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"IT FEELS LIKE A CULTURAL SHIFT": PARENT SCHOOL SELECTION AND
EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL CHOICE AT TITLE I SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

by

Christina Lee Ballantyne

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Dissertation Titled

"IT FEELS LIKE A CULTURAL SHIFT": PARENT SCHOOL SELECTION
AND EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL CHOICE AT TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

Christina Lee Ballantyne

APPROVED FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

David A. Whitenack, Ph.D.   Department of Teacher Education

Rebeca Burciaga, Ph.D.   Department of Educational Leadership
and Chicana and Chicano Studies

Carrie Bosco, Ed.D.   Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and
Instruction, Los Altos School District

ABSTRACT

"IT FEELS LIKE A CULTURAL SHIFT": PARENT SCHOOL SELECTION AND
EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL CHOICE AT TITLE I SCHOOLS

by Christina Lee Ballantyne

A neoliberal agenda to institute educational reform via school choice has created a school marketplace where parents and schools are connected in a supply-and-demand relationship. Rather than attend the neighborhood school, some parents can seek alternative school options for their children. Although purported to improve educational outcomes and desegregate schools, school choice has not demonstrated increased student academic achievement nor integrated school spaces. Instead, the school choice movement has been seen to contribute to and perpetuate racial and economic segregation. This study sought to understand the perspectives of parents who have selected their neighborhood Title I school and how they navigated the school choice process; with an additional layer exploring Latine parents and school choice (in this study, the term Latine is used as an ungendered term to describe Latino, Latina, Hispanic, Chicano, or Chicana groups of people). Furthermore, this study collected recommendations from parents on how the school could improve communication with prospective parents. This study contributes several unique findings to the body of research including (a) parent selection of the Title I school in support of public education, (b) resistance to GreatSchools ratings, and (c) a desire to resist external pressure that uses academic achievement to identify good schools. The study concludes with practical suggestions for schools to consider when communicating with prospective parents with specific considerations for Latine parents.

DEDICATION HAIKUS

great educators

you bring your full self to work

it will make a change

you deserve a seat

at the table you belong

make your voice public

if you think you can't

push inner critic away

you say yes to you

carol and tom lee

seeking opportunities

gratitude for you

brilliant nora and june

spread light and joy everywhere

proud to be your mom

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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter sets the stage for the research study focused on understanding school choice by parents who selected their neighborhood, Title I school. It is organized by the following sections (a) an unresolved issue in education, (b) purpose of the study, (c) significance of the problem, (d) research questions, (e) definition of terms, (f) population and sample, (g) scope and limitations of the study, and (h) positionality: assumptions, background, and role of the researcher in the study.

Purpose of the Study

Overview

This study hopes to contribute to the body of work around school choice and selection by examining how parents who selected a Title I school navigated school options by understanding how they collected information, what factors were essential for them, and what recommendations they have for the school to improve communication for prospective parents. Understanding how all parents navigate the school selection process, especially those who selected a Title I neighborhood school, deepens the body of work on school selection and provides invaluable information to schools and school districts. A layer of focus in this study was understanding Latine parents' navigation of school choices and if there were any differences in experiences between Latine and non-Latine parents.

Public school education has experienced increased market competition in the form of school choice (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Orfield et al., 2016). The neoliberal pressure to privatize education has led to racial and economic stratification that can disproportionately impact students of color (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Buras, 2011; Ravitch, 2014).

Neoliberalism arose as a global economic trend in the 1980s, free market trends were promoted as a means to resolve government issues by promoting consumer choice and encouraging competition. Yet, these policies typically benefit the wealthy and disproportionately impact the poor, despite rhetoric that promotes personal gain and opportunity (Chomsky, 1998). Neoliberalism argues against public education for the social good and instead promotes individual gain and benefit (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

This neoliberal pressure may have stemmed from the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) court case to desegregate schools (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Orfield et al., 2016). Arguments have been made that school competition improves the quality of education and schooling for all students (Hoxby, 2003). Yet, negative perceptions of a school based on test scores can lead to the exodus of students leaving the school, removing financial support from the site (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Davis, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). This exodus from schools can have negative impacts on students of color (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Buras, 2011; Ravitch, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

Traditionally, in the United States, a family's home location has dictated the school their child will attend (Holme, 2022; Ravitch, 2014); now, parents have multiple school options. Kozol (1992) asserts that the family's residence location can limit or expand educational access to children and families. School choice options for families with additional economic resources have always been plentiful (Holme, 2022; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In other words, parents with more financial resources have the means to pay for a

private school or have flexibility in time and transportation to take their child to a charter or magnet school (Cucchiara, 2008).

Public education has encountered rising market competition in the past 30 years through school vouchers, public charter schools, and school choice options (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Orfield et al., 2016). Even among those with less financial means, the market economy of school choice has grown and become more widespread over the past two decades (Teske et al., 2007). In some places, parents can examine the available public, private, and charter school options before selecting a school for their child. However, in many districts across the country, the school market contributes to and exacerbates racial and socioeconomic stratification (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Davis, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

Pressure to provide school choices can stem from neoliberal pressure to reduce government intervention and increase capitalism; this can disproportionately impact Black and Latine students (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Buras, 2011; Ravitch, 2014). Some researchers have argued that when middle-class students leave public schools, they take their financial and traditional cultural capital with them, leaving schools with less funding (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Davis, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Saporito & Lareau, 1999) and potentially at risk for closure (Jabbar, 2015a).

A seminal argument for school choice was made by the economist Hoxby (2003), who argued that a rising tide lifts all boats. Hoxby posited that school choice would elevate quality due to market competition. However, researchers have challenged and refuted the idea that school quality has improved because of market competition (Ball, 1993; Bartlett et

al., 2002; Bilfulco et al., 2009; Frankenberg et al., 2019; Houston & Henig, 2021; Olson Beal & Hendry, 2012). Additionally, the school choice movement has likely contributed to the resegregation of schools and most likely arose in response to the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) court case and the mandate to desegregate schools (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Orfield et al., 2016). In many cases, when parents have selected alternative school options, it has created segregated spaces for their children, whether purposefully or inadvertently (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Ellison & Aloe, 2019; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a). Instead of creating a more equitable system, in many places, school choice options have contributed to inequity in education, where the most educated and connected families have access to the most comprehensive choices (Frankenberg et al., 2019).

Compounding the issue of school choice, in some places, the parents' perception of a school's quality was aligned with the racial demographics in the school. The higher the percentage of Black or Latine students, the more negatively the school was viewed by parents (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Negative perceptions of a school have contributed to the migration of students to charter or magnet schools (Jabbar, 2015a). This loss of students due to student migration led to a loss of financial resources, which detrimentally impacted the school's programming quality and in some cases, led to school closure (Jabbar, 2015a). The loss of financial resources related to student exodus has been the most impactful in Title I schools, with higher percentages of Black and Latine students (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Ravitch, 2014).

Conversely, an argument has been made that if middle-class families stay in desegregated schools, students benefit from the integrated school space. "Disadvantaged schools (and all of the children in them) will reap the benefits of these families' financial contributions, political power, and social capital in the form of improved facilities, higher quality academic pressure to adopt White cultural norms.

Neoliberalism has promoted using test scores to measure school quality (Baltodano, 2012; Davies & Bansel, 2007). However, some scholars have challenged this argument and have posited that integrated schools can pose challenges for historically marginalized students (Kendi, 2019; Voight, 2013). Voight (2013) argues that educational learning gaps exist for students of color in integrated school spaces due to the lack of an affirming social climate. Kendi (2019) concurs that integrated spaces can have negative impacts for Black students, where they may experience.

Neoliberalism has promoted using test scores to measure school quality (Baltodano, 2012; Davies & Bansel, 207). A characteristic that many parents have used to determine school quality is student achievement data (Houston & Henig, 2021). Across the nation, state test scores have been used to give schools labels such as "underperforming," "unsuccessful," or "failing" (Ravitch, 2014); however, federal education reform efforts linked to state test results have been seen to negatively impact communities of color at higher rates than White communities (Orfield et al., 2016). In addition, it has been argued that standardized tests have questionable relevance to student learning and that they reflect the resources given to the school rather than an accurate measurement of student learning (Ravitch, 2010). Additionally, test scores can be used to harm students by placing them on academic tracks

(Ravitch, 2010). School labels, academic achievement data, and racial bias have influenced parents' perceptions of a "good school" and, ultimately, school selection in many areas (Bifulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

As seen in earlier studies, the definition of a "good" school based on academic test scores can disproportionately impact Latine students. Simultaneously, the stressors on the Latine population have increased with defamatory and racist rhetoric. This rhetoric and draconian U.S. policies being enforced at the Mexican border have contributed to increased stressors for the Latine population in the United States (P. López & Pérez, 2018; Muñoz et al., 2018). Meanwhile, school demographics have shown growing numbers of Latine students in public schools. From 2009 to 2020, there has been an 8% drop in White students attending public schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). By 2030, another 3% of White students will stop attending public school (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). In contrast, Latine students have increased from 22%-28% from 2009-2020 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2022). A lengthier longitudinal comparison of demographic shifts in public schools observed demographic changes from 1970-2016; in 1970, 5% of the entire student population comprised Latine students, increasing to 26% by 2016 (Frankenberg et al., 2019).

Summary of the Purpose of the Study

School choice options have been increasing in the past 30 years. A neoliberal argument, promoting school privatization and likely stemming from *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) posits that school competition will improve school quality and learning for

all students. Yet school choice has contributed to and exacerbated racial and economic stratification in many places. Parents' perceptions of schools have been linked to test scores leading to the migration of students to higher-achieving schools which can negatively impact neighborhood schools. Finally, Latine student populations are growing in the United States, and school choice can disproportionately impact this population of students.

Significance of the Problem

As mentioned previously, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the subsequent neoliberal pressure to create school choices for families have contributed to the creation of a school market (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Frankenberg et al., 2019; Orfield et al., 2016). This pressure to provide school choices had been fostered and cultivated by neoliberals via state test scores, which disproportionately penalized schools with higher percentages of Black or Latine students (Bartlett et al., 2002; Berliner & Biddle, 1996; Ravitch, 2014). Furthermore, G. López and Burciaga (2014) point out that *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) has not yet fulfilled the promise of desegregating schools nor met the goal of equal education for all students. In past studies of the school market, school quality was determined by state test scores, and parent perception was aligned with the racial makeup of the school (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Schools with higher percentages of White and Asian students were considered "good," while schools with higher numbers of Black and Brown students were considered "bad" (Houston & Henig, 2021).

Although school choice has disproportionately impacted Title I schools, they have spent limited time and funds to market themselves to the parent population. Jabbar (2016) found

several factors that explain this lack of promotion. Most commonly, school principals spent time focusing on improving the quality of schooling for students rather than spending time marketing themselves to parents (Jabbar, 2016; McDonald et al., 2019).

School choice has been a source of ongoing debate for the past three decades. Past research around school choice has been conducted on charters (Altenhofen et al., 2016), high school selection (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Roda & Wells, 2013), and urban areas (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a). A significant body of research has been focused on middle-class parents and school choice (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Cucchiara, 2008; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2013; Ellison & Aloe, 2019; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox, 2014; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b; Roda & Wells; 2013). I have chosen to situate this study in a mid-sized suburban school district in California at two Title I schools where the school market is not omnipresent. The study seeks to understand the parents', perspective, including that of Latine parents, who choose to stay at their neighborhood school.

Research Questions

The goals of the study lead to the following three research questions:

Research Question 1: How are parents selecting a school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 1a: What, if any, source(s) of information are parents using when selecting a school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 1b: What values, programs, or factors are parents considering when choosing a Title I school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 2: What, if any, differences exist between Latine and non-Latine families in the school choice process?

Research Question 3: From a parent's perspective, how can Title I schools improve the quality of communication with prospective parents?

Definition of Terms

In this section, I outline terms and definitions as they pertain to the purpose of this particular study related to school choice and school selection by parents. The terms and definitions typically come from two genesis points: derivation from research and application to the study.

Parents: In this study, the term parents can be used interchangeably with families. This term also includes guardians or other family members.

School choice: For this study, the term describes the various school options for families. School choice may include neighborhood, private, charter, and magnet schools.

School selection: Refers to the school the child will attend, whereas school choice relates to the options that families had before they selected a school.

Public schools: Schools primarily funded with local, state, and federal dollars. These schools do not collect tuition from families.

Title I school: A school where 35% of the students are considered low-income (California Department of Education, 2022b). Students are considered low-income if they qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (California Department of Education, 2021).

Neighborhood school: May also be known as the geographic school or a walk-up school. Historically, these schools have been assigned based on family residence (Kozol, 1992; Ravitch, 2014). In this study, the neighborhood school is also a Title I school.

Open enrollment: This is both a period and a process; it is when and how parents can express interest in schools other than the one in their neighborhood.

Inter-district transfer: The request from a family to transfer from their neighborhood school district to another school district.

Intra-district transfer: The request from a family to transfer from their home school to another school within the same school district. This may be a part of the open enrollment process within a school district.

Latine: The term used in this dissertation to describe Latino, Latina, Hispanic, Chicano, or Chicana groups, such as students or families. I am using Latine as a gender neutral term that has been used to describe these groups of people. Although Latinx is also a term that has been used to remove the gender from the terms Latino/Latina, the /e/ ending in Latine exists in the Spanish language, whereas the /x/ ending does not (LATV Media, 2021; Lee, n.d.; Marquez, 2020; Slemp, 2020). The survey instrument uses "Hispanic," which comes directly from the California Department of Education (2022a). It is a term parents have seen in other forms or school surveys. Ethnic group labels are broad and do not accurately represent the varied nuances of culture, nationality, and values within the ethnic group.

Black: The California Department of Education (2022a) defines this racial category as "a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa." This is how the term is

used in this study. This racial category does not explicitly name how the person may have origins related to black racial groups.

White: This racial category is used to define groups who have origins from the continent of Europe (California Department of Education, 2022a).

Brown: The phrase "Black and Brown students" has been used by past researchers. Although Black is typically defined, Brown is not always clearly defined. If the term "Brown" used in this study, it is a reflection of the term the researcher being cited used in their study.

Asian: A racial category used to define groups who have origins connected to the continent of Asia (California Department of Education, 2022a).

Academic achievement data: Academic achievement data refers to the student test score data related to standardized state tests.

Academic growth data: Term used to describe the growth rate on standardized state tests.

Site Selection

This study took place at two Title I schools in a medium-sized suburban school district in the Bay Area located in Northern California. Becker Elementary School and Kan Elementary School (pseudonyms) are located in Thomasville School District (pseudonym). Thomasville School District serves students from preschool through Grade 8 and is considered a mid-range-sized district by the California Department of Education (2022c). Approximately 30-40% percent of the students at Thomasville qualified for free or reduced-price lunch during the 2021-2022 school year. At the time of the study, Thomasville School District had two

magnet schools: one was a parent-participation school and the other was a dual-language school. The school district was in strong financial standing and was experiencing declining enrollment across the district as families moved out of the area. Limited numbers of students, estimated to be 7%, were leaving the district to attend charter or private schools.

Becker and Kan Elementary Schools are demographically similar in terms of student ethnicity, as can be seen when comparing the percentages of students from each ethnic group in the columns in Table 1. Schoolwide student ethnicity data was used rather than parent ethnicity data since the former was more accurate.

Table 1

Average Percentages of Student Ethnic Groups for Becker and Kan Elementary, 2021-2022

	African American, not Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Filipino	Hispanic or Latino	Pacific Islander	White, not Hispanic	Two or more races	Not reported
Becker	1%	3%	9%	12%	43%	1%	16%	10%	5%
Kan	1%	5%	16%	2%	47%	1%	23%	5%	2%
Average	2%	4%	12%	7%	45%	1%	19%	8%	4%

Population and Sample

The population for this study were parents of kindergarten students from two Title I schools in the same school district in Northern California. The original design of the study excluded parents with an older child at the school since their choice set (Bell, 2009) was already established and narrowed by the school they had selected for their older child. However, due to gaps in school information and recruitment requests, parents with older children at the school did participate in interviews. Parents from both schools participated in

the survey portion of the study and did not have an older child at the school (n=45). Parents from both schools participated in interviews and may have had an older child at the school, and five out of the eight had an older child at the school (n=8).

At the time of the study, the Latine demographics of the overall student population at the school and the kindergarten student cohort differed from one another. Although the average of Latine students at both schools was 45%, the kindergarten Latine student cohort was 25%. Both principals shared that the kindergarten had surprisingly low numbers of Latine students compared to the rest of the school. They posited that these lower numbers were due to the ongoing rising cost of housing in the area, but had not spent time investigating the cause. Table 2 describes the Latine and non-Latine parent participant representation from the two school schools from overall school populations, the kindergarten cohort, and the samples from interviews and survey responses.

Table 2

Percent of Parent Participation in the Study: Comparison of Latine and non-Latine Populations, Kindergarten Cohort, and Sample

Overall School Population Percentage			Kindergarten Cohort Percentage			Interview Sample Percentage		Survey Sample Percentage	
Latine	non-Latine	not reported	Latine	non-Latine	not reported	Latine	non-Latine	Latine	non-Latine
45%	51%	4%	25%	72%	3%	0%	100%	27%	73%

Scope and Limitations of the Study

A multiple case study design was applied for this study; a case was defined as a single school and the study took place at two elementary schools. The scope of the study was constrained or "bounded" (Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2018) to the two Title I

elementary schools within one school district in Northern California during the winter of 2023. Therefore, the study's conclusions may be generalized only to this setting. Although the inability to generalize to other contexts can be considered a limitation, humans create and learn from generalizations (Stake, 1995, 2010). A study deeply rooted in the nuanced experiences of the participants combined with researcher awareness is rich and meaningful in its own right and does not need to be generalized to other settings (Stake, 1995, 2010).

Positionality: Assumptions, Background, and Role of the Researcher in the Study

As the primary researcher in this study, I must outline my background and positionality. I recognize and acknowledge the effect my life experiences may have in influencing my relationship with the participants, the analysis and interpretation of data, and how I approach the study. "The researcher, whether novice or veteran, is considered by many within the field of qualitative inquiry to be the primary instrument of the endeavor" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 22). My life experiences, including my gender, ethnicity, values, knowledge, and perspectives, influence all aspects of the study. As a researcher, transparency around my positionality does not change my influence over the study. Instead, transparency places the study in the context of when and where it occurred and acknowledged the biases and lenses that influenced the work.

As a Black, Indigenous Person of Color (BIPOC) woman in a doctoral program, I have studied many aspects surrounding equity in education. The scholarship has been internally transformative as I learned and engaged in reflective practices. I have explored my stance and positionality as a Chinese-American woman and delved into the concept of the model minority (Chou & Feagin, 2015) during a time of rising Asian American Pacific Islander hate

and violence (Gover et al., 2020; Tessler et al., 2020). This work on school choice was exciting to me as I explored my background and privilege. My parents have spent their lives striving to ensure I had the opportunities they felt were not available to them, including access to the "best schools," which they linked to private school attendance. As the child of immigrants, who struggled to understand and navigate the unspoken rules that permeate our systems and organizations, I connect knowledge and information with power and control.

I am a current public school administrator and parent of two children. I have been a public school employee for over two decades and have witnessed the impact of external pressures to privatize public schools through charter school positioning. I have also seen the negative impacts on neighborhood schools when charter and magnet schools are opened in school districts. In relationship to parent narratives and school choice, I was a former school site administrator who launched the first dual-language program in Thomasville School District. While a site administrator, it was incumbent upon me to recruit 48 diverse and representative students into the dual-language program annually to sustain the program. As a result, I felt the pressure to ensure annual student enrollment. In the years following the launch of the dual-language program, other site administrators across districts have reached out to me to discuss declining enrollment at their sites and ideas for parent outreach and school promotion.

The discussion of "good schools" permeates many aspects of my life, and I can see the impacts of the neoliberal agenda pushing toward school choice. As mentioned earlier, my childhood was influenced by my parents' desire that I attend "good schools." Now, as an adult, I interact with school choice at work, in social settings, and in online forums. At work,

I regularly interact with parents, teachers, and community members that have opinions about "good" and "bad" schools. In social settings, other parents regularly ask me if their neighborhood school is a "good school." And finally, in online communities and mom groups, I regularly see posts asking about moving into the area, looking for a "good school", for their child or transferring to a different school. These omnipresent questions and my past experiences as a person and educator have brought me to the study of school choice.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In chapter two, the literature review, I have organized the literature starting with (a) an overview of Neoliberalism as a basis for school choice reform, moving into (b) outlining the theoretical framework of market theory and cultural capital, (c) describing locations of previous literature, (d) reviewing methodology of past studies, and I summarizing findings both from the parent perspective, the supply side of the market, and the school perspective, the demand side of the market.

For this literature review, I began by searching terms in Google Scholar such as "school choice" and "parent school choice." Literature related to school choice had also arisen in prior coursework. From initial searches, reviewing reference lists, analyzing abstracts, methodology, and findings sections, I curated literature for this literature review. The literature comes from various fields, including sociology, education, and economics. In the United States, the field of school choice study directly reaches back 40 years, steadily gaining focus from the 1990s (Ball et al., 1995; Saporito & Lareau, 1999; Smrekar & Goldring, 1999) and continuing into the present day with new publications (Cunningham, 2021).

Neoliberalism and Its Impacts

Overall, the literature focuses on the lack of equitable outcomes in school choice, selection, and marketing despite the school choice narrative being steeped in the rhetoric of reform for all communities (Hasan & Kumar, 2019; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Educational reform efforts based on school choice have failed to meet the set outcomes for the desegregation of schools (Bartlett et al., 2002) or to increase student achievement (Houston

& Henig, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006, 2012). The "failing schools" narrative has been weaponized by neoliberals seeking to privatize schools and has successfully created and promoted the school choice market, (Buras, 2011; Cunningham, 2021; Ravitch, 2014).

Published in 1983, under the direction of President Ronald Regan, *A Nation at Risk, The Imperative for Educational Reform* placed blame on schools for economic losses in the nation (Bartlett et al., 2002; Berliner & Biddle, 1996). In the report, public schools were supposedly responsible for a "rising tide of mediocrity," causing the United States to lose economic competitiveness (Bartlett et al., 2002). Concurrently, neoliberals created a "manufactured crisis in education," which built off the fears and reality of economic insecurity, specifically for the middle-class, and redirected blame to the public school system (Berliner & Biddle, 1996). In reality, the economic recession was caused by mega-corporations, such as Xerox and IBM, moving into new geographic locations to take advantage of tax breaks (Bartlett et al., 2002).

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, neoliberals have argued that the market of school choice and the associated competition will improve educational outcomes (Apple, 2005; Bartlett et al., 2022; Berliner & Biddle, 1996; Hoxby, 2003). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, put into law by George W. Bush, and the subsequent high-stakes testing has been used by neoliberals to identify "good" and "failing" schools (Apple, 2005; Bartlett et al., 2022; Berliner & Biddle, 1996). The narrative of "good" and "failing" schools has contributed to the manufactured crisis in education (Berliner & Biddle, 1996) and is used to support the argument that school choice will create more equitable outcomes for students of color providing access to higher quality schools. And yet, some researchers argue that high-

stakes testing has not yet demonstrated a positive impact on student academic achievement (Houston & Henig, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006, 2012), whether connected to school choice or by improving the quality of education within the school. Related to high-stakes testing and the NCLB Act, Whitenack and Swanson (2013) found that there are tensions brought on by NCLB between student-centered preservice teacher preparation and curriculum programs used in school districts that disproportionately impacted students with the greatest needs.

Summary, Neoliberalism and Its Impact

The research points to the impacts of neoliberalism contributing to negative public perception of public schools (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Lubienski, 2005; Ravitch, 2014). Neoliberalism is an economic principle used to promote the decrease of government intervention and increase the consumerism of public goods (Chomsky, 1998). Thereby, neoliberalism pressure changes the focus of public education by removing the focus on social good and promoting individual capital gains via consumerism (Baltodano, 2012; Davies & Bansel, 2007). These negative school narratives contribute to the segregation of schools via families selecting school alternatives rather than their neighborhood public school (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Ellison & Aloe, 2019; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b). This segregation of schools negatively impacts public schools' finances and marginalized communities disproportionately (Ravitch, 2014; Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is underpinned by cultural capital theory and market theory. This section begins with a discussion of cultural capital theory. It then moves

into a discussion of the studies exploring how parents use their cultural capital with school choice.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1989) posits that cultural capital will reproduce advantage in various contexts. In the context of school choice, the cultural capital can perpetuate the power of White and middle-class parents in urban schools. Jaeger (2009) contributes to this discussion by arguing that cultural capital is transferred actively from parents to children through parent investment in their school selection. In the case of all parents, this active transfer occurs by the school selection. The social and cultural capital that Black and Latine parents transfer to their children in the school selection process has not been explored in the literature. Jaeger's statement on capital also reminds us that Yosso's (2005) approach to community cultural wealth demonstrates how the interpretation of capital can be skewed towards White cultural expectations of capital, excluding experiences of other cultures.

Parents bring cultural capital and their identity to the school choice process. This includes their race, economics, knowledge of the system, and privilege. The impacts of parents leveraging their social and cultural capital to maximize the schooling outcomes for their child have been well documented and typically focus on the effects of parents utilizing their capital once their child is enrolled in the schools (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Most of the research around parent cultural capital in schools revolves around White middle-class parents in schools (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). Less explored is how parents deploy their cultural capital in the school selection process before enrolling in school (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). To date, I have not found any literature exploring

how Latine families apply cultural capital to the school selection process. Taylor Haynes et al. (2010), articulate that although there is ample research studying Latine student capital, there is no educational research explicitly studying Latine parent capital applied in school choice. The research has instead focused on middle-class White families and their use of cultural capital.

For example, McDonough Kimelberg's (2014) study examined how middle-class mothers applied their cultural capital in the school choice process. The mothers approached kindergarten selection with a perspective of lowered stakes. They expressed confidence in their family resources in selecting schools for their child or mitigating any learning loss in the household for their child (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). As one mother shared, "It's Kindergarten. Like, what's the big deal?" (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014, p. 221) The mothers were confident in their ability to provide resources for their child outside of school in the form of tutoring at home or enrichment options outside of the school day (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

In the case of White middle-class mothers, they also can advocate and exert pressure on the outcome of school selection (Posey-Maddox, 2014). In one study, the mothers felt that as a group entering a school, they could collectively influence the school, which prompted them to select schools they may have been skeptical about (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). The cultural power of White moms is so extensive in the public school choice system that, in one example, the parents banded together to get rid of a principal who refused to bring in an academic enrichment program that would have served the White students disproportionately compared to the Black students in the school (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). Middle-class,

White families feel confident they can fill any gaps their child may have in learning at public school. This can include adding enrichment classes into the school day or making up any academic learning via tutoring at home or a program at school (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b).

In light of the capital that White middle-class parents bring to schools, when they sent their child to a public school with higher ratios of Black students, parents did not express concerns about their child's success (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). They were confident that they would be able to organize their lives, activities, and assets in ways that would benefit their children, both for enrichment and learning (Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

These parental experiences and the ability to exert cultural capital are not the same across racial groups and economic levels. In response to the annual Los Angeles pamphlet outlining school choice options and reform policies, a parent "asserted that the information is 'Greek' to most Black parents who 'just don't know'" (Cooper, 2005, p. 184). Even within a racial group, the cultural capital is realized and deployed in varied ways based on economic levels (Lareau, 2003).

Summary of Cultural Capital. Cultural capital can be used to reproduce advantage by the parents' school choice (Bourdieu, 1989; Jaeger, 2009). Cultural capital can be interpreted narrowly and skew toward White middle-class values which may be a limitation of the theory (Yosso, 2005). Most past scholarship has examined cultural capital of White, middle-class parents in schools (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). White, middle-class mothers saw that their cultural capital lowered concerns about their child attending public schools as kindergartners, and they believed that they could

supplement any missing learning (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). At this time, no literature on Latine parent application of cultural capital with school choice has been found.

Market Theory

In addition to cultural capital, I am employing market theory to this study. School choice has been examined from the perspective of parents, who constitute the demand side of the market, and also the supply side of the market, the schools.

Parents are considered consumers in the market of school shopping. The question arises as to whether or not all parents are aware of the market; to date, no literature has yet to focus specifically on parents who are unaware of the school market. In the existing literature, each parent identifies their criteria for determining quality schools in the school market (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Bilfulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Burgess et al., 2014; Ellison & Aloe, 2019; Houston et al., 2020; Jabbar, 2015b; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Villavicencio, 2013). However, the definition of quality school varies widely depending on the positionality of the parents (Cooper, 2005; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

Tiebout's (1956) theory of local expenditures argues that parents will seek out the best quality school for their child; thus, when applied to school choice, the Tiebout model typically applies to families with significant capital resources. Families with no time or money constraints have fewer barriers in seeking the "best" school for their child (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Burgess et al., 2014). In contrast, Bell (2009) argues that all school choice decisions are limited by "choice sets" available to the parents, choice sets being a preset, limited number of factors each set of parents can consider when making their school choice options.

Regardless of the choice set available to parents (Bell, 2009), parents have sought alternative options for their children based on a negative view of their assigned school (Hastings et al., 2006; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In some cases, negative views of the schools may be grounded in low student achievement and chronic lack of resources (Cucchiara, 2008). In another instance, educational choices are offered to parents but a guise to maintain resources with specific parents (Stovall, 2012). And in New Orleans, school choice has been implemented by educational entrepreneurs for their own social and economic benefit rather than for the benefit of the community (Buras, 2011).

Latine family and school choice has been studied by a relatively small number of researchers, although the application of cultural capital by Latine families in school choice has not yet been explored. Mavrogordato and Stein (2016), argue that market theory does not apply to Latine immigrant parents. Due to the use of only the English language by the school, immigrant parents may have had less access to information about the school options as well as information on how to navigate the market to make a school choice (Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016). Gastic and Salas Coronado (2011) agree that Latine families do not search as widely for school options in comparison to Black or White parents.

Regardless, the research demonstrates that the school selection process can contribute to racial segregation (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012) and the misallocation of resources (Bartlett et al., 2002; Jabbar, 2015a). Much of the research has been focused on White middle-class families as a group benefitting from the driving or perpetuation of school choice (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox, 2014; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b). Studies focused on Black

and Latine parents navigating school choice have been limited (Cooper, 2005; Gastic & Salas Coronado, 2011; Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017).

