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Culturally Responsive School Leadership in Continuation High Schools: An Alternative Approach in Leadership Styles

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CONTINUATION HIGH
SCHOOLS: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN LEADERSHIP STYLES

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Roberto C. Portillo

May 2022

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Dissertation Titled

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CONTINUATION
HIGH SCHOOLS: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN LEADERSHIP
STYLES

by

Roberto C. Portillo

APPROVED FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN
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May 2022

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ABSTRACT

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CONTINUATION HIGH SCHOOLS: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN LEADERSHIP STYLES

by Roberto C. Portillo

Continuation high schools and the students they serve are often invisible and ignored to most Californians. However, state school authorities estimate that over 115,000 California high school students will pass through one of the state's 519 continuation high schools each year, to either graduate with a diploma, or to drop out of school altogether (Austin & Dixon, 2008). Principals in these schools must be exceptional and well prepared. However, principals have been trained to implement culturally responsive school leadership at their sites. Eight continuation high school principals described their experiences regarding their preparation, supports, challenges and successes in implementing culturally responsive school leadership at their sites. The findings in this study showed that while principals have a high degree of understanding of Khalifa et al. (2016) culturally responsive school leadership framework, they still lack the support to implement the leadership style at their site. Recommendations included leadership preparation programs emphasizing CRSL, professional development opportunities and mentorship opportunities.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all of my influences since I began this educational journey but most importantly to my mother. None of this would be possible without your tenacious perseverance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Context

Continuation high schools and the students they serve are often invisible and ignored to most Californians. However, state school authorities estimate that over 115,000 California high school students will pass through one of the state's 519 continuation high schools each year, to either graduate with a diploma, or to drop out of school altogether (Austin et al., 2008). The problem is that student populations in continuation high schools are more likely to be racially or ethnically concentrated than those in the state's comprehensive high schools. Continuation high schools are more likely to be Latinx, Black, and English Learners. Latinx students tend to be over-represented in continuation high schools as they make up 55% of all students in continuation high schools (Ruiz de Velasco et al., 2008). This study examines leadership skills necessary for continuation high school principals to engage in Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL).

Continuation High Schools in California

Continuation Schools are an alternative option for students whose educational needs are not met by the traditional comprehensive sites. They were first established in California 1919 to accommodate students needing to work full-time and still wanting to earn a traditional high school diploma (Alarcon, 2019). Continuation schools are a conduit towards a high school diploma for students who have challenges with their academics, attendance, and social emotional well being and who need an alternative pathway to graduate. Continuation schools have served working and parenting students since the early 1900's, after which they adapted and broadened their reach to enroll students needing academic intervention because they

were credit deficient (Kelly, 1993). Currently, continuation schools are alternative sites for students who are 16 years old or older and are credit deficient. It is estimated that 11th graders in continuation high schools- “Are three times more likely to be pushed out than in traditional schools (21% vs 6%) (Austin et al., 2008, p. 6). This statistic is reason enough to study what school leaders are doing to connect with Latinx students to raise graduation rates.

Ten years later, the statistics have not had significant changes. Of 100 students, 40 Latinx students will push out of high school. Of the 60 that continue into higher education, 11 will graduate with a Bachelor’s degree. Three will continue to earn a graduate degree and .3 will earn a doctorate degree (Huber et al., 2015). According to additional research conducted by American Community Survey, the status push out rate represents the percentage of 16-24 year-olds who were not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED certificate). The push out rate among Black students was (6.4%), Hispanic students (8.0%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (9.5%), compared to their Asian counterparts (1.9%) and White students (4.2%) (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2020). Educational leadership can influence these startling statistics by applying culturally responsive leadership approaches to continuation high schools.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership for Exceptional Leaders

What if principals could raise graduation rates for Latinx students in Continuation high schools? What would that type of leadership look like? How could principals implement this type of leadership? The answer to these questions may be in promising pedagogical frameworks for leadership preparation and leadership development that are centered around

justice-centered approaches (Gray & Mendoza-Reis, 2021; J. Lopez et al., 2006; Mendoza-Reis & Smith, 2013). Nearly two decades ago, culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive pedagogies (Gay, 1994) entered and would come to dominate discourses on education and reform. Efforts to address the unique learning needs of minoritized students (Khalifa et al., 2016), include encouraging teachers to use cultural referents in both the pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and classroom management (Weinstein et al., 2004). Gay (2010) added to the literature by agreeing that culturally responsive teaching is critical component in addressing the challenges facing minoritized students and added the importance of reforming and transforming all aspects of the educational enterprise, such as funding, policymaking, and administration, so they too are culturally responsive (Khalifa et al., 2016).

McCray and Beachum (2014) defined a CRSL framework that consists of three components: (a) Liberatory Consciousness requires leaders to conduct a self-analysis in their epistemologies, prejudices, stereotypes, and understanding one's limitations in working with diverse groups. (b) Pluralist Insight is a form to counter deficit thinking. Traditionally, underrepresented students are not held to the same high standards as their peers from dominant cultures. Having high expectations produces higher engagement and productivity from students. The last component of CRSL is (c) Reflective Practice. This requires school leaders to learn about the school community, identify social issues, connect with community based organizations, and be an ally the community can depend on. CRSL is a framework school leaders can explore to bridge the gap between schools and marginalized communities. Some of the most marginalized youth in high school are often found in continuation high

schools. At these sites, educational leaders have the opportunities to create spaces where underserved youth can earn a high school diploma and break cycles of poverty and increase graduation rates among students of color. Latinx students need leadership at their sites who are well versed in CRSL.

Khalifa et al. (2016) proposed a framework for CRSL that included four elements, (a) Critically self-reflection on leadership behaviors; committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge, is a transformative leader for social change and inclusion, leads with courage, uses school data and indicants to measure culturally responsiveness in schools, (b) Promotes culturally responsive/inclusive school environment; developing teacher capacities for culturally responsiveness pedagogy, creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers, modeling culturally responsive teaching, using culturally responsive assessment tools for students, (c) Develops culturally responsive teacher; accepting indigenized, local identities, building relationships; reducing anxiety among students, modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions, promoting a vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practice, if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors, and (d) Engages students, parents and indigenous contexts; developing meaningful, positive relationships with community, is a servant leader, as public intellectual and other roles, finds overlapping spaces for school and community, serves as an advocate and social justice activists for community-based causes in both school and neighborhood, uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families, resists deficit images of students and families.

Multiple Pandemics in the Current Context

At the time of this study, there were several major events in our society that contributed to multiple pandemics. For the first time in 100 years, our planet was crippled by the Covid - 19 pandemic, or novel coronavirus. This was a new and deadly coronavirus that had not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold (Chatterjee, 2022). At the time of this study, Covid - 19 had claimed 531,766 American lives (Chatterjee, 2022). Schools were affected by the abrupt shift from in-person to distance learning teaching in order to save lives and continue educating students.

A second pandemic was a national and global movement around BlackLivesMatter. This movement had its origin in the US policing system and citizens of color who have had a long-standing history of racism and systemic oppression. The assassination of Mr. George Floyd was televised globally. George Floyd was a 46-year-old black man who was assassinated during an arrest by four Minneapolis police officers (Oriola & Knight, 2020). For 8 minutes and 46 seconds, Mr. Floyd begged for his life and called for his mother (who had died two years earlier), and repeated the phrase, “I can’t breath,” which has now become a familiar refrain all across the United States and around the world (Oriola & Knight, 2020, p. 113). George Floyd’s public execution led to widespread protest in the United States and cities in over 60 countries, and six of the seven continents (with the exception of Antarctica) around the planet (Oriola & Knight, 2020). It would be a disservice to social justice movements to not include this important moment in history that aims directly to a path of

transformative changes in the institutions that are “designed” to protect and serve its constituents.

Latinx Students

A third pandemic, and the focus of this study, is the persistent failure of our most vulnerable Latinx students who are assigned to continuation high schools. The academic failure of Latinx students is illustrated by Tara Yosso (2005a) who utilizes the 2000 U.S. Census data from the National Center of Educational Statistics to illustrate the following realities of the Latinx educational pipeline by beginning with 100 Latinx students at the elementary level, noting that 56 push out of high school and 44 continue on to graduate. Of the 44 who graduate from high school, about 26 continue to some form of postsecondary education. Of the 26, approximately 17 enroll in community colleges and nine enroll at 4-year institutions. Of the nine Chicanas/os attending a 4-year college and one community college transfer student, seven will graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Finally, two Latinx students will continue on to earn a graduate or professional school degree and less than one will receive a doctorate. In 2020, the Latinx student push out rate in California was 10.2% compared to their White peers who had a push out rate of 6.7% (California Department of Education [CDE], 2020).

This disparity in educational attainment is both a challenge and an opportunity for all school leaders who have been tasked to develop an equity lens in light of distance learning and racial unrest. It is imperative that state and local leaders ensure school leaders are appropriately prepared and supported in these unprecedented times.

Statement of the Problem

The current problem is that principals in continuation high schools may not have sufficient preparation or support in culturally responsive leadership to be effective school leaders. A lack of preparation and support coupled with the current demands of the role of the principalship, may contribute to the push out rate and educational attainment among Latinx boys.

