis, LIEP Dept Leader)
Signage and messaging in multiple languages	1	4	6	3	14	So from a principal, like tasks, I’ve got an admin aide who translates my weekly message to Spanish and delivers it to our Spanish speaking population." (Mr Smith, Principal).
Clubs, athletics, events reflecting inclusion and building connectedness	2	7	4	1	14	"so the students feel part of the whole school program, whether it's athletics, whether it's clubs." (Ms. Harris)
Can't tell who is ML:"They are just part of our school"	2	2	0	10	14	"And, and that's the thing, like I wouldn't even be able to tell who it was for, you know what I mean? Like, it's just such a seamless part of, of the teaching " (Ms. Davis, LIEP team leader)
Outreach to the community	1	1	3	5	10	"We’re going to do EL specific back to school nights and try to reach those communities individually" (Mr. King, Principal)
Principal messaging to staff and communities	0	0	4	2	6	"The more tangible pieces are more things like robo calls or community letters. All those things require multi-language speaking home to receive what their primary language it." (Mr. King, Principal)

Schools that center ML support and success as a part of their school cultures are, first and foremost, welcoming environments to all students and families, but particularly those for whom English is not their first language. This welcoming nature that the participants describe seems to

include staff, students and the community. This is reasonably predictable and supported in the research but I did not anticipate just how often and widespread this subject would be, across schools, positions and time. The raw, ungrouped data from qualitative coding landed "The importance of the school as a welcoming environment" as the second-most frequent code, just behind "Focusing on MLs as everyone's job," and ahead of other predictable responses like "innovative programming," or "teamwork," and mentioned twice as often as "Professional development," or the importance of "Teacher attitudes." A Welcoming school culture just kept coming up in these conversations. Participants even seemed to try not to bring this up since it seems obvious and not ground-breaking, but they could not help it. Their responses suggest that being welcoming is just so ingrained in the culture, it's almost not worth mentioning. Mr. Dunn from Balboa started a response with, "I mean, obviously the school is very open and welcoming." It seems to have been that way for a long time, Mr. Dixon, former principal, described the moment that immigrant groups would first arrive to Balboa, "They were totally accepted by the student body."

Bartlett Middle School went through this ML population shift moment recently when a shift in LIEP clustering brought a wave of MLs to the school, and the response, according to the principal and also the LIEP department leader, was the same, "I would say, you know, in terms of the kids, everybody's been really welcoming," said Mrs. Davis "the kids are well supported and loved at the school. That's not even an issue." Participants in all schools described their welcoming principals, their welcoming front offices, their welcoming libraries, students, clubs and organizations and classroom teachers so much that it was impossible to ignore this visible, welcoming atmosphere as a characteristic of schools with a culture of ML support and success. Ms. Harris described the front office of once such school, and how it felt when MLs and their

families entered, like this, “the minute I walked in that office, and that's where it's just happy, happy to see you happy to see the kids. And they, while they may have struggled to communicate, their body language, in the main office was always very welcoming. So if you didn't speak the language, it didn't matter, you knew that somebody in that office was happy to see you.”

It would be irresponsible to ignore a second code from this group, “innovative programming” as a tangible, observable element one would see in a visit to our four case schools. Each school and nearly every participant mentioned plans and systems that were in place specifically to support MLs. The logical result of other characteristics like a “whatever it takes” attitude and a core value that adults in the building “never stop learning,” these schools try new things, learn from other schools and are willing to commit resources to new ways to reach MLs. During this study, I encountered dozens of innovative programs from these four schools that are above and beyond state and local requirements but that are impacting students in their schools.

Table 13

List of Participant-mentioned Innovative Programs

Innovative Practice	**School**
ESL Soccer Academy	Balboa HS
ESL Algebra Explorations	Rock City
Super Block	Rock City HS
Coffee and Tea Express	Bartlett Middle
English 912	Rock City HS
BIO I/II class	Rock City HS
Government/US History swap	Rock City HS
Spanish Language Content classes	Rock City HS
Dual Language Immersion	Rock City HS
LIEP Welcome Center	Balboa HS

With further discussion of this topic in both a previous (Rock City High School) and latter (Never Stop Learning) section of this paper, we will move on from this topic here, but it is safe to say that this attitude is one characteristic we would be able to observe in schools with a school culture of ML support and success. But like most observable or tangible elements of school culture, this one likely belies or is even the result of deeper elements of school culture, such as core beliefs of systems that lead to such proliferation of innovative programs.

A third characteristic that emerges from the transcripts that I've classified as observable is the inclusivity that we would see at our four schools within their clubs, activities, events and athletics. Using the code, "Clubs, Athletics, Events Reflecting inclusion and building connectedness" I could identify 14 instances, spread throughout the schools in the study of participants mentioning this as a key indicator of a school culture for ML support and success and one that is present at their schools. What the Table 11 does not tell you, however, is the level of emphasis several of the respondents placed on this characteristic. In fact, because the research supports this and since I had anticipated some level of importance placed on this topic, I had planned on listing it as a part of the "Things you'd expect but should also be included" list (see below) for this section, but the emphasis placed on this in a few schools necessitated greater unpacking. Several participants placed a heavy priority on MLs finding ways to connect with the school, and as we'll see in subsequent sections, getting past isolation to become a part of the school is a reoccurring theme across interviews, and several participants connected that one tangible way this happens is through clubs and athletics. For example, there are innovative clubs at Balboa High School to celebrate ethnicities and connect people across demographics and at Rock City to work with MLs developing writing skills. Interviewees noted a welcoming and ML-friendly track coach at Rock City and soccer coaches at Bartlett and Balboa. Some

participants referenced engagement in extracurriculars as a key measurement for success with MLs. ESL Soccer Academy at Balboa High School is a program that spans the "Innovative" and "Engagement" codes and is illustrative of the connections that extra curriculars can provide. Coach Ellis, a participant in this study, teaches advanced English and coaches soccer for BHS, and this year he wrote a grant with a partnering philanthropic organization to carry out a summer program that uses soccer to teach an English 9 course to MLs who are interested. Using this sport as the subject matter for reading and writing skills development and time on the field itself as a means to engage students and build community, Advanced Soccer Academy led to high levels of engagement, connections to the school that will last, and a few dozen students gaining English course credits over the summer, putting them on a path ahead of their peers. Mr. Smith described the event and shared "it gives you chills." When asked about the motivation behind the program he built, Coach Ellis shared "I had always seen that soccer, or any sport, was such a way to connect with students and connect them to the school, but there are so many barriers to joining a varsity sport, this allowed us to make those connections to adults in the building and to the school itself--they got jerseys, all kinds of swag with the grant—and use it for a really useful result, language development and getting an English credit." Several participants pointed to engagement in extracurriculars as a key measurement for success with MLs and that they were seeing increases in participation in the schools in our study. This tangible result, diverse and inclusive clubs and teams, serves as a key characteristic for schools developing a culture of ML support and success, so much so, it is how they are measuring their efforts.

Several other characteristics of our case study schools emerged from the data set that are worth sharing, but their regular occurrence in the research needs no further analysis here. Schools with a culture of ML support and success, according to the 21 experts in this study, have

signage and messaging in multiple languages, which likely helps facilitate their robust community outreach, another common characteristic. Participants report that their MLs don't feel "invisible" and can be seen interacting with their peers constantly, so much so that observers would not be able to tell who has that ML classification. According to our experts, a visitor to a school with a culture of ML success would likely observe these tangible characteristics:

Table 14

Summary of Observable School Culture Elements

Observable Characteristics of Schools with a Culture of ML Support and Success:
- A welcoming environment from all stakeholders - Innovative programming in and out of the classroom - Signage and messaging in multiple languages - Meaningful interactions between all students so much so that we could not be sure who the MLs were - Meaningfully integrated clubs and athletics events - Outreach efforts to the community.

Research tells us that these observable elements are only the tip of the school culture iceberg, and that they are often indicators or results of more deeply held beliefs or regular practices and routines. These are harder to observe, but more impactful.

Routines, Practices and Behavior characteristics of School Culture

It would take a bit longer to detect than the most observable elements of school culture, but the daily routines, practices and behavior of a school make up a significant portion of its school culture. In my conversations with school and division officials, school culture indicators of this category were very frequently discussed as important and revealing elements of a school culture that centers ML support and success. Table 15 shows the most commonly used codes that meet the description of routines, practices and behaviors. From this list, we can extrapolate

the characteristics of this nature that our participants believe reveal a culture of ML support and success.

Table 15

Codes Indicating Routines and Practices of Schools with Culture that Centers MLs.

Code	DHS	RCHS	BHS	BMS	Total	Example from the text
Inclusion in regular education setting	18	3	3	2	26	"inclusion. I think the way that a lot of the classes are scheduled, the ELLs are they're put right in the mix of things. (Mrs. Peterson, Bartlett Teacher)
Scheduling and its impact on MLs	8	5	3	10	26	"Were we strategic? I would say the answer is yes, we, last year, when we were having conversations about Master scheduling, when we were talking about that shift" (Mr. Ingram, Dalton Director of Student Support)
Co-planning and co-teaching	12	0	1	11	24	"collaborative teaching with EL teachers. That's been somewhat successful" (Mr. Smith, Balboa Principal)
Having "the right conversations"	9	0	6	8	23	"we're gonna do this together, you know, we're going to take it slow, we're going to work collaboratively. And we're going to have the right conversations."(Mr. D)
LIEP teachers acting as consultants	4	4	11	4	23	"we would have a workshop during like you know, the teacher days where the teacher could bring in an assignment they have, and we could basically, you know, help them, refine it so that it's more ELL friendly," (Mrs. Peterson, Bartlett Teacher)
Scaffolding, differentiation in the classroom	2	8	6	3	19	"Scaffolding is going on. And if you have lower proficiency students that differentiation and modifications are happening." (Ms. Davis, Bartlett Teacher)
Collaboration and teamwork across the school	5	3	2	9	19	"You are sort of in this community problem solving and nobody is acting like they are the end all expert on this so it's a mutual growth opportunity for everybody at the same time." (Mr. Brown, Bartlett's LIEP Division Specialist)
Importance of "hearing their story"	3	1	7	7	18	"You are just like… you tell these things to the faculty it really, hopefully, like makes all of these kids real to them." (Mr. Smith, Balboa Principal)
Importance of high-quality classroom instruction	2	1	8	4	15	"Classroom instruction, cause that's where the rubber meets the road." (Mr. Smith, Balboa Principal)
Teachers Attitude	3	1	2	9	15	"We saw a lot of people wanting to engage and to assist the English language learners to the best of their ability" (Mr. King, Bartlett Principal)

Use of Data	5	3	1	5	14	The next [important mindset] is...We talk a lot about, like, using data to inform our decisions." (Mr. Evans, Dalton Principal)
Relationships	2	5	2	2	11	"Its relationships. Yeah. And you can see it, you can see the body language you can see it and is there a wall between teachers and students." (Mr. Nichols, Rock City Teacher)
Problem solving from staff members	1	0	4	5	10	"A culture of problem-solving, like, look, we let's not just name issues, but hey, here's the issues... and here's what I propose." (Mr. Evans, Dalton Principal)
LIEP teachers as advocates	2	0	0	6	8	"[the LIEP specialist] said, Look, yes, you're a teacher, you are an advocate for these kids, before you're anything else," (Ms. Davis, Bartlett Teacher)
LIEP teachers on Content teams	8	0	0	0	8	" If there you're meeting a bunch of biology teachers, or all or biology teachers are meeting in their team meeting, and, and there's no ESOL perspective, or sped perspective, I would tell you right there, like you're, you don't have a culture to try and meet the needs of, of your most vulnerable student" (Mr. Evans, Dalton Principal)
Fun, games, and laughter matter	2	1	4	0	7	"They didn't take it too seriously. In that they didn't do the 'Woe is me.' They would joke about situations. They kept a sense of humor. that helped them work with families, you know, they just embraced what came along. And I think if you lose your sense of humor...they found the joy and the humor in it." (Mrs. Harris, Balboa's former LIEP division specialist)
Pathways	0	7	0	0	7	"This idea of like a culture of pathways...there's a lot of ways to do high school" (Ms. Taylor, Rock City Teacher)
Access scores as indicator of success	1	1	1	3	6	"So we started going back to our data, we started looking at WIDA growth for students. And we found that that our students weren't making the same level of progress as other schools..." (Mr. Ingram, Dalton Director of Student Support)

From this list of codes, we can see themes emerging that can indicate characteristics of the school cultures in our case studies, at least according to the participants. The first to stand out when looking at the most frequent codes in this section, and almost in the whole study, revolves around the importance of using the master schedule in a way that supports more

inclusion of MLs with their peers in regular-education classrooms, accomplished through the use of collaboratively taught classrooms. This might have been something we suspected based on recent literature and trends nationally, but I did not foresee this being perhaps the most significant thread across all 21 conversations.

Each school in the study has undergone a dramatic shift in how many MLs are scheduled, with more and more being placed in co-taught classrooms. This reveals something regarding the third research questions and recommendations that I will dive into in subsequent sections and chapters, the use of the master schedule as a lever for shifting school culture and centering MLs therein. The master schedule with both its flaws and strengths when relating to MLs, was the first thing that LIEP specialist Ms. Garcia wanted to talk about. Ms. Dunn of BMS used it as a metric for how effective school leaders are placing their focus on MLs. Mr. Smith referenced the move toward collaboratively taught classes as a significant step in the development of the school culture at BHS, and all of the school leaders interviewed from Dalton High School referenced their decision to drastically increase co-taught classes and thus create more inclusion for their MLs as the major step they've made as they build the school culture that supports and centers that population. Principal, Mr. Evans, discussed changes to the schedule as among the most important routines or practices that led to a shift in culture, sharing "…this comes back down to like some of the structures that we build… where, you know, we shifted a lot of [LIEP teachers] away from these sheltered self-contained ESOL classes….But, you know, we're finishing up first quarter, and I think, you know, the work that we're doing, and the quality of instruction that we're providing, overall, is just, it's just been at such a higher level. And I think our students have responded."

I cannot overstate how much scheduling came up as a topic of conversation, despite zero reference to it in the planned interview questions. The combination of the codes, "Inclusion in regular education setting," "Scheduling and its impact on MLs," "Co-planning and co-teaching," and "Pathways," would make this single category the most referenced (73 times) code group in the study. The frequency with which participants wanted to talk about how we schedule and place MLs was surprising. This is deeper, however, than just a tip that the master schedule has an impact on students or that it's a clever trick for better serving MLs, both of which are true. In many of the conversations, how students are scheduled seemed to be an indicator for where the school's values lead. The research supports this, as behaviors, routines and practices are heavily influenced by core values and deep beliefs (Hoy,1991). Our participants seemed to recognize that the construction of a school's master schedule is among the most significant controllable levers at the school-building level. Schools don't usually control funding, or zoning, or standards, but they can, in the case of these schools, control who is in what class and how the day is structured. How they do that, according to some participants, both has an impact on students and is an indicator of the core values of a school's culture. A careful read of Mr. Ingram's recounting of how DHS decided to change from mostly isolated ML sections to mostly inclusive ML sections reveals the importance of the schedule, and how he views it as a communication of what the school believes about inclusivity and efficacy. This sentiment, that the master schedule reveals the priorities of the school culture, emerged from each school I studied and from each level of school official. It was a part of the school division members, principals, LIEP department leaders and teachers.

While all of our schools make use of collaborative classes for MLs, they also use the master schedule in other ways to support international families. As was discussed in a previous

section, at Rock City High School, they use the master schedule to put all MLs in math class at the same time to allow for differentiation and flexibility. In Bartlett Middle School's district, school and division officials visited Rock City to see how they reversed the scheduling of social studies classes for MLs to maximize language development before the high stakes state test that can act as a barrier to graduation. Several participants discussed the idea that there are different pathways through high school built into their system and that this has had a tremendous impact on how they can support and find success for MLs. This idea, that all students don't follow the same path, is counter to the traditional high school model, but this multiple-pathways model seems to be a part of the cultures of the schools in this study. A relatively new teacher, Ms. Taylor from Rock City, counted this as a significant reason for the success of MLs at her school. She went on to say, "So after English 912, students can maybe take a few different paths, like the nice thing that I really appreciated about our programs here is that it's not cookie cutter, like there are a lot of different pathways towards graduation based on a student's needs. And like, language is a very developmental thing, but also can be completely at different paces for different students." The idea of multiple pathways toward completion was pervasive and another example of the emphasis that our participants placed on how MLs are scheduled within the school setting.