Summary of Market Theory. Market theory has been utilized to study the school choice market and identifies parents as the demand side of the market and schools as the supply side of the market. The model posits that parents will seek out the "best" school for their child (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Burgess et al., 2014; Tiebout, 1956), yet not all families have the same options (Bell, 2009; Buras, 2011; Stovall, 2012). Arguments have been made that school choice contributes to racial segregation and the misallocation of resources (Bartlett et al., 2002; Jabbar 2015a). Parents typically seek school choice options based on their perception of their school (Cucchiara et al., 2011; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014), which can be related to concerns about academic achievement (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014), and chronic underfunding and in other cases related to a neoliberal agenda to privatize schools (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014). Limited studies have explored Latine parents navigating the market of school choice (Gastic & Salas Coronado, 2011; Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017).

Summary of Theoretical Framework. This study draws from cultural capital theory and market theory. Cultural capital in school choice can be used by parents to reproduce advantage if they select the "best" school (Bourdieu, 1989; Jaeger, 2009). It can also be interpreted narrowly and connected to White, middle-class values (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). Market theory positions schools

and parents as actors in a marketplace of education (Tiebout, 1956). Schools provide the service of education and engage in marketing to attract families. Parents act as the demand side of the market, seeking out the best school option. The literature on cultural capital theory and market theory, respectively, that focuses on Latine parents and school choice is limited (Taylor Haynes et al., 2010).

Locations of Studies

Below I will highlight research conducted in (a) urban areas and (b) suburban areas. Most studies surrounding school choice have taken place in large urban school districts where the marketization of education can most easily be seen in the forms of vouchers, charter and magnet schools (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). Urban cities have been prime locations for school choice due to high percentages of Black and Latine populations, increased poverty due to socio-economic factors, and movement out of cities to the suburbs by White parents (Cucchiara, 2008; Stovall, 2012).

Across all urban locations, the marketization of education and school choice is pervasive. The public school education system has been opened for school market competition, whether by the district itself (Cooper, 2005), by outside forces such as a state takeover of the school district (Cucchiara, 2008), natural disasters (Jabbar, 2016), or a combination of internal and external forces (Ellison & Aloe, 2019). Typically, these changes are situated in educational reform efforts with the idealized perspective that providing school choice will lead to increased academic performance by students of all demographic backgrounds (Teske & Schneider, 2001). However, what has been shown is that school choice policies rarely create the equitable school environments they purport to promote (Lubienski, 2001). In addition,

some of the school choice studies are being conducted in coordination with large public school districts in highly marketized environments since districts seek to understand the motivations of parents in school selection and the implications of school choice policy creation (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

Urban Areas

Chicago. Voicing the negative impacts of city reform efforts tied to school choice policies in a large urban school district, Stovall (2012) takes a critical look at school choice policies in Chicago and argues that school choice is a falsehood utilized to convince working-class communities of color that school choice offers opportunities for educational improvement. Stovall names this phenomenon the "politics of desperation," where marketing strategies are used to promise educational reform for families, preying on working-class communities of color who experience uncertainty in housing and education and spend time attempting to navigate a limited school choice process. Stovall situates the study in Chicago, where between 1995-2005, the city focused on reform and redevelopment stemming from a mayoral election, the subsequent appointment of a school board, and changes in housing policies that impacted African-American and Latine communities from low-income and working-class communities. During these reform efforts, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) identified 70 schools that were "chronically underperforming" for "transformation" to "charter, contract, or performance school" (Stovall, 2012, p. 36), thus providing a rich ground for understanding school choice in an environment of city reform efforts. In addition, Chicago has been used by other city leaders as a model for education, housing, and business

development; therefore, the impacts of Chicago city and school reform have had ripple effects across the nation in other urban areas (Stovall, 2012).

In another Chicago-based study, Waitoller and Super (2017) built upon Stovall's (2012) foundational work around the "politics of desperation" and narrowed the focus within Chicago to examine Black and Latine charter school selection if their child had a dis/ability. Waitoller and Super's examination of the parent school search process for students who have a dis/ability confirmed Stovall's argument that parents are making school choice decisions based on the "politics of desperation;" that is, a poorly constructed educational choice system with limited options in communities of color.

Stovall's (2012) politics of desperation points to how housing and school choice policies and discourse have disproportionately impacted Black middle-class families under the guise of choice. Subsequently, Waitoller and Super's (2017) work in Chicago elaborates and expands upon Stovall's politics of desperation for students with a disability.

Philadelphia. Philadelphia has been a location of studies as a former industrial city where the loss of the manufacturing base and subsequent exodus to the suburbs led to "social and economic deterioration" (Cucchiara, 2008, p. 166) within the city (Cucchiara, 2008; Cucchiara et al., 2011; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2013). At the time of Cucchiara's (2008) study, the Philadelphia school district had high diversity, with 42% African American and 41% Asian students. The city of Philadelphia used schools and other economic incentives to offset the impacts of suburban flight by upper- and middle-class families to maintain the city's prosperity. In addition, the Philadelphia School District had recently experienced a takeover by the state due to poor achievement and low academic achievement scores (Cucchiara,

2008; Cucchiara et al., 2011; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2013). City planners in Philadelphia leveraged schools as part of gentrification efforts in sections of Philadelphia (Cucchiara, 2008). The use of schools and school choice as a gentrifying tool has also been seen in CPS (Stovall, 2012).

Boston and New York. Other urban school choice studies took place in Boston (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). Similar to Philadelphia, when these studies took place, Boston Public School District's population was predominantly minority and low-income. In addition, Boston Public Schools instituted a "controlled choice" program that systemized a school choice program across the school district (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

New York shares characteristics with Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia; White, middle-class families have been leaving the city for the suburbs (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Roda & Wells, 2013). School choice policies have also been systemized across the district, where high school students must apply to schools across the city, and no neighborhood high school is assigned to students (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016). In Boston and New York, the school choice practices are ubiquitous across the district and policies and practices were in place where families make school selections.

New Orleans. In 2012-2013, New Orleans city had the highest charter-school market share, with 84% of public school students attending charter schools (Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016). Following hurricane Katrina in 2005, disaster capitalism was the impetus for systemic education reform in New Orleans (Klein, 2007). The "conscious capitalism" movement following hurricane Katrina created a system where "educational entrepreneurs engaged in

conquest through takeover charter schools, producing an urban space economy that bolstered their own class and race interests" (Buras, 2011, p. 323). Whiteness as a function of property, took place in New Orleans where the "appropriation and commodification of black children, black schools, and black communities [was taking place] for white exploration and profit" (Buras, 2011, p. 302) under the guise of educational reform for communities of color.

Recovery School District (RSD) was expanded with a mission to reform the schools in New Orleans (Jabbar, 2016). RSD shares similarities to Chicago's Educational Management Organizations (ECOs; Stovall, 2012). RSD in New Orleans and ECOs in Chicago were used to reform the educational infrastructure, creating more space for school charters and choice by taking over "failing" schools.

The RSD had gone as far as creating OneApp, a consolidated process for families to apply to charter and non-charter schools in New Orleans, an example of the pervasive and comprehensive nature of the New Orleans school choice system (Jabbar, 2016). In the case of New Orleans with OneApp and Boston with controlled choice, once urban school districts institute a universal school choice selection process, it may signal a legitimization of the market to families. New Orleans is a location of high school marketization where "conscious capitalism" has had disastrous effects on Black children, schools, and communities by commodifying their education and privatizing schools.

Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Milwaukee. Additional school choice studies took place in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where extensive options exist in charters, magnet schools, and inter- and intra-district school choices (Wilson & Carlsen, 2016). Another study was set in Milwaukee, where the Chapter 220 program, established in 1976, is the "longest-running

state-funded private school voucher program in the nation" (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002, p. 847). The Chapter 220 program was established to promote racial integration via a voluntary busing program targeting minority students. Students could transfer from districts with 30% or more minority students into districts with lower than 30% minority students (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). Again, common to the other urban communities, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Milwaukee had high competition in school selection. Multiple cities have formalized systems by which parents can select a school for their child, including the voucher program in Milwaukee, the OneApp process in New Orleans, the controlled choice program in Boston, and the high school application process in New York (Jabbar, 2016; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; Saporito & Lareau, 1999; van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). Ball (1997) argued that implementing these systems reflects neoliberal impacts on social provisions, privatizing public services such as education. Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Milwaukee are other locations of intense school markets and competition where students can be bused to new schools and formalized systems for choice have been established.

California. Shannon-Baker et al.'s (2020) study had geographic and ethnic demographic similarities to my location, although this study was conducted in a much larger school district, specifically, a:

> [l]arge, urban, Northern California school district that at the time of the study was serving almost 37,000 students. More than half of the students spoke a language other than English at home, and the majority of students received free or reduced price lunch. Latina/o students comprise[ed] half of the student population. (p. 84)

Unique factors to this study, versus the other urban studies, included focusing on the Latine population and the partnership between the researchers and the public school district.

The district sought to understand the ongoing decline in student enrollment due to families leaving the school district for charter schools (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

In Los Angeles, another study examined the relationship between Black mothers and the school selection process. These mothers were navigating the school choice process for their students who had previously attended public school as middle schoolers, and they were seeking alternative school options for high school (Cooper, 2005). Both California-based studies shared similar demographics with higher percentages of Black and Latine students (Cooper, 2005; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

In summary, two focused studies took place in California, one that included a focus on Latine students and another examining the relationship between Black mothers and school choice.

Meta-Studies. A handful of school choice studies include two to three separate and distinct geographic locations with similar characteristics. These combined studies have been called "meta-studies" (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a). In these meta-studies, research teams combined their research due to the similarities in topic choice, location, and methodology. McDonough Kimelberg appears to be the prolific co-author, with four shared studies (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg; 2013; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b). Interestingly, all the "meta-studies" focused on middle-class parents and the school choice process in urban settings.

The triad of Posey-Maddox, McDonough Kimelberg, and Cucchiara have published two studies together focused on middle-class parents, exploring how middle-class parents engage in the selection of urban schools. They wrote "Middle-class parents and urban public schools:

Current research and future directions" (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a) and "Seeking a 'critical mass': Middle-class parents' collective engagement in city public schooling" (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). These studies compared similarities between their studies related to school choice in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia. All three urban areas had experienced job loss due to deindustrialization, which contributed to demographic shifts in the cities as White, middle-class families left the city for the suburbs. For example, the public school systems demonstrated a lack of resources and had high percentages of Black students. "The difficulties the three districts confront vary in size and severity, but they all continue to deal with entrenched patterns of racial and socioeconomic segregation" (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, p. 914).

Similarly, Billingham has published with other researchers, again focused on middle-class parents. Billingham and McDonough Kimelberg have published twice together. "Middle-class parents, urban schooling, and the shift from consumption to production of urban space," found that young couples attracted to living in Boston remained in the urban setting and once their child entered kindergarten, heavily invested their time and energy into the public school (Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013). In "Attitudes toward diversity and the school choice process: Middle-class parents in a segregated urban public school district", McDonough Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) found that although parents may not have prioritized the racial and socio-economic diversity at the school site, they appreciated it once enrolled in the school. In a different relationship, Billingham and Hunt (2016) collaborated to write "School racial composition and parental choice: new evidence on the preferences of white parents in the US", where they found an inverse relationship

between the percentage of Black students at a school and the likelihood that White parents would enroll their child at the school.

International Studies. Several school choice studies have taken place outside of the United States, and some of the U.S. studies have been published in the British Journal and Sociology in Education. School choice in England (Foskett, 2012), Australia (McDonald et al., 2019), and Chile (Bellei & Munoz, 2021; Zancajo, 2018), is more pervasive and has existed longer than in the United States. Common to the school choice movements in other countries, socio-cultural-economic-political pressures and a neoliberal agenda have been the basis for school choice selection as the means for educational reform (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). These international studies provide insight into what school choice could hold in the future for the United States.

In Chile, the school market has existed for more than 35 years, and universal vouchers are used throughout the country (Bellei & Munoz, 2021; Zancajo, 2018). In Australia, McDonald et al. (2019) explored "The emergence of the marketing professional in schools" as the country has fully embraced the marketization of education, with up to 40% of high school students attending private or non-governmental schools. In Sweden, a relatively more homogeneous country compared to the United States regarding race and socio-economics, Böhlmark et al.'s (2016) findings indicate that the 15-year-old voucher system had minimally impacted school segregation.

England has long been a country explored for its school choice and marketization, perhaps because the school market has been established for decades before systems in various places in the United States. The conservative government, led by Margaret Thatcher

in 1979, set foundational policies which allowed for the establishment of the Education

Reform Act of 1988 and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, both of which instituted

neoliberal educational reform efforts in the form of marketization (Foskett, 2012). These

neoliberal reforms are similar to the reform efforts seen simultaneously in the United States

Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown's (2004) analysis of marketing in education included an

examination of 18 British studies, three United States, two in Israel, and one in New Zealand.

Comparatively, 18 studies from Britain focused on educational marketing to the three from

the United States demonstrate the difference in where the two countries are with school

choice in terms of longitudinal time, pervasiveness, and impacts.

International studies in England (Foskett, 2012) and Chile (Bellei & Munoz, 2021;

Zancajo, 2018) demonstrate the impacts of long standing neoliberal reform efforts with

public education. In these countries, school choice practices and polices exist nationally,

large portions of the student population attend private schools, and school marketing

professionals are commonplace.

Suburban Areas

Urban settings are prime locations for school choice and markets to take root (Cooper,

2005; Cucchiara, 2008; Jabbar, 2016, McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Stovall,

2012), yet the neoliberal movement towards school choice has also taken place in suburban

areas. As White and middle-class families have moved out of urban areas, the student

population in suburban areas has higher ratios of White and upper-middle-class families,

reflecting the exodus out of cities and metropolitan areas (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Roda

& Wells, 2013; Turner, 2018).

Altenhofen et al. (2016) examined charter schools across Colorado in predominantly suburban and one urban school district. The prevalent presence of charter schools across the state creates a highly marketized environment for school choice (Altenhofen et al., 2016).

In Turner's (2018) study, two medium-sized suburban school districts in Wisconsin were the location of the research where unemployment was rising due to the economic recession of 2008. In one of the school district locations, increased xenophobia produced county ordinances making English the official language and banning the ability for businesses to hire undocumented workers. In contrast, the local government had established equal opportunity laws related to housing, employment, and education. Wisconsin also saw racial inequities between Black and White children by poverty levels and academic achievement. Although school choice is more prevalent in urban areas, it is becoming more commonplace in suburban areas.

Location Summary

What is shared amongst all the locations where studies have taken place is that school choice has been established, whether by external or internal factors (Cooper, 2005; Cucchiara, 2008; Ellison & Aloe, 2019). School choice has been situated in the rhetoric of educational reform, although increased student learning outcomes and integrated schools have not yet manifested as a result of school choice (Buras, 2011; Lubienski, 2001; Ravitch, 2014). In many places, school choice has contributed to socio-economic and racial segregation (Cucchiara, 2008; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Stovall, 2012).

Methodologies of Studies

The methodological practices of studies range across qualitative and quantitative applications, periods, and resource deployment. In some studies, the ages of the students were not considered (Altenhofen et al., 2016; van Dunk and Dickman, 2002). A range of student ages and parent characteristics have also been studied. DiMartino and Jessen (2016) examined the choice process for middle and high school students. Cooper (2005) studied Black mothers who had students who previously attended a public middle school and were looking at alternative high school options for their children. Many studies examined parents of kindergarteners (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Roda & Wells, 2013). Finally, studies have engaged solely in review (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Stovall, 2012; Wilson & Carlsen, 2016).

I have organized the methodology section by (a) quantitative studies, (b) qualitative studies, (c) mixed methods, and (d) document review.

Quantitative

Studies based solely on quantitative methods used a team of people to make phone calls to collect survey data from families (Altenhofen et al., 2016; van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). In Altenhofen et al.'s (2016) study, in the Spring of 2012, Grade 1 parents were contacted following their child's kindergarten year in a Colorado charter school. Five hundred fifty-three families were called to participate in phone surveys; 62% of the families applied to the lottery of charter school options for their children as they applied to kindergarten. Six Core Knowledge charter schools provided contact information to Altenhofen et al. from the parent applications. Most of the participants in the study were White, and few qualified for free or

reduced lunch. The study did not examine the racial makeup of schools. Instead, their study was limited to "suburban, high-income, predominantly White schools (Altenhofen et al., 2016, p. 4), specifically looking at charter schools.

Another phone survey study was used in 1999 by van Dunk and Dickman (2002) in Milwaukee. Six hundred and seventy-eight parents who attended Milwaukee public, charter, suburban, and private schools participated in the phone survey. There was no parameter placed on the child's age, and the sample population included families with less than a college degree, non-White, a range of people who did or did not attend church, and a range of household incomes. Parents were asked if they "[knew] the name of the principal at their child's school" (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002, p. 849) and if they knew the range of the school's population that [was] "above grade level in reading, "the percentage of the student body that is African-American, and the percentage of the student body eligible for free or reduced-price lunch" (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002, p. 858).

These quantitative studies generated statistically significant results contributing to the literature on parents and school choice. Like many quantitative studies, they give insight into the "what" parents have done, with limited insight into the "why" parents made decisions.

Qualitative

Qualitative methods were more commonly used than quantitative with school choice studies. As researchers seek to understand the many perspectives contributing to the school choice phenomenon, interviews have been frequently used in qualitative studies.

In Cooper's (2005) study of African American mothers, purposeful sampling was used to recruit 14 mothers representing self-identified low-income or working-class African

American mothers. The definition of mother included grandmothers who had legal custody of their grandchildren. The mothers self-identified as working class. Their children had previously attended public school as middle schoolers but were enrolled as high school freshmen in other types of schools, including private and charter. Each mother was interviewed two times, descriptive coding was applied, and the researcher found analytical themes via deductive analysis.

Studying Boston middle-class mothers and their elementary-aged children, 32 interviews were conducted by the researcher and an assistant (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). Interviews were semi-structured. Participants were recruited through online discussion boards and listservs that would have been advertised and directed toward mothers. Although the recruitment process was not limited to mothers, all the participants were upper-middle-class mothers.

In a stratified random sample of 30 schools in New Orleans, Jabbar (2016) conducted qualitative interviews, observed board meetings, and reviewed board meeting minutes from a random sample of 30 schools in New Orleans over a year, from September to June. All the parts of the city were sampled, from dense to less populous areas and including the various demographic populations in New Orleans. Interviews with parents were conducted twice, on "the count day for enrollment and pupil funding" and after the deadline for OneApp applications, the consolidated school application in New Orleans. In addition to the parent interviews, 72 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 47 school leaders. Historical documents such as school and district marketing materials and board meeting observations were utilized to triangulate interview data.

DiMartino and Jessen (2016) collected data over two years, beginning in 2006 and ending in 2008, creating a meta-ethnographic study based on two case studies the researchers conducted independently, with a "more thorough and complete picture of the elaborate complexities of school-based marketing and branding" (p. 461). The combination of case studies also allowed for the triangulation of data. In the first case study, DiMartino and Jessen (2016) conducted interviews with guidance counselors, parent coordinators, and 12 parents of Grade 8 about to enter high school as part of the city-wide high school choice process. Interviews with parents occurred 2-3 times over the school choice process; after the initial application was completed, after placement letters were received, and a third interview happened if the parents/students filed an appeal for a placement. DiMartino and Jessen (2016) also used a case study to explore two new school sites that the New York Department of Education had founded alongside private educational partners. Interviews occurred with various staff members and parents and data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed with qualitative software. Additional information was used to triangulate the data from interviews.

Interviews were the most commonly used methodology in qualitative surveys. Researchers interviewed a range of parents, students, and staff members when investigating school choice.

Mixed Methods

Shannon-Baker et al. (2020) conducted their study in partnership with the school district. A mixed methods case study included a survey instrument sent to all the parents who had children enrolled in the school district, from elementary to high school. The research team collected 882 responses. Descriptive statistics were used for "demographic data and closed-

response questions on the survey" (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020, p. 84). Focus groups were then used "to encourage more self-disclosure and to create a welcoming environment for conversation" (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020, p. 84). School administrators identified participants for the focus groups, "12 parents, all women, participated in the focus groups" (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020, p. 84). The qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and the focus groups were coded for emergent themes.

Buras (2011) conducted a mixed methods study grounded in policy ecology. Document review of "primary and secondary historical sources, school district policies and documents, state data and reports, news articles from local and national sources, and organizations' literature, including their websites" (Buras, 2011, p. 298) created a foundation that linked policies at the local, state, and federal levels. In addition, Buras conducted semi-structured interviews of "more than fifty education stakeholders" (p. 299).

A range of mixed methods were used to collect data on school choice including surveys combined with focus groups or document review combined with interviews.

Document Review

Opaltka and Hemsley-Brown (2004) conducted a literature review of educational marketing, including studies from four countries. Stovall (2012) conducted a document review thoroughly examining local policies in housing, education, and urban renewal reform efforts. Wilson and Carlsen (2016) analyzed 55 K-8 websites of charter schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Furthermore, Hasan and Kumar (2019) engaged in a document review to delve into the relationship between the GreatSchools website and housing prices.

Methodology Summary

There has not been a standardized way of exploring and researching school choice. A range of studies has taken place over long and short durations, with parents of students at multiple age levels and in various locations. What does stand out in the methodology has been the use of interviews to find out the "why" around the actions of parents or school administrators.

Findings of Studies

The findings section has been organized by (a) parents: the demand side of the market, and (b) schools: the supply side of the market.

Parents: The Demand Side of the Market

A significant portion of school choice literature has been focused on parents and their experiences with the school shopping process, their attitudes, beliefs, and the factors they are considering when making a school choice for their child (Cooper, 2005; Cucchiara, 2008; Martin, 2021; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). All parents look for school choices that they feel are best for their children, regardless of their identity factors. What differs is the perception and qualifications of how parents perceive school quality (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). There has been more historical research on higher-income families regarding school choice (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b).

All families, regardless of socio-economic background, ethnicity, or other identity factors, want successful schooling experiences and see that school choice and selection may be a means to provide additional educational resources and advantages for their child

(Cucchiara, 2008; Roda & Wells, 2013) A small, growing body of research has begun to study school choice in communities of color; it exemplifies a shift in researcher focus to include more diverse perspectives regarding the school choice movement (Cooper, 2005; Stovall, 2012; Teske et al., 2007; Waitoller & Super, 2017). This research has studied Black parents navigating school choice (Cooper, 2005) and the misdirection sold to Black families that oversell and under promise educational outcomes (Stovall, 2012). To date, a limited amount of literature exists around the experiences of Latine families in the school selection process (Cuero et al, 2009; Gastic & Salas Coronado, 2011; Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Taylor Haynes et al., 2010; Waitoller & Super, 2017) despite the growing population of Latine students in the United States (de Brey et al., 2019). Building off of Stovall's (2012) foundation, Waitoller and Super (2017) have written about Latinx parents of students with special education needs in Chicago and the "politics of desperation" as the parents seek access to charter schools. Shannon-Baker et al. (2020) found that Latine parents "wanted their voices to matter" (p. 77) in the school selection process, an indication of the lack of resources or confidence Latine parents had in the school choice process. Related to school choice, Gastric and Salas Coronado (2011) refute the claim that Latine parents are choosing to leave public schools for religious schools and found that Latine families are relatively well represented in charter schools. Related to charter schools, Mavrogordato and Stein (2016) studied Latine parents and school choice and outlined the importance of bilingual materials and staff for parents.

Who Are the Parents?

Parent Identity and Mothers. It could be commonly understood that parent positionality and background significantly impact how they approach the school choice process. In selecting a school for their child, parents bring their past and current experiences to the school choice process. Parents bring several identity factors into the school selection process. This can include their gender, race, experiences in school, or past locations of residence (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Cooper, 2005; Martin, 2021; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

Mothers are seen as the primary decision-makers in the household in regard to their children and school choice (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Cooper, 2005; Martin, 2021; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). Mothers review information, select, and exert capital in the school selection process to ensure their child is enrolled in the preferred school (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b). As such, the lack of response by fathers in school choice studies could contribute to a misrepresentation of the findings (Lewis, 2003; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

Diversity, whether seeking or being wary of it has played a role in mothers selecting a school based on race. The term "diversity" has been used synonymously with race by participants (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). White moms have shared a desire for their children to have diverse experiences, such as attending school with minority students, that they may not have had as a child (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). Disproportionate impacts of school choice on communities of color have not been lost on White middle-class mothers. Moms have pointed to the pressure on parenting and how selecting a good school felt like it would determine their ability as parents (Roda & Wells, 2013). Mothers have articulated

being "swept up in the school selection" process (Roda & Wells, 2013). These findings point to the connections between race and school selection and White mothers' social identity to how "successfully" they manage the school choice process (Roda & Wells, 2013).

Another aspect of parent identity that has played a role in school choice is the identity of being young urban couples. City planners targeted young families in gentrification efforts by promoting schools in the neighborhood (Cucchiara, 2008). These gentrification efforts have been focused on keeping young, middle-class wealth and resources within the city and limiting movement into the suburbs.

Black working-class mothers also bring their whole selves to the school choice process, looking for options and desired qualities in schools aligned with their own experiences with the school system, both personally and experienced by others in the community (Cooper, 2005). Black mothers saw their school choice "as a form of sociopolitical and cultural resistance" (Cooper, 2005, p. 185). After the public school system failed to meet their needs and the needs of their children, the mothers sought "to gain the power, resources, and educational opportunities their children need[ed] to successfully compete and advance in society" (Cooper, 2005, p. 185). What arises in the literature is that, for communities of color, the school choice process is more complicated and nuanced (Cooper, 2005; Stovall, 2012; Teske et al., 2007; Waitoller & Super, 2017). Parents are considering the implications for their children with more and deeper layers of culture and the impacts of society.

Summary, Parent Identity. The research indicates that the political and social perceptions of schools, alongside the marketization of public schools, encourage middle-class families to exert their ability to select a school for their children (McDonough Kimelberg,

2014; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b). In addition, there are social implications to being considered a "good parent" and selecting the right school for their child (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Houston & Henig, 2021). In turn, school choice places economic pressure on the school system, disproportionately impacting those students in marginalized communities (Diem et al., 2018; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016).

What Parents Rely on to Get Information

What parents rely on to get information consists of two sub-sections, (a) the social network and (b) website information.

The Social Network. As parents navigate the school markets and choice options, the literature has consistently pointed to the impacts of parent social networks in relation to families seeking information on schools and ultimately making their school selection (Cucchiara, 2008; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). Whether examining private school selection (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002), charter/alternative school selection (Altenhofen et al., 2016; Cooper, 2005), or middle-class families who are choosing to stay in urban and lower-resourced communities (Cucchiara, 2008; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012), or public school selection (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020) the social network is crucial and essential to parents in making their decision about where to send their child to elementary school. The social network constitutes the "soft data," which includes information gathered from social networks with family members, neighbors, and friends (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Houston et al., 2020; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Villavicencio, 2013). A foundational study of soft data is Ball and Vincent's (1998) work around the

"Grapevine" of social networks by parents to navigate school choices and how parents identify the pros and cons of schools.

In Lareau and Goyette's (2014) qualitative study, higher-income families collected information about schools via access to social networks. The social networks first provided information on the location of residence about the associated school. Since the social networks were found to be "secure" and "stable," the families engaged in the choice process felt that the information was reliable and trustworthy. Therefore, the higher-income families could access a higher amount of choice options since they could access their neighborhood school with increased resources due to the capital the families brought into the school. Additionally, they had the resources to access the other school options (Lareau & Goyette, 2014).

Roda and Wells' (2013) research could confirm aspects of Laureau and Goyette's (2014) social network findings. Roda and Wells found that if the social network of high-income families provided information that reassured parents about the quality of the school, those high-income parents would not engage in the school shopping process. These families may not tour schools, which was generally considered an initial step in school shopping. The importance of the social network on other White middle-class parents was seen in Altenhofen et al.'s (2016) open-ended responses regarding charter schools However, none of the schools could be considered low-performing, and none had a significant portion of Black, Latine, or other minority students.

McDonough Kimelberg and Billingham (2012) also found that parents would select schools if their peers gave it a positive referral. Information may have been shared via online

discussion forums or within social circles. None of the schools the White middle-class

mothers considered were regarded as low-performing (Altenhofen et al., 2016; McDonough

Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). "The advice of trusted and respected peers—complemented

by individual research on websites and at school fairs—served as the primary means by

which most of our parents narrowed the range of schools that they deemed acceptable"

(McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012, p. 220). Holme (2002) confirms this

phenomenon where high-income families place the reputational status of the school higher in

their decision-making process over more objective measures of academic quality. The

school's reputation is perpetuated by the families currently enrolled to prospective parents

seeking school choice information (Holme, 2002).

Less well researched is the social network for lower-income or educated parents. Henig

(1995) purports that parents with lower-income or education are theoretically less positioned

to have adequate information to make school decisions that serve their best interests. In

contrast to the argument that lower-income families may struggle to make school choices that

support their goals and their child (Henig, 1995), Black mothers from lower-income

backgrounds went through a process to "investigate and evaluate" the available options to

them before selecting a school (Cooper, 2005, p.180). The mothers called the schools and

district offices and went on tours to observe classrooms and tour the facilities and found

adequate information about the schools (Cooper, 2005). To a lesser extent, some of the

mothers who selected a private school used referrals from others and the location in making

their school choice (Cooper, 2005). Stovall (2012) contributes to this discussion by arguing

that the school choice discourse gives parents false information similar to "glossification"

(Jabbar, 2015b), where the schools spend more time on promotion and false promises other than improving the educational outcomes for students.

The social network, or soft data, was used and valued by all parents regardless of economic or racial background with school choice studies. Parents found the word-of-mouth recommendations valuable when collecting information about the schools and also when making their school choice.

Website Information. Minimal research has been done on school website analysis (Glazerman et al., 2020; Wilson & Carlsen, 2016). Additionally, there was minimal peer-reviewed research on third-party websites about school choice (Altenhofen et al., 2016; Barnum & LeMee, 2019; Hasan & Kumar, 2019). This was surprising considering the pervasiveness of the Great Schools website and similar third-party resources such as Niche or School Digger. In many places, an internet search of a school will direct you to a GreatSchools site for that school (Barnum & LeMee, 2019). Annually, the website receives 40 million unique visitors (Samuels, 2019). Altenhofen et al. (2016) identified that 72% of parents sought and used information from third-party sites such as GreatSchools, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, and the school website when shopping for schools.

