DIGITAL ACCESS TO
SCHOLARSHIP AT HARVARD
DASH.HARVARD.EDU

HARVARD LIBRARY
Office for Scholarly Communication

Examining How Superintendents Understand, Leverage, and Balance Social Justice and Accountability: Case Studies in Leadership

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters

**Examining How Superintendents Understand, Leverage, and Balance
Social Justice and Accountability:
Case Studies in Leadership**

Laura Kay Kelley

Committee Members:
Professor Katherine C. Boles
Professor Andrés Antonio Alonso
Professor James P. Honan

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

2016

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT

By almost every measure, American schools have not educated poor, minority, and disadvantaged children to the same level as their White, some Asian, non-poor and non-disabled counterparts (American Institutes for Research, 2013; Gándara, 2010; NCES, 2014; Rojas-Lebouef & Slate, 2011; Thurlow, Bremer, & Albus, 2011) despite increased accountability expectations for all student subgroup performance outcomes (DeNisco, 2013; Payne, 2008). Students who do not achieve academically are potentially forced to contend with negative health and social difficulties, as well as unemployment, underemployment and a cycle of marginal, low paying and often part-time jobs (Buddin, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2009/2010; Holmes & Zajacova, 2014). Aside from the moral and social costs of these disparities, the economic loss of underperforming students could range into trillions of dollars in lifetime earnings (Hanushek, 2010; Hanushek and Woessmann 2012).

High-stakes accountability systems, based primarily on standardized test data, have become the cornerstone of federal education policies designed to close those achievement gaps among student subgroups (Supovitz, 2010). The shift from comparing educational inputs such as reduced class size and increased per-pupil expenditures to an emphasis on achievement outcomes offers a highly public measure for determining comparative school and student success. Financial and nonmonetary rewards and a range of sanctions and interventions for schools and districts considered underperforming are outlined in Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's summary of *A Blueprint for Reform* (2010). From an outcomes-based achievement perspective, current policy supports equitable results for all students, with more flexibility around means to achieve those

outcomes. This challenges superintendents to prioritize among many programs, responsibilities, and reform efforts that promote demonstrable student achievement gains, equitable outcomes, and responsive learning experiences.

Social justice in education involves the persistent pursuit of equitable educational experiences and results across social identity groups in schools, a much broader mission than the focus of today's accountability policies. Questions arise as to how the current accountability context and social justice leadership intersect. While some argue that today's accountability provides a great opportunity to advance goals of social justice and equity (Skrla & Scheurich, 2004), others contend that accountability policies per se are "flawed as equity-producing initiative[s], lacking adequate consideration of power relations, democratic participation, and rich, diverse philosophies of education" (Gunzenhauser & Hyde, 2007, p. 490). How superintendents understand, leverage, and balance accountability conditions with their perceptions of social justice impacts their leadership.

In the end, this study examines how three superintendents in districts recognized for closing achievement gaps among student subgroups understand the relationship between social justice and accountability, how the concepts intersect in their practice, and what the actions are that superintendents take in their attempt to satisfy accountability conditions while addressing various causes of social injustice in their districts. This research is guided by a conceptual framework shaped by McKenzie et al.'s (2008) tasks of social justice leadership: increasing student achievement, raising critical consciousness among staff and students, and doing this work in inclusive communities. It is also guided by Lashway's (2002) description of role shifts superintendents face as a result of

high-stakes accountability: tensions between accountability and authority, heightened expectations for instructional leadership, and the impact of public and transparent evaluation criteria on superintendent effectiveness. Framed by these researchers and the findings from the superintendents studied here, this work offers a set of strategies, understandings, and observations for current and aspiring superintendents who wish to improve educational outcomes for all children as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is currently being revised and implemented.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Given the country's changing demographics and history of disparate outcomes for different students, there is little doubt that increased accountability for the achievement outcomes of all students has become a priority for policymakers, parents, and practitioners alike. In the midst of shifting federal regulations and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), accountability questions regarding "for what" and "to whom" loom large, particularly among the daily leadership decisions of our nation's district leaders.

Social justice leaders may use the pressure of accountability policy requirements to make drastic changes more quickly in underachieving schools (Chikwe, 2013). These leaders may divert resources and invest more funding into these schools and then communicate such support and choices by explaining how these actions might best meet accountability policy requirements. Such attempts may also leverage accountability policy to secure additional resources and support for chronically underserved schools with large numbers of marginalized students. Superintendents could use disaggregated student achievement data to highlight instances of inequity. Initiatives taken to leverage accountability policy to meet social justice goals could vary widely. Components of such initiatives might include designing a strategy around increasing access to highly effective teachers, paying closer attention to practices intended to serve underperforming subgroups, or mapping out how to reach targets for one of more underperforming subgroups.

There may also be times when promoting social justice goals conflict with accountability policy. In a historically and chronically underperforming district where most schools are in sanction status, a superintendent may be pressured into making decisions that offer quick fixes in order to get student achievement scores up and prevent further consequences. For example, implementing a test preparation program designed to quickly improve achievement scores may result in overall higher scores without building capacity to continue improvements over time. When districts already in sanction status implement a quick fix to address the challenges of accountability requirements, they might do so at the expense of a more proactive long-term improvement strategy. In schools where leaders and portions of teaching staffs must be replaced but tenure laws require maintenance of staff, simply switching teachers and building principals from one school to another meets the requirements of accountability policy reform. However, this strategy does not address the social justice tasks of improving outcomes for all students, raising critical consciousness amongst staff and students, and implementing inclusive practice and communities (McKenzie et al., 2008). In fact, moving staff as described may actually make such goals even more elusive. By selecting strategies that do not support long-term achievement for all students for the purposes of serving accountability policy, leaders could do more harm to their organizations than good (Hargreaves, 2007; Wang, 2012).

I have witnessed the aforementioned examples of leadership decisions and strategies through my own work in struggling school districts. In addition, I have documented such examples in my study of superintendents for a book of case studies. For example, I have seen superintendents take accountability policy and own it in ways that have been proactive for their districts in terms of not

waiting for consequences to be handed down by state or federal agencies. In fact, some superintendents have even increased what current policy measures and expects and have created internal accountability systems to help schools and districts assess their own progress against measures created by district staff and communities. By establishing indicators of importance to stakeholders in their own context, some superintendents have been able to include social justice goals within an internal accountability system that has its own set of responses to success or struggle, in addition to what state and federal accountability policy requires (Peterkin, Jewell-Sherman, Kelley, & Boozer, 2011).

These are examples of the types of situations and circumstances I am interested in uncovering, along with the leadership responses to such complex situations. Looking at accountability policy in isolation from social justice may in fact result in decisions like the example where high school teachers are simply swapped out with middle school teachers due to tenure rights and certification categories. Focusing only on social justice may serve as a missed opportunity to acknowledge and leverage accountability policy. Understanding how the dual purposes of accountability and social justice goals can be achieved may assist other leaders in complicated school systems.

How superintendents understand the relationship between accountability policies that promote progress via measurable student achievement gains with reforms intended to eliminate social injustice is the focus of this study. By almost every measure, American schools have not educated poor, minority, and disadvantaged children to the same level as their White, some Asian, non-poor and non-disabled counterparts (American Institutes for Research, 2012; Gándara, 2010; NCES, 2014; Rojas-Lebouef & Slate, 2011; Thurlow, Bremer, & Albus, 2011)

despite increased accountability for all student subgroup performance (DeNisco, 2013; Payne, 2008). Students who do not achieve academically are potentially forced to contend with negative health and social difficulties, as well as unemployment, underemployment and a cycle of marginal, low paying and often part-time jobs (Buddin, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2009/2010; Holmes & Zajacova, 2014). Aside from the moral and social costs of these disparities, the economic loss of underperforming students could range into the trillions of dollars in lifetime earnings (Hanushek, 2010; Hanushek and Woessmann 2012).

High-stakes accountability systems, based primarily on standardized test data, have become the cornerstone of United States federal education policies designed to close achievement gaps among student subgroups (Supovitz, 2010). The shift from comparing educational inputs such as reduced class size and increased per-pupil expenditures to evaluating achievement outcomes offers a highly public measure to determine comparative school and student success. Accountability policies now promote growth and improvement among student subgroups rather than pure performance and proficiency measures. Financial and nonmonetary rewards and a range of sanctions and interventions for schools and districts considered underperforming are also outlined in Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's summary of *A Blueprint for Reform* (2010). Districts and states earn more flexibility as student achievement outcomes improve, while chronically underperforming schools and districts "face additional restrictions" on funding and governance decisions (Duncan, 2010). Accordingly, the concept of equity has become more rooted in the distribution of outcomes rather than access to certain programs or processes (Opfer, 2006).

Regardless of current policy intentions, the relationship between

accountability and social justice can be simple or complex. Social justice involves the persistent pursuit of educational equity across social identity groups in schools (Wang, 2012). Some argue that today's accountability policies "start a discussion about an alternative, genuine, sociocultural vision of failure-free education" (Matusov, 2011, p. 7), providing a great opportunity to advance goals of social justice and equity (Skrla & Scheurich, 2004). Others contend that accountability policies per se are "flawed as equity-producing initiative[s], lacking adequate consideration of power relations, democratic participation, and rich, diverse philosophies of education" (Gunzenhauser & Hyde, 2007, p. 490). How do accountability policies and social justice work intersect?

Research Questions

In districts with disparate outcomes for unique subgroups of students, superintendents' reform work must be anchored in a commitment to more equitable outcomes while improving results for all children, meaning those students who need more support and resources get more, regardless if the superintendents are focusing on educational, managerial, or political concerns (Roza & Miles, 2002). To understand what this means for leadership and how a leader's dedication to improvement and equity affects student outcomes, one must examine the actual work of leading a school district recognized for working toward social justice goals.

This study examines how superintendents perceive the relationship between social justice and accountability, how the concepts intersect in their practice, and what actions superintendents take based on that understanding. As superintendents seek to demonstrate measurable student achievement gains to meet accountability requirements, they must leverage and balance decisions with

those that address issues of social justice. Theoharis (2007) and Vogel (2011) argue that thus far there is no shortage of theoretical work in social justice and leadership. However, empirical studies that specifically look into "the ways in which leaders enact justice" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 222) are largely absent.

This study contributes to the literature by providing some empirical evidence on the ways superintendents understand and enact social justice while striving to achieve accountability policy. Specifically, my research considers how three superintendents, recognized for closing achievement gaps and increasing achievement for all students, address social justice issues in their reform agendas. The following questions guide my research:

- How do these three superintendents describe, define, and understand the relationship between social justice and accountability in their respective district contexts?

- What do these three superintendents do to promote social justice in school districts while working to meet accountability expectations established by state and federal policy?

- What are the strategies and initiatives these three superintendents undertake to leverage the relationship between accountability expectations and their social justice agendas in their local contexts to improve educational outcomes for all students?

This study considers how three social justice-driven superintendents work to meet accountability expectations, work that could look radically different across three districts. Examples of how accountability and social justice goals may align and support one another may vary due to contextual priorities and

constraints; however, in these districts the critical overlapping aspect of social justice leadership and accountability policy is the focus on improving student achievement outcomes for all students. Key aspects of current accountability policy and leading for social justice can often seem to serve in a push-pull connection fraught with tension, yet the same features may actually serve in support of each other (Hargreaves & Braun, 2013). It is the understanding and negotiation of the two agendas that is the focus of my study. I examine the intersection of social justice and accountability, and I am conscientious about describing the relationship that reflects the title of the study—understanding, leveraging, and balancing of social justice and accountability—rather than portraying social justice and accountability only as opposing forces. Grounding the description and explanation of the relationship within actual decision-making and dilemmas of the superintendents and districts in the study helps illuminate connections and points of consonance and dissonance between social justice and accountability. Through the exploration for what and to whom superintendents feel accountable, I aim to better understand the decisions, trade-offs, and opportunities they see for advancing social justice.

Dissertation Preview and Organization

In Chapter 2, my dissertation begins with a definition of normative terms *social justice, equity*, and *accountability* to help frame the understanding of how these terms manifest themselves in the practice of school district leadership. This chapter also includes a review of relevant literature, which contains research-based definitions of key terms *social justice* and *accountability*, along with a discussion of leadership for equity and social justice. The conceptual framework guiding my initial understanding of social justice leadership from McKenzie et

al. (2008) and the implications for leadership in the current educational accountability era are described here. Next, in Chapter 3, I present the research methodology of qualitative methods I used to collect and analyze my data. This chapter includes selection procedures for choosing sites to study, data collection and analysis strategies, and validity concerns that arose. I then present my findings in Chapters 4-6 through the lens of common themes that emerged from the research, after I present overview descriptions of the three school districts and their leadership. The findings are presented thematically as responses to the research questions, which provide the context and background for my analysis. In Chapter 7, I discuss conclusions about how the superintendents understand, leverage, and balance social justice and accountability and describe their perceptions of the relationship between the two constructs. The conclusions might help other superintendents as they make critical policy, systemic resource, reform implementation, and human capital decisions when leading for social justice. I also discuss possible future research that could build on this work and implications for practice and policy in the midst of reauthorizing federal accountability legislation.

Chapter 2

Definition of Key Terms

Normative concepts of social justice, equity, and accountability are defined in myriad ways in research literature but are left open to interpretation by the field. In order to consistently inform my proposed study, I have adopted the following operationalized definitions. These definitions are informed by the literature, my personal experience in school district administration, and by a peer group of superintendents with whom I regularly work and seek feedback. The research process has resulted in refining and modifying these definitions based on study findings and participant feedback.

Social Justice

Social justice involves acknowledging and actively addressing the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and discriminating forces such as racism, sexism, ableism, classism, etc. along socially constructed groups (Kose, 2007; Ryan, 2006; Theoharis, 2009; Wang, 2012). In education, leading and working for social justice involves seeing unfairness and acting to disrupt patterns of exclusion and inequity while simultaneously increasing possibilities for all groups. It encompasses self-reflection of one's role(s) in relationships of power, analysis of the ongoing causes of oppression, and the will and behaviors to challenge hierarchies across and within identity groups (Ainscow, 2012; Jenlink & Jenlink, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2008). These behaviors may include highlighting disparities in opportunity and achievement, advocating for new traditions of implementing choice, and collaboratively questioning and interrupting unfair systems and processes (Theoharis, 2007).

Equity

Equity in education addresses two primary issues—fairness and inclusiveness (Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick, & Kerr, 2009; Killen, Rutland, & Ruok, 2011; Wang, 2012). Fairness ensures that life and social conditions do not serve as barriers to opportunity or achievement. Inclusion involves confronting such barriers for all individuals and social groups so that at least minimum standards are achieved by all. How systems are designed to provide access and opportunity, support learning in and out of school, and allocate resources so that everyone can succeed are all aspects of creating equity in education (Cooper, 2009; Koschoreck, 2001; West, 1999; Peterkin et al., 2011). Decisions regarding how to allocate the most effective teachers, funding, curriculum resources, additional time, etc., and remove barriers for all students to access quality instructional programming are examples of choices leaders make to instill more equity in a system (Boozer, 2013; Childress et al., 2009; Cooper, 2009; Koschoreck, 2001; Marshall, 2004; Peterkin et al., 2011; Roza & Miles, 2002; Shields, 2010).

Accountability

Simply put, accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies (Wang, 2012). For superintendents, accountability usually incorporates the obligation to report, explain and answer for consequences resulting from leadership decisions. This study asks participants to describe accountability in terms of "for what" and "to whom" (Behn, 2004) in order to understand both local accountability context and how leaders acknowledge and assume responsibility in their respective roles.

As the discussion on accountability continues, controversies emerge about whether accountability facilitates or hinders the pursuit of social justice. Some

argue that accountability facilitates opportunities to advance goals of social

justice and equity (Skrla & Scheurich, 2004). Others pose the relationship as one

other than a zero-sum game, arguing that a balance of both concepts will

improve public education. They contend that accountability without attention to

social justice may result in ignoring key aspects of school experiences. Leading

for social justice without leveraging accountability may continue to produce

inequitable student achievement outcomes, leaving wide achievement gaps

across subgroups. Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, Jr., & Koschoreck (2001) reasoned

that without accountability:

> We cast aside a powerful tool, one which might be used effectively to at
> long last create widespread, sustained equitable school success for literally
> all children. What is needed, then, is for educators who are committed to
> social justice and equity to reject either/or argument, to resist balkanized
> and totalized positions, to avoid being typecast as either the defenders or
> the critics of testing and accountability and, instead, to become seriously
> engaged in a careful consideration of the possibilities and perils of these
> issues (p. 73).

Others contend that accountability policy per se is "flawed as an equity-

producing initiative, lacking adequate consideration of power relations,

democratic participation, and rich, diverse philosophies of education"

(Gunzenhauser & Hyde, 2007, p. 490).

Conceptual Framework

By synthesizing the literature I reviewed, I developed the following

conceptual framework which connects the notion of social justice leadership to

the tensions superintendents face in the context of current high-stakes

accountability policies. By positioning superintendent leadership within the

relationship of McKenzie et al.'s (2008) three tasks of social justice leaders as well

as Lashway's (2002) description of superintendent accountability tensions, I

explored how some superintendents understand, leverage, and balance social justice and accountability in relation to each other.

The work of social justice-driven superintendents is set within current accountability contexts, which include not only local, state, and federal policy, but also the cultural, social, and political accountability of each unique school district. Thus, context matters tremendously. The implementation of federal policies is dependent upon the capacity and will of local actors and organizations (McLaughlin, 1987), and those actors construct their understanding from both historical context and present circumstances (Furman & Shields, 2003).

The framework served as a way to examine the literature and as a guide for testing theories, ideas, and assumptions as I conducted my study and was modified as my findings produced an enhanced understanding.
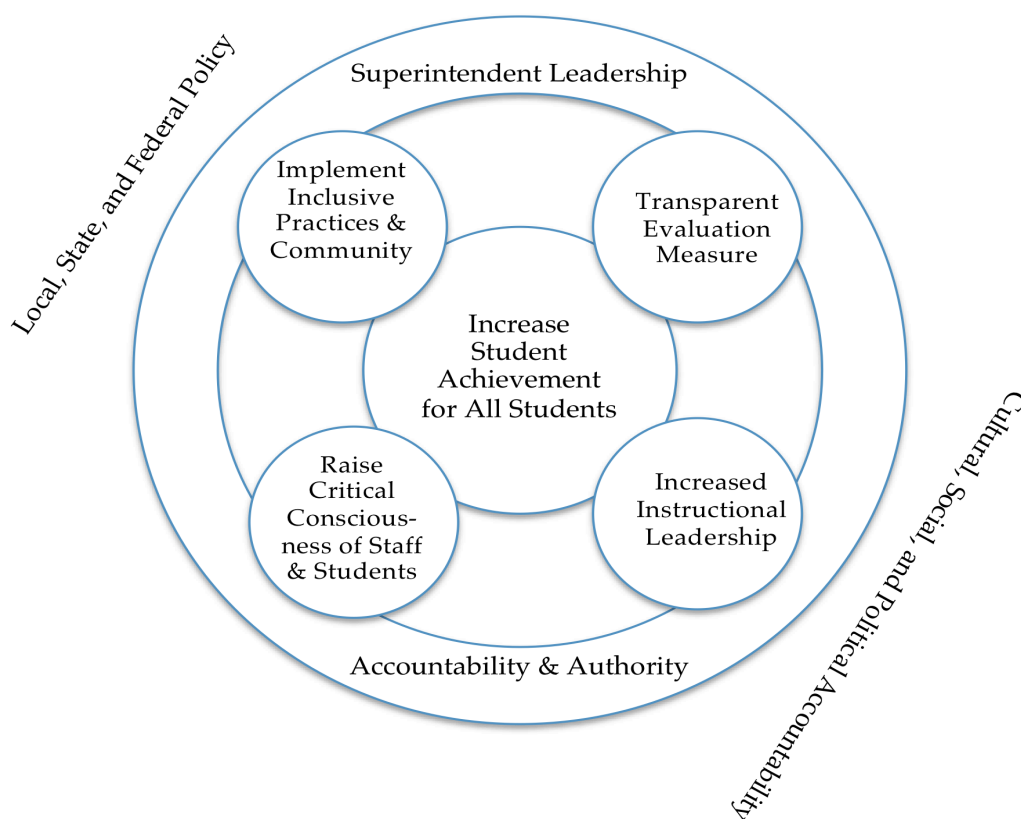
Literature Review

Through discussion with and observation of superintendents, I explored the relationship between social justice and accountability in school districts. In order to examine superintendents' interpretation and enactment of social justice within current accountability policy, I looked to research on social justice leadership and accountability to inform my conceptual framework.

Defining Social Justice

According to Furman (2012), social justice is an "umbrella term" with multiple meanings and is an "under-theorized concept" (North, 2006), making it difficult to define (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). Blackmore (2009) suggests that social justice actually "encompasses a range of terms—some more powerful than others—such as equity, equality, inequality, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and most recently diversity," and that each of these terms "takes on different meanings in different national contexts" (p. 7). Despite the various constructions of social justice, a common understanding among scholars is that social justice in schools "focuses on the experiences of marginalized groups and inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes" (Furman, 2012, p. 194) within which superintendents can make "deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power" (Bogotch, 2002, p. 138).

Because issues of social justice vary from context to context (Wang, 2012), educational values, assumptions, and approaches to social justice leadership may differ significantly from district to district. For example, constituents in districts facing school closure and consolidation may uniquely experience justice and injustice, where "political importance placed on consolidation as a remedy for educational and economic inequalities may in fact be masking real inequalities of

class, race, gender, or socioeconomic status" (Alsbury & Shaw, 2005, p. 115).

Other districts may encounter challenges to uphold desegregation plans while

adhering to parental choice options (DeBray-Pelot, 2007) under No Child Left

Behind (NCLB). How one understands the relationship between social justice

and accountability policy is framed largely by context.

<u>Leading for Social Justice</u>

The contexts in which superintendents work are continually impacted by

myriad social, political, and economic factors that influence their leadership

skills and decisions, consequently affecting them both personally and

professionally (Norton, 2005). According to McKenzie et al. (2008), leaders for

social justice perform three primary tasks: *increase student achievement* scores for

all students which speaks to the very heart of current accountability policies, *raise*

critical consciousness among staff and students, and accomplish these goals

through intentionally *heterogeneous and inclusive communities*. McKenzie et al.

believe that all three tasks are critical; one without the other two is not enough.

Increasing Student Achievement

McKenzie et al. (2008) argue that academic achievement matters and

should be a core goal in socially just schools, complementing accountability

policies priorities. Furman and Gruenwald (2004), however, believe that so much

emphasis is placed on academic achievement that other benefits of school such as

socialization, leadership development, collaboration skills, and many "soft skills"

are overshadowed. Other social justice scholars have argued that the intense

focus on high-stakes achievement testing and resulting prescriptions actually

impedes social justice work (Anderson, 2009; Kumashiro, 2012). Larson (2010)

posits that leaders should use student achievement data for justice and

"question, rather than avoid, enduring inequities that undermine student

achievement" (p. 327). Capper and Young (2014) suggest

> One can debate how learning is best measured and agree that learning
> gains represent just one facet of a student's wellbeing and that educational
> practice needs to be linked to community transformation; but in the end, if
> a child cannot read, write, communicate, and compute at grade level or
> beyond, that child's educational and life odds are severely diminished (p.
> 163).

Kose (2007) states that social justice leaders of schools and districts create

systems that support increased academic achievement and use data to

"continuously examine whether . . . student learning is equitable for all student

groups . . . and encourage teachers to critically examine their practice for possible

bias in regard to race, class, and gender" (p. 279).

Raising Critical Consciousness

According to McKenzie et al. (2008), the second key task of social justice

leaders at all levels requires they "prepare students to live as critical citizens in

society" (p. 116). The work of raising critical consciousness is important not only

because it promotes critical thinking, awareness, reflection, inclusiveness, and

community, but also because it results in shared responsibility for change

(Ainscow, 2012). Leaders prompt awareness of issues of injustice and increase

critical consciousness of those issues among staff and students and "illuminate

and interrogate injustices" (Jenlink & Jenlink, 2012, p. 2). Leaders cannot focus on

student achievement solely to produce students who can read, write, and

compute at high academic levels; students must also use these academic skills to

challenge injustices in society (Theoharis, 2009). Likewise, it is not enough for

leaders to raise staff and student consciousness about inequities while excusing

or failing to address achievement gaps.

Social justice leaders may increase consciousness with tools such as "School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist[s]" (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009) to assess school-wide values, assumptions, and norms related to cultural competence. Others use rubrics that help assess staff awareness of socially just learning and teaching (Kose, 2007). Scheurich and Skrla (2003) and Skrla et al. (2004, 2010) also describe "equity audits" superintendents can use to assess "levels of equity and inequity in specific, delimited areas of schooling" (Skrla et al., 2010, p. 264).