As we unpack the remarkable emphasis that our participants put into discussion of scheduling and inclusion, their comments fell into two groups with regard to the reason that this was so important. On one side, inclusion was vital. MLs need to be around their peers who are native English speakers, and this change in the way they are scheduled helps accomplish that. Another benefit emerged that was surprising, however. When the schedule is shifted, this made LIEP teachers into collaborative partners with regular education teachers and put them onto content teams. When a school like DHS, for example, makes the decision to dissolve an

"adaptive" or "sheltered" ML World History class and instead place those MLs into regular education classrooms, the teacher who would have taught that class becomes the partner of the Social-studies teacher assigned to World History. They also join the world history content team or their professional learning community (PLC). This, according to many of our participants, has a significant effect on the culture of the school, specifically, and emphasis on teamwork in the service of our Multilingual Learners.

Several codes illustrated the importance of teamwork as an essential practice in schools with an ML-centered school culture. "Co-planning and co-teaching" were mentioned in every school by nearly every participant. "Collaboration and teamwork across the school" came up often. At Dalton High School, their principal, Mr. Evans, stressed the importance of "having the right conversations," and I saw evidence of that across the schools in this study. Whether it was by design or a result of other factors, it is very evident that in each of our schools, LIEP teachers do not work in isolation; instead, they work together with content teachers and the rest of the school on a daily basis in service to their students. Participants discussed two specific roles of LIEP teachers that may surprise the reader. The first is the importance of having the LIEP teacher on individual content teams or PLCs. These grade-level or content-area teams do much of the instructional work of the school, planning together, evaluating student work and making adjustments, and discussing best practices and pedagogy. The presence of a voice for MLs in those key meetings, informal discussion, or planning sessions may be a non-negotiable according to several members of the study. Listen to how Dr. Foster, Dalton assistant principal, describes this,

> "Every ESL teacher is on the content team for that content that they team teach with. And so, not only are they helping their team teacher in that section that they're team teaching, but they're helping their content team by pointing out areas that might need to be scaffolded, or suggestions for how things could be done differently…The

> biggest thing that I've heard from teachers is content teams meet…thinking that all kids come with the same background knowledge. And so reminding content teams that you have a huge group of kids that haven't been here, so don't rely on the fact that they've learned that back in sixth grade, because that's not the case. And so, just having that, I feel like has been a huge shift for school, having those types of conversations."

Her principal, Mr. Evans, believed that if he were assessing whether a school had a culture that centered ML support and success, the first thing he'd look for is whether LIEP teachers were a part of these teams.

The second role that LIEP teachers seem to take on frequently in schools with this type of culture is the role of consultant. With remarkable consistency, experienced LIEP teachers shared stories about how other teachers would approach them, either through informal conversations or- more often- planned sessions and discuss how to adjust their lessons to better meet the needs of the MLs they teach. This role of consultant does not appear on the job description for LIEP teachers, but it was reported to happen at each school in our study. Balboa High School offered a "Scaffolding and Differentiation Workshop" during professional development days, led by their LIEP department chair; several members of their team brought this up during interviews as a key practice in their support of MLs. Bartlett Middle School has seen an increase in the frequency with which content teachers approach LIEP colleagues for advice on lessons. Rock City's department leader shared that just prior to an interview she had been responding to a teacher's formal request for help on a lesson, and her colleague in the LIEP department, Ms. Taylor, shared that her math-teaching friend informally asks for her advice quite frequently in their daily conversations as friends and co-workers. It seems that in schools with a culture for ML success, LIEP teachers are certainly not isolated and engaging their students alone, but instead a part of co-teaching classes, key members of the planning and content-teams, and act as coaches and consultants for their colleagues as the whole staff engages in the important work of

educating this population. I will discuss in the next chapter how this concept, setting the environment for frequent collaboration and consultations, is a very controllable and significant step a school can take toward duplicating the successes found in our case schools.

The impact of master scheduling for the support of ML inclusion and the emphasis on teamwork among school staff emerged as the most frequently referenced practice in the interviews for this study, but there were also some surprising findings that each spanned several schools and are important to note in this section. The first is surprising in that it did not emerge from the body of research but seemed to have had a significant impact; several participants in our study repeated the belief that a key aspect of their school's culture was that many adults involved took the time to listen to the stories of their international students and MLs. I used the code "Importance of Hearing their story," and will illustrate it here. Ms. Dunn from Bartlett Middle shared what she has seen happening is an increase in the number of staff listening and hearing the stories of the MLs in her school and then an increase in advocacy and willingness to do whatever it takes to help them.

> When a kid tells me how they *walked* here from Honduras. … Yeah, they walked here, like they literally walked here. And when you hear that story, … you can't help but suddenly need to be an advocate for that kid and that family…and once a teacher hears that, and gets to hear that firsthand story, it really does begin to change the way they see the kids. I think that that over those four years, that is one of the things that's changed is they've heard the story.

Ms. Dunn, the LIEP department chair at Balboa, described the impact of this idea on the administrators she worked with.

> All these phone calls and home visits, like we really got a much deeper understanding about how deep the needs are [and] how interesting the needs are for Els. I think that they kind of knew on a surface level.... And it's easy to think about intellectually, but …just there's something different when you go, and you start to engage with the community in that way.

Mr. Smith, Principal of Balboa spoke at length on this topic, sharing his own personal journey of hearing about a student who road across Mexico on top of a train to come to America, and another who drives his mother 4 hours round trip to work each day before and after school and then is having trouble staying awake in class. He shared the impact that had on him as an advocate for MLs and he believes the same thing is happening to those around him:

> One of the teachers did a lesson about what's the bravest thing you've ever done, and they talked about "I swam across a river to get here, and I don't know how to swim" you are just like… you tell these things to the faculty it really, hopefully, like makes all of these kids real to them

I was not expecting to hear that impact of simply listening and getting to know the students and their stories on the culture of a school, but it was an undeniable finding from this study. It turns out that research outside of the LIEP, school culture and school leadership fields of study supports this through a construct know as intergroup contact theory. Beginning with Allport in the 1950s and continuing to this day through the work of Pettigrew and Tropp and others, intergroup contact theory holds that prejudice across racial or ethnic lines can be mitigated by increasing contact between the two groups as long as certain criteria are met (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2009). The participants in this study are reporting that the more contact they have with MLs, the more chances to hear remarkable stories of grit and perseverance, the more compelled they are to find ways to support them. More research is necessary to see if intergroup contact theory applies to this situation, and I will discuss this in the implications section of chapter 5. Such a simple yet powerful concept has significant implications for future research and for possible next steps for school leaders. This finding also intersects with the importance of inclusive scheduling practices, since the more individuals who are in a position to hear the stories of the MLs in their school, the more likely they are to be affected by this

phenomenon that leads to advocacy and action. This key lynchpin has exciting implications that will be discussed later.

A second surprising finding in this category of observable school practices, routines and behaviors emerged from a few, but not all of the schools in this study, but I thought it was important to highlight. Several participants referenced the importance of fun, laughter and games in the work to support MLs, citing this as an aspect of the school's culture. Mrs. Harris former LIEP division specialist described one school like this, "They didn't take it too seriously. In that they didn't do the 'woe is me.'…They would joke about situations. They kept a sense of humor. that helped them work with families, you know, they just embraced what came along." Another division-level LIEP specialist discussed the importance of keeping the "joy factor," and making sure that all the support like extra tutoring and more time in the classroom didn't crowd out the fun of school. Among the most exciting programs discussed in the study, the Advanced Soccer Academy at Balboa High school was built around incorporating something fun as a hook for improving literacy. Mrs. Peterson, a strong but relatively inexperienced teacher described making sure that the work was always a privilege, and fun. In her words, "It's a 'get-to', and not a 'have-to." She recognized that having fun on the job with our students was so vital to the success of her kids. She went on, "we joke around it like we're basically like part time actors because they have to be basically silly with our job. Well, you know, a lot of teachers do. Um, so as long as there's like, laughter, that's like a huge thing… at [Balboa High School]." For a few schools in our study, laughter, fun and games were a part of the school culture and the participants that I interviewed believe it to be a key observable element of the school's culture that impacts the support and success of their MLs.

In summary, the most important observable practices, routines, and behaviors associated with a school culture that centers ML success and support are a careful use of the master schedule, a heavy emphasis on teamwork with varying roles for LIEP teachers, as well as surprising elements like listening to the stories of international students and families and incorporating fun and laughter into this important work. Those elements are listed below in Table 16 for the reader's reference.

Table 16

Summary of Observable Behaviors and Practices of School Cultures for MLs

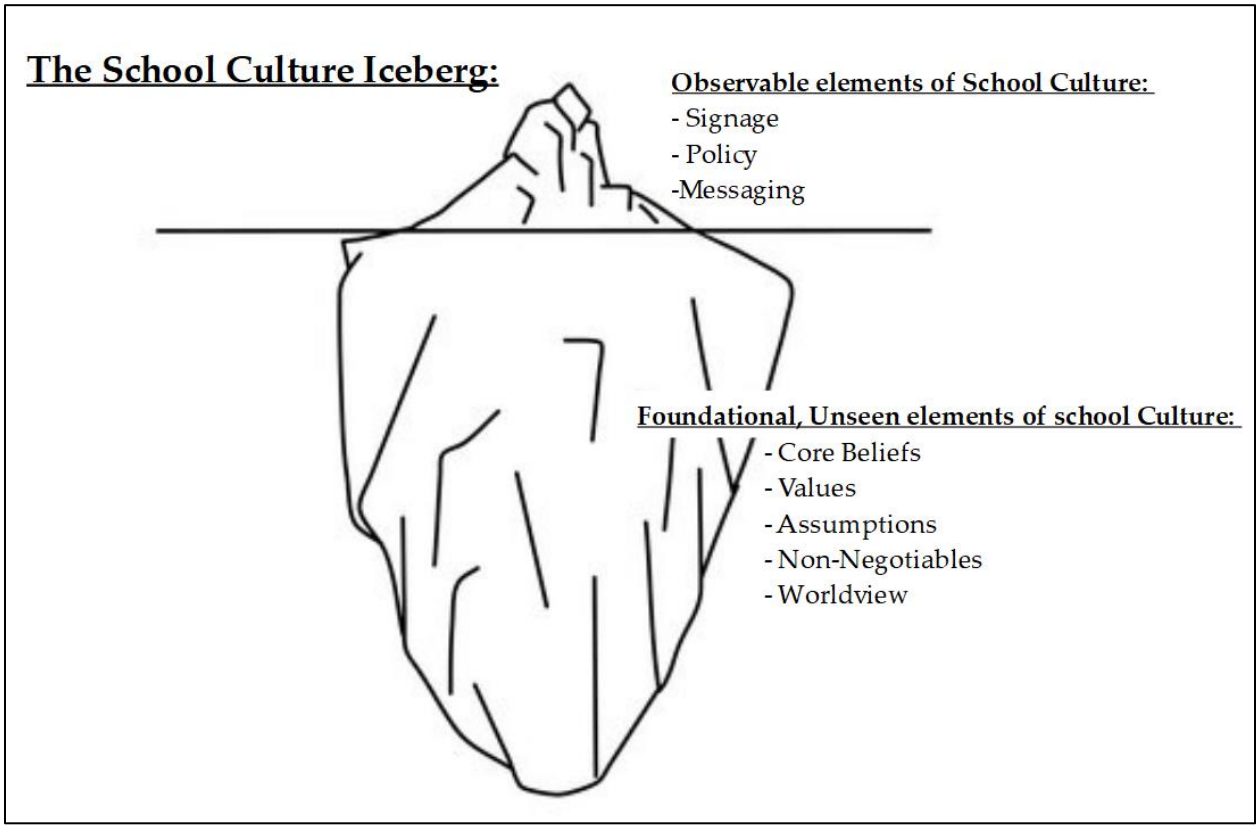
Observable Behaviors and Practices of Schools with a Culture of ML Support and Success:
- Intentional use of master schedule for Inclusion and innovative pathways
- Emphasis on teamwork involving LIEP teachers as consultants, co-teachers and PLC teammates.
- Staff Members take the time to hear the story of the MLs in their school
- Presence of fun, laughter, and games in the work

Core Values, Beliefs and Mindset as Elements of School Culture

The most impactful level of school culture elements is also the hardest to observe. The core beliefs, deeply held values and perspectives of a school and its stakeholders are the mass of ice below the surface of the school culture iceberg (see figure 5)

Figure 5

The Elements of school Culture Represented as an Iceberg



Note: Based on the work of Hoy, 1991 and Schein, 1985

This was a key area to explore in the semi-structured interviews with participants from four Virginia secondary schools, and several themes and elements emerged as findings. I will outline the codes that applied to these deeply held beliefs that indicated elements of school culture in Table 17 and then unpack them in the section that follows.

Table 17

Foundational Elements of School Culture Case School Participants Referenced

Code	DHS	RCHS	BHS	BMS	Total	Example from the text
Presence of MLs and diversity as an ***asset***	3	5	15	5	28	"Viewing them with respect as an asset to the community school versus a burden that we have to deal with." (Ms. Dunn, Balboa HS)
Having High Expectations for Students and Staff	12	1	12	2	27	"I think the same levels of thinking that we're asking our honors level students should be the same levels of thinking that we should be asking our ESL students" (Mr. Evans, Dalton HS)
Never stop learning	3	5	9	2	19	**"**Teachers who volunteer for the coaching cycles, they're, they're very, they're willing, they're, and they put a lot of work into a lot of effort into it. And then, and then a real open to having honest feedback about what's happening in their classrooms, I see them grow a lot" (Mrs. Garcia, Rock City)
Having "big hearted people" on staff	1	7	6	4	18	**"**I'm going to still like you and love you tomorrow, regardless of whatever this test says. And you know how many kids need to hear that?" (Mr. Nichols, Rock City HS)
Professional Development	3	2	4	8	17	**"**Faculty meetings, its usually an agenda item. What are we doing to support our Els?" (Mr. Smith, Balboa HS)
Sense of family	0	0	6	10	16	"This is a fully functioning family unit in a sense and there's buy-in from all around" (Mr. King, Bartlett MS)
Prioritization the needs of MLs as a school	9	2	2	1	14	"We're nowhere, nowhere close to where we want to be. I think, you know, this is the first we're only one quarter into the, you know, the modification of our scheduling. And we've seen, you know, we've definitely seen bumps, we've had teachers, you know, say that this felt like it wasn't gonna work, but we, I think you just have to, we stay the course."
Humanizing: Seeing students as individuals not statistics	1	5	5	2	13	"Putting a face on the [ML population], humanizing it" (Mr. Smith, Balboa HS)
"Whatever it takes": grit	2	2	0	8	12	I've had situation where school counselors want to do stuff that's beyond what we are allowed to do...That means they've gotten past the "I can't" so it's like "how are we going to do this" (Mr. Ingram, Dalton HS)
Intrinsic quality of the teacher as the factor	1	2	4	5	12	"I find that ability to teach an ML is the ability to teach period. So, there are some folks who just have an instinct for teaching" (Ms. Davis, Balboa HS)
Deeper learning for all kids	5	5	1	1	12	"The thing that would be good for language learners...is to create more project based more collaborative and relevant or meaningful experiences." (Mrs. Garcia, Rock City)
Collective ownership: The whole school takes responsibility	2	0	3	5	10	"Collective ownership basically means it's not. It's not you and me or them. Yeah, like, look, this is not a teacher administrator thing or a parent versus teachers thing. We're all in this together like this is we have to bring this idea that, that its collective ownership and, and your success is my success, and it's our success." (Mr. Evans, Dalton HS)
Not settling					9	"We're nowhere, nowhere close to where we want to be...I think you just have to; we stay the course." (Mr. Ingram, Dalton HS)
Sense of belonging	2	3	2	0	7	"This is a fully functioning family unit in a sense and there's buy-in from all around" (Mr. King, Bartlett MS)

Intrinsic Compassion of Staff Members. One of the most frequent and consistent themes arising from the data in these qualitative interviews involved the intrinsic kindness

present in those who worked with MLs in our case student schools. As an interviewer, I either met or heard about amazing educators who seemed called to go above and beyond the expectations of the job for their students. There were so many of them then it rose to the level of being a part of each school's culture. I probed the participants for more details about the qualities of those individuals and therefore the culture of the school, and I found that respondents had a difficult time putting to words the values of the individuals doing this work other than "big hearted," "kind" "compassionate." The participants feel that their school has enough of these intrinsically conscientious individuals, that it makes a difference in the culture of their entire staff. Ms. Dunn, LIEP Department Leader at Balboa, said in response to my probing about the values threading through her colleagues,

> What is the string that connects the people? I think they just really want to be good at their jobs. They like the kids and they want them to succeed. Yeah. I just want I think in each of those people, I think of like, kind of just big-hearted people. Yeah, like they have that kind of vibe in all of their work.

Mrs. Peterson called it a "servant's heart," and said, "…as cliche as it possibly is to say I think that as teachers and educators, you know, compassion is one of the characteristics that we have to have. But in order to and this is not a pat on the back for myself by any means, but to work with English learners. It is just a compassion, like, like nothing else."