The lack of preparation and support in CRSL is exacerbated by the need for additional leadership skills in continuation high schools with Latinx students. Due to the unique nature of educational reform mandates, a majority of principals working in continuation high schools may not have received training in CRSL. Furthermore, the role of the principalship is difficult as a result of the increase in responsibilities and managerial tasks. Ethnic representation is also beneficial when working with Latinx students as understanding cultural norms can assist in implementing CRSL at continuation high schools.

Culturally responsive leadership has been defined and studied for decades but has not been studied under current times. School leaders had not been tasked to lead their schools in a space of distance learning where students, teachers, counselors and classified staff were working from home. Leadership has now added an additional layer of distance learning that staff members and communities had to adjust and learn to navigate.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (a) to examine the school leaders' understanding of culturally responsive leadership at the continuation high school level among Latinx students, and (b) to identify the preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes that

Continuation high school principals perceive to be necessary to improve their leadership skills.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools with CRSL regarding the following: (a) preparedness, (b) supports, (c) challenges, and (d) success?

Delimitations

This was an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study of selected continuation high school principals in the Southern Bay Area counties in California during the 2021-2022 academic year. Therefore, the findings and results may or may not necessarily generalize to other subpopulations, locations, and/or time periods. The concepts examined were from the CRSL framework by Khalifa et al. (2016).

Significance of Study

Investigating how practitioners (principals) are cultivating and harvesting a climate of inclusion and celebratory practices of their Latinx students has important implications for the professional development of future principals. The findings of this study may assist present and future principals on how to maintain engagement among their Latinx student populations and increase their graduation rates. Culturally responsive approaches to school leadership have received attention in recent years, however, there is not a consensus as to how to support principals to enact CRSL.

Definition of Terms

Community Cultural Wealth- In response to learning and recognizing structures of racism in school systems, Yosso (2005a) presents a framework that focuses on the community's cultural assets and counters deficit thinking.

Continuation High Schools- Continuation education provides a high school diploma program that meets the needs of students of ages sixteen to eighteen who have not graduated from high school, are not exempt from compulsory school attendance, and are deemed at risk of not completing their education (Sackheim, 2018).

Critical Race Theory (CRT)- CRT is a study of transforming relationships among race, racism, and power activists and scholars (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Culturally Relevant Leadership- Leadership practices consisting of three principals: Liberatory Consciousness, Pluralistic Insight and Reflective Practice (McCray & Beachum, 2014).

Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL)- Culturally Responsive Leaders will challenge teaching and environments that marginalize students of color, and they will also identify, protect, institutionalize, and celebrate all cultural practices from these students (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1278).

Drop Out- Students who are pushed out of high school (Husted & Cavalluzzo, 2001).

Funds of Knowledge- A research approach model that is based on understanding households and classrooms qualitatively. Utilizing a combination of ethnographic observations, open-ended interviewing strategies, life histories, and case studies that, when combined

analytically, can accurately portray the complex functions of households within their socio-historical context (Moll et al., 1992).

Graduation Rates- Graduation rates formula is based on the NCES definition. The formula is the number of graduates (year 4) divided by the number of graduates (year 4) plus the push outs in each year.

Summary

Chapter I discussed the history of CRSL and how it can affect the graduation rates of Latinx students in continuation high schools. Chapter II provides a review of the research related to the variables of the study. Chapter III discusses the methodology used to conduct the study. Chapter IV provides the results of the data analysis and discusses the findings of the study. A summary of key findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research studies are found in chapter V.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

The first purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed method study was to examine the school leaders' understanding of CRSL at the continuation high school level among Latinx students. The second purpose of the study was to identify the preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes that Continuation high school principals perceive to be necessary to improve their skills in culturally relevant school leadership. This chapter provides a review of the literature on CRSL. The literature review also includes a discussion of (a) background and historical context, (b) Latinx Push Out Rates/Graduation Rates, (c) Continuation High Schools, (d) Components of CRSL, and (e) Theoretical Framework.

Background and Historical Context

Principals and Leadership

Over the past 20 years, the principalship has evolved and has shifted the responsibilities and focus into new areas to keep pace with expectations for their performance (Grisson et al., 2021). Federal mandates such as the No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and the Every Student Succeeds Act placed a premium on student achievement, influenced approaches to reforming low-performing schools, and introduced new responsibilities for managing testing and evaluating poor personnel. School leaders had to engage in policies set by Washington DC that required a closer observation of classroom instruction, competing for students in public and private school choice environments, and pay close attention to equity as a stand-alone policy and professional goal (Grisson et al., 2021). Grisson et al. (2021) suggest that principals reconsider their leadership behaviors in light of equity considerations. Questioning

themselves on how their actions will remove barriers and create opportunities for historically underserved groups, how their behaviors will promote access to critical resources and supports for the success of all students, and how their practices will confront institutional factors that may be currently inhibiting certain members of the school community from achieving their full potential (Grissom et al., 2021).

The Wallace Report on “How Principals Affect Students and Schools” (Grissom et al., 2021), highlights seven key findings that indicate how principals can affect their school sites.

1. **Effective Principals are at least as important for student achievement as previous reports have concluded—and in fact, their importance may not have been stated strongly enough.** According to this study, effective principals have large effects. By replacing below-average principals (below 25th percentile) with an above average (at the 75th percentile) would increase a student’s learning by nearly three months in both math and reading annually. The replacement could affect hundreds of students per year. Their results indicate that there needs to be renewed attention to strategies for cultivating, selecting, preparing, and supporting a high-quality principal force.
2. **Principals have substantively important effects that extend beyond student achievement.** Research indicates links between effective leadership and important teacher outcomes, including more positive teacher working conditions and reduced turnover, mainly among effective teachers. Coupled with student achievement results, these findings project the importance of how strong principals are in multiple

dimensions and how critical policy efforts to strengthen principal leadership are for school site success.

3. **Effective principals orient their practice toward instructionally focused interactions with teachers, building a productive school climate, facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities, and strategic personnel and resource management processes.** These areas of practice draw on skills and expertise in the three areas-instruction, people, and the organization- that principals need to effect positive change at their school sites. Grisson et al. (2021), emphasize that instructionally focused interactions with teachers include feedback, coaching, and other instructional improvement work that is grounded in classroom observations and other data about teaching and learning. Productive climates are cultivated by trust, collective efficacy, and a culture of data use that promotes teachers' and students' learning engagement and learning. Strategic management of personnel and other resources focuses on effective and equitable allocation of teachers and other key inputs to student learning.
4. **Principals must develop an equity lens, particularly as they are called on to meet the needs of growing numbers of students who are marginalized.** Equity focused principals lead differently, and evidence suggests that leadership for equity can make schools more inclusive and instruction more culturally responsive. This evidence argues for continued reorientation of the work of principals toward educational equity through preservice preparation, in-service supports, and other mechanisms.

5. **Effective principals are not equitably distributed across schools.** School districts must be held accountable for developing an equity lens when hiring, placing, and retaining effective principals in school sites who serve large numbers of historically minoritized and marginalized students. School districts must prioritize an equitable allocation of principals and developing local authorities and systems to pursue that goal is imperative for more equitable student outcomes.
6. **Principals are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, but representation gaps with students are growing, which is concerning, given the payoffs to principal diversity.** While the principal racial and ethnic diversity is slowly increasing, the diversity of the student population is rapidly changing. Of the 6.1 million students in California, 55% are Latinx, 22% are white, 12% are Asian or Pacific Islander, 5% are Black, 1% are American Indian, and 4% multiracial (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020). These student demographics are not reflected in California's school leaders. A 2017-2018 report from the NCES (2020) described the ethnicity of California principals as 66.1% white, 22.5% Hispanic, 6.1% Black, and 5.3% Other (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander). More so is this evident with Latinx students. Principal diversity has an effect on better student color outcomes, including test scores gains, teacher outcomes, including the likelihood that teachers of color are hired into a school site and their likelihood of them staying.
7. **Research on school principals is highly variable, and the field requires new investment in a rigorous, cohesive body of research.** School principal research displays a topical diversity that reflects the complexity of the job. This diversity can

be an asset and it also creates challenges around making sense of the work that needs to be studied moving forward. The principalship requires major investment in data collection and capacity-building around high-quality methods if it is to offer clear direction for leadership policy and practice. The reflection implies a role for policy makers, too, and not just researchers.

Historical Context of Education

Leadership in education has evolved in the past half century. A brief educational history will be presented to explain how we have arrived in need of Culturally Relevant Leadership and how it has to continue to evolve. Before 1965, federal legislation dealing with education provided funding or land for schools or special programs but was careful not to intrude on states' rights to make decisions on curriculum and general operations of the school (Standerfer, 2006). The Johnson Administration passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 (ESEA) in an effort to provide funds to schools in need because of the socioeconomic status of their students. ESEA's purpose was to close the achievement gap and raise graduation levels between students of different backgrounds, mostly, Black and Latinx students, while not intruding on schools that were doing well without federal mandates (Standerfer, 2006). While there was a national thrust towards closing the achievement gap and raising graduation rates, school leadership was not yet a focus at the federal level.