Heterogeneous and Inclusive Communities

To truly be a leader for social justice, McKenzie et al. (2008) argue that the aforementioned tasks must be accomplished in the context of inclusive school communities. Exclusion deprives students of their right to fully participate in school and community practices and activities (Ryan, 2006) and can take various forms, such as tracking, low expectations, and persistently failing schools. Karagiannis et al. (1996) suggest that schools should provide positive educational experiences for marginalized populations of varying race, class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. Consequently, inclusion has become one of the core concepts of the social justice agenda (Theoharis, 2009).

Students segregated from each other by pullout programs or tracking for remediation are denied access to a rich and engaging curriculum (Johnson, 2000), a prerequisite for improved academic achievement (Oakes et al., 2000). Leaders for social justice may eliminate or minimize pullout and self-contained service delivery models that separate student subgroups based on ability, language, or need for remediation (Theoharis, 2007) to foster inclusiveness and promote both achievement and awareness of differences.

Accountability Policy

The term accountability implies a "systemic method to assure those inside and outside of the educational system that schools are moving to desired directions" (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997, p. 97). From NCLB legislation to the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)*, federal accountability policies designate sanctions that range from changing curriculum to dissolving entire districts, impacting superintendent decision-making. Lashway (2002) and Parker-Chenaille (2012) describe a set of tensions superintendents face as a result of current high-stakes accountability policy that include a widening gap between superintendent *accountability and authority*, a need for *increased instructional leadership* amid other leadership responsibilities, and a more *public evaluation measure* utilized by the board and community. How superintendents make sense of these shifts in relation to social justice is largely influenced by the contexts within which they work.

Accountability vs. Authority

Accountability policies like NCLB and *ARRA* introduce tension between superintendents' accountability for outcomes and authority for management (Lashway, 2002; Meyer & Feistritzer, 2003). Authority is defined as a process requiring "the desire to lead and follow," developing reciprocal relationships, and "where the development of the norms of the group are based on a collection of the values, perceptions and skills of those involved" (Banner, 2010, p. 28). Authority is influenced by community awareness and the superintendent's enactment of inclusion in decision-making (Banner). Lashway (2002) and Parker-Chenaille (2012) argue that current accountability relaxes district authority by mandating more parental choice in schools deemed failing by annual

accountability targets. Yet, this form of choice prompts awareness of school effectiveness measures and allows for family decision-making (DeBray-Pelot, 2007), supporting core notions of social justice leadership.

While urgency established by accountability policies that require actions to improve failing schools gives superintendents power to implement reform, this authority is filtered through local and state governance structures and laws. For example, state union laws and protections often prohibit superintendents from hiring and removing school and central office leaders as they see fit (Meyer & Feistritzer, 2003). Even moving principals and teachers to match the needs of students can require extensive labor negotiations, including when staff changes are supported by federal accountability policy (Duncan, 2010).

Increased Instructional Leadership

While superintendents have always been required to manage decision-making regarding instruction in districts (Cuban, 1998, Johnson, 1996), current accountability policies heighten that expectation due to shifts in measuring and evaluating effective teachers and principals (King, 2002; Lashway, 2002). Using data to inform decisions, knowledge of instructional strategies, and coaching methods to support school-based instructional leaders are even more central aspects of superintendents' work (Anthes, 2002). Superintendents who foster inclusiveness and critical awareness may be faced with the challenge of selecting test-focused curriculum to get faster results despite pressure from segments of the community to support a more holistic approach that supports arts and nonacademic programs (Alsbury & Whitaker, 2007). The cultural, social, and political accountability context of a community may complement, oppose, or even act in support of a superintendent's attempts to advance a social justice

agenda via instructional practices.

Public Evaluation Measure

Despite theoretical clarity on the division of labor in school districts in which boards set policy and superintendents execute it, the practical application of supervision and evaluation tends to be more ambiguous (Mendoza-Jenkins, 2009). Expectations for student achievement are higher, public, and explicit, increasing pressure for superintendents to get or keep districts on track (Lashway, 2002). The demand for proven results moves the superintendent "to the forefront" of supporting student achievement, and those results potentially play a much bigger role in superintendent tenure and evaluation by the board and the public (Peterson & Young, 2004). Interestingly, neither NCLB nor *ARRA* include language that holds superintendents accountable for academic growth or student performance (Motoko, 2013). The legislation instead focuses specifically on teachers and principals and their qualifications. As the position of formal authority in the organization (Peabody, 1962), superintendents face intense public pressures, even without the policy language. A need exists to determine what the superintendent is accountable for: his or her leadership or the student outcomes from those he or she leads (Wood & Winston, 2005). In other words, "to whom" and "for what" is the superintendent accountable? These questions regarding accountability may be defined differently by local boards and communities across school districts.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

To study leadership for social justice in varying accountability contexts, a research methodology that explores experiences, history, politics, and relationships within particular districts is necessary to understand how leadership is enacted. In order to answer my research questions, I conducted qualitative research using the case study method, described by Bromley (1990) as a "systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest" (p. 302). Shaw (1978) says that case studies "concentrate attention on the way particular groups of people confront specific problems, taking a holistic view of the situation. They are problem centered, small scale, entrepreneurial endeavors" (p. 2), making the methodology suitable for this study on superintendents' understanding of the relationship between social justice and accountability.

Case study research involves an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009). Qualitative methods are appropriate to conduct an in-depth analysis of the process for addressing injustice and leveraging accountability by three superintendents via examination of contextual data primarily through interviews, observation, and document analysis (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009). Cross-site data allowed me to compare approaches to address accountability and foster social justice as well as test the theoretical assumptions I introduced in my conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009). Specifically, I compared superintendents' perceptions of social

justice and accountability, strategies for identifying and addressing district-wide inequities, and approaches for implementing practices that address social justice while attending to accountability expectations. I analyzed the role of embedded contexts and modified my conceptual framework based on my findings.

Site and Participant Selection

I examined the work of three superintendents pursuing social justice in their respective districts. The superintendents chosen for this study have been recognized for their successful leadership and stated commitment to equity, excellence, and social justice; however, their districts vary in population, geographic location, and issues of equity and social justice. I sought urban districts with diverse student populations and stark achievement gaps among student subgroups, but I recognized each district faced its own unique accountability context and equity challenges. These differences were crucial because they helped reveal not only similarities in understanding and approach, but also differences based on community context, need, and leadership style.

To select superintendents, I engaged in purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 2005; Seidman, 2006). As previously stated, I wanted to study superintendents committed to social justice to explore how they perceive this work in the context of accountability requirements that may or may not facilitate and hinder their goals. I was interested in superintendents recognized by the educational leadership community for their effective leadership and reform agendas addressing issues of equity and social justice. With these criteria in mind, I crafted a potential pool of study participants by considering recommendations from education leadership professors, in conjunction with leaders acknowledged for their work to improve school districts. I considered superintendents who

were Broad Prize district finalists and winners, recipients of the Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award, and American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Superintendent of the Year winners, along with nominees and winners of the Council of the Great City School Green-Garner Award. Each of these awards recognizes superintendents for their leadership in increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps, their commitment to social justice, and/or their abilities to work with others to creatively meet the needs of students in their district (see Appendix A).

I then contacted superintendents to explore their willingness to participate in the study via conversation and a formal invitation to participate in the research (Appendix B). Two superintendents agreed to the study and one declined due to scheduling conflicts. I revisited my list of potential superintendents and contacted a fourth district whose leader agreed to participate in the study. I shared my consent form (Appendix C) for consideration and signature by each participating superintendent and my approval from the Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (Appendix D).

Data Collection and Analysis

In my conceptual framework, I identified the contexts within which superintendents leverage and balance social justice leadership goals with the demands of accountability policies. Over a six-month period, I used three key sources for data collection: semi-structured interviews, observations, and district documentation. As Yin (2009) noted, multiple sources of evidence allow for triangulation and corroboration in a single study.

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews serve as a useful research method when asking participants to make meaning of their experiences and perspectives (Seidman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews make "data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent" (Patton, 1990, p. 288) despite the different individual perspectives and district contexts of the study participants. Participants were asked about their perceptions of social justice and current accountability context, what they do in light of these perceptions, and the strategies they utilize in addressing social justice issues while meeting accountability conditions.

In order to ascertain each superintendent's perceptions and understanding of social justice and accountability, I conducted a series of individual semi-structured interviews with each superintendent. These interviews worked toward a purpose of establishing the superintendent's theory of action, core values and beliefs, and strategies for systemic reform.

The first interview explored the superintendent's background, district context, and educational leadership experience. The second interview asked each superintendent to describe his leadership theory of action and reform strategies designed and implemented to address social justice and accountability requirements. The third interview prompted superintendents to reflect on their leadership and how they understand the relationship between social justice and accountability in their district. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E) allowed for a number of pre-determined questions, as well as follow-up open-ended probing questions to gather in-depth information (Gall, 2003) to provide a scaffold for the interviews. Based on the participants' answers, I explored opportunities to delve further into ideas and experiences that influence strategies

and perceptions. Follow up questions varied as I collected data from other sources within each district and reflected upon participants' responses.

In each district, I gave the superintendent a list of potential interview candidates informed by background research. I selected study participants based on their different roles within the district, their knowledge of and responsibility for implementing strategic initiatives and meeting accountability requirements, and their familiarity with the superintendent's commitment to social justice. For example, principals leading the district's most diverse and/or underperforming schools or those showing demonstrable achievement gains were asked to participate, as well as board members, parent organization leaders, union presidents, and members of the district leadership team, with more than one candidate in each role whenever possible so they would not be identifiable. I asked each superintendent to identify individuals he felt were actively engaged in achieving accountability targets and addressing social justice in the district to collaboratively select other key participants for interviews. I used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix F) for the additional 10 to 20 district stakeholders per site. From previous experience collecting data from eight district sites for a book on district leadership (Peterkin et al., 2011), I found this number to be the point of "saturation of information," or the number where I began to hear the same information from the participants (Seidman, 2006, p. 55).

Document Review

Data from document reviews were necessary to corroborate and augment evidence from interviews (Yin, 2009). I collected a variety of district documents and stored them electronically in a case study database. Specifically, I reviewed district strategic plans and goals, superintendent speeches and presentations,

board meeting agendas, budget documents, several years of annual student achievement reports, and letters/publications to the community. The documents offered insight into each superintendent's priorities and theory in use. They helped me create a more descriptive case study of the superintendents' leadership and helped corroborate, enrich, or contradict the data I collected from interviews and observations, enhancing the validity of interview findings (Creswell, 2003).

Participant Observation

To further understand the leadership of social justice-driven superintendents, I also took detailed notes from methods of participant observation. When permitted, I observed interactions such as budget development sessions and meetings to determine reform strategies for underperforming schools to further explore their attempts to address issues of social justice and accountability. I also attended a board meeting in each district I studied. Whenever possible, I scheduled site visits averaging five full days per site when relevant meetings and events were taking place so I could observe communication, interactions, and decision-making processes by district leadership.

The data collected through these observations allowed me to see how superintendents lead for social justice in various environments. These data, along with their spoken reflections on their perspectives, style, and enactment of leadership, helped me to understand what these superintendents do to foster social justice in their respective accountability contexts and how they make sense of their role and responsibility as leaders. Observations of school board meetings, school visits, community forums, and leadership team meetings provided

evidence to focus analysis on activities designed to promote social justice. I utilized an observation protocol and recorded my reflections regarding the dimensions of my conceptual framework in research memos. Field notes were typed, and interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

One reason case study research is appropriate for this study is that it allows method and analysis to occur simultaneously through an iterative process of describing experience, describing meaning, and focused analysis (Zucker, 2009). I used the constant comparative method of data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which focuses on the identification of regularities or patterns in interview transcripts and interview notes through an interactive process during which the data are constantly compared. Specifically, the constant comparative method involves categorization, comparison, inductive analysis, and refinement of data bits and categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

As I collected data, I engaged in multiple strategies to answer my research questions, using literature on social justice leadership and accountability policies as frames. As described above, field notes were taken following all observations and interviews in order to capture contextual factors such as emerging themes, analytic insights, initial impressions, and the content of meetings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I maintained a chain of evidence by keeping the evidence separated and labeled, intended to increase reliability, help me to become familiar with all evidence, and provide a link between the data and my research questions (Yin, 2009).

I analyzed interview and observation data through an iterative coding process, organizing data contents and interpreting it for different purposes as I

read for themes connected to the proposed research questions and the conceptual

framework categories derived from my literature review (Creswell, 2003; Miles &

Huberman, 1994). My operationalized definitions of social justice and

accountability, as well as equity, served as a basis for initial coding. Terms such

as privilege and power, disparities, decision-making, fairness, self-reflection,

responsibility and accountability, access and opportunity, trust, inclusion, and

choice formed initial categories of organizing interview transcripts and

document reviews. As I read the data for participants' perceptions of

accountability, I continuously considered how the participants described "to

whom" and "for what" they feel accountable, what actually gets reported in their

district context and to whom it gets reported, and what actions are taken to be

more accountable.

I grouped codes into categories according to my research questions. For

example, I grouped codes and data that address definitions of social justice and

accountability by district, and then compared the data across districts for the

cross-case analysis. I asked how superintendents define social justice, how they

define accountability, and how these two concepts are situated within their

district context.

I organized data into actions and behaviors superintendents take and

employ to meet accountability policy and those taken and demonstrated to enact

social justice, and compared them across districts as part of the cross-case

analysis. In order to examine each superintendent's understanding of the

relationship between accountability and social justice, I used the data coded by

the operationalized definitions to respond to the following questions:

- What accountability decisions support stated social justice goals?

- When do instances of alignment between accountability and social justice occur? What circumstances contribute to and/or allow for this alignment?

- When are social justice and accountability decisions not in alignment? What circumstances contribute to this misalignment?

I continued to code data using my operationalized terms and research questions, and when conducting the cross-case analysis of data, I looked for similarities and differences across each of the questions. For example, I read for consonance and dissonance across how superintendents describe the relationship between accountability and social justice. I also considered when there are similarities of understanding and description but different approaches toward implementing initiatives. When superintendents defined and described the relationship between accountability and social justice similarly but strategized differently about systemic reform work, I analyzed contextual factors, leadership styles, and implications for decisions that differed from district to district.

The multiple sources of data, including interviews, district documents and meeting observations, supported triangulation and also highlighted contradictions (Maxwell, 2005). I shared my findings and evidence regularly with my peer interpretive community to check for bias and to ensure that data supported my findings.

Once themes were identified within each case, I conducted an analysis (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009) of the three districts as they relate to the reviewed literature and my conceptual framework. The analyses included comparisons of the superintendents' understanding of how social justice relates to accountability

and the leadership decisions made as a result of that understanding. Thus, the case analyses described each superintendent's approach to addressing social justice in their respective district accountability contexts and how beliefs and intentions were translated into action. Ultimately, I described the accountability and social justice contexts of each district and then conducted a cross-case analysis that focused on the three research questions to describe points of similarity and difference.

Validity

As is the nature of qualitative research, I made interpretations of data through my personal lens that is colored by my past experiences, knowledge, and biases (Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). Throughout my study, I implemented multiple strategies to reduce any threats to validity. As previously mentioned, I triangulated data by examining evidence from multiple sources, and I regularly shared my findings with my dissertation support group throughout the analysis process. In my writing, I used rich descriptions to convey my findings and acknowledge my decisions to pursue particular lines of questioning in my interviews (Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). To give readers insight into my analysis process, I regularly reflected on possible biases in my narrative. I also shared contradictory evidence whenever possible to allow readers to understand where the discrepancies in the data lie.

One particular threat to validity stems from my site selection process (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2007). Since my study focuses on the superintendent, I restricted myself to sites where the superintendent agreed to be interviewed. I interviewed the superintendent's leadership teams, and those participants were aware of the superintendent's authorization of the study. Since

the superintendent directly supervised many of my participants, I reminded them that this study was completely voluntary, and that they could refuse to answer any question and stop the interview at any time. I assured participants that the study was confidential and that pseudonyms were used for the district and participants, but I disclosed the selection criteria for participation in the study, which substantially narrowed down the list of 13,588 American school districts (NCES, 2014) to those meeting selection criteria. I also disguised participants' roles to alleviate potential fear of retaliation or evaluation based on their interviews.

Chapter 4

Case Study Findings, Research Question #1

In this chapter, I present findings in the form of themes that emerged from each of the three case study districts in response to the first research question: How do these three superintendents describe, define, and understand the relationship between social justice and accountability in their respective district contexts? In order to discuss these themes, I first present district overviews with relevant background about each district's demographics, leadership structure, and political context. I also provide brief overviews of each superintendent's assumption of leadership as leaders for social justice and accountability. Throughout each of the chapters that explore findings, I use pseudonyms to protect the identity of the districts studied and all study participants. I also omit identifying characteristics and citations and refer to board members, principals, and parents by their title or role in order to obscure their identities.

The following sections provide brief descriptions of the superintendents participating in this study and the districts they lead:

Arthur Hale-Meritas Central School District

Since he was a teenager, Mr. Arthur Hale wanted to be an educator, and his family encouraged and supported that dream. Starting as an elementary school teacher, he has worked in Meritas Central School District in the western United States for most of his educational career. He has worked in some of the district's most underperforming schools in the past and has been a leader of dramatic turnaround efforts in buildings recognized throughout the state for their extremely poor student outcomes. Meritas' nearly 100,000 students are a

diverse group with over 50 languages spoken; 14 percent of students are African American; 11 percent are Asian; 55 percent are Hispanic; 14 percent are white and less than 2 percent are Pacific Islander; less than 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 4 percent identify themselves as "other." Nearly 23 percent of Meritas' students are English Language Learners, 8 percent are students with disabilities, and 68 percent are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Hale, who has been superintendent of this district of over 100 schools for more than five years, has led the district in realizing consistent growth over time, demonstrating slow yet steady gains over the past decade (see Appendix G).

As a classroom teacher, school leader, and in his various roles in district administration, Hale has held what he calls "a long view" of his work as an educator, saying:

> I have never believed in quick fixes. That doesn't mean dramatic results can't be achieved quickly, but I am in this for the long haul. True success is sustained over time, impacting more than one generation of children. This doesn't get derailed or become undone in a budget crisis or political turmoil. Good instruction in responsible and accessible systems will prevail.

When tapped to lead Meritas, Hale was humbled and excited about the chance to continue the reform efforts underway in the district. He saw the superintendency as a position of influence in which his strong instructional background would be a boon for change. He had long expressed his desire to stay in Meritas in any role they would have him, which was seen by the board as one of the more positive aspects of his leadership. A board member who approved Hale's initial contract said:

> He focuses on making schools within the district better, regardless of what might be going on around us in other places. He puts his own children in the schools he has led, and he really is a member of this community. We knew this wasn't a steppingstone to some other position for him.

Another trait that made Hale attractive was his willingness to be transparent, even with facts and data that did not always paint the most glamorous picture. One board member stated:

> Mr. Hale is effective and honest. He has a track record of including parents and the community and doesn't ever sugarcoat where we are or how far it will take to get us where we want to be. We've had some real problems here. It's his willingness to confront the brutal facts of how difficult district reform is that helps build trust. We needed that, and we still do.

Hale has convened numerous committees over his tenure as superintendent, and he has even co-chaired advisory committees for district-wide reform initiatives.

Hale's persistence, instructional knowledge, and inclusive style have paid off for Meritas. The district has repeatedly been recognized for achievement gains and has been nominated several times for the Broad Prize for Urban Education—established in 2002—awarded "to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color" (www.broadprize.org). The list of accomplishments of individual schools and the district as a whole is long:

- Graduation rates have increased five percentage points, reaching an all-time high of over 81 percent in 2015;

- Seven schools have been recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools;

- More than twenty schools have been recognized by the state for reducing achievement gaps;

- Over thirty schools have been named as National Title I Academic Achievement Award winners;

- Five or more high schools have been recognized by the U.S. News and World Report as top high schools in the country for the past five years.

Dr. William Booker, Coral Cove Public Schools

Dr. William Booker's upbringing by working class African American parents emphasized hard work and the importance of learning in school, something Booker believes all children are capable of, "even the toughest ones." After nearly two decades as a teacher, vice principal, and principal in a suburban district, Booker set his sights on improving urban education systems. He has worked in several large districts of over 100,000 students and came highly recommended to relocate to the eastern United States in Coral Cove after leading his previous district through substantial budget cuts and historical wariness of school district and board leadership. From salary freezes, reductions in force, illegal behaviors of board members, to an influx of charter schools and abrupt leadership changes, Booker had weathered several challenges in other districts that had uniquely prepared him for his leadership role in Coral Cove.

The population of Coral Cove's approximately 100,000 students represent a variety of strengths, with subgroups of 50 percent African American, 20 percent Hispanic, 14 percent white, 8 percent Asian, 6 percent multiracial, and less than 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. Approximately 10 percent of Coral Cove's students are English Language Learners speaking 111 different languages, nearly 14 percent are students with disabilities, and over 80 percent of families served in Coral Cove Public Schools are economically disadvantaged. The district has endured a number of leadership changes and devastating economic concerns over the past ten years. When Booker was selected to take the

helm of Coral Cove, the district was facing its fifth budget crisis in a decade, needing to borrow hundreds of millions of dollars in order to balance an overstretched budget (see Appendix H).

Booker's political "gravitas," as explained by one board member, and his honesty about the fiscal and academic situation in Coral Cove coupled with his belief in schools and children, won him many supporters in the community. "He immediately recognized aspects of excellence in some schools while noting the unevenness of student performance," said a central office staff member. "White and Asian students historically outperformed African American and Hispanic students in Coral Cove, while overrepresentation of African American and Hispanic students in special education and alternative education and out-of-school suspensions was glaring." For years, the community had been complaining about the disparities and how they continued despite the changes in leadership. "It wasn't until Dr. Booker came and actually visited schools and talked to students himself," said another central office administrator, "it was acknowledged that major differences in program access existed. For example, White students were overrepresented in magnet schools and gifted programs across the city. Dr. Booker took note."

Using himself, his siblings, and his family as examples, Booker aimed to show the city that students of color could succeed when given the right supports. In his community learning sessions, he referred to teachers and leaders who helped him achieve despite expectations about his race or class. He was the first in his family to attend college, and he expressed his belief in preparing students for work and higher education. He also referred to mistakes he had made as a teacher, when he at times assumed his students had an issue with

misunderstanding his instruction, rather than him taking responsibility for needing to change his teaching. "I believe smart is something you become, not something you are, " said Booker. "Educators themselves must reflect on their practice and make changes in order to meet students' needs. 'Smarter' is always attainable with hard work, no matter how old or accomplished one might be." Booker's upfront commitment to both social justice and accountability was summed up in his opening letter:

> Broken promises litter the history of public education. I believe we can break the cycle of overpromising and under-delivering here in Coral Cove and realize the promise of opportunity all students are due to realize. Despite an unprecedented financial crisis, public mistrust, and tremendous variability of success among schools, we can change our practices to see better outcomes for all students.

In Booker's nearly five years of leadership in Coral Cove he has been criticized for the difficult decisions he has made to balance the budget and work to build a changed future for children and families. He has also weathered suspicions of testing improprieties and has implemented increased security measures to avoid future improprieties. He has been nominated for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Superintendent of the Year award, "designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents" in recognition for his "leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, and community involvement" (www.aasa.org). His focus on turnaround, innovation, autonomy, and opportunity has been the core of his strategy for supporting schools and holding them accountable for improved outcomes.

He is still hopeful that more dramatic increases in student achievement outcomes will result as "reform takes a stronger hold in Coral Cove," but he

expresses continual concern over funding challenges and the currently

unavailable resources required to support students and schools. "I have shifted

my calendar to spend an extraordinary amount of time asking for support. I

explain our research-driven reform strategies, partner with peers facing similar

challenges, and lobby policymakers and local and state governance for additional

funds." A member of Booker's senior staff concurs:

> Dr. Booker has outlined a path toward improvement that looks like no
> other one we have tried before. It is equally simple and complex in terms
> of what we want to do and the scale at which we're working. We just need
> to convince others that we can see better results if we have the funding.

In some ways, the decisions of past leaders haunt Coral Cove and Booker's team

in their attempts to bring about change, yet "momentum continues to build,"

according to board members and vocal community groups.

Luis Ortiz-Daytonville City Schools

When Luis Ortiz was offered the superintendency of Daytonville City

Schools, he did not take long to consider his response. Feeling a "moral

responsibility" to serving the large southern district of more than 100,000

students, Ortiz assumed the top leadership position with a passion to enact quick

change. His own background as an English Language Learner and first

generation college-goer shaped much of his urgency about education and

opportunity. While he has led in Daytonville for more than five years and has no

immediate plans to leave, he has continuously expressed a need for

improvement—now. Said Ortiz:

> There are some who argue that change takes time and [they] promise
> reform in ten years, but how many children are you going to lose while
> you are tinkering and experimenting, rather than building lasting change
> that begins now? How long do children have to wait?