Mr. Ingram of Dalton High School said, "the valuing students for who they are and not what they can produce immediately, I think is, is more important to this work." Each of these educators is referencing an X-factor value that teachers who are contributing to the culture that centers success for MLs, a core value of compassion and a "big heart" for their students.

While this finding is likely not surprising—compassionate teachers contribute to a culture that supports MLs—what was surprising was just how quickly and often the conversation went

to this intrinsic quality of the teachers and staff, despite my attempts, as the interviewer, to actively steer it away from that topic beyond it to more concrete or novel explanations. The presence of passionate educators with deep compassion seems to be a non-negotiable for a school culture to center the success and support of MLs. As Ms. Peterson, LIEP teacher from Balboa put it,

> So, other educators might have this mindset, but it's almost like their cup is full with how much compassion that you're able to pour out into a student. And, you know, just like anybody, people are different. And some people their strength is to work with different kinds of people. And if they're unable to pour that compassion out on to a student that may need it that I think that's kind of a difference maker and itself... What's the difference maker? what's kind of The X Factor? it's …that compassion. So …that's interesting that it's not …the experience or that it's not the pedagogy. [it's not] the classroom program I used. It's really just that orientation of compassion.

How a school gets to that point is important to the next section and the third research question, but it is hard to deny that this is the pervasive feeling for participants at all schools.

Asset-Based Thinking. While it would be impossible to deny the importance of compassionate educators based on the consistency with which that topic emerged from the interviews for this study, it was the passion with which this next set of core value elements of school culture was communicated that stands out in the data. The first of two themes from this category involve how staff members and the community view MLs. Not their willingness or desire to support this group of students or their level of commitment, but instead whether international families and students are viewed as assets to the community and a belief that all students can learn. Across each case school, school and division-based participants spoke about how important it is that the members of staff and community view the presence of MLs as a positive strength for their school, rather than a challenge to be overcome or a problem. This asset-based thinking, the opposite of a deficit-mindset, emerged in the data in two ways. It was

either directly referenced by participants as a deeply rooted but foundational element of their school value-system (and therefor culture) or it was evident in the participants, themselves, based on their responses.

The school and division staff that participated in this study spoke so genuinely enthusiastic about what MLs brought to the school. From Balboa HS we heard phrases like "we're just so lucky to have a huge population [of MLs]" (Ms. Dunn), and "a hidden benefit to going to school here. You are exposed to so many different types of people." (Mr. Smith). From Bartlett Middle, their principal beamed with "The demographics [and the diversity represented therein] are the best part of our school." at Dalton, the principal demonstrated his asset-based thinking when he said, "we really had a lot of success…because of our ESOL students not in spite of [them]." Ms. Harris, LIEP specialist in Balboa's district described one school, "They get excited to have a new culture, they find it interesting.". Mr. Nichols, Rock City math teacher beamed with pride discussing a particular day in class when students dress in the traditional garb from their countries of origin and how much he and his students learn from one another. The participants were tremendous examples of asset-based thinking that must be present in a school for its culture to center ML success, but they also called it out as a core value that they see entrenched or emerging in their school cultures.

That same Rock City math teacher, Mr. Nichols, referenced an asset-based mindset as something that he has learned that informs his daily instruction (he allows students to discover more, rather than feeling the need to over-scaffold in math just because of a language barrier). Ms. Dunn, from Balboa, referenced this as a key change necessary for a school to best support its MLs, and she used the same language. "Viewing [MLs] with respect as an asset to the community school versus a burden that we have to deal with. That's kind of the attitude to

change, … the good spot that we'd want to be in." Mr. Quinn, LIEP specialist in Bartlett Middle's division said something similar, emphasizing his work with other schools to stop the deficit mindset that is not allowing MLs time to get connected to school because the immediate need to over-remediate crowds out the parts of school that may form a meaningful connection. The presence of MLs improves the discourse, diversity of thought and richness of a school community, and the individual qualities of each ML are assets to a school. The schools that possess a school culture of support and success for MLs seem to have individuals who recognize that and who live it out in their actions, languages, and decisions each day.

High Expectations: All Kids Can Learn. Very related to asset-based thinking, the schools in this study each possess a core value that all students can learn, and they hold their students to high expectations. This concept seems absolutely critical to the school culture central to this study; participants talked about this with great passion. Consider where Mr. Evans, Dalton High School principal, prioritizes this concept on the list of core values for his school. When he took over as principal of Dalton High School a few years ago, Mr. Evans and his staff discussed and generated 10 core values that they all must share in order to do the challenging work of education. Participants were able to share several from memory in each interview. When I asked Mr. Evans which was the most important in order to create a culture of ML support and success, he did not hesitate or equivocate at all, "I think the first and only question is, it's just the belief that all kids can learn. Like that, that has to be non-negotiable."

Mr. Quinn, the LIEP specialist for a very large division similarly and independently placed the belief in our students as a top priority, "I think it is a belief that those kids can do it, I feel like there is one of the traps that English learners that we fall into with our ELS is giving them too much support, where they become disinterested in school."

Dr. Foster pointed to an experience this year as newly-formed LIEP collaborative class pairs had to adjust their expectations up, "what [the LIEP teachers] told me is like, seeing the level, and what kids need to know, in those classrooms, made them reflect on what they had been doing prior to team teaching. And, you know, just kind of, they've been thinking like, this is I what I was doing wasn't enough for my kids. Like, I my expectations were not high enough for my students." Time and time again in this study, the topic of expectations and belief in students' abilities emerged from the interview transcripts. Individuals in different positions and across the state from one another came to the same conclusion, that support, and scaffolding were important and a willingness and compassion for students was vital. It was also important to keep in mind that our ML students should be held to a high standard and pushed with high expectations; this value is dependent on an even deeper core belief, that all students are capable of learning at a high level. That core belief is pushing Dalton and Rock City High Schools to bring more deeper learning opportunities to their MLs, according to our participants. As Dalton's Mr. Evans shared,

> I think the same levels of thinking that we're asking our honors level students should be the same levels of thinking that we should be asking our ESL students or special ed students. Now granted, that some of our students may need scaffolds to get there. But I would tell you…we should create that scaffold, and we should offer it maybe a kid in honors level class that needs that scaffold in order to do that, for this one thing.

While it appears that DHS is still working toward this reality, it is apparent that their core belief, that all students are capable of –and should regularly be-- learning at a high level is driving their work. It also appears that this tension between pouring on support and scaffolding for our MLs and the need for high expectations in order to prepare them for a challenging world after high school is ongoing, even for a school with an undeniable school culture that centers ML success. Mr. Smith, principal at Balboa, put that into words for us, "So I do think something that we have

to continually address, is expectations for what they can do and seeing that if given the right supports, they can do things that other kids can do." Schools with a culture that centers ML success have shared common core values that all students, particularly MLs, are an asset to the community, able to learn at a high level, and capable of meeting high expectations.

A Culture of Collective Ownership. The schools in this study, according to the participants who work in and around them, pointed to deep beliefs regarding students that they believed make a difference in the culture of the school, namely the idea that all students can learn and are an asset to the community. They also revealed important beliefs about how the staff members in our case schools view their work that are impactful elements of school culture. The most notable, based on their responses, are a culture of continuous growth, which I coded as "never settle" or "never stop learning," and a "collective ownership," which is the idea that all members of the community have a part in the work and that the work will likely make an impact.

The participants in our study referenced this concept, either in name or in describing their lived experiences, time and time again. In their perception, almost all of the members of the staff and school community began to take responsibility for the support and success of the MLs in their schools as a group, and this was a significant core value element of their school culture. This presented itself in the transcripts as teachers talking about how all members of the staff had a part in supporting international students, or how the staff worked together. We see this manifest itself in the behaviors listed in a previous section, such as teamwork and collaboration, but it starts with a core belief that the responsibility for every student lies with every member of the community. LIEP specialist Mr. Brown from Bartlett Middle's division called it, "community problem solving." Ms. Dunn from the same division addressed it in the importance in how content teachers view MLs, not as her students, but as "our students." Dr. Foster,

assistant principal from Dalton High, used similar language, “we can't… as an ESL department, we can't do it all. It's not on us to just help these kids be successful…. As a school, these are our students, and so everybody needs to have that ownership of who these students are. And so, in order for that to happen, other people need to be involved in their lives…it has to be through a whole community working together to make that happen.” Each of these educators is echoing a deeply held belief that the entire school must believe that they are helping the MLs in their community find success. This is collective ownership, and it emerged from each of our four case study schools.

Mr. Evans, principal of Dalton HS reported directly, without prompting, that this was a core belief that his leadership team and faculty openly discuss,

> We talk about collective ownership… collective ownership basically means it's not you and me or them…This is not a teacher administrator thing or a parents versus teachers thing. We're all in this together. We have to bring this idea that, that it's collective ownership and, and your success is my success, and it's our success.

Never Settle and Never Stop Learning. Just as Mr. Smith shared Balboa’s ongoing work to navigate the tension between effusive supports and high expectations, each case school revealed signs that they are constantly improving, learning, tweaking, and growing in their quest for ML success. It is worth noting the very frequent but not-to-be-overlooked mentions of professional development opportunities apparent in each school, but what really stands out from the data is how frequently and passionately the participants revealed this sense that for all the statistical growth and attention their schools have received for progress in their LIEP programs, they were not satisfied and very eager to improve. There exists in each locale a healthy impatience for the need to do so much more. At Balboa, Principal Mr. Smith was quick to ask if his staff, among the most compassionate and dedicated I came across, could fall into a trap of

over-scaffolding and not challenging its MLs enough. Even during the interview for this study, he stopped to reflect on what more he could do to examine this question. The LIEP department leader discussed plenty of strong teachers and leaders in her school working to support MLs but also a desire to make sure this was happening in every classroom every day.

At both Balboa and Rock City High Schools, a long-standing culture of support for MLs has existed, but both wonder if they could be doing more, particularly to put MLs at the forefront and challenge them to the same level that native-speaking peers are prepared for life after high school. Rock City High School is the epitome of this idea that all involved in the support of MLs must constantly grow in this practice and that the best in the state have a deeply seeded element to their school culture that they shouldn't settle and must push forward. I learned from two interviews outside of RCHS that this high school is often a destination for localities looking to see innovative support for MLs in action, and there is a significant library of research as to why this is happening, praising the work of this division. Reading through the transcripts of interviews with several teachers and the LIEP specialist hardly demonstrates this sense of accomplishment. While they recognize how far they have come in the support of MLs there is more about what more than can and should be doing than what is already in place. Examine how Ms. Garcia, the clear driver of innovation and support for MLs in Rock City—and therefore one of the most accomplished ML leaders in the state—talks about what the work her division still has to do. Regarding the number of documents and communications they have translated, "my sense is, well, that that's not that's not good enough." Regarding how core values consistently play out in decisions for the school, she stated, "If every decision that you make doesn't stem first and foremost for that need, then you're just all talk." On whether her school--the one with

the reputation across the state for being among the very best at serving MLs—is doing enough, she is not willing to settle and rest on the work they've done,

> Until we have that type of wraparound service until spaces, places for families to use this institution as their core institution of support. … So, until we actually rebuild all of that, with our language learners in mind, then for me, it's not enough. Not good enough.

It wasn't just division leadership that held this attitude at Rock City. I came across almost identical language from Dalton High School's participants. The idea that they are just getting started and have a long way to go was a pronounced theme through each interview there. Mr. Ingram put it, "We're nowhere, nowhere close to where we want to be. … But we, I think you just have to, we stay the course." Dr. Foster's words for it were "There's still so much to do…. We're not there yet." The same sentiment was shared from each school. They are pleased with the progress they've made, but there is so much more they must and are prepared to do to support their MLs and families. This core belief that there is more work to be done, an ethos of never settling, seems to be a core belief element of school culture inherent in each of our case schools.

This constant drive to improve how MLs are served in their schools is perhaps best summed up by Dr. Foster, assistant principal at the wonderfully diverse Dalton High School, who shared that all the efforts being made to support MLs would never be enough until those efforts are simply a part of their work and MLs are not a secondary thought, but at the forefront of every decision the school makes. In other words, as long as we can list out the ways a school is supporting its MLs, then such support is still extra and "in addition to," rather than ingrained and infused into every act, action, value, and observable element of school culture,

> I always think is my end goal is that our ELLs are not an afterthought when decisions are being made as a school, whether it's putting up a banner, or if it's creating an event is like, Oh, what about our ELs? Or

> what about our ELL families? I don't want that to be the second conversation…that should be a part of the beginning conversation is so we have all of these kids, let's make sure we have all of these things are in place to make sure we meet those needs.

Schools with a culture that centers support and success for MLs don't settle or rest on their accomplishments in that field. Instead, they constantly examine what they have not done, and they are open about the work that is still to come, knowing that as long as MLs and their families are "add-ons" (Mrs. Garcia) or "secondary conversations" (Dr. Foster) or "an afterthought" (Mr. Evans, Mr. Smith, Ms. Dunn), then there is still work to be done.

Review of Core-Value Elements of School Culture at Case Study Schools

According to the participants in our study, the case study schools that possess a school culture that centers ML support and success have some common deeply held beliefs and core values. These are more challenging to observe and quantify, but they surfaced as themes running throughout the interviews conducted for this study. Participants reported that their schools had an ethos of deeply compassionate teachers and staff. They reported that an asset-based thinking was foundational to their approach; student diversity was a positive that made their school stronger. They reported a core value of holding every student to high expectations because all students are capable of deep learning. Participants reported this feeling of collective ownership amongst their faculty and communities as well as a belief that they are still learning and will continue to learn. Lastly, each school in this study was adamant that they were not doing enough and refused to be complacent based on what they had achieved for their MLs. This "never settle" attitude continues to push them to constantly improve in their work.

Table 18

Summary of Participant-Reported Core Value Elements of School Culture

Core-Value Elements of Schools with a Culture of ML Support and Success:
- Intrinsic Compassion for all students - Asset-based thinking for students from varying backgrounds - High Expectations: All kids can learn - Collective Ownership of Student Success - Belief that Educators should never stop learning - An attitude of never settling and constant improvement.

The deeply held core values of a school are the most impactful elements of school culture and likely influence all other elements, such as behaviors and tangible aspects. In this study, they were as apparent as a sign on the wall or a published routine because of how frequently and strongly they were referenced by participants. These most ethereal elements of the school cultures I explored seemed to jump out of the transcripts because of the passion and frequency with which participants noted them. These foundational elements of school culture, deep beliefs and core values, summarized above in Table 19, don't exist in isolation and likely impact each of the other elements of school culture outlined in this chapter.

Conclusion of RQ2

What characterizes the school cultures of our case sites that center ML support and success? First, their core values include compassion, high expectations, constant improvement, asset-based thinking around diversity and collective ownership of student success. Those values likely influence the behaviors that are seen on a daily basis by the participants in the study. A school culture that values collective ownership logically places a heavy emphasis on teamwork, seen in the schools in this study as involvement from the whole staff, co-planning, the use of LIEP teachers as consultants and PLC teammates. A school culture made of individuals with intrinsic compassion for students may factor into the welcoming atmosphere at each location and

interact with staff members taking the time to hear the lived experiences of their students. Such intrinsic compassionate love for kids could also contribute to many of our schools maintaining a sense of joy in the midst of the challenging work. The high expectations and asset-mindset inherent in the value system of the schools likely show up in a school division focusing on inclusion and using innovative scheduling to remove MLs from isolation. Finally, a school culture that refuses to rest on its previous work and is constantly learning from others and its own experiences likely results in the explosion of innovative program seen in the study. In this chapter, I divided the elements of school culture into categories based on previous research as an organizational device, but in reality, each of these elements is interwoven with the others to form the fabric of a school culture. Each element intersects with all of the others and is constantly changing, either reinforcing values, behaviors and routines or undermining them. Each element simultaneously affects and is affected by the human beings and events that make up a school. As challenging as it is to name those elements and isolate their impact on the four schools in this study, it is impossible to deny their existence, at least in the minds of our participants based on the consistency with which they were referenced and the passion with which our participants called them out as a part of their school culture. The elements summarized in Table 19 truly are, as Bowers would put it, "The way that we do things around here," in schools that center ML support and success.

Table 19

Characteristics of School Cultures that Center ML Support and Success

Category (Level of Abstractness)	**Key Characteristics Across Case Schools:**
Tangible Characteristics	- **A welcoming environment from all stakeholders** - **Innovative programming in and out of the classroom** - **Signage and messaging in multiple languages** - **Meaningful interactions between all students so much so that we could not be sure who the MLs were** - **Meaningfully integrated clubs and athletics events** - **Outreach efforts to the community.**
Observable Behaviors and Practices	- **Intentional use of master schedule for Inclusion and innovative pathways** - **Emphasis on teamwork involving LIEP teachers as consultants, co-teachers and PLC teammates.** - **Staff Members take the time to hear the story of the MLs in their school** - **Presence of fun, laughter, and games in the work**
Core-Value Elements	- **Intrinsic Compassion for all students** - **Asset-based thinking for students from varying backgrounds** - **High Expectations: All kids can learn** - **Collective Ownership of Student Success** - **Belief that Educators should never stop learning** - **An attitude of never settling and constant improvement.**

Research Question 3: How do participants believe such a culture developed at their school?