When the ESEA failed to deliver the reduction in achievement gap, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was introduced in 2002 (Koretz, 2009). NCLB required states to have a system that would monitor progress of public schools in proficiency on state academic

standards. Teacher quality standards were also part of the legislation, as previously, the accountability of standards was handled on the state level and through accreditation services (Standerfer, 2006). Lastly, sanctions were given to schools who did not meet standards. Sanctions ranged from needing improvement, implementing district corrective action, devising a restructuring plan and, finally, entering school restructuring after failing to meet targets for six consecutive years (Heck & Chang, 2017). Restructuring required the “major reorganization of a school’s governance structure arrangement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 24). A concern with NCLB was that it had not gone through rigorous research and development, and it had not been evaluated adequately after implementation (Koretz, 2009). In both legislations, ESEA and NCLB, the focus was injecting money where needed or into student test scores to show improvement and graduation rates. ESEA and NCLB did not examine the issues surrounding school culture, leadership, or community engagement. The legislation ignored the importance of many factors inside and outside of schooling. Specifically, it ignored how culturally responsive leaders develop and support the school staff in promoting a climate that makes the whole school welcoming, inclusive and accepting of minority students. Because minority students have been disadvantaged by historically oppressive structures (i.e., ESEA and NCLB), and because educators and schools have been intentionally or unintentionally complicit in reproducing this oppression, culturally relevant school leaders have a principled, moral responsibility to counter this oppression (Khalifa et al., 2016).

Scholarship defining culturally responsive or culturally responsive approaches to leadership has evolved and pushed the conversation forward. The work from (Paris, 2012)

referring to culturally sustaining pedagogy, culturally responsive pedagogy from (Cazden & Leggett, 1976), culturally compatible from (Vogt et al., 1987), cultural collusion from (Beachum & McCray, 2004), cultural synchronism (Irvine, 2002), culturally proficient (Lindsey et al., 2004; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Khalifa et al. (2016), settled on the term “culturally responsive school leadership” (CRSL). The first reason is that the term culturally responsive has been around the longest and is a more recognizable term employed to describe this work, and has been consistently employed in educational leadership studies (Johnson, 2006; Merchant et al., 2013; Webb-Johnson, 2006).

Nearly two decades ago, culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive pedagogies (Gay, 1994) entered and, arguably, would come to dominate discourses on education and reform. Efforts to address the unique learning needs of minoritized students (Khalifa et al., 2016), include encouraging teachers to use cultural referents in both the pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and classroom management (Weinstein et al., 2004). Gay (2010) added to the literature by agreeing that culturally responsive teaching is critical component in addressing the challenges facing minoritized students and added the importance of reforming and transforming all aspects of the educational enterprise, such as funding, policymaking, and administration, so they too are culturally responsive (Khalifa et al., 2016).

McCray and Beachum (2014) have also added to the CRSL by defining the three components of CRSL. CRSL consists of three components: Liberatory Consciousness requires leaders to conduct a self-analysis in their epistemologies, prejudices, stereotypes, and understanding one’s limitations in working with diverse groups. Pluralist Insight is a

form to counter deficit thinking. Traditionally, underrepresented students are not held to the same high standards as their peers from dominant cultures. Having high expectations produces higher engagement and productivity from students. The last piece of CRSL is Reflective Practice. This step requires school leaders to dive into their communities, identify social issues, connect with community based organizations, and be an ally the community can depend on. CRSL is a framework school leaders can explore in wanting to bridge the gap between schools and marginalized communities.

In 2016, President Donald J. Trump appointed Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education to implement policies that would displace money that would originally funnel into the traditional public school system. Secretary DeVos, a lifelong booster of private schools and opponent of the teachers' unions, set out to reduce the Education Department's footprint by proposing cuts to public school funding and narrowing the department's enforcement of federal education laws and civil rights (Green, 2020). DeVos' accomplishments included reverting Obama's guidance and regulations, including those aimed at protecting the rights of transgender students and survivors of campus sexual assault through Title IX (Camera, 2020). DeVos also revoked higher education regulations "aimed at curbing bad actors in the for-profit college sector and discharging student loan debt for borrowers they defrauded, as well as nixed school discipline guidance aimed at stemming the school-to-prison pipeline for students of color (Camera, 2020, p. 2). During her tenure of Secretary of State, DeVos failed to accomplish the administration's agenda on school choice, had difficulty staffing the Department of Education, drew a record-setting number of lawsuits as well as being on the

receiving end of the pushback from the K-12 and higher education community she was tasked with overseeing (Camera, 2020).

Latinx Push-Out Rates/Graduation Rates

The push-out rates among Latinx is a national issue that educational leaders must address at their respected high schools. Half of Latinx males graduate from high school and a smaller fraction of that number earn a post secondary degree (Contreras, 2011; Huerta, 2015; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). This disparity is a result of multiple structural barriers Latinx students face, which interrupts their academic success- a problem even more significant among Latinx males (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Prior research has found that Latinx students are often concentrated in schools and communities that are poor, segregated, and receive little funding (Acevedo-Gil, 2016; Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Moreover, many of the schools Latinx students attend are large and overcrowded, with inadequate facilities and without a high standard of teaching or school counseling for low-income and minority students (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). These factors pose major concerns for the U.S. since Latinx students account for the largest and fastest growing group in the K-12 education sector (M. H. Lopez & Fry, 2013) but belong to the racial group with the highest push out rate in the U.S. (Fergus et al., 2014).

Graduation Rates

Yosso (2005b) utilizes the 2000 U.S. Census data from the National Center of Educational Statistics to describe a need to implement CRSL into the educational system to support Latinx students. She illustrates the following realities of the Latinx educational pipeline (see Table 1) by beginning with 100 Latinx students at the elementary level, noting

Table 1*The US Education Pipeline, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2012*

Latinx	Whites	Asian Americans	African Americans	Native Americans
100 students	100 students	100 students	100 students	100 students
63/60 High School Diploma	92/91 High School Diploma	84/88 High School Diploma	85/82 High School Diploma	83/80 High School Diploma
13/11 Bachelor's Degree	32/33 Bachelor's Degree	48/52 Bachelor's Degree	21/17 Bachelor's Degree	16/12 Bachelor's Degree
4/3 Graduate Degree	12/13 Graduate Degree	18/24 Graduate Degree	8/6 Graduate Degree	6/4 Graduate Degree
0.3/0.3 Doctorate	1/2 Doctorate	2/5 Doctorate	0.6/0.7 Doctorate	0.5/0.6 Doctorate

Note: The first number represents females, the second, males.

Source: Huber et al. (2015)

that 56 pushout of high school and 44 continue on to graduate. Of the 44 who graduate from high school, about 26 continue to some form of postsecondary education. Of the 26, approximately 17 enroll in community colleges and nine enroll at 4-year institutions. Of the nine Chicanas/os attending a 4-year college and one community college transfer student, seven will graduate with a baccalaureate degree. Finally, two Latinx students will continue on to earn a graduate or professional school degree and less than one will receive a doctorate.

Ten years later, the statistics have not had significant changes. Of 100 students, 40 Latinx students will push out of high school. Of the 60 that continue into higher education, 11 will graduate with a Bachelor's degree. Three will continue to earn a graduate degree and .3 will earn a doctorate degree (Huber et al., 2015). According to additional research conducted by American Community Survey), the status push out rate represents the percentage of 16-24 year-olds who were not enrolled in school and had not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED certificate. The push out rate among Black students was (6.4%), Hispanic students (8.0%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (9.5%), compared to their Asian counterparts (1.9%) and White students (4.2%) (NCES, 2020)

Continuation High Schools

Continuation High Schools are an alternative option for students whose educational needs are not met by the traditional comprehensive sites. They were first established in California 1919 to accommodate students needing to work full-time and still wanting to earn a traditional high school diploma (Alarcon, 2019). Continuation schools are a conduit towards a high school diploma for students who have challenges with their academics, attendance, and social emotional well being and need an alternative pathway to graduate. Continuation schools have served working and parenting students since the early 1900's, after which they adapted and broadened their reach to enroll students needing academic intervention because they were credit deficient (Kelly, 1993). In 1965, only 13 Continuation High Schools existed in California (Kelly, 1993; Malagon, 2011), and as of 2016, there were 452 continuation high schools located in urban, rural, and suburban communities throughout the state (CDE, 2016). Latinx students represent an overrepresentation of low-income, students of color, non English speaking students (Malagon, 2011; Warring, 2015). The large population of Latinx students (68.2%) in continuation schools is not surprising given the large representation of Latinx students (54%) in California's public schools (CDE, 2016).

Currently, continuation schools are alternative sites for students who are 16 years old or older and are credit deficient. It is estimated that 11th graders in continuation high schools "Are three times more likely to push out than in traditional schools (21% vs 6%) (Austin et al., 2008, p. 6). This statistic is enough to study what school leaders are doing to connect with Latinx students to raise graduation rates. Continuation schools are currently structured to accommodate the needs of working parents, parenting teens, and credit deficient students by

having a more flexible schedule, a smaller learning environment, and a menu of credit recovery options, for a more personalized learning environment (Alarcon, 2019). With modified class schedules, augmented 1:1 teacher/student meeting time, and accelerated learning opportunities, students transfer to continuation schools to increase their chances of graduating with their cohort and earn a high school diploma.