The students of Daytonville, 75 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged, are 62 percent Hispanic, 25 percent African American, 8 percent white, 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent other. More than one out of every five students is an English Language Learner, and eleven percent of students are classified as students with disabilities. Many of Daytonville's youngest citizens have benefitted from the reforms Ortiz has put in place. Before he became superintendent, only six of every ten students graduated from high school on time. Now that has increased the number of those who graduate to eight out of ten—a substantial improvement over a decade—but Ortiz has not been satisfied (see Appendix I). "How can we rest with 20 percent of students not finishing?" he asked.

Ortiz has summarized the challenges in Daytonville as issues of "execution. We know what we need to know about improving schools. There is a wealth of knowledge about what works, but like many cities, we have struggled to implement ideas well at scale," he said. He was selected as superintendent to execute efficiencies and effective reform when facing near bankruptcy. After several years of conservative spending and leveraging federal dollars in unique ways, Daytonville has increased its reserves while searching for ways to update and renovate many of its deteriorating buildings. Ortiz has campaigned hard in the community, pointing to improvements in student achievement to secure support for increases in local revenues to support enhancements to building and technological infrastructure.

Ortiz's commitment to and focus on innovation in education is grounded in his beliefs about schooling. From "digital equity," a phrase he uses to describe how all students should have access to the tools of our fast-paced and dynamic

technological world, to the dramatic expansion of school and program choice options for students, Ortiz makes all of his decisions based on data collected about school performance. In regular data meetings, conversations about student achievement data have been used as developmental, rather than punitive, tools to discuss accountability from a "friendly" perspective. "We use the information we have to be honest about needs, and we make decisions about how to intervene and support schools, as well as expand programs, based on what the data says works for our kids," Ortiz said. That data-driven approach is how Ortiz has recommended spending in a cash-strapped district.

> We have used our federal funding—both Title funds and competitive monies—in building systems that will last beyond the life of the funding. We could not survive with the previous approach to spending dollars on positions. Instead, we have invested in early learning, professional development, technology, and innovation.

The implementation of new tests aligned to more rigorous standards has resulted in a dip in scores, a drop that Ortiz has conveyed to the community by saying that the drop is about honesty and progress. "Mr. Ortiz has managed this change with poise and transparency," said one board member. He continued:

> At first, the drop in scores and subsequent state accountability 'labels' were confusing, but as our teachers and students adapted to the challenge of higher expectations, we have seen scores improve despite increased rigor. Mr. Ortiz has helped us keep our focus on the goals of improvement, even when we have hit speed bumps.

A school principal confirmed:

> Mr. Ortiz has really been with us every step of the way, experiencing the challenges alongside us. He reminds us how education changed his life and how there are still too many groups of children we need to reach better. He motivates us to keep improving, even when times are tough.

Daytonville's success in increasing graduation rates, increasing the number of students taking Advanced Placement classes by 30 percent, tripling

the number of students scoring a 3 or higher on Advanced Placement exams, being recognized for more than ten National Blue Ribbon Schools, receiving numerous Magnet Schools of Merit Awards, and decreasing the number of schools on the state takeover list has earned recognition by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Like Meritas, Daytonville has been nominated multiple times for the Broad Prize for Urban Education and continues its path of improvement through what Ortiz coined "infectious innovation" in the work of Daytonville's teachers and leaders. In addition to the Broad Foundation's acknowledgement, Ortiz has been recognized as an American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Superintendent of the Year during his tenure in Daytonville.

The three superintendents I studied, recognized for closing achievement gaps and increasing achievement for all students during their tenures, address social justice issues in their reform agendas in various ways in response to their respective district's historical, political, and organizational contexts. In order to address the first research question of this study, findings have been organized across the three districts by themes of description, definition, and understanding of the relationship between social justice and accountability. The commonalities and differences across districts are explored below.

Public Education *As* Accountability for Social Justice

Many of the leaders in each district, and all three superintendents, discussed public education as an endeavor of social justice. They considered the work of public schools as that with a purpose of achieving more equitable outcomes for everyone, with Superintendent Hale defining the purpose of education as creating "fair, or more just" opportunities for everyone:

> My job is to promote social justice…that's a large part of what public education and leadership of schools is all about. I felt this was true as a teacher, as a vice principal, a principal, a deputy superintendent and as superintendent. We are here to make the world more accessible for *all* children.

This sentiment is aligned with Klenowski's (2009) notion of public education promoting the development of responsible citizens who contribute to the common good.

Longtime colleagues of Hale in Meritas confirm that these beliefs have always been at the center of his life as an educator. One board member explained Hale's commitment to social justice as an integral part of his leadership work:

> He has never turned a blind eye to the inequities embedded in the status quo of the district. In fact, a central component of his leadership is that he questions, and asks us to question, injustices that our students may face. He encourages us to take responsibility for our community and our schools, reminding us that what has been in place can be reimagined and rebuilt to offer different opportunities and new outcomes for children who have never experienced them before.

Being known for, and relied upon, as an instructional and sometimes "moral" compass, Hale symbolizes the district's position on supporting all students. A vocal advocacy group made up of many parents who have both supported and criticized Hale's reform work over the past several years expressed clarity around his beliefs:

> He really does believe schools are here for every child—no matter what. We do not always agree with his tactics or his pace, but we know he is here for the children, rather than the adults, which has been a huge downfall of the district in the past.

Unlike Hale, Booker assumed the superintendency as a leader from another school district, making him an outsider in Coral Cove. From parents to principals to board members, the community of Coral Cove considers one of Booker's greatest strengths to be his ability to listen with respect and genuinely

engage with stakeholders. Listening to constituents is a hallmark of his

leadership style, and there are some ideals and values Booker holds dear and

communicates consistently. Like Hale, firm ideas about the purpose of education,

as well as whom schools serve, echo Booker's perspective of social justice being a

responsibility:

> We have a responsibility to provide safe, welcoming learning
> environments for each and every child, even those we're not sure
> understand or acknowledge the purpose of school. We are responsible for
> thinking about all facets of our decisions—from offering breakfast and
> snacks in schools to how we subsidize field trips to making sure quality
> school programs are offered in every quadrant of the city…preferably
> every single school. While we aren't there yet as a district, I do believe this
> responsibility is something specific we should be accountable for in a very
> public way. Otherwise, how will we give children and families a voice to
> say if we are meeting their needs?

> A principal of one of the district's historically most underperforming

schools takes Booker's words seriously:

> When we release our district's school report cards, we are asked to explain
> and justify how we will change our use of resources, our staffing, our PD
> [professional development] plans, etc. for the following year. Do we have
> practices that make it harder for some students to access support and
> rigor? Is our outreach adequate? What is keeping certain student groups
> from succeeding as much as others? We *must* think about the students
> who aren't being served well and make changes so that they get what they
> need. That's what Dr. Booker expects, and it's also what I believe.

By continuously wondering about how services are provided to different

student groups and supporting the "development of all students regardless of

race, creed, or intellectual capacity" (Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2011, p. 3),

Meritas and Coral Cove actively addresses the dynamics of privilege and access

to expand opportunities for all students. This is the embodiment of social justice

in education. In Meritas, Hale encourages his constituents to rethink what

schools can and should offer children. Booker asks his leadership team in Coral

Cove, including his numerous school leaders, to relate outcomes to equity and

social justice in order to "address and redress marginalization, inequity, and

divisive action" (Carr, 2007, p. 3). A conscious focus on opportunity, justice, and

equity is at the heart of these leaders' promptings.

The leader of the third district in this study, Superintendent Ortiz of

Daytonville, also believes in leadership that extends beyond the schoolhouse and

boundaries of the district, leadership that increases the knowledge of entire

communities, not just students:

> I believe it is important to raise awareness and place the issues of certain
> schools, neighborhoods, and the entire city sometimes, in the context of
> larger issues of the country. How we raise awareness of immigration
> issues, racial tensions, class and poverty—these conversations and
> decisions are all part of a national context of struggles playing out in cities
> and school districts across America. If we want to change outcomes for
> future generations, we have to talk about injustice and explain decisions
> we're making in a way that doesn't just intend to bring about change, but
> also demonstrate why this is the right thing to do.

At the core of Ortiz's understanding and communication of raising awareness

about social justice issues is his steadfast commitment to equity. He

fundamentally believes students and schools who face greater challenges should

receive more support and that the support should be readily available, without

"red tape" and "obstacles" to accessing services. When resources have been

shifted to provide more support to the students who need it, he has seen that

schools actually improve in terms of climate and achievement outcomes.

Differently trained teachers, uniquely skilled principals, more funding, or

"culturally appropriate and responsive materials" are examples of resources

Ortiz believes should be allocated based on needs in order to support more

equitable outcomes. Research suggests that equity-oriented leadership originates

from a moral responsibility to address institutional inequalities and persistent

achievement gaps in schools systems (Ackerman, 2008; Ball & Alverez, 2003;

Childress et al., 2009; Cohn, 2005; Cooper, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2007;

Darling-Hammond, 2010; Education Equality Project, n.d.a, Flanigan; 2004;

Koschoreck, 2001; Talbert-Johnson, 2004). Ortiz embodies this responsibility and

commitment to equity, drawing on his parents' limited education and witnessing

schools succeed with additional and appropriate support, only to have that

success interrupted when resources were discontinued.

These three district leaders "advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their

practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and

other historically and currently marginalizing conditions" (Theoharis, 2007, p.

222) by testifying to the State legislature for equitable access to funding support,

implementing strategies to end special education consent decrees, and

communicating and educating staffs, students, and communities about

achievement disparities amongst student subgroups. They consider their core

work to be that of improving outcomes for all students while simultaneously

closing achievement gaps among subgroups. They embody several of the central

tenets of social justice leadership, as described by Theoharis (2007). Each of these

superintendents:

- Places significant value on diversity, deeply learns about and understands that diversity, and extends cultural respect;
- Demands that every child will be successful but collaboratively addresses the problems of how to achieve that success;
- Knows that school cannot be great until the students with the greatest struggles are given the same rich opportunities both academically and socially as their more privileged peers (Theoharis, p. 252).

Their actions support Marshall and Oliva's (2009) argument that educators must

possess the "understanding that inequitable outcomes are not merely the result

of deficiencies in the students, nor of the communities from which they come" (p.

7). The leaders of these three districts grasp that understanding and exemplify this perception in a set of beliefs they communicate to multiple constituencies in their work to improve educational outcomes for children.

Accountability as Measured in Outcomes

Many (Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata, & Williamson, 2000; Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschoreck, 2004) "argue that accountability can increase educational equity by reducing achievement gaps among student groups—especially gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students—through the establishment of standards and performance-based assessment." To date, the primary means of measuring these gaps has been standardized test data. Although a push for accountability may not be new to the educational policy environment, the reauthorization of the ESEA in January 2001 ensured that accountability systems focused primarily on academic outcomes as measured by test scores (Gross & Supovitz, 2005).

Even as discussion of the reauthorization of ESEA is underway, district leaders all over the nation are focused on test score results. Asher-Schapiro (2015) reports that 80 percent of polled superintendents say, "their highest priority for 2015 is to improve student outcomes" (p. 2). These results, however, are not achieved in a vacuum, and the pressure for higher test scores has weakened resolve for more equitable outcomes. In Coral Cove, Booker describes the challenge of a context-free approach to increasing test scores, "Like some other districts around the country, we have experienced a probe into testing improprieties. I sometimes worry that school leaders may narrow their focus on achieving student outcomes at the expense of assessing and addressing the root causes of achievement gaps in their school." Meritas Superintendent Hale agrees

with Booker when he says, "long-term change must include conversation and analysis of the origins of inequity." All three superintendents in this study, due to their own educational experiences, family support, and encounters with barriers and success, expressed a desire to support school leaders in disrupting what Booker coined "patterns of inequity" to describe social justice challenges in his district, in service of better outcomes for all students.

When it comes to achieving different outcomes, all three districts have employed a data-driven approach to replicating success. When Meritas experienced a jump in math scores after a group of teachers collaborated to revamp the curriculum, the district—and Hale—took notice. Examination of the changes made to the curriculum prompted a district-wide shift in middle school math, and several years later, to elementary school math. Daytonville also expands and replicates successful practices and programs to offer more access to students across its large geographic territory. Ortiz, whose pace for change has left some in Daytonville "breathless at times," according to parents and principals, conveys concern about the sometimes "unrealistic" expectations placed on English Language Learners in the district. Understanding that not all English Language Learners are the same, and a strong advocate for immigrant student rights, Ortiz has not embraced broad change for this vulnerable population. Instead, he considers the varying types of populations in different schools and respective needs, infusing social work and counseling support in some schools and more prescriptive literacy programs in others:

> Expecting all of these students to test well in English within the same length of time entering school in this country is not responsive to the issues they face. We cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach to serving kids, and we can't have a one-size-fits-all to measuring their progress. Of course I believe in high standards for all children, but we do not all learn

to walk or talk or ride a bike at the same age. We must take into consideration the challenges of living with undocumented status or leaving family behind or having caretakers who cannot easily partake in partnering with schools because of their own educational experiences. Some children need more time, and if we are showing growth—especially growth that outperforms other districts in the state—I would like to continue on that path even if it takes an extra year or two to achieve the ultimate performance targets.

Daytonville has also taken an aggressive approach with its special education population. Partnering with local universities and foundations with specialized expertise, the district is committing resources and investing in professional learning to support students with autism and improve their special education service delivery model. "This is a group of students who typically underperform compared to their nondisabled peers," said the Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. "We want to continue to disrupt that achievement trend among students with disabilities, and we believe it starts by putting expertise in the hands of those working closest with the students themselves."

In Meritas, Hale is also very dedicated to serving students with disabilities better, a commitment he made after many years of teaching elementary school. "I saw the difference quality special educations services can make in the lives of children with learning disabilities, physical challenges, and social-emotional challenges from autism to behavioral concerns," he said. Though he has faced criticism from families upset by the changes in service as yet another shift their children had to experience, Hale has remained steadfast in his decisions to invest in special education resources, programming, and improved and inclusive school options for students with disabilities. "A few years ago, we recognized that this was still an area in need of a lot of attention in Meritas, and we will keep

attending until we close gaps between special education students and their nondisabled peers," said Hale.

All three leaders discussed outcomes that may not be measured on a standardized achievement test: outcomes focused on making it possible for students to fulfill their potential, ensuring all students acquire skills needed to become contributing members of society, and preparing students to define their own expectation of independence and happiness and make decisions to achieve those goals. The key emphasis all three leaders and constituents from each district repeatedly enforced is the focus on *all* students, even those facing the most challenging life and learning circumstances. By current policy, the social justice efforts of these leaders inevitably come down to student outcomes, even if from a perspective of "equalizing where people end up rather than where and how they begin" (Philips, 2004, p. 1). The three leaders in this study, however, take a bolder approach to accountability outcomes. They define and expect results beyond required test scores required by policy in an effort to better serve children.

Accountability as (Un)Defined via Policy

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the term accountability in schools implies a "systemic method to assure those inside and outside of the educational system that schools are moving to desired directions" (1997, p. 97). In Feuerstein's (2013) opinion, the focus of NCLB has shifted policy from "verifying the quality of the inputs" to "verifying the quality of outputs" (p. 877). Former superintendent Carl Cohn explains the "rare opportunity and a unique challenge" NCLB has posed for district leaders (2005). The opportunity for superintendents emerged from the law's dominant focus on disaggregated

student performance as the measure of school and district effectiveness. The challenge for superintendents stems from the law's equally powerful resolve for consequences for lack of progress toward outcomes. Where the law and federal policy do not attend to process or procedure, the public and local communities in each district care about exactly how leaders go about the work of achieving improved outcomes.

Each of the districts studied has taken a different approach and employed assorted strategies to achieve accountability targets while closing achievement gaps. These variances are influenced by state and local financial constraints, historical perspectives on unjust treatment of various subgroups, and current political coalitions. Ortiz says, "The district picks up where the feds leave off" when it comes to how some of the policy is defined and implemented at the local level. For example, Hale explains how Meritas embraces the spirit of NCLB, even if not in complete compliance with the law's requirement of all students achieving proficiency by 2014:

> We recognize the federal goals and targets but have established a more realistic and attainable set of targets to which we can work toward each year... This minimizes the demoralization I have seen other district face when they simply cannot maintain that straight-line goal of proficiency set by federal policy.

This approach, which a Meritas principal confirms is a "more sustainable" way to achieve better student outcomes, has been recognized as successful for the district, yet still fails to meet the policy guidelines. Recent waivers to NCLB that have granted states some flexibility in return for adoption of common learning standards and teacher and principal evaluation accountability have shown Meritas' steady growth each year as successful. This shift in focus is in alignment with recent research on accountability policy and inequality.

According to Gamoran, "The transition from an accountability system aimed at absolute scores to one that focuses on both gains and absolute scores may have positive implications for attention to inequality" (2013, p. 13). The assessment system in place in Meritas continues to provide evidence of ongoing improvement and data for maintaining or changing instructional strategies to reach more children.

Ortiz has been vocal about his criticism of current policy and his concerns about "over-testing," especially of the nation's youngest learners. He believes the accountability tied to schools and districts is important, but he argues:

> We will not measure our way into excellence. Of course we need to assess how we are doing and make adjustments based on that information, but we need to be thoughtful about which tests actually help us improve the quality of teaching in classrooms. Anything else is excessive.

The test-based accountability built into NCLB and the system of state waivers currently issued echo what educator and political scientist Frederick Hess (2009) described as a way to prove the business management principle of "what you measure is what you get" (in Feuerstein, 2013, p. 17). Ortiz believes schools are not always measuring the right things, or sometimes schools are measuring simply to measure, and that work is not in service of the equality efforts NCLB intended to address.

While all three district leaders discuss concerns and suggest revisions for current federal accountability policy, they also describe how policy's definition of accountability is influenced by local factors. Researchers support how leaders must work to integrate policy targets and equity aims and align both with overall district goals and purpose (Louis, Febey, Gordon, Meath, & Thomas, 2005; Rorrer & Skrla, 2005; Sipple, Killeen, & Monk, 2004). Booker speaks of the community

conversation and demands for accountability—both inside NCLB requirements

and the more recent push for common standards and assessments:

> We talk a lot about defining the 'what' and supporting autonomy for the
> 'how,' but the truth is, whether during the process or after the fact, many
> constituents want to be involved in the process. How stakeholders are
> included (or not) makes a big difference to the success of implementation
> of a reform effort designed to produce improved outcomes. Federal policy
> doesn't and can't dictate that kind of accountability to stakeholders.

To help shape the community's expectations of what to be accountable for

against what policy determines are targets, Booker has worked to implement a

set of indicators important to Coral Cove:

> Instead of focusing on the federal and state's definitions of the bottom 1, 5,
> or 10% of low-performing schools, we crafted a set of indicators and
> criteria by which schools can be determined in need of intervention or
> validation. We can more immediately make adjustments, recognize what
> the community finds to be valuable indications of school success, and
> communicate progress in a way that would be more meaningful to local
> stakeholders. This also helps us work to get ahead of the consequences
> attached to the four reform models before they are imposed on us, which
> is something the community asked for loud and clear in my first year in
> Coral Cove.

While addressing educational inequality through collection and exposure

of data was a major focus of NCLB (Gamoran, 2013), the three superintendents

describe ways in which the policy has been distorted to focus too much on

testing, leave implementation in the hands of local leaders, and set a standard of

average annual achievement gains that no district could reasonably accomplish.

The leaders' work in their respective districts helps them describe and define

accountability in alignment with law and regulations. Their work also serves as

examples of how to integrate accountability for results in practice and everyday

decision-making. Each superintendent affirms Rorrer and Skrla's (2005)

assertion, "Accountability is originally based on the premise that the

institutional-level accountability has the potential in promising the school

organization, instructional delivery, and student performance," and that leaders help others "reconceptualize accountability policy by advancing it as an integral nonnegotiable part of the organization" (p. 465).

Understanding Social Justice and Accountability As Intertwined

All three district leaders repeatedly discuss their understanding of a moral responsibility to all children within their perception of accountability. They each describe a coupling of accountability with personal responsibility that marry the two concepts as integrated and in service of each other, and the lens of policy shapes how they might discuss the relationship. Hale says that Meritas' district reform efforts have been heavily influenced by, and partly formed in response to, accountability legislation. "It is so easy to get distracted by the latest fads, the most recent political pressures, and the lure of funding sources," says Hale. "What NCLB, and the fiscal crisis we are still enduring, has done is keep us very, very focused. We take close looks at how we are serving our students and what is successful in order to channel our resources in the right directions." The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development concurs, describing how the once "top-heavy, multi-layered" central office administration recognized their responsibility to hold the adults within the system accountable by "regularly combing through the data to see what is working well in the district and where schools are struggling. We use this information to design new interventions that were specifically tailored to meet the needs of students in Meritas."

Like Hale, Ortiz in Daytonville says that their analysis of data helps the district realize where their equity work remains:

> It caused us to take a very close look at the various subgroups that we work with in our school district, and we know we not only have more work to do with our English Language Learners, but we have to do better by *certain* English Language Learners. They are not all performing equally well, depending on a whole host of factors that include immigrant status, poverty level, disability classification, and community organizational support.

The superintendents not only analyze data by NCLB requirements, but they take the policy even further to refine improvement work to capture more nuanced data about student performance in the interests of serving all children better.

The social justice leadership orientation displayed by each of the superintendents sets a tone for achievement and equity that moves toward their personal beliefs about social justice *while* increasing student outcomes. This two-pronged leadership stance sets "a vision that supports social justice [that] not only provides a sense of direction for ongoing efforts but also directs a positive impact on schools" (Kose, 2011, p. 120). This is supported by the achievement gains each district has been making during the respective superintendent's tenure and the recognition each leader has received for promoting outcomes and closing achievement gaps.

Furman and Gruenewald (2004) and Wang (2012) claim that accountability reform has influenced views of social justice work, and that for some, social justice leadership has become interchangeable with school achievement. The leaders of these three districts support a more complex view of social justice leadership that includes an environment where students achieve higher, more equitable outcomes. They focus on more than test scores, attending to process, communication, and what Beachum and McCray (2010) call "equitable insight" to examine the past, present, and future through a "justice lens." Booker believes the decisions he makes today and how schools impact

current students will have consequences for society's future, and the legacy he

wants to leave is one of "equity and justice." Booker describes a "ripple effect" of

equity-based decision-making he hopes to expand, and ignite when necessary, in

order to achieve a way of thinking and means of cooperation that sustains the

entire city, regardless of accountability policy or who sits in the superintendent's

chair:

> I have had the fortune to work in effective schools. I have been on the receiving end of injustice and discrimination. I walk through schools in Coral Cove and see the physical disrepair of schools in certain parts of the city, and I witness the opportunities other schools and students are afforded. Part of my job is to wake people up to the inequities, and part of my job is helping marginalized communities find a voice for bringing about change. Sometimes inviting this voice means longer days, bearing witness to pain, and anger at how we have let things get so out of hand. But I am always hopeful that we can do better, and I convey that message of hope every chance I get. These schools will be here long after I am gone, and I intend to contribute to their betterment, both in terms of test scores and creating places where teachers want to teach and children want to learn.

In a qualitative study on social justice leadership practice, Wasonga (2009)

found that, "To integrate deep democratic community and social justice for

student progress, leaders must develop processes that promote fairness, equity,

care, and a focus on cultural impacts on educational outcomes for all students"

(p. 202-203). Like Hale and Ortiz, Booker embodies this entanglement of values

with respect to accountability for outcomes and social justice for access,

opportunity, and support. It is almost as if none of these men can discuss social

justice work without also describing their accountability for achievement or

equity outcomes. Nor can they describe their personal or systemic accountability

for improvement without mention of equity and justice for all students under

their watch.

Summary

      All three of these leaders have been recognized for increasing achievement outcomes and closing achievement gaps among subgroups, as well as promoting an agenda for increasing social justice in their communities. They value their work in public education as social justice leadership work and describe it similarly despite different historical, political, and district organizational contexts. The three men understand the relationship between accountability and social justice to be intricately entwined and rarely speak of one concept without referring to the other. They each consider the very work of district leadership and complying with, designing, and enacting accountability policy to be a social justice endeavor. While accountability policy is enacted in different ways in each district, the superintendents themselves take the achievement mandates of current accountability legislation beyond the letter of the law, explicitly stating outcomes that cannot always be measured in terms of test scores. Their desire for a more equal and more just world for each of the students they serve is apparent in their spoken and espoused values and the reform initiatives implemented in their respective districts.