The third research question in this study proved to be the most challenging, but some data emerged from our case study schools that presents a hazy picture of how our participants view the forces that led to their school culture being one that was worthy of this study. The challenge emerged, in large part, because participants had trouble articulating exactly that might have led to their school adopting the beliefs, behaviors and routines that, to them, were just "the way we do things at our school." This was predictable given the hard-to-define nature of school culture and the same challenges to define it are well-documented in other studies. It is logical to assume that since just defining school culture is challenging, that pinpointing the factors that led to its development in a school is doubly difficult, compounded by all the many forces that simultaneously act on a school during its existence, including community, students, staff, division, events, physical constraints, and dynamic personalities. As Mr. Smith, principal of Balboa put it, "It's hard to put your finger on when and how it happened, but it's just part of who we are."

The question is further complicated by the fact that several themes in the data could be interpreted as either results of a culture of ML success or a cause of it. Some may be both a catalyst and result simultaneously or simply correlational. Several examples of this emerge in the list of codes and themes from interview transcripts, but one example may help illustrate this. As has been discussed previously in this chapter, one common practice or routine element of school cultures in this study was the inclusion of MLs in classes with their native-speaking peers. This was listed as an element of school culture in each of the case schools, but it is unclear if this is the fruit of an ML-centered school culture or a catalyst and cause for it. It is very likely both, but this question further complicates the third research question of our study and accounts for our

participants' difficulties identifying the factors that led to their school's current culture. This question applies to many of the school culture elements identified in our data, including Collective Ownership, High expectations, Hearing their Story, Innovative Programming, and many others.

Notwithstanding the challenges for our participants in articulating this answer, several themes emerged from the data that are important to note in this section. I've listed the codes that pulled from the data set in Table 20 for the reader's reference, in order of frequency that they appeared across all interview transcripts. What follows brings organization and context to these emerging themes.

Table 20

Codes Categorized as Factors for Development of School Culture for MLs.

Generated Code	**Number of references**
Leadership (principal)	29
Teacher led Program	28
Inclusion in regular setting	26
Leadership (division)	25
Collaboration and teamwork across the school	19
Having big-hearted people on staff	18
Importance of hearing their Story	18
Professional development	17
Can't ignore: demographics	18
Sense of family	16
Hiring/staffing	15
Leadership (department leader)	15
Experience leads to efficacy	13
Leadership (teacher)	11
How a zoned program affects school culture	10
School History	7

There are also other phenomena that appear to be taking place that are worth noting, but since they are connections that I am making from separate data points, they will be explored further in Chapter 5. The scope of this study is to determine what elements are present at those

schools and ask for the perspectives of the participants on how those elements may have come into being. The best I can hope for is to report on what the participants believe, which will be discussed in this section, and offer discussion and recommendations for further study—a significant section for this research question—which will be reserved for Chapter 5. First, let's start with what the participants named directly. I have broken them into three categories for this paper as a means of organization for the reader: Environmental Factors, Leadership and School Actions.

Environmental Factors: Time, numbers and zoned programs.

The common element of these factors leading to a school culture that centers ML success is that the circumstances of the school were such that the participants felt that the school community had to develop the elements of school culture that I've discussed in this chapter. While they acknowledge that there were other forces, leadership and a compassionate staff for example, affecting the school culture, we could not discount that environmental and demographic forces acted on their staff and community that resulted in a centering of ML support and success. This occurred differently, or at least at different times, for each of our four participating case schools.

Such a discussion must start with shifts in population that affected the demographics of our case schools. In each set of interviews, participants could recount the moments of their school's history, usually to the year, when there occurred a population shift that forced them to take a hard look at programming and school culture as it related to their ballooning ML population, and that moment became a catalyst for school culture growth. Balboa's occurred first, with refugees from the Vietnam war, according to their principal at the time, and then shifted several times since then, impacting the school's culture along the way. The LIEP

specialist and department leader at Rock City named the influx of migrant working immigrants around the turn of the last century as a catalyst. Rezoning, geographically at Dalton High School and programmatically at Bartlett Middle, led to this moment in these two schools. These shifts in population led to needs for innovative programming, scheduling shifts, teamwork, eventually collective ownership and all of the elements that exist in their school cultures now. While a look at the data of each school shows some long-term gradual increases with these years standing out as jumps, participants emphatically point to these moments as foundational to the culture that exists in their schools today.

The population of ML students grew in these important moments, according to study participants, to the point that the staff and community had no choice but to respond and make sure that support for MLs was a part of their school culture. Mr. Smith, Balboa principal explained, "the numbers [of ML students] create the need." Mr. Evans, school leader at Dalton. "Over time, this change in population led to a change in the teachers and the culture of the school." Ms. Fisher, LIEP teacher, stated, "So it's almost to the point, right now I guess in population in our city having been this way for a while, there's like, when you put in your application to Rock City High School, you know… there's going to be immigrants in your classes." The population change in each of the case schools was seen as a catalyst for making sure that the staff, community and the school culture itself couldn't ignore this group of students. As Ms. Garcia, LIEP division specialist, put it"…We have critical mass, so we have no choice. No choice, no choice but to do some things differently." This outside factor cannot be ignored as a central catalyst toward a culture of ML support and success in the eyes of our participants. This factor leaves little room for recommendations for school leaders, but it could not be ignored. It is important to note, however, that many participants went out of their way to name

the moment in time that they believed the population shifted. In any school, including those in the study, populations are always shifting, sometimes in a trend and sometimes more drastically than others, but the fact that the participants each named a moment is worth exploring in the next chapter.

In two of our schools, Balboa High School and Bartlett Middle, a division-wide shift in how they place MLs resulted in a shift in the population in our case school, and participants point to that moment as an important one in the development of a culture centering ML success. This seems to be a separate and distinct factor from population increase and carries with it a greater impact than if more MLs had arrived at their school without a change in placement programming. According to the participants, this establishment of a "zoned program" that named their school as an important one for the district in their LIEP programming brought emphasis to ML support and efforts to find success that impacted their school culture. Mr. Smith, Balboa principal, talks about the impact that the school division's "Welcome Center" has on his school, including the very *semantic* aspects of it, like a full-time counselor who interprets international transcripts and the fact the division LEIP specialist has an office on campus, but also the symbolic fact that the "Welcome Center" is a part of the ethos of Balboa High, bringing attention and emphasis to their support of MLs. The school recently went through a re-build and Mr. Smith beamed with pride when he explained how the very architecture of the school reflected their values of supporting MLs; the welcome center is the first thing you see when you enter. The presence of a zoned program impacts the culture of the schools I studied.

The reciprocal of that may also be true, according to our participants. The school culture of our case schools may have had something to do with the fact that these sites were chosen for zoned programs. This is another example of the challenge presented to our participants,

discerning between what might have been affecting school culture and what may have been affected by it. In the case of Balboa HS and the "Welcome Center," Mr. Smith and Mr. Dixon, two of its school's principals, believed that the existing school culture made it the obvious place for the program at its inception decades ago: "…when the welcome center was established. That was intentional. The principal…was like. It needs to be here. That really draws that association with [Balboa]. That the welcome center is here." (Mr. Smith). In this case it is possible that the school culture of ML support and success led to a zone program being planted there, and the subsequent existence of that program further developed and solidified that culture.

While participants in each school could point to a moment in their institutional timeline that triggered a shift in school culture, few could point to that culture emerging right away. Instead, most of the schools followed a similar progression, though at varying rates. This triggering moment occurred, either due to natural population changes or changes in zoning, and then some time went by while the school adjusted before the culture of ML support and success reached its present status. Several phenomena took place during that period of time between population change moment and solidified culture of ML support and success.

One recurring theme, which accounts for a change in culture during this window of time, is staff turnover. New teachers came in who were either better prepared or more open to growth, and our participants reported this having an effect that moved their culture toward one more supportive of MLs. According to some of our participants, the initial disconnect between population and school culture was seen in experienced teachers who were unwilling or unable to change to adapt to demographics. Participants were quick to state that this was not every teacher or true in every case, but at Bartlett Middle, Ms. Dunn discussed it like this, "there's always, you know, there's always teachers who don't want to change anything that they did. But I've always

done it like this. Right. It was successful in 1995. Well, yeah, you know, I did in 1997, when I started teaching was successful, too, but maybe not so much anymore." As those experienced teachers moved out of the profession due to retirement or other reasons and others took their place, the culture shifted with this turnover. In Rock City, LIEP specialist Ms. described this phenomenon with a nod to the asset-based view of MLs outlined in previous sections, "I think that young, younger, I think people coming to the profession through more recent preservice programs. And actually, yeah, I'm going to say younger, because I think younger people are growing up in a more multi-cultural …more global type experience. And so, they're less afraid of people who speak other languages, they are less afraid of other cultures…And so I think that they're more open and more open to seeing that our students aren't empty." Teacher turnover, another environmental factor, was cited by our participants as a driver of school culture development.

Another trend that the participants reported was that over time, experience with MLs led to greater efficacy and expertise with MLs. This may seem obvious, but it is important to report that participants recognized this natural phenomenon; as the school gained more experience working with ML students and their families, they got better at it and more confident in the work. Some said it outright, like Mr. A, LIEP specialist in Bartlett Middle's division, "You see English learners [with] their persistent deficits in language proficiency and sometimes experience in school, but once you've seen a student come in and accelerate and you realize that … they aren't going to be stuck at this level of proficiency forever, it really helped those schools accelerate that shift, but it does take time…" (Mr. Brown). Balboa's principal put it plainly… "Experience leads to that self-efficacy." (Mr. Smith).

Others noticed the progress in comparison to other schools who were just experiencing their ML population shift. Mr. Dixon, retired long-time administrator and principal from Balboa HS shared a story that illustrated this. Speaking of a combined professional learning session with another school, he said "someone from another school said: Okay, this kid in our class, don't speak English when they're supposed to do? our teachers almost fell off their chair laughing…. You teach them, that's what you do!" The teachers from Balboa were confident and effective in their work and found it humorous to hear from a school just starting on this journey. The LIEP department leader from the same school echoed that statement as a reason for increased comfort and effectiveness with instruction for MLs, "I think just, for one, the teachers have just gotten more used to having these kids there." This is among the least surprising findings from this study as it re-enforces research that supports that new destinations for immigrant families are more likely to experience challenges in student outcomes (Hirschman, 2014), but it is important to note how frequently and directly participants in this study named this as a development. It is an important component to the concept of a key moment in a school's history followed by a period of growth before a culture that centers ML support and success is established.

Leadership

In attempting the challenging task of naming how a culture of ML support and success emerged in their schools, our participants named several environmental factors that seemed to be matters of chance and circumstance. But to an even greater degree, both in terms of passion behind their responses and the frequency of them, the participants pointed to leadership from varying sources as having a significant impact on the development of such a culture in their schools. For the purpose of organization of this section, I will break down their responses in

terms of the sources of that leadership into three categories: teacher leaders, school principal and administration, and division-level leadership.

The role of teachers and teacher-leaders, most frequently but not exclusively LIEP Department chairs, in building a culture of ML support and success was a remarkable phenomenon emerging from this data in most of our case schools. This grass-roots style driver of school culture was seen as being tremendously influential throughout Bartlett Middle School's division and it was on display at Rock City High and Balboa High Schools. Mr. Brown is the division LIEP specialist, and you would expect someone in his position to talk about all the ways that the central office influenced the school cultures of its best-performing schools for MLs. Instead, he was eager to tell the story of a group of teachers who, at a critical moment of their careers, joined a cohort to gain their ESL endorsement to learn how to best support their students. With the division providing a space and some support for their work, the teachers rallied others to their group and infused their school with what they learned, shifting a culture in a building. When I pressed him on why this happened, Mr. Brown offered his best guess with some familiar hypotheses. The teachers were intrinsically compassionate, and they were faced with an ML population shift moment in their school, exposed to the stories of their students and compelled to act. Their actions were contagious, and a school culture that elevates this work was formed. The data reveals the same thing on display in Rock City High School where, as I've already outlined in the Rock City HS section, Mr. Nichols has built an incredibly innovative and complex system for supporting newcomers in high school math, essentially re-writing the curriculum and redesigning the structure of high school class matriculation, all by rallying teachers to the cause and only involving school and division leadership when permission is needed (and sometimes not even then). Coach Ellis at Balboa HS designed an award-winning

summer language arts/soccer program that fostered engagement and reading and writing skills all on his own, writing a grant to fund it and executing it with the help of other teachers. With maybe one exception, Dalton HS, each school in our study had multiple instances of teacher-leadership that participants believed not only helped students and should be included as evidence of a school culture for MLs, but was also critical in the development of such a culture. Mrs. Fisher, Rock City, described this phenomenon, while referencing a different teacher than Mr. Nichols referenced above, like this: "Those teachers are just embracing this. One of the teachers who was teaching a sheltered world I class, of his own volition, formed his own PLC of teachers who shared kids. Little things like that are inspiring."

A subset of the teacher-leadership theme emerged from the data involving the importance of leadership from—and the existence of—the department team leader, often called department chair, of the LIEP team of teachers. Several of our participants currently hold this position in our case schools, and they demonstrated through their actions the importance of their leadership in school culture development. Mrs. Dunn, LIEP leaders at Balboa advocated for changes to lesson plans around the school by advocating for and demanding this from her administrators, who appreciated her advocacy on behalf of students. Mrs. Davis, LIEP leader at Bartlett Middle reported the same thing, "So I've been a little pushy this year, more so than I have been I'm fairly pushy anyway, but I've been a little more pushy this year," considering it her role to advocate for more supports and success for her students and also to support all teachers, not just those in her department, outlining all the ways that she does that in our interview. This is leadership, and the participants in this study believe it to have had an important impact on the development of their school culture. Mr. King is the school principal at Bartlett, and you'd expect a school principal to report the impact of the principal on the school culture, but instead, he reported, "a very strong

foundation of what seemed to be an already created EL program which did start from leadership and from a [school based] EL coordinator…" referencing that role as foundational to a neighboring school's culture of ML support and success.

Participants in a few case schools pointed to division-level leadership as a driver for the development of their ML school culture. The most pronounced of which, as I've outlined in a previous section, was Rock City High with its dynamic and relentless division-LIEP specialist, Mrs. Garcia. When I pressed Mrs. Fisher, LIEP department leader, for the key reason behind the amazing progress in Rock City that has resulted in their national reputation for ML support and success, her answer was simple, "It's [Mrs. Garcia]." It was apparent from every interview in Rock City that the dynamic division specialist was either a driving force behind innovative programming that shifted the school's culture over the last 15 years, or she was seen as an empowering figure whose weight behind a teacher-led project, for example, gave it the space and power to succeed. In Bartlett Middle School's division and that of Balboa High School, it was also apparent that division LIEP leadership and a close relationship between schools and those in that position was an important factor in school culture development.

Participants also frequently referenced the leadership of the school principal and school administrators as a driving force behind the development of a school culture, though this was referenced inconsistently across the case schools, perhaps indicating that principal leadership is important, but not non-negotiable. This is a very similar finding to that of August and Hakuta (1998) who found that more than half, but not all, of the studies they reviewed name the principal's leadership as an important factor. It is an important theme in the data for this study, with principal leadership emerging as the fourth most referenced code in the entire data set; the

school principal matters in the development of a school culture that centers ML support and success, at least to the participants in this study.

At Balboa, every participant except the principal referenced his leadership for this work as a major factor in its prominence in their school. Describing her principal, who took on the role while she was already a teacher, Ms. Dunn described him glowingly, "He is THE ESL principal. Like that's what we call him. He said he wants to be ESL principal and the ESL principal he is, and he has made English learners a focus." When pressed on why his leadership had such an effect on her, another Balboa teacher, Mrs. Peterson, shared,

> So, I think that he's just getting right down in the trenches with us. He doesn't necessarily make himself have any distance between the kids I see him walking around a lot. The kids don't necessarily know his name. They don't necessarily know exactly why he's so happy to see them. But they know like, because of him, I matter and he's an important person. So, he kind of takes the idea of other people feeling valued. And he just makes I mean, he makes me feel valued as, as, you know, a teacher at his school. And he makes the kids feel that way too. And I think that's a really big difference maker in that regard.