Principles of Culturally Responsive School Leadership

There are several principles that support our understanding of CRSL. The first principal of CRSL is Liberatory Consciousness. Liberatory Consciousness addresses the lack of sociocultural consciousness, which entails an understanding that people's ways of thinking, behaving, and being are deeply influenced by such factors such as race/ethnicity, social class and language knowledge by the practitioner (Villegas & Lucas, 2001). Liberatory Consciousness also focuses on a lack of knowledge and causes the leader to seek out crucial information and/or experiences (McCray & Beachum, 2014). This principle begins with the leader and involves self-exploration, questioning one's true beliefs, and coming to terms with the reality of school society (McCray & Beachum, 2014). Examples of Liberatory Consciousness include leaders asking themselves: Is Racism real and I am racist? How do I truly feel about wealth inequality and how does it impact my students and their life chances? Do I really believe that men and women are equal and do I try to even the playing field in all of my professional and personal interactions (McCray & Beachum, 2014). These questions are important to address as people's epistemologies, behavior and being, are deeply influenced by such factors such as race/ethnicity, social class, and language (Villegas & Lucas, 2001). By having a solid awareness of one's own moral compass, leaders have an

opportunity to connect with their communities and begin building and improving culture at their campuses.

The second principle to CRSL is Pluralistic Insight. This is a way to counter deficit thinking educational leaders. Deficit thinking refers to the idea that students, particularly of low socioeconomic status background and of color, fail in school because they and their families have internal defects, or deficits that thwart the learning process (Valencia & Black, 2002). Through the Pluralistic Insights phase leaders can begin to dispel myths regarding their students and their communities. Plutocracy is an attitude that challenges the conventional practice of school leaders focusing solely on academic yearly progress assessments and, rather, digs deeper into the individual leader and their attitudes and beliefs of others. This attitude sees past stereotypes, misconceptions and misinformations. According to McCray and Beachum (2014), Pluralistic Insights leans toward an affirming and positive notion of students that acknowledges the uniqueness of their experiences and the assets they bring to education. Culturally relevant leaders should assist staff in the organization to understand themselves and their students. Bilingual students bring linguistic wealth to their schools that also must be acknowledged and harvested. This requires not only the appropriate knowledge base, but also the proper attitudes especially when working with students of color or of different cultures and backgrounds (McCray & Beachum, 2014) as students make progress to graduate from high school. An example of Pluralistic Insights could be demonstrated when school leaders have higher expectations of their students, the more likely students will meet those expectations. The converse is also true if school leaders have low expectations (McCray & Beachum, 2014). Pluralistic Insights is seeing the multiple

perspectives and insights of communities of color and tapping into their Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005b).

The last principle of CRSL is Reflective Practice. This aspect of CRSL is action-oriented and concentrates on praxis. School leaders engage in both practice and reflection upon what is morally right and equitable at their schools (McCray & Beachum, 2014). This approach rejects the alienation and stigmatization of diverse school communities and encourages a two-way street of communication and participation (McCray & Beachum, 2014). School leaders play a role in promoting overlapping school-community, contexts, speaking (or at least honoring) native student's languages/lexicons, creating structures that accommodate the lives of parents, or even creating school spaces for marginalized student identities and behaviors (Khalifa et al., 2016). Specific examples include, marching for migrant workers' pay, a rally against neighborhood murders, or frequent trips to a local recreation center are all community-based activities directed at improving the lives of community residents, which, of course includes students. Community organizing and advocacy for community-based causes are central to CRSL (Khalifa et al., 2016). Connecting with the community in spaces that are not directly associated with school matters, such as organizing marches, rallies, and trips to recreation centers, are investments for leaders to consider. Supporting the community, especially marginalized groups that attend continuation high schools, as they have a history of being underserved academically and underrepresented in higher education, is an effective way to build community and tap into sources of wealth that are often overlooked. In return, students feel a greater connection with their schools and are more likely to be engaged in practices that involve them and their community. Reflective Practice is the partnership of

Liberatory Consciousness and Pluralistic Insights and the ability of being self-critical to maximize success.

Framework for Culturally Responsive School Leadership

A recent framework by Khalifa et al. (2016) was developed that translates the principles into practice for school leaders. Khalifa et al. report that minoritized students struggle with a menu of academic issues, including low school performance, but they do so in a culture that consistently disproportionately disciplines them and questions their intelligence, leading to discomfort in school. This same outcome requires a strong need for a framework such as CRSL to address the social culture in schools (Khalifa et al., 2016). Black, Latinx, and poor students face a hostile school climate and are often being pulled and pushed out of school (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Khalifa et al., 2016; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Okey & Cusick, 1995). Therefore, Khalifa et al. (2016). have developed four major strands that emerged from a comprehensive-synthesis of the literature. Table 2 is a representation of Khalifa et al. CRSL Framework that is referenced throughout the study.

The first strand of CRSL is *Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors* This notion requires that the leader needs to have an awareness of self and his/her values, beliefs, and/or dispositions when it comes to serving poor children of color (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1280). According to this research, leaders need adequate preparation programs that address race, culture, language, national identity, and other areas of difference is necessary but not sufficient in developing a critical consciousness. Further, leaders need to have an awareness of self and understanding of the context in which they lead and must use their understanding

Table 2
CRSL Framework

<p>Strand 1: Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors</p>	<p>Strand 2: Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts ● Displays a critical consciousness on practice in and out of school; displays self reflection ● Uses school data and indicants to measure CRSL ● Uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools ● Challenges whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school ● Using equity audits to measure student inclusiveness, policy, and practice ● Leading with courage ● Is a transformative leader for social change and inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing teacher capacities for cultural responsiveness pedagogy ● Collaborative walkthroughs ● Creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers ● Using school data to see cultural gaps in achievement, discipline, enrichment, and remedial services ● Creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive ● Engaging/reforming the school curriculum to become more culturally responsive ● Modeling culturally responsive teaching ● Using culturally responsive assessment tools for students
<p>Strand 3: Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments</p>	<p>Strand 4: Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accepting indigenized, local identities ● Building relationships; reducing anxiety among student ● Modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions ● Promoting a vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices ● If need be, challenging, exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors ● Acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students ● Uses student voice ● Using school data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing meaningful, positive relationships with community ● Is a servant leader, as public intellectual and other roles ● Finding overlapping spaces for school and community ● Serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood ● Uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families ● Resist deficit images of students and families ● Nurturing/caring for others; sharing information ● Connecting directly with students

Source: (Khalifa et al., 2016)

to envision and create a new environment of learning for children at their school sites who have been marginalized because of race and class (Khalifa et al., 2016). Better prepared leadership programs and a commitment to self reflection are two components to CRSL.

The second strand of CRSL is *Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers*. This aspect is highlighted by scholars who argue that teachers are primarily not culturally responsive and do not have access to culturally responsive teacher training programs (Gay, 2010; Hayes & Juarez, 2012; Sleeter, 2001). In this layer, the critical role of the school leader is highlighted in ensuring that teachers are and remain culturally responsive. The focus of culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation is on the ability of the school leader to articulate a vision that supports the development and sustaining of responsive teaching (Khalifa et al., 2016). The leaders in this level must have the knowledge to recognize and challenge patterns of inequities that lead to marginalization of poor urban youth. This can be achieved by recruiting and retaining culturally responsive teachers, securing culturally responsive resources and curriculum, mentoring and modeling culturally responsive teaching, or offering professional developments around CRSL (Khalifa et al., 2016). The tough decisions are when culturally responsive leaders have to guide teachers who do not recognize this work as meaningful to their school sites.

The third strand is *Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments*. This layer emphasizes that school leaders must actually promote a culturally responsive school context with an emphasis on inclusivity (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Ryan, 2006). An example of CRSL consists of leveraging resources to identify and foster a culturally affirming school environment (Ainscow, 2005; Riehl, 2000). Leaders in this category, seek to

challenge and support teachers who fall into familial patterns of deficit thinking and disproportionately refer students to special education or punishing students of color more severely than their white classmates for the same infractions (Skiba et al., 2002).

The fourth strand is *Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts*. This component of CRSL highlights the ability of the school leader to engage students, families, and communities in culturally responsive ways. An example of engaging students, parents, and community consists of promoting overlapping school-community context, speaking (or at least, honoring) native students' languages/lexicons, creating structures that accommodate the lives of parents, or even creating school spaces for marginalized student identities and behaviors (Khalifa et al., 2016). Collectively, these four layers of CRSL are tools that can equip educational leaders in raising graduation rates among continuation high schools.

The Role of Caring in CRSL

Inherent in a CRSL framework is the notion of adults caring for students in the educational setting. This stems from several sources, including social and cultural distance in student-adult relationships and school culture itself (Valenzuela, 1999). Most of the school's staff neither live nor participate in their students' predominantly Latinx community. The non-Latino teachers who constitute the majority (81%) are doubtful and even defensive about the suggestion that more Latino teachers would make a difference in school climate. As noted above in the Wallace report (Grison et al., 2021), school leaders can make a difference in school when they represent the ethnicity of their students.