Chapter 5

Case Study Findings, Research Question #2

Chapter 5 includes a presentation of findings to the study's second research question: What do these three superintendents do to promote social justice in school districts while working to meet accountability expectations established by state and federal policy? As in chapter 4, the findings are organized by themes that emerged from each of the three case study districts in response to questions about promoting social justice. Each of the districts face different social justice challenges unique to their respective embedded historical, political, and social context.

The superintendents in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville are each faced with the charge of disrupting issues of inequity and injustice not only to increase student outcomes, but also to improve the world in which their students learn and live. Dantley and Tillman (2006) suggest that social justice focuses on "those groups that are most underserved, underrepresented, and undereducated and that face various forms of oppression in schools" (p. 23) and that social justice leadership "investigates and poses solutions for issues that generate and reproduce societal inequities" (p. 20). McKenzie et al.'s (2008) framework for leadership is guided by their definition of social justice, which requires school leaders to "raise the academic achievement of all the students in their school," yet the study participants expand this idea of achievement.

Each of the three superintendents, working to achieve state and federal accountability performance targets and implement lasting change within their districts, faces unique social justice contexts. Issues that are predominant in one

district may not be equally important in another, and the histories and current political environment of each district impacts how the three superintendents address injustice. While each leader tackles different social justice concerns, there are common threads across their approaches. As discussed in chapter 4, these leaders' understanding of accountability beyond student outcomes and seeing achievement results as a component of or by-product of social justice work frames the interrelated goals of improved social *and* academic achievement outcomes. The similarities and variations to the superintendents' work are discussed below.

Bringing the Margins to the Middle—Building Inclusivity

Concerns about groups separated by past schooling practices, historical and political policies of inequity, and lack of access to "the mainstream" come up frequently in interviews with multiple study participants. The superintendents in particular mention groups served "at the margins" and those "cut off from opportunity" for one reason or another. They describe this lack of access as a social justice challenge they each face in their districts. From a limited number of racial minorities in Advanced Placement classes and overrepresentation of white students in magnet schools and programs, to primarily pullout English as a Second Language instruction, to lack of facilities supporting participation of gender fluid students in extracurricular activities, leaders in these districts worry about how different groups of students are excluded due to practices, policies, and beliefs. Creating environments where all students are supported and welcomed so that they can achieve at the highest levels is a priority for all three leaders. Ryan (2006) sums up the landscape of inclusive practices:

Inclusive leadership consists of a number of distinct practices. They

include advocating for inclusion, educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision- and policymaking strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches (p. 9).

Hale, Booker, and Ortiz incorporate these practices in a variety of ways, utilizing their own skillsets, personal experiences, and the current context for change within their respective districts. By not just acknowledging and respecting diversity and difference, but also appreciating and responding to varying student needs, these leaders set examples for district and school administrators to model for their teachers. They create cultures of inclusion through examination of participation rates (Hale), new choice policies (Ortiz), and responsive curricula (Booker). Research findings from Billman (2004), Lambert (2006), and Ross and Glaze (2005) show that a critical component to creating a strong culture is for leaders to be collaborative and inclusive. The leaders in these three districts describe the collaboration and inclusivity they work to foster in terms in students, staff, and the community, as well as in structures and processes like curriculum and instruction.

In Coral Cove, Booker describes how he intentionally communicates the district's desire to rebuild, using the schools as a vehicle for creating a stronger city:

> We want to empower staff, communities, and most importantly students. Coral Cove has suffered over the past few decades, but it is a city with a rich history of intellectual and social success. We can revive that success through schools—the hearts of our communities.

Booker sees students as a resource the city has underdeveloped and underutilized, but he also talks about asking students to tackle the problems discussed in detail each evening on the news. Tapping into the children's knowledge and problem-solving skills not only helps students learn—thus,

improving achievement outcomes—but it also fosters a commitment to helping

Coral Cove, to contributing to the overall health of the community, and to

tackling collective problems collaboratively. Scott (2009) posits that to empower

students for the ownership of their education, there must be a shift from

education being a service provided to students to that of education belonging to

students. Booker encourages this ownership and challenges teachers to think

about issues of justice as instructional opportunities that extend beyond the

classroom:

> In learning discussions and in project-based learning opportunities, we encourage students to look at issues in multifaceted ways…it could be gender equality, recycling, gun violence, law enforcement…we really look to empower students to examine the roots of these issues and pose solutions from their unique perspectives. We believe in the answers our young people can offer.

Booker makes it a point to speak to teachers and principals about creating and

seizing teachable moments where we "help students discover and wield their

own power as critical and knowledgeable people" (Chapman, Hobbel,

&Alvarado, 2011, p. 541). Booker is explicit about the connection between

addressing issues of justice while meeting accountability requirements:

> Embedding social justice into curriculum supports accountability goals. If you read *The Color Purple,* you do so not just because it's a classic and offers a common intellectual experience, but because it provides a platform for discussing classism, human rights, fairness, etc. You incorporate justice issues into literacy and numeracy skills, which serves every purpose.

In letters he pens to staff, presentations he gives to school leaders, and in

speeches to the local and state legislature, Booker discusses the needs for

successful outcomes that extend beyond the academic gains Coral Cove so

eagerly seeks. He speaks of the "whole child" in terms of an "improved Coral

Cove community," one in which students are supported to be critical thinkers

and participants in discussions and actions that will make the city a better place for everyone to live.

Like Booker, Hale believes in Meritas preparing students to live as productive and thinking citizens who contribute to making the world a better place. In order to do that, he believes student discourse must be valued and that different opinions and perspectives should expand thinking and refine solutions to societal problems. A key component of social justice leadership (McKenzie et al., 2008), creating inclusive environments in which students interact and learn from each other, is also a centerpiece of Hale's reform work. Said Hale:

> For too long, we created 'alternative settings' and separated students. We faced all kinds of problems as a result—both in schools and in neighborhoods. Once we made that change, students started to learn from each other and learned how to get along. Things aren't perfect, but they're certainly a lot better.

Meritas has made a concerted effort to improve each school so that students' home school option is a supportive one, no matter one's dis/ability, financial status, or native language. "While some specialty schools and programs exist in particular areas to concentrate resources for serving our most unique student groups, we typically have less than 15% of our students attending schools outside of their neighborhood because of program access," said Hale. Fewer students are sent to schools away from their neighborhood because of a particular learning need, which means more inclusiveness of diversity in each school.

Senior staff members agree that Meritas has made a tremendous shift toward more inclusive schools, even if they still have more work to do, "Mr. Hale often speaks of diverse perspectives and the strength in our collective ideas. He supports it in our Cabinet meetings and expects us to carry that into schools."

Researchers Beachum and McCray (2010) assert, "[W]hen all members of the organization feel wanted, appreciated, and their contributions and thoughts affirmed, the organization can operate at optimum levels" (p. 207). Hale enacts the idea of inclusiveness with staff, which models an inclusiveness he wants to see in schools. Meritas' commitment to bringing students together also aligns with Furman's (2012) notion that socially just leaders "structure schools to ensure that students learn in heterogeneous, inclusive classrooms" (p. 116).

Daytonville's student population, similar to Meritas in terms of Hispanic students comprising more than half of the district, also shares a breadth of diversity within that subgroup's population. Numerous native-born students and immigrants walk through Daytonville's school buildings each day, some fleeing violence in their home countries illegally, some as refugees, some second- and third-generation English Language Learners with emerging proficiency in Spanish and English—some of whom underperform on standardized achievement assessments, and some performing at the highest of academic levels. Superintendent Ortiz is particularly sensitive to the diversity of students whom so many "lump together" as one "socio-ethnic" group. Said Ortiz:

> We have students coming from so many different places, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds. We have to think about how we bridge those connections and intentionally be more inclusive. We have to think about different kinds of support so that everyone can interact and be successful in school and in society.

Ortiz's dual commitment to scholastic and social success supports social justice and accountability achievement goals.

Ortiz's lens for diversity extends to his beliefs about curriculum and instruction. He speaks of tackling social justice and accountability simultaneously throughout curricular and instructional decisions and

approaches:

> One example of how we embed social justice within the curriculum is through our speaking and listening standards. We examine the use of various types of communication to get our points across. We actively discuss the use of Standard English and how we code switch, when we code switch, and why we code switch. We are addressing so many literacy, cultural, and social norms when we have these conversations, and it opens up perspectives and thoughts we might not otherwise have. Ultimately, we are helping students understand when to use their Standard English skills, which supports their social and academic achievement. Of course, we are giving them invaluable skills they will need in their search for a career after school, too.

Part of the work of social justice leadership in schools is to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the lives of the students (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Jean-Marie, 2008; Tillman, Brown, Campbell-Jones, & Gonzalez, 2006). This is work that Ortiz believes will also make a difference in achievement outcomes. A district administrator responsible for curriculum and resource selection and adoption speaks of how her decision-making has been informed by Ortiz's responsiveness to difference:

> Typically, when new curriculum is adopted, new resources are purchased, etc., we have a wave of professional development for teachers to learn how to use the programs for general education students. Special ed and ESL teachers are usually shown the 'enrichment' or 'differentiation' recommendations for lessons, but we don't spend a lot of time learning how to make these resources and curricular approaches work for special populations. Now we're putting attention and energy toward special populations of learners—beyond special ed and ESL—as a way to ensure everyone has access to rich experiences, rather than 'after the fact' learning opportunities.

This questioning and selection of resources not only supports Ortiz's prioritization of students' critical thinking in schools, but also as future leaders. Dei (1996) submits that "inclusivity requires pedagogies that respond to the social construction of difference in the school system, and also in society at large" (p. 176), a sentiment Daytonville is working to realize at scale.

Raising Awareness—Courageous Conversations and Learning Experiences

Dewey asserted "schools were responsible not for reproducing the status quo, but for developing young people into active social beings who would work to ameliorate social injustices" (Boyles, Carusi, & Attick, 2009, p. 35). One of the common themes for promoting social justice across all three study districts is the superintendents' intent to educate students, staff, and communities about the inequities in their cities and empower these stakeholders to act for change. According to Marshall and Oliva (2010):

> Leaders cannot make social justice happen by their passion and will alone. The huge shifts in cultural understandings and societal and school expectations will happen only with the shared values, coalitions, networking, and mutual support that come with the power of engaging groups of people in societal movements, which results in the building of social capital and, eventually, political power (p. 14).

Disrupting these patterns of injustice does not happen merely because the superintendent says they should. Even the most justice-oriented leader cannot right inequities without the support and collaborative efforts of everyone involved. In order to establish more just districts, superintendents must help these urban communities acknowledge and understand the multiple forces of inequity at play and see how it is in everyone's best interests to enact social justice ideals. Ultimately, that means everyone is accountable for his or her part of social justice work.

Hale, Booker, and Ortiz are continuously and actively engaged in raising awareness of inequities in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville. All three men consider communication to be the heart of this endeavor. With some variation in terms of frequency and participation of schools, each superintendent is engaged in conversations about school data. For example, Hale has monthly meetings in

which several student achievement indicators, as well as indicators directly

connected to inequity and service, like student discipline and parent

participation, are discussed. Assistant superintendents are responsible for

reporting out on each of their schools against data from previous months and

talk about what is changing—or not. According to Hale, these meetings are

critical structures in which awareness is created:

> These conversations offer a chance to do more than just talk numbers. They offer entry into discussion about underlying issues. Why did so few parents attend open house in school A? What caused the spike (or reduction) in suspensions for Hispanic boys in school Y? We can get into some heated conversations. At first, there was talk about parents who just don't care, or 'We've tried everything we can think of' to support these ED [emotionally disabled] students. I like to ask, 'Have we? How do you know?' And we all know that if the data isn't shifting, we aren't doing something right. We have to dig deep and put ourselves in others' shoes so we can problem-solve together. Sometimes it means we have to ask for more expertise or knowledge about a particular subject or question, so we do some collective research and expand our knowledge base. This only helps us better understand our students, families, and staff to create better places for kids to learn.

These difficult conversations have become the cornerstone of district office's

belief in change for social justice. Several district office administrators speak of

these discussions as "life-changing" talks that "open our eyes to things we never

considered before." While Hale acknowledges he wants to keep staff on their

toes in terms of making assumptions and questioning motives, policies, and

procedures for barriers to access and opportunity, he does not engage in these

meetings to "catch people" or "trip them up." Hale said:

> I truly want us to think long and hard about what our kids and families experience every day. The majority of us come from a place of substantial privilege, and the majority of the students do not. How will we help them build a better world if we don't attend to things making their world less than great right now?

> Creating the space for such discussion is a key component for critical

thinking, and problem-solving without fear of reprimand is what allows such honest conversations to take place. "I would never have believed some of the things I have felt I am able to say in that room," said one administrator. He continued:

> We really get down to the heart of it, talk about our perspectives, and most of us end up changing our beliefs as a result of new insight we get from each other or outside guest 'experts.' Mr. Hale pushes us hard, but only so we can get better results.

The results Hale pushes staff to see are not simply about assessment scores, yet that information is a central part of each data meeting. The "safe space" Hale has created for discussion is something he tries to bring with him when he visits schools, however, "It is more difficult when the players change. I can take someone into a spare room to talk, but there is always the 'danger' of someone interrupting or being cut short." He said:

> It's just really important to keep bringing people back to the heart of what is going on. Often, what we see is just the tip of the iceberg. We have to really work to understand. And when we understand, we can figure out how to get better.

The difficult and sometimes courageous conversations that take place in Meritas may be avoided in other places, Hale thinks. "I don't shirk controversy, and I don't shy away from conversations about the rights of students," he said. "They all need to have very talented teachers and principals. They need to be challenged and supported in ways that allow them to grow and contribute and included. Those things are really non-negotiable for me." Going beyond raising awareness to developing a "critical consciousness" (McKenzie et al., 2008) or possessing "a deep understanding of power relations and social construction including white privilege, heterosexism, poverty, misogyny, and ethnocentrism" (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006) prepares stakeholders to organize and act.

Knowledge, interpersonal skills, and an open disposition enhance and intersect with Meritas' critical consciousness to enable and support social justice work as they continually increase assessment results.

Booker and Ortiz attempt to raise critical awareness and consciousness within their district staffs, but also within their communities at large. This work is very difficult in Coral Cove, where there is a lack of community trust in the school district that has experienced several dramatic cuts to programs due to finances, investigations as a result of testing improprieties and contract disputes, and tension between city, state, and school district governance for many years. Ultimately, Coral Cove residents feel "disenfranchised and ignored," as stated by a longtime city resident and parent leader. According to Lynch and Baker (2005), a lack of respect and recognition is one of the main contributors of inequality that many groups experience in education. Booker's leadership style rests upon respect and genuine attention. For Booker, there is no greater way of honoring and healing the hurt from the past in order to rebuild trust in and move forward together to improve Coral Cove's schools:

> I think a lot of this attention to respect and listening comes from my mother and father and their strong work ethics and strong beliefs around respect; making sure that we do unto others as we want them to do unto us. I believe that's really important. I also think it creates the best foothold for different people to engage in conversation. I think this notion of conversing, or sitting down and really talking about feelings on a subject matter, especially when it relates to education, becomes extremely important in a place like this, where so many promises have not been kept.

> I listen attentively, but it just can't begin and end with listening. Then you have to build action steps around the reforms and outcomes you want to see from students. … I do my share of talking to increase awareness, too.

Effective school leaders listen and learn (Mustafa, 2010; Schulte, Slate, & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). This has been such a critical component of Booker's

leadership approach that he is widely recognized for his ability and willingness to engage not only with community groups, but students themselves. One principal said:

> Dr. Booker made a point of talking with students before school opened, and he has an advisory group of students, too. He has an open door policy for any student who asks to meet with him, and he also solicits student input frequently during school visits.

According to Booker, "This is how I know what we really need to focus on to improve the lives of our young people and their schooling experience. They know I genuinely want to know." Lalas and Valle (2007) support Booker's approach to soliciting student input, arguing that "critical information" can be "gleaned from listening to the authentic voices of students by using a social justice lens" (p. 76). Booker strives to know who students are and what they need, from their own perspective, in order to balance the scales of justice in Coral Cove.

Similar to Hale and Booker, Ortiz makes a point of frequently visiting schools. He does so not only to see if the policies and reform strategies in Daytonville are being implemented and are effective, but also so he can talk with school stakeholders about their experiences and perspectives. "On any given day, I may run into a parent in the office at a school, and I'll ask him how we are serving his child. I want to know if we're getting it right and communicating our priorities," he said. "I talk to teachers. I talk to kids. I want people to know their voices are heard, that I'm listening and will respond in every way I can." In addition to the impromptu visits between Ortiz and various stakeholders, he holds a monthly "chat" online to answer questions about anything and everything that might be important to those who write. "For almost the past

year, a lot has been about testing. We're testing too much; we're overwhelming students… I do think we're spending too much time on testing," he said. "I just announced a consolidation of assessments so we can spend more time teaching. This was the right thing *and* is responsive to the community."

Reaching out to families and community groups who have concerns provides entrée for Ortiz to engage them in discussion about how to improve schooling experiences in Daytonville. He said:

> It is important to me to talk with the families and agencies that have had the biggest complaints with the district. Those that felt we have grossly disserved the kids had some of the best insights into how to fix things. Some of the biggest critics I met with were widely considered to be 'pains in the neck,' but they help others see a new point of view. We need those perspectives.

Not everyone in Daytonville shares Ortiz's willingness to engage with difficult stakeholders:

> There are times when Mr. Ortiz has asked me to meet with a certain parent or community leader, and I have felt it was a waste of time. The same complaints get rehashed every time there is a new superintendent. I buy into the desire for different perspectives, but sometimes it is difficult to help people understand that meaningful change takes time. We aren't going to change City Hall overnight. We can't address all of the police violence from within the classroom. But we can talk about it in ways that help keep kids safe and prepare them to lead a friendlier world than the one we're in now. I want that, but I am not always sure how we'll get there. I do believe in Mr. Ortiz, though. I think he is leading us down a good path, and test scores are going up. AP scores are going up. More kids are graduating. We can do this while we tackle big social issues.

For Ortiz, meeting with disgruntled families and community groups is part of improving the schools, since ultimately, everyone has the right to a free and public education, "free of discrimination and in safe spaces—physically and emotionally," he said. Daytonville builds relationships "by understanding (not judging) families' lives and beliefs, by committing to reaching out and listening

to families, and by using persistent, diverse, and native language communication" (Theoharis, 2010, p. 369).

These relationships are core functions of social justice leadership in these three districts. In a study on leadership practices that integrate social justice for student learning, Wasonga (2009) found that "dispositions cited in the study included respect for students, being honest with people and having honest conversations, having the courage to stand for kids' integrity, caring about children unconditionally, being a good listener, confidentiality, respectful conflict, and respect." (p.214). Tackling tough conversations about equity, fairness, and healing wounds suffered from exclusionary practices and lack of recognition and support is as important as increased assessment outcomes in each of these three cities. Through examination of why some schools or student groups are achieving more than others, issues of justice become apparent. According to Wang (2012), "Leading for social justice thus becomes a process of constantly confronting and tearing down such obstacles and barriers by leveraging the politics of accountability and social justice to move toward what is best for students" (p. 238).

Increasing Capacity of Staff

Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville are not only raising the critical consciousness of their students, staffs, and communities, but they are also equally engaged in increasing the technical capacity of the educators in their districts. In research and in this study, capacity is defined and understood as "the process of creating the experiences and opportunities for people to learn how to do the right thing and do it effectively in different circumstances" (Harris & Day, 2002, p. 972). These districts invest in professional development in terms of

curriculum and instruction, but they maintain a social justice lens. Examples
from these three districts include:

- selection of secondary literature done with the community's input "to
  ensure a diversity of perspectives about quality literature…;"

- university experts and practitioners from other districts that succeed with
  "hard-to-reach" populations inform pedagogical approaches;

- restorative justice training to address the disparate responses in discipline
  across subgroups of students and schools;

- discussion facilitators support meetings about achievement gaps and
  performance differences among racial, ethnic, language, ability, and
  economic subgroups; and

- increase of budget expenditures by 2 percent to invest more in
  professional learning that includes peer assistance, common book study
  material on accessing competitive universities, and Parent University co-
  participating courses in which teachers and parents attend together.

According to Hale:

> The primary means of achieving our performance targets is to be more
> effective with our students in the classroom. That means we need to relate
> to them better, increase access to meaningful learning opportunities and
> effective practices, and that means we need to know our kids better.

> Ortiz seconds those efforts and has made a point of "specializing our

knowledge base while expanding our collective repertoire of instructional

strategies." In Daytonville:

> Teachers are learning the value in specialist approaches. General ed
> teachers want to know more about ESL and special ed instructional
> strategies because they see the improvement in their entire class of
> students. This is no longer just 'specialist' knowledge, and all students are

benefitting from the collaboration. We're using what have been traditionally designated 'specialist' techniques with general education students, and we're seeing better achievement results. At the same time, we are investing in our knowledge about autism, a group of students we want to serve better. We are creating specialist programs for kids with unique needs like this so that we can better meet their needs. Those strategies help a lot of different kinds of learners, however, so we do what we can to share that expertise across classrooms.

This work has prompted a variety of changes in how schools make schedules, how meetings are facilitated and led, and what the purpose of meeting time is for adults. According to Daytonville's professional development director:

We have had to rethink common planning time, too. Creating schedules that allow special educators, interventionists, ESL instructors, etc. to meet alongside their gen ed peers has been challenging, but a critical part of what has helped some schools close gaps more quickly than others. Schools that were reluctant to change at first saw how the data was shifting, and now we have every school prioritizing common plan time in one way or another.

Hale has also leveraged the expertise of his specialist teachers to give more students access to the general education curriculum. One way in which Meritas has worked to increase capacity is through a broad-based approach to professional development. In addition to workshops and in-service opportunities, the district also created a collaborative consultant reform division within the department of pupil services. Staffed with teacher leaders with strong backgrounds in special education and ESL services to students and families, this division works in a handful of schools at a time to support co-teaching strategies and embedded coaching for responsive classroom instruction. According to principals, these consultants are considered "coveted positions" by teachers and building leaders alike. "We sometimes horsetrade to get more time from the consultants," said one principal. "They come in and increase our ability to respond to kids in very practical ways."

In Coral Cove, Booker has enacted his inclusiveness for students to staff in schools. Even though the financial challenges in the district prevent "the kinds of investments our staff and children deserve," Booker has promised to increase the skill and knowledge of "everyone working with our students," he said. In the past, only certain schools were targeted for intensive professional development, and only certain teachers were included. "The focus on reading and math really meant a lot of teachers were excluded from meaningful PD," said one central office administrator. "Yes, we can all support literacy, but how much is PD on reading and writing going to help PE teachers when they're struggling to get kids to dress for class? That's where they need help." For Booker, increasing capacity includes professional learning catered to different teacher types and content areas, as well as instructional support staff. Of professional development, Booker said,

> Another key component to our overall capacity push has been to think about all of the people we entrust with our most vulnerable, most challenged students. We assign teaching assistants and aides to many of our students who find school the most difficult, yet we have traditionally left them out of the rich professional development we believe teachers need to be successful with the same kids. Including the aides and TAs in PD has not only been the right thing to do, but it has increased their ability to support students. We see fewer discipline referrals for these same students, and we see better attendance. The investment has certainly been worth it, especially from an inclusivity and capacity perspective. We celebrate the successes of students who have previously been seen as 'problems' and 'too difficult to teach.' We value and recognize the adults who support these achievements.

All three districts invest in their staff members, and they also expect to see learned and developing strategies implemented in classrooms and interactions with students. In one district, tens of millions of dollars are being invested in restorative justice practices. Every school in the district has at least a subset of

staff engaging in the training this year, with the intent of all staff in the district being trained over three years. One superintendent said:

> I ask some hard questions sometimes about discipline data, especially when I don't see suspension data changing. I ask if they have tried behavior contracts or conferences, if circles are being used, etc. I expect adults to be using these strategies, and the data will shift. We focus on things we believe, or that research says, will improve all types of outcomes.

This focus on restorative practices in a district with disproportionate discipline data is aligned with a recent study on teacher-student relationships that confirmed positive relationships could influence academic engagement and performance, particularly for at-risk students (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). While focusing on social justice indicators, the superintendents in this study work to increase their "staff's capacity to imagine what might be achieved, and increase their accountability for bringing this about" (West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005, p. 89).

By investing in professional development in a "focused, coherent fashion," the leaders and district administrators of Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville can influence teaching practice and impact outcomes (Firestone, Mangin, Martinez, & Polovsky, 2005). Including all relevant staff in the process of professional learning, along with leveraging school structures such as time, expertise, and specialist knowledge, help propel all three of these districts forward in terms of social-emotional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and strategies. Ultimately, districts are looking to see a return on their investment through more opportunity, improved achievement success on standardized tests, and feedback from stakeholders about the enhanced and more inclusive experience of school.