Describing his efforts as a "difference maker" and the fact that his appointment to the role "made English learners a focus" are both important to this question about the development of a school culture where that is the case. In speaking with the teachers and leaders at Balboa and Dalton High Schools, you get the impression that the school culture would be different if there were a different person in the principal position and in speaking with principals Mr. Evans and Mr. Smith., I came to understand that this was very much intentional.

For one, each principal interviewed for this study was able to reference specific programming that either passed through or originated from his office. Mr. King at Bartlett spoke of EL community outreach that he emphasized during the recent COVID quarantine as well as outreach efforts that he was working on for the very near future. Mr. Evans took very intentional steps to shift the culture at Dalton starting with the foundational elements of school culture, re-

writing and delivering the non-negotiable mindsets that the staff must have as they returned from the pandemic. This reframing moment focused on working with the student furthest from opportunity, specifically MLs, and this leadership moment was referenced by every member of the Dalton team as being an instrumental turning point. When asked about it, Mr. Evans recounted with passion his list of mindsets and motivation for this opening talk at a key moment in the school's history.

> But in order for us to do it at a high level, is we've got to be aligned on our beliefs are our values, our mindsets. Because, if we don't, if we're not there on these things, no matter what we do, as a school, we're not going to be successful, or anywhere near as successful as we could be. If we begin here with this idea of, let's make some commitments as we begin this journey together around our mindsets. And being really explicit about what they are, and what they mean, what it looks like, and what it sounds like.

This intentionality around naming and unpacking the core values of the school, foundational elements of school culture, and re-setting what they are, is a clear sign of principal leadership. The fact that it was referenced independently from others in the study is some evidence of its contribution to the development of Dalton's school culture. This sort of moment can only come from a school principal, indicating the principal's importance in this process. Despite his enthusiasm for the core mindsets of his school, Mr. Evans. deflected away from this moment as a the most important turning point, instead focusing on other phenomena, hiring others who share this vision and restructuring the organization of Dalton's leadership for LIEP. These were common themes across case schools.

Several school leaders in this study cited the principal's role in hiring the right people to advance the school culture toward more support and success for MLs as being critical to the development of that in their school culture. On several occasions they even named the individual they added to the team whom they believed was a major spark in the development of their

current school culture. Mr. Evans named the moment when he hired Mr. Ingram and Dr. Foster as critical to shifting the culture of his school, calling Mr. Ingram's hire "huge" for this work, and raving about how he lucked out adding Dr. Foster,

> And then I really lucked out. At the end of last year, … I had another opportunity to hire an assistant principal. And so I hired somebody who came from [Mr. Quinn's] office, who was just an absolute expert on this, her specialty is ESL, but she's just an amazing leader. Someone who could have conversation, who can speak to the work who, who not only has led to work in the classroom and in central office, but she teaches at George Mason, and she's personable and funny…I think what would have taken me much longer, I've had the opportunity to really bring on some leaders that that aligned in this vision and teachers, ... And so every time that I had an opportunity to hire, I made sure that, that that alignment to this vision was a core piece of it. And that really became a tipping point.

It's obvious that Mr. Evans believes that these two critical hires significantly accelerated the shift in his school's culture, becoming a tipping point toward greater support and success for MLs.

Mr. Smith of Balboa High School talked about his intentionality around the hiring process for this exact aspect of school culture building, including specific interview questions in every interview and his personal excitement that they were bringing in more teachers of color and from international backgrounds than ever before. It's hard for me to overstate how much the principals in this study emphasized hiring "tipping point" individuals as key to the development of a school culture for MLs whether it was specific leaders at Dalton, or Bartlett Middle's Mr. King who referenced his "deep arsenal of Spanish-speaking staff, or Mr. Smith's focus on each new teacher aligning with this work, or the Rock City idea that anyone applying to the school with such a reputation ought to be expecting and prepared for working with MLs. This interacts with the findings related to the "intrinsic quality of the teacher." Logically, if the intrinsic qualities of the teachers and staff, like compassion and grit, are key to success in this field, then

hiring the right people will be “huge” (in Mr. Evans’s words) for the development of a culture that values and succeeds in this work.

Leadership in and out of the school appears to be a critical aspect of building a culture that centers ML support and success. Our participants indicated that the necessary leadership can and should come from multiple sources, but in every case, it was clearly a factor and staff members agreed on where it came from in their school. Strong leadership set the direction for the work, pushed others forward toward support for MLs, and shaped every level of the school culture element, including core values, routines, and observable elements. Perhaps most frequently, leadership served as a source of inspiration for colleagues who were prone to the work but needed a nudge in that direction. Mrs. Peterson, a relatively new teacher at Balboa put it this way, “But once that inspiration is there, and that leadership is there, whether that's within a certain team or admin, or you know, anyone can be a leader wherever they're at… a person is able to see I want to, I want to be like that..” Leadership, from multiple sources, appears to have an impact on the development of a school culture that centers support and success for MLs.

Other Factors Influencing the Development of School Culture for MLs

Participants referenced several other factors that they believe had an impact on developing this school culture, and I’ve mentioned many of them in prior sections as elements of the school culture. These further blur the line between results of a school culture and influencers of a school culture that contribute to the idea that the relationship between these factors could be two ways, creating a cyclical cause/effect dynamic. Because they’ve been unpacked in a previous section, I will mention them only briefly here.

Our participants referenced robust professional learning opportunities as elements that indicate a school culture for MLs, but they also cited it as a factor in its development. The

existence of these opportunities was often a catalyst for bringing more people to the work of supporting and advancing the development of MLs. The inclusion of MLs into classes with native speaking peers was also a key indicator this culture had been established, but our participants also referenced it as a catalyst. This is logical; by not isolating MLs and those working to support them, you bring more of the school to the work and it finds a more firm foothold in the ethos of the school. This interacts with another interesting finding, the importance that more members of the organization, including staff, community, even other students, be exposed to the individual stories of our international students and their families. The more interaction that happens, through involvement in the school and inclusion with other students, the more likely these stories will be heard, and our participants cited this as a catalyst for culture shift in their schools. These factors were outlined earlier but are very interesting findings that emerged from the data across several school sites in this study. I've included them, along with factors noted as contributing to the development of a school culture for MLs outlined previously in this section in Table 21, which acts as a summary of this section addressing RQ3.

Table 21

Summary of Factors believed to Contribute to a Culture for MLs in Case Schools.

Factors believed to Contribute to a Culture for MLs
- **ML population shift moment**
- **Zoned programs (in some cases)**
- **Time: Experience creates efficacy**
- **Leadership from principal, division and teachers**
- **Professional learning**
- **Inclusion with native-speaking peers**
- **Hearing the story of MLs and their families**

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications for Further Research

Organization of the Chapter

This study relies on a foundation of research across several fields of study, including LEIP best practices, school leadership, and school culture. That body of research tells us that Multilingual Learners (MLs) in America, the country's fastest growing demographic group, are lagging behind their peers in nearly every outcome measuring student achievement. (McEneaney, López, & Nieswandt, 2014; Pardini, 2006; Jimenez-Castellanos, 2017; Kim, 2017). Research also tells us that school leadership and school culture have a significant impact on student achievement, particularly for MLs. (August & Hakuta, 1998; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Aleman, 2009; Christison & Murray, 2009; Marzano, 2005). Using those bodies of research as a starting point and lens, I interviewed 21 participants across four case study schools to address the research questions below. Those findings, outlined in the previous chapter, yielded dozens of common themes that illuminate the rich lived experiences of the participants, all members of the case study school cultures. In this section, I will draw on the research and those findings to discuss conclusions, or what we know now that we didn't before, recommendations, or advice for school leaders and policy makers based on my conclusions, and implications for further research.

Conclusions

An understanding of the body of research around LIEP and Educational Leadership combined with the data and findings presented in the preceding chapter allows us draw important conclusions in response to the three research questions of this study:

- Are there secondary schools in Virginia where school leaders believe they have a school culture that centers ML support and success?

- What characterizes the culture of these schools?
- How do school leaders involved with each believe such a culture was developed?

I will use these research questions to organize the conclusions in this chapter, but it is important to note that they interact with one another, and several conclusions cross the research-question organizational structure.

RQ1: Are there Secondary Schools in Virginia Where School Leaders Believe They Have a School Culture that Centers ML Support and Success?.

Yes. An application of almost a hundred years of research in the field of school culture to findings across four case study schools points to the existence of middle and high schools for which success and support for MLs is ingrained in their school cultures. As with all pragmatic qualitative research, there is room to argue the warranted assertions in this section and there is significant room for further research.

Reaching this conclusion must start with a reminder of how school culture researchers define this concept. Despite many attempts over the decades, school culture remains an abstract and challenging construct to bring specificity to (Deal and Peterson, 2009; Hoy, 1991; Tartar % Kottkamp, 1991; Schein, 1985). In Chapter 2, I cited many of the hundreds of definitions of this elusive and hard-to-define concept. Almost every definition in the literature uses a listing of elements to describe it. You may recall that school culture is made up of the rituals, folkways, mores, norms, values, interactions, beliefs, traditions, assumptions, symbols, behaviors (and more) shared by members of an organization, or a school in this case. (See Table 1 for a complete list). I adopted Bower's appropriately vague and ethereal definition, "The way we do things around here" to guide my inquiry. To answer the first research question, it is necessary to determine if in any of our case study schools there exist a considerable number of elements that

center ML support and success. In other words, as I dove into the school culture of each building, is it evident that supporting MLs is the way they do things around here? In each location, I found multiple elements of school culture devoted to the success of MLs. I, once again, used Hoy's organizational model for levels of abstractness as a framework, which groups the elements of school culture into those that are observable artifacts (symbols, signage, language), behaviors and programs (rituals, scheduled practices, routines, norms), and hidden but important beliefs (attitudes, assumptions, core values). I examined each school to see if there were important elements of their school culture that fit this served MLs in each of these categories and they jumped off the transcript page. At Balboa High School, I learned about signage and messaging in multiple languages, ceremonies that celebrated their international students as assets and, most importantly, deeply ingrained beliefs about the importance of the work diffused across the entire school, starting with the principal, and reaching each person I spoke with. At Dalton High School, participants reported intentional work around core values and assumptions, and focused work around scheduling of classes to best serve their MLs. At Bartlett Middle, a school culture that focused on family extended to every student and key members of the staff displayed behaviors that prioritized the needs of their growing population of MLs. In Rock City School District, the high school displayed incredibly innovative programs to serve their growing population of MLs, becoming a well-known exemplar in the field, but their belief that they were not doing enough and refusal to settle stood out in interviews. In each locale, MLs were not an afterthought, instead the work to improve student achievement for this student group appeared to be central to the work of the school and diffused across the faculty and staff. Taken as individual case studies, it is clear that the school culture in each of the locations

is one that centers ML support and success. Taken as a whole, the answer to the first research question has to be yes. The challenge, however, is to prove it.

A qualitative multiple case study approach is not meant to prove a conclusion beyond any doubt, but instead to explore the lived experiences of the participants in order to illustrate these experiences to the reader (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This is further complicated by the "confusing," (Hoy, 1991) "elusive" (Schein, 1985) nature of school culture and the challenges to define and pinpoint this ever-changing construct. The participants in this study report, almost unanimously, that their school features an ML-focused school culture, and they backed it up with dozens of elements of their school culture that support their claim. Therefore, the most definitive conclusion that this study can offer is that there are secondary schools in Virginia in which *school leaders believe* a culture that centers ML success exists. I will address how this conclusion spawns implications for further research later in this chapter.

RQ2: What characterizes the culture of these schools?

The participants in this study reported many elements of a school culture that centers ML support and success. A surprising pattern emerged; despite many similarities, significant differences in the elements of an ML-focused school culture were revealed. This may suggest the presence of non-negotiable, essential elements that are common to all schools with this type of culture and another menu of additional options. I have organized the conclusions for RQ2 into two levels: "Common Elements" and "Menu of Additional Elements," and then, secondarily, by level of abstractness as Hoy has done previously.

Menu of Additional Elements. I have chosen to write about these elements first in order to make sure that these are not presented as less important, because that would mischaracterize the viewpoint of many of the participants. These characteristics, which were reported in the

interviews in this study appeared as critically important to one or several of our schools, but not reported across all four. How we interpret this may be better suited for the implications section, but I must conclude that each is important—while not necessarily universal—to a culture of ML support and success. It may be that each is a contributor to, or is a symptom of, a more foundational, essential school culture element.

Table 22

Menu of Optional Elements of School Culture

Elements of School Culture Observed in Several Case Schools
- Intentional use of master schedule for inclusion and innovative pathways - View of school community as a family - Innovative programs - Community outreach - Fun, games and laughter - Signage in multiple languages

The first two elements on this list serve as an illustrative example. Two of our case schools spoke extensively, almost exclusively in one case, about their focus on altering how MLs matriculate through their courses as a key cultural shift they've made to better serve this group. At Rock City High School, innovative courses like English 912 or Algebra Explorations were helpful for preparing newly arrived international students for success and served as a way to quickly catch them up to be integrated into classrooms with native speaking peers. At Dalton High School in Northern Virginia, the principal, Director of Student Services, and LEIP assistant principal pointed to their increased integration of LEIP students using the master schedule to build collaborative classes in every core content area as the defining shift in their school culture. The shift brought more teachers to the important work of serving MLs, brought those same MLs out of isolation, and contributed to a belief and collective efficacy that MLs could be held to high

expectations. I cannot overstate how much often this came up in conversations with each member of the Dalton team I interviewed and with several Rock City teachers.

The use of innovative pathways and new courses for integration and acceleration did not, however, emerge much from the interviews at Balboa High or Bartlett Middle. There may be innovative scheduling happening, and it was alluded to by a few participants, but did not occupy the same level of importance as the other two schools in this study. Balboa, and to a slightly lesser extent, Bartlett Middle did, however, report the sense of family as a key element of their school culture. Both principals stressed this, and the feeling was independently reported by members of their staffs. This phenomenon was not reported by staff members at either of the other two schools. Similarly, this does not discount the presence of this feeling, but does suggest that it is not as important to the ethos of Dalton or Rock City as it is at Balboa or Bartlett. This menu of optional elements may suggest important steps toward getting to the common, perhaps essential elements outlined in the next section. For example, further studies might explore if a sense of family and use of the schedule to increase integrated class offerings are both a means to reach a common theme across these schools, such as an inclusive environment full of interactions across language lines.

Common Elements. Several elements of school culture were present in each school in this study. They are listed below in Table 23 in order of Hoy's level of abstractness. It was remarkable how these themes emerged from each locality, independently and without prompting, as critical elements to their school culture.

Table 23

Elements of School Culture Observed in Each Case School

Common Elements for Case Study Schools with Culture of ML Support
- A welcoming environment - Inclusive with frequent interactions across language lines - Teamwork, specifically between LEIP teachers and other staff - Strong leadership - High expectations - Collective ownership of ML education - Staff is constantly learning and not settling for previous progress - Asset based view of international students - Intrinsically compassionate staff

The participants in this study report that an observer to each of the four schools would be able to immediately see and experience a welcoming environment. Whether that was the incredible welcoming student community at Balboa greeting new students or the welcome back to school video in Spanish by the Bartlett principal, each school talked about the importance of being a friendly and welcoming space for MLs, particularly newcomers.

That same observer would walk into many spaces in the building where MLs were in close proximity to, and therefore interacting with, their native-speaking peers. This is not an accident in most of our schools. This was accomplished by different means but was a point of emphasis, even the central topic of several interviews. At Dalton High School, the most important shift in their school culture for MLs, according to their school leaders, was the integration of MLs with their peers in many of their classes through the creation of collaborative ML courses. Among the many effects of this move, the experience of their MLs became that of inclusivity, not isolation. At Rock City, school leaders and teachers worked together to redesign their schedule to accelerate early courses so that they could integrate MLs into inclusive settings earlier than they would have been able to do otherwise. At Balboa, Coach Ellis and Mrs.

Peterson built a summer soccer academy where MLs got to interact and bond with native speaking mentors. Several schools also reported using extracurriculars as a means for inclusivity. This inclusivity seemed to be an accelerator for other elements observed by our participants and should be thought of as a non-negotiable for a culture that centers ML support and success. This tracks with the research, specifically intergroup contact theory that holds that different racial or ethnic groups can overcome the effects of prejudice and bias through when the setting they are in meets certain criteria, starting with proximity (Allport, 1988; Pettirgrew and Tropp, 2006). This is a fertile area of study for further research, as I'll outline later in this chapter.