GreatSchools used test score publications from 2001's NCLB policy to create an algorithm that reinforced a belief system that schools with higher numbers of White and middle-class students were better than schools serving more significant percentages of Black and Latine students (Barnum & LeMee, 2019; Samuels, 2019). "The result is a ubiquitous, privately run school ratings system that is steering people toward whiter, more affluent schools" (Samuels, 2019, para. 13). Contributing to the issue of GreatSchools's impacts on

school choice is its partnership with Zillow, an online real estate site, and additional funds

from foundations that support and advocate for school choice (Barnum & LeMee, 2019;

Hasan & Kumar, 2019). For example, the Walton Family Foundation has donated over 25

million since the inception of GreatSchools under the premise that the website helps low-

income families make informed choices about their school choice (Barnum & LeMee, 2019).

Other significant contributors include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Goldman

Sachs Group, Zoom Foundation, Target Foundation, Kern Family Foundation, and the

Robertson Foundation (Samuels, 2019).

Although Hasan and Kumar (2019) did not find fault in offering school information to the

public, they point to the unintended consequences related to the use of school data. They do

not place responsibility on GreatSchools. Nevertheless, the results of using the information

contribute to and perpetuate segregation. "'They're just putting out information for people.

They're not policymakers,' he said. 'Providing school information, is it a bad thing?

Absolutely not, it is a good thing. It is just an unintended consequence.'" (Samuels, 2019,

para. 15).

Zillow and GreatSchools share a symbiotic relationship; there are direct linkages between

the ratings of schools on GreatSchools, the housing prices in the area, and the demographic

movement of families following rating publications (Hasan & Kumar, 2019). "Across a range

of specifications, we find that access to school performance ratings appeared to accelerate,

rather than reduce, economic divergence across zip codes in the United States" (Hasan &

Kumar, 2019, p. 26). Although GreatSchools partners with the U.S. Department of Housing

and Urban Development and Section 8 housing (Samuels, 2019), parents made limited

selections that led to a slight increase in school quality over the school they were slated to attend (Hasan & Kumar, 2019). This brings into question the limits of the GreatSchools rating system overall, where the measurements of school quality are narrow and do not consider how culturally inclusive the school may be for a child of color (Barnum & LeMee, 2019). As seen in a Los Angeles study, mothers were looking for more than test scores as a qualification of school quality; they were looking for schools that would help their children learn about themselves as Black children and develop skills to be successful in society (Cooper, 2005).

Minimal research has been conducted exploring school websites or the website GreatSchools.

What Are Parents Considering When Making a School Choice?

The research surfaces that four main categories continually arise as factors for parents (1) race, (2) location, (3) safety, and (4) academic performance; this is how this section is organized. It is paramount to mention the pervasive nature that race places into all the parent school-selection factors, consciously or unconsciously (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013). In some cases, unique factors may be considered in school selection; for example, families with students with special education needs seek the best special education support for their child (Cooper, 2005; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Waitoller & Super, 2017).

Race. The school's racial composition was a focal point for most parents, regardless of their racial identity (Cooper, 2005; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). Parents often want their children to be with other students who look

like them and have the same backgrounds (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b). In Cooper's (2005) study, the mothers wanted their children to gain "cultural exposure" and develop the ability to "get along" with other racial groups and identified these areas as essential to success as African Americans living in a diverse society (p. 182).

The marketization of education has been seen in a mixed light by minority parents. Several studies acknowledge the marketplace potential of school options, yet the consensus among parents is that school choice still needs to meet its promised outcomes (Cooper, 2005; Jabbar, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

White parents also seek experiences with integrated racial spaces; in one study, 66% reported seeking diversity as an essential component of a school (Farkas & Johnson, 1998). Despite White parents outlining diversity as an essential component of the school, what level of diversity was not established, nor was race explicitly named as a synonym for diversity. Ball and Vincent (1998) point to limited awareness of race being a contributing factor for White middle-class parents in their application school choice. Coded language such as "safe schools," "high achieving," or "curb appeal" point to the application of replacement language rather than naming race (Ball & Vincent, 1998). Although White parents sought diversity in schooling, their definition of diversity was not consistently defined (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In addition, Black parents sought diverse spaces with Black students but not a Black racial majority (Farkas & Johnson, 1998; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012).

The concept of having some Black students without the Black students being a racial majority continued with White parents seeking schools (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). If the school's minority population exceeded 70% of the overall population, then White parents did not select the school (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). In some places, a "good school" was defined by an entirely White student population. It was articulated as parents seeking homogeneous educational spaces or wanting others to "be like us" (Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

In prior research, race has been considered by parents when they were making their school selection. In some places, a "good" school was linked to the racial makeup of the school and in others, parents sought school communities that reflected their own racial or economic identity. Safety was also linked in some places to race. In some studies, parents sought diversity in a school population but definitions of diversity were wide and unclear.

Location. The distance to and from school has been a factor in parent school selection. Geographic location is historically the primary means by which students attend school. The public education system was established where students attend the closest school in proximity to them based on their home location (Kozol, 1992; Ravitch, 2014). As a result of the historical context for school selection, geographic location continues to be a primary determinant of school choice. Families prefer the physical proximity of sites since it provides ease of childcare by decreasing commuting time. It centers the students and families in the neighborhood, making it easier to make social connections with other families (Bell, 2009; Hastings et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

Safety. A common criterion that parents sought with school selection is school safety (Henig, 1995). Although school safety or discipline is often cited as a cause for review by parents, it is unclear and inconsistent what school safety and discipline mean to parents or the schools themselves. The term school safety may also be used by parents, consciously or unconsciously, as an indicator of race (Ball & Vincent, 1998).

Academic Achievement. Academic achievement across the nation has been primarily measured by student performance on state tests (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Bilfulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Burgess et al., 2014). In contrast to the social network, academic achievement scores can be considered the hard data used by parents to make their school choice decision (Cucchiara et al., 2011; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). The emergence of hard data to measure school quality arose and was promoted with high-stakes testing (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014). A challenge with families utilizing hard data as a means to evaluate school quality is that this measurement is more aligned with the recognized cultural, social, and financial assets that exist in the family and community than actual school quality (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014). School reform advocates have advocated adding academic growth data, the measurement of how much students learn in a year, in combination with academic achievement data (Houston & Henig, 2021).

Hard data can be self-serving to various groups and organizations (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014). In one example, real estate agents, bankers, and city organizers work to reinforce the binary narrative of "good" and "bad" schools as a way to maintain control and power within the city system (Cucchiara, 2008; Cucchiara et al., 2011).

In some cases, test scores are a high priority in selecting schools for high-income White parents (Holme, 2022). However, emerging studies, which also include a more comprehensive range of diverse parents, demonstrate that test scores have less importance in school selection than previously thought. Cooper's (2005) mothers did not place a heavy weight on standardized test scores or school rankings. Instead, they prioritized their child's physical and emotional well-being over these hard data measurements.

Similarly, White middle-class moms in Boston did not rank test scores as the most critical measurement of the quality of the school (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). They may have disagreed with standardized tests and were also able to provide a rational explanation attributed to the lack of resources in the community for the lower test scores (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). In Boston, some moms would dismiss scores since they saw the test scores as irrelevant to their children's potential success (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). In that study, one parent examined the percentage of students at the bottom and then the students at the top end of the distribution and pointed out how students at the top end of the distribution of many schools did relatively the same (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014).

When examining the academic data, a theme in the literature is parent confidence to fill in perceived gaps in their child's education. In Cooper's (2005) study with middle school students, the mothers explored opportunities for their children to experience diversity via extracurriculars, travel, and family outings. In McDonough Kimelberg's (2014) study with parents selecting options for their Kindergartener, the parents were confident in their ability to fill in the gaps with their child's academic learning or enrichment.

In Colorado, in an examination of high-income parents, the parents did not closely examine the school test scores when examining charter schools (Altenhofen et al., 2016). Instead, they used their social network to collect information on the school, none of which could be considered low-performing or had a significant population of minority students (Altenhofen et al., 2016).

The push to include student growth data as a measurement of school quality and student achievement data is an interesting proposal to create a more equitable examination of school quality (Houston et al., 2020). The question arises as to whether or not growth data would be recognized and valued following the concerted push to use academic achievement data as the measure of school quality (Houston et al., 2020). Recently, the GreatSchools website began to include student growth data under an equity label (Hasan & Kumar, 2019). Moreover, in a Colorado study of charter school selection, socio-economically advantaged parents found it challenging to understand the growth data (Altenhofen et al., 2016).

Academic achievement data, or the hard data, in relationship to school choice has been a focus of previous academic research. Contrasting findings were found in relationship to the academic data. Whereas real estate agencies, community businesses, or urban planners may use academic achievement data for their own interests, parents demonstrated a mix of responses in relationship to academic achievement data. Some parents dismissed it as a measure of school quality. In other places the academic achievement of the school was the primary driving factor with school selection. Academic growth data proved to be challenging for parents to navigate and understand.

Summary, Parents: The Demand Side of the Market

Parents use a variety of unique factors when selecting a school. These vary by social class, race, and geographic location and therefore hard to establish which factors are consistently considered by parents with school selection (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Bilfulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Burgess et al., 2014; Ellison & Aloe, 2019; Houston et al., 2020; Jabbar, 2015b; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Villavicencio, 2013). Parents have a wide range of information about schools and quality based on identity factors such as personal beliefs, income, location, and language and they use their social networks to collect information and navigate school choices. Regardless, the school shopping process is more complex and nuanced, irrespective of the children's ages, what school options the parents are considering (charter, private, public), or the location and background of the parents.

The marketization of public schools best serves those parents with advantages (Roda & Wells, 2013). Perhaps this is why most past studies focus on White middle-class parents; how they find information and make their school choice. Limited research exists around the experiences of Latine parents with school choice (Gastic & Salas Coronado, 2011; Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

The Supply Side: District and School Response to the Market

The supply side: district and school response to the market is organized by (a) the school's understanding of its placement within the market and (b) who does the marketing for schools, and (c) regulation of school choice and policy creation.

The Market Side. The market's supply side explores schools' response to the marketization of education. Most researchers agree that educational marketing has been understudied (Foskett, 2012; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Zancajo, 2018). Although much of this research has occurred in highly marketized environments such as New York (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Roda & Wells, 2013), New Orleans (Buras, 2011; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016), Philadelphia (Cucchiara, 2008), Boston (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014), Los Angeles (Cooper, 2005), and Chicago (Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017), this research provides insight into the unique contexts and situations related to school response to school markets within the individual socio-cultural-political circumstances across the United States. International studies also contribute knowledge to the school response to marketization (Ball, 2003; Foskett, 2012; Opaltka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004).

There are similarities in the socio-cultural-political movements between the U.S. and internationally that have created an environment for the marketization of schools in the neoliberal agenda pushing for reform efforts, at times under the guise of providing school choice to all demographic groups (Ball et al., 1995; Bell, 2009; Stovall, 2012). These school choice options intentionally or unintentionally create or contribute to the systems of school segregation (Jabbar, 2016; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004).

It may be possible that marketing pushes schools to reflect on programs and vision, contributing to educational improvements (DiMartino & Jessen, 2016). Although reflective practices may positively impact school improvements, most of the research speaks to the unintended consequences of school marketing that disproportionately impact Black and Latine communities while furthering and contributing to White capital and privilege (Ball et

al., 1995; Bell, 2009; Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2016; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Stovall, 2012).

School Understanding of Its Placement Within the Marketplace. In the marketplace of school selection, a school must first understand where they are situated compared to other schools (Jabbar, 2015b; Lubienski, 2005; Zancajo, 2018). Understanding placement within the market is the first step in the recruitment and retention of students. Declining enrollment due to demographic shifts in the attendance area or competition from private, charter, or choice programs forces public schools to compete for students (Jabbar, 2016).

Jabbar's (2015b) work closely examines the market strategies employed by leaders in New Orleans, a highly competitive education market post hurricane Katrina. Similarly, Zancajo's (2018) work closely examines the school response to market pressures in Chile, another highly competitive education market with a universal voucher system. He found that schools market themselves strategically based on how the principal perceived their placement in the market. Zancajo (2018) identified three typologies of school marketing: (a) marketing since student enrollment was high and competition was low, (b) strategic marketing to attract a specific kind of student, and (c) extensive marketing since enrollment was low and competition was high.

In New Orleans, the various charter schools experienced unique circumstances that impacted their position (Jabbar, 2015a). For example, it was hard for small, independent charters to compete with the larger brand-name schools or for older schools to compete with "shiny and new" schools (Jabbar, 2015a). Schools that benefitted from reputation and historical success were less likely to engage in marketing practices (Jabbar, 2015a). A school

leader in New Orleans indicated the pressure to recruit students by saying, "Every student is money" (Jabbar, 2015b, p. 1). For all the schools in New Orleans, any drop in student enrollment led to decreased funding which could lead to a decrease in resources (Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016).

Local competition and context in the area impacted the school marketplace and therefore how schools should respond. In highly marketized environments, where student enrollment is tied to funding schools must actively market and recruit students. As discussed earlier, these highly competitive markets are typically in urban areas.

Who Does the Marketing? Marketing will become more of a school leader's responsibility if it has not already happened and yet limited research has been done on school marketing (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b; Loeb et al., 2011). Little is known about how school leaders develop marketing strategies (Jabbar, 2015b). This is not surprising since marketing is not typically part of the background or education of principals. To date, I have found no existing research on principals' knowledge to engage in this level of communication, public relations, or marketing. Despite a focus on schools and school leaders understanding the marketplace, little to no research has been done on school principals' understanding of how to deploy marketing strategies to recruit and retain students, and the research demonstrates that principals are bound by time to either engage in marketing or improving educational outcomes (Diem et al., 2018; Jabbar, 2015b; Loeb et al., 2011). Related to the role of being a principal, Bosco (2021) roots her work in the mitigating stress measures taken by school and district leaders. Spanish speaking parents have requested bilingual staff and materials to support their access and understanding of school choice

(Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Taylor Haynes et al., 2010). In marketing to parents and enrolling students, principals can help parents or be exclusionary, creating bridges or perpetuating inequalities (Diem et al., 2018; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b).

In this new paradigm of school markets, Diem et al. (2018) argue that school leaders must educate and develop an understanding of district policies around school choice since they can perpetuate educational inequities that marginalize students. By educating themselves with school choice information, school leaders can challenge racist policies and practices (Diem et al., 2018). Similarly, Burciaga (2015) argues that emerging school leaders must challenge their deficit mindsets of historically underserved populations of students by studying the school systems, their impacts, and developing their belief systems that are rooted in funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Gallego et al., (2001) confirmed the need for educators to better understand themselves and other cultures, developing "relational knowing," in order for educational reform to take place.

Whether or not school principals have educated themselves about the school choice policies or the intended or unintended impacts of school choice, they are typically the staff members responsible for the marketing of schools (Jabbar, 2015b; Loeb et al., 2011; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). In response to the pressure to attract parents, principals may engage in several various strategies that include: (1) general marketing, (2) niche market defining (religion), and (3) program improvement (Jabbar, 2015a; Loeb et al., 2011). Program improvement was least pursued when principals considered attracting parents (Jabbar, 2015a; Loeb et al., 2011). Rather than working on improving academic achievement

or educational programs, most school sites engaged in marketing efforts to parents (Jabbar, 2015a; Loeb et al., 2011). This focus on marketing has similarities to Boston, where the "politics of despair" (Stovall, 2012) are promising underserved communities better educational opportunities, much like the "glossification" (Jabbar, 2015a) taking place in New Orleans, and yet there is minimal change to the academic program in either location.

Another school response to the school market is the emergence of marketing professionals in schools. School districts in Australia have started to hire marketing professionals in response to market pressure stemming from large charter school networks (Foskett, 2012; McDonald et al., 2019). If a marketing professional is needed in schools to promote, recruit, and enroll students, it should be noted that no additional funds are allocated for this position or marketing overall (Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2015a). Some researchers have proposed that allocating time and resources, in many cases, public funds, to marketing can be considered a misuse of funds that should be allocated toward the education of students (Diem et al., 2018; Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2015a).

In the context of two school districts with changing demographics, Turner (2018) examined the potential benefits of marketing diversity to parents, a trait that could be viewed as a negative by White middle-class families. Unfortunately, a finding of the research is that for communities of color, the communication typically fell into one-way communication patterns, where the school district "informed" rather than "responded" to parent concerns (Turner, 2018, p.811). In the case of school choice, communication was rooted in White supremacy culture that "devalued schools with growing populations of children of color" (Turner, 2018, p. 811). In addition, the findings point to the need to "develop and

communicate messages about racial diversity that go beyond its benefits for White children" (Turner, 2018, p. 812), where multiculturalism was seen as additive for White children but subtractive for the children of color.

The continued impacts of marketing were only beneficial for some students. In one study, schools broke the rules by not enrolling disadvantaged students (Jabbar, 2015a). Principals would not openly advertise open seats for students; they did not want students to enroll who may have had attendance, academic, or behavioral challenges at other schools (Jabbar, 2015a). Strategically selecting students can be a way for principals to increase student performance or maintain or change school culture (Jabbar, 2015a; Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017). There were many ways of gaming the system and not serving students. It might have been seen by schools turning parents away with either direct or indirect statements (Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017) or when parents were purposefully attracted to schools based on their socio-economic privilege (Cucchiara, 2008). When schools strategically recruit or decline students, the choice set (Bell, 2009) offerings for parents to select a school is further limited by the schools. In a related fashion, Whitenack et al., (2019) point out that educational policies should be further examined in order to measure their impact on students, especially those students "who have been marginalized and inequitably served by existing educational institutions" (p. 43).

Some researchers point to the inequities of whom marketing serves, the time and resources school marketing takes without improving educational programs, and the superficial nature of marketing surface challenges in market competition operating in public school spaces. In the marketplace for goods, some regulations moderate what is promised

and what is delivered. In the case of education, there is no regulation on what is promised and what is delivered (Foskett, 2012; Lubienski, 2007).

For Spanish-speaking parents, there is a lack of Spanish print materials and bilingual staff at schools (Cuero et al., 2009; Ramirez, 2003). When taken into the context of school choice, this lack of language resource exacerbates the inequity of school marketing for Latine parents (Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Taylor Haynes et al., 2010). Spanish-speaking parents have requested bilingual staff and teachers to find out information about their children's schooling (Ramirez, 2003; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020). The recurring refrain of "We want our voices to matter" from Spanish-speaking parents came up in both Ramirez's (2003) and Shannon-Baker et al.'s (2020) studies.

Pressure to market to families is becoming a principal's responsibility and past research has demonstrated that very little is known about how school leaders are engaged in the process. Principals are also bound by time constraints and may be focused on improving educational outcomes at the school. Depending on what principals communicate to parents they may be perpetuating inequalities or inclusivity.

Regulation of School Choice and Policy Creation

Researchers have made policy recommendations in response to the inequities surfacing with school choice. Creating accountability guidelines and regulations with schools comes up in the literature (Jabbar, 2015a; van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). This could include increasing accountability or incentives for parents to collect a complete picture of school choices (van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). Guidelines for providing well-rounded information could be applied to third-party websites like GreatSchools (Hasan & Kumar, 2019). There could also

be regulations and parameters for schools to ensure that accurate information is shared and shared with all potential parents (Jabbar, 2015a; van Dunk & Dickman, 2002). This could include a requirement that schools provide information on the school choice process (Jabbar, 2015a). With informational materials, policymakers should be forewarned that challenges with accessibility exist for historically marginalized families (Cooper, 2005). In places where the school market has instigated biased student selection, both at enrollment and for transfer students, it would be essential to increase oversight over these processes (Jabbar, 2015a). School information is not currently regulated which may lead to inequities or bias.

Summary, The Supply Side: District and School Response to the Market

A limited amount of research has been focused on schools' marketing to counteract negative narratives and public perception, which identifies a gap in the literature (Jabbar, 2015a; van Dunk & Dickman, 2022). In addition, a gap in the literature exists around the school market and its impacts on communities of color (van Dunk & Dickman, 2022).

School marketing has yet to be as deeply explored as the parent response to the market of education (Foskett, 2012; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Zancajo, 2018). Regardless, it has been clear that there are intended or unintended consequences of choice on schools themselves. These consequences are contributing to inequitable systems of school choice that disproportionately impact Latine and Black students with lower incomes by limiting their options for school, while White, middle-class families have increased opportunities for school choice (Ball et al., 1995; Bell, 2009; Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2016; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Stovall, 2012). As schools engage in outreach to families, what begins to arise in the literature is selective marketing, screening, and acceptance of students

rather than educating the populace (Cooper, 2005; Ravitch, 2014). Neoliberal impacts have degraded the social provision of public education (Ball, 1997), and schools are consciously or unconsciously moving toward privatization efforts.

Educational marketing demonstrates a values drift from student learning to marketing resources (Lubienski, 2005; Olson Beal & Hendry, 2012). No additional funds are allocated to schools to engage in marketing, yet the market pressures schools to recruit and retain students. This pressure is likely transferring energy and resources from educational program improvements to student selection (Jabbar, 2015a; Loeb et al., 2011). Inadvertently or purposefully, this means that public schools are not serving the public good of creating an educated populace. Without change or reform, school choice will likely become ubiquitous nationwide (Ravitch, 2014).

Summary and Gaps in the Literature

A neoliberal agenda to privatize education has "manufactured a crisis in education" (Berliner & Biddle, 1996). This crisis has contributed to the narrative of failing schools which has taken root in the public discourse (Ravitch, 2014) and created the school choice market (Apple, 2005).

From the literature, some fundamental themes arose about school choice. First and foremost, the school market is not delivering on the promise of increased student learning outcomes or desegregation (Houston & Henig, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006, 2012). This inequity disproportionately impacts Black and Latine students and communities (Ravitch, 2014; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Second, most studies are in urban areas where school markets are established and pervasive (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). Few studies have

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occurred in the suburbs. No studies have been found to have occurred in the suburbs where school marketization has yet to become commonplace. Third, most studies use qualitative methods, specifically interviews, to understand why parents and schools are making their decisions (Cooper, 2005; DiMartino & Jessen, 2016; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014). One used focus groups to collect parent data (Shannon-Baker et al., 2020). Fourth, middle-class White mothers have cultural capital that they utilize to collect information about schools via their social network and websites to make their school selection. Fewer studies have explored the experiences of historically marginalized populations of parents navigating school choice and selection, and even few have studied the experiences of Latine parents (Cooper, 2005; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Stovall, 2012; Waitoller & Super, 2017). Finally, the school response to marketing, the supply side, is understudied, and the marketing practices are inconsistent and inequitable (Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2015b, 2016; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004).

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter describes the study's research case study methodology designed to answer the research questions connected to understanding parents' experiences with school selection. The chapter includes the following sections: (a) restatement of purpose, (b) research questions, (c) research sample, (d) context for the study, (e) entering the field, (f) population and sample, (g) purposeful sampling, (h) background and positionality of the researcher, (i) methodology, (j) data analysis and synthesis, and (k) ethical considerations.

Overview of Purpose

This study hoped to contribute to the body of work around school choice and selection by engaging with parents who selected their neighborhood Title I school. A specific lens was placed on understanding Latine parents and school choice. Additionally, the study sought to understand and provide recommendations to schools for practical next steps. As discussed in chapter one, an original aim of the study was to engage in a comparative case study with schools and parents. Following initial inquiries with school principals, the focus of the study was shifted to studying parents, then gathering their recommendations for the school for future communication with prospective parents.

Restatement of Research Questions

The goals of the study lead to the following three research questions:

Research Question 1: How are parents selecting a school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 1a: What, if any, source(s) of information are parents using when selecting a school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 1b: What values, programs, or factors are parents considering

when choosing a Title I school for their kindergartener?

Research Question 2: What, if any, differences exist between Latine and non-Latine

families in the school choice process?

Research Question 3: From a parent's perspective, how can Title I schools improve

the quality of communication with prospective parents?

Restatement of Site Selection

This study took place at two Title I schools in a medium-sized suburban school district in

the Bay Area located in Northern California. Becker Elementary School and Kan Elementary

School (pseudonyms) are located in Thomasville School District (pseudonym). Thomasville

School District serves students from preschool through Grade 8 and is considered a mid-

range-sized district by the California Department of Education (2022c). Approximately 30-

40% percent of the students at Thomasville qualified for free or reduced-price lunch during

the 2021-2022 school year. At the time of the study, Thomasville School District had two

magnet schools: one was a parent-participation school and the other was a dual-language

school. The school district was in strong financial standing and was experiencing declining

enrollment across the district as families moved out of the area. Limited numbers of students,

estimated to be 7%, were leaving the district to attend charter or private schools.

Becker and Kan Elementary Schools are demographically similar in terms of student

ethnicity, as can be seen when comparing the percentages of students from each ethnic group

in the columns shown in Table 1. Schoolwide student ethnicity data was used rather than

parent ethnicity data since the former was more accurate.

Entering the Field

As a public school administrator who has been working in the field for decades, I, the researcher, had a high level of access and understanding of the school sites where this study took place. This connection to the two sites afforded increased access to the participants due to the ease of navigating the systems and previously established relationships with staff members at the elementary schools.

As a doctoral student, I was frequently asked, "What are you doing your dissertation on?" In two separate casual conversations where I was asked about my dissertation, two principals expressed interest in having the study done at their site. In one instance, I was chatting with Principal A, who responded to my research topic by stating, "I want you to do it at my school!" She requested that the study occur at her school site following a description of the purpose of the study and potential outcomes. Principal A was interested in knowing the parents' perspectives at the site. Principal B also had a positive response stating, "That would be really worthwhile to know. Are you looking for school sites?" The principals' interest and engagement level opened the options and possibilities for the study design.

The principals expressed initial interest in late spring of 2022. Upon returning to the school year at the end of July 2022, follow-up meetings were set up with the principals via text messages. The text messages led to one-to-one meetings with Principals A and B. At the meetings, both principals confirmed interest in having the study at their site. Both principals agreed to send an electronic letter of support to be included with the IRB proposal (see Appendix A for the electronic template letter of support).

Following the dissertation proposal defense and Human Subjects Research - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in December 2022, I shared detailed information with both principals via text and email. This email included an overview of the study, the problem statement, and research questions. Several appendices were also included in the email including the parent consent notice (see Appendix B and C), survey (see Appendix D and E), interview protocol (see Appendix F and G), letter of introduction to the community liaison (see Appendix H), and a recruitment script (see Appendix I and J). A phone conversation occurred with both principals before the consent notice and survey link was sent to their parent communities.

Principal B confirmed immediately that I could contact the community liaison directly and that she would send the consent notice (see Appendix B and C) and survey (see Appendix D and E). She also requested talking points for the kindergarten teachers to have a quick at-a-glance resource (see Appendix K and L) to reference if parents asked the teachers any questions. Principal A asked that I wait to contact the community liaison until she could meet face-to-face with her. Principal A also agreed to send the parent consent notice and survey link within the week. Principals provided access to their school database to provide parent contact information for the kindergarten and tk classrooms. This included demographic information such as student names, parent phone numbers, parent names, parent language preference, ethnicity, and if there was an older sibling in the household.

I emailed the community liaisons and included the introductory letter (see Appendix H), recruiting script (see Appendix I and J), survey (see Appendix D and E), and interview protocol (see Appendix F and G). Simultaneously, the principals sent their kindergarten

parents the consent notification and the survey (Appendices B-E). The principals included the consent notice (see Appendix B and C), survey (see Appendix D and E), and requests for interviews on both their school newsletters and in targeted emails and texts to kindergarten parents.

Both principals sent an email introduction to their kindergarten teachers so questions could be redirected to me as the principal researcher. My experience as a site and district administrator was that parents seek and respond to information from the classroom teacher and then the school site. Kindergarten teachers could direct parents to me if questions arose since many parents would identify them as reliable sources of information. A consideration I had not made in my original research design was the inclusion of transitional kindergarten (tk) as a grade level. In California, the movement to expand tk under the universal pre-kindergarten movement was still being implemented. Not all schools in California had a tk at the time of the study. After talking through the logistics of the rollout with Principal A, including tk as a grade level made sense.

Principals A and B provided me access to the community liaison staff member on their site and shared the study's anticipated outcomes with kindergarten teachers. Community liaisons in Thomasville School District are classified employees whose primary purpose is to connect with Spanish-speaking families and support family engagement and home/school connection. Although kindergarten teachers were asked to redirect parents to me, the principal investigator, if they had any questions, no parents contacted me as a result of a conversation with the teacher.

If Spanish interpretation was needed, the community liaison or I contacted the parents through the parent's preferred method of communication (text, phone call, in-person, or email). Any texts I sent directly to Spanish-speaking parents were translated into Spanish.

I considered the implications of utilizing a community liaison in the research. Before conducting research, I discussed the impact of using the community liaison with my dissertation chair, Title I principals, an instructional coach from a Title I school, and a community liaison from the high school district, all of whom were not directly related to the study. The consensus from the group confirmed that utilizing the community liaison would be a wise strategic move to increase the participation of the Latine parent population. All the expert panel felt the Latine parents would likely have stronger connections with the community liaison and that previous positive relationships would support participants' feelings of safety. In addition, the expert panel agreed that the Latine parents would need reassurance and understanding that the study was confidential and that their information and responses would be protected. Ultimately, two goals lead to the justified use of the community liaison, a school employee and a community member. These two goals included: (a) pursuing a representative sampling of the parent population and (b) lowering barriers and potential stress for participants.

Spanish Translation and Interpretation

The process of translating and verifying translations brought up some interesting challenges in methodology. Spanish translations were completed by a school employee who regularly translated material for parents. I also verified the translations with a native Spanish speaker from Sonora, Mexico, and made subsequent adjustments to the translations. The

language verifier and I had ongoing discussions about the translation and debated how best to communicate clearly to the parents at an accessible literacy level.

Restatement of Population and Sample

The population for this study were parents of kindergarten students from two Title I schools in the same school district in Northern California.

Purposeful Sampling

As is typical with qualitative research, purposeful sampling was implemented to narrow to a focused set of experiences by the participants in the study (Merriam, 1998).

Discussed in chapter one, the original design of the study excluded parents with an older child at the school since their choice set (Bell, 2009) was already established and narrowed by the school they had selected for their older child. However, due to gaps in school information and recruitment requests, parents with older children at the school did participate in interviews. Parents from both schools participated in interviews, and five out of the eight had an older child at the school (n=8).

Although the survey's last question prompted parents to indicate interest in participating in an interview, the interview could occur before survey completion. The two processes were non-sequential to promote participation and support outreach efforts.

Following the survey instrument completion, parents self-selected and expressed interest in participating in the interviews. While survey links were being sent to parents, I or the community liaison also contacted parents individually. Even with a representative sample, the interviews consisted of self-selected parents. Self-selection of participants is a limitation of many research studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña, 2011; Yin, 2018).