Taking Personal Responsibility and Accountability for Reform

The superintendents of Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville "talk the talk" and "walk the walk" of social justice leaders committed to enacting accountability reform. In each district, there are examples of leadership assuming personal responsibility and accountability for improvement efforts in their district. Hale, Booker, and Ortiz model what they want in terms of execution for results, and they embody the principles of social justice they each believe in so deeply. Wood and Winston (2005) define leader accountability as

> (a) the leader's willing acceptance of the responsibilities inherent in the leadership position to serve the well-being of the organization; (b) the implicit or explicit expectation that the he/she will be publicly linked to his/her actions, words, or reactions; and (c) the expectation that the leader may be called on to explain his or her beliefs, decisions, commitments, or actions to constituents (p. 84).

Personal responsibility and accountability looks different from district to district, but it is readily recognizable in all three study sites. In Meritas, Hale serves as a substitute teacher several times a year each year in his district. He even teaches a high school course, "Though not every day," he said, to "stay fresh and relevant and connected to the learning process with students."

During his tenure, Ortiz has taken over schools as the principal. Like Hale, he also teaches courses in the district in his certification area. He has reported his school data just like he asks principals to do, and his modeling does not go unnoticed. "We see him leading innovative reform efforts in 'his' schools over the years, and it helps us step up our game," said one principal. Like teachers who have principals who support and model instructional reform, principals who experience Ortiz's personal commitment and "skin in the game," as one principal coins it, helps them "take personal accountability for student learning"

(McEwan, 2003).

In Coral Cove, Booker has claimed a subset of schools that report directly to him. He oversees, supports, and develops leaders within his zone of schools, and like Ortiz, he reports as area superintendents do regarding his schools' performance. Booker has taken his commitment to accountability one step further, and he has designated the most struggling, the most "at-risk" schools as those in his own zone. For Booker, the superintendent's zone is about "integrity." He agrees with Dufrense and McKenzie's (2009) definition of integrity as "consciously aligning one's attitudes and beliefs with one's actions and behaviours" (p. 37). Hale, Ortiz, and Booker all express enthusiasm and pleasure at their roles as teacher, principal, and area superintendent. They are excited about working with students, teachers, and principals, and they learn from the process of implementing reforms. Booker also explains how he models the reform he is looking for through his leadership of the superintendent's zone of schools. "I love doing this because it helps keep me sharp and supportive for the area superintendents. It allows for a 'lab classroom' type of experience for the other school leaders in Coral Cove."

In addition to his optimistic outlook despite dire financial and political considerations, Booker brought a self-described "servant leadership" perspective to the role of the superintendency. He defined that work as twofold:

> It is a passion I have to meet students' civil rights and that we eliminate any of the social injustice issues of this educational process. It is also my understanding and acceptance of responsibility for developing people in order to hold them accountable for expected outcomes.

While Hale and Ortiz do not use this term or description of servant leadership, they affirm Booker's accountability for educational outcomes as a student right.

Said Hale:

> Ultimately, I am accountable to the students. Yes, the Board is my 'boss,' and I have a list an arm long of constituent groups who demand attention and results, but at the end of the day, I am accountable to the students. This is why I have a group of students for which I am responsible as a teacher.

Not only do the superintendents agree about "to whom" they are accountable, with their supreme priority being students, they also agree in regards "for what" they are accountable. In response to questions about "For what are you primarily accountable?" all three superintendents speak beyond outcomes and the results of compliance with accountability policies. Each of the leaders responds in terms of values and ambitions, morality and outlooks. Hale wants students to "come to a place where they feel safe and valued. I am accountable for climate and culture in terms of a positive learning experience that results in improved achievement outcomes." Booker wants students to "be equipped with the skills and knowledge to be the next club, government, or world leader. They need to have every skill necessary to be successful in life." Ortiz believes schools are responsible for "ensuring basic needs are being met in terms of a daily learning experience…we need to make the world a better place for students and teach them to keep making the world better for others."

Another common thread in terms of personal accountability for social and academic outcomes for these three leaders stems from their own educational experiences, the schooling experiences of their parents, or encounters they have witnessed as students or seen close friends encounter in school and the world in general. As member of minority or marginalized student groups, or observing close friends or family members who have experienced injustice in school and in neighborhoods and areas of their home communities, each of the

superintendents has a personal stance on injustice that has influenced their

leadership. From being excluded from honors classes to pull-out ESL classes to a

sibling with a disability struggling through school, the three men have personal

tales of discrimination, exclusion, and inequity. The challenges these leaders

have experienced as members of a minority group have impacted their life

experiences, sensitivity and awareness to injustice (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli,

2009), and have increased their commitment to fairness and equity. It makes their

decisions to personally account for student success more understandable and

genuine.

Summary

The styles and approaches of all three leaders share several values when it

comes to communication and building relationships: they are leaders concerned

with quality relationships, they use their position to help other stakeholders

empower themselves, and they advocate for students. These traits are affirmed

by Fraser's (2012) research on social justice leadership practices, in which shared

decision-making, creating empowering curriculum, and establishing

opportunities for authentic student input were considered to be priorities.

Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville are all engaged in the social justice

leadership practices described by Ryan (2006) as inclusive leadership practices.

These three leaders seek input from stakeholders, utilize diverse perspectives in

decision-making, develop critical consciousness in students, staff and

community, and increase the knowledge and professional capacity of educators

as a means to better serve students. Perhaps most importantly, these

superintendents practice the social justice and accountability ideals they preach,

each taking responsibility for the very work they ask of their staffs, expecting the

results they ask to see from schools within their authority.

Chapter 6

Case Study Findings, Research Question #3

In this chapter, the superintendents' replies to the third research question are organized by strategies and actions taken by these districts leaders. Despite different experiences and political support for reform, initiatives undertaken by the three district leaders to achieve accountability goals share common ground when addressing broader concerns of social justice and equity. A overview of reform initiatives are described here in response to the study question: What are the strategies and initiatives these three superintendents undertake to leverage the relationship between accountability expectations and their social justice agendas in their local contexts to improve educational outcomes for all students?

Skrla & Scheurich (2004), longtime proponents of accountability that requires reporting by student subgroups and promotes proficient outcomes for all students, see a strategic relationship between accountability levers and change for social justice. The authors argue:

> We believe it is possible to appropriate some of the tools of accountability systems and to use them to leverage positive change to benefit all children. We think it is possible, desirable, and indeed necessary, that we take advantage of the space where the interests of those supporting accountability movements converge with those of us who are interested in promoting more socially just schooling outcomes (p. 60).

Examining where the three superintendents in this study see and utilize those intersections between accountability and social justice is the focus of this chapter. By examining different strategies these leaders use to leverage the power of accountability systems to support social justice goals, superintendents in other districts may realize opportunities for overlapping purposes.

This examination of and action to disrupt inequity do not come without

risk, however (Lugg & Shoho, 2006). Leaders may face potential hostility within

and outside the school community when addressing systemic tracking of student

groups, exploring equitable access to exposure to rigorous curriculum,

supporting undocumented immigrants, or investigating historical structures that

marginalize certain groups (Karpinski & Lugg, 2006). The superintendents

themselves expressed some concern over community support, but they actually

considered it a minor concern in the overall work of leading systems filled with

variability of access and support.

One district leader took his concerns to state and federal attorneys, risking

his position on behalf of what he believed was best for students. A board

member expressed concern for the superintendent:

> There is a fine line between pushing too hard and not pushing hard
> enough. It's impossible to please everyone, but we have spent several
> years 'in reform' now, and we hope for different outcomes. We have
> closed schools, increased programs and options for families, and we are
> seeing some results, but for all of the 'pain,' there are many who want to
> see more.

A member of the district's cabinet also worried:

> We have done so much, so fast…it never seems like we are doing enough.
> I think about when the support will shift. I have seen it in other
> places…when the scales begin to get balanced, there is always a segment
> of the community that gets upset. That segment typically has a powerful
> voice to leave well enough alone.

Researchers argue that the battle against institutionalized and rarely scrutinized

marginalizing forces—the status quo—is an exercise in political leadership

(Cooper, 2009; Dantley & Tillman, 2006; Theoharis, 2007). Despite the political

implications, leading for equity calls for intentional strategies to fundamentally

change schools and districts so that all students benefit from equitable access and

opportunity. The leadership decisions made to provide this access and success

may require differentiated support and resources based on varying student and school needs (Childress et al., 2009; Cooper, 2009; Koschoreck, 2001; Marshall, 2004; Peterkin et al., 2011; Roza & Miles, 2002; Shields, 2010), which is not always popular with diverse community interests.

Organizing to Accomplish District Goals for Every Student

Similar to many superintendents who enter a new school district, each of the three leaders in this study assessed and reorganized their senior leadership teams (Childress, Elmore, & Grossman, 2006). Experience and historical knowledge of the district, skillsets needed to enact reform agendas, and a team composition that enables diversity of perspectives and collaboration for effectiveness comprise some of the priorities these superintendents considered in their team building. Leithwood and Riehl (2005) assessed four categories of leadership responses specifically related to accountability: "setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program." Hale, Booker, and Ortiz have implemented these four categories of leadership in the organization of their senior teams. From recruiting diverse staff to be more representative of the communities they serve, to assigning roles and responsibilities aligned with district goals, these three leaders have reorganized their district staffs to carry out the reform agenda and support the instructional programs of each district.

Due to drastic reductions in state funding during his past several years as superintendent, Hale has been forced to make more shifts in his senior leadership team than he would like. Throughout all of the reductions he has made, however, "the work remains the same." Hale said:

> We just have fewer people to accomplish our improvement agenda, and that means leaders at all levels of the organization have assumed multiple titles and roles. We've never said, 'Oh, we can't close achievement gaps or create enhanced school options because we've lost staff.'

The organizational chart for the district has been reduced in terms of positions, but the responsibilities have always been listed, and a focus on equity has been explicitly outlined as part of the superintendent's responsibilities since Hale assumed the position. While Hale expects all of his senior leaders to maintain an equity and access lens when leading, he personally takes responsibility for modeling the kind of leadership for quality schooling opportunities in Meritas.

In Coral Cove, Booker has put his beliefs about accountability and equity front and center in his organizational structure by naming an Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Accountability, and Compliance in his senior team. By combining these roles into one position, Booker believes:

> We are saying there is a seamless connection between the idea of equity—of access, support, and outcomes—with accountability for achieving and maintaining that equity. We have a long way to go before we see the kind of just opportunities and outcomes we're looking for, but we have this position to help maintain our focus on these ideals. Melding the compliance role into this position also helps us realize the actionable legal items and relational promises we have made to schools, students, and the community. We said we would work to make all schools quality places of learning, resources with materials and supports that allow all children opportunities to succeed, and the assistant superintendent helps prompt us to ask hard questions about equity, accountability, and compliance when we're making decisions about allocating scarce resources, balancing the budget, and opening new programs.

This senior leadership role and the current composition of the team were part of Booker's second round of reorganizing. "When I first got here, we had some gaps and we were in need of some experienced leaders to complement those with community knowledge of Coral Cove," said Booker. After a thorough listening and learning entry campaign, Booker selected two key school leaders from

within the district to serve on his senior team. "This helped keep a relevant

perspective on the history of turnover and attempted reforms here," said Booker:

> I did not want to disrespect the community by only appointing outside
> leaders, but I also didn't want to select someone just because they've been
> here. I felt lucky that we found two strong women who were willing to
> take the risk of joining the district team. The different perspective is
> invaluable.

The mistrust that plagued Coral Cove for years made the two former school

leaders hesitant at first. One of the leaders who is now supporting pupil services

across the district, said:

> I wasn't sure I wanted to be associated with another leadership 'regime'
> that didn't follow through with proposed reform initiatives. Dr. Booker is
> very personally compelling, however, and he convinced me that I can do
> more to help by bringing my school experience to his Cabinet.

By increasing the diversity of gender and insider experience, Booker also

supports research on high-performing teams (Phillips, 2014).

Ortiz shares Booker's commitment to different perspectives, and he has

worked over the past few years to create diversity amongst all levels of

Daytonville's leadership. Ortiz's inclusive approach to different points of view in

school and district leadership positions has a common thread, one he calls

"impact." He tries to match skillsets and experience with school and district

needs, saying:

> If we want to change what has happened in the past in terms of school
> climate and district outcomes, we have to think about what leaders bring
> to the table. We can't just name priorities; we have to live them.

In Daytonville's work to transform opportunities and outcomes for all students,

Ortiz models the kind of inclusiveness he wants to see in schools in his

leadership appointments. His strategy reflects Cooper and Gause's (2007)

description of effective leadership, in which "leaders use their positional power

to promote democracy, redress inequities, and empower various stakeholders, including marginalized students and families. Through collaborative methods, leaders then develop inclusive governing structures and communities" (p. 200). Ortiz also named a Chief of Accountability and Performance Management, underscoring the importance of accountability in district-level decision-making. Said Ortiz:

> I am holding my senior team accountable, just like I am, for the schools. We have a chief reminding us when we're on and off track, reminding us when we need to alter our strategy or direction in order to achieve our goals.

All three districts have organizational structures that include responsibility for social justice, equity, and accountability. Whether explicitly delineated in a person's title or outlined in the superintendent's responsibilities, each of these leaders has responded to the needs of their districts and their beliefs about accountability and social justice. As Arnold (2013) explained in a study of district culture in an era of increasing accountability, superintendents can establish and influence organizational culture by aligning values within metrics and structures that reflect the overall mission and goals.

District Leadership Team Composition

Meritas Central School District-Superintendent Arthur Hale	Coral Cove Public Schools-Superintendent William Booker	Daytonville City Schools-Superintendent Luis Ortiz
Deputy Superintendent of Schools	Deputy Superintendent	Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction
Deputy Superintendent of Pupil Services	Assistant Superintendent of Auxiliary Services	Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning	Deputy Superintendent of Professional Learning

Assistant Superintendent of Middle and K-8 Schools	Executive Director of Innovation and Federal and State Programs	Chief Communications Officer
Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools	Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Accountability, and Compliance	Chief of Accountability and Performance Management
Assistant Superintendent of High Schools	Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships	Assistant Superintendent of School Operations
Chief Business and Financial Officer	Chief Talent Office	Chief of Staff
Assistant Superintendent of School Support	Chief Financial and Business Officer	Assistant Superintendent of School Improvement
Assistant Superintendent of Research, Evaluation, Planning, and School Improvement	Executive Director for Information Technology	Assistant Superintendent of Grants and Community Partnerships
		Chief Facilities Officer

Differentiating Support Based on Need

Leading for social justice requires intentional acts designed to change how schools operate, such as designing student assignment policies to increase diversity, increasing minority enrollment and passage rates in Advanced Placement courses, and realigning resources to match students' needs (Childress et al., 2009; Cooper, 2009; Koschoreck, 2001; Marshall, 2004; Peterkin et al., 2011; Roza & Miles, 2002; Shields, 2010). This means implementing substantive systemic approaches to raise levels of education for underserved students. It also means understanding and analyzing critical issues of inequality. To this end, equitable leaders do not just change practices; they also explicitly challenge long-standing beliefs that not all children can perform to high standards (Carpenter & Diem, 2013; Cooper, 2009; Houston, 2001; Leverett, 2002; West, 1999).

Some superintendents use the pressure of accountability policy requirements to make drastic changes more quickly in underachieving schools

(Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010; Childress, 2010; Travers & Rosenberg, 2013).

They divert resources and invest more funding into these schools and then

communicate this support by explaining how these actions might best meet

accountability policy requirements. Such attempts may also leverage

accountability policy to secure additional resources and support for chronically

underserved schools with large numbers of marginalized students. A variety of

multifaceted, multipurpose reforms have been implemented in Meritas, Coral

Cove, and Daytonville to address issues of fairness and equity by utilizing the

authority and power of accountability policies, as well as their own personal

perspectives on what it means to be an accountable leader.

In Meritas, Hale has led discussions about resource allocation for years,

discussions that have been challenging at times due to substantial reductions in

state funding. According to Hale, his primary focus for these conversations is

that:

> Equity is something we talk about not as equality, but as what is good for everyone. We have to think about equity of access and equity with respect to diversity and inclusion... Some students need more, so we have to give them more.

For Meritas, this has meant careful consideration about program placement and

how schools are funded, as well as keeping an eye on how schools utilize the

resources they are given to promote the district's achievement agenda. As one

board member explained:

> We're never going to achieve social justice without a foundation of equity. That's important to us in Meritas because it's important to Mr. Hale, and it has become increasingly important to the larger community as a result of district communication efforts.

While funding is always a potentially contentious topic for districts to discuss, Meritas tries to manage non-financial resources in terms of varying school needs, too. Said Hale:

> Sometimes different groups or individuals may not need more in terms of actual resources, but they may need extra support, or encouragement along the way. How we schedule our time in schools, which PTA meetings are attended by district staff, and invitations to city officials for school performances all play into this idea of support.

According to one principal who has recently implemented new math curriculum despite "resistant" staff:

> We get visits and updates about our progress in terms of positive emails, staff visits, and highlights in the district newsletter. This helps keep people motivated and the ongoing support and 'cheerleading' lets people know the district office cares about our work.

Booker, known for his genuine presence and ability to listen, brings a sense of support to schools when he visits. "Even when he's there to find out what's not going well, we feel honored when Dr. Booker stops in and chats with staff and students. His care and concern gives us a boost," said one principal in Coral Cove. Like Hale, Booker has faced significant financial challenges. Overspending and overdependence on short-term grant funding to provide numerous staff positions has resulted in hundreds of jobs being lost in the past few years. This has led to a dramatic change in how schools operate and are supported. Booker spends a lot of time rallying for support for Coral Cove schools, laying out his reform agenda and attaching price tags to each major initiative. According to Booker, the financial mistakes of the past are harming some groups disproportionately in Coral Cove:

> I see some schools with newer lab equipment and some schools with microscopes that don't even work. Some classrooms have computers set up, but none of them are operational. We have closed underutilized buildings to save money and share newer resources, but there are still

schools without the resources they need to teach 21ˢᵗ century skills. If
resources aren't adequate, that puts certain groups at a disadvantage. We
have to start with, 'What is the ask? What do we want to see our students
doing in terms of learning experiences?' Then we can move toward, 'What
will it take for each learner to achieve that goal?'

By painting a clear picture and grounding his reform initiatives in research-driven strategies, Booker advocates for increased finances to create a better Coral Cove.

Schulte and Hong (2011) argue that school district finance and the response of some leaders to accountability policy have disparate impact on special populations. According to these authors, "School finance equity is but one item that can be considered on a social justice leader's agenda" (p. 42). For Booker, he believes the state's funding formula is "flawed" and that special populations, like the underperforming and economically disadvantaged student body of Coral Cove, will remain at a disadvantage unless resources are shifted. Booker said:

We will always, of course, do the best we can with what we have, but we
know we don't have enough. We aren't providing sound basic
educational experiences for the city. Some schools can offset needs
through fundraising efforts, but is that a just approach to funding schools?

Funding and resource disparities can exacerbate, rather than eradicate, educational barriers brought about by the demographic realities of particular regions and educational readiness (Batalova & Fix, 2010; Berger, 2010; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Fry & Gonzales, 2008; Popham, 1999; Tienda, 2009; White, 1982). It is these barriers that Booker is trying to remove for the children of Coral Cove.

According to some researchers, superintendents could use disaggregated student achievement data to highlight instances of inequity, prompting a need to address injustices while using accountability timelines and targets (Obiakor &

Beachum, 2005; Peterkin et al., 2011). These researchers described components of

such initiatives that could include designing a strategy around increasing

students' access to highly effective teachers, paying closer attention to practices

intended to serve underperforming subgroups, or mapping out how to reach

targets for one or more underperforming subgroups. In Daytonville, continuous

data analysis and strategic responses serve as the backbone for the district's

response to needs. "We can't treat everyone the same," said Ortiz. "There is no

one-size-fits-all, gold-standard model out there that will work for every school."

Instead, data and strategy meetings are used to monitor where schools are

having success, why this success is happening, and how to replicate it in other

schools. Conversely, when schools are not making progress, questions are asked

about why, and teams of support are utilized, resources are secured, and reform

initiatives are even abandoned if results are not realized. "If we say we want to

provide great schools for everyone, we have to realize that means not all

students need the same things," said Ortiz. "We must match resources to student

populations. We must use research-based strategies with evidence to support

success. We must close achievement gaps in order to say we are providing great

schools."

In addition to a broad-based approach to allocating resources to needs

each fiscal year, Daytonville is committed to being "agile and responsive" to

schools throughout each school year. Specialists are sent to schools to shore up

struggling schools and build capacity while infusing resources. According to a

principal of a turnaround school:

> When our area superintendent and Mr. Ortiz saw we were struggling to
> make gains, they came and helped. They sent instructional support staff to
> work with our teachers. They invested in additional literacy materials,

and they visited with parents and community members. It made a difference, and we have gotten better as a result. We have been trying to get more and more kids to proficiency, and we want to meet external accountability targets set for us. We believe we can.

Ortiz acknowledged the role and "push" accountability policy has had in terms of district reform and resource allocation decisions. "We want to meet our goals, and we want to show that we are capable," said Ortiz. "NCLB requirements are motivational for many schools. It helps them, and the entire district, stay focused and attentive to all subgroups of students. That has not always been the case." The work underway in Daytonville supports Hentschke, Nayfack, and Wohlstetter's (2009) findings that federal accountability legislation has "catalyzed reform efforts for specific subgroups of students" (p. 325). Daytonville has embraced the accountability to inform decision-making focused on getting better outcomes for students, which supports the intent of the law, as well as Ortiz's social justice agenda.

Building Proactive Accountability Systems

Some superintendents take accountability policy and own it in ways that have been proactive for their districts. Instead of only reacting to top-down consequences from state or federal offices for lack of progress, these leaders have established improvement targets that match or even exceed state and federal legislation (Thompson, Templeton, & Ballenger, 2013). Two of this study's superintendents have increased what current policy measures and expects. They have created internal accountability systems to help schools and districts assess their own progress against measures created by district staff and communities. From parental involvement and engagement to community partnerships to student voice regarding school climate, these two districts are not only

measuring achievement over time, but they are also attending to values of equity and justice. By establishing indicators of importance to stakeholders in their own context, these leaders have been able to include social justice goals within their own internal accountability systems. They have merged social justice goals in a system that includes a set of responses to success or struggle, in addition to what state and federal accountability policy requires.

Each of the three results-oriented district leaders have taken different approaches to developing internal metrics for improvement and public reporting of change over time. In Ortiz's district, he leveraged the state's school report card system to establish a district assessment of school success. Within his first year as superintendent, Ortiz grouped schools into different categories along what he described as "continuum of transformation and support." Three different kinds of schools are characterized by this continuum: schools needing more intensive resources and support, those that are showing promise and need to be accelerated, and schools whose success should be replicated. There is also a set of schools whose innovative learning approaches serve as potential models for choices across the city. By seeing schools at different starting points and addressing different needs as a cause of concern and action, Daytonville is seeing student achievement through a lens of need and equity, which is aligned with Hammersley's (2001) perception of social justice. Ortiz said:

> By qualitatively and quantitatively describing and defining schools at each phase of the continuum, we can better respond to school needs. We can intervene when we see a school needing more support, and we can 'back off' when we see a school beginning to thrive. We have indicators for assessing improvement and consider growth over absolutes.

The district-created school report cards used to determine where schools fall on the continuum of transformation and support include relative growth of

all students, relative growth of struggling students, parent feedback, student feedback, parent engagement, overall student achievement gains, and school climate survey data that includes discipline and descriptive qualities about how stakeholders experience schools. Each year, Daytonville celebrates the release of these report cards, which are more widely sought than the typical school report cards from state education agencies, according to a parent. These report cards reflect Gong's (2002) and Goldschmidt, Roschewski, Choi, et al.'s (2005) criteria and analysis of useful assessment and reporting strategies and how they vary from state to state depending on context and priorities.

Like Daytonville, Meritas established its own accountability system for determining progress. Like Daytonville, Meritas used state and federal accountability requirements to inform its internal system, but the district decided to take a more realistic approach to progress over time. "The straight-line expectation of improvement in proficiency scores set by NCLB for 2014 was not realistic," said a district office staff member. "Instead, we set achievement and growth targets that pushed us but allowed us to succeed. We set targets that worked to close gaps among subgroups of students so we were better serving all kids." To establish their targets, Meritas formed a committee comprised of a large group of district office administrators, principals, teachers, parents, community members and students. This committee considered historical growth and debated how hard they should push schools and students. A member of the committee said, "We asked tough questions about how fast we could push schools. We knew we weren't going to make NCLB proficiency targets each year, but we knew we could push ourselves."

Hale has made no apologies about the targets, despite what was required by legislation prior to the waiver his state received. According to Hale:

> A lot of my colleagues around the state and across the country felt this tremendous pressure to achieve certain results according to an externally imposed, speedy timetable that didn't always make sense. We have often been accused of going 'slow and steady,' but we are making gains and closing gaps each year. Not every district can say that. This has really worked for us. Of course we'd like to see faster progress so that kids are getting the outcomes they deserve, but we are working tremendously hard, and it shows.