Valenzuela (1999) argues that authentic caring in the classroom is properly premised on the notion that individuals need to be recognized and addressed as whole beings. Valenzuela

and other scholars argue that to make schools caring institutions for members of historically oppressed subordinate groups like Latinx, authentic caring is necessary but not sufficient. Students' cultural world and their structural position must also be fully apprehended, with school-based adults deliberately bringing issues of race, difference, and power into central focus. This approach necessitates abandoning the notion of a color-blind curriculum and a neutral assimilation process. The practice of individualizing collective problems must also be relinquished. A more profound and involved understanding of the socioeconomic, linguistic, sociocultural, and structural barriers that abstract the mobility of Latinx youth needs to inform all caring relationships (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Authentic Caring is strengthened when it is imbued by the leader's ideology clarity. Furthermore, school leaders who practice radical care are those who confront and dismantle inequitable education (Bartolome, 1994; Mendoza-Reis & Flores, 2014; Rivera-McCutchen, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was centered on CRT. Borrowing from the work of Delgado and Stefancic (2012), CRT is a study of transforming relationships among race, racism, and power among activists and scholars. Among the issues this movement considers include economics, history, context, groups- and self-interest, and even feelings and unconsciousness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Although CRT is deep-rooted in traditional civil rights focusing on incrementalism and step-by-step progress, CRT studies the foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principals of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

In response to learning and recognizing structures of racism in school systems, Yosso (2005a) presents a framework that focuses on community's cultural assets and counters deficit thinking. Expanding on earlier theories that explained how schools contribute to social and cultural reproduction (Broadfoot, 1978), Yosso (2005b) identified six sources of capital in communities of underserved students that would be-valuable for leaders to explore to help engage students in continuation high schools. The six forms of capital within the assets based CCW model that school leaders can embrace and practice as a framework in improving school culture at their sites are as follows:

1. Aspiration-maintaining hope for the future regardless of real and perceived barriers
2. Linguistic-communication skills learned through art and language
3. Familial-forms of knowledge and understanding initiated through culture, memory, and family
4. Social-trusting relations and networks or connections with individuals who are able to assist in navigating various social institutions and accessing/attaining various types of support
5. Navigational-informational and social networks and/or resources that help students maintain resistance and persistence
6. Resistance-skills and knowledge that challenge oppression and subordination obtained and fostered through opposition (Locke et al., 2017)

Collectively, these capitals represent a “storehouse of different sources” that leaders can use when needed. Moreover, they challenge dominant perspectives of communities of color and recognize the ways that people of color have historically built on generations of

resources to adapt, resist, survive, and thrive within racist institutions and social structures (Locke et al., 2017).

CRT has been applied to analyze issues in schools including discipline and hierarchy, tracking, affirmative action, high stakes testing, controversies over curriculum and history, and alternative and charter education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Continuation high schools are considered a part of alternative education. Thus, CRT was an appropriate theoretical framework for this study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on CRSL on Latinx students in continuation high schools. Khalifa et al. (2016) framework on CRSL was explained and illustrated as well as the role of caring in CRSL. Lastly, the theoretical frameworks included CRT and community cultural wealth.

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

Introduction

This chapter presents the purpose of this study, the research questions, and describes the methods and procedures. Included in this chapter are the following sections: (a) introduction, (b) purpose statement, (c) research design, (d) population and sample, (e) criteria selection for sample, (f) instrumentation, (g) phase I: survey (h) survey part a, (i) part b, (j) part c, (k) part d, (l) field-test procedures, (m) phase II interview, (n) data collection procedures, (o) organization of the data analysis, (p) limitations, and (q) summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the school leaders' understanding of culturally responsive leadership at the continuation high school level among Latinx students.

Research Design

The research design for this study was explanatory sequential mixed methods. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the explanatory sequential mixed methods is one where the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research. The study is considered explanatory because the initial qualitative data results (survey) are explained further with qualitative data (interviews). Explanatory research is considered sequential because the initial quantitative phase is followed by the qualitative phase.

Trustworthiness

The four criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research were addressed and met in this study (Greene, 2000). Credibility was met through several strategies including the researcher's familiarity with the context as a counselor in a continuation high school.

Credibility was also met through a field-test that served as a member-check. Triangulation of the data also contributed to credibility. Transferability strategies included a limitation on generalizability and boundaries of the study. Dependability strategies included the research design and implementation. The survey instrument reflected all elements of the CRSL framework. Finally, confirmability was met through triangulation of the data in order to reduce potential researcher bias.

Population and Sample

The population for this study were Principals at continuation high schools in the Bay Area and neighboring counties. All participation was voluntary and participants had the option to opt out of the survey and interview phases of the research study at any time.

Selection Criteria for the Sample

Principals in this sample included the selection criteria:

1. Principals who were administrators in continuation high schools.
2. Principals who had at least one year of experience in continuation high school.
3. Principals whose school population demographic consists of at least 50% Latinx population.

Instrumentation

There were two instruments in this study that each served a phase of the research. The instruments included a survey and a set of interview questions. Both instruments are described in the following sections.

Phase I: Survey

According to Fowler (2013), survey research provides quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection-with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population. For the purpose of this study, a survey was used as a form of quantitative data that is consistent with the structure of explanatory data.

In Phase I, the survey for continuation high school principals had four sections that were aligned with the four quadrants identified by Khalifa et al. (2016). Participants were asked to respond to the following: (a) examine the school leaders' understanding of CRSL at the continuation high school level among Latinx students. (b) to identify the supports that principals perceive to be necessary to improve their leadership skills; (c) to describe the perceptions of principals regarding CRSL at their sites.; (d) Supports from district; (e) Demographics questions.

The survey sought to describe their perceptions concerning CRSL and to identify supports they perceived to be necessary to improve their leadership, and perceptions about their culturally responsive leadership in continuation high schools. In addition, the survey in this study was developed to assess individual principal's thoughts, opinions, and feelings, thus aligning with the first characteristic outlined above by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Furthermore, the survey was designed to allow the researcher to gather participants' perceptions on preparedness and supports as culturally responsive leaders. The survey developed for this study consisted of the following parts: (a) Understanding of Culturally

Responsive Leadership (b) Identifying CRSL Supports, (c) Identifying components of CRSL, (d) Background information. The survey is further explained in the next section.

Survey Part A. Understanding of Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Survey item (a) asked principals to identify their understanding of CRSL. In the survey, principals were asked to rate their levels of preparedness to be CRSL in four strands of CRSL defined by Khalifa et al. (2016): (a) Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors, (b) Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers, (c) Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments, (d) Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Their preparedness and understanding of the four leadership strands were rated on a four-point Likert scale. The values were “very well,” “well,” “somewhat well,” and “not well.”

Survey item (b) asked principals to rank the areas of support they received as leaders. Principals were asked to rank the areas of leadership in which they received support by using a six-point Likert scale. The value “1” was “least support,” and “6” was “most support.”

In survey item (c) principals were asked to discuss and provide examples of support(s) they have received in becoming CRSL leaders from principal preparation programs, mentors, coaches, and/or their districts to lead continuation high schools. Lastly, survey item (d) asked principals to report their background demographic information.

Survey Part B. Identify the Supports that Principals Perceive to be Necessary to Improve Their CRSL Skills

This part of the survey asked participants to identify supports they may have received to become culturally responsive school leaders. Principals were asked to report if they had received the following supports: (a) principal preparation program, (b) professional development, (c) district support, (d) conferences, (e) central offices, (f) colleagues, (g)

teachers, (h) support staff, (i) family. Principals were also asked to report how useful the support was if they had received it on a six-point Likert scale. The value “1” was “not useful,” and “6” was “very useful.”

Principals were also asked to give examples of supports they had received. Qualitative data was gathered to identify principals’ preparations, supports, challenges, successes, demonstrations of CRSL at their schools, and how specifically they have been supported by their district in implementing CRSL at their schools.

Survey Part C. Identifying Components of Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Principals were asked to rank the four components of CRSL as most important in leading continuation high schools. The importance of these components of CRSL was rated on a four-point Likert scale, with the value “1” designating “lowest” and the value “4” designating “most” in terms of importance. Lastly, survey item Q.25 asked principals to explain their ranking choices for survey item Q. 24.

Survey Part D. Demographic Profile

In this part of the survey, principals were asked to provide demographic information about their age, ethnicity, gender, degrees and credentials earned, and number of years as administrators in continuation high schools. The researcher used this information to establish a descriptive profile of continuation high school principals who participated in this study.

Phase II Interviews

Interview respondents included two principals. Interviews were conducted with the researcher's personal laptop from the researcher's home office. The interviews were conducted via zoom during the principals’ availability. The interviews were conducted after

completion of the survey and was comprised of four follow up questions. The intent of the interviews was to explore further continuation HS principal perceptions of CRSL.

The questions included: (a) can you give an example of the type of CRSL support you received from your preparation program?, (b) can you provide a challenge in demonstrating CRSL at your site?, (c) can you provide a success in demonstrating CRSL at your site?, and (d) in your opinion, how have you been supported in building a CRSL culture by your district? Please provide examples.

Field-Test Procedures

The field test for the survey and interview was conducted in February 2022 by a peer who is also a principal. Feedback noted that the survey and interview were clear. Therefore, no major modifications were made.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures for this study are described in this section. Surveys were completed with the sample of the study. Survey data was collected through a google form to answer the research questions in the most valid and ethical manner possible (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). All principals participating were invited to participate in the phase 1 (survey) of the study. Data collection occurred between February 2022 and May 2022.

The researcher sent an email to all principals in the participating school districts with an invitation to participate, which included access to the survey. The survey began with a Letter of Consent. Only those participants who indicated they agreed to the conditions outlined in the Letter of Consent advanced to the survey. Those who indicated that they would like to “opt out” automatically exited from the survey. At the end of the survey, participants were

asked to provide their email address if they wished to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

The return rate for the surveys was 50%.

Organization of the Data Analysis

The data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data was organized and aligned with the research question. The first section of the data analysis addressed the research question: What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools with CRSL regarding the following: (a) preparedness, (b) supports, (c) challenges, and (d) successes?

The qualitative and quantitative data included a summary of the perceptions of participating principals regarding preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes of implementing CRSL at their sites.