Eight parents were interviewed for the study. All the parents who were interviewed were English-speaking and parents identified their ethnicities as White, two or more races, Black, or Asian/Chinese. Table 2 summarizes Latine and non-Latine demographics of participants, kindergarten students, and the overall school population.

The sample aimed to have representative sampling, which proportionally mirrored the populations at the two schools (Stake, 2010). It was important to strive for a representative sample to ensure that the Latine parent experience with school selection was collected. In addition, Saldaña (2011) articulates that strategic sampling will support the collection of an "overview of perspectives" (p. 33). Although representative sampling was the goal, participant self-selection may have impacted the findings of this study since the participants may have been interested or motivated to talk about school choice (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1976). Additionally, while social desirability (Rogers & Carmichael, 1939) could have potentially influenced participant responses, I also saw that participant responses typically fell outside of widely held collective beliefs and therefore less likely to have influenced their responses (Grimm, 2010).

At the time of the study, the demographics of the overall population at the school and the kindergarten cohort differed. Although across both schools there was an average of 45% Latine families, the kindergarten cohort Latine population was 25%. Both principals shared that the kindergarten had surprisingly low numbers of Latine students compared to the rest of the school. They posited that these lower numbers were due to the ongoing rising cost of housing in the area, but had not spent time investigating the cause. Table 2 describes the Latine and non-Latine parent participant representation from the two school schools from

overall school populations, the kindergarten cohort, and the samples from interviews and survey responses.

Overview of Positionality

Saldaña (2018) posits, "You can't analyze others until you've analyzed yourself" (p. 1). I outlined my positionality in chapter one as a public school administrator interested in studying school choice and selection. In professional and personal spaces, parents have regularly asked me about the quality of a school and their school choice options. As part of my personal history, both my parents immigrated to the United States and always wanted me to be in the "best" schools.

Methodology

The purpose of the methodology section is to provide an overview of the study's design and the methodological steps that will be used throughout the process. This includes areas on (a) multiple case studies, (b) mixed methods, (c) part 1: survey, and (d) part 2: interviews. Following this section, more details are provided regarding data collection and analysis.

Multiple Case Study

A multiple case study design was applied for this study. Multiple case studies "might be examined simultaneously or consecutively for comparison and contrast" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 9). In case study research, the unit of measurement defines the "case" (Yin, 2018). In agreement with Yin, Saldaña (2011) purports that "a case study focuses on a single unit for analysis – one person, one group, one event, one organization, and so on" (p. 8). For this study, the unit of measurement, or case, is defined as the parents at one school. I will refer to this parent group as a "school." The scope of the study was constrained or "bounded"

(Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2018) to the two Title I elementary schools within one school district in Northern California during the winter of 2022. Therefore, some of the study's conclusions may be generalized only to this setting. Although the inability to generalize to other contexts can be considered a limitation, humans create and learn from generalizations (Stake, 1995, 2010). A study deeply rooted in the nuanced experiences of the participants combined with researcher awareness is rich and meaningful in its own right and does not need to be generalized to other settings (Stake, 1995, 2010).

Yin (2018) notes that multiple case studies can meet two different needs for research. First, multiple case studies can compare two concepts and hold them in contrast to one another to more deeply understand what is occurring in the phenomenon. The second use of multiple case studies is the ability to examine a phenomenon across two different and comparable groups. This study utilized Yin's (2018) second definition of multiple case studies by exploring two different and comparable groups: (a) the parents at Kan Elementary and the parents at Becker Elementary, and (b) Latine and non-Latine parents. According to Cucchiara and Horvat (2013), the experiences of Latine families in the public school system are unvoiced and under-valued. Although Hoxby (2003) would argue that the Latine population is smaller and therefore in less need of exploration, I would agree with Stovall (2012) that the Latine experience needs to be expressly explored to create educational and racial equity. In addition, the need to understand the Latine experience is essential since the Latine population continues to grow in the United States (Jones et al., 2021).

School selection and choice are highly contextual. Many school choice researchers have centered their location and context in their studies (Bifulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Bilfulco,

Ladd, & Ross, 2009; Hoxby, 2003; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b; McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Teske et al., 2007). The bounded aspect of case study, where studies are situated within time, space, and context, lends to exploring each unique circumstance with school choice studies (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) further elaborates that "a case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 15).

Based on past case study research alone, using a case study to explore parental school choice and decision-making was a strong candidate for this research design. In addition, the use of case studies allows for a depth of understanding of school choice in a short period of time. This ability to go deep is a respectful way to understand parent choice and honors the parents' experiences at the school.

Although the findings related to case study research are localized to the context in which the study took place, the purpose of the research and use of results should still prompt the next steps to better the educational field. "The purpose is to generate understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice, policy development, and community or social action" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 50). From this study, a deeper understanding of parent experiences with school choice could instigate changes at the school and district levels.

Yin (2018) outlines four main limitations around the use of case study as a method; rigor, generalization from the case study, unmanageable levels of effort, and comparative advantage. Using of case studies by nonresearch functions such as teaching cases often leads

to a lack of understanding of "research" case studies. The nonresearch case studies typically question the rigor of case study. To separate a research case study from nonresearch case studies, "you need to overcome this confusion by highlighting your methodic procedures, especially the reporting of all evidence fairly. You also need to be transparent and explicit about limiting or eliminating any biases" (Yin, 2018, p. 20). Regarding unmanageable effort, it has been argued that case studies can be short (Yin, 2018). "This incorrectly confuses case study research with a specific method of data collection, such as ethnography" (Yin, 2018, p. 21). Yin (2018) purports that the emergence of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) in the 21st century "downgraded" case study research "because case studies (and other nonexperimental methods) cannot directly address the effectiveness issue" (p. 21). Many qualitative researchers argue that RCTs and other quantitative methods cannot explain the "how" and "why" of human behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 2010).

Mixed Methods

This study was conducted using a convergent mixed method design that combines both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This mixed methods approach included an administered survey instrument and interviews that were non-sequential. "The key assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information – often detailed views of participants qualitatively and scores on instruments quantitatively – and together they yield results that should be the same" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 217).

Saldaña (2011) differs slightly from Creswell and Creswell's (2018) definition of mixed methods in that he argues that "mixed methods bring the once-separated quantitative and qualitative paradigms together to form a new epistemological, theoretical, and methodological way of working" (p. 11). He further suggests that "it is assumed that the epistemological (i.e., ways of knowing) and methodological advances of each paradigm can work in concert to corroborate or more robustly support the findings" (p. 10).

In the context of this study, I am utilizing mixed methods in a confirmatory manner. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) posit, a "confirmatory process" can occur in mixed methods. A confirmatory process occurs when trends arise in the quantitative data and are then confirmed and elaborated upon during the qualitative approach, creating a depth of understanding around the potential findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Quantitative studies have limitations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Stake, 2010). Quantitative data can lack the "thick" and "rich" description that provides insight into participant experiences (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2010). In addition, the argument that quantitative studies can be generalized into other settings depends on the study's purpose and design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, following the quantitative method with the qualitative provides the ability to triangulate the data from both methods while also providing rich, contextual information about the participants' setting, interests, and experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the field, compelling qualitative data can provide an easy access point for administrators and school board members to process and understand new information.

Part 1: Survey

Rationale. In this study, the survey allowed for broad data collection across the kindergarten cohort at the two Title I schools. The economy of the survey design, length of completion, and use of two languages allowed parents to participate in the study at their leisure without needing to participate in qualitative research methods such as interviews with restrictions on the days and times to participate. Survey instruments provide convenience in administration and limited challenges regarding participant engagement (Fowler, 2013). This broad data collection allowed the researcher to examine trends across responses and stimulated a more comprehensive range of participation across the population sample. Surveys "provide a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 147). Surveys were also commonly used at the schools and across the district as a method for collecting parent feedback.

Potential Drawbacks. A potential limitation of survey use is the inability to probe into how parents may interpret survey questions despite pilot testing. Developing a deep understanding of the responses can pose a challenge as survey responses rarely capture the complexity of relationships or social interactions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Survey Sample. Of the 178 total potential participants, forty-five parents completed the survey (n=45). These participants were given a survey instrument that asked them to complete demographic information collection and provide insight into their experiences and decision-making processes surrounding school selection (see Appendix D and E).

Instrumentation. The survey instrument consisted of demographic information with item responses connected to California Department of Education descriptors. The construct responses had a forced 1-4 rating scale and a non-applicable (n/a). The item response options were as follows: one is "not important, two is "somewhat important," three is "important," and four is "very important." The rating scale response was used due to its familiarity with parents. Rating scales such as the Likert 1-5 scale were commonly used within the school and district to gather feedback from parents.

The questions on the survey were created to investigate the following constructs: (a) school selection factors, (b) information resource evaluation, and (c) information gaps for families. The themes and survey questions were tested for validity (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014). In this study, (a) content, (b) response process, and (c) internal structure were tested via piloting the survey instrument (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014). Pilots of the survey instrument were conducted with four parents from various backgrounds. Content validity was measured utilizing a literature review and an expert panel review. The literature review and expert panel contributed to the analysis of the "content and the construct it is intended to measure" (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014, p. 14).

Procedures. At the two Title I school sites, all kindergarten parents were contacted to participate in the study via multiple requests through the existing school communication methods. All communication was in English and Spanish. This included the emails from the school, school newsletters, class newsletters, digital communication platforms, and personalized outreach by the community liaison and myself. In addition, I sent texts to each

parent individually inviting them to participate in the study following the school communication. Each parent received two texts. The initial text invited parents to participate in the study along with the survey link. The second text invited parents to participate in an interview. To attempt to create an inclusive sample representative of the demographics at the school site the community liaison engaged in one round of parent contacts via phone calls for Spanish-speaking parents in addition to the above outreach. At both school sites, the community liaisons and I also passed out flyers with QR codes and talked to parents at two morning drop-off times, inviting them to participate in the study. We specifically focused on talking with Spanish-speaking parents, although we spoke to as many parents as possible.

Data Collection. During the data collection process, I maintained a handwritten journal to record my thoughts. As recommended by Stake (2010), my journal contained the following items: (a) observations of the data, (b) reflections on the data, (c) connections between the literature and the data, (d) personal musings, (e) checks of my own bias, (f) interpretations of the data, (g) details that I wanted to remember, (h) reflection of my data collection practices, (i) connections between researchers, (j) speculations, (k) items to consider, (l) ponderings, (k) items to ask my advisor, (j) items to ask my cohort-mates, (k) reflections on participant representation. For survey data, potential trends in the data were noted. Potential trends in the rating-scale responses were noted. Constructed responses were analyzed along with the interview responses.

Part Two: Interviews

Rationale. In this study design, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit thick descriptions (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). As argued above, rich analysis was needed to

understand further the quantitative survey data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews provided in-depth insight into participants' lived experiences on a particular topic based on their own context and in a specific time period (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Turner, 2018).

Potential Drawbacks. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), a disadvantage to using interviews is that power dynamics may be imbalanced towards the researcher. Saldaña (2011) elaborates on that potential dynamic and its converse:

> There can be underlying and unspoken power dynamics between a researcher and a participant during the interview. Some of this stems from what might be perceived as an 'expert' persona on the researcher's part and thus an enhanced status. In contrast, the participant might be perceived as an 'expert' persona who has information the researcher wants and needs. (p. 39)

Although Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) point to power imbalances in interviews, Stake (1995) and Saldaña (2011) point out that these power imbalances exist in other qualitative research methods like focus groups and observations.

There is potential for bias in interviews and qualitative research studies. Yet, it seems as though all research is biased in some ways. We would not choose our research interests if we were not biased, excited, and curious about the topic. Saldaña (2018) speaks to our interests and how they drive our decisions. Thus, there are no such things as neutral, bias-free, or objective lenses for qualitative researchers. There are, however, guidelines and procedures available to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of one's knowledge construction to develop a vivid and persuasive account for readers. Below, in data collection, I outline how I used member checks for credibility and trustworthiness.

Interview Sample. Of the 178 total potential participants, eight parents participated in interviews (n=8). These participants engaged in an interview over Zoom or in-person. Participants answered questions about their demographic information and provided insight into their experiences and decision-making processes surrounding school selection (see Appendix F and G).

Procedures. Parts of the procedures for the interview portion of the study were outlined above. Additionally, if parents indicated on the survey that they were interested in being interviewed, they were contacted in their preferred language, English or Spanish, and also via their preferred method, text, phone call, or email. Interviews took place over Zoom or in-person. All the parents who indicated a preference for an in-person interview selected the school site as the interview location.

Data Collection. During interviews, I asked and gained permission to take handwritten notes and record on two digital devices; both devices had embedded transcription options. In my notes, I jotted down identifying language the parent used if it was interesting or if I saw a connection to past literature. Following the interview, I would review the transcript and clean it by removing filler words and editing for clarity and brevity. Cleaned transcripts were then sent to interview participants via email to conduct member checks (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Stake, 2010). I used member checks as a way to check my interpretation of what participants shared in their interview and develop credibility and trustworthiness in the qualitative portion of the study.

During the interviews I observed both physical and verbal responses. Saldaña (2011) coaches researchers to:

attune yourself to the nuances of voice and body language to discern whether participants are being truthful with their responses not to challenge them directly, but to steer the course of your questioning to get at honest perceptions, opinions, feelings, and value systems. (p. 40)

The interview protocol's purposeful design was created to be inclusive of the participants. The opening of the protocol set the stage for confidentiality and the purpose of the study. The opening of interviews began by thanking the participants for their time and their willingness to participate and share their experiences with school choice. It was important that the participants feel like volunteers who would inform me of the "human condition and social world" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 79) rather than conscripted individuals. I reviewed that the interview could take 30-45 minutes and that I would respect their time since they were busy parents. I then outlined the participant consent notice and reviewed the purpose of the study and how their experiences may contribute to changes in how schools communicate and attract families to the school in the future. As much as possible, I wanted to let the participants know the "back-stage operations" of the focus group mechanics to "demystify the process and potentially create a more equitable relationship" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 41).

Moving past the mechanics of the study, I typically tried to connect with the parent on a social level before moving into questions as a "good warm-up for both parties before the heart of the interview" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 41). In interviews, I started with these broad, open-ended questions to create an easy access point for the participants while also gathering information about the participant's breadth of experiences.

Following the broad opening questions, prompts were written into the protocol to elicit more details from participants. This included such phrases as "can you share more about how

that felt?" or "what if….?" In addition, affirmation of experiences and sharing were essential

aspects of the facilitation (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). It was

essential for me to be aware of the affirmation of experiences versus the affirmation of ideas

so that all participants felt I was seeing and honoring their experiences and sharing equally.

The interview protocol was piloted with three parents who had older children. Pilot

processes provided insight into the data-gathering process, and I was able to ask pilot

participants for feedback on their interpretation of questions. In addition, pilot participants

shared their feelings on the overall experience. This invaluable feedback allowed me to make

revisions to the interview protocol.

Before engaging in interviews, I met with community liaisons ahead of time to review the

protocol, prompts, and roles. They also provided input on the protocol, which led to changes

in the protocol. Although no interviews were conducted with Spanish-speaking parents, it

was important that the community liaisons were invested in the process since the intention

was to interview Spanish-speaking Latine parents.

During the data collection process, analytic notes were taken on an ongoing basis to

record potential codes, themes, wonderings, and considerations. These notes were

incorporated into the coding process following the first pass of data analysis.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

With data analysis, Saldaña (2011) talks about the need for "data intimacy" to identify

"patterns and categories" that arise in the data. I used grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss,

1967), moving from the concrete to the abstract, to develop the data intimacy (Saldaña,

2011). Deductive and inductive approaches were applied to the interview and open-construct

survey responses. Patterns were analyzed, and themes were identified and confirmed (Stake, 1995). There is no standard way for researchers to analyze data (Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Perhaps Stake (1995) said it best, "Good research is not so much about good methods as much as it is about good thinking" (p. 19).

Surveys. Descriptive statistics was used as the analysis framework for survey responses. Mean, median, mode, frequency, and comparisons were examined for the rating scale questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ravid, 2020). Open-ended constructed response questions were analyzed for any confirmatory codes or themes. Google docs, Microsoft Excel, Apple Numbers, and manual calculations were utilized for data analysis.

Interviews. After gathering the data and consolidating it, I employed grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) using multiple layers of coding and analysis to develop a depth of understanding of the participant experiences (Saldaña, 2011; Stake, 1995). This included (a) in vivo coding and (b) descriptive coding which moved into thematic analysis. In vivo coding "in that which is alive" (Saldaña, 2011), the code is pulled directly based on the language that the participant utilizes (Strauss, 1989); this may also be considered open coding. Starting with in vivo coding allowed me to pull phrases from the participants, such as, "We really do feel quite strongly about supporting public education," or "I really want them to develop empathy, and learn to love, and to know people who are different from them, and see a lot of other cultures." This gave me a foundational understanding of the participant's perspectives as directly verbalized.

Following the in vivo coding, I applied descriptive coding to generate broad themes that occurred in the data. Descriptive coding "not only help[s] categorize but also index the data

corpus' basic contents for further analytic work" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 106). Descriptive codes were both inductive, derived from the participant responses, and deductive, derived from the thematic framework and previous literature. Interviews were coded chronologically and new codes were added for each interview. Additionally, codes were adjusted to refine and clarify as meaning-making occurred.

Throughout the coding process, I used analytic memos to capture my interpretations of the data. "An analytic memo is a 'think piece' of reflexive freewriting, a narrative that sets in words your interpretations of the data" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 98). Saldaña (2011) writes:

> Memos are opportunities to reflect on and write about:
> - how you personally relate to the participants and/or the phenomenon
> - your study's research questions
> - your code choices and their operational definitions
> - the emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts
> - the possible networks (links, connections, overlaps, flows) among the codes, patterns, categories, themes, and concepts
> - an emergent or related existent theory
> - any problems with the study
> - any personal or ethical dilemmas with the study
> - future directions for the study
> - the analytic memos generated thus far [labeled "metamemos"]
> - the final report for the study (p. 40)

Throughout the grounded theory application, my interpretations of the data evolved as I engaged in coding, developed themes, and triangulated the data.

Ethical Considerations

Protections for participants follow the IRB guidelines for confidentiality and anonymity outlined by San José State University (n.d.). IRB guidelines align with the statement, "The classic principle, 'but first, do no harm,' is the primary objective when working with human participants" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 24). Protections were outlined in the participant consent

notice. "Researchers need heightened attunement during all stages of a study to ensure that no harm and minimal discomfort come to anyone" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 25).

When I had participated in other studies in the past, I found the process of engaging in interviews both a reflective and reinforcing process. I hoped the participants felt the same positive feelings towards studies and input gathering, therefore increasing their desire to participate in future studies or information sessions.

Participant protections were outlined in the participant consent notice (see Appendix B and C). The participant consent notice outlined that there would be no repercussions, negative impacts, and that their participation and engagement in the study would not be shared. It was important for me to outline that participant feedback would be consolidated into general information shared back to the school site but would not include any specific identifying details. It was essential to reinforce transparency and trust by addressing confidentiality issues ahead of time. Outlined above are the mechanical aspects of protecting the participants; perhaps equally as important are the emotional protections for participants while engaged in the study. My experience in working with parents is aligned with Saldaña's (2011) statement, "The researcher is always a sympathetic and empathetic listener, someone who does not pass judgment on what the participant says, but one who provides a forum for a voice to be heard" (p. 40).

Community liaisons received a letter of introduction that included and outlined their role in the study and how they would maintain participant confidentiality. The community liaison letter outlined that they could generally speak about the study and participant feedback without naming which parents participated in the research or assigning specific statements to

individuals. In addition, any notes taken were turned over to me, the principal investigator, to maintain confidentiality. Due to the principals' high interest in the study results, it was essential to preserve the overall confidentiality of the participants.

Summary, Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, I restated the purpose of the study to understand the parent experience with school selection at Title I schools and connected the purpose of the study to the research questions that compare the experiences of Latine and non-Latine parents while also providing input to schools on how to better communication to prospective future parents. I then offered details of the research sample and context for the study, which took place in a medium-sized school district in Northern California at two Title I schools. I outlined the process of talking with principals to gain entry into the field. The population, sample, and sampling process were purposeful and deliberate to collect perspectives of Latine parents, White parents, and Asian parents. In addition, I reviewed my background and positionality as a researcher surrounded by the questions, "is this a good school?" and "should I send my child there?" The methodology section reviewed the research design of multiple case studies and explained how mixed methods would be utilized in the form of a survey and interviews. The chapter continued with the data analysis and synthesis processes used to examine the data collected via in vivo, descriptive, and process coding. Finally, the chapter concluded by outlining the ethical considerations of the study with a focus on confidentiality as well as maintaining the respect and trust of the participants

Chapter Four: Results and Findings

Chapter four provides the findings for the research questions. The purpose of the research questions was to better understand parent experiences with school options and school selection at Title I schools. The chapter includes the following sections: (a) a restatement of the research questions, (b) a brief review of the mixed methods research design utilized for this study, and (c) the final results.

Restatement of Research Questions

> Research Question 1: How are parents selecting a school for their kindergartener?
>
> > Research Question 1a: What, if any, source(s) of information are parents using when selecting a school for their kindergartener?
> >
> > Research Question 1b: What values, programs, or factors are parents considering when choosing a Title I school for their kindergartener?
>
> Research Question 2: What, if any, differences exist between Latine and non-Latine families in the school choice process?
>
> Research Question 3: From a parent's perspective, how can Title I schools improve the quality of communication with prospective parents?

Overview of Research Design

This study utilized a mixed methods, multiple case study design of two elementary schools, Becker Elementary and Kan Elementary, including surveys (n=45) and interviews (n=8). Both quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were gathered from parents and analyzed according to the methodology outlined in chapter three and summarized below. Both the surveys and the interviews were used to triangulate findings and elaborate on

trends that arose in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Following a grounded theory

approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I started with open in vivo terms, locating language used

by the participants, which then led to axial coding connected to the theoretical framework

and literature (Chametzky, 2016). Finally, I applied descriptive coding for interviews and

open-ended survey responses (Saldaña, 2016). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze

quantitative survey data (Libman, 2010; Ravid, 2020).

Results and Findings

This section will outline findings based on the interviews (n=8) and survey responses

(n=45) by answering each research question, providing details, and identifying sub-themes

that arose in the interviews and survey data. It is worth noting that all the parents participated

fully during the interviews with little prompting required by me, the researcher, who directed

the interviews.

Results for Research Question 1: How are Parents Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener?

The central theme that emerged was that parents selected a school for their child based on

the school's location. One sub-theme of location was that it provided convenience for the

family. And another sub-theme of location was public school support.

The school district limited access to school alternatives and the default was to the

neighborhood school. Although parents could seek school choices within and outside the

district, Charles referenced inertia as the cause for attending the neighborhood school.

Parents' survey responses indicated that the school's location was "very important." In

interviews, parents emphasized that the location of elementary schools provided convenience

to the family and could be a stress reducer for the parents and children. Additionally, some parents connected location with public school support.

Theme 1: Location. Location of the school was a primary factor in how parents selected a school for their kindergartener. Survey data indicated that the location of the school was the most important factor for parents in school selection along with school safety, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, interview data confirmed that location was a factor in how parents selected the school. Discussed later in this chapter is how location combined with informational gathering were used collectively by parents to make a decision to send their child to a Title I school.

Survey responses (n=45) to the question, "Why did you choose the school?" indicated that 56% of parents did not consider other options besides their neighborhood school. The second largest percentage of parents, 23%, looked at alternatives and selected their neighborhood school. The smallest percentage of parents, 8%, chose Becker or Kan Elementary instead of their neighborhood school. Of the parents surveyed, 13%, chose "other" for various reasons. Figure 1 shows the percentages of parents who chose the school based on the additional criteria outlined below.

Interview data elaborates upon the survey data as to why the location of the school is important for parents. Charles and his wife Josie shared that their school selection came from not wanting to move to a new neighborhood or send their child to private school.

> So, if I had to be a hundred percent honest, a lot of the decision comes from inertia…There's a lot of inertia in the decision. We like where we live, we like the house, we like the area, so Kan Elementary is the one school.

Figure 1

Parents' School Choice Responses by Percentages

- 56%, Selected neighborhood school-No other considerations
- 23%, Selected neighborhood school-Looked at other options
- 8%, Selected in lieu of the neighborhood school
- 13%, Other
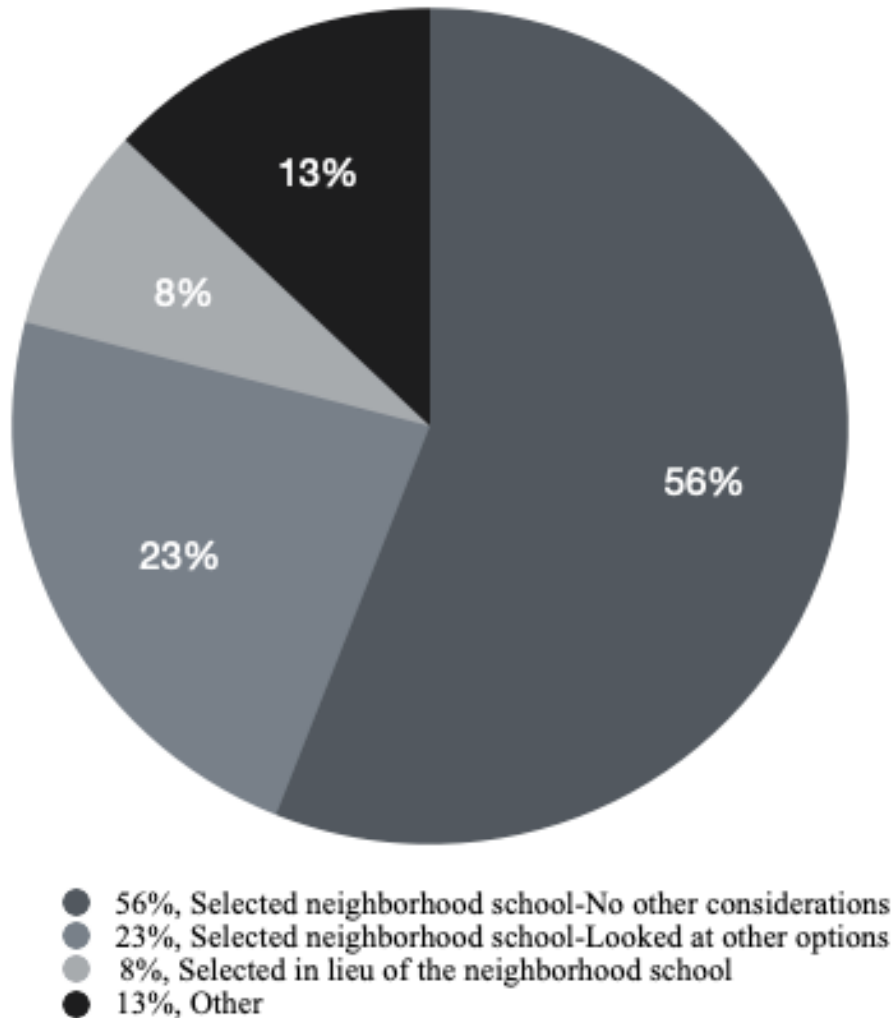
Mary knew there was a school nearby and had seen Becker Elementary when she was at

the park with her daughter. She was initially interested in a program of choice within the

school district but could not enroll at the school since she had missed a deadline.

> I started to look at the schools in the district and the school is right next to our neighborhood park, so we're familiar with the school. We saw it all the time when we would go to the park.

There's another school that's close to our house, Gordin Elementary, and I saw that they had a program…I was like, 'Let me see if I can get her in this program"…But by the time I was looking, the deadline was over.

Parents shared that the other reasons for selecting the school included that it had a transitional kindergarten program and their neighborhood school did not: "I selected this school because the one that is assigned in my neighborhood doesn't have TK." Another reason was that they could not get into their neighborhood school: "No alcanzó a entrar en su escuela designada," translation "Couldn't get into his/her designated school." And a final response for "other," was that the parent selected their neighborhood school with optimism: "It is my neighborhood school, and I was optimistic because of what I read on their website."

Similar to Mary, in an open-ended survey response, a parent shared that they could not enroll in a different school and then enrolled in their neighborhood school. In the survey response, the parent wrote, "We planned on enrolling our child in a different school, however, admission was full. We ended [up] enrolling our child to [the] school assigned for our neighborhood."

Parents may have considered options and been interested in options other than their neighborhood school; yet most parents enrolled at the local school.

Theme 1a: Convenience. Related to the school's location, the theme of convenience arose in interviews (n=8). When parents spoke about attending their neighborhood school, they shared that the lack of commute to a school led to increased time for the family.

For Charles and Josie, they had picked their house before they had children but liked the physical proximity to the school.

It's very convenient for the logistics of picking up the children…My wife stays at home. So, for her to be able to just walk. It's a six-minute walk to get there. So, it

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makes waking up convenient, it makes getting them on time convenient, picking them up. It's easier to do something when they're at school because it's only a five-minute trip to get there.

Kathryn shared that she felt that her children were happier not commuting to another school since she had previously enrolled in a program of choice across town. After her daughter had a challenging year at the other school combined with their growing family with increased childcare needs along with required volunteer hours at the program of choice, she made the choice to attend the neighborhood school.

> It just made a lot more sense for us to come here…It's just down the street, they can bike themselves. And that's been great…I mean, I don't commute. I just open my garage, and my kids " down the street, and then in the afternoon I open it and they come home. So, it's great…I feel my kids come home a lot happier because they have that time to decompress as they bike or walk home. If I don't have to stay home with the sleeping baby, then I'll come bike with them. I feel it's a great way to, much better than the car, to get the kids to talk and I feel like it's really good for them to be out.

While not explicitly mentioning convenience, Madelyn's response hints at the school's proximity as being convenient. "I mean, it's just so wonderful to be so close to the school. We are less than a mile away."

In Riley's interview, she shared that her two children attend two different schools because her daughter's Special Education program is located at Orchard Glen Elementary. When I presented her with a hypothetical situation of being able to move her daughter's Special Education program to Becker Elementary or move her son to Orchard Glen, Riley would pick the closer school. "Then I would probably move them both here. It's more related to ease of getting back and forth to school. It's close by. It's convenient." Close proximity between the school and the residence provided convenience for families, which was valued by parents.

Theme 1b: Public School Support. The last sub-theme of location was public school

support. Supporting public schools was an important factor in school selection for Riley and

Blake. They connected their decision to attend the neighborhood school to community

support and maintaining funding for the school.