By setting achievement goals and expressing an explicit commitment to closing the achievement gaps that exist among subgroups, Hale's district is on a path of improvement that is focused on analyzing outcome data and meeting needs. Differentiated programs, increased opportunities, and a variety of school supports are key strategies to make the world more accessible to all children.

Coral Cove has taken a different approach to establishing accountability targets for its schools. Because the district authorizes charter management organizations, universities, and education management agencies to oversee and run schools and subsets of schools, the district manages accountability for authorization and accountability in unique ways. Agencies interested in managing schools to more successful outcomes must apply to do so, and the district may approve or rescind an agency's bid for school management based on if and how schools meet achievement criteria. While the district has its own indicators for success and uses a lens of equity of access and achievement for school management authorization, some agencies have included additional indicators that reflect their commitment to process and justice within their proposed management plans. Booker, who recommends authorization of agencies to a committee and the district's governance team, personally reviews

each proposal he submits:

> I am looking for managers who want to see great things happen for students in Coral Cove. While I want to see evidence of previous success in terms of outcomes, I also value *how* different agencies want to serve and how they may be suited for serving some of our historically underperforming and underserved populations. Writing targets on paper is one thing, but outlining a plan for achieving those goals is more challenging.

According to a board member, "the focus on accountability and achievement" helped Coral Cove and the state education agency secure monies to support turnaround of the lowest-achieving schools. It also supported Coral Cove's design for district, charter, and private educational agencies to develop plans that would support gains in schools with historically poor outcomes. "In the past, we have had mixed results for district-led and non-district run schools," said a district office administrator. "We never had a district platform or set of values and priorities by which other providers could gauge themselves to see if they were a 'fit' for Coral Cove. Dr. Booker has defined what success looks like." For Booker:

> Having a comprehensive array of providers opens our eyes up to new ways of leading schools. What I care about more than anything is that children here have excellent school choices. Even if a family doesn't make a choice, I want the school those children attend to be great.

Ultimately, the district is concerned with outcomes. Booker has also prioritized quality experiences for all students, and he closely considers which schools external providers request to manage. "I want to make sure we are creating choices all over the city. No neighborhoods should be overlooked or ignored because of the challenge or uniqueness of their makeup," he said. Booker's commitment to social justice extends beyond the district-led schools he supervises as external providers make their proposals to lead schools, through

the authorization process, and ultimately, the district's oversight of providers' execution of plans and outcomes.

Summary

Skrla *et al*. (2004) argue that accountability can be a strong lever for social change and that "accountability has real, significant, tactical possibilities for improving educational equity on a wider than school-by-school basis" (p. 59). Through means that look different from district to district, the social justice-driven superintendents in this study work to meet accountability expectations to produce change at scale. Examples of how accountability and social justice goals may align and support one another vary due to contextual priorities and constraints, as well as different experience and knowledge each leader brings to their position (Anderson, 2009; Bredeson, Johansson, & Kose, 2004; Bredeson & Kose, 2005; Kowalski & Brunner, 2011). Hale focuses more on attainable, sustainable improvement over time while Ortiz pushes for more immediate change to be realized. Booker and Ortiz's personal experiences in schools as members of marginalized groups shape the way they discuss choice and access. Two districts set internal accountability targets that push beyond federal and state policy and include indicators of equity, inclusiveness, and climate as measures of success. Ultimately, all three leaders are contributing to a social justice agenda important to themselves and their respective districts through reform work prompted not only by policy, but also by their desire to improve educational experiences and outcomes for the children in their care.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Implications

In Chapters 4-6, findings were shared in the form of themes in response to the three research questions of this study. By exploring similarities and differences across the three superintendents of Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville, a deeper understanding of how these leaders make sense of, balance, and leverage the relationship between accountability and social justice has been described. Though the experiences of each superintendent vary greatly as a result of his personal perspective and experience, district context, and unique regional and local circumstances, several common trends emerged across the data. This chapter considers those trends with relation to the conceptual framework for this study and considers implications for future research, policy, and practice.

This exploratory study examined the educational leadership beliefs and practices around the relationship between social justice and accountability in only three school districts. The small sample size of this study makes it impossible to generalize the findings to other school districts, superintendents, or district leadership teams, even those who meet the sample selection criteria. However, the findings in the study do suggest there are some approaches to practice that can be considered for embracing accountability and changing the status quo for more just schools and achievement outcomes. Potential recommendations for future research, as well as reflections for leadership practice and implementation of new federal and state policy decisions are explored at the end of the chapter.

Conclusions

Elements of the conceptual framework are highlighted by the research data, and the overall connection between accountability contexts and social justice leadership is enhanced.
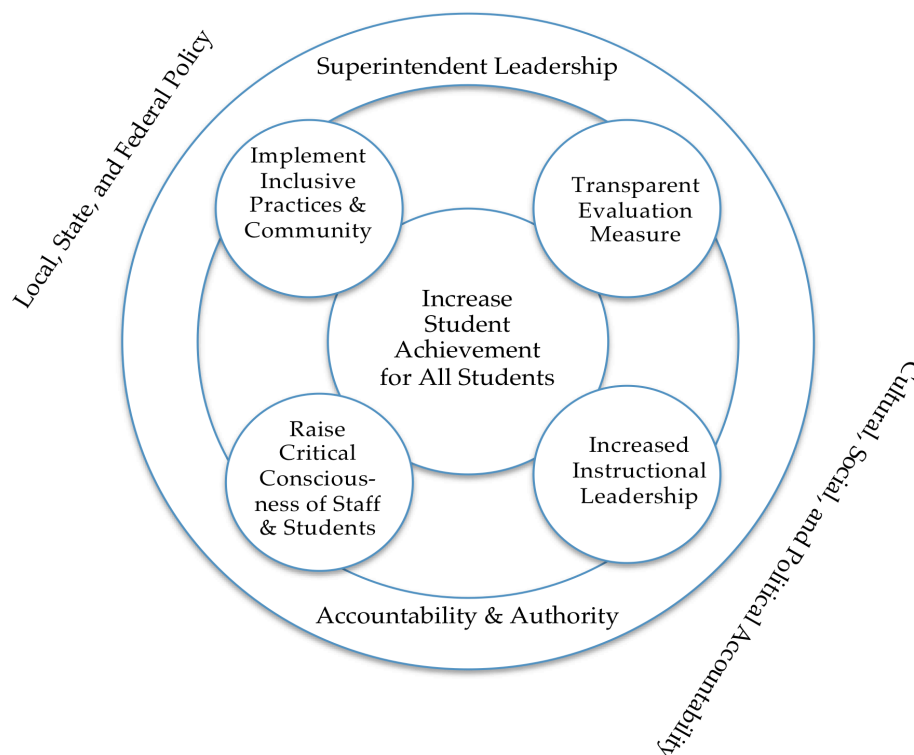
The Framework

The conceptual framework connects core tenets of social justice leadership to the realities superintendents face in the context of high-stakes accountability policies. McKenzie et al.'s (2008) three tasks of social justice leaders and Lashway's (2002) description of superintendent accountability work are concepts not only found in research literature, but also in the practice of these three study superintendents. According to McKenzie et al. (2008), the work of social justice leadership requires leaders to "raise the academic achievement of all the students in their school," "prepare students to live as critical citizens in society," and

"structure schools to ensure that students learn in heterogeneous, inclusive classrooms" (p. 116). The superintendents in this study all agree, in words and in actions, that these three tasks are central to their work as leaders. They see their work in public education as being accountable for social justice, and social justice means breaking down barriers of exclusion so that all students can experience rich, meaningful school experiences with comparable outcomes for various subgroups. They agree with Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) that inequities in and across schools are among the social injustices with which educational leaders need to be primarily concerned, and they make this a core focus of their leadership.

Hale, Booker, and Ortiz all express their personal commitment to social justice and their beliefs about what improved outcomes can do for communities. They also articulate that schools should be places of positive learning and inclusive experiences, and they each work within their districts to create better school options for children that foster critical thinking and respect for differences. They ask their staffs and the communities in which they work to upend the status quo through political savvy and respectful yet urgent conversations about who succeeds in schools, who does not succeed, and why. According to Jenlink and Jenlink (2012),

> The educational leader's work, in part, is to illuminate and interrogate injustices. Taking a social justice stance requires that the educational leader interrogate social structures and cultural practices that contribute to injustice, bringing democratic practices to bear so as to mediate cultural dominance, political ideologies and asymmetries of power that work to reproduce cultures and social structures that foster injustices and inequities in educational settings (p. 2).

This approach to inclusiveness and critical awareness extends to their investment in adults. By asking difficult questions about differences and channeling

resources into professional development, the three study districts have worked to build knowledge about root causes of different outcomes and expertise in strategies to close those achievement gaps.

At the heart of social justice leadership and accountability policy lies student achievement. A view of social justice as "synonymous with school achievement" (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004, p. 51) oversimplifies the issue of accountability expectations in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville and neglects the social, political, and moral complexity of the accountability-social justice relationship. To improve educational outcomes for all students while closing achievement gaps is to succeed on both fronts. Hale, Booker, and Ortiz take this work a step further, defining outcomes beyond academic achievement. They embrace the targets for increased results that have accompanied state and federal accountability policy, but they have not stopped with simply improving test scores. Leveraging accountability policy has been an important first step for each of these leaders, however. The work in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville supports Skrla and Scheurich's (2004) perspectives on making the most of accountability policy to address inequality:

> [U]sing accountability systems to improve school achievement for children of color will probably not achieve the highest ideals many of us hold for critically oriented, culturocentric, or the best college preparatory school experiences for African-American, Latina/Latino American, Native-American, and other children of color…We are *not* saying that working within the context of accountability to leverage more just educational outcomes will attain our ideals…[I]n our view, accountability systems have the tactical potential to raise the baseline of acceptable academic achievement for all children…it is a step, a significant step (p. 60).

Hale, Booker, and Ortiz do not believe the kinds of schooling experiences they envision for all children start and stop with accountability policy, but they

each welcome accountability as part of their approach to leading their respective reform agendas. Coral Cove and Daytonville actually add accountability indicators to their annual public school reviews, and they consider parental engagement, access to programming, and participation in special and extracurricular activities as indicators of a well-rounded school. All three men actively and continually seek student input as an ongoing measure of how schools are serving their most important stakeholders, and each district makes adjustments in resource allocation, professional development investments, and organizational support for schools based on needs indicated by students, staff, and achievement indicators.

The attention Hale, Booker, and Ortiz give to continuously monitoring school progress is supported and enhanced by accountability legislation. Where federal policy requires annual reporting of growth by student subgroup, these leaders look at progress more frequently. Federal policy requires action to be taken as a result of continued underperformance, and the superintendents in this study take proactive measures to keep schools from falling in the "persistently lowest achieving" category of schools. They each believe in holding schools accountable for improved results, and they all believe in holding district office staff accountable for supporting schools in their improvement efforts. Hale, Booker, and Ortiz consider the varying needs of the schools in their districts, the unique makeup of student learning needs, pedagogical expertise required, and materials, resources and programs that will allow students throughout their respective districts to succeed in school. They all agree that without equity in educational resources and opportunities, accountability policy alone will not close achievement gaps (Lee & Wong, 2004; Ryan, 2004). How resources are

allocated has become a central focus for equitable decision-making within all three superintendents' leadership teams.

The Importance of Priority Setting and Context

Hale, Booker, and Ortiz have spent a tremendous amount of time communicating priorities for the improvement of teaching and learning across their respective districts. Through data meetings, listening and learning sessions, advocacy campaigns to local and state legislatures, and frequent impromptu school visits, each superintendent has been deliberate in his messages about serving students. They each convey urgent messages about equity and access and discuss what excellence looks like in terms of academic, social, and even basic needs descriptors. All three superintendents have faced exceptional pressure to meet accountability requirements for all schools and students, as Hale, Booker, and Ortiz all lead districts with historical inequities. Based on study participants' responses in each district, having leadership that welcomes responsibility and accountability for achievement, models that personal accountability, and intentionally pushes a reform agenda committed to social justice is key to the kinds of outcomes Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville have experienced. One principal summed this up best when saying:

> We have never had such a committed, capable, equity focused leader before. He talks the talk and walks the walk. He takes ownership of some of our most struggling schools and expects of himself what he expects of us—maybe even more so. This helps keep us focused and committed, even when things get tough.

The personal perspective Hale, Booker, and Ortiz bring to their social justice leadership has also had an impact in their districts. From being an English Language Learner to a member of a minority group to growing up in a family of educators, each has witnessed the power of access, support for success, and the

development of critical thinking and strategies for action. The personal experiences each man brings to the superintendency have influenced their leadership stance and beliefs, and also add credibility to the very challenging work they ask of their schools. Drawing upon experiences from their childhood, as schoolteachers and leaders, and as members of communities subject to institutionalized barriers outside of schools, each of the study superintendents has brought a new perspective to what social justice means for the historically underserved children in their districts. They have each brought a personal passion for the work of improving schools that requires everyone to be accountable for results because these superintendents know firsthand what kinds of lifetime outcomes students without properly developed skillsets will face.

Similar to Cohn's (2011) observation regarding the importance of district context for leadership, each of the superintendents in this study recognized the importance of the historical, political, and financial context in determining a social justice agenda. They also used this understanding of context to identify pressure points for leveraging accountability mandates to pursue particular equity initiatives. How to manage the politics, surmount conflicts, and minimize or eradicate barriers have become central components of social justice leadership (Aleman, 2009; Gerzon, 2006; Ryan, 2010), and the unique circumstances in each district influence the accountability-social justice relationship. For example, the immigration and ESL concerns of Meritas and Daytonville are not as relevant in Coral Cove. The historical mistrust regarding financial management in Coral Cove does not strike the same urgency in Meritas, despite massive state funding reductions over the past decade. And how each superintendent addresses accountability varies from district to district. In Meritas, Hale assigns

responsibility for oversight of accountability to himself. Ortiz serves as a principal of a school in Daytonville to model the accountability he is asking from his school leaders. And Booker has his own zone of schools he oversees and supports, a zone of the most underperforming schools in Coral Cove. Ultimately, what works in one district may not work in another, even if superintendents are addressing similar social justice challenges.

Superintendent Accountability

While NCLB, state, and local accountability requirements certainly had an impact on leadership decision-making in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville, each of the superintendents in these districts not only embraced accountability, but they also expanded it. Hale, Booker, and Ortiz each augmented the policy's definitions and requirements of accountability to include a substantial role for them to take. Despite NCLB's focus on teachers and principals, each superintendent in this study welcomed accountability across the board for all stakeholders, starting with themselves. As a result of accountability legislation, Petersen and Young (2004) stated that superintendents tend to find their schools, school districts, and even themselves as leaders being compared based on how well students perform on standardized tests and other standardized indicators. Where some leaders may be apprehensive of such comparisons, the superintendents in this study welcomed that public measure and modeled responsibility for process and outcomes.

Unlike legislation regarding teachers and principals, neither federal or state policy includes language that holds superintendents accountable for academic growth or student performance (Motoko, 2013) or defines what is considered a highly qualified or highly effective superintendent (Spaulding,

2014). Even without the policy requirement, the superintendents in this study all

recognized the importance of modeling personal responsibility and

accountability, especially when such high stakes have been attached to teacher

and principal evaluation of effectiveness (Motoko, 2013). These superintendents

have not done this work alone, and they all three asserted the importance of

collaboration in this work—with their cabinets, boards of education, principals,

parents, teachers, and even students. They are not only trying to support and

meet the expectations of these various stakeholders, but they also actively seek

feedback about what is and is not working for different student groups.

According to Peterson and Young (2004), "The demand for proven results…has

moved the role of the superintendent from the sideline to the front line of

supporting student achievement" (p. 343). This is a position all three of this

study's superintendents appreciate and accept, and they find ways to

incorporate social justice goals within their roles as accountable leaders in their

day-to-day work.

Summary

In the recent era of accountability in education, outcomes for student

achievement have been a top priority. The annual reporting by student

subgroups serves as a foundation for analyzing and addressing achievement

gaps. Accountability policy alone, however, is not enough to support the

improvement of educational practices necessary to close historic achievement

gaps in every school and every district across the country. Nor will a laser-like

focus on social justice work be the sole means for increasing achievement for all

students while closing achievement gaps. Understanding, leveraging, and

potentially strengthening the relationship between accountability policy and

social justice leadership serves as a foundation for education reform in Meritas, Coral Cove, and Daytonville that has begun to result in improved outcomes for all children.

The discussion about the effects of educational reform through recent accountability policy tends to be polarized, with pro-accountability and pro-social justice groups each claiming that the impact of accountability policy on justice and equity is either all positive or all harmful (Skrla, 2001; Scheurich, Skrla, & Johnson, 2000). The three leaders in this study argue that the relationship between social justice and accountability is an important one. It is complex and dynamic, based on context and changes in local and state priorities and politics. To focus on accountability without consideration of social justice issues may result in proposing flawed reform agendas. However, to disregard or minimize the role accountability plays in improving school experiences and outcomes is problematic. Accountability is but one tool to be used to influence school improvement, but it a powerful one when modeled and exercised strategically to achieve more equitable opportunities and outcomes, as well as to increase positive school experiences for all children.

Implications

As discussed in the study findings, the relationship between accountability and social justice is sometimes simple and sometimes complex. By examining how accountability policies and social justice work intersect, this study has highlighted three snapshots of superintendents in districts working to achieve more just schools and outcomes for children while navigating, and often endorsing, accountability policy in their reforms. This study contributes to the literature by providing some empirical evidence on the ways superintendents

understand and enact social justice while striving to achieve accountability policy, examples which have largely been absent from research literature (Theoharis, 2007). Implications of this study's findings for research, policy, and practice are discussed below.

Implications for Research

The role context plays when understanding superintendents' management of the relationship between accountability and social justice is a critical and consistent theme. Aside from considering the size of school districts and consideration of urban, rural, and suburban categorization, possible contextual factors have not received much attention from researchers. Few studies tangentially address the influence of accountability measures on the attitudes and practices of local superintendents (e.g., Cohn, 2005; Sherman & Grogan, 2003), an area that warrants further exploration in light of recent legislation shifting the authority for accountability expectations back to states and districts.

Examination of the many players involved in school district leadership and the implementation of accountability and social justice initiatives is another area of research that this study prompts. The composition of district boards of education and the role the board plays in establishing justice-oriented policy and local interpretation of accountability requirements are areas in need of study. The alignment of the board and superintendent relationship is also an important consideration, especially in a policy-governance model of leadership. How local and state union leadership supports or resists a superintendent's social justice agenda, along with scrutiny of a collaborative or forced relationship to enact accountability law are additional areas of research. Finally, exploring various stakeholder perspectives, including those teacher and principals tasked with

executing a social justice agenda in classrooms and schools, is a perspective of research that could enhance the field's understanding of how to accelerate reform. Studying parent and student perspective can only enrich practitioners' comprehension of how attempts to lead play out in the day-to-day lives of those whom school is intended to serve. Stakeholder perspectives and the power they wield or perceive to hold, particularly in the context of each district, would shed light on the myriad ways the social justice-accountability relationship is defined, understood, and enacted.

Through the lens of this study's conceptual framework, closer analysis of each component of the intersection between the influence of accountability on superintendent decision-making and leading for social justice may provide more insight on which aspects are the most powerful for producing improved student outcomes. How to more quickly impact student achievement may be realized by more closely examining how leaders implement inclusive practices and community, raise critical consciousness of their staff and students, utilize public and transparent achievement data and measures, and determine appropriate instructional leadership responsibilities. How and when leaders divulge performance data, indications of progress toward social justice goals, and the rationale for curriculum and instructional programming decisions are also factors to consider when learning more about how accountability and social justice intersect in everyday decision-making. In addition to the individual and connected components of the framework for this study, considering local political environments and how various government agencies collaborate with or isolate school district leadership offers a broader understanding of how context plays a role in the intersection of social justice leadership and accountability in

school districts. Perhaps different components become more or less important, depending on the political, cultural, and social contexts and appetites for social justice reform.

Also considering a larger sample size of districts, including districts with greater or less success in improving student achievement outcomes, may highlight which are the more powerful levers for superintendents to pull when enacting reform agendas. Investigating varying types of districts with respect to size and how superintendents perceive themselves as social justice leaders may also contribute to the literature on improving student achievement outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Additional levers for increasing social justice may be realized in districts with extreme or lax accountability mandates to implement or with superintendents whose previous experience has or has not been to develop and put accountability systems in place.

Studying achievement gaps across particular student subgroups and considering the root causes of specific achievement gaps across different types and sizes of districts (urban, suburban, or rural) is an area in need of additional study. Most school districts do not look like the large urban districts examined in this study, and the sizes and types of gaps that exist, and for which subgroups student achievement is less than expected, may define not only social justice goals, but also how accountability can be leveraged outside of regulations. Understanding more about how superintendents of large and small suburban and rural districts define social justice needs and how they perceive, make sense of, and leverage accountability for social justice may result in findings and lessons that influence a large number of American school districts, leaders, and students.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As federal regulation and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act shift, accountability questions regarding "for what" and "to whom," as well as who defines such accountability, are priorities for school districts to consider. The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is much more specific about which schools require intervention based on low achievement via standardized measures, but the law is less prescriptive about reform remedies than NCLB. Additionally, the new law leaves definition and expectations of accountability goals almost entirely up to state education agencies. States are required to submit their accountability plans to the Department of Education. These plans must work within accountability "guardrails and protections for the most vulnerable students" (Report from the Executive Office of the President, December 2015) that broadly define what the accountability goals need to include, and test scores and graduation rates must be given "much greater weight" than more subjective measures. Interestingly, the new legislation includes a provision for more equitable funding programs that differentiate financial resources based on a weighted student formula. In exchange for a commitment to more equitable distribution of state and local monies, districts will be allowed to allocate and use federal dollars in more flexible ways.

This change in law alters the legislative power by which superintendents could use accountability "mandates" to support their reform agendas. Varying definitions of accountability may impact the implementation of accountability in school districts. Thus, the onus for accountability in day-to-day practice may fall squarely on the shoulders of superintendents. Those committed to social justice

may need examples of how to maintain and support high levels of accountability without the kinds of firm federal regulations that have existed for nearly fifteen years. The superintendents in this study share a perspective of going beyond federal accountability requirements and may offer insight into how social justice leadership can be supported via locally determined priorities and targets for accountability. These leaders also illustrate how the connection between accountability and social justice is not an either-or relationship, but one of mutual goals and purpose in which improved student achievement is the strong overlapping focus.

The new federal policy offers a noteworthy opportunity for district and state education leaders to include indicators of social justice in their descriptions of accountability. The findings of this study suggest that there are elements of accountability that might need to be defined in specific ways in order to truly promote social justice in schools. Where previous policy has fallen short and has left indicators "undefined," as described by the leaders in this study, some suggestions about what should be more defined as accountability for social justice indicators must include room for variability among school district populations, historical and cultural contexts, and community and political power structures. Data points that might lea to indications of more or less just schooling opportunities and experiences include attendance and truancy information, student participation in extracurricular activities, various measures of family and community engagement that involve outreach as well as in-school visits, and discipline infractions and consequences. These data points all critical indicators that can help paint a picture of the types of schooling experiences various subgroups of students have from building to building and district to district.

While these data alone do not tell the entire story, they help explain the different levels of participation, engagement, and consequences subgroups of students face in the school environment.

Leaders for social justice who may not have embraced or leveraged accountability fully may be empowered through the examples of the superintendents in this study. Whether other leaders see student achievement as a result of social justice leadership or view accountability mandates as congruent with promoting justice and equity in schools, maintaining the wellbeing of students as the core of their work will help superintendents negotiate the accountability-social justice relationship. Leaders accomplish this work in a variety of ways, from focusing on allocation of resources to attending to how organizations are structured. Leveraging accountability for student achievement as the primary goal of social justice leadership is the foundation by which more equitable social and academic outcomes will be realized.

How superintendents are prepared to lead this multifaceted work also requires attention. Leaders need skillsets to manage the difficult political terrain of social justice leadership within changing accountability expectations. Not only do district superintendents need the skills for this work, but teachers, principals, and district office leaders must understand and develop skills for promoting social justice and managing the role of accountability. Even without a personal connection or experience with being marginalized or considered a member of a traditionally underperforming subgroup, district leaders must bring a personal perspective and passion to this work in order to be genuine about the urgency of social justice. While part of a social justice leader's work involves increasing critical consciousness, preparation programs that support skill development for

cadres of like-minded leaders could have an even greater impact on more just schools and outcomes for all children.