Quantitative Analysis

Principal data from the survey included ethnicity, gender, when they received their administrative credential, which institution they received their administrative credential from, how many years they had served as principals, degrees held, a list of their credentials, and previous positions held. All of the quantitative data were summarized and displayed in frequency tables.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data from open-ended questions in interviews and questionnaires. To organize the data, the researcher created an instrument alignment table. Responses were placed in the appropriate sections and aligned with the CRSL quadrants. Frequency tables were developed according to the CRSL quadrants.

Finally, relevant literature was used to determine whether the responses were aligned to the research on CRSL.

Limitations

Having virtual meetings because of the pandemic was the primary limitation of this study. Not having access to Latinx student input and testimonios was another data point that limited the study. Also, the sample size for this study was small and therefore, the findings are not generalized beyond the sample of principals who participated in this study.

Summary

Chapter III described the methods and procedures used in this study. The population and sample were described as well as the two instruments used, survey and interview. Procedures for data analysis were described. Limitations were discussed. Chapter IV will present the research findings from this study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter IV presents an analysis of the data collected in the study. The findings are presented and discussed under each of the research questions.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine the school leaders' understanding of CRSL at the continuation high school level among Latinx boys; (b) to identify the preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes that principals perceive to be necessary to improve their CRSL skills.

Research Question

1. What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as leaders with CRSL regarding the following: (a) preparedness, (b) supports, (c) challenges, and (d) success?

Sample Profile

The sample included eight (N=8) continuation high school principals with at least 50% Latinx student population. The sample represented 6 school districts in Northern California. The study consisted of 69% females and 38% males. When asked when they received their administrative credential, 14% had earned their degree in 1982 or before, 29% earned theirs between 2005-2015, and 57% earned theirs between 2016-2020. When asked about their degree, 75% held a Master's degree and 25% had a Ed.D or Ph.D. When asked about their ethnicity, 13% reported being Asian, 25% reported being white, and 63% reported being Hispanic/Latino, Spanish Origin (from Spain).

Statement of Research Question

1. What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as leaders with CRSL regarding the following: (a) preparedness, (b) supports, (c) challenges, and (d) success?

Quantitative Data from Survey

The data on understanding principals' perceptions of CRSL was analyzed first. The online survey gathered data on principals' understandings of CRSL as displayed in Table 2.

According to (Khalifa et al., 2016), CRSL has four areas that principals can utilize to gauge their level of understanding and implementation of CRSL at their sites: Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors, Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers, Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments, and Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Principals were asked in the online survey to offer their insights in regards to the degree of understanding and the degree of practical value to Latinx students in the areas of preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes in implementing CRSL at their sites. Table 3 displays the findings regarding perceived preparedness of administrators in implementing CRSL and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Table 3 reflects the data collected on CHS administrators about their degree of understanding and their preparedness of the Khalifa CRSL framework.

Statement of Research Question 1a

What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as school leaders with CRSL regarding preparedness in implementing CRSL.

Table 3

Continuation High School Administrators Degree of Understanding and Preparedness of CRSL Framework

Khalifa et al. (2016) CRSL Framework	Preparedness of CRSL Framework		Degree of Practical Value to Latinx Students		
	Indicator	Well/Somewhat Well Number & Percentage		Very Well/Well Number & Percentage	
Quadrant 1	Critically Self-Reflection Leadership Behavior	8/8	100%	7/8	86%
Quadrant 2	Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers	7/8	86%	8/8	100%
Quadrant 3	Promotes Culturally Responsive Environments	7/8	86%	8/8	100%
Quadrant 4	Engages Students, Parents and Indigenous Contexts	6/8	76%	7/8	86%

n=8

Source: (Khalifa et al., 2016)

As noted in Table 3, participants had a very good understanding of preparedness of CRSL framework used in this study. Data gathered about Quadrant 1. Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behavior revealed that 100% (8 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of this framework. Indicators in Quadrant 1 included: (a) is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and context, (b) leading with courage, (c) is a transformative leader for social justice, (d) uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools

Similar results were found in Quadrant 2-Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers. Data gathered about Quadrant 2. Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the frameworks. Indicators in Quadrant 2 included: (a) developing teacher capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy, (b) collaborative walkthroughs, (c) creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for

teachers, (d) creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive teachers, (e) modeling culturally responsive teaching.

Identical results were found in Quadrant 3- Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments. Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 3 included: (a) accepting indigenized, local identities, (b) building relationships; reducing anxiety among students (c) modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions, (d) promoting vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices, (e) if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers and behaviors, (f) acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students.

The last indicator for participants to report their preparedness of CRSL was in Quadrant 4-Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Context revealed that 76% (6 of 8) participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 4 included: (a) developing meaningful, positive relationships with community (b) is a servant leader, as a public intellectual and other roles, (c) finding overlapping spaces for school and community (d) serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood (e) uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families (f) resists deficit images of students and families.

Statement of Research Question 1b

What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as school leaders with CRSL regarding supports necessary in implementing CRSL.

Quantitative Data from Survey

Principal support was the second indicator for principals to offer their degree of understanding of implementing CRSL to their sites and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Supports were identified by the participants in the three areas listed in Table 4.

Table 4
Continuation High School Administrators Degree of Understanding and Supports of CRSL Framework

Khalifa et al. (2016) CRSL Framework	Supports of CRSL Framework		Degree of Practical Value to Latinx Students		
Quadrant	Indicator	Well/Somewhat Well Number & Percentage		Very Well/Well Number & Percentage	
Quadrant 1	Critically Self-Reflection Leadership Behavior	7/8	86%	7/8	86%
Quadrant 2	Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers	7/8	86%	7/8	100%
Quadrant 3	Promotes Culturally Responsive Environments	7/8	86%	6/8	76%
Quadrant 4	Engages Students, Parents and Indigenous Contexts	8/8	100%	7/8	86%

n=8

Source: (Khalifa et al., 2016)

As noted in Table 4, participants had a very good understanding of supports of CRSL framework used in this study. Data gathered about Quadrant 1. Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behavior revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of this framework. Indicators in Quadrant 1 included: (a) is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and context, (b) leading with courage, (c) is a transformative leader for social justice, (d) uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools

Identical results were also found in Quadrant 2-Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers. Data gathered about Quadrant 2. Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the frameworks. Indicators in Quadrant 2 included: (a) developing teacher capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy, (b) collaborative walkthroughs, (c) creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers, (d) creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive teachers, (e) modeling culturally responsive teaching.

Again, identical results were found in Quadrant 3- Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments. Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 3 included: (a) accepting indigenized, local identities, (b) building relationships; reducing anxiety among students (c) modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions, (d) promoting vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices, (e) if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers and behaviors, (f) acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students.

The last indicator for participants to report their supports of CRSL was in Quadrant 4- Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Context revealed that 100% (8 of 8) participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 4 included: (a) developing meaningful, positive relationships with community (b) is a servant leader, as a public intellectual and other roles,

(c) finding overlapping spaces for school and community (d) serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood (e) uses the community as a informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families (f) resists deficit images of students and families.

Table 5 shows supports received and participation among those indicators. Principals had received 100% from colleagues. District and support staff was reported by 88% of principals. Principals reported 75% support from conferences and families. Principal preparation programs and teachers consisted of 63% of the principals' support. Lastly, 50% of principals received supports from their central offices.

Table 5
Shows Supports and Participation (n=8)

Supports Indicator	Yes, received this as a support	No, I did not receive this as a support
Colleagues (School and district support)	8/100%	0
District (School and district support)	7/88%	1/13%
Supports Staff (School and district support)	7/88%	1/13%
Conferences (Professional)	6/75%	2/25%
Family	6/75%	2/25%
Principal Preparation (Professional)	5/63%	3/36%
Teachers (School and district support)	5/63%	3/36%
Central Office (School and district support)	4/50%	4/50%

Statement of Research Question 1c

What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as leaders with CRSL regarding the following: Challenges

Table 6 displays the findings regarding administrators' challenges in implementing CRSL and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Table 6 reflects the data collected on CHS administrators about their degree of understanding and their challenges of the Khalifa CRSL framework.

Table 6
Continuation High School Administrators Challenges and Degree of Understanding of CRSL Framework

Khalifa et al. (2016) CRSL Framework	Challenges of CRSL Framework		Degree of Practical Value to Latinx Students		
Quadrant	Indicator	VeryWell/ Well Number & Percentage		Very Well/Well Number & Percentage	
Quadrant 1	Critically Self-Reflection Leadership Behavior	5/8	62%	7/8	88%
Quadrant 3	Promotes Culturally Responsive Environments	4/8	50%	7/8	86%
Quadrant 4	Engages Students, Parents and Indigenous Contexts	8/8	100%	7/8	86%

n=8

Source: (Khalifa et al., 2016)

As noted in Table 6, participants had a very good understanding of challenges of CRSL framework used in this study. Data gathered about Quadrant 1. Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behavior revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very well understanding of this framework. Indicators in Quadrant 1 included: (a) challenges whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school, (b) leading with courage, (c) is a transformative leader for social justice, (d) uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools

Data gathered about Quadrant 3. Promoting Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments revealed that 50% (4 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the frameworks. Indicators in Quadrant 3 included: (a) building relationships; reducing

anxiety among students (b) if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors (c) uses student voices (d) uses school data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends (e) accepts indigenized, local identities (f) acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students.