For Riley, choosing the neighborhood school was a way to support the community, which

she articulated at the start of the interview when asked, "There are a lot of different ways that

parents make choices about schools for their families…How did you come to this school?"

> Ultimately what it comes down to is location. This is our home school. So, my
> husband and I are very big proponents of public school and public school
> education…Keeping the community together is really important to us…It was just
> an easy decision. He's going to go to Becker Elementary because this is his home
> school. We did not even look at other schools.

When prompted to elaborate further upon why public school education was important to

her and her husband, Riley shared her and her husband's democratic ideas and how they are

trying to support a "democratic and equitable society" by maintaining funding and

"supporting good public education."

> My husband has his Ph.D. in history, and he taught some classes in community
> colleges and some university classes. And it starts down at the bottom in
> kindergarten. It starts with elementary school having equity and equal
> opportunities for all students regardless of race or socioeconomic status. All of
> that comes down to funding and supporting good public education. Trying to
> divert funds, which is ultimately what school choice and vouchers and charter
> schools really do…Diverting funds away from public education is only going to
> disadvantage the students who do not have the opportunities or the funds to
> potentially go to charter schools. And it's really important to us if you live in a
> democracy and you want to have a democratic and equitable society, or if you're
> working towards that goal, the important thing is starting with public education.

Blake and her husband also wanted to support public schools. After I had described the

study, Blake immediately shared how her husband had attended public schools, was

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successful, and had researched how attending public schools would positively impact all

students and would have a limited negative impact on their own child.

> I can just tell you, basically, we live in Becker boundaries…A year or so beforehand, when my oldest was three or four, we started to think about schools. And we thought it's crazy that there [are options]. When we grew up, you just go to the school where you live; and that's it. But now it seems there's a lot [of choices] and we kind of thought, "Well, we really do feel quite strongly about supporting public schools." My husband has this perspective where he went to public schools his whole life, and not amazing public schools. But he also went to MIT, and his family is really engaged in education and so he was like, "It's better to support the school system." The data shows that supporting the public schools for people who have the means to go other places, it does sometimes bring down the level of academics for those kids, just a hair. But it brings up the level of education for the school system as a whole, by a lot. So we felt like unless it's a school that's really going to be a problem, we really do want to support the public schools.

When I probed further to understand how Blake and her husband had developed their

pro-public school perspective, she shared that they felt they were being "good community

member[s]" and retaining resources within the school.

> Well, we just feel it's part of being a good community member. If everybody…that's one of the reasons we don't like the voucher system. We don't like charter schools. It's not to say that they in and of themselves are bad, but I think it really drives inequality. There's less political will to dump money into public schools if they're competing with charter schools. It's not to say the other options are bad. And there are cases where I think they really are great. But I don't like when all the people who have the means to go to them go to charter schools. I think public schools work best when they're a mix of all the people who live in the area. But when people who have the means to go somewhere else leave, then it just takes resources away from the people who didn't have the resources in the first place to go somewhere else. I just feel like it's really important to us to not create, not add to where we can, to not add to a system that disadvantages more people, but rather to try to participate in it so that everybody has a better experience.

Both Riley and Blake wanted to support the public school by deciding to attend the neighborhood school. Being a good community member and maintaining funding and resources in the schools were important to them.

Summary, Results for Research Question 1: How Are Parents Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener? Location was a main factor for most parents in selecting the Title I school with 56% of parents (n=45) selecting their neighborhood school without looking at alternatives and 23% of the parents selecting the neighborhood school after looking at other options. The location led to convenience for families. Finally, parents' desire to support public schools by maintaining funding and resources was connected to the location of the Title I schools.

Findings for Research Question 1a: What, if any, Source(s) of Information are Parents Using When Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener?

Parents used three primary sources of information to get information about schools. First, parents used GreatSchools and its corresponding ten-point rating system as a starting point to seek information about schools. Second, they sought word-of-mouth information from their social networks, which may have been in person or virtually via online forums. Lastly, parents sought information directly from the school. When seeking information from the school, there were several informational items that parents sought.

Theme 1: GreatSchools, Their Rating System, and Criticism. In interviews (n=8), all parents referenced the ten-point rating system that GreatSchools has created, whether or not it influenced their school choice process. In some interviews, parents criticized GreatSchools for the rating systems and the subsequent impact on the school.

For Riley, the GreatSchool's rating was unimportant. When asked if academic

performance was a factor in her school choice, she responded that it might be a factor for

other parents, but that her selection of the neighborhood school is connected to her principles

and her desire to build the community.

> I think for some parents it certainly is [a factor] with deciding on schools in the school district. You know full transparency, Becker is not one of the higher-rated schools in the district, and I think that has a lot to do with the population of the school. There's a higher ESL population. But at the end of the day, that goes back to my principles, which is, if we're all going to make it then we all need to share the responsibility of building public education for everybody. And so, I know with some people, it's like, "Okay, but that's my kid. I need to figure out the best academic situation for my kid so my kid can succeed." And I understand that drive, but we need to work as a community.

> This is on a micro and macro level with public education. So taking higher socioeconomic status kids, more involved parents, less behavior-issue kids, taking those to the higher performing schools is only going to disadvantage the schools that are left behind. Essentially, I'm a huge believer in every school needs to be treated the same. We're not going to base our decision to send our kids to whichever school on the academics of the school. We're trying to build the community up at the community level. And this is where it starts.

In her interview, while Blake shared qualities she liked about Kan Elementary, she

brought up GreatSchools. Blake shared her frustration with the GreatSchools website. She

connected the website to negative impacts on Kan Elementary School. Blake also shared how

the website is used by parents looking for a residence and her thoughts on ratings if she

purchased a house. Finally, she made a connection between the rating and English learners at

the school.

> I'd really like to figure out if there's a way to get in touch with the GreatSchools company because their numbers can be so damaging to a school. When that's literally all anyone knows about when they're buying a home or considering a neighborhood to move into…There's just no information when you're processing all that stuff, other than that GreatSchools's rating. Kan Elementary is rated a four and it's our dream school.

We kind of want to avoid any schools that are higher than an eight because we don't want all the pressure of those types of places. But we also prefer to be in the four to six range. But what if a school's a three? What if a school's a seven?...Those GreatSchools ratings. I know one of the big things that tanks them is if your English-as-a-second-language-kids are not performing to a certain level on standardized testing, which, of course they're gonna have a hard time with a standardized test.

Madelyn, another parent at Kan Elementary who has moved multiple time was sharing how much she liked Kan Elementary. She highlighted the science nights, and the culture of the school and shared how "generic ratings" were not a reflection of the culture of the school.

As someone who came from outside, when you're researching schools among all the other things about living in the area, there's so many factors in schools that are important ones. There's generic school ratings and things. But what I have found is that those are dry numbers that give absolutely no indication about what a school culture is going to be like.

When prompted to explain further what she meant by generic school ratings, Madelyn shared her understanding of GreatSchools. She also articulated how she has seen a cultural shift away from one-dimensional scores on local Facebook mom groups, and her own feelings as a parent wanting to do the right thing.

There's this system called GreatSchools…and it gives a rating. And then the other thing that I tend to do when I move to a new place is join local Facebook groups to get other information. And I have noticed something that's been a cultural shift to have more awareness about how those school ratings, from what I understand, they tend to be based on test scores. They are not very multi-dimensional. And so they give a number. I'm basing this on [being] sort of an ordinary parent who's just trying to figure out what's right.

I think parents need to just raise their awareness of knowing to not take that rating on face value…It feels like a cultural shift. Do you know the podcast "Nice White Parents?" I feel like that has had an impact on people at least on the whole. Stop judging schools based on certain elements. And it reinforced my gut feeling that public school is the way to go.

Julia, Mary, Charles, and YiChen also referenced GreatSchools ratings. Julia mentioned

that Becker Elementary didn't have the best rating and that she didn't know what the ranking

was based upon. "The local school, Becker Elementary, which is our boundary school, was

not getting the highest scores for test scores and whatever else is on there. I don't even really

know what those scores are based on."

Mary spoke about the lower GreatSchools rating and how it caused some initial concern

about sending her daughter to the school.

> When I started to research it online…it obviously came up…It's the site, all the
> parents use it to rate schools and it came up. And the rating was not so great. Like
> maybe a four or five…And then I was like, "Okay, the school doesn't have a good
> rating; should I send her there? What should I do?"

When asked if she looked for any information online or from friends, YiChen said that

she had done no additional information seeking but did reference a school score, which could

be attributed to GreatSchools. "I didn't look online, but I know this school score is not so

good."

When Charles and his wife purchased their home, they were looking for a good place for

their future children to go to school. He referenced the GreatSchools rating and how they had

purchased the house thinking it was zoned for Orchard Glen, which had a higher rating, an

eight.

> Schools are rated out of ten, I think…We wouldn't want like a ten. So, I think
> Orchard Glen was an eight, and like, "Eight sounds great." But again, we were
> still several years away from having children. It wasn't the biggest decision point
> [to purchasing a house].

In contrast to the pervasiveness of the GreatSchool's website and rating scales in

interviews, 50% of the survey responses by parents (n-=45) felt that gathering information

from GreatSchools or Facebook Parent groups was "important" or "very important," and 50% of the parents indicated these sites were "somewhat important" or "not important." Additionally, some parents criticized the GreatSchools website and named impacts to their school based on the rating assigned.

Theme 2: Social Network and Word-of-Mouth. Parents in this study also utilized their social network to gather information about schools. Word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted sources were highly valued; even recommendations from acquaintances were considered. A suggestion from a trusted source may have provided contrasting information to GreatSchools ratings that swayed parents' decision to enroll.

In Blake's school choice experience, as discussed earlier, she and her husband were already self-identified public school supporters. Then, their friends "raved" about the school, which solidified her decision to send her children to the school.

> Frankly, this was probably one of the biggest things…All of our friends who went to Kan Elementary, they didn't say anything that wasn't raving about it. They weren't like, "Yeah, it's fine." "Oh yeah, we go to it, it's pretty good." It was like every time we ever heard anybody talking about Kan, they were like, "Oh my gosh, the teachers are just amazing. Oh my gosh, the principal is so in touch. Oh my gosh…". You know, all these different things. It's just the best thing, you know. And so we kind of were, "Well, it's hard to go wrong with that."

Julia was initially concerned that the school would place her son into Grade 1 instead of kindergarten. She had held her son back a year in Salt Lake City, where it was a common practice. Her son also had some physical needs that were visible. When she moved into her residence, her landlord recommended she consider a private school, which created doubt about the neighborhood school. Julia then turned to her social network, including local

Facebook mom groups, moms from church, and other moms to find out more information about the school.

> I was worried about throwing him into first grade in a new place, new school. And I was worried about bullying and not making friends and then having jumped a grade. And then on top of that, when we moved here, our landlord said, "Hey, just so you know, the local school here is not great. So, you might want to do a private school." And so I was kind of freaking out about all of those factors. And I don't know what he meant by the school wasn't great.
>
> So I just talked to some moms, joined some local Facebook Groups, talked to some moms at my church. The ladies at my church said, "Look, the teachers are great there, the principal is great there. Just because there's lower test scores there, maybe more English Learners or lower income level…it doesn't mean that it's not going to be a good learning environment for your child."

After looking at school ratings online, Mary went to a different school in a neighboring district that was recommended by her daycare provider. The staff member from the other school's word-of-mouth recommendation convinced Mary to consider her neighborhood school.

> And so I called and I just said, "Hey, you know, my daughter, I'm looking at public school for her. And the school in our area, it doesn't really have a high rating. We passed by this school and my daycare person recommended it. She thinks it's a pretty good school. So, is there a chance, because they're going to daycare in your city that she could come to this school? Even though we live in Thomasville?" And the lady was like, "I'm not sure, you might have to call the district office…I think it is based on where you live and not where they went to daycare for school…I'm pretty sure, but you would have…you might have to call the district office." And then she was like, "But to be honest with you, you were saying that school doesn't have a good rating. But, if you go online, our school doesn't have the best rating either. But that doesn't mean that the kids aren't learning." She's like, "So that you know, we're still dedicated to the kids. We're still, you know…" I'm summarizing because I don't remember the exact words. So this is the message I got. It was like, "We're still dedicated to the kids. Still a good school. And that rating doesn't always reflect the experience that the kids have or that your kids will have at the school." So I was like, "Okay, that was a good point." Because she didn't have to make it. I couldn't go to their school, you know? So she was just trying to help me understand that I shouldn't base my opinion solely on those ratings, which to be honest, was what I was doing. And

the fact that the website didn't provide me with a lot of information. So she helped me realize that I should look at more than just that basically. That's not the sum representation of a school's results – of a school or a student's experience.

From the survey data (n=45), 87% of parents felt that "getting information from family, friends, or acquaintances" was "important" or "very important" when gathering information about the school. This was the second highest rated category after "Meeting the kindergarten teachers." Parents valued the word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted sources when gathering information about the neighborhood school.

Theme 3: School Information. The last place parents sought information was directly from the schools themselves. Parents sought information from the school by looking at the website and meeting the principal or kindergarten teachers. Overall, parents shared that the school website lacked information and that meeting the principal and kindergarten teachers was beneficial.

Mary shared that the GreatSchools rating was clear, but the information on the school website was lacking. "Honestly…I feel like it's insufficient…there was no information…if it's there, I couldn't find it."

Blake shared having a similar experience with the school website. Although she and her husband had already made the decision to send their child to Kan Elementary based on their desire to support public schools and the word-of-mouth from friends, she still looked at the website and found no helpful information. Blake also shared that once enrolled in the school, the parents no longer use the website for information.

> Well, we did look up Kan's website and I'll say it's better now, but at the time, there was no information we learned from the website. It was really bad…almost unusable…You can find some basic information now where I think they post pictures and some stuff. But I don't know, the school doesn't seem to use the

website. It seems to be more outward facing than for the community itself. I don't really use it for anything, and I don't feel like anybody I know thinks, "Oh, I need to go check the school's website."

Survey responses (n=45) indicated that 78% of parents felt that meeting the principal was "important" or "very important," which was the seventh most important item out of eight possible responses. Yet, in interviews, parents highlighted interactions and conversations with the principal as the tipping point for sending their child to the school.

For Julia, as mentioned earlier, she wanted to ensure that her son was placed into kindergarten and not first grade. She had held him back in preschool and was concerned about his physical needs leading to bullying. For her, after hearing from her social network that the school was good, working with the principal and assistant principal to have her son placed into kindergarten was the final contributing factor that led to her picking Becker Elementary.

> They were so helpful and kind about helping Jasper get into kindergarten. I was like, "We're going to go here." And I felt supported. They were willing to do what we needed for him. So, that's why we didn't opt for a private school.

Similar to Julie, after looking online and talking to the staff from the other school, the conversation with the principal was the final contributing factor in Mary's decision to send her daughter to Becker Elementary. The principal's approach to education was enough to support Mary's belief that the school would meet her daughter's needs. "But talking to her. Just getting her perspective, her background. She seemed like a very kind woman, someone who was focused on the kids. That was the final decision to send her there."

Survey responses indicate that 93% of parents felt that meeting the kindergarten teachers at the school was "important" or "very important;" it was the highest-rated item by parents

regarding school information gathering. Kindergarten teachers and their ability to convey warmth and caring came up in several interviews. Yet, regarding gathering information before attending the school, they were only referenced once in interviews.

For Julia, the experience at the kindergarten orientation was a positive experience that corroborated the word-of-mouth recommendations from other moms. "Before school started, I got to see some of the [kindergarten] teachers, and they looked awesome. They were so kind. I mean, they knew what they were doing. They looked like great teachers."

Parents felt that the school websites were lacking information in their school selection process and also once enrolled in the school. They also felt that meeting the principal and seeing the kindergarten teachers were valuable and in two cases, talking with the principal was the tipping factor for the parents to send their child to the school.

Summary of Findings for Research Question 1a: What, if Any, Source(s) of Information Are Parents Using When Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener? Parents sought information from three main sources, the GreatSchools website, their social networks, and the schools themselves. Mary and Julia compared all three sources of information in order to make their choice. The GreatSchools rating system was pervasive, and all the parents knew about the school's score regardless of whether or not they felt the rating should have merit. Word-of-mouth recommendations were always considered, but recommendations from parents' social networks were the most valued. Finally, the school websites were lacking, but interactions with the principals or kindergarten teachers were viewed positively by parents.

Findings for Research Question 1b: What Values, Programs, or Factors Are Parents Considering When Choosing a Title I School for Their Kindergartener?

The most important factor for parents when selecting a school was safety, with survey responses reflecting that 97% of parents rated it as "important" or "very important." The factor of school safety was as equally important to parents as school location, which was discussed earlier. Five parents interviewed (n=8) referenced school safety.

In addition to safety, additional themes that emerged were that (a) parents were willing to try it for a year, (b) parent connection to educators, (c) social-emotional-cultural importance and supplementing, and (d) opportunity. Social-emotional-cultural importance and supplementing was the second most frequently occurring theme after safety.

Theme 1: Safety. Safety was the top priority for parents in the survey. In interviews, parents also named safety as a priority and an area of concern. Although it was unclear how parents may define safety in survey responses, it was clear during interviews that parents were concerned about a school shooting in regard to campus safety.

Figure 2 shows the percentages of parents that identified specific factors as being important to them when selecting a school. The "important" and "very important" categories were combined to demonstrate the overall importance that parents placed on the factor.

Mary mentioned that the Uvalde school shooting caused her to be concerned about school safety. She brought it up during a meeting with the principal when looking at the school. "Because this is the world we're in today…We had a meeting after Uvalde, and it came to mind, but that was a big thing." Mary was the parent who brought up an exception to outside campus safety. In addition to her concern about an active shooter incident on campus, she also wanted to know who would be around her child in one-on-one situations to prevent the

Figure 2

Parent Survey Response: What Factors Were Important to You When Selecting a School?
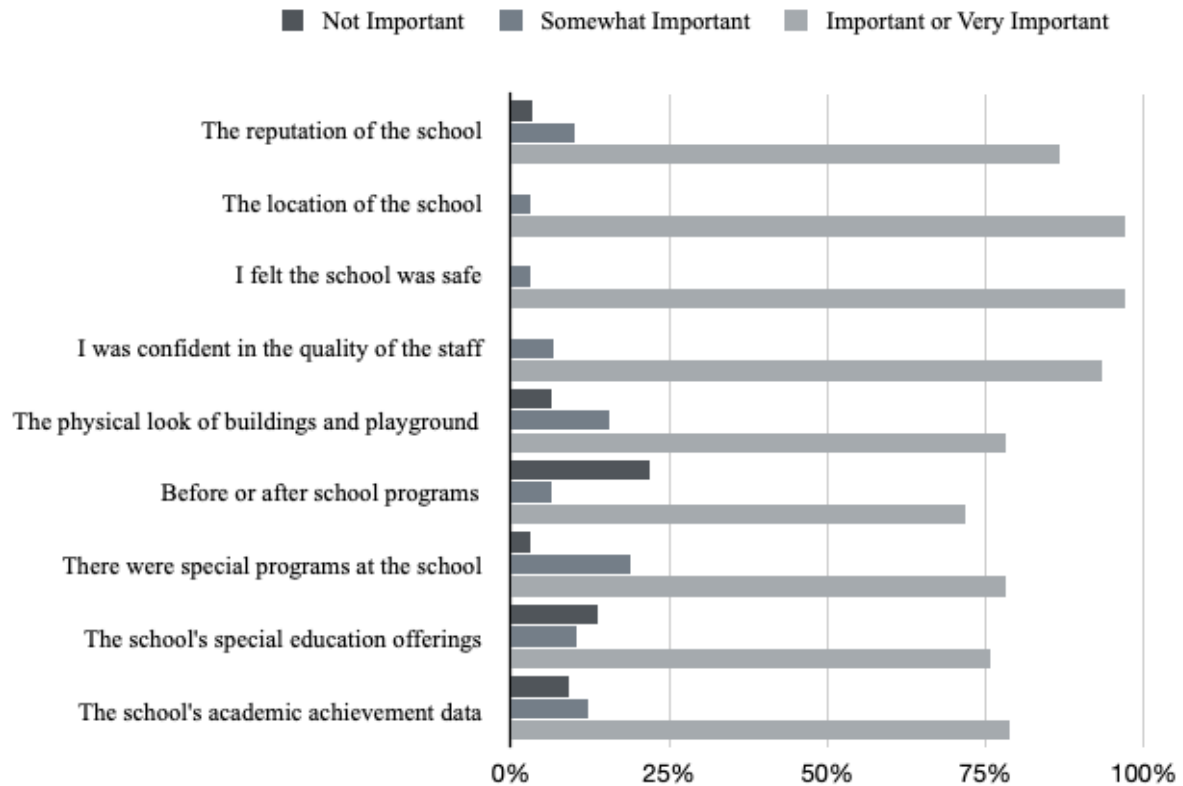
potential for abuse. She also emphasized again that she felt a lack of information about the

school with only the GreatSchools rating and no positive word-of-mouth recommendations

from another parent.

> Would there be a situation where she would be alone or just around older students? I mean that's what you think about safety in terms of like, Uvalde happened. But you also think about the other things that can happen to kids that young. "Who was she with? Who would she ever be alone with?" Based on my own experience growing up and then just looking at the school rating and not having any experience talking to other parents in a similar situation.

At the end of YiChen's interview, while I was asking her if there was anything I missed,

she shared her concern about access to the campus due to a short fence in the case of an

active shooter. She also mentioned the drills that were practiced at the school where the

teacher will hide with the students in the case of a shooter on campus.

> I think that I most care about another thing, school safety…Here, it's very easy to get in. If they want to cross the fence <mimics climbing over the fence>. The fence over here is short. It's very short. And, you know, now is a lot of people <mimics gun and shooting>, crazy people. I know they have a drill, like a fire drill. Like, one time her teacher take all the kids in the restroom. Tell them, "shhhh" and gives them a lollypop.

When asked in the interview how Riley interpreted school safety, she shared that her

interpretation of safety was related to outside threats, "I don't think about the inside of

campus. I think more the threats tend to come from the outside. That's what is on most

parents' minds."

School safety was the most important factor in school choice from survey responses.

Interview examples provided insight into how parents interpreted the term, "school safety"

by linking school safety to active school shootings.

Theme 2: Willing to Try It for a Year. Some parents mentioned that although they

selected the school, there was still some trepidation, and they were not fully committed to

attending it long-term. In Mary's case, her husband favored trying the public school, "We

can save money. She's five. Even if it sucks, she'll be fine. For one year we can save this

money."

In a survey response, a parent wrote that they had selected the school but were ready to

move if it didn't meet their expectations.

> I chose this school to see how it is run, meet staff and teachers, and learn more about the programs offered. It is my neighborhood school, and I was optimistic, because of what I read on their website. However, I knew my options if it did not meet my standards once my child attended.

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For YiChen, she shared that the school was currently exceeding her expectations by teaching social-emotional-cultural skills like emotional regulation and inclusive practices but was lacking in academics, which was fine for the time being.

> Ms. Luc teach them a boy can wear skirts. Boy can have long hair…And the teacher will teach them, no matter they are Black. No matter they are Asian. No matter they are from Mexico…They teach different culture… That's a good thing. This school is pretty good for this age, but for older, actually, I'm not sure.

Madelyn was more committed to staying at the school. She was skeptical of GreatSchools ratings and pleased with the culture of the school. Madelyn also knew that she could exercise alternative school options if an extreme circumstance arose that may impact her children.

> We like where we live, we are going to pick the school, the neighborhood school is closest. And if we encounter some problem that is going to be an issue for the well-being of our children, then we would reconsider our options. But I feel like we got lucky, we picked a place to live in the neighborhood, and school is lovely.

Parents selected the school and were keeping their options open if they thought the school would not meet their needs. They were willing to try it for the year and exercise their options for alternative schools in the future.

Theme 3: Parent Connection to Educators. Parents who were former educators or related to an educator shared that this relationship broadened their perspective on schools. Julia and Kathryn had both previously been teachers in public schools, and Riley was related to educators.

When probing further about the GreatSchools rating and why Kathryn was frustrated that the rating didn't reflect the qualities of Kan Elementary, she shared that she could look past ratings due to her past experience as a teacher. "Well, I think that's also because I was a

teacher before, so I know that the GreatSchool rating doesn't tell the whole story. Just like my students, I knew that their test scores didn't tell their whole story."

Julia combined the information she gathered from her social network, her meeting with the principal, and her own past experience as a teacher when she made her decision to send her son to Becker Elementary.

> And I knew from my own experience. I worked at a Title I school in Utah. And just because the scores are lower, it doesn't mean anything about the teachers being bad or the principal's not doing a good enough job. So, I had all those things in mind.

Riley has multiple relatives that are educators. Her lens of equity and democratic values along with her siblings' careers contributed to her desire to support public education. "And both of my siblings and my sister-in-law are public school teachers. It's just kind of in the blood. We are all very big supporters of public education."

Being a former public school teacher meant that parents could look past or contextualize GreatSchools ratings. For Riley, being related to educators was another contributing influence that influenced her support of public education.

Theme 4: Social-Emotional-Cultural Importance and Supplementing. Almost all parents prioritized their child learning social-emotional-cultural competencies, rather than focusing on academic achievement. They wanted their child to be happy and well-adjusted as children and as adults. Parents frequently connected their desire for their child's social-emotional-cultural well-being to their own confidence that they could supplement their child's academic growth if there were any gaps that may occur in school. They consistently believed that their child would do well academically and did not want their child to be in a high-pressure academic environment.

As mentioned earlier, YiChen felt that Becker Elementary exceeded her expectations by teaching social-emotional-cultural skills, and she felt that she could teach the academics at home. She also felt that, regardless of a person's academic ability, if they didn't have a good personality, they would struggle in any future career.

> So for knowledge things, we can teach her. But for emotion things, they have a good system to let them know and understand and learn to control it. I think that's very good things. Everything you learn from school you can use for when you become adult, right? If you have good personality, I think that's worth many things. Even you are a doctor. You have a good college, but if you don't have good personality, you don't know to how to responsibility. Then that one is trash. So I think personality is more important. Because you can connect to other people. But if you don't have it, you don't know how to social. That's bad things.

When Riley was prompted in the interview to consider ways her equitable or democratic views could be spread to others, Riley connected the curriculum her son was learning to long-term changes in society. She felt that the social awareness curriculum was important and valuable for her child.

> They have a social awareness curriculum. It's been important because he's come home and we've had discussions about homelessness…social justice is being taught in kindergarten. I think introducing those ideas to kids at an early age is going to help them develop those skills to then be able to talk to family about it. It's going to be part of their normal life. And this is what they learn from an early age, this is what they are surrounded by. So, I think it [democratic views] is being promoted in schools in a more roundabout way.

At the close of her interview, Kathryn shared that she and her husband might be different from other parents because they didn't feel the need to have their children at a school that was rated a "ten." They preferred a school with a positive climate to help their children become good people who are empathetic, experience living in a diverse community, and are happy without the pressure to be perfect. She referenced a friend with older children who were living in a highly pressurized community and how she didn't want that for her children.

There's so much more for me than just academics because my husband and I both love to learn. We hope we're raising them with a culture of wanting to learn. We're not so worried about them academically. But I really want them to develop empathy, and to learn to love, and know people who are different from them, and to see a lot of other cultures, and to just like learning, to make friendships with people, and have a community where they feel loved, and also a place where they don't feel a ton of pressure. One of my best friends just moved to Charlotte, but she did not want her kids to go to the high school because she was so worried about the pressure there. All her friends with kids in high school were just so stressed. Some, to the point of suicidal thoughts. And I feel like the schools that are lower-rated, I feel like my kids are going to do fine there, but maybe they won't feel the intense pressure of having to be perfect.

I feel there are some parents who really feel strongly that they want their kid to get the best academics, the best they can do. They want everything perfectly lined up. Whereas my perspective is more, I feel like my kids are going to be fine. We're going to encourage them to learn and to go to college and to do all those things. But I want them to have to not grown up feeling that is what life is all about. That's what I look for in a school. Is it a place where I feel like my kids are going to be healthy, emotionally happy, safe, and also get a good education? But not to the point of education being everything.

As a recent transplant into the area from Salt Lake City, Julia talked about the parent culture in the community and how she knew parents who were concerned about their child's academic performance but that she didn't feel like this should be the focus of early primary grades. She highlighted the need for children to learn empathy and become accustomed to diverse cultures at a young age because it will help them become a better person later in life.

I know there are a lot of parents in this area who are concerned about high academic performance and getting their kid into good high schools and really prestigious colleges. Especially for me, at this point where it's kindergarten, first grade, I'm like, "Is he safe? Is he happy? Is he learning something?" That checks the boxes for me. Look, your kid is going to go out into the world and needs to know how to work with people that are different from them. And needs to be empathetic and understanding of people with different cultures and languages and eat different kinds of food. And that it's so good to get the exposure at a young age where it seems normal. And it's normal, but not in all places. Like our old neighborhood, it wasn't normal. It was totally different. So I think just helping parents understand the value of exposing your child to that at a young age and how it will be normal to them even though it wasn't normal to you. And just how

it can help them become a better person, a better employee, a better, you know, just well-rounded individual that can work with anybody.

The other parent who recently moved into the area, Madelyn also talked about the pressure in the community and how she and her husband wanted their children to develop intrinsic motivation to learn. Also that a "warm and nurturing" learning environment was more important than academic success.

> It was hard to think about coming back to the area and raising kids because we had lived here in the past as a young people. And then we bring kids back here and we're like <groan> because there's like summer camps for money, being practically MBA programs…My husband jokes about getting Stanford credits in preschool…And I am just like, "Oh my God, I can't even." So anyway, we want our kids to feel confident and sort of in line with whatever motivation is intrinsically coming from within them. And to do that, we don't want to channel them into a track. We don't want to pressure them to do something. And so for us, as a family, having a warm and nurturing environment is way more important than academic pressure.…I don't really care about their achievements. I mean, I want them to be stimulated academically. It's exciting that they're learning and learning to read and I can tell that they are. They're coming home excited about learning, but that's what I want. I want them to be excited about learning. I want to nurture in them a self-motivated desire to learn. My husband and I feel a self-motivated desire to learn now as adults, but we didn't really feel that necessarily when we were kids.

In his interview, Charles emphasized that academic learning was important but that there was more to life, and being happy was more important. He used an example of someone whom he worked with who lacked social skills. Charles ended by sharing that he is able to supplement his children's academics at home.