This study, situated in the midst of the accountability era, considers strategies, challenges, and opportunities of three social justice-driven superintendents who maximize accountability conditions. Leading from the intersection of moral imperatives for social justice and policy obligations for accountability, these three leaders have found ways to achieve both goals. They have bettered schools for children, increased awareness and capacity in their staffs, and they are improving student outcomes while closing achievement gaps. While the work looks very different in each context, the common thread of managing the accountability-social justice relationship as a catalyzing force for district reform work opens discussion about the possibilities for replicating the success of three superintendents leading school districts recognized for working toward social justice goals. The findings suggest multiple entry points for engaging in social justice leadership while maintaining high standards of accountability, and my hope is that more district leaders will find it personally and professionally compelling to explore the ways in which accountability bolsters a social justice agenda.

Appendix A

National Award Criteria Recognizing Superintendent Leadership

The Broad Prize

The $1 million Broad Prize, established in 2002, is the largest education award in the country given to school districts. The Broad Prize is awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color.

The Board Prize has four goals:

- Reward districts that improve achievement levels of disadvantaged students
- Restore the public's confidence in our nation's public schools by highlighting successful urban districts
- Create competition and provide incentives for districts to improve
- Showcase the best practices of successful districts

The Broad Prize Review Board determines the finalists based on the following data:
- Performance and improvement results on mandated state tests in reading and math for elementary, middle and high schools
- Performance and improvement of the district compared with expected results for similar districts in the state (based on poverty levels)
- The reduction and magnitude of achievement gaps between ethnic groups and between low-income and non-low-income students
- Graduation rates calculated using the latest enrollment data available from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data (CCD) according to three different methods: the Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR), the Urban Institute Graduation Rate (Cumulative Promotion Index or CPI), and the Manhattan Institute Graduation Rate (Greene's Graduation Indicator or CGI)
- Advanced Placement exam participation and passing rates
- SAT and ACT exam participation rates and scores
- District demographic data (e.g., student enrollment, income, language, special education, ethnicity)

Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award

The Dr. Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award honors leadership in educational equity and excellence. Those recognized must be AASA members who evidence commitment to the advancement and mentorship of women and minorities in positions of leadership and/or demonstrate a commitment to address social justice issues among children, youth and adults in schools.

Criteria for consideration of nominees includes:
- Organizes and facilitates networks and enterprises to ensure equity and access for women and minorities in education
- Provides leadership development through coaching, mentoring, modeling and networking
- Shares generously of own knowledge, skills and resources to promote women and minorities in education and to address equity issues among children
- Promotes innovative structures to achieve goals of equity and excellence
- Demonstrates courageous leadership in addressing social justice issues among children and adults with relentlessness and unwavering persistence
- Encourages others to become AASA members

American Association of School Administrators (SSAS) Superintendent of the Year Award

This program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents.
Each candidate is judged on the following criteria:
- Leadership for Learning – creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication – strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism – constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community Involvement – active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

Council of the Great City School Green-Garner Award

Each year at its annual Fall Conference, the Council presents a board member or superintendent with the Green-Garner Award, the nation's highest urban education honor recognizing outstanding contributions in urban education and named in memory of urban school leaders Richard R. Green and Edward Garner. Recipients of the Green-Garner Award should be able to demonstrate one or more of the following ideals cherished by Dr. Green and Mr. Garner:

LEADERSHIP
- The applicant has shown excellence in leadership and sustained that leadership over a number of years.
- The applicant has improved the quality and stability of the district through his or her leadership and governance.

ACHIEVEMENT
- The applicant has demonstrated that his or her leadership has been instrumental in improving student achievement districtwide for a number of years.
- The applicant has demonstrated that his or her leadership has been instrumental in narrowing achievement gaps in his or her district over a number of years.

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE
- The applicant has helped improve the public's confidence in his or her school district.

PROFESSIONALISM
- The applicant embodies the personal characteristics and professional accomplishments that reflect well on urban education and the progress it is striving to make.

INVOLVEMENT
- The applicant has shown active and sustained participation in and support of the Council of the Great City Schools.

Appendix B

Letter of Consent

February ___, 2015

Dear Superintendent _____,

I am a doctoral student studying superintendent leadership at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I am embarking on my dissertation research and I am interested in studying your leadership work.

My dissertation centers on how superintendents understand and address issues of equity and social justice while leading a school district under the current accountability context. I believe this research will provide aspiring and current leaders examples of how one can shape reforms, direct resources, manage human capital, and influence political powers to promote social justice and meet accountability targets in our school systems.

In order to collect data on this topic, I'd like to interview you on three separate occasions, for approximately 60-90 minutes each time. I'd also like to interview members of your cabinet, a few members of your school board, and other district stakeholders, such as union leaders and principals, particularly those who have addressed equity and social justice issues and those who have met or exceeded accountability targets in your district. I would also like to interview parents, if possible. I plan to audio record the interviews to ensure that I have captured each participant's thoughts accurately and to assist with my data analysis. In addition to the interviews, I will review district documents, attend board meetings, and possibly observe other district meetings.

I have attached an informed consent form for your review. This form will explain any risks to you for agreeing to participate in my study. I will ask for your signature on a written consent form if you agree to participate, as well as the signature from each person interviewed.

The results of my study will be read by my dissertation committee and, once passed, placed in the HGSE Library. I will use pseudonyms for all individuals and schools. It is possible that I will adapt the dissertation into an article for publication, but again, pseudonyms will be used.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-271-6742 or via e-mail at uspkelley@gmail.com. If you would like to discuss my project with my advisor, please feel free to contact Dr. Katherine Boles at 617-496-0948 or via e-mail at katherine_boles@gse.harvard.edu.

Thank you so much for your consideration. I greatly appreciate your time and I look forward to the opportunity to learn from you and your work.

Best regards,

Laura Kelley
Doctoral Student in Education Policy, Leadership, and Instructional Practice
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM
DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR LAURA KELLEY
STUDY TOPIC:

1. *Purpose of the study.* The purpose of this study is to provide a complete and up-close look at the kinds of challenges and choices urban school district leaders encounter as they understand, leverage, and balance the relationship between accountability and social justice within the political, managerial, and educational contexts of their school districts. By examining the changing landscape of urban schools and studying current issues school leaders confront, current and future leaders can learn from some of the most successful superintendents in urban schools today. I will accomplish my goals by asking you a series of questions and studying your school systems. Please be as honest and thorough in your answers as possible.

2. *Selection of participants.* I will interview a series of superintendents, members of their leadership team, and other individuals connected to their school districts. Participants were chosen based on their knowledge of the case study subject area.

3. *Participant's requirements.* I will generally schedule one interview with you that will last approximately one to one and one-half hours. I will tape the interview, possibly videotape the interview and make a transcription of the tape. The interviews will be scheduled between February and December 2015. Recordings will be destroyed upon passage of my dissertation, but no longer than June 2016.

4. *Confidentiality.* Throughout the research project, your confidentiality will be maintained. I will assign you and your district a pseudonym in my writing and will make every reasonable effort to exclude information that may allow readers to identify you. I will use this pseudonym in all products of the interview and observations, including my notes. I will also destroy the digital recording of the interview after completion of the project as another way to protect your privacy. Despite these precautions, a determined individual familiar with your district and your views may be to identify you.

5. *Risks associated with participating in the study.* There are minimal foreseeable risks to you because of participating in this study. If at any time you feel that you have been harmed by your participation in this study, please contact me or Dr. Boles immediately.

6. *Benefits associated with participating in the study.* Please remember you will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, it is my hope that the study will allow you to reflect on your work as a school leader/school stakeholder and be of benefit to you as a superintendent, educator and/or community member.

7. *Voluntary nature of study.* Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Without fear of penalty, you may stop participating at any time and you may choose not to answer any question. If you have any questions throughout this process, you may ask me at any time. If you wish to not answer a question or need clarification on a question, please let me know.

> Researcher contact information. This study has been approved by HGSE and Dr. Katherine Boles. If you have any questions, you may contact me, Laura Kelley at 202-271-6742 or uspkelley@gmail.com, or the faculty member overseeing this project, Dr. Boles at 617-496-0948 or Katherine_boles@gse.harvard.edu.

Whom to contact about your rights in this research, for questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that are not being addressed by the researcher, or research-related harm: Harvard University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research, 1414 Massachusetts Avenue, Room 234, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 617-496-2847, E-mail: cuhs@fas.harvard.edu

The nature and purpose of this research have been satisfactorily explained and I agree to participate in the study described above. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation at any time if I so choose, and that the researcher will gladly answer any questions that arise during the course of this research.

Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Name of Researcher: Laura K. Kelley_____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

HARVARD
Human Research Protection Program

Harvard University-Area
Committee on the Use of Human Subjects
1414 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MA 02138
Federal Wide Assurance FWA00004837

Notification of Modification Exemption Determination

February 20, 2015

Laura Kelley
lkk258@mail.harvard.edu

Protocol Title:	Urban Superintendent Leadership Perspectives: Case Studies
Protocol #:	IRB14-0555
Submission #:	MOD14-0555-02
Funding Source:	None
IRB Review Date:	2/20/2015
IRB Review Type:	Exempt

Dear Laura Kelley:

On 2/20/2015, after review of your submission, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Harvard University-Area determined that the above-referenced protocol continues to meet the criteria for exemption per the regulations found at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). This determination applies to changing the name of the project.

Additional review by the IRB is not required. However, any additional changes to the protocol that may alter this determination must be submitted for review via a modification (by selecting the Create Modification activity in the ESTR system) to determine whether the research activity continues to meet the criteria for exemption.

The IRB made the following determination:
- Research Information Security Level: The research is classified, using Harvard's Data Security Policy, as Level 2 Data.

Please contact me at 617-495-1775 or fennever@fas.harvard.edu if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Fanny Ennever
Senior IRB Administrator

University Area IRB http://cuhs.harvard.edu
Longwood Medical Area IRB http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ohra/

Appendix E

Interview Protocol-1ˢᵗ Interview
Introduction:

"Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about your experience as a superintendent of schools, your background, and your beliefs about equity and social justice and accountability. As an aspiring superintendent, these are topics of great importance to me. These are also topics that I believe will be beneficial to a wider audience of educators, particularly those who aspire to district and school leadership positions. I want to thank you in advance for sharing your experiences with me. I expect each interview to take about an hour. I'd like to tape record the interviews so that I can have it transcribed and accurately record your words. Is that okay with you? I'd also like to take a moment for you to review the consent form and have you sign if you agree to participate in my study. Please remember I can stop recording at any time, so please let me know if you want the recording to stop. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Background questions:

Please describe your work as an educator prior to becoming a superintendent.
- What roles did you have?
- What was your school/district like in those roles?
- Why did you desire to enter into district leadership as a superintendent?

Please describe any other influences on your decision to become a superintendent.
Please tell me about your school district. (Staff profile, students' background, and community)

Please tell me why you wanted to become superintendent in your specific district.
- What were some of the challenges you faced?
- How would you describe teacher and administrator expectations for students before you entered?
- What did you want to change as the district's leader?

Please describe your personal core values that guided your work as superintendent.
- Why did you believe your _____ belief - is so important to your work?
- How did your core values influence your work?

Why do you feel you were chosen as superintendent of _____? Could you tell me what you feel you stands for – what is important to you? What would others say you stand for? How do you know?
What are the key aspects of your practice as a superintendent? How do you find you spend your time in this work?
How would you describe your theory of action – or what you intend to do as superintendent and how/why?

How did you set your reform agenda?
- What were the indicators you examined?
- Who was involved in this process?

Conclusion:

Is there anything I haven't asked about your background as an educational leader that you'd like to add?

Thank you again. I look forward to our next interview, which we have scheduled for:

2ⁿᵈ Interview

Thank you again for your insights on _____. I'd like to continue to discuss your personal leadership experience as superintendent of schools in _____ and your perceptions of social justice and accountability.

District leadership experience:

How do YOU understand social justice in schools?

Please tell me about the social justice issues that are particular to your school district.

How does your leadership practice address social justice in your district? (personal value, leadership practice, district vision)

How do you describe the superintendent's role in improving student achievement?

How do YOU perceive accountability policy?

What do you do to meet the requirements of current accountability policy?

In what ways, if at all, do you find that meeting the requirements of accountability relates to your work to promote social justice?
- Instruction and curriculum
- Ability to manage change
- Students and teachers
- The community
- District/central office organization and structure
- Administrative issues and priorities
- Board of Education relationships

Please describe a superintendent's leadership responsibilities? How do you enact these responsibilities? What do they look like in action?

How have recent accountability policies influenced your leadership, if at all? The work that you are doing in your district?

Could you please describe some of your major initiatives you tackled as superintendent?
- Why were these issues important to you?
- How did you work to tackle the inequities? What were the important pieces of this work—accountability, implementing best practices, collaboration, etc?
- How do you balance urgency with implementing your reforms?
- How did you communicate the importance of these issues to your constituents?

What are/were some of your greatest challenges as superintendent?
- How did political forces impact your strategies from enacting change?
- How did you work with various stakeholders to overcome these challenges?

What are you most proud of during your superintendency?

Conclusion:

Is there anything I haven't asked about your reform strategies that you'd like to add?

Thank you again. I look forward to our next interview, which we have scheduled for:

3ʳᵈ Interview (to include clarifications on topics discussed in 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ interviews)
Reflections:

Please describe the dilemmas you have faced/are facing in your work to promote social justice.

Do you find that meeting the requirements of accountability policy complements your work to advance social justice goals? Please describe times when accountability policy has served to advance your social justice leadership.
- What has been difficult in these situations?
- How did you respond?
- What made these situations easier?

How do you balance accountability and social justice in times when the two conflict?

What strategies have you used to meet accountability policy expectations AND social justice goals in your district?

How do you want accountability policy to address social justice in your district?

What could be added or changed from current policy to support social justice

leadership in your district?

Superintendents talk about what's doing best for students. What does this mean to you? What kinds of experiences have you had with this?

What advice would you give to a new superintendent that was entering a district with many inequities – whether they are differences in classes, resources, or expectations?

You had previously described some of your challenges? Looking back, what would you have done differently with/wish you had done with _____.

What are the greatest inhibitors when pursuing equity and social justice as a superintendent?

How do you hold others accountable for their leadership decision-making across the district?

How do you balance the student achievement goals of the district with the urgency of other issues you have identified as needs in the district?

What, if any, are some of the district inequities that you feel still exist? How do you talk about and address this work as the district's leader?

How do you feel empowered or hindered in enacting your vision by accountability pressures?

How does your board and community understand the strategic vision and direction of the district and accountability targets?

Conclusion:
Is there anything I haven't asked about your leadership that you'd like to add?

Appendix F

Sample stakeholder interview protocol – Cabinet Member

Introduction:

"Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about your experience as a member of Dr. _____'s leadership team. As an aspiring superintendent, social justice and accountability are topics of great importance to me. These are also topics that I believe will be beneficial to a wider audience of educators, particularly those who aspire to district and school leadership positions. I want to thank you in advance for sharing your experience with me. I expect the interview will take about an hour. I'd like to tape record the interview so that I can have it transcribed and accurately record your words. Is that okay with you? I'd also like to take a moment for you to review the consent form and have you sign if you agree to participate in my study. Please remember your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to not answer any question and I can stop recording at any time, so please let me know if you want the recording to stop. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Please tell me a little about your affiliation with ____ district. How long have you been here/in what roles have you served?

Why do you feel that Dr. _____ was chosen as superintendent of _____? Could you tell me what you feel he stands for – what is important to him? How do you know?

How would you describe his theory of action – or what he intends to do as superintendent/what does he stand for?

What are some of changes you've seen in the district since Dr. _____ became superintendent?

What, if any, are some of the district inequities that you feel still exists? How do you talk about this work as a member of the leadership team?
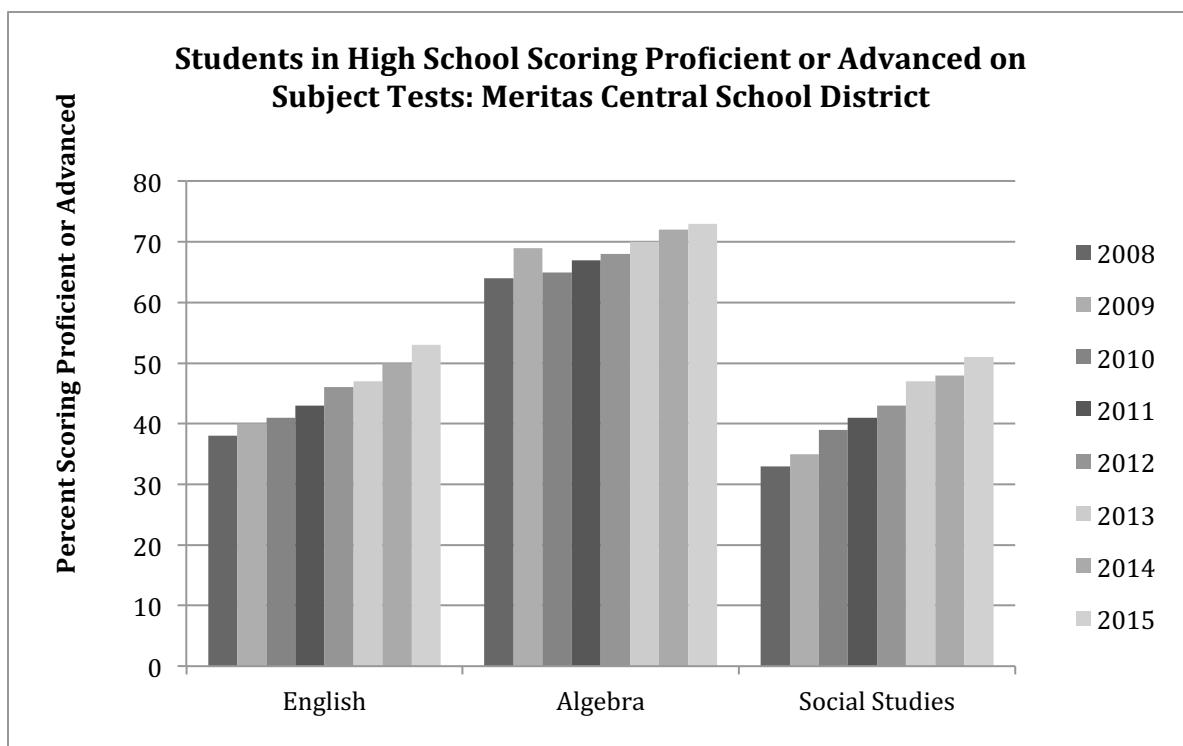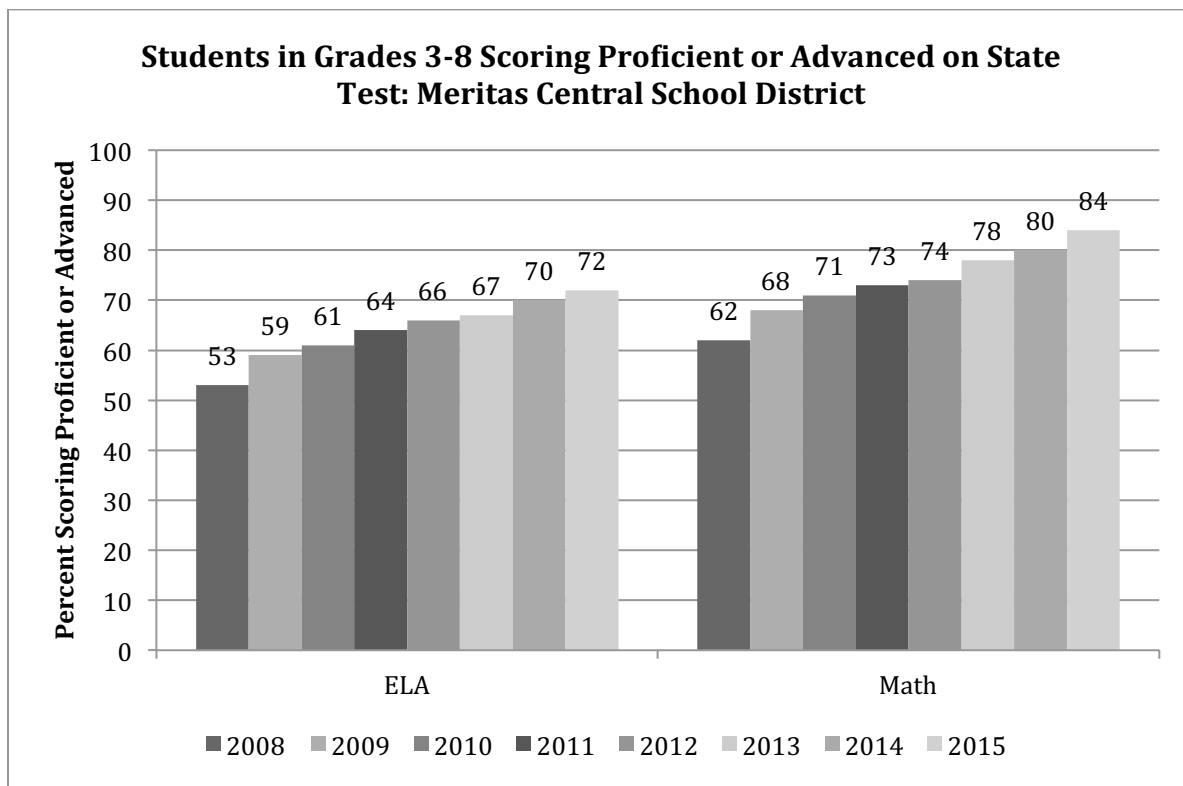
What are the most pressing accountability targets you focus on as a leadership team? How often and how do you discuss these targets?

What are some of the key strategies/initiatives of Dr. _____'s tenure? What is your role in implementing those strategies?