The last indicator for participants to report their challenges of CRSL was in Quadrant 4- Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Context revealed that 100% (8 of 8) participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 4 included: (a) developing meaningful, positive relationships with community (b) is a servant leader, as a public intellectual and other roles, (c) finding overlapping spaces for school and community (d) serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood (e) uses the community as a informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families (f) resists deficit images of students and families.

Statement of Research Question 1d

What are the experiences of principals in continuation high schools as leaders with CRSL regarding the following: Successes

Principal success was the last indicator for principals to offer their degree of understanding of implementing CRSL to their sites and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. The three indicators of success most commonly reported were relationships, leadership, and racial identity. Successes were identified by the participants in the three areas listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Continuation High School Administrators Successes and Degree of Understanding of CRSL Framework

Khalifa et al. (2016) CRSL Framework	Successes of CRSL Framework		Degree of Practical Value to Latinx Students		
	Indicator	Well/Somewhat Well Number & Percentage		Very Well/Well Number & Percentage	
Quadrant 1	Critically Self-Reflection Leadership Behavior	7/8	86%	7/8	86%
Quadrant 2	Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers	7/8	86%	7/8	100%
Quadrant 3	Promotes Culturally Responsive Environments	7/8	86%	6/8	76%
Quadrant 4	Engages Students, Parents and Indigenous Contexts	8/8	100%	7/8	86%

Source: (Khalifa et al., 2016)

As noted in Table 7, participants had a very good understanding of the successes of the CRSL framework used in this study. Data gathered about Quadrant 1. Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behavior revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of this framework. Indicators in Quadrant 1 included: (a) is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and context, (b) leading with courage, (c) is a transformative leader for social justice, (d) uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools

Identical results were also found in Quadrant 2-Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers. Data gathered about Quadrant 2. Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 2 included: (a) developing teacher capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy, (b) collaborative walkthroughs, (c) creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers, (d) creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding

new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive teachers, (e) modeling culturally responsive teaching.

Again, identical results were found in Quadrant 3- Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments. Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environments revealed that 86% (7 of 8) of the participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 3 included: (a) accepting indigenized, local identities, (b) building relationships; reducing anxiety among students (c) modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions, (d) promoting vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices, (e) if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers and behaviors, (f) acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students.

The last indicator for participants to report their successes of CRSL was in Quadrant 4- Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts. Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Context revealed that 100% (8 of 8) participants had a very good understanding of the framework. Indicators in Quadrant 4 included: (a) developing meaningful, positive relationships with community (b) is a servant leader, as a public intellectual and other roles, (c) finding overlapping spaces for school and community (d) serving as advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood (e) uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families (f) resists deficit images of students and families.

Summary

This chapter reported and analyzed the survey data collected through the online principal survey. The next and final chapter will summarize key findings, discussion, and conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Key Findings, Conclusions, Discussions, and Recommendations for Future Action

This chapter summarizes key findings and offers conclusions alongside a discussion generated from key findings. Recommendations for future actions are presented in this chapter.

The study achieved its objectives as an exploration of principals' experiences in implementing CRSL at continuation high schools and its effects on Latinx boys. In addition, this study sought to determine the preparedness, supports, challenges and successes principals experience in implementing CRSL at their sites.

The perceptions and experiences of principals in this study were explored via a mixed-method, exploratory, and descriptive design, allowing for the exploration of data through multiple sources. Principals were able to recognize and share perspectives and collective leadership experiences, informing this inquiry. The depth of findings collected in the survey provided insights into principals' preparedness, supports, challenges, and successes in implementing CRSL at their sites.

Summary of Key Findings and Discussion

Intro— The summary of key findings for research question 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d describe the preparedness, supports, challenges and success of principals at continuation high school with Latinx students.

Key findings were determined by (a) a frequency of responses of at least one-half or 50% and above of the respondents from the the quantitative data (survey) or (b) a frequency of response of a degree of understanding and degree of practical value to Latinx students from

the qualitative data, which included the comments from the survey, and (c) related studies discussed in Chapter II.

Research Question 1a: What Are the Experiences of Principals in Continuation High Schools as Leaders with CRSL Regarding Preparedness

Preparedness is an indicator of CRSL that principals were asked to report their degree of understanding and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Khalifa et al.'s (2016) framework in developing culturally responsive teachers includes providing inclusive instructional and behavioral practices, continuous learning of knowledge, developing critical consciousness and school and community preparation. Principals (50%) reported a "very well" and (50%) reported a "well" degree of understanding of feeling prepared in having inclusive instructional and behavioral practices at their sites. Similarly, principals (50%) also reported a "very well" and (36%) reported "well" degree of continuous learning of knowledge and having a critical conscious.

Principals reporting of their preparation was consistent with scholars (Gay, 2010; Hayes & Juarez, 2012; Sleeter, 2001) who argue that teachers are primarily not culturally responsive and do not have access to culturally responsive teacher training programs. The role of the school leader is highlighted in ensuring that teachers' preparation is on the ability of the school leader to articulate a vision that supports the development and sustaining of responsive teaching (Khalifa et al., 2016). Principals in this level must have the knowledge to recognize and challenge patterns of inequities that lead to marginalization of poor urban youth. Developing better prepared teachers can be achieved by recruiting and retaining culturally responsive teachers, securing culturally responsive resources and curriculum,

mentoring and modeling culturally responsive teaching, or offering professional developments around CRSL.

Research Question 1b: What Are the Experiences of Principals in Continuation High Schools as Leaders with CRSL Regarding Supports

Support is an indicator of CRSL that principals were asked to report their degree of understanding and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Khalifa et al.'s (2016) framework of promoting a culturally responsive/inclusive school environment includes creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive, using the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families and modeling culturally responsive teaching.

Principals 86% (7 of 8) reported having a “well or somewhat well” degree of understanding of creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive. Principals, 100% (8 of 8) also reported having a “well or somewhat well” degree of understanding of using the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families. Principals 86% (7 of 8) reported that modeling culturally responsive teaching had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students.

One principal reported on the importance of speaking through an equity lens and focusing on the curriculum as “driving the bus.” Another principal added by reporting that they “create spaces to bring the community together through events on campus, PD’s around culturally relevant pedagogy, implementing interdisciplinary courses, and hosting multi-lingual parent education night.” These events were hosted monthly. Engaging students and parents in community contexts is a layer of CRSL that can equip principals in raising

graduation rates among Latinx students in continuation high schools by engaging students, families, and communities in culturally responsive ways. One example of engaging students, parents, and the community is by promoting overlapping school-community context, speaking (or at least honoring) native students' languages/lexicons, creating structures that accommodate the lives of parents, or even creating school spaces for marginalized student identities and behaviors (Khalifa et al., 2016). One way to address this is by hosting a sunrise ceremony and inviting the community to facilitate the event.

According to the Wallace Report (Grison et al., 2021), effective principals orient their practices towards instructionally focused interactions with teachers, building a productive school climate, facilitating collaboration and professional learning communities, and strategic personnel and resource management processes. Productive climates are cultivated by trust, collective efficacy, and a culture data use that promotes teachers' and students' learning engagement and learning.

Research Question 1c: What Are the Experiences of Principals in Continuation High Schools as Leaders with CRSL Regarding Challenges

Challenges was an indicator of CRSL that principals were asked to report their degree of understanding and the degree of practical value to Latinx students. Khalifa et al.'s (2016) aspects of engaging students, parents, and indigenous context included (a) resisting deficit images of students and families, (b) challenging whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in schools, and (c) if need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors.

Principals in the study, 86% (7 of 8) reported having a "very well or well" degree of understanding of resisting deficit images of students and families and reported 86% (7 of 8) "very well" degree of practical value to Latinx students. The quantitative data was consistent

with an open-ended response from a principal who reported, “we struggled with allowing for a range of family representation of guardianship which was not inclusive of our student’s family dynamics.” They mentioned that the default structure of the school system is the idea that a mother or a father would be able to provide a signature or would attend a meeting. However, with this demographic, there are often non-traditional living arrangements. Students might be living with a tia or with their abuelitos without having legal custody at the time.

Engaging students, parents, and indigenouisis is a layer of leadership that emphasizes that school leaders must actually promote a culturally responsive school context with an emphasis on inclusivity (Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Riehl, 2000; Ryan, 2006). Being able to leverage resources to identify and foster a culturally affirming school environment is an example of CRSL (Ainscow, 2005; Riehl, 2000). Leaders in this category, seek to challenge and support teachers who fall into familial patterns of deficit thinking and disproportionately refer to students to special education or punishing students of color more severely than their white classmates for the same infractions (Skiba et al., 2002).

Research Question 1d: What Are the Experiences of Principals in Continuation High Schools as Leaders with CRSL Regarding Successes

The three indicators of success most commonly reported by principals were relationships, leadership, and racial identity. These three indicators borrow from all four of the CRSL framework Khalifa et al. (2016); Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors, Develops Culturally Responsive Teachers, Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment, and Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts.