> And it's important to learn, and you need to learn how to learn. But personally, I think you also have to learn how to just…how to exist. And it's hard to do that if you have…all you can think about is schooling. And does that really prepare you to deal with people even in college or a job? Where like, all I know how to do is study, and study, and study, and study? But I have to talk to people, and I need to be comfortable, and I need to understand how to just be happy. We hired this one guy at my work many years ago who graduated high school at 16 or 15. And he went to college. And his roommate for three years at college was his "mom in the

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dorms." And then when he came to us, he was not socially well-adjusted. Like he was very smart from his resume perspective, but he could not work on a team of other people to do a job. Like, it just didn't work. So, from the educational standpoint, we are fortunate enough to be able to… subsidize is the wrong word…shore up, prep? So we do a lot of Khan Academy, we do a lot of reading at home. We're trying to teach them more than the actual base curriculum they're getting.

Finally, as a previous Catholic school student, Mary had experienced a "well-rounded" education and wanted the same for her daughter. When she was looking for information about Becker Elementary, she considered asking about the curriculum, but it didn't seem as important as the additional enrichment options at this stage in her daughter's life.

> I wanted to know if there was going to be any art, if there would be any sports, physical activities. If there would be any music. … Those are the things I was exposed to as child… I want her to be well-rounded…She's a kindergartener, she's five years old, I could ask about the curriculum, but it wasn't as important because she's five. I mean, maybe when she's older I'll be a little bit more concerned.

Parents highlighted the importance of social-emotional-cultural learning and were less interested in academic achievement. They wanted their child to be happy in kindergarten and later in life as an adult. Parents wanted warm, caring environments for their child and some mentioned not wanting their child in a high-pressure environment. Skills such as learning emotional regulation, developing empathy, having early exposure to social-justice concepts, developing intrinsic motivation, and working in diverse environments were important for parents, and they felt they could supplement any academic learning.

Theme 5: Opportunities. A few parents shared statements that may point to thinking their child or family may benefit from being at a Title I school. That there may have been opportunities that may not have been available at one of the neighboring, larger, non-Title I schools.

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For Kathryn, being at the Title I school meant that there was a comparison to the non-Title I school that was across a busy street. The non-Title I school had community events that did not exist at her school. She shared that on the "flip side," her children had opportunities that didn't exist for her friends' children at the non-Title I school.

> Kan Elementary doesn't do a walk-a-thon. They don't do a lot of the other things that a lot of the bigger schools that pull in a lot of money do, just because they don't have the resources. They don't get a lot of parent volunteers. They don't get as much funding, or parent volunteers as some of the other schools. So I feel that's been a little bit sad for me because I feel my kids kind of miss out on some of those outside-of-school events.

> On the flip side of that though, my kids have a ton of opportunities at Kan Elementary that I don't think they would have at those bigger schools. Kan hasn't done a play for a while, but then they did, my kids would often get one of the bigger roles just because there aren't as many kids here. Whereas my friends at Orchard Glen, they would have two casts for their production…so you get to be Mufasa or Simba for the first half, but someone else is going to play it for the second half.

As reviewed earlier, Julia wanted to ensure that her son would be placed into kindergarten since she had held him back a year. When she was talking about the GreatSchools rating and seeking out information from her social network, she mentioned that perhaps the Title I school was more accommodating with the grade level placement into kindergarten than a non-Title I school might have been. Grade-level placement was the most important factor in her school choice decision. Additionally, Julia and her husband found value in the diversity of the school and compared it to the homogeneity of Salt Lake City.

> Yeah. That was a big, really big factor. And I don't know that if we had tried to go to a different school that had better ratings on GreatSchools that they would've let us. I don't know, but I am a little bit doubtful because I think that some people are turned away from Becker Elementary because of the ratings. And so I don't know. I'm not saying that they wanted to get as many students as they could because people don't want to go there. But I do think that was a little bit of an

advantage to us that it's a lower-rated school. Some people opt not to go, and so maybe they were more willing to do that for us.

For Julia, she was excited about the diversity at the school and would be helpful to her children in the long run and that prospective parents should see it as an opportunity to support their children in developing a broader perspective that would be helpful later in life.

> Where we came from in Salt Lake City was very homogenous. It was like all White people, I'm just going to say it, it's just all White people. And I'm half Japanese. I am Asian, and I was the most diverse person for miles. And my husband's White, and we went to the orientation, and he's like, "I am the only White person here. And I think that is so cool." We were so excited that Jasper would have a little bit more exposure to different cultures and different kinds of people from different backgrounds. And after school started, they've had culture days and, "come bring your favorite food from your culture." And I think that that's super valuable for him. Part of his education is to be exposed to different languages and different people. So that was a really positive thing before school started. We were like, okay, this is great. This is a good experience.

In their choice of the Title I school, the parents felt that there may have been opportunities for their child that may not have existed at a non-Title I school. This may have included extra-curricular activities, a grade-level placement, or a diverse environment.

Summary of Findings for Research Question 1b: What Values, Programs, or Factors are Parents Considering When Choosing a Title I School for Their Kindergartener? Parents shared that safety was the most important factor for them when selecting a school. This was consistent in both survey and interview responses. Interviews elaborated that school safety was connected to the threat of a school shooter. Parents were also willing to try the school for a year if they were hesitant about the school and felt that they could exercise alternative options if needed. Parents that were connected to an educator, by being a former educator or being related to one allowed parents to have a more open perspective or pro-public-school view on the neighborhood school. Following safety, the

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most widespread other factor was the importance of social-emotional-cultural learning and environments. Parents wanted their child to develop these other skills and placed more importance on them than academics, and connecting them to later life success. Parents connected social-emotional-cultural value in the school with the feeling that they could supplement any academic learning at home. And finally, some parents felt that there might be opportunities that existed at the Title I school for their child in the forms of access, options, and diversity.

Findings for Research Question 2: What, if any, Differences Exist Between Latine and non-Latine Families in the School Choice Process?

Based on the survey results, Latine parents (n=12) placed higher value than non-Latine parents in the areas of gathering information on prospective schools, what factors they considered when selecting a school, and what they think would be valuable information for prospective parents. Latine parent survey participation was 27% of the total parent response (n=45), which is less than the total Hispanic or Latino population average of the two schools, which is 45%. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, both principals shared that the overall percentage of Latine students in their current kindergarten cohorts was surprisingly less than across the school. The "important" and "very important" categories were combined and compared between Latine and non-Latine parents to represent where parents placed importance.

Example 1: What Resources/People Provided the Most Helpful Information to You When You Were Looking at School Choices? Survey responses reflect that Latine parents placed greater importance than non-Latine parents on the information sources about the school. The biggest difference in value was on "seeing information on school flyers" with

28% more Latine parents rating this as "important" and "very important." Other areas where the difference between Latine and non-Latine parents was higher than 10% were around "gathering information online" (13% difference), "going on a school tour" (14% difference), and "meeting other teachers or staff at the school" (12% difference). Table 3 shows the percentages of Latine, non-Latine parent responses and the differences between the groups based upon their rating of sources of information related to school selection.

Table 3

Comparison of Latine and non-Latine Parents: Importance of Information Sources

Sources of Information	Latine (n=12), Important and Very Important	Non-Latine (n=33), Important and Very Important	Differences between Latine and non-Latine
Getting information from family, friends, or acquaintances	90%	87%	+3%
General information from the school website	83%	84%	-1%
Gathering information from social media such as GreatSchools or Facebook parent groups	63%	50%	+13%
Seeing or visiting the school	90%	84%	+6%
Going on a school tour	100%	86%	+14%
Seeing the information on school flyers	97%	69%	+28%
Meeting the principal at the school	72%	78%	-6%
Meeting the kindergarten teachers at the school	100%	93%	+7%
Meeting other teachers or staff at the school	91%	79%	+12%

Example 2: How Satisfied are You with the Information Provided on the School's Website? As discussed in research question 1a, parents sought information on the school website after finding information from other sources. When asked about their satisfaction

with the school website, Latine and non-Latine parent responses were similar with only a 3% difference in their satisfaction. Figure 3 shows the percentages of Latine and non-Latine parent satisfaction with the school's website.

Figure 3

Latine and Non-Latine Parent Satisfaction with the School Website
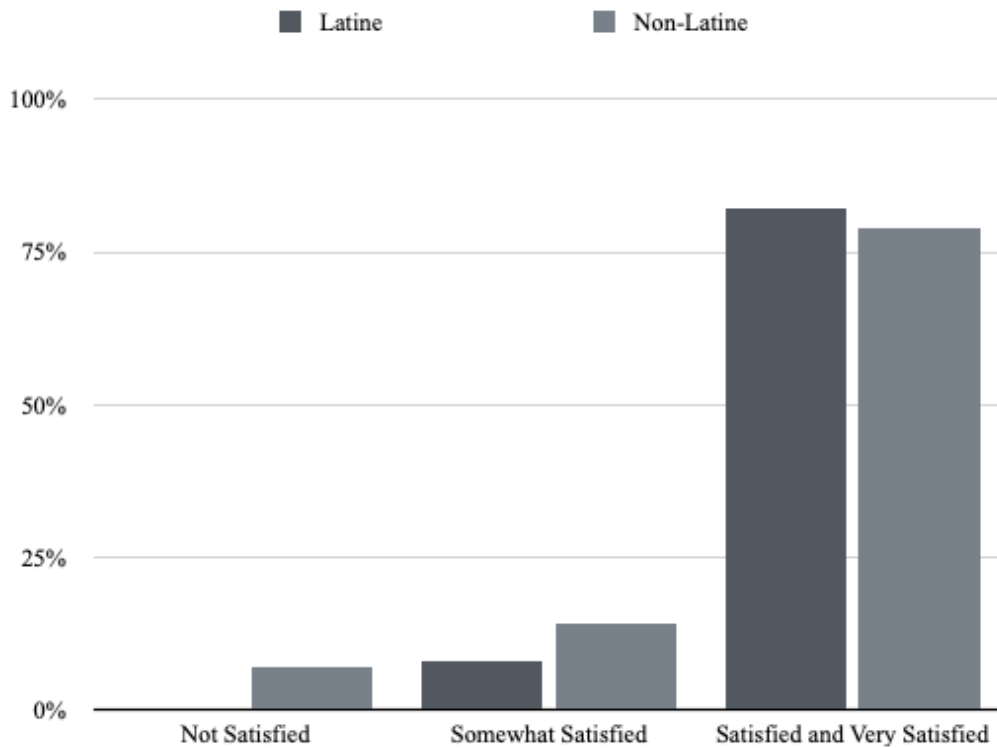
Example 3: What Factors Were Important to You? Latine parents rated the factors related to school selection higher than non-Latine parents. The biggest difference in value was placed on "opportunities to talk with current parents at the school," with 38% more Latine parents rating this as "important" and "very important." "School philosophy" was rated 20% higher for Latine parents. Differences that were higher than 10% included, "approaches to teaching"(11% difference), "opportunities to visit the school" (10%

difference), "parent testimonials about the school" (15%), "student academic performance information" (19%), "school safety information" (10%), and "school program information" (10%). Table 4 shows the percentages of Latine and non-Latine parent responses and the differences between the groups based upon their rating of important factors related to school selection.

Table 4

Comparison of Latine and non-Latine Parents: Important Factors with School Selection

Information	Latine: Important & Very Important	non-Latine: Important & Very Important	Difference between Latine and non-Latine
School philosophy	100%	80%	+20%
Approaches to teaching	100%	89%	+11%
Opportunities to meet the teachers	100%	91%	+8%
Opportunities to visit the school	100%	90%	+10%
Opportunities to talk with current parents at the school	100%	62%	+38%
Parent testimonials about the school	100%	85%	+15%
Student academic performance information	100%	81%	+19%
School safety information	100%	90%	+10%
School program information	100%	90%	+10%

Example 4: What Information or Opportunities Do You Think the School Should Provide to Future Families Who Are Considering Sending Their Child to the School?

Finally, in the same trending fashion as in the prior examples, Latine parents rated the suggested information items and opportunities the school should provide to families higher than non-Latine parents. In this last example, Latine parent responses prompted the biggest

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percent differences between Latine and non-Latine parents. The biggest difference in value was placed on "the school's special education offerings," with 42% more Latine parents rating this as "important" and "very important." Other areas where the difference between Latine parents placed at or higher than 20% was around hearing "school philosophy" (20% difference). At or higher than 10% differences included "approaches to teaching" (11% difference), "opportunities to visit the school" (10% difference), "parent testimonials about the school" (15% difference), "student academic performance information" (19% difference), "school safety information" (10% difference), and "school program information" (10% difference). Table 5 shows the percentages of Latine and non-Latine parent responses and the differences between the groups based upon their recommendations for school information.

Table 5

Comparison of Latine and non-Latine Parents: Recommended Information for Prospective Parents

Information	Latine: Important & Very Important	non-Latine: Important & Very Important	Difference between Latine and non-Latine
School philosophy	100%	80%	+20%
Approaches to teaching	100%	89%	+11%
Opportunities to meet the teachers	100%	91%	+8%
Opportunities to visit the school	100%	90%	+10%
Opportunities to talk with current parents at the school	100%	62%	+38%
Parent testimonials about the school	100%	85%	+15%
Student academic performance information	100%	81%	+19%
School safety information	100%	90%	+10%
School program information	100%	90%	+10%

Summary of Findings for Research Question 2: What, if Any, Differences Exist Between Latine and Non-Latine Families in the School Choice Process? Generally, Latine parents rated survey items higher than non-Latine parents. The sample of Latine parents (n=12) was 27% of the total parent sample (n=45) and also lower than the percent of the Latine parent population, 45%, at the two schools.

Findings for Research Question 3: From a Parent's Perspective, How Can Title I Schools Improve the Quality of Communication with Prospective Parents?

Across the board, during interviews, parents recommended that Title I schools should improve their websites with helpful information that includes conveying the culture of the school as well as basic information for prospective parents. Survey open-ended responses echoed the request for additional information about the school. The parents articulated that in their experience as prospective parents looking online, there was a dearth of information from the school. This contrasts with survey responses where 81% of parents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the information on the school website. Parent recommendations for the website included pictures of classrooms and students, sharing details about school vision and programs, including contact information for staff, and mitigating the GreatSchools ratings. Secondly, and with less emphasis, parents had some recommendations for improving alternative forms of communication, including holding tours and an open house, improving the customer service for the staff in the front office, providing more school information to new parents before the first day of school, and holding informational webinars.

When parents were asked on the survey what they would recommend schools share for prospective parents, the highest value responses were around providing additional information on: "approaches to teaching" (93%), "opportunities to meet the teachers" (94%),

"opportunities to visit the school" (94%), "school safety information" (94%), and "school

program information" (94%).

School philosophy, student academic performance, and opportunities to talk with current

parents were less important to parents based on survey responses. The decreased importance

of student academic performance may match the earlier finding that parents are placing

greater importance on the social-emotional-cultural aspects of learning over academic

performance. The lowered importance of talking with current parents at the school seems to

be in contrast with the earlier finding that word-of-mouth recommendations were an

important way to gather information from social networks. Table 6 shows the percentages of

parent responses based on their recommendations to the school for future prospective

parents.

Table 6

Parent Recommendations to Schools for Future Parents

Information	Not important	Somewhat Important	Important & Very Important
School philosophy	7%	6%	87%
Approaches to teaching	0%	7%	93%
Opportunities to meet the teachers	0%	6%	94%
Opportunities to visit the school	0%	6%	94%
Opportunities to talk with current parents at the school	6%	19%	75%
Parent testimonials about the school	0%	10%	90%
Student academic performance information	6%	6%	88%
School safety information	6%	0%	94%
School program information	0%	6%	94%

After Kathryn described aspects of Kan Elementary and how the GreatSchools website didn't capture the things she liked at the school, I asked her how much of an impact she thought having information on the school website would have for prospective parents. She confirmed adding information to the website would be helpful and that she would also recommend adding parent testimonials to positively communicate what the current parent experience is at the site.

> I think it would help. I definitely think it would help because you do…I mean I've looked for rentals a lot around here because we've had to move a few times. Especially as we've had more kids, we're like, "Oh, we need more space." And I do look at the GreatSchools to get an idea of what the school population is like. But I do look at the school website too. And I feel if on the website you had some, "Hey, I'm a parent at School #2, I love it here." I don't know…[it might help].

Kathryn wasn't the only person who referenced that the school needed to add information to counter-balance the GreatSchools website. As mentioned earlier, Mary felt that the website was "insufficient." She recommended that the school add more programmatic information to its website and also directly address the GreatSchools rating.

> I remember I did not get the answers I was looking for. There was no information about if there are any other programs. The question was, did they do any art or PE or anything for that age group? There was really nothing that talked about that age group. What the day-to-day would look like for the kindergarten class, or at least I couldn't find it… Like, "You know GreatSchools has this rating, and they rate it based on this, this, and this. But our school…." Something to counteract that GreatSchools rating review…Talk about their academic success or the structure of the kids' day. It would've helped, definitely, when I was going into the school website.

Blake was initially hesitant to communicate anything regarding GreatSchools on the school website but thought there was potential for schools to explore illustrating school values that would balance what was on GreatSchools.

When you first mentioned it, I was like, "that sounds defensive." But I don't know. I think it could be communicated well. But I think you'd have to put a lot of thought into how to do it, and it would need to be done very specifically. And maybe not just with words. It might need to be illustrated, more than explained. And I'm not sure how to do that, but I think that it's probably worth exploring.

Julia agreed that pictures of the school for prospective parents would be helpful. She wanted to understand what the school was like and felt that the information was generic. Julia also sought information on what her child's kindergarten experience would look like in terms of staffing ratios and the climate of the school.

I wish that there had been like pictures of the school, pictures of students, which I know can be hard to post that kind of stuff. But just a little bit more personalized. It's just so general; not a lot of information on the website. So maybe just more information on the website. As specific as they could be without compromising any kind of like, safety or anything of the students. But yeah, I was interested in things like class size, teacher-to-student ratio. Like what specifically are they doing in their school to make it [good]? And maybe that's more of on the district level, that information would come from the district, but those are like the kinds of things that I wanted to know about.

Overall, parents wanted more information on the website that provided an overview of the school, more specific information about the school program and day, and insight into the student and parent experience both in pictures and written information.

Theme 2: GreatSchools Resistance. As discussed above, school websites and GreatSchools were often connected to one another, perhaps since both are online. Mary, Kathryn, and Blake suggested the school website add information that parents might seek after looking at the GreatSchools website. In addition, Mary, Kathryn, and Blake identified the GreatSchools website as a source of information that contributed to and perpetuated bias against their school. Kathryn and Blake suggested some ways for parents to mobilize to balance or counter the GreatSchools website.

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Mary shared in her interview that she thought the GreatSchools website was "terrible" and jokingly said that she thought that it was created by private schools so parents would have concerns about their neighborhood school. Now a parent at the school, Mary felt that the GreatSchools site didn't accurately represent the positive qualities of the school.

> There's GreatSchools, and the website is terrible. I feel like private schools pay to have that website up. Like they all went in together and were like, "Yeah… [let's make this website]." It's just terrible. I don't think it reflects the value of the school and the teachers and what they do there.

As parents involved in the PTA, Blake and Kathryn had considered ways to mobilize the parents to add to the content on the GreatSchools website. Blake shared how she and the PTA had considered posting ratings and narratives on the GreatSchools website underneath the initial rating as a way to offer additional information on Kan Elementary.

> One thing we are trying to do…we want to have PTA communicate to our families at the school, around registration time…To go post ratings on GreatSchools because if the parents that are looking at that GreatSchool's number want to dive deeper, we want to have reviews on their website that can give more context. I think that will be helpful. But also, it's just for people who specifically are looking at the GreatSchools website. So really, I just have a beef with GreatSchools.

Kathryn, another PTA parent at Kan Elementary recalled leaving a review on the GreatSchools website and confirmed what Blake had shared about the PTA's discussion about leaving reviews on GreatSchools as a PTA.

> There is a way that parents can go in and leave reviews of the school… I think I left one as a PTA board member. We all thought, "We need to go leave a review." Anyway. If you read the reviews, they're actually really positive. But I don't think a lot of people take the time. They just see the number, "four-out-of-ten-rating," and they're like, "Oh, I don't want to send my kid there."

Mary agreed that seeing current parent testimonials on the GreatSchools website would have been helpful when she was looking at Becker Elementary. As discussed earlier, she also shared that these testimonials should go on the school website.

> I tried to find other places for reviews. I tried to find where I could get information from parents. Like I said, I even went on Yelp and some of the other sites you don't normally go into for a school rating. But so I could see comments, and there wasn't a lot there. There really weren't that many. But you know what…I think a couple of the comments that I did find were very positive about Becker Elementary, but there may have been two or three comments, and they were from five years ago. So it wasn't enough, but it was good to see it was at least positive. But it wasn't enough to help me make a decision.

The parents recommended that the school website be updated to provide additional information for prospective parents which may provide an alternative view of the school compared to the GreatSchools website. Most importantly, the parents wanted the school website to provide insight into the culture and values of the school. In the case of Kathryn and Blake, the PTA was working as a group to add parent narratives to the GreatSchools website to provide additional information to prospective parents.

Theme 3: On-Campus Information for Parents. In survey and interview responses, parents recommended on-campus options and events for prospective parents, which included an open house and tours. As seen earlier in Table 6, 94% of parents on survey responses would recommend that the school create opportunities for prospective parents to visit the school.

Mary shared that this particular set of kindergarten parents might not have been able to experience events like a tour or open house due to the COVID-19 shelter-in-place which limited school campus access.

I reached out to the administrator, and I was asking if I could do a visit, a school visit, campus visit and just see the school and stuff like that. And she was saying that it was during COVID and they weren't doing school tours yet…You know a tour would've been helpful. Thinking back to that now, that was just a year ago, so they even did an open house at one point. I think they're back to that, the open houses. I missed it, but I really wanted to go to it. I probably would've gotten more information from that.

Parents sought on-campus opportunities to gather information on the school, items such as tours and open houses were mentioned in Mary's interview. Perhaps due to the COVID-19 shelter-in-place, campus access was limited for this particular set of prospective parents.

Summary of Findings for Research Question 3: From a Parent's Perspective, How Can Title I Schools Improve the Quality of Communication with Prospective Parents?
Parents recommended improving the school website with more specific and personalized information related to the school. They made suggestions such as adding pictures that would convey the climate of the school and providing more specific information about the experiences their child would have such as staffing ratios and details of the day-to-day in a classroom. Connected to the school website, parents discussed the GreatSchools website and providing information on the school website to balance what parents may see on GreatSchools. Parents also discussed mobilizing and posting reviews on GreatSchools as a movement organized by the PTA. On-campus options for school information may have been limited for this group of parents due to COVID-19, but the parents recommended events such as tours and an open house.

Identification of Themes Across Research Questions

There were three additional themes that arose from the findings that did not directly address a research question or were across research questions. These are (a) positive school

experiences, (b) resistance, equity, and mobilization, and finally, (c) juxtaposition and conflict.

Positive School Experiences. In this study, some of the parents expressed some initial hesitation in attending the Title I school. Despite any initial doubts, all the parents interviewed were to some extent satisfied with the education that their child was receiving at the school. In the cases of Madelyn, Blake, Mary, and YiChen, the schooling that their child had received exceeded their expectations. As Blake said, "Honestly, this is our dream school." Survey data confirmed that the none of the parents were unhappy with their child's school experience. Participant self-selection may have impacted the sample, their viewpoints on school choice, and been reflected in their positive outlook on the schools. A goal was to have a representative sample of the school population. Although the representative sample was achieved in the survey responses, it was not achieved in the interview sample, despite multiple personalized outreach attempts.

It brings forth the question, if the school or classroom was not meeting the parents' expectations would the parents be willing to stay at the school? Although all the parents said that location was important and provided convenience, it may have been the case that a negative experience by the parent could prompt them to leave the school site. This points to schools maintaining a high-quality education for students in order to maintain enrollment at the school. It may also mean that if the education of the children at the school is meeting or exceeding parents' expectations, current parents will remain at the school and also share positive experiences with others.

Resistance, Equity, and Mobilization. The most interesting and unique findings in this research were themes of resistance to GreatSchools rating scores, the internalization of an equity lens, and interest in mobilization by middle-class White parents regarding school choice. A few mothers expressed that their focus on the community, democratic ideals, and funding resources was the reason why they selected the neighborhood, Title I school.

They pointed out concerns that the rating system lacked accuracy in reflecting the school community and that English learner students would not do as well on the state tests, which was to be expected if students were learning another language, therefore the GreatSchools rating would be lower. Although previous findings outlined that parents may ignore test scores or school ratings, there have been no prior findings where parents actively select a school because they feel they are contributing to the community.

Additionally, Blake and Kathryn shared how they were working as a PTA to mobilize and write reviews on the GreatSchools website in order to provide more context and parent perspective for prospective parents seeking information.

Madelyn saw a potential "cultural shift" occurring in the community with the podcast "Nice White Parents" and additional perspectives on Facebook mom groups. Perhaps prospective parents started making efforts to gather a more multi-dimensional view of schools while simultaneously current parents provided more balanced perspectives of their school online.

These new perspectives might signal that change was occurring in the greater community as Madelyn shared, she seemed to have noticed a shift in the greater community that influenced her own decision and perhaps the decisions of others.

I think parents need to just raise their awareness of knowing to not take that rating on face value…It feels like a cultural shift. Do you know the podcast "Nice White Parents?" I feel like that has had an impact on people at least on the whole. Stop judging schools based on certain elements. And it reinforced my gut feeling that public school is the way to go.

And that's sort of what we're all doing, is trying to live together as people. We have cultural norms, and they shift over time. Hopefully they shift in positive directions.

These new perspectives might signal that change was occurring in the greater community. As Madalyn shared in her extended quote above, she had begun to see parents question the GreatSchools ratings, and the podcast, "Nice White Parents" reinforced her perspective about public schools. She seemed to have noticed a shift in the greater community that influenced her own decision and perhaps the decisions of others.

Parents in this study articulated that they were making conscious decisions to select their public schools in order to support the community. This demonstrates a new ideology in the market system regarding school choice. Rather than focusing on market ideals and personal gain, these parents demonstrated a concerted and focused decision to embrace democratic ideals of public education.

Juxtaposition and Conflict. Alongside parent support of public schools, the potential for inequity and centering White experiences may also occur when parents select their neighborhood school. There were statements made across various themes that may have indicated a deficit mindset about students and the English Learner population at the school. I saw this as juxtaposed with the parents' desire to support their public school and aligned with parent social and cultural capital.

In Riley's interview, she shared that it was important for her to stay in the school and also attributed desired qualities to parents who had more school choice and deficit language to students.

> This is on a micro and macro level with public education. So taking higher socioeconomic status kids, more involved parents, less behavior-issue kids, taking those to the higher performing schools is only going to disadvantage the schools that are left behind.

In Kathryn's interview, she shared the appeal of traditional school community events such as a walk-a-thon and also how parent volunteers can contribute to the school.

> Kan Elementary doesn't do a walk-a-thon. They don't do a lot of the other things that a lot of the bigger schools that pull in a lot of money do, just because they don't have the resources. They don't get a lot of parent volunteers. They don't get as much funding, or parent volunteers as some of the other schools. So I feel that's been a little bit sad for me because I feel my kids kind of miss out on some of those outside-of-school events.

Summary of Themes Across Research Questions. Additional themes arose across the results from this study. The parents in this study were all satisfied with their child's school experience at the neighborhood school. Parents also demonstrated resistance to GreatSchools ratings, had an equity mindset, and wanted to mobilize to share the positive qualities of a school demonstrated by parents. Finally, even with an equity mindset, parents used deficit language and generally centered of White, middle-class values and capital in what they wanted at their school or what they valued.

Summary, Chapter Four: Results and Findings

In this chapter, I discussed the results and findings related to understanding parent perspectives on school choice. This chapter outlined the data from the multiple case study of (a) Becker and Kan Elementary Schools and (b) the examination of Latine and non-Latine

parents with school choice. Parents completed surveys (n=45) and participated in interviews (n=8). The results indicated that parents selected a school for their child based on (a) location, (b) convenience, and (c) their desire to support public schools.

When they searched for a school, parents collected data from three places. They used the GreatSchools website and its rating system. Some parents criticized the ratings and felt they contributed to bias against their school. Parents also used their social network, and word-of-mouth recommendations from trusted sources were valued the most. Finally, parents sought information from the school by looking online and attending in-person events. When asked about important factors they sought in a school or what they valued in a school, parents shared that school safety related to an active shooter was the most important. Additionally, they may have been willing to try the school for a year if they were hesitant and felt they could exercise alternative options if needed. Parents with a connection to an educator were more open to attending the school or were pro-public-education. Developing social-emotional-cultural competencies was valued by parents and had more importance than academic achievement, which they felt they could supplement at home. The last item that parents valued in their school selection were the potential opportunities connected to access and diversity that would be available to their child.

Latine parents (n=12) participated in the study by completing the survey. Generally, Latine parents rated survey items with greater importance than non-Latine parents. For example, Latine parents rated "opportunities to talk with the current parents at the school," 38% higher than non-Latine parents. There were a few places where Latine parents rated

survey items lower than non-Latine parents, for example "meeting the principal at the school" was rated 6% lower for Latine parents.

Parents had three main recommendations for schools to improve the quality of communication for prospective parents. First, improve the quality of the school website with information that conveys the culture of the school and also navigational details. They felt that an improved website would also balance information prospective parents saw on GreatSchools or the rating given to the school. Second, parents also shared their ideas on how to mobilize as a PTA to post reviews the GreatSchools website. And last, parents recommended more in-person events at the school.

Finally, in chapter four, I discussed additional themes from the findings. Parents who participated in this study were all pleased with their child's school experience at the Title I schools. Some of the parents also shared resistance to the GreatSchools rating system and website. They had adopted an equity lens and also wanted to mobilize as a group to share their positive experiences with the schools. Even with the equity lens, the parents used some deficit language about the school and generally centered White, middle-class values for their school experience and desired outcomes.

Chapter Five: Implications

This final chapter begins with a review of past chapters and is organized into two main parts: (a) connections to literature and the theoretical framework and (b) implications.

Review of Past Chapters

In a medium-sized suburban school district, at two Title I schools in Thomasville School District, eight parents were interviewed, and 45 valid survey responses were collected to answer the following research questions.