While it would take a deeper examination to see in action, if an observer stayed long enough or was able to shadow staff members, participants report that they would see strong collaborative teamwork in the faculty, particularly between LEIP staff and their counterparts in other departments. This important conclusion emerged from several differing codes in our findings, but once identified, seemed to leap off the page of the transcripts. LEIP teachers at Rock City, Balboa and Bartlett frequently act as consultants for their colleagues in scaffolding and adapting their lessons to suit the needs of MLs. At Dalton High School and Bartlett Middle, critical importance was stressed on the presence of LEIP teachers on content teams, co-planning with colleagues and providing a voice and advocate for MLs in the behind-the-scenes planning that affects so much of a child's education. Mr. Nichols went so far to say that this would be the most important indicator to him if a school possessed a culture that had ML support and success in mind.

This observer on his or her deep dive would also witness or experience the effects of strong leadership. The most-discussed aspect in this study, strong leadership is a core part of the

school cultures of each case. Interestingly, leadership came from different places, sometimes even different points in the same school, but it was always a key factor. At Balboa High School, Mr. Smith was referred to as "*The* ESL principal." Mr. Evans at Dalton High School set the tone by identifying key core values of the school that set up their work in the LEIP field, but he points to other leaders, the director of student services and the assistant principal for LEIP, as the driving forces in leading this work. At Rock City, all parties point to the dynamic and determined school division specialist and school leaders were praised for allowing teacher leadership to flourish. While further study is needed beyond our four cases study schools, it is very likely that one cannot have a school culture that centers ML support and success without strong leadership. I will touch on this much more in the following section as we explore RQ3, what school leaders believe happened that created this culture for ML support and success.

The observer would not be able to see the shared core values, key beliefs and assumptions that serve as the most impactful but also most hidden elements of a school's culture, but he or she may be able to feel their effects. Twenty-one hours of interviews started to bring to light those foundational elements and, once again, it was remarkable how the same themes emerged from nearly every interview and certainly each case school. Among the most compelling of these beneath-the-surface phenomena is a collective ownership among the staff for the task of educating its MLs. Several participants spoke about this using different language. Mr. Evans of Dalton called it by name, saying, "We're all in this together. We have to bring this idea that its collective ownership and your success is my success, and it's our success." LIEP specialist Mr. Brown from Bartlett Middle's division called it, "community problem solving." Ms. Dunn from the same division addressed it in the importance of how content teachers view MLs, not as her students, but as "our students." Dr. Foster, assistant principal from Dalton High

used similar language, “we can't… as an ESL department, we can't do it all. It's not on us to just help these kids be successful…. As a school, these are our students, and so everybody needs to have that ownership of who these students are. And so, in order for that to happen, other people need to be involved in their lives…it has to be through a whole community working together to make that happen.” Each of these educators is echoing a deeply held belief that the entire school must believe that they are helping the MLs in their community find success. Other key elements in this section, such as teamwork and inclusive classes would not be possible in a school that did not also believe in collective ownership of this important work.

Each school also demonstrated a belief in high expectations for its MLs, usually in the form of a belief that every student is capable of deeper learning and achieving at a high level. Some went as far as to name the opposite as a tragic flaw of well-meaning schools or individuals who care so much that they don’t hold students to a high standard. This emerged in conversation around the same time as the asset-based view of our international scholars. A deeply held view that all students have something to offer and those learning far away from their country of origin are achieving something remarkable seemed to align with the belief that all are able to achieve. Mr. Nichols’s math class at Rock City and his school’s focus on deeper learning for all students stand out as an illustrative example.

Those high expectations did not stop with the students; staff members in each of our four case schools held high expectations for themselves and their colleagues, as two related key characteristics emerged from each location. In schools with a culture that centers ML support and success the staff is never satisfied with what they have done—not settling for progress they’ve made—and obsessed with continuing to learn. As advanced as their school culture is compared to others, the very strong educators in this study frequently pointed out how they wish

they and their school was doing more. As a way to make sure they are, they are also keen on continually learning, taking advantage of, and building their own professional learning opportunities to constantly improve in their craft. In an ironic and challenging twist to the study, schools with a culture for ML success according to the selection process we used--chain sampling with expert recommendation triangulated by student achievement data--might not have self-identified as exemplars in this field because their attention is on how they could improve, not the remarkable school culture that they've build. It is likely that this intrinsic drive to always do more to help those students in need has been a factor in how these schools became exemplars, whether or not they want to admit it.

Lastly, another important deep core belief that emerged as a significant characteristic was that participants pointed to the inherent kindness and compassion of staff, and in some cases students in their schools as key elements contributing to a school culture that supported the schools. It was remarkable to hear how often, when pressed for more details, the line of questioning in the interviews for this study stopped with the human quality of having a big heart and its impact on this work. Participants at every case school referenced it; they believe that there exists at their school an extraordinary number of good people and their compassion has impacted the school culture when it comes to vulnerable members of the population. This is a particularly difficult claim to prove or compare across schools, and maybe not an unexpected quality impacting school culture, but the frequency with which the idea of simple compassion emerged from the data was surprising and should have implications in the next two sections, recommendations for school leaders and implications for further research. While this intrinsic quality is not something school leaders or policymakers can easily affect in our current staff,

knowledge of this as a foundational element in the building of a school culture can impact hiring, as Principal. Smith of Balboa High School pointed out.

RQ 3: How do school leaders involved with each believe such a culture was developed?

There are significant limitations to any conclusions I can make for our third research question; we can only assert how our participants experienced the formation of such a culture, but nevertheless, this section is useful to school leaders and policymakers who have not lived through such a transition and are curious how it felt to do so.

This question is inextricably linked to RQ2. While the second research question asks what characteristics our participants observed in their schools as a part of their ML-focused school culture, this section addressed their perception of how that culture came to be. The first logical conclusion one can make is to observe the list of characteristics and speculate that it is possible that these correlational elements have had some impact on the formation of the culture in place at each of our case study schools. Of course, causality cannot be concluded from the findings of this study, and the cyclical, non-linear relationship between school culture and a school's characteristics muddies that thought even more. We explored the example of ML inclusion with native-speaking peers in chapter 4. It is impossible to know if that is a cause of an ML-focused school culture and or a product of it. Even still, the list of characteristics belongs in a discussion of perceptions of what led to our schools' ML-focused culture and will have a place in the next section related to recommendations.

When I asked school leaders about what may have led to their school's special culture, participants were, above all, not sure. This was expected and matches the research around the elusive nature of putting language to school culture. The conversations, however, turned quickly to one or both of two topics, school leadership and a pattern of exposure, proximity, and

experience. The former has a rich history in the literature I've outlined in this paper; the latter opens up implications into grounded theory research.

Conclusion: Particular elements of school leadership emerged as factors. As stated in the preceding section, every school in this study exhibited strong leadership from either principal, school division specialist, LEIP department leader, or teachers. Our participants also report leadership as a key factor in the *development* of their culture. This matches the research from the intersection of the fields of school leadership and LEIP student achievement, and connects to the findings from the literature outlined in chapter 2—that school leaders interested in progress in the LEIP world should demonstrate transformational leadership (Burns, 1970, McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2014; Aleman, et al., 2009), distributive servant leadership (Murray, 2005; McGee, Haworth & MacIntyre, 2014; Christison & Murray, 2008; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; August & Hakuta, 1998; Wynne, 2001), culturally responsive leadership (Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2006) and knowledgeable instructional leadership (Greenleaf 1970, Spillane, et al., 2001). Using this conclusion from the review of the literature, it is important to add to that by highlighting which of these elements was most pronounced in schools with a culture that centers ML success and what should be added to this list. I found that every school I studied not only had strong leadership, but they also had transformational leadership from at least one source and each school showed repeated signs of distributive and adaptive leadership.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, transformational leadership happens when a leader has a clear focus on goals and vision while using relationships and other means to transform those around him or her to reach desired ends. (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006.). Our participants reported this occurring in each of our case study schools specifically in the field of LIEP. Perhaps the clearest example of this was at Dalton High School in Northern Virginia

where Mr. Evans rallied his staff around ten core values, brought in key leaders who shared his vision like Mr. Ingram and Dr. Fisher, and then pulled staff in through individual conversations and a relationship focus. This was also true at Bartlett Middle School in the southwest where Mr. King's transformation leadership was on display. As we heard his teachers discuss Mr. Smith, there was little doubt that the staff and even students and community, had bought into his vision and were following their "ESL principal" toward the culture that he helped bring about. Interestingly, it was not always the principal whose transformational leadership was a catalyst for a shifting culture. LIEP specialist Ms. Garcia's passion for the work, clear uncompromising vision, and desire to pull along the rest of the division toward her goals were prevalent in every conversation with members of the Rock City Team. Her work from the early 2000's until today, as told by those who experienced it, is almost perfectly aligned with Burn's transformational leader research. According to the participants in our study, transformational leadership played a significant role in bringing about a culture of ML success, which aligns with the research. It was remarkable how clearly this style of leadership rose to the top of the list of important factors in driving school culture in this study.

It is logical to think that transformational leadership, with its focus on pulling others into a shared vision, would be instrumental in the formation of a school culture. The same is true of distributive leadership, which was very evident in all of our schools. Just as Mr. Evans of Dalton shared that the work cannot just be the Mr. Evans vision, the work toward building a culture of ML success, according to our participants, must be shared amongst as many stakeholders as possible. At Rock City, the teachers spoke of the space they had to innovate and lead from where they are. At Bartlett Middle, teachers, home-school liaisons, and librarians were stepping into fill key gaps for MLs, and they were encouraged to do so and provided support and space to

operate in the interest of kids. Despite being strong leaders themselves, Mr. Smith of Balboa and Mr. Evans of Dalton High School beamed most with pride when describing how others had stepped in to lead the work and the administrators and department leaders at each school led the way as much as the principal did. The data for this study is filled with instances of distributed leadership, from teachers building programs, LIEP teams as advocates and leaders for the rest of the staff, and other individuals within a school taking on the role of leader in this work. Each school in this study showed pronounced signs of distributive leadership from their school leader and other leaders in the LIEP field. This matches our understanding of school culture, the strength of which can be measured by how widespread a particular belief, habit or action is amongst the members of an organization (Schein, 1985). Just like transformative leadership, it is logical to expect to see distributive leadership as a factor and that is exactly what emerged from the participant interviews in the four case schools of this study. Similar, it was stark just how much this style of leadership was repeated as a point of emphasis. Participants continually pointed out that their leaders were intentional about diffusing the work across other members of the team, which emerged from conversations with the principals and LEIP specialists themselves as well as others to whom leadership was distributed.

A third quality of leadership that each of our schools reported as being influential in bringing about a culture of ML success, participants cited the ability of their leaders to change and adapt to changing situations in their schools. This matches Marzano, Waters & McNulty's list of competencies building on the work of Blanchard and Hershey (1996) who argued that a leader must adapt to the context (time, place, and people) of the situation. Inherent in this theory, an effective leader must be able to read and interpret each aspect of a situation and have

the skill set to respond. This is similar to the traits of "situational awareness" and "flexibility" espoused by Marzano, et al. ten years later.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, a key characteristic of the school culture of many of the cases in this study was a related combination of never settling for what they've accomplished and the idea that the adults working with MLs should never stop learning. This approach to the work almost forces the school leaders in our study to continually shift and adapt as they learn more and aspire to do more. This was on display with Ms. Garcia, the leader of perhaps the most LIEP-innovative school division in the state passionately lamenting that they are not serving their MLs well enough and must learn more, including herself. This desire to learn and do more sets up a leader to being willing to read a situation and adapt to it, which she has done continually for two decades

There exists an intersection between this conclusion, that leaders in buildings with ML-centered school cultures demonstrate a flexibility and willingness to adapt, and the story I continually heard about a shift in student demographics in each location. As I discuss this story in the next section, it is important to keep in mind that the leaders of each school faced significant demographic change and were able to navigate this and shift the culture of the school for the better, according to those who experienced it. This combination, an ability to shift priorities and approach through change must be included in a list of conclusions for how the school culture came to be. It is not difficult to imagine a situation where demographics shift under the feet of a leader unwilling to change and what the outcomes would be; this was not the story of the case schools in this study.

According to our participants, transformational leadership, distributive leadership, and an ability to adapt leadership to fit a changing landscape rose to the level of most significant

leadership conclusions from this study. It is important, however, not to discount other findings from the literature regarding effective leadership for LEIP; they were present but did not happen to emerge as prominently from this data set. Instructional leadership and culturally responsive leadership, for example, were evident. Each school showed strong instructional leadership—our principals and LIEP specialists were knowledgeable about best practices or had a member of their team they could lean on (Dr. Fisher at Dalton, for example) for that expertise. Interviews from each site also revealed culturally responsive educators and leaders, passionate about building schools that are inclusive for all, just as the review of literature might have predicted. The findings related to the asset-minded viewpoint of staff, the welcoming environment and compassion of members of each school community correlates with a culturally responsive atmosphere in each of our schools. This started with the dynamic LIEP leaders. Ms. Garcia in Rock City, Mr. Smith at Balboa, Ms. Davis and Mr. King at Bartlett Middle and every leader we talked to at Dalton demonstrated characteristics of a culturally sensitive and responsive leader. This seems correlated to the work of leading schools toward a culture that centers ML success, but it was not explicitly named as a factor in the way that the characteristics of transformational leadership and distributive leadership were.

Conclusion: A School Culture that Centers ML Success Undergoes an Evolution.

School leadership matters, but it does not exist in a vacuum. Each of the case schools in this study, according to participants, went through a journey to reach their current ML-centered school culture, and that evolution consisted of elements of exposure, proximity, and experience. Each school referenced a moment in time when demographics of the school changed, sometimes brought about by a policy change like a program that centralized ML support and students in a division, and sometimes by shifts in the general demographics of the locality. This moment

brought about exposure between staff and MLs as well as MLs and their peers. This happened on different timelines in each school, with Balboa in the 1970s and the welcome center, with Rock City and migration patterns shifting around 2000, Dalton High School and a shift in attendance zone about ten years ago, and more recently at Bartlett Middle with its division's decision to house all upper-level MLs in that building. In some locations, they were able to accelerate this by breaking down figurative walls inside the school and increasing the inclusion and therefore proximity of MLs to their peers and more of the staff, a conclusion that I will draw attention to in the recommendations section of this chapter. With that proximity—and time—the compassionate staff members and leaders of each location, fueled by incoming staff who knew they would be working with MLs and may be self-selecting into that school, heard the stories of the MLs in their school and gained confidence and skills in finding success with them. Each school revealed a similar arc of initial struggles and then compassionate staff members finding a way to support them and finally diffusing that knowledge across the building. The result, according to those who were drivers of that work and others who were beneficiaries of it, was this welcoming culture where MLs are seen as an asset, where leadership for the work is diffused amongst the staff, and students are finding success. This almost perfectly matches the research of Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) building off the work of Allport (1954) and many others regarding intergroup contact theory. Intergroup contact theory holds that a bundle of interwoven elements, including proximity and increased contact, has a significant impact in overcoming intergroup prejudice. This evolution is an environmental factor, one that cannot be influenced by school leaders or well-intended stakeholders seeking to replicate, but in the next section, we will point out the factors inherent in this evolution that can be impacted and suggest further research into how those levers can be pulled to achieve a similar school culture.

Conclusions Summary

A careful review of the research and the findings from this study reveals that, according to the diverse and knowledgeable participants, there are secondary schools with a school culture that centers ML support and success; I found four of them in Virginia. They are characterized by common elements such as a welcoming environment, frequent interactions between MLs and their peers, teamwork, strong leadership, high expectations and collective ownership of MLs success by the whole school. Additional elements that seem to be a factor are the use of scheduling for inclusion and creative pathways for MLs, a family-like school feel, innovative programming, community outreach, and an emphasis on fun and laughter amidst this serious work. Participants point to leadership, particularly transformational, distributed, and flexible leadership, as a factor in how this school culture emerged, but also that it happened via a process where the school members became exposed to MLs, and proximity and experience led to confidence and success. This evolution led to the ML-centered school culture that exists today. Table 24 on the next page outlines the key conclusions of this study.