Relationships consisted of building relationships Rivera-McCutchen (2021); reducing anxiety among students, developing meaningful positive relationships, connecting directly with students, and nurturing/caring for others; sharing information. Principals (88%) reported a “very well” degree of understanding of building relationships; reducing anxiety among students and (100%) reported that building relationships had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students. Principals (88%) reported a “very well” degree of understanding of developing meaningful, positive relationships and (88%) reported that developing meaningful, positive relationships had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students. Principals (75%) reported a “very well” degree of understanding of connecting directly with students and (88%) reported that connecting directly with students had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students. Lastly, principals (63%) reported a “very well” degree of understanding of nurturing/caring for others; sharing information and (63%) reported that nurturing/caring for others; sharing information had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students. These findings were consistent with the literature on the primacy of caring in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Rivera-McCutchen, 2021; Valenzuela, 1999).

Leadership consisted of being a transformative leader for social justice and being a servant leader, as a public intellectual and other roles. Principals (63%) reported that being a transformative leader for social justice and being a servant leader had a “very well” degree of understanding. Principals also reported that being a transformative leader had a “very well” practical value to Latinx students.

A principal reported that “the relationships with students is what holds space for everything to work. If the relationship is inclusive, that is the foundation for other pieces to work. I think that working with families and communities is very important, but hard work for people to have capacity sometimes, and if the environment isn’t inclusive, families won’t feel welcome to participate.”

According to the Wallace Report (Grison et al., 2021), while the principal racial and ethnic diversity is slowly increasing, the diversity of the student population is rapidly changing. More so is this evident with Latinx students. Principal diversity has an effect on better student color outcomes, including test scores gains, teacher outcomes, including the likelihood that teachers of color are hired into a school site and their likelihood of them staying.

The last indicator for success that principals reported on was racial identity. Racial identity consisted of; using student voice, leading with courage, accepting indigenized, local identities and creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers. Principals (63%) reported that principals racial identity had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students. Similarly, (63%) also reported that creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers had a “very well” degree of practical value to Latinx students.

A principal shared that

it starts with CRSL at the highest seat, which then empowers the teachers to be culturally responsive and implement culturally responsive pedagogy, which then creates inclusive and safe spaces on campus which then allows students and families to be engaged on campus. It’s a domino effect and while they can be slightly interchangeable, the crux is these elements are imperative for creating spaces for student development and growth.

McCray and Beachum (2014) add to CRSL by stating that there is a reflective practice component to CRSL. This step requires school leaders to dive into their communities, identify social issues, connect with community based organizations, and be an ally the community can deeply depend on.

Conclusions

Preparedness: Principals Are Not Formally Prepared to Implement CRSL

Principals in this study reported not receiving the support necessary from their leadership preparation programs in implementing CRSL at their sites. Principals stated that having culturally responsive thinking Latinx professors who focused on equity within the classroom and the practicum helped them in their current and past experiences working with Latinx students. However, they also shared that their leadership programs theory missed the mark in the implementation of CRSL.

Supports: I Understand CRSL but Do Not Feel Supported by My District in Implementing It. Principals identified receiving support in implementing CRSL at their sites. Principals relied on the community for a deeper understanding of student needs to create safe learning environments for students. Additionally, principals identified that support from their colleagues was a great support and space for collaboration.

Challenges Are Both Personal, Institutional and Pedagogical

Principals reported challenges in implementing CRSL at their sites. Challenges included time during the instructional day to implement CRSL and the district curriculum not being culturally responsive. Others shared that being a minority or being a white male was a challenge in implementing CRSL at their sites.

A Positive School Culture Led to Success

Principals reported feeling successful with developing a culturally responsive curriculum, having a diverse staff, and supporting students. Principals also shared that working at a smaller school enabled them to focus on their staff and build community and that having people who choose to work at continuation high schools usually have a deeper understanding of the mission.

CRSL Is a Promising Pedagogy for Leadership in Continuation High Schools

CRSL is a framework for principals to implement at their sites when dealing with Latinx or minority communities. This is important because the current traditional and outdated leadership practices are resulting in lower graduation rates among the Latinx communities. Principals in this study have made efforts towards implementing CRSL at their sites to have positive effects on Latinx students. They understand and value the four components of CRSL and the commitment it takes to support their sites in and out of the classroom. However, principals face multiple challenges in their ability to implement CRSL at their sites. They are overwhelmed with the jobs demands and an unprecedented global pandemic that has added additional layers of responsibilities to their day-to-day operations. Moreover, they understand that even with their preparation and supports, they have not been able to fully implement CRSL at their sites. They offered additional components necessary in implementing CRSL such as developing a more culturally responsive curriculum and allowing for a range of family representation for guardianship which is inclusive of their students' family dynamics.

Recommendations Based on Conclusions

Leadership Preparation Programs Emphasizing CRSL

More targeted and intentional practicum hours towards credentialing. This can enable practitioners to receive invaluable feedback from students, staff, and communities without the positionality they currently have in their respective roles. Also, developing leadership programs that are social justice oriented and are focused on CRSL.

Professional Development Opportunities. Districts need to fund CRSL opportunities for principals. The opportunities can include yearly training and workshops around trauma informed practices, positive behavioral intervention systems and restorative justice models to strengthen relationships with students and the community. Districts need to also offer ethnic studies programs to their principals based on the makeup of their students and communities.

Mentorship Programs. CRSL is a journey not a destination. District or leadership program alumni support will assist principals in continued development of their craft as culturally responsive school leaders.

Epilogue - Looking to the Future with Culturally Responsive School Leaders in Continuation High Schools

The experiences of Latinx students in continuation high schools is of increasing concern as the number of continuation high schools has drastically increased in the past thirty years (Malagon, 2010). Kelly (1993) argues that as school districts seek to mask the push out/pushout rates at comprehensive high schools, continuation high schools have become a way to strategically “warehouse” students where they are blamed for their educational “failure.” It is critical that leaders of continuation high schools be exceptionally well-prepared.

A CRSL model offers a promising framework for practice. A principal who practices CRS self-reflects on leadership behaviors and is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts, challenges whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school, leads with courage, and is a transformative leader for social justice and inclusion (Gray & Mendoza-Reis, 2021).

Additionally, a principal who develops culturally responsive teachers develops their capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy, creates culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers, engages and reforms the school curriculum to become more culturally responsive.

CRSL leaders promote an inclusive school environment. A principal who commits to this aspect will accept indigenized, local identities, builds relationships; reducing anxiety among students, models CRSL for staff in building interaction and promotes a vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practice CRSL leaders-challenge exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors. They acknowledge, value and use Indigenous cultural and social capital of students, use student voices, and school data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends.

Finally, a CRSL leaders serves as an advocate and social activist for community-based causes in both the school and neighborhood community, uses community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families, resists deficit images of students and families, nurtures/cares for others; sharing information and connects directly with students. CRSL would also be strengthened by including leaders' recognition of linguistic capital in students.

Latinx students belong to the racial group with the highest push out rate in the U.S. (Fergus et al., 2014). Research has found that Latinx students are often concentrated in schools and communities that are poor, segregated, and receive little funding (Acevedo-Gil, 2016; Brown & Rodriguez, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009). These factors require leaders to adopt and learn extraordinary leadership. Culturally responsive school leaders choose to engage in the struggle for educational justice knowing that they have the ability and human right to refuse oppression and refuse to oppress others, especially their own students.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Script Protocol

TITLE OF STUDY

Culturally Responsive Leadership in Continuation High Schools: An Alternative Approach in Leadership Styles

NAME OF RESEARCHER

Roberto C. Portillo, Doctoral Candidate and Dr. Noni Mendoza-Reis, Faculty Advisor

RECRUITMENT

1. The Researcher will send the attached flier to educational leaders in continuation high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. The flier explains commitment-one google form survey with a follow-up volunteer online individual interview. The flier provides information about the project and the participants' role. The following would be the body of the email:

Hello, my name is Roberto C. Portillo. I am a graduate student at SJSU in the Department of Education. I am conducting research on Culturally Responsive Leadership in Continuation High Schools and its Effects on Latinx Boys, and I am inviting you to participate.

Participation in the research includes taking a one 30 minute Google Form survey about culturally responsive leadership; preparedness, supports, successes and challenges among Latinx boys. Participants also will participate in one hour or less interview about your leadership experiences. If you participate in both the Google Form survey and the interviews, your total time commitment will be approximately 45 minutes.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in the research, I can be reached at the phone and email on the flier. Thank you and I am looking forward to hearing from you!

2. Participants will complete the survey using the link provided on the flier.
3. The last question on the survey, the participants will indicate interest for a follow-up interview

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Script

Culturally Responsive Leadership in Continuation High Schools: An Alternative Approach in Leadership Styles

Principal Interview Protocol Script

I. Provide Context:

“The goal of this dissertation is to learn how districts can provide principals with the supports needed to be an effective culturally responsive leader. Therefore, our purpose today is to better understand your preparedness to be a culturally relevant leader at a continuation high school, and to identify the supports you perceive to be necessary to improve your culturally relevant leadership skills. There are no right or wrong answers; I am simply interested in what you have to say on the research topic. At any time during the interview you may ask to skip any question or opt-out of the interview.”

II. Confidentiality:

“The data gathered from this research is highly confidential. Pseudonyms and identification numbers will be used throughout the study. I will be the only person with access to this information. Paper copies will be provided of this interview if asked. ‘Off-the-record’ responses are acceptable and will allow you to express your feelings of discomfort with certain questions.”

III. Recording and Transparent Disclosure of Data Use:

Would you be comfortable with me recording your interview? The recording files will be deleted and transcriptions will be destroyed once the study is complete.”