> Research Question 1: How are parents selecting a school for their kindergartener?
>
> > Research Question 1a: What, if any, source(s) of information are parents using when selecting a school for their kindergartener?
> >
> > Research Question 1b: What values, programs, or factors are parents considering when choosing a Title I school for their kindergartener?
>
> Research Question 2: What, if any, differences exist between Latine and non-Latine families in the school choice process?
>
> Research Question 3: From a parent's perspective, how can Title I schools improve the quality of communication with prospective parents?

The origin of this study came from my own lived experience as a school administrator. From my work experience, I had a nascent concept that racial segregation and separation of economic resources could negatively impact a school or district, which aligned with the work of Billingham and Hunt (2016), Davis (2014), McDonough Kimelberg and Billingham (2012), Saporito and Lareau (1999). I had also seen continual pressure on school systems to create choice options based on the perception of good schools, which was in turn linked to

test scores (Houston & Henig, 2021; Ravitch, 2014). In my context, the GreatSchools ratings impacted how parents perceived schools since it pulled academic achievement data from state test scores and was reflective of the socio-economics and racial makeup of the area, which was confirmed by researchers Hasan and Kumar (2019). In this school district, parents had options to select their neighborhood, charter, private, or a magnet school within the district. At the time of the study, the school district was experiencing a decline in student enrollment as people moved out of the city. There were no elementary charter schools located in the city. The exact number of district students that left to go to charter and private schools was estimated to be 7% at elementary school level.

This study hoped to contribute to the body of work around parents and school choice by elaborating on prior work and also unearthing new findings. I'd like to caution readers that the study sample was predominantly White, middle-class parents. Although that was not the original intent of the study, those were the parents who volunteered to participate.

Connections to Literature and the Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will first discuss the research questions and the literature. Next, I will discuss the theoretical framework and the findings.

Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1: How Are Parents Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener?

Location and Convenience. Unsurprisingly, this study confirmed that family residence is a primary factor influencing how parents select an elementary school for their child. The United States school system was designed with home location as a determinant of school attendance (Holme, 2022; Kozol, 1992; Ravitch, 2014). In this study, parents articulated the convenience of attending the neighborhood school. Past researchers found that the physical

proximity of the school decreased commute times and centered families, allowing them to create community with other families (Bell, 2009; Hastings et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020). It is likely that the home residence will continue to be a primary factor in parents' school selection.

Public School Support. A unique finding of this study was the parents' desire to support the public school. The parents interviewed knew they could exert their cultural capital to access other schools and felt that staying at the neighborhood school would better support the community by maintaining resources and funding in the school. Although researchers have examined the impacts of middle-class parents staying in integrated spaces (Posey-Maddox et al., 2014a, 2014b), I had not seen the manifestation of middle-class parents internalizing a belief system related to understanding the impacts of school choice on the system of schooling. Along with the cultural shift that Madelyn pointed out in Facebook groups, this may point to a return to the democratic ideals of public education where public education is defined and categorized as a public good rather than a private commodity.

Summary of Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1: How Are Parents Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener? The location of the family's residence will most likely continue to be a determining factor in how parents select a school for their kindergartener. A unique and interesting finding from this research question was discovering the parents' identification of deliberately choosing their neighborhood Title I school and their connection to a value of public school support and maintaining funding and support in the community.

Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1a: What, if any, Source(s) of
Information are Parents Using When Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener?

It was clear that parents were searching online to seek information about schools. This

included seeking information from GreatSchools, online social forums, and from the school

website. In addition, parents sought information from in-person recommendations from their

social network.

GreatSchools, Their Rating System, and Criticism. Online resources such as

GreatSchools were ubiquitously used by parents, which confirmed Barnum and LeMee's

(2019) and Samuel's (2019) findings that the GreatSchools website is pervasive and accessed

by parents, although this is the first study that sought to understand the rationale behind the

use of GreatSchools as past studies were based on survey responses.

A unique finding in this study was the examination and criticism of GreatSchools by the

parents. Barnum and LeMee (2019) pointed out that the GreatSchools ratings are narrow and

do not accurately reflect values such as cultural inclusivity. Samuels (2019) argued that

GreatSchools directs parents toward White, middle or upper-income schools. Although these

authors have argued potential challenges with the GreatSchools rating, no past research has

found parents to have articulated or voiced challenges directly.

School scores or rankings connected to high-stakes testing had been identified as a way to

determine the quality of a school (Cunningham, 2021; Nichols et al., 2006; Ravitch, 2014).

Orfield et al. (2016) pointed out the flaws in linking standardized tests to student learning and

yet past studies also identified that school ratings have been shown to bias parents'

perceptions of schools and their selection (Bifulco, Cobb, & Bell, 2009; Billingham & Hunt,

2016; Saporito & Lareau, 1999).

Parents in this study questioned the validity of ratings and scores, pointing out issues with expectations if the student population includes English language learners. It also affirms and expands upon one of McDonough Kimelberg's (2014) findings where White middle-class moms disagreed with test scores being an accurate measurement of school quality and linked the lower test scores to decreased resources within the community.

Although the GreatSchools website and ranking system were ubiquitous and referenced by all parents, not all parents viewed the score as meaningful. In some cases, the parents viewed the GreatSchools score as detrimental and biased against their school.

Social Network and Word-of-Mouth. Parents seriously considered word-of-mouth recommendations from all sources while engaged in the school selection process. This confirmed a significant body of research demonstrating the value that parents placed on their social network when collecting information (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Houston et al., 2020; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020; Villavicencio, 2013).

The contribution to the literature on social networks was the use of Facebook mom groups and the extension of accessing the social network online. Although past research named online forums (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012), Facebook mom groups were not specifically named in past literature. The social network and word-of-mouth recommendations trumped the GreatSchools ratings and in several cases, contributed to the parent's considering the Title I school and not dismissing it based on the numerical score.

Additionally, past research did not identify what Madelyn defined as a "cultural shift" where other parents posted commentary pointing out potential bias of the GreatSchools

website and encouraged a multi-faceted approach for information gathering for prospective parents.

The movement toward parent social networks emphasizing multi-dimensional perspectives on school information collection may be promising for Title I schools in the future.

School Website Information. There was a disconnect between what information parents sought from schools and what schools provided. This is no surprise considering that the literature has argued that principals and educational leaders lack the experience and background in marketing or communication (Diem et al., 2018; Jabbar, 2015a, 2015b). In this situation, tension was created between parents and the school. Parents, accustomed to having information easily accessible online, found themselves at a disadvantage when seeking information from schools. Perhaps this is why they turned to the simplicity of the GreatSchools website.

School websites had importance to parents, and they identified a lack of information on the school website. Taddeo and Barnes (2016) and Wilson and Carlsen (2016) have argued that a minimal amount of research has been done analyzing school website content. It may also connect to Jabbar's (2015a) work that posited little is known about how principals might market their schools and may rather be focused on improving the educational outcomes for students.

Summary of Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1a: What, if Any, Source(s) of Information Are Parents Using When Selecting a School for Their Kindergartener? Parents predominantly sought information from online sources, and they

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also used their social networks. Although all interviewed parents referenced the online

GreatSchools rankings, some parents questioned its ability to accurately represent the school

and shared that the ranking may bias prospective parents against their school. Parents felt that

the school website lacked useful material that shared detailed information or gave insight into

the school culture. When seeking information through their social networks, parents asked

for word-of-mouth recommendations in person and online. Recommendations from other

parents were valued, and those from friends were valued the highest.

Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1b: What Values, Programs, or Factors are Parents Considering When Choosing a Title I School for Their Kindergartener?

Overview. In survey responses and during interviews, the factor that parents were most

interested in was school safety. Following safety, during interviews parents valued social-

emotional-cultural learning and felt they could supplement any academic needs of their child.

Parents were also willing to try the school for a year, may have been affected by their

connection to an educator, or seen that opportunity would exist for their child at the

neighborhood school.

Safety. A unique finding of this study was the clear and constant definition of school

safety defined in light of active shooter threats to campus. Mary shared that when she began

looking at schools it was after the Uvalde school shooting, which was in the forefront of her

mind. YiChen, Blake, and Riley also connected school safety to access to campus for outside

intruders. It may be that outside events affect how parents view and frame safety. In this

case, the Uvalde school shooting impacted how parents viewed school safety and also the

importance of campus safety. This contrasts with previous research that found school safety

was commonly sought out by parents (Henig, 1995), yet how parents defined school safety was unclear and inconsistent. Ball and Vincent (1998) found that safety could be used as a euphemism for race, purposefully or indirectly, which was not confirmed in this study.

Parent Connection to Educators. A finding from this study that was not explored in prior literature was parent connection to educators in their school selection process. Although in past studies, parents' positionality contributed to their school choice process (McDonough Kimelberg, 2014; Posey-Maddox, 2014a, 2014b), prior research did not connect explicitly to parents' past experience working in a public school or relationship to educators

Willing to Try it for a Year. This study found that parents were willing to try the school for a year and were aware of alternative options if it did not meet their expectations. In interviews and one survey response, the parents who wanted to keep their options all fell into the highest economic bracket available, with an annual income of $100,000 or above. This finding confirms McDonough Kimelberg's (2014) research that parents are more willing to take a "risk" when enrolling their child in kindergarten versus in other grade levels. This confirms that school choice options are more robust for families with more economic resources (Cucchiara, 2008; Holme, 2022; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012).

Importance of Factors Other Than Academics. Parents prioritized their child's social-emotional development and general skill-building over academics. This finding contributes and adds another layer to McDonough Kimelberg's (2014) work, which looks at middle-class mothers navigating the school choice process, their prioritization of soft skills over academics, and their confidence in their ability to supplement the academic aspects of their child's education. Adding to the literature, parents in this study prioritized social-emotional-

cultural learning, a unique finding not previously seen in the literature. Parents wanted their child to be happy, as a kindergartner and as an adult. They wanted their child to develop abilities and have experiences that would support their long-term success such as learning emotional regulation, developing empathy, early exposure to social-justice concepts, developing intrinsic motivation, and working in diverse environments. Parents also named the desire to have their child in a warm and caring climate and contrasted this to a high-pressured academic environment.

Julia and YiChen discussed the value of cultural diversity the most explicitly. Farkas and Johnson (1998) found that parents sought diversity, yet diversity was not explicitly tied to race. The parent value of cultural and racial diversity contrasts with earlier research where parents were seeking schools with a White majority population (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). Additionally, parents seeking or valuing diversity challenges earlier research that parents wanted their child to be with other students with similar backgrounds, including race (McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Posey-Maddox et al., 2014b).

Advantage. In the narratives of Julia and Kathryn, both moms named that their children or family may have additional resources or access at the school based on the school's Title I status. Although the supply side of the market was not explored in this study, this belief system surfaces the idea schools need students at their school and may need students that fall into middle-class demographics. It brings forth the question as to whether or not the school is engaging in marketing practices targeted for middle-class parents versus families who may be socio-economically impoverished. This, in turn, reflects Jabbar's (2015a) work that looks

at how schools actively recruit specific parents to the school site and potentially connects to Cooper's (2005) and Ravitch's (2014) work that schools may be engaged in selective marketing and recruitment of students.

Summary of Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 1b: What Values, Programs, or Factors are Parents Considering When Choosing a Title School for Their Kindergartener? This study both reinforced previously reported findings in the literature and found new ones. Some parents expressed that they were willing to try the school for a year and could exercise alternative options if needed. All these parents fell into the highest annual income category and confirmed the research that higher-income parents had more school choice options and were open to trying public school in kindergarten.

Other aspects of the study both reinforced past findings and contributed a new perspective to the literature. Parents shared that school safety was the most important factor when selecting a school for their child, which was seen in past research. In interviews, parents shared that their interpretation of school safety was related to a school shooting. This connection between safety and an active school shooting had not been seen in prior literature. The Uvalde school shooting had recently occurred and most likely influenced parent concerns.

Although prior research identified parent positionality as a factor in school choice, no explicit connection to relationships with educators was made in earlier studies. If parents were connected to an educator, this contributed to their positive view of public education.

The importance that parents placed on social-emotional-cultural learning, connected to their child's development of abilities such as emotional regulation or working in diverse

communities for future life success contributes a new perspective to the literature that references parents valuing "soft skills." This study also expands upon the limited literature that White, middle-class parents valued cultural diversity.

Finally, parents shared that their child may have an additional advantage at the neighborhood school in kindergarten. This parent perspective was not seen in prior research.

Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 2: What, if Any, Differences Exist Between Latine and Non-Latine Families in the School Choice Process?

Research question two had a focused goal of studying the experiences of Latine parents, a large demographic group at both Title I schools and an understudied population in relationship to school choice (Cuero et al., 2009; Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016; Ramirez, 2003; Taylor Haynes et al., 2010). As outlined in chapters three and four, although the Latine population at both schools was 45%, both principals shared that the percentage of Latine parents in the kindergarten cohort, 25%, was smaller than the percentage at the school and the lowest that they had seen in an incoming class cohort.

My methodology utilized trusted individuals via the community liaison at the school site and also deployed an outreach process beyond what was offered to other families. I had hoped to create the language and cultural supports needed for Latine parents, specifically Spanish-speaking parents to participate in the study (Gastic & Salas Coronado, 2011). Despite the methodology deployed, I was unable to secure an interview with a Latine parent despite having two interviews scheduled and interest from an additional parent. Latine interviews may have provided insight into their experience with school selection and suggestions for the school that would benefit prospective parents. Past research argued that

lower-income, Black and Latine students had limited school choice options (Ball et al., 1995; Bell, 2009; Foskett, 2012; Jabbar, 2016; Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004; Stovall, 2012).

Latine parents did respond to the survey and placed higher value than non-Latine families on (a) sources of information and (b) values and programs. This calls into question the misguided notion that Latine parents do not care about their child's education and confirms research that Latine, Spanish-speaking parents seek information about their child's schooling experience related to school options (Ramirez, 2003; Shannon-Baker et al., 2020).

Summary of Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 2: What, if Any, Differences Exist Between Latine and Non-Latine Families in the School Choice Process? With school selection, survey responses highlight that Latine parents placed higher value on sources of information and factors related to selecting a school than non-Latine parents, confirming past research that Latine, Spanish-speaking parents care and seek information related to their child's school options and information.

Conclusions and Discussion for Research Question 3: From a Parent's Perspective, How Can Title I Schools Improve the Quality of Communication with Prospective Parents?

Overview. Parents made recommendations for schools to improve the quality and types of information available for prospective parents by improving the school website for information and to also provide balance to the GreatSchools website. They also requested more in-person events. In light of the research on school marketing, these suggestions are not surprising. Past research points to the limitation of time and expertise of principals in regard to marketing. With the time limitation, principals have typically prioritized focusing on improving educational outcomes rather than engaging in marketing (Diem et al., 2018; Jabbar, 2015a; Loeb et al., 2011). Furthermore, Jabbar (2016) and Zancajo (2018) found that

schools would engage in marketing in response to pressure from demographic shifts or competition from private, charter, or choice programs.

As mentioned in chapter one, the school district where this study took place was not experiencing heightened competition from outside charter or private schools, with an estimated 7% of the students attending a private or charter school. There were no elementary charters in the city or district at the time of the study. The district was experiencing decreased student enrollment due to families moving out of the area. It is most likely that the schools did not feel extreme pressure to improve communication or marketing to prospective parents. As shared in chapter three, principals were interested in participating in the study. They felt that the information would help them improve communication with prospective parents in the future. They articulated that they didn't know what needed to happen with marketing and had not received any prior training or support, which confirms the gap in the existing literature.

Website. In interviews, parents recommended that the school improve the quality of the school website by communicating more detailed information as well as conveying the culture of the school. Mary described the website as "insufficient," and other parents agreed that the information found on the school websites was lacking.

The literature on school websites and marketing is relatively thin (Glazerman et al., 2020; Wilson & Carlsen, 2016). Wilson and Carlsen (2016) analyzed charter school websites and their marketing messages to parents and Glazerman et al. (2020) examined website design and how information displays impact parent perception of the school. This study confirms that parents seek information about schools online and adds the perspective that parents perceive public school websites as lacking information.

GreatSchools Resistance. In interviews, parents made a connection between the GreatSchools website and the school website, perhaps because both are accessible online. Parents voiced a recommendation to provide information on the school website that would more accurately represent the school beyond the GreatSchools rating. Additionally, Kathryn and Blake shared their efforts as a PTA to write reviews on the GreatSchools website for prospective parents. As discussed earlier there has been no prior research that has surfaced this resistance to GreatSchools and the rating system and subsequent mobilization by parents to communicate directly to prospective parents.

In-person Events. In interviews and in survey responses, parents requested more in-person events to support their school information collection and found them lacking. This cohort of prospective parents looked at schools during the COVID-19 pandemic where access to school campuses was limited. As the COVID-19 pandemic becomes endemic, parents should have increased access to campus.

Summary of Discussion for Research Question 3: From a Parent's Perspective, How Can Title I Schools Improve the Quality of Communication with Prospective Parents? Parents suggested that schools improve communication for prospective parents by improving the school website, including providing information for parents who have looked at GreatSchools. They also suggested in-person events such as tours or an open house. These suggestions pointed to a lack of communication by the school to prospective parents, which aligns with past research that principals have limited or no experience with marketing and are also working within time restrictions.

Research Findings and Connection to the Theoretical Framework

The section above connected key findings from the study to the literature. In this section, the findings will be connected to the theoretical framework. Before introducing the theoretical framework, I first want to contextualize that the framework of market theory is heavily influenced by neoliberalism and the pressure to privatize public education. Researchers have found that the impacts of neoliberalism have contributed to a negative perception of public schools (Frankenberg et al., 2019; Lubienski, 2005; Ravitch, 2014).

Market Theory. Market theory has been used by various researchers who have placed emphasis on the supply side of the educational market, the schools, and the demand side of the market, the parents (Bell, 2009; Billingham & McDonough Kimelberg, 2013; Burgess et al., 2014; Chubb & Moe, 1990; Hastings et al., 2006; McDonough Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012; Tiebout, 1956). Yet Bell (2009) also recognize that there are limitations to utilizing market theory, since the quality of a school is determined by parent-identified factors and may also be limited based on economic factors.

Additionally, Mavrogordato and Stein (2016) argue that market theory does not apply to Latine parents since they navigate the market with "different resources, skills, social connections, and cultural contexts and that these differences have the potential to expand or constrain preferences, access to information, choice sets of schools, and ultimate choices" (p. 1035).

In this study, I did not explore the supply side, the schools in this market. As previously mentioned in chapter one, I had originally planned on conducting a comparative case study that examined the marketing strategies of the school and the actions of the parents. Initial

conversations and instrument pilots with several principals revealed that they had limited to no marketing processes at the school site. Subsequently, I changed the focus of the study to focus solely on the parents and created a research question focused on their recommendations to the school. If a market theory is to be applied to school choice, perhaps all future researchers need to study both the supply and market sides of the market simultaneously to make the connection between supply and demand explicit.

Parents in this study navigated the market and searched for information online and from their social networks, which is aligned with market theory. As discussed in chapters one and two, market theory is derived from the private sector and argues that market forces are the parents and schools. Parents fulfill the role of consumers in the school marketplace, creating the demand side of the market. Schools provide the supply side of the market and provide the service of education. In this theory, parents explore school options before selecting a school for their child. However, they may not have made their school selection based on additional factors and not only their personal gains. Parents may have returned to the democratic ideal of public education for the public good (Dewey, 1903) rather than viewing school choice as the means to escape a "bad" or less desired school (Berliner & Biddle, 1996).

Cultural Capital. Traditional cultural capital centers on White, middle-class family values (Yosso, 2005) and posits that it will reproduce advantage (Bourdieu, 1989). Regarding school choice, Jaeger (2009) argued that cultural capital means that parents will use their capital to select the "best" school for their child. The challenge with using cultural capital as a framework for school choice is that it centers and perpetuates a narrow definition of cultural capital. Additionally, parents interviewed for this study shared two distinctive and

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uncommon aspects of cultural capital. First, their concept of a "best school" was not aligned with GreatSchools ratings which has been reflective of the socio-economic level and racial demographics of the community. Rather, parents saw that social-emotional-cultural learning and warm caring environments as more important than academic achievement. Second, some parents decided to use their traditional cultural capital to support their neighborhood school and the community rather than using their traditional capital to seek solely academic gains or a more traditional White middle-class-centered experience exclusively for their family.

Some parent statements could be connected to Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory where White cultural practices are seen as the ideal model for schools rather than looking at the multiple assets and wealth that exist within the community. Yosso's approach to community cultural wealth theory may be in conflict with structural systems such as PTA organizations where the White cultural norms drive the embodiment of "what a good PTA does." Yosso speaks to how a traditional view of capital is narrow and aligned with White, middle-class values, which is what could be identified in Kathryn's interview where she spoke about the lack of events or parent volunteers at her school.

> Kan Elementary doesn't do a walk-a-thon. They don't do a lot of the other things that a lot of the bigger schools that pull in a lot of money do, just because they don't have the resources. They don't get a lot of parent volunteers. They don't get as much funding, or parent volunteers as some of the other schools. So I feel that's been a little bit sad for me because I feel my kids kind of miss out on some of those outside-of-school events.

The quote above may exemplify how parents sought traditional White cultural experiences in schools, which may perpetuate the reproduction of their own cultural capital and overlook the cultural wealth of the community.

Summary, Research Findings and the Theoretical Framework. Preceding studies have utilized market theory as a theoretical framework when investigating school choice while other researchers have pointed out the limitations of using market theory because of how it can narrowly define school quality. Furthermore, parents may have limited access to navigate or access the market due to socio-economic factors or language. This study focused on the parents, the demand side of the market. Preliminary inquiries into the supply side of the market, the schools, demonstrated that they had limited engagement with marketing. The parents operated in the market with broader perspectives on school quality and they also considered how their school selection would impact others. In this study, the school is not fully engaged within a school market, nor are the parents actively seeking a school with only their own self-interests in mind.

This study also used cultural capital as a theoretical framework. Similar to market theory, cultural capital had limitations and can be narrowly defined by White, middle-class values. Parents in this study used two distinct and novel applications of cultural capital. First, a good school would teach social-emotional-cultural competencies and this had greater importance than academic achievement. Second, parents utilized their cultural capital to contribute to the community as opposed to seeking opportunities for their immediate family. Finally, some parents made statements that pointed to a deficit mindset about the community and a desire to recreate White cultural events rather than viewing the cultural wealth in the school community.

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Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

There are many interesting possibilities for future research in the areas of school choice. Both future research and practical application would benefit from further exploration before the movement to privatize schools becomes more commonplace.

Future Research Recommendations

There are intriguing possibilities to explore with future research. A premise of this study is that integrated spaces would support all students because families with traditional cultural capital would contribute to holding spaces for all students. However, some scholars have questioned this premise. Kendi (2019) has argued that the challenge with segregated schools is not racial segregation but rather the lack of resources provided to Black communities. Furthermore, integrated spaces can promote the assimilation of Black children into White culture. It may be possible that maintaining integrated spaces contributes to the perpetuation of White cultural ideals and belief systems. If parents stay at Title I schools with the perspective of recreating their past experiences of schooling, they may create harm. Additionally, if parents with recognized capital leave the school, it can leave the school susceptible to losing funding and resources and potentially school closure (Jabbar, 2015a). Therefore, in the study of school choice, future research needs to be aware of its intended and unintended impacts on historically marginalized populations of students and the potential for White middle-class ideology to drive the research.

Perhaps the most interesting topic of study would be exploring the parental ideals of school choice and connections to democratic values and equitable access to education for all students. This study was conducted in the Bay Area in California, a liberal-leaning area. It

would be intriguing to see how these beliefs may hold true in other geographic areas, or to see how widespread they are in the current location. Additionally, further understanding where these beliefs are stemming may be insightful and perhaps an indication that the pressure to privatize public education has decreased or met resistance.

A longitudinal inquiry would expand upon the findings in this study and earlier scholarship. Past research on school selection has focused on a specific entry, for example elementary, middle, or high school. Since parents were willing to try the neighborhood school for a year, it would be worth examining how many stay in the public school system and for what duration of time. Perhaps there are time periods or events that prompt parents to exit or enter public schools.

Future research in the area of school choice could focus on a comparative case study. This study focused on the parents who chose the neighborhood or Title I school. A comparative case study between parents who chose and didn't choose the Title I school in the area may interest future researchers. Self-selection may have impacted the results of this study, and a broader sample could provide greater insight into parent perceptions of the neighborhood school. Furthermore, gathering feedback from parents who did not select the Title I school may identify themes that could later be used to support neighborhood schools in battling negative perceptions or promoting public education.

Related to this concept, studying the broader community, their perceptions of the neighborhood school, and connecting these perceptions to GreatSchools may support future research and practice. This suggested research could explore community perceptions of

schools and the sources of information and identify trends among those parents who choose to stay at the neighborhood school and those who leave.

Connected to research on sources of information. More research on the GreatSchools website, its impacts on parents and the community, and its ties to real estate is worth further exploration. As discussed in chapter four, GreatSchools and its rating system was ubiquitous in all parent interviews. Yet, current research related to the website is limited.

Finally, Latine family and school choice should continue to be a focus of future research. This would add value to the body of literature on school choice. Further exploration of how market theory does or does not apply to Latine immigrant parents is worthy of further exploration (Mavrogordato & Stein, 2016). A recommendation for future studies involving Latine parents would be to significantly expand the data collection window and divide the window into three parts, the first focused on presence and physical proximity, the second on relationship building, and the last being data collection. I would anticipate that the parts would be intermingled, not sequential, and vary in duration. These suggestions may be challenging for future researchers who seek a step-by-step process to follow. What I am recommending is spending time in the community, acclimating as a researcher, and letting the community acclimate to you. Simultaneously, I would recommend building relationships with parents with a service orientation before engaging in data collection. I am not recommending developing a quid pro quo relationship with parents but rather asking them what they would like to see and where they need support before ever asking for participation in the study. Time constraints of this study did not allow for the implementation of the suggestions above.

Recruiting changes aside, I wondered while conducting the study if school choice held importance for Latine parents. Would a study asking Latine parents what they like about the school and what they would like to change about it have been of higher interest to participants? If I had engaged in participatory action research and worked alongside parents, I may have better understood their cultural capital. There are many unanswered questions in regards to Latine parents and school choice. Perhaps some of the lessons from this study could support future researchers who also attempt to explore those questions.

Future Practice Recommendations

As a practitioner, I have recommendations for school and district administrators who may be experiencing pressure based on school choice movements. This may be stemming from charter or private school competition or from parent pressure to provide school options. Whereas the public may have previously accepted the narrative that the neighborhood school was a good, or only choice, the public and parents may now have a more critical lens by which they examine schools since the neighborhood school is no longer the only choice. All the parents in the study were satisfied or very happy with their school experience and classroom teacher.

First, regardless of what schools choose to do with marketing, they must first ensure that students are having meaningful academic experiences that positively impact educational outcomes. Not only is this the primary purpose of education, it may also be the best way to mitigate competition from outside actors who are applying pressure on the school system to privatize. In this study, all of the parents were satisfied or happy with the school experience for their child. From this study, a recommendation would be for schools to focus on creating

safe and caring environments for students and also teaching students social-emotional-cultural competencies.

Secondly, I'd like to bring awareness to school and district leadership that the process of marketing schools seems to default to White, middle-class values and has the potential to impact historically marginalized populations. If parents are seeking an active PTA that supports events such as walk-a-thons, this could be out of balance with the student or parent population at the school site. Concurrently, not providing information related to the quality of the public school or demonstrating the assets that exist within a school community may leave the school susceptible to higher levels of competition. The GreatSchools website rates schools based on test scores, which has been hailed as a misguided notion of school effectiveness or quality. To not provide a counterbalance or narrative to the rating seems to leave a vacuum of information in which parents will default to acknowledge the information that is online. At a foundational level, if schools and school districts are trying to positively convey their strengths to the public and parents, they should put effort into creating websites that can convey accurate and detailed information as well provide parents with insight into the culture and climate of each school. School districts should be also wary of inadvertently setting up conditions for competition between schools when promoting the unique qualities of the individual schools.

It may also be worth school leadership spending time with their parents to identify parents who would accurately and fairly share what they like about the school to other prospective parents. This may be a way to spread the mindset and belief system that Riley and Blake shared in terms of supporting public education and Madelyn alluded to with seeing

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a cultural shift in other parents to not judge schools based on test scores. If word-of-mouth recommendations are impactful for prospective parents, then schools can encourage parents who feel positively about the school to share testimonials about it.

Finally, a campaign by the parents in the school and school administration may help improve the quality of information for prospective parents. Parents could share their positive experiences with the school on Facebook mom groups and GreatSchools. Concurrently, the school can improve the information on the website for prospective parents. This activation of the current parents at the school could lead to an alternative narrative contrasting with the GreatSchools rating. School focus on pushing their website up on algorithmic searches of the school after schools improve the content of their website may also serve to counteract GreatSchools ratings.

Summary of Recommendations

Future research recommendations include exploring the impacts of middle-class parents within integrated spaces, with a focus on intended and unintended impacts on historically marginalized populations. Further examining the novel finding-the parent ideology of democratic values and equitable access for all students–could be worthwhile. Another recommendation would be to conduct a longitudinal inquiry that explores parents and their school choices over time. A comparative case study across the community, examining the parents who stay at the neighborhood school and the parents who choose alternative schools, may shed light on the school marketplace. More research on the GreatSchools website is needed to understand its impacts on families. Finally, further research studying Latine parents and school choice would add to a thin body of literature.

The first recommendation to practitioners is to ensure that students have positive educational experiences, separate from school choice, this is the primary responsibility of the school. Additional recommendations for practitioners include having awareness that marketing may attract specific parent populations and a recommendation to use an asset lens for the community. Minimally, schools that want to communicate with prospective parents need to improve the quality of their websites to include vital school information, including about its cultures and values. Last, schools can identify and empower parents to share testimonials and promote the school to prospective parents.

Closing Reflection

I began the study of school choice based on my life and work experiences. My immigrant parents always wanted me to have opportunities not afforded them, including access to the "best" schools. My parents' cultural assets were not always recognized. At an early age, I was interested in communication and the power of information.

As a public educator, I've seen increased pressure to have school choice options for parents and the negative impacts of charter schools. My personal and work lives regularly overlap with one another since I regularly get asked about "good" or "bad" schools, often based on bias, racism, and centering whiteness.

This study was my first foray into studying school choice and working with parents as a beginning researcher. I remember telling the first person I interviewed, "You're my first interview. I'm nervous and really excited." My one regret in this study was not having Spanish-speaking Latine parents, whom I'll now refer to as Latine parents, participate in

interviews. Although hopeful that I would have two Latine interviews, neither occurred. I spoke to the lack of Latine parent interviews in chapter three, but let me be more candid here.