Table 24

Key Conclusions by Research Question

Research Question	Key Conclusions
RQ1: Are there Secondary Schools in Virginia with a School Culture that Centers ML Support and Success?	- Yes, according to participants direct assessments and descriptions of the school cultures of each case school
RQ2: What characterizes the culture of these schools?	In each case studied: - A Welcoming environment - Inclusive with Frequent interactions across Language lines - Teamwork, specifically between LEIP Teachers and other staff - Strong leadership - High expectations - Collective ownership of ML education - Staff is constantly learning and not settling for previous accomplishments - Asset-based view of international students - Intrinsically compassionate staff In many cases: - Intentional use of master schedule for inclusion and innovative pathways - View of school community as a family - Innovative programs - Community outreach - Fun, games and laughter - Signage in multiple languages
RQ3: How do school leaders perceive that this culture came to be?	- Leadership, particularly transformational, distributive, flexible leadership. - An evolution involving exposure, increased proximity, and experience

Recommendations

As a practicing high school principal, this is often the most compelling section of a study for my day-job, and this study has no shortage of recommendations for practitioners seeking to better serve the MLs of their school and for policymakers seeking to bridge the egregious achievement and opportunity gap between MLs and their peers. It has been made evident that an important step in better serving MLs in our nation's schools is to build a school culture that centers support and success for this group of students (August & Hakuta, 1998; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004; Aleman, 2009; Christison & Murray, 2009; Marzano, 2005). In the words of Dr. Foster from this study, we should strive to not "make MLs an afterthought or even a second thought." The purpose of this study was to see if there were secondary schools in Virginia that had accomplished this, to describe their school culture, and to find out what the members of the school community believed led to its development. From what I found, school leaders and policymakers can observe through the lens of this study what characterizes these schools and what transpired that may have led to this development. One recommendation is to replicate that school culture and the actions that led to its development. Of course, there are significant limitations to this approach, since a qualitative study like this one cannot prove or even suggest causality even as it discusses correlation. This section will operationalize the conclusions from the previous section into concrete actionable items for school leaders and policymakers that would be beneficial to ML success based on the experience of the case study schools and the body of literature that has come before.

Leadership Approach

Both the literature on the topic and the participants in this study point to several leadership approaches that school-based officials would be wise to emphasize in their work guiding schools and departments. While these are best practices for all school leaders, in a world of competing priorities for principals and other leaders for LEIP, these recommendations serve as a means of prioritization. We all aspire to be the perfect leader, but no such person exists, so prioritizing which attributes and approaches are most important is vital to the work. This can also serve school division officials as they assign leaders to specific settings or recruit and hire principals and teacher-leaders to do this work. These are the leadership approaches that this study points to having the most impact on building a school culture that centers ML success.

School leaders and LIEP department heads should aspire to what Burns described as transformational leadership, where those in charge set a clear vision and then use the power of relationships to pull others on board that vision to make it a reality (Burns, 1979) They should seek to act as what Murray and others would call distributive leaders, making sure that the work of leadership is spread throughout an organization because those at the top allow for others to lead and leave space for others to achieve and thrive. Lastly, those seeking to form a culture of ML success should prioritize flexibility and adaptability to changing settings, allowing leadership style and practices to shift if necessary to meet the moment.

The leadership characteristics most prominent across the case study schools-transformational, distributive, and adaptable leadership-were perhaps best epitomized in this study by Mr. Evans of Dalton High School. Mr. Evans became principal of a traditionally high-achieving, prominent high school in Northern Virginia for which shifting attendance zones had changed the school's demographics. Mr. Evans emerged as a transformational leader early in his

tenure, resetting the priorities of the staff and school in a memorable kick-off event where he articulated the mindsets necessary for working with the growing population of MLs at Dalton, and then went about the important, person-by person, work of bringing the large staff on board that vision. As a distributive leader, Mr. Evans cited that the most important step towards building his school's culture was the hiring of two other leaders to whom the transformational work would be distributed, Mr. Ingram and Dr. Fisher. The work that Mr. Evans and his team took on occurred several years after the boundary lines and therefore demographics of Dalton High shifted, but it took a flexible leader, one able to adapt styles to fit the moment, to move the school's culture in line with what was necessary for the student body. School leaders would be wise to use Mr. Evans from this study as a model in building a culture for ML success, a proven way to support achievement for this growing and important student population.

Replicate Elements of School Culture in Case Study Schools

A school culture is made up of its elements. Because nearly every definition of school culture includes a list of school culture elements, these two constructs (school culture and the sum of the elements of school culture) are almost synonymous. It is logical, therefore, to suggest that a school seeking to alter its school culture simply needs to alter its elements.

This study presents principals and LIEP division and department heads with recommendations for the most important leadership approaches for building an ML-centered school culture supported by the existing body of research. We have also seen, however, that school and LIEP leaders are not the only drivers of school culture, so another recommendation of this study is for school stakeholders to take steps to replicate the elements of school culture exhibited by our case study schools. As discussed in a previous section, it is challenging to separate precipitating causes from symptomatic results when dealing with school culture and

impossible to claim causality. With this limitation in mind, replicating some of the positive elements of our case study school culture may have a positive impact for other schools. Let's examine what those elements are, starting with the most observable and therefore most exportable to other settings and moving to more impactful and deeper core values and beliefs. For your reference this information is housed in Tables 13, 15 and 19 in Chapter 4.

Each school in this study reported a remarkably welcoming atmosphere from all stakeholders. Visitors to their campus would see positive interactions toward all students, but particularly MLs and their families. They would also see signage and messaging in multiple languages and outreach efforts into the ML community. School leaders and all members of a school community can address those parts of their schools right away, shifting messaging and signage and prioritizing the welcoming interactions through training with key members of staff. Intentional professional learning for front office members, hall monitors, and administrators would shift these aspects of a school culture and match that of our case schools. Participants also reported that visitors to their schools would see meaningful interactions between MLs and their peers, often in integrated clubs and athletics. Schools looking to replicate this element of their school culture should look for ways to break down obstacles to meaningful interactions, such as barriers to participation in extracurriculars, scheduling, mentoring, or use of building space that separates MLs from their peers. Lastly, one would observe innovative, unique programming upon visiting our case study schools, so those looking to replicate this school culture should encourage innovation and creative programming, allowing teachers and others the room to experiment ways to better serve the school's MLs.

Our participants also pointed to observable behaviors and practices within their school that represent key elements of school culture. Schools looking to better serve their MLs might

replicate these practices and behaviors as a means for building a school culture the centers ML support. This could be as broad as growing or placing greater emphasis on existing elements of school culture, like being intentional with infusing fun, laughter, and games into the serious work of supporting MLs. They might place greater emphasis on teamwork by encouraging collaboration across departments or by building in structures that encourage teamwork, such as implementation of PLCs, common planning time, or requiring that core departments have LEIP teacher representation on them.

Our participants' descriptions of school culture also suggest two very specific practices that they feel influence the degree to which their school culture supports ML success, intentional use of the master schedule for inclusion and a possible result of that, exposure to the stories of MLs as a driver for action. This has tremendous potential for recommendations for schools seeking to replicate this culture, including direct implications in how schools structure their master schedule. Staff members from several schools, Dalton and Rock City particularly, point to the way they are setting up their schedule as the driving force behind building a culture of ML support and they evaluated their school culture by the number of innovative pathways and inclusive classes that they established to support MLs. I cannot overstate the degree of importance these schools place on their master schedule as a lever for supporting MLs; a school attempting to build a school culture for ML success should examine how their master schedule is supporting MLs and where there are opportunities to develop multiple pathways for success as well as opportunities for classes to be more inclusive, exposing MLs to native speaking peers and more of the school's teachers.

As more students and staff members became more exposed to MLs through inclusive classes and extracurriculars and other means of crossing language lines, our participants reported

an interesting phenomenon happening in their schools. As more people became more familiar with the backstory of international students in their schools, the culture of ML support and success became widespread and more deeply ingrained in the culture of the school. This emerging theory, which requires more research as I will outline in the next section, has fascinating and novel implications for schools and school leaders. The findings of this study recommend that school leaders build structures and programs to accelerate and increase the scale of this phenomena. School leaders or program directors might build in events, programs, or settings where students from international families have the opportunity to share their stories with a wide audience or where one-on-one or small group mentoring occurs, encouraging relationships to be formed where stories may be shared. It is important to note that this must go beyond the few adults who normally interact with MLs in a typical school, their LEIP teachers. In our case study schools, this tended to happen organically, with school leaders and non-LEIP teachers going out of their way to get to know MLs and their families through either intentional or accidental informal interactions--Mr. Smith visiting classes, Coach Ellis and the students who tried out for the soccer team, for example-- but there is no reason that this cannot be accelerated through programming or design. More compassionate people hearing the story of a school's MLs is one of many behaviors and routines a school could fold into its school culture, centering ML support and success like our case study schools.

The most challenging, yet impactful work of shifting a school's culture is that of the core beliefs of its members (Schein, 1985). Before taking on that work, it is important for those potential change-agents to know what the school cultures of our case schools have in common, which this study was able to distill, based on the perspective of the participants. Schools with cultures that center ML support and success have staff members with intrinsic compassion yet

high expectations for all students. They view their work with MLs as something collectively owned by the whole staff and that the presence of MLs in their community is an asset, not a problem to be overcome. They also believe that they should continually learn and improve in their craft and are never satisfied that they have done enough for this population. Each of these core beliefs jumped off the pages of the interview transcripts in interviews across all four schools. School leaders and policymakers, however, have to wonder how they can bring those same beliefs to their schools and divisions and two recommendations are apparent. First, school leaders can start by simply naming them. Much like Mr. Evans of Dalton High School, a school leader would not be wrong to list out the core beliefs that are necessary for the work; participants from this school point to this memorable moment as one that had had a lasting impact on their school's culture. This matches our understanding of transformational leadership outlined in a previous section of this chapter. Dalton's list of core values may be different from those of their schools, but the list was not the important part, the act of naming it and norming a staff on it was. School leaders can use this as a starting point to work with staff to develop their own and present and reinforce these beliefs repeatedly and regularly.

Additionally, school leaders should model these core beliefs, demonstrating them through their actions. In each school there was a leader doing exactly that, and there were others noting the impact of that example. This might look like Ms. Garcia in Rock City continuously learning despite her decades of experience, Dr. Foster at Dalton High never settling for the work they've done until all students are treated with equity, Mr. Smith at Balboa pushing his teachers past over-accommodating MLs and focusing on deeper learning because he believes all students are capable of it, or Mr. King's enthusiasm at Bartlett Middle for what MLs can offer his community as an asset to his school. Leaders modeling the behaviors, and in this case the values, that they

want to see in their schools has a significant impact and is a turn-key recommendation that they could shift towards immediately based on this work.

Follow the Evolution of Case Schools and Accelerate Where Possible.

By replicating the key elements of the school cultures in this study, school leaders can nudge their own buildings toward a culture of ML support that closes gaps and increases student achievement for this important student population. By listening to how the participants described the school cultures of these four locations evolving over time, school leaders and policymakers may be able to further accelerate the growth of their own buildings.

The participants of this study indicated through their description of the formation of their present school culture a pattern and evolution that seemed to transcend location and even time. Schools existed somewhere on a continuum that included an ML population shift moment of more MLs, a period of time where more of the school's most compassionate educators became exposed to MLs and their stories and increased the fervor of their work, and then a period where they gained efficacy and confidence before the culture of ML success became diffused amongst staff. (See figure 4) School leaders may be able to replicate and accelerate that process in their own schools in order to reach the desired school culture more quickly. The following are some recommendations, but much more research is needed on this potential grounded theory to move these recommendations beyond mere suggestions.

Before we unpack the process or journey that our schools experienced, it is important to note that participants reported that this journey helped activate members of their team who were already prone to do the work necessary for MLs to find success, namely, the compassionate educators that were already on their teams. This leads to a recommendation about hiring. Participants reported in nearly every case school that their staff had more than its fair share of

compassionate educators. This has implications for school leaders who have some say in the core values of their employees. The findings from this study indicate that having teachers and staff with the heart to work with traditionally underserved populations like MLs is essential to building a school culture that centers that work. School leaders should keep this in mind when hiring new staff. So many factors go into a decision or which candidate to pick, and I am suggesting that leaders prioritize compassion and heart in that process, knowing that experience, expertise, and content knowledge are all attainable skills as the school culture evolves, but the only personal characteristic of teachers and staff that emerged with consistency in our study was compassion. Acquiring a team of big-hearted educators, suggest our participants, has an impact on how the process outlined above played out in their schools; I recommended that school leaders start there.

With the right team in place, the journey for each of our schools toward a culture of ML support and success began with what I am calling an "ML population shift moment." This was either a demographic shift or structural change that did two things. This moment brought more MLs to each of our schools, but more importantly, it brought more focus for the school to the fact that MLs were a part of their cultural identity. When Balboa High School became the home to the division's "welcome center" it did not add significantly more students, but it did bring attention to Balboa as school for which MLs were an important part, so much so that in the design of their new school building, the welcome center enjoys a pace of prominence right next to the main office. This ML population shift moment looked different in each school, but all reported on its significance, which leads to a recommendation for school leaders and policy makers to lean in to those moments and bring attention to them. There may be an impulse to down-play significant cultural changes like this, but based on the findings of this study, school

leaders would be wise to highlight these moments, even exaggerate them, to accelerate the school's process of folding ML success into their shared identity. Furthermore, downplaying or denying the impact of structural or demographic changes ("our school is the same as it has always been") could stunt the progression of a school's progression to a culture of ML support and success.

Another accelerant for school leaders toward a culture of ML success may be to build in structures and programs that integrate ML students with their peers and further expose the compassionate educators in a school to the stories and backgrounds of the MLs that are in the building. This likely includes elements mentioned previously, such as use of the master schedule to build more inclusive classes and the use of mentoring programs and physical proximity to pull MLs out of isolation. Further study is needed to examine the effectiveness of programs that could support this work, such as culture nights, podcasts, mentoring or other vehicles where MLs are welcome to share their stories. Whatever the means, the findings from these case studies indicate that leadership teams should find creative ways to put MLs and their families in close proximity to the compassionate educators around them. When this happened in the schools in this study, the participants reported that they and those around them had no choice but to pour themselves into the work of building a school culture that has MLs at its heart. Further study is necessary for the particular methods that accomplish this most effectively, but this surprising finding has immediate implications for program-building, school leadership and LIEP policy.

With more compassionate staff members pushing the work to support MLs after being exposed to their stories, the next phase in this progression is a cycle of doing the work, gaining confidence, and doing it again. With participants from all over the state reporting this necessary phase in their own development, and that of their school, school leaders should resist the urge to

over plan or hesitate to implement strategies because they are short of perfect. Even the best plans, it seems from my interviews, needed further development once put in the field—the innovative math pathways at Rock City are an example—but those developments would not have occurred without seeing the plan in action. Even more importantly according to our participants, the skills and confidence developed by putting the plan in the field could not have happened otherwise. With the massive effect size collective efficacy has in all phases of education (Hattie, 2009) and our participants reporting that their school's collective efficacy was born from experience, it is logical for school leaders to accelerate the level of experience by building systems where their staff members dive in quickly and often. If more experiences lead to greater confidence and effectiveness with our MLs, then forcing and encouraging more experiences will be an accelerant for efficacy and achievement.

The last recommendation of this chapter follows the last phase of this evolution of a school culture as reported by the participants of this study. A school culture is as ingrained and deep as it is widespread across the stakeholders of a school (Schein, 1985). With that knowledge, I recommend that school leaders prioritize empowering others along the way. As was discussed in the section on distributive leadership, this is a critical element to this process, most critical at this moment in a school culture's evolution. With compassionate educators hired, sprinting toward success for MLs after hearing their stories, and with confidence from experiences in this work, this is the time that school leaders should prioritize diffusing the work across other leaders, teachers and staff, community members and even students. When the leaders of Balboa High and Bartlett Middle discuss their teachers taking up the cause and leading this work from where they are, I got a sense that their culture was so ingrained and widespread that it would be resilient to many changes. As principals come and go, demographics shift and

communities experience change, an ingrained school culture for ML support and success will remain if it is so diffused amongst all people that it becomes "how we do things around here."

Table 25

Summary of Recommendations for Practitioners and Policymakers

Category	Recommendation
Leadership Approach	- Transformational leadership - Distributive leadership - Adaptable leadership
Replicate Reported Elements of an ML School Culture in Case Schools	- A welcoming environment from all stakeholders - Innovative programming in and out of the classroom - Signage and messaging in multiple languages - Meaningful interactions between all students so much so that we could not be sure who the MLs were - Meaningfully integrated clubs and athletics events - Intentional use of master schedule for Inclusion and innovative pathways - Emphasis on teamwork involving LIEP teachers as consultants, co-teachers and PLC teammates. - Staff members take the time to hear the story of the MLs in their school - Presence of fun, laughter, and games in the work - Intrinsic Compassion for all students - Asset-based thinking for students from varying backgrounds - High Expectations: All kids can learn - Collective ownership of student success - Belief that Educators should never stop learning - An attitude of never settling and constant improvement.
Follow and Accelerate the Reported Evolution of a ML School Culture	- Hire Compassionate People - Lean In to ML population shift moments as culture-builders - Facilitate and accelerate situations where others hear MLs' Stories - Create more experiences to accelerate efficacy - Diffusion across the school for sustainability

Implications For Further Research

This qualitative study leaves significant room for further study, and this section will point to some of the many directions this work could lead future researchers. The purpose of qualitative work of this nature is to shed light on and describe lived experiences and phenomena, not to prove causality or argue the validity of findings. Instead, I hope that this work will open doors to further, more detailed study of the intersection of LIEP research, research around school culture and the field of school leadership. With that in mind, the following are three directions for future researchers that emerged from this study.

Comparison Studies

This study explored the school cultures of four schools that experts indicated likely have a school culture that centers ML success and support, and the findings indicated that each school does in fact possess this quality. This study does not compare those schools and their cultures to those that do not focus as acutely on MLs. A logical next step would be a comparison study to further explore what distinguishes these schools from others. The generalizability of the findings and conclusions that emerged in this paper are limited by the fact that no such comparison was made. By studying schools with similar demographics but less impressive results or reputations for their work with MLs, a researcher would be able to further distill which factors and elements contribute to the emergence of a school culture and which may be present in all schools with similar populations. This study was able to describe schools with the culture for MLs and offer loose recommendations as suggestions for practitioners and policymakers, but a comparison study of a similar scope might be able to target even more specific elements to replicate or steps to follow, bringing more generalizability and validity to recommendations. Mintszberg's school culture work from almost 40 years ago suggests this, defining an organization's culture as being something that is "shared by its members but that *distinguishes it from other organizations*."

This points to a limitation of this study and a clear next step for researchers interested in adding to this field.

The goals of this study, to learn about the rich experiences of those who experienced life in these schools, coupled with the application of an idea as intangible as school culture, clearly align with those of qualitative research. A logical next step for researchers, however, would be to explore these phenomena in a more systematic way through quantitative research. Using school culture theory and existing measurement tools, a survey of a standard set of participants may provide more clarity around the answers to this study's research questions or related ones. Which of the factors that emerged from this study have the most impact on the development of school cultures in our case schools? Which elements shape their work the most? Which leadership approach has the greatest correlation with schools who identify with this type of school culture? Quantifying answers to questions like these would advance this work, which sought to establish lists of elements and factors and prioritize them for policymakers and school leaders to guide their work. This was not possible using the methods employed in this study. Furthermore, quantitative methods to solve similar research questions could help verify the findings of this study or perhaps challenge them.

Increase the Scope

Further research could also expand the scope from that presented in this study, involving more schools across a larger geographic area, more achievable using a quantitative survey that does not require such in-depth relationship formation like qualitative interviews and analysis require. This study focused entirely on staff members, which make up only a portion of a school's stakeholders and therefore a school's culture. This was mitigated by asking for their perceptions of students and the community, but this limited both the research questions and

conclusions. A future study is needed to involve more stakeholders, such as students, parents, community members and those that surround the school. Their views on the school's culture would be instrumental in developing more robust conclusions and recommendations. Whether expanding the scope or diving deeper into the elements that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants in this study, there are significant avenues for further research around the questions explored in this exploratory study.

Grounded Theory

Throughout this research inquiry, I observed trends and patterns that seemed to be occurring across schools and settings. I presented the most pronounced in the final two chapters as ideas reported by participants that are worth consideration by practitioners and policy makers. Future researchers may set out on grounded theory research with the intent of arguing the validity of the constructs introduced here.

It became evident from the qualitative interviews conducted for this study that participants felt that there existed a progression or evolution of a school culture, and that evolution seemed similar across school settings. Further research is necessary to develop a theory from these trends, but this exploratory study could serve as a building block toward its development. Furthermore, the importance of more staff members and stakeholders becoming exposed to the backgrounds and stories of the MLs in their schools emerged as a trend in the data from this study. There does not currently exist a construct to explain this phenomenon in the intersectional field of LEIP and school culture theory. There is very interesting research to be done to tease out this concept and develop a working theory to support my conjecture that this phenomenon could extend beyond the reported lived experiences of the participants of this study.

Additionally, the participants of the study—and the researcher in the last two chapters—placed significant emphasis on the intrinsic compassion of the stakeholders of our case schools in the development of an ML-centered school culture. There is little doubt that our participants believe this, but this suggests a rich field of research to bring validity to their claims. Quantitative or mixed methods grounded theory research could add to this study by articulating a working theory that outlines the effect of compassionate educators and achievement for MLs they serve. Such a study could take my recommendations for prioritizing this character trait in hiring and staff assignments to a greater level of importance and specificity. In general, more detailed work into the ideas explored in this study will only bolster the findings, conclusions and recommendations for those working to better serve MLs in the field.

Conclusion

The work of educators is as challenging as it is critical to the future of the country and the world. Working with students for whom English is not their first language is essential to that work for all educators and growing more important with each passing day, year, and newly arriving family looking for the world-class education for their children that America is known for. Our schools and communities are made richer by the experiences of our immigrant neighbors, and we have a responsibility to build schools around their needs. This is largely not happening across the country. School leaders and policymakers have varying degrees of experience, expertise and confidence in the best practices for working with this unique group of students. Some schools seem to have it ingrained in their DNA to support and find success for MLs. The research supports that the schools that are most effective in this work don't have some magic program or single solution to challenges faced by our students; instead, they have school cultures that prioritize ML support and success.

This study sought to find schools with this ethos and learn from those who are a part of it. I found four such buildings in very different settings whose culture seemed to be overloaded with elements that supported their work with MLs and my assumptions were challenged in some ways and validated in others. As a practitioner, I was excited to see my research support beliefs about the importance of transformational, distributed and adaptable leadership, the value of a welcoming environment, inclusive classes, and hiring compassionate staff, though the degree to which each impacted the participants, and their schools, was remarkable. I was surprised to learn about the importance of scheduling, the degree to which hearing the individual stories of MLs impacted participants and their school cultures, and how similar the arc of each school culture development was across divisions, size and setting. I will carry this work with me for the rest of my career as a school leader and it is my sincere hope that others do as well.

Even more so, it is my ultimate hope that work like this will one day no longer be necessary. As Dr. Foster, a former ML herself and now school leader driving ML support and achievement her Northern Virginia high school shared, this work will not be finished until MLs are no longer a second thought. Support for MLs, while it requires expertise, scaffolding and carefully designed instruction and programming, should not need extraordinary leadership or unique school culture to be a reality. This should be a part of every secondary school in the commonwealth and as ingrained in a school's culture as everything we associate with public schools already is. Supporting MLs should happen in each school to the same extent that support for every other student does. We will have built a school culture that support MLs when we stop noticing that we are doing so and success for this valuable group of students is, simply, "how we do things around here."

Appendix A

Interview Protocols for LIEP Specialists and School Leaders

Part I. Interview Protocol for LIEP Specialists

Research Focus	Aim(s) of Interview Questions	Examples of Interview Questions
Defining Success for MLs	To learn how experts in the field describe a school successfully serving MLs.	What does success look like for Multilingual Learners? ▪ Think of a group of Multilingual Learners you served well, how did you know a school was successful in their work with those students?
	Identifying broad elements of schools with a culture for LIEP success	When you think of the most effective schools for MLs, what is present in those places?
Identifying Successful Schools	Using network sampling as a means for selection to identify schools for the case study as well as collecting outsider data for key elements of school culture therein.	What schools come to mind that are having success? ▪ In your perception, Why? ▪ What specific elements of those schools made you think of them? ▪ Who was involved? ▪ Has this school changed over time from your point of view?
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	Identifying key, detailed elements of schools with a culture for LIEP success	What are the tangible visuals, policies that you've observed about this school that support LIEP and success for MLs? ▪ What seem to be the language and practices of the people at this school that support LIEP? ▪ From your perspective, what are the core beliefs, values, and ideals of the school? What makes you think that?

Part II. Interview Protocol for School-Based Official in Case Study School

Tell me about the Multilingual Learners at your school

Do you think of an individual?

Research Focus	Aim(s) of Interview Questions	Examples of Interview Questions
Defining Success for MLs	To establish criteria for success	This study is about success for MLs. Do you think that your school is successful in its work with English Learners? Why?
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	To ascertain the breadth or diffusion of a culture for LIEP success	Who is involved in Supporting MLs at your school? ▪ Press for specifics, like names and titles. Do not let off the hook with LIEP teachers. The point of this question is to see if the work is widespread ▪ Has that always been the case? ▪ Why is that the case at this moment?
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	To bring the lens of school culture to be applied to the case	Explanation of School Culture Theory ▪ "The way we do things around here" ▪ Diffused widely amongst the school
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	To establish the presence of tangible, observable pieces of evidence of school culture	What are observable elements of your school that support LIEP and MLs? ▪ When and in what manner did they come about or into being?
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	To establish the presence of semi-tangible, pieces of evidence of school culture	What are some routines, practices and actions that support LEIP and MLs? ▪ When and by what manner did they become common or start happening?
Evidence for a Culture of success for MLs	To establish the presence of deep but ethereal, pieces of evidence of school culture	What are some of the core beliefs of the school the involve MLs or LIEP? ▪ What makes you say that? (How do you know they are present?) ▪ Have they always been present in your time there? ▪ Have they changed over time?

Appendix B

List of All Repeated Codes with Frequency by School

Inductive Code	All Interviews	Dalton High School	Rock City High School	Balboa High School	Bartlett Middle School
Focusing on MLs became everyone's job /Fell on Everybody (widespread)	38	8	6	9	15
The importance of the school as a Welcoming Environment	32	0	2	20	10
Innovative programming	30	2	20	3	5
Leadership (Principal)	29	10	0	13	6
Presence of MLs and diversity as an asset	28	3	5	15	5
Teacher Led Program	28	0	9	9	10
Having High Expectations for Students and Staff	27	12	1	12	2
Inclusion in regular education setting	26	18	3	3	2
Scheduling and its impact on MLs	26	8	5	3	10
Leadership from central office (division)	25	3	9	5	8
Co-planning and co-teaching	24	12	0	1	11
Having "the right conversations"	23	9	0	6	8
LIEP teachers acting as Consultants	23	4	4	11	4
School culture Definition or evidence referenced	20	3	8	5	4
Collaboration and teamwork across the school	19	5	3	2	9
Leadership from the Admin Team	19	9	0	10	0
Never Stop Learning	19	3	5	9	2
Scaffolding and differentiation in the classroom	19	2	8	6	3
Can't ignore MLs due to demographics of the school	18	6	3	9	0
Having "big hearted people" on staff	18	1	7	6	4
Importance of "hearing their story"	18	3	1	7	7
Professional Development	17	3	2	4	8
Part of our Core Values	16	10	1	5	0
Sense of Family	16	0	0	6	10
Hiring/Staffing	15	3	3	6	3
Importance of high quality classroom instruction	15	2	1	8	4
Leadership from Department Leader	15	3	0	4	8
MLs "not invisible"	15	4	3	7	1
Teachers Attitude	15	3	1	2	9
Can't tell who is ML:"They are just part of our school"	14	2	2	0	10
Clubs, Athletics, Events Reflecting inclusion and building connectedness	14	2	7	4	1
Prioritzating the needs of MLs as a school	14	9	2	2	1
Signage and Messaging in multiple languages	14	1	4	6	3
Use of Data	14	5	3	1	5
Experience leads to Efficacy (Growing capacity)	13	3	2	3	5
Humanizing: Seeing students as individuals not statistics	13	1	5	5	2
"Whatever it takes": grit	12	2	2	0	8

Inductive Code	All Interviews	Dalton High School	Rock City High School	Balboa High School	Bartlett Middle School
Deeper Learning for all Kids	12	5	5	1	1
Intrinsic quality of the teacher as the factor	12	1	2	4	5
Leadership (Teacher)	11	1	4	4	2
References to Challenges/Obstacles	11	2	4	2	3
Relationships	11	2	5	2	2
Collective Ownership: The whole school takes responsibiliy	10	2	0	3	5
How a zoned program affects school culture	10	0	0	6	4
It's central to what we do	10	0	0	10	0
Problem solving from staff members	10	1	0	4	5
Teacher experience level or age as a factor	10	2	3	2	3
"Isolated" - MLs often feel isolated in school or class	9	2	1	2	4
Not settling - "we're not there yet."	9	4	3	1	1
Outreach to community and parents	9	1	0	3	5
Teacher efficacy	9	0	0	4	5
Bonding with students	8	0	3	4	1
Community Trust	8	0	0	5	3
LIEP teachers as advocates	8	2	0	0	6
LIEP teachers on Content teams	8	8	0	0	0
Listening	8	3	0	2	3
Fun, games and laughter matter	7	2	1	4	0
Importance of Student voice (including MLs)	7	4	1	1	1
Pathways: 'Theres alot of different ways to do high school'	7	0	7	0	0
School History influencing current culture	7	1	1	5	0
Sense of Belonging	7	2	3	2	0
Student interest is key (connectedness)	7	6	0	0	1
"Not an afterthought" "not the second conversation"	6	4	2	0	0
Access scores as indicator of success	6	1	1	1	3
Admin Support & Autonomy for teachers	6	1	3	2	0
Principal Messaging to staff and communities	6	0	0	4	2
Staff making assumption/stereotypes	6	0	0	2	4
Teachers and staff intentional with their efforts	6	1	0	4	1
Celebrating successes as a school	5	0	2	3	0
Disrupting the status quo	5	5	0	0	0
More than Showing off/Pride, whats next?	5	0	1	3	1
Paralells with special education	5	2	0	2	1
Student participation in class/'Oral Language engagement'	5	2	2	1	0
Teacher ownership of ML success and programs	5	1	0	1	3
The belief that all kids can learn	5	4	0	0	1
cultural acceptance (not xenophobic)	4	0	4	0	0
Having and using resources wisely	4	0	0	3	1

Inductive Code	All Interviews	Dalton High School	Rock City High School	Balboa High School	Bartlett Middle School
Importance of separate department chair position/own dept	4	0	1	3	0
Teachers/Staff not resistant to Working with MLs	4	0	1	2	1
A significant demographic shift in our school	3	2	1	0	0
Access to AP/Honors for MLs	3	1	1	0	1
Athletics coaches tend to be effective with MLs in and out of the classroom	3	0	1	1	1
Division within MLs - Long term vs others	3	0	2	0	1
Establishing ML-related Goals	3	0	1	1	1
Fidelity with services for MLs	3	1	0	2	0
Importance of meeting ML students where they are	3	0	0	0	3
Lack of teacher time as obstacle to success	3	1	0	1	1
Lack of teacher training	3	0	2	1	0
Representation in curriculum	3	0	1	0	2
[Bartlett School Division] Reference	3	0	0	2	1
The need for systems that outlive people	3	0	2	1	0
The work with MLs is 'Tied to Everything'	3	1	0	2	0

Appendix C
Information and Consent Form for School/District Staff

TITLE:
Building a School Culture of Success for MultiLingual Learners:
A Multiple Case Study of Perspectives from Secondary School Leaders

This consent form outlines important information about a research study in which you are being asked to participate. Please ask the researcher to explain any information in this consent document that is not clear to you. You may take home a copy of this form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to apply school culture theory, educational leadership theory, and the research surrounding best practices for English Learners (ELs) in order to examine aspects of school culture that are present in schools that have built a culture of success for ELs.

The study will identify schools whose members believe have built a school culture of support and success for ELs and Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEP). The study will use a case study method to describe the context in which such a culture emerged, using school culture and Educational Leadership theoretical frameworks applied to the lived experiences of the school leaders in those schools.

By doing so, the study hopes to inform school leaders seeking to close achievement gaps for EL's by pointing out the importance of school culture in that process and indicating elements of school culture that are present in schools that are having success.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT

Using a qualitative framework, including in-depth semi-structured interviews and document analyses, this multiple case study inquiry will apply theoretical frameworks of effective school leadership and school culture to the practices associated with supporting English Learners in secondary school settings. In order to accomplish this, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview that will take about an hour. This questions in this interview will ask you your perceptions about your school, your school's culture, and how your school supports English Learners. This interview will be recorded and then analyzed for themes using qualitative coding methods.

RISKS, BENEFITS AND COSTS

It is unlikely that participation in this study will cause you any risk or discomfort. However, sometimes talking about teaching experiences causes people to become upset. You do not have to talk about any subjects you do not want to talk about; you may leave the project at any time. You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information we learn from this study may help us think about school culture and serving ELs in new ways.
There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview and the time you spend analyzing the accuracy of your contribution to the study's findings.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of this consent form, audio files of interviews, transcripts of interviews, researcher field notes, and various journal entries. A fake

name will replace your name in documented field notes and will not be connected to names on the consent form. All electronic data will be kept in password protected computer files. Hard copies of data will be kept in locked filing cabinets. Transcripts of interviews will be kept for a minimum of five years after the completion of the study. All other data containing identifiable information on computer files and hard copies will be destroyed upon completion of the research study. Reports and publications generated from this study will not identify individuals, schools, or the school division, and all research materials will seek to accurately represent the party conducting the study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study. If you leave the study, you will be given the option of having any data already collected about you destroyed and not used in the project.

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

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Acknowledgement of Consent	
_____ Adult Participant Name (Printed)	
_____ Adult Participant's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Name of Person Conducting Consent Discussion (Printed)	
_____ Signature of Person Conducting Consent Discussion	_____ Date

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