I went into participant recruitment with my previous experience and knowledge that traditional methods wouldn't be enough to connect with Latine parents, so I did more outreach to connect to Latine parents. I checked my translations with native Spanish speakers from México and sent individual text messages in Spanish. The principal communicated to the kindergarten teachers the importance of the study so that they could connect with Latine parents. Thinking that relationships may be key, the community liaisons at the school also made individual phone calls. And I walked the campus at morning drop-off with a smile on my face to drum up excitement. It wasn't enough.

I've wondered if the topic of school choice is of importance to Latine parents. That is not to say that Latine parents don't care about their child's school. Rather, I wonder if there are other topics of higher interest and priority to Latine parents. I recommended that future researchers consider immersion and participatory action research with Latine parents rather than coming in with a topic in mind. Sit down and ask parents, "What matters to you about your child? What matters to you about school?" and see what arises. I'd like to know what you find out.

As a practitioner, this study further illuminated the structural issues with communication and information within our school system which are rooted in White supremacy culture. We continue to make slight adjustments to our communication methods in the hopes that we will gather a wide range of input from parents, in this case, Latine parents. It's not enough. Our continued attempts to use a flawed communication system may contribute to internalized

bias. It's far easier to blame others than ourselves. If we've done more outreach, but parents aren't responding, it could be easier to say it's a parent issue rather than looking internally at what we need to change. We can't continue trying to make square pegs fit into round holes and then wonder why it's not working. We have to sit down with parents and ask them what is important to them and how they want to communicate that with the school. We have to stop doing things for parents without them.

Closure

Neoliberalism and the pressure to privatize education have contributed to the marketization of education. Parents are aware of school options which can include public, charter, private, or magnet school. This study explored the gap in the literature studying school choice in a suburban area in a non-competitive school market. The goal of the study was to explore parent perspective on school choice to understand the decisions and rationale behind why parents may choose their neighborhood Title I school. Additionally, this study sought to explore the experiences of Latine parents since there is limited prior research studying how Latine families navigate school choice. Latine parent responses indicated that they care about the factors related to school choice and point to the need for further study.

The most optimistic finding in this study was the equity lens expressed by three parents. Their perspectives demonstrate a return to the belief system that public education is for the betterment of democracy rather than for personal gain.

This research leaves me hopeful for the future of public education and the ability for us to coalesce around the shared belief around the benefits of education for all students. As Riley

shared, "If we're all going to make it, then we all need to share the responsibility of building

public education for everyone."

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Appendix A

Template: Letter of Support from an Elementary Principal

[Letterhead of school sending letter of support to Principal Investigator (PI) of study. Letters of support can come via email or in hard copy]

Date:

Re: Parent experiences with school choice at Title I Schools

Dear Christina Lee Ballantyne,

_____ Elementary School is aware of your proposed research project. Your study seeks to understand the narratives surrounding choice and the considerations of parents who have selected a Title I school for their Kindergartener. This research could contribute Title I schools ability to improve communication with parents who are engaged in the school selection process.

I understand the involvement of _____ Elementary School in assisting you to accomplish this project includes:

1. Administering a quantitative survey instrument to all kindergarten parents via multiple school communication methods such as email and other school communication tools. *Kindergarten parents with older students at the school will be directed to the end of the survey after they indicate that they have an older child.
2. Allocating my community liaison to answer questions and support parent participation. This may look like making phone calls or engaging in face-to-face communication.
3. Allocating my community liaison to serve as a cultural broker during focus groups. This will include interpretation and trust/relationship building alongside you, the Principal Investigator (PI). My community liaison will be obligated to protect the parents' (research participants') identities by keeping the participants' identities confidential and turning over any notes or data to the PI for storage and safekeeping.
4. Communicating the research study goals to kindergarten teachers so that the teachers can direct any questions to the PI.
5. If requested by the parents at my school, provide a confidential space on campus to conduct focus groups.

As the principal of _____ elementary school able to approve research at this site, I have read through your research proposal and support our school's involvement in this project and look forward to working with you.

Should you have any questions, please get in touch with me at [phone number/email address].

Sincerely,
[name]
Principal

Appendix B

Consent Notice: Parent – English

Parent School Selection at Title I Schools

Dear __,

I am conducting a research study to better understand parent experiences with school choice at Title I schools. This research could contribute to the ability of Title I schools to improve communication with parents during the school selection process.

The title of this study is "Parent School Selection at Title I Schools."
You may have heard about this study from your school or classroom teacher.

I am a doctoral student at San José State University. David Whitenack, Ph.D. is my faculty supervisor.

Participation in this study will consist of two parts. You do not need to do one part to do the other.
1. Survey - 15-30 minutes
2. Interview - 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded and will be held in person or via Zoom depending on parent preference. Interviews held over Zoom will be video recorded and participants will have the option to turn off their camera.

You are receiving this consent notice along with the survey.

There is no compensation associated with this study. Your participation will be kept confidential. A limit to confidentiality is that I am a mandated reporter and I am required to report cases of abuse, neglect, and intent to harm self or others. The following people will have access to the data and information shared including the recorded interviews: me, my faculty supervisor, and the school outreach liaison. There are no known risks involved in this research. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect. You have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions, please email me at christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu.
Concerns or complaints about the research may be presented to Ferdie Rivera, Ph.D, Interim Director for the Educational Doctorate Program.
For questions about participants' rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Richard Mocarski, Associate Vice President for Research, San José State University at 408-924-2479 or irb@sjsu.edu.

Your completion of the survey or participation in the interview indicates your willingness to participate. Please keep this information for your records.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Christina Ballantyne
SJSU Ed.D. Leadership Program Student
christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu

Consent Notice: Parent – Spanish

Procesco de elección la Escuela de los Padres en las Escuelas de Título I

Estimado __,

Estoy conduciendo un estudio de investigación para entender mejor las experiencias de padres de familias con la elección de la escuela en escuelas de Título I. Esta investigación podrá mejorar la comunicación de escuelas de Título I con familias durante el proceso de la elección de escuela.

El título de este studio es "Proceso de elección de escuela a para padres en las escuelas del

Título I."Es posible que usted haya escuchado sobre esta investigación por parte de su

escuela o maestra/o de salón de clase.

Soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Estatal de San José (SJSU, por sus siglas en inglés). El Dr. David Whitenack, es Professor de la Faculatad de SJSU y es el supervisor de esta investigación.

La participación en este estudio consistirá de dos partes. No es necesario hacer una parte para hacer la otra.
1. Encuesta - 15-30 minutos
2. Entrevista, 30-45 minutos. Las entrevistas se realizaran en persona o a traves de Zoom, según sean la preferencia de los padres. El audio de estas entrevista sera gravado. Las entrevistas realizadas a través de Zoom se grabarán en video y los participantes tendrán la opción de apagar su cámara.

Usted está recibiendo esta notificación de consentimiento acompañado por la encuesta.

No hay compensación asociada con este estudio. Su participación se mantendrá confidencial. El límite de la confidencialidad es como parte de las responsabilidades de mi trabajo, estoy obligado a reporter casos de abuso, negligencia, e intento de dañarme a mí mismo oa otros. Las siguientes personas tendrán acceso a los datos y la información compartida, incluidas las entrevistas grabadas: mi supervisor de la facultad, el enlace de extension escolar, y su servidor. No hay conocimiento de riesgos involucrados con esta investigación. Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted puede rechazar participar en

el estudio por completo o cualquier parte del estudio sin ningún efecto negativo. Yo tengo el derecho de omitir cualquier pregunta que no desee contestar.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor mandeme un correo electrónico a christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu.
Preocupación o quejas sobre esta investigación pueden ser presentados a Ferdie Rivera, Ph.D., Director Provisional para el Programa de Doctorado Educativo.

Para preguntas sobre derechos de los participantes o si usted siente que ha sido perjudicado en cualquier manera por su participación en este estudio, por favor contacte al Dr. Richard Mocarski, Vicepresidente Asociado para Investigación, Universidad Estatal de San José al 408-924-2479 o irb@sjsu.edu.

Gracias por su tiempo y consideración,
Christina Ballantyne
SJSU Ed.D. Estudiante del Programa de Liderazgo
christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu

Appendix D

Parent Survey – English

Qualtrics Survey Link

I understand that this research study seeks to understand parent experience with school selection.

I understand that there is no compensation associated with this study. No identifying information will be collected, and my participation will be confidential. There are no known risks involved in this research. My participation in this study is completely voluntary. I can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect. I have the right to skip any question I do not wish to answer.

This survey should take 15-30 minutes to complete.

I consent to participate.
- Yes
- No

This survey is for "first-time" parents at the school. Do you have an older child at the school?
- Yes
- No

___

Ethnicity of your kindergartener
Please check all the appropriate box(es) that apply below
- African American, not Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latino
- Pacific Islander
- White, not Hispanic
- Two or more races, not Hispanic
- Prefer not to say

Number of people in household
Please check the appropriate box below

- 2 people in the household
- 3 people in the household
- 4 people in the household
- 5 people in the household
- 6 people in the household
- 7 people in the household
- 8 or more people in the household

Children in the household
Please check the appropriate box below
- 1 child in the household
- 2 children in the household
- 3 children in the household
- 4 children in the household
- 5 children in the household
- 6 children in the household
- 7 children in the household
- 8 children or more in the household

Age of each child in the household
Please check all the appropriate boxes below
- 0-12 months
- 1 year old
- 2 years old
- 3 years old
- 4 years old
- 5 years old
- 6 years old

Parent education level - highest education level in the household
Please check the appropriate box below.
- Elementary school (kindergarten-5th grade)
- Middle school (6th-8th grade)
- High school (9th-12th grade)
- Some college
- College
- Some graduate school
- Graduate school

Annual income level
Please check the appropriate box below $23,000-$29,000
- $29,000-$33,000
- $33,000-$36,000
- $36,000-$42,000
- $42,000-$48,000
- $48,000-$51,000
- $51,000-$54,000
- $54,000-$60,000
- $60,000-$68,000
- $68,000-$77,000
- $77,000-$86,000
- $86,000-$100,000
- $100,000 or higher

Do you know someone who works or worked at the school?
- Yes
- No

Do you know someone who attends or attended the school?
- A friend's child
- A relative's child
- A neighbor's child
- An acquaintance's child
- I do not know anyone who attends or attended the school

Thinking back to when you selected a school for your kindergartener:

Why did you choose the school?
Please check the appropriate boxes below.
- It's the assigned school in my neighborhood, and I didn't consider any other schools
- I looked at other school choices and selected my neighborhood school
- I chose this school instead of my assigned neighborhood school
- Other factor(s), please write them below

Thinking back to when you selected a school for your kindergartener:
What resources/people provided the most helpful information when you were looking at school choices?
Please check the appropriate boxes on the scale below.

	1 – Not important	2 – Somewhat important	3 - Important	4 – Very Important	Not applicable
Getting information from family, friends, or acquaintances					
General information from the website					
Gathering information from social media such as GreatSchools or Facebook parent groups					
Seeing or visitng the school					
Going on a school tour					
Seeing the information on school fliers					
Going on a school tour					
Meeting the principal at the school					
Meeting the kindergarten teachers at the school					
Meeting other teachers or staff at the school					
Other factor(s), please write it in below					

Thinking back to when you selected a school for your kindergartener: What resources/people provided the most helpful information to you when you were looking at school choices? Please check the appropriate boxes on the scale below.

	1 – Not	2 –	3 -	4 – Very	Not

	important	Somewhat important	Important	Important	applicable
The reputation of the school					
The location of the school					
I felt the school was safe					
I was confident in the quality of the staff (principal, teachers, other staff)					
Before or after school programs were offered at the school					
There were special programs at the school, for example science, technology, or the arts					
The school's special education offerings					
The school's academic achievement data					

What information or opportunities do you think the school should provide to future families who are considering sending their child to the school?

	1 – Not important	2 – Somewhat important	3 - Important	4 – Very Important	Not applicable
School philosophy					
Approaches to teaching					
Opportunities to meet					

the teachers					
Opportunities to visit the school					
Opportunities to talk with current parents at the school					
Parent testimonials about the school					
Student academic performance information					
School safety information					
School program information					
Other factor(s), please write it in below.					

How satisfied are you with the information provided on the school's website?

Not satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable

What recommendations would you make to improve the school's website?

How can the school do a better job communicating with families who are selecting a school?

Are you interested in participating in a parent focus group related to school selection?

- Yes
- No

If interested in participating in a focus group, my preferred method of contact is:

- Text: phone number
- Call: phone number
- Email

For the focus group, I would like Spanish interpretation

- Yes
- No

We thank you for your time taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Appendix E

Parent Survey – Spanish

Yo comprendo que este estudio de investigación busca entender la experiencia de padres de familia con la selección de escuela.

Yo comprendo que no hay compensación asociada con este estudio. Ninguna información de identificación será coleccionada y mi participación será confidencial. No hay conocimiento de riesgos involucrados con esta investigación. Mi participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Yo puedo rechazar mi participación en el estudio entero o en cualquier parte del estudio sin ningún efecto negativo. Yo tengo el derecho de omitir cualquier pregunta que no deseo contestar.

Esta encuesta debería tomar 15-25 minutos para completar.

Yo doy consentimiento en participar.
- Sí
- No

Esta encuesta es para padres de familias de "primera vez" en la escuela. ¿Usted tiene un hijo/a mayor en la escuela?
- Sí
- No

Origen étnico de su alumno de kínder
Por favor marque todas la(s) casilla(s) que aplican a continuación
- Afroamericano No Hispano
- Nativo de America del Norte or Nativo de Alaska
- Asiático/a
- Filipino/a
- Hispano o Latino
- Isleño del Pacifico (Nativo de la Polinesia)
- Blanco/a no Hispano
- Dos o Más Razas No Hispano
- Prefiero No Decir

Número de habitantes en la casa
Por favor marque la casilla apropiada a continuación
- 2 personas en la casa
- 3 personas en la casa
- 4 personas en la casa
- 5 personas en la casa
- 6 personas en la casa
- 7 personas en la casa
- 8 o más personas en la casa

Niños/as en la casa
Por favor marque la casilla apropiada a continuación
- 1 niño/a en la casa
- 2 niños/as en la casa
- 3 niños/as en la casa
- 4 niños/as en la casa
- 5 niños/as en la casa
- 6 niños/as en la casa
- 7 niños/as en la casa
- 8 o más niños/as en la casa

Edad de cada niño/a en la casa
Por favor marque todas las casillas apropiadas a continuación
- 0-12 meses
- 1 año
- 2 años
- 3 años
- 4 años
- 5 años
- 6 años

Nivel de Educacion Padre/Madre - Nivel de educación más alto en la casa
Por favor marque la casilla apropiada a continuación
- Escuela Primaria (kínder a quinto grado)
- Escuela Secundaria (sexto a octavo grado)
- Preparatoria (noveno a duodécimo grado)
- Un poco de universidad
- Universidad
- Un poco de escuela postgrado
- Escuela Postgrado

Nivel de Ingreso Anual
Por favor marque la casilla apropiada a continuación
- $23,000-$29,000
- $29,000-$33,000
- $33,000-$36,000
- $36,000-$42,000
- $42,000-$48,000
- $48,000-$51,000
- $51,000-$54,000
- $54,000-$60,000
- $60,000-$68,000
- $68,000-$77,000
- $77,000-$86,000
- $86,000-$100,000
- $100,000 o más alto

Usted conoce a alguien que trabaja o trabajaba en la escuela?
- Sí
- No

Usted conoce a alguien que asiste o asistió la escuela?
- Un hijo/a de un amigo/a
- Un hijo/a de un pariente
- Un hijo/a de un vecino
- Un hijo/a de un conocido
- Yo no conozco a nadie que asiste o asistió la escuela

Pensando atrás a cuando usted seleccionó la escuela para su estudiante de kínder:

¿Por qué eligió la escuela?
Por favor marque las casillas apropiadas en la escala a continuación.
- Es la escuela asignada en mi vecindario
- Yo me fije en otras opciones de escuelas y seleccione la escuela en mi vecindario
- Yo seleccione esta escuela en vez de la escuela asignada en mi vecindario
- Otro(s) factor(es), por favor escriba por debajo

Pensando atrás a cuando usted seleccionó la escuela para su estudiante de kínder:
¿Cuales recursos/ personas le proporcionaron la información más útil cuando estaba buscando opciones escolares?

Por favor marque las casillas apropiadas en la escala a continuación.

	1 - No Importante	2 - Un Poco Importante	3 - Importante	4 - Muy Importante	No Aplicable
Recibir información de parientes, amigos, o conocidos					
Información general del sitio web de la escuela					
Datos de rendimiento académico del sitio web de la escuela					
Juntando información de redes sociales como Great Schools o grupos de padres de familia en Facebook					
Viendo o visitando la escuela					
Ir a una visita guiada de la escuela					
Ver información en folletos de escuela					
Conocer el/la directora de la escuela					
Conocer las/los maestras/os de kínder de la escuela					
Conocer otras/os maestros/as o empleados de la escuela					
Otro(s) factor(es), por favor escriba por debajo					

Pensando atrás a cuando usted seleccionó la escuela para su estudiante de kínder:

¿Cuáles factores fueron importantes para ti?
Por favor marque las casillas apropiadas en la escala a continuación.

	1 - No Importante	2 - Un Poco Importante	3 - Importante	4 - Muy Importante	No Aplicable
La reputación de la escuela					
La ubicación de la escuela es conveniente para mi familia					
Sentí que la escuela era segura					
Tengo confianza en la calidad del personal (director/a, maestras/os, otros empleados)					
El aspecto físico de los edificios de la escuela y patio de juegos era agradable					
Programas antes y después de escuela ofrecidos en la escuela					
Habían programas especiales en la escuela, por ejemplo, ciencias, tecnología, y las artes					
Las ofrendas de educación especial en la escuela					

¿Qué información piensa usted que la escuela debe proveer a familias en el futuro que están considerando mandar a su estudiante a la escuela?

	1 - No Importante	2 - Un Poco Importante	3 - Importante	4 - Muy Importante	No Aplicable
Filosofía de la escuela					
Método de enseñanza					
Conocer a las/los maestras/os					
Oportunidades para visitar la escuela					
Oportunidades para hablar con padres de familias actuales de la escuela					
Testimonios de padres de familia sobre la escuela					
Información del rendimiento académico de los estudiantes					
Información del desarrollo académico de los estudiantes					
Información de seguridad escolar					
Información de programas escolares					
Otro(s) factor(es), por favor escriba por debajo					

¿Cómo puede la escuela hacer un mejor trabajo comunicándose con familias que están seleccionando una escuela?

¿Le interesaría participar en un grupo de enfoque de padres relacionado con la selección de escuela e información para padres de familia?
- Sí
- No

Le damos las gracias por su tiempo dedicado a esta encuesta.
Su respuesta ha sido registrada.

Interview Protocol - English

Process
1. Welcome, Overview of the topic
2. Questions
3. Closing

Welcome
- Hello and welcome to our session. Thank you for coming to talk to me about school choice. My name is Christina Ballantyne and I'm from San José State University.
- I am conducting a study on the parent experience related to choosing a school for your child and am curious about when you were looking at schools for your kindergartner, how you made your school choice, and what the school can do to improve communication with prospective families.
- You were invited to participate because you have a kindergartener in the school.
- There are no wrong answers but rather different points of view. Keep in mind that I'm just as interested in negative experiences as positive ones.
- I'd like to record the session because I want to miss any of your comments. We will use pseudonyms today and no names will be included in the study. Your confidentiality is of the utmost importance to me. The limit to confidentiality is that I am a mandated reporter and am required to report cases of abuse, neglect, and intent to harm self or others.
- My role today is to ask questions and guide the discussion.

Questions
- There are a lot of different ways that families and students find their school. Thinking back to when you registered for school. How did you pick ___ school?
- Did you look at other schools?
- Please share your experience when you were registering your kindergartner.
- In your experience, what were positive experiences when registering/selecting (for) ____ school?
- In your experience, what challenges were there when registering/selecting (for) ___ school?
- What would you recommend changing about the process?
- What did the school do that you appreciated?
- What were the things about ___ school that appealed to you?
- Were there any things about other schools that you wanted to avoid?

Probes
- Would you explain further?
- Would you give an example?

- Is there anything else you would like to share

Conclusion
Thank you so much for participating today.
My goal was to hear about your process with school choice. What you shared was valuable and rich information. The hope is that this would contribute to schools, like this one, make changes in how they communicate to prospective parents.

Before we leave today, is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you again and have a great day.

Interview Protocol - Spanish

Proceso
1. Bienvenidos, Resumen del tema
2. Preguntas
3. Cierre

Bienvenidos
- Hola y bienvenidos a nuestra sesión. Gracias por venir a hablar conmigo/ nosotros sobre la selección de escuela. Mi nombre es Christina Ballantyne y soy de la Universidad Estatal de San José. Asistiendo es _____, la/el encargada/o de enlace de comunidad de la escuela.
- Yo estoy conduciendo un estudio sobre la experiencia de padres de familias relacionado con la selección de escuela para su hijo/a y tengo curiosidad sobre cuando estaba buscando escuelas para su estudiante de Kínder, como hizo su selección de escuela, y cómo puede la escuela mejorar la comunicación con familias prospectivas.
  · Usted fue invitado a participar porque usted tiene un estudiante de Kínder en la escuela.
  · No hay respuestas incorrectas pero quizás diferentes puntos de vista. Tenga en mente que nosotros estamos interesados en experiencias negativas al igual que las positivas.
  · Me gustaría grabar la sesión porque no quiero perder cualquiera de sus comentarios. Usaremos seudónimos hoy y ningún nombre será incluido en el estudio. Su confidencialidad es muy importante.
  · Mi papel hoy es hacer preguntas y guiar la conversación.

Preguntas
  Vamos a las preguntas que son relacionadas con la selección de escuela:
  · Hay muchas maneras en las cuales familias y estudiantes buscan su escuela. Pensando atrás a cuando se registró en la escuela. ¿Cómo selecciono la escuela ___ ?
  · ¿Usted buscó otras escuelas?
  · Por favor comparta su experiencia cuando estaba registrando a su estudiante de kinder.
  · En su experiencia, cuáles fueron las experiencias positivas cuando estaba registrando/seleccionando (para) la escuela _____?
  · En su experiencia, cuáles fueron los desafíos cuando estaba registrando/ seleccionando (para) la escuela _____?
  · ¿Qué recomendaría cambiar del proceso?
  · ¿Qué hizo la escuela que usted agradeció?
  · ¿Cuáles fueron las cosas sobre la escuela _____ que le atrajeron?
  · Cuales fueron las cosas sobre las otras escuelas que usted quiera evitar?

Averiguar

- · ¿Puede explicar más?
- · ¿Puede dar un ejemplo?
- · Hay alguna otra cosa que le gustaría compartir

Conclusión

Muchas gracias por su participación hoy.

Mi meta fue escuchar sobre su proceso con la selección de escuela. La información que usted compartió fue muy valiosa y abundante. La esperanza es que esto pueda contribuir a escuelas, como esta, para hacer cambios en cómo se comunican con las familias prospectivas.

Antes de irnos hoy, ¿hay algo más que le gustaría compartir?

Un recordatorio amable de que acordamos mantener la confidencialidad de cada persona en este cuarto hoy.

Muchas gracias otra vez y que tenga un buen día.

Appendix H

Letter of Introduction: Community Liaison

Dear __,

I am conducting a research study to better understand parent experiences with school choice at Title I schools. This research could contribute to Title I schools' ability to improve communication with parents during the school selection process.

You may have heard about this study from your principal.

Your role in this study will be aligned with your role and responsibilities at the school site. This will likely include the following:

1. Supporting and encouraging parent participation in the study. This may look like making phone calls or engaging in face-to-face communication to promote and support survey completion or focus group participation.
2. Directing questions to me, the principal investigator (PI).
3. Serving as a cultural broker during focus groups. This will include interpretation and trust/relationship building.
4. Maintaining the parent anonymity and confidentiality in the study by keeping the] participants' identities confidential and turning over any notes or data to the PI for storage and safekeeping.
5. Providing support to the principal in communicating the research study goals to kindergarten teachers so that the teachers can direct any questions to the PI.

If you have any questions, please email me at christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu.

The next steps include sending you the timeline and next action steps.

Thank you for your time,

Christina Lee Ballantyne
SJSU Ed.D. Leadership Program Student
christina.ballantyne@sjsu.edu

Recruitment Script – English

1.<u>Introduction:</u> Hello, this is Christina Ballantyne. I am calling to invite you to participate in a research study. I am a doctoral student at San José State University. David Whitenack, Ph.D. is my faculty supervisor. The title of this study is "Parent School Selection at Title I Schools."

2.<u>Reason for the call:</u> You are being invited to participate because you are a kindergarten parent at _____ school.

3.<u>Brief description of the study and commitment from the parent:</u> This study wants to better understand parent experiences with school choice at Title I schools. This could improve communication with future parents during the school selection process. The study has two parts, a survey that will take 15-30 minutes and an interview that will take 30-45 minutes. You can do either part of the study and do not need to do one to do the other. There is no compensation for this study and your participation will be kept confidential, unless necessary to share due to reports of abuse, neglect, and intent to harm self or others, and no identifying information will be collected. Your participation is voluntary.

4.<u>Opportunity for questions:</u> "Do you have any questions about the study?"

5.<u>Interest check:</u> "Can I send you the survey to complete?
     "Can I schedule you for an interview?"
6.Closing:
        a. If interested: "Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. Your participation can help schools improve communication for future parents."
        b. If not interested: "Thank you for your time."

Adapted from: https://research.umbc.edu/telephone-recruitment-screening-scripts/

Appendix J

Recruitment Script - Spanish

1.Introducción: Hola, soy Christina Ballantyne. Llamó para invitarlo a participar en un

estudio de investigación. Soy un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Estatal de San

José (SJSU, por sus siglas en inglés). El Dr. David Whitenack, es Professor de la Faculatad

de mis estudios de doctorado y de esta investigación. El título de este studio es "Procesco de

elección de escuela para padres en las escuelas del Título I."

2.Razón por la llamada: Usted está invitado a participar porque es un padre de familia de un
estudiante en Kínder en la escula ___.

3.Descripción breve del estudio y compromiso del padre/madre: Este estudio está diseñado
para mejor comprender las experiencias de madres y padres con la selección de escuela en
escuelas de Título I. Esto puede mejorar la comunicación con madres y padres en el futuro
durante el proceso de selección de escuela. El estudio está dividido en dos partes, una
encuesta que tomará 15-30 minutos y una entrevista de 30-45 minutos. Puede hacer cualquier
parte del studio y no necesita hacer una para hacer la otra. No hay compensación para este
estudio y su participación será mantenida confidencial y ninguna información de
identificación será coleccionada, a menos que sea necessario compartir debido a la reporter
casos de abuso, negligencia, e intent de dañarme.a mí mismo oa otros. Su participación es
voluntaria.

4.Oportunidad para preguntas: "¿Usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio?"

5.Checar interés: ¿Le puedo mandar la encuesta para completar?
    ¿Puedo programarte para una entrevista?
6.Cierre:
        a. Si hay interés: "Gracias por aceptar participar en el estudio. Su participación puede
ayudar a las escuelas a mejorar la comunicación para familias en el futuro."
        b. No hay interés: "Gracias por su tiempo."

Appendix K

**Study Talking Points and Frequently Asked Questions –
English**

Q: What is a research study?
A: Research studies are done to discover new information or to answer a question about how we learn, behave and function with the end goal of benefitting society. Some studies involve simple tasks like completing a survey or participating in an interview.

Q: Who is doing this study? The school or San José State University?
A: The study is being conducted by a doctoral student at San José State University at our school. The school believes that the study will help them better communicate with prospective parents in the future.

Q: Who will know I did this study?
A: No identifying information will be collected and your participation will be kept confidential. The Principal Investigator, PI, Christina Ballantyne will know that you participated. The community liaison may know you participated. The completed study will not contain any names or other identifying information from the parents/guardians. The school will be able to read the completed study at the end of the research.

Q: What if I decide I don't want to participate after I started?
A: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect. You have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Q: How long will this take?
A: The survey portion of the study will take 15-30 minutes. The interview part of the study will take 30-45 minutes. You do not need to do one part to do the other.

Q: What's the format of the interview? And when will it take place?
A: The interview will be in person or virtual depending on the preference of the parents/guardians. Parents will provide days and times that work for them and a date and time will be scheduled and confirmed.

Adapted from: https://www.rochester.edu/ohsp/subject/participatingInResearch.html

**Study Talking Points and Frequently Asked Questions –
Spanish**

P: ¿Qué es un estudio de investigación?
R: Estudios de investigación son conducidos para descubrir nueva información o para solucionar preguntas sobre cómo aprendemos, nos comportamos y funcionamos con el fin de beneficiar a la sociedad. Algunos estudios [como este] involucran tareas sencillas como completar una encuesta o participar en una entrevista.

P: ¿Quién está haciendo este estudio? ¿La escuela o la Universidad Estatal de San José?
R: El estudio está conducido por un estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Estatal de San José en nuestra escuela. La escuela tiene confianza que el estudio los ayudará a comunicarse mejor con posibles padres de familias en el futuro.

P: ¿Quién sabrá que participe en este estudio?
R: Ninguna información identificativa será coleccionada y su participación será mantenida confidencial. La Investigadora Principal (PI, por sus siglas en inglés), Christina Ballantyne sabrá que usted participó. La persona de enlace comunitario puede saber que usted participó. El estudio completo no contiene nombres o cualquier otra forma de información identificativa de los padres de familia/ tutores legales. La escuela tendrá la oportunidad de leer el estudio completado al final de la investigación.

P: ¿Qué si decido que no quiero participar en el estudio después de haber comenzado?
R: Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Usted puede rechazar participar en el estudio completo o en cualquier parte del estudio sin ningún efecto negativo. Usted tiene el derecho de omitir cualquier pregunta que usted no desea contestar.

P: ¿Cuánto tiempo tomará este estudio?
R: La parte del estudio, que es la encuesta, tomará 15-30 minutos. La parte de la encuesta de la entrevista del studio tomará de 30 a 45 minutos. No es necesario hacer una parte para hacer la otra.

P: Cuál es el formato del entrevista? ¿Y cuándo se llevará a cabo?
R: La entrevista será en persona o virtual dependiendo en la preferencia de los padres de

familia/ tutores legales. Los padres de familia proveerán días y horarios que trabajan para

ellos y una fecha y tiempo que trabaja para en entrevista será programado y confirmado.