Conclusion:

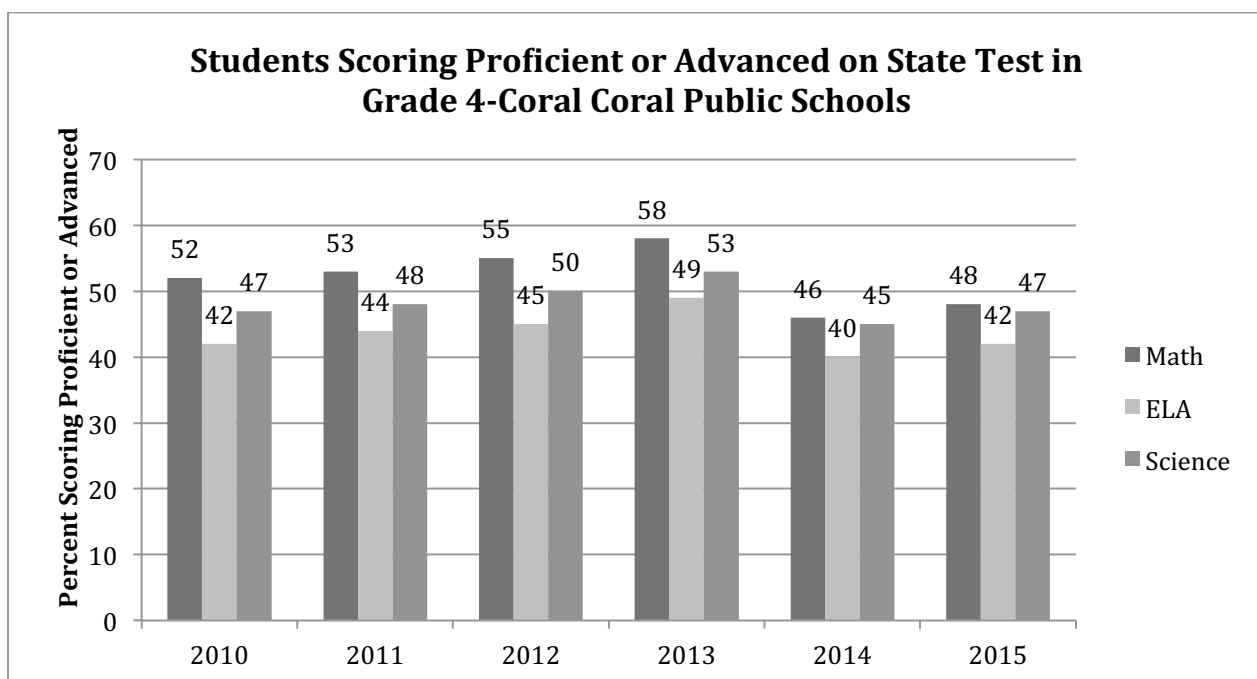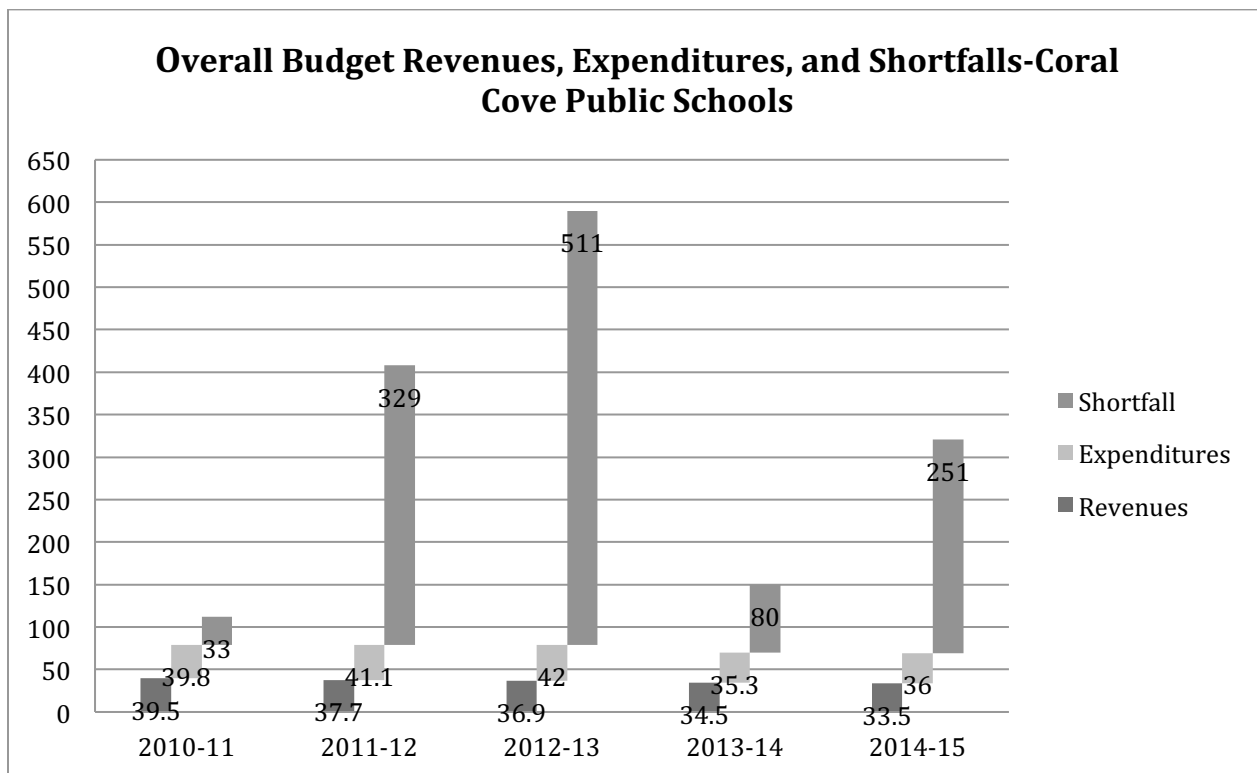Is there anything I haven't asked about your leadership that you'd like to add? Thank you again. May I contact you if I have any follow up questions? What number/e-mail should I use?
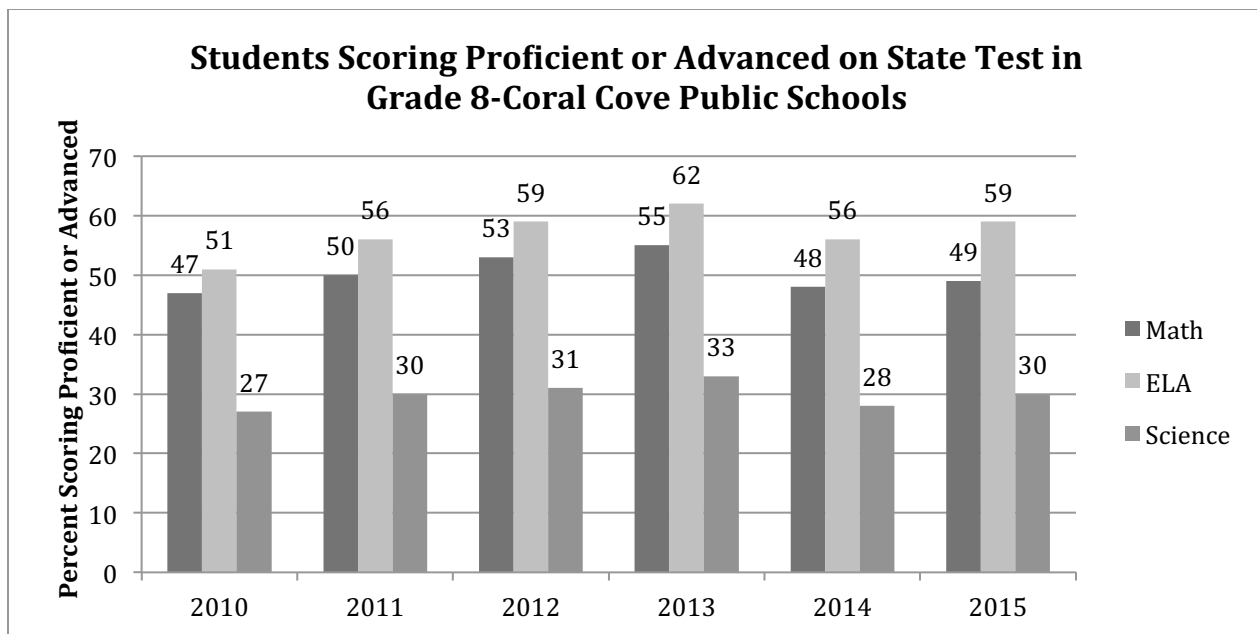
Appendix G

Students in Grades 3-8 Scoring Proficient or Advanced on State Test: Meritas Central School District

Students in High School Scoring Proficient or Advanced on Subject Tests: Meritas Central School District

Appendix H

Overall Budget Revenues, Expenditures, and Shortfalls-Coral Cove Public Schools

Legend: Shortfall, Expenditures, Revenues

Values by year:
- 2010-11: 39.5, 39.8, 33
- 2011-12: 37.7, 41.1, 329
- 2012-13: 36.9, 42, 511
- 2013-14: 34.5, 35.3, 80
- 2014-15: 33.5, 36, 251

Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on State Test in Grade 4-Coral Coral Public Schools

Y-axis: Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced

Legend: Math, ELA, Science

Values by year (Math, ELA, Science):
- 2010: 52, 42, 47
- 2011: 53, 44, 48
- 2012: 55, 45, 50
- 2013: 58, 49, 53
- 2014: 46, 40, 45
- 2015: 48, 42, 47

Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on State Test in Grade 8-Coral Cove Public Schools
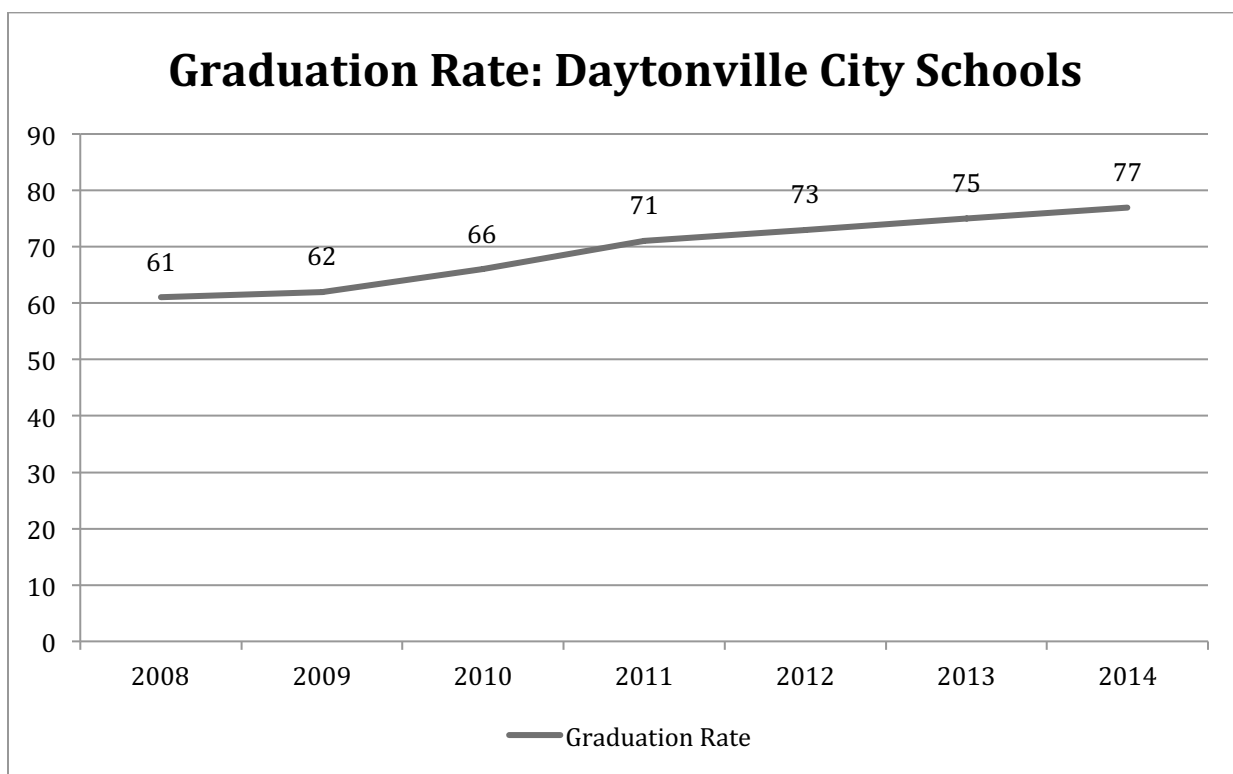
Appendix I

Graduation Rate: Daytonville City Schools

— Graduation Rate

References

Ackerman, A. (2008, May). Standing for something on bedrock values: Arlene Ackerman will assume the job of CEO in Philadelphia in June. *The School Administrator, 65*(5), 12-13.

Ainscow, M. (2012). Moving knowledge around: Strategies for fostering equity within educational systems. *Journal of Educational Change*, 13(3), 289-310.

Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Goldrick, S., & Kerr, K. (2009). Using research to foster equity and inclusion within the context of New Labour educational reforms. In C. Chapman & H M. Hunter (Eds.) *Radical reforms: Perspectives on an era of educational change*. London: Routledge.

Aleman Jr., E. (2009). Leveraging conflict for social justice: How "leadable" moments can transform school culture. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 12*(4), 1-16.

Alsbury, T. L., & Shaw, N. L. (2005). Policy implications for social justice in school district consolidation, leadership and policy in schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(2), 105-126.

Alsbury, T. L., & Whitaker, K. S. (2007). Superintendent perspectives and practice of accountability, democratic voice and social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45(2), 154-174.*

American Institutes for Research. (2013). Three decades of education reform: Are we still *A Nation At Risk*? Retrieved September 29, 2015 from http://www.air.org/resource/three-decades-education-reform-are-we-still-nation-risk.

Anderson, G. L. (2009). *Advocacy leadership: Toward a post-reform agenda in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Anthes, K. (2002). School and district leadership: No Child Left Behind policy

    brief Pleasantville, NY: DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund and

    Education Commission of the States.

Archer, J. (2005). Theory of action: The idea that schools can improve on their

    own gives way to a focus on effective school leadership. *Education Week,*

    September 14, 3-5.

Arnold, J. (2013). Should it stay or should it go: How successful superintendents

    build, shift, and transform culture in an age of increasing accountability.

    Dissertation Papers. UCLA.

Asher-Schapiro, A. (2015). Leaders launch new roles. *District Administration,*

    51(1), 38-43.

Ball, V. A. & Alvarez, R. M. (2003). Schools and educational outcomes: What

    causes the 'race gap' in student test scores?" *Social Science Quarterly 84*(3),

    485-507.

Banner, T. J. (2010). Competing perspectives on accountability, authority and

    autonomy as sources of organizational change: The case of Florida's state

    university system, 1998—2009). Florida State University.

Batalova, J., & Fix, M. (2010). A profile of limited English proficient adult

    immigrants. *Peabody Journal of Education, 85*, 511-534.

Beachum, F., & McCray, C. R. (2010). Cracking the code: Illuminating the

    promises and pitfalls of social justice in educational leadership.

    International Journal of Urban Educational Leadership, 4(1), 206–221.

Behn, R. D. (2004). Rethinking accountability in education: How should who

    hold whom accountable for what? in L. Jones, K. Schedler, & R. Mussari

    (Eds.) *Strategies for Public Management Reform (Research in Public Policy*

Analysis and Management, Volume 13) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp.19 – 53.

Berger, J. (2010). The Latino lag. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/25/education/edlife/25hispanics-t.html.

Billman, P. S. (2004). *Mission possible: Achieving and maintaining academic improvement*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University. Retrieved from: http://www.ilhonorroll.niu.edu/pdf/mission_possible.pdf.

Blackmore, J. (2009). Leadership for social justice: A transnational dialogue. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 4*(1), Article 5.

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An Introduction to theory and methods*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bogotch, I. E. (2000, November). *Educational leadership and social justice: Theory into practice*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Albuquerque, NM. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/62350372?accountid=14771.

Bogotch, I. E. (2002). Educational leadership and social justice: Theory into practice. *Journal of School Leadership, 12,* 138-156.

Bogotch, I. E., Beachum, F., Blount, J., Brooks, J., English, F., & Jansen, J. (2008). *Radicalizing educational leadership: Dimensions of social justice*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishing.

Boozer, L. A. (2013). *The challenges of pursuing equity as a first-time superintendent.* Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

Bottoms, G., & Schmidt-Davis, J. (2010). *The three essentials: Improving schools requires district vision, district and state support, and principal leadership.*

Retrieved from Southern Regional Education Board website:

http://publications.sreb.org/2010/10V16_Three_Essentials.pdf.

Boyles, D., Carusi, T., & Attick, D. (2009). Historical and critical interpretations of social justice. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.) *Handbook of social justice in education*. New York: Routledge.

Bredeson, P. V., Johansson, O., & Kose, B. W. (2004, April). *A comparative study of superintendents in Sweden and the United States: Responses to Educational Reform Initiatives.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Bredeson, P. V., & Kose, B. W. (2005, April). *School superintendents as instructional leaders: Responses to a decade of reform 1994–2004.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Bromley, D. B. (1990). Academic contributions to psychological counseling: I. A philosophy of science for the study of individual cases. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 3*(3), 299-307.

Buddin, R. (2012). Implications of educational attainment trends for labor market outcomes. Iowa City: ACT Research Report Series.

Bastamante, R. M., Nelson, J. A., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2009). Assessing schoolwide cultural competence: Implications for school leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*, 793-827.

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

Capper, C. A., & Young, M. D. (2014). Ironies and limitations of educational

leadership for social justice: A call to social justice educators. *Theory Into Practice, 53*(2), 158-164.

Carpenter, B.W. & Diem, S. (2013). Social justice & leadership preparation programs: The call for developing a transformative curriculum centered on critical discourse. *Journal of Planning and Changing,* 43(1/2), 96-112.

Carr, P. R. (2007). Educational policy and the social justice dilemma. In H. Claire & C. Holden, (Eds.), *Controversial issues in education* (pp. 1-10). London: Trentham.

Chapman, T., Hobbel, N., & Alvarado, N. V. (2011). A social justice approach as a base for teaching writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(7), 539-541.

Childress, S. (2010). Investing in improvement: Strategy and resource allocation in public school districts. Paper presented at American Enterprise Institute Conference.

Chikwe, M. (2013). School leaders sense-making and use of equity-related data to disrupt patterns of inequality. UCLA: Education 0249. Retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gw395k.

Childress, S. Elmore, R. F., & Grossman, A. (2006). How to manage urban school districts. *Harvard Business Review*, November, 1-14.

Childress, S. M., Doyle, D. P., & Thomas, D. A. (2009). *Leading for equity: The pursuit of excellence in Montgomery County Public Schools,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Cohn, C. A. (2005). NCLB implementation challenges: The local superintendent's view. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 80(2), 156-69.

Cohn, C. (2011). Replicating "the Long Beach way." In Peterkin, R., Jewell-

Sherman, D., Kelley, L., & Boozer, L. (Eds.) (2011). *Every child, every classroom, every day: School leaders who are making equity a reality*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Collier, V. P., & Thomas, W. P. (2004). The astounding effectiveness of dual language education for all. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 2*, 1-20.

Cooper, C. & Gause, C. P. (2007). —Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? Facing identity politics and resistance when teaching for social justice. In Carlson, D. & Gause, C.P. (Eds.). *Keeping the promise: Essays on leadership, democracy, and education*. New York: Peter Lang.

Cooper, C. W. (2009). Performing cultural work in demographically changing schools: Implications for expanding transformative leadership frameworks. *Educational Administration Quarterly 45(5)*, 694-724.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cuban, L. (1998). The superintendent contradiction. Education Week, 18 (7), 56.

Dantley, M., & Tillman, L. C. (2010). Social justice and moral transformative leadership. In C. Marshall and M. Oliva (Eds.), *Leadership for social justice: Making revolutions in education* (pp. 16-30). Boston: Pearson Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2009/2010). America's commitment to equity will determine our future. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(4), 8-14.

DeBray-Pelot, E. H. (2007). NCLB's transfer policy and court-ordered desegregation: The conflict between two federal mandates in Richmond County, Georgia, and Pinellas County, Florida. *Educational Policy, 21*(5), 717-746.

Dei, G. J. S. (1996). The role of Afrocentricity in the inclusive curriculum in

Canadian schools. *Canadian Journal of Education, 21*(2), 170-186.

DeNisco, A. (2013). Thirty years later, little has changed. *District Administration, 49*(4).

Duncan, A. (2010). *A blueprint for reform*. Washington, DC: United Stated Department of Education.

Duncan-Andrade, J. M., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Dufrense, P., & McKensie, A. S. (2009). A culture of ethical leadership. *Principal Leadership, 10*(2), 36-39.

Education Equality Project (n.d.a). Education Equality Project: About us. Retrieved September 10, 2015 from http://www.edequality.org/who_we_are/about_us.

Executive Office of the President. (2015). *Every student succeeds act: A progress report on elementary and secondary education.* The White House.

Feuerstein, A. (2013). Knuckling Under? School Superintendents and Accountability-Based Educational Reform. *Journal of School Leadership*, pp. 865-897. Retrieved September 6, 2014, from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.fhsu.edu:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=e3c18372-93e0-41b3-95a1-b04814716fce%40sessionmgr115&hid=121.

Firestone, W. A., Mangin, M., Martinez, C., & Polovsky, T. (2005). Leading coherent professional development: A comparison of three districts." *Educational Administration Quarterly, 41*(3): 413–48.

Flanigan, R. L. (2004, December). Learning to lead: Urban superintendents need specialized preparation and training. *American School Board Journal,*

191(12), 48-50.

Fraser, K. (2012). Exploring the leadership practices of social justice leaders at urban charter schools. *Doctoral Dissertations.* Paper 37. http://repository.usfca.edu/diss/37.

Fry, R., & Gonzales, F. (2008). *One in five and growing fast: A profile of Hispanic public school students*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Available from www.pewhispanic.org.

Furman, G. C., & Gruenewald, D. A. (2004). Expanding the landscape of social justice: A critical ecological analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*, 49-78.

Furman, G. C., & Shields, C. M. (2005). How can educational leaders promote and support social justice and democratic community in schools? Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(2), 191-229.

Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.) White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gamoran, A. (2013). Educational inequality in the wake of No Child Left Behind. Paper presented at the Association for Public Policy and Management.

Gándara, P. (2010). The Latino education crisis. *Educational Leadership*, 67(5), 24-30.

Gerzon, M. (2006). Leading through social conflict. *School Administrator, 63*, 28-31.

Glaser, G. B., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for*

qualitative research. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine.

Goldschmidt, P., Roschewski, P., Choi, K., Auty, W., Hebbler, S., Blank, R., & Williams, A. (2005). *Policymakers guide to growth models for school accountability: How do accountability models differ?* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Gong, B. (2002). *Designing school accountability systems: Towards a framework and process.* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Grissmer, D., Flanagan, A., Kawata, J., & Williamson, S. (2000). *Improving student achievement: What state NAEP test scores tell us.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Gross, B., & Supovitz, J. A. (2005). State accountability policy and our special focus on high schools. In B. Gross & M. E. Goertz (Eds.), *Holding high hopes: How high schools respond to state accountability policies* (pp. 1-16). CPRE Research Report Series Rp-056, March, 2006, Consortium for Policy Research in Education. University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia.

Gunzenhauser, M. G., & Hyde, A. M. (2007). What is the value of public school accountability? *Educational Theory, 57*(4), 489-507.

Hammersley, M. (2001). Interpreting achievement gaps: Some comments on a dispute. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 49*(3), 285-298.

Hanushek, Eric A. (2010). *The economic value of higher teacher quality*. Working Paper 16606, National Bureau of Economic Research. Cambridge, MA.

Hanushek, Eric A., & Woessmann, L. (2010). *How much do educational outcomes matter in OECD countries?* Working Paper 16515, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA.

Hargreaves, A. (2007) Sustainable leadership and development in education: Creating the future, conserving the past. *European Journal of Education, 42*(2), 223-233.

Hargreaves, A., & Braun, H. (2013). Data-driven improvement and accountability. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved [date] from http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/data-driven-improvement-accountability/.

Harris, A., & Day, C. (2002). Teacher leadership reflective practice and school improvement. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *2nd international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 957–977). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Hentschke, G., Nayfack, M. & Wohlstetter, P. (2009). Exploring superintendent leadership in smaller urban districts does district size influence superintendent behavior? *Education and Urban Society* 41(3), 317-337.

Holmes, C. J., & Zajacova, A. (2014). Education as the "great equalizer": Health benefits for Black and White adults. *Social Science Quarterly, 95*(4), 1064-1085.

Houston, P. (2001). Superintendents for the 21st century: It's not just a job, it's a calling. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 428-33.

Jean-Marie, G. (2008). Leadership for social justice: An agenda for 21st century schools. *The Educational Forum, 72*(4), 340-54.

Jean-Marie. G., Normore, A. H., & Brooks, J. S. (2009). Leadership for social justice: Preparing 21st century school leaders for a new social order. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 4*, Article 1. Retrieved from http://www.ucea.org/jrle.

Jenlink, P. M., & Jenlink, K. E. (2012). Examining leadership as public pedagogy for social justice. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation,* *7*(3), 1-16.

Johnson, R. (2000). *Using data to close the achievement gap: How to measure equity in our schools*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Johnson, S. M. (1996). *Leading to change: The challenge of the new superintendency.* Can Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Karagiannis, A. (1996). Rationale for inclusive schooling. In S. Stainback and W. Stainback (Eds.), *Inclusion: A guide for educators*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Karpinski, C. F., & Lugg, C. A. (2006). Social justice and educational administration: Mutually exclusive? *Journal of Educational Administration,* *44*(3), 278-292.

Killen, M., Rutland, A., & Ruok, M. (2011). Promoting equity, tolerance, and justice in childhood. *Social Policy Report, 25*(4).

King, D. (2002). The changing shape of leadership. *Educational Leadership, 59*(8), 61-63.

Klenowski, V. (2009). Public education matters: Reclaiming public education for the common good in a global era. *The Australian Educational Researcher,* *36*(1), 1-25.

Koschoreck, J. W. (2001, May). Accountability and educational equity in the transformation of an urban district. *Education and Urban Society* 33(3), 284-304.

Kose, B. W. (2007). Principal leadership for social justice: Uncovering the content of teacher professional development. *Journal of School Leadership, 17,* 276-

312.

Kose, B. W. (2011). Developing a transformative school vision: Lessons from peer-nominated principals. *Education and Urban Society, 43*(2), 119-136.

Kowalski, T. J., & Brunner, C. C. (2011). The school superintendent: Roles, challenges, and issues. In F. English (Ed.), *Handbook of Educational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press.

Kruse, S. D. (2008, September). Reflections on leading and learning for change. *Education & Urban Society* 40(6), 655-69.

Kumashiro, K. K. (2012). Bad teacher!: How blaming teachers distorts the bigger picture. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lalas, J., & Valle, E. (2007). Social justice lenses and authentic student voices: Enhancing leadership for educational justice. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development, 19*, 75-102.

Lambert, L. (2006). A study of high leadership capacity schools. *The Educational Forum, 70*(3), 238-254.

Larson, C. L. (2010). Responsibility and accountability in educational leadership: Keeping democracy and social justice central to reform. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly, 4*(4), 323-327.

Lashway, L. (2002). *The superintendent in an age of accountability*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, OR, ERIC Document Reproduction Servcie No. ED468515.

Lee, J., & Wong, K. K. (2004). The impact of accountability on racial and socioeconomic equity: Considering both school resources and achievement outcomes. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(4), 797-832.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2005). What we know about successful school leadership. In W. Firestone and C. Riehl (Eds.), *A new agenda: Directions for research on educational leadership* (pp. 22-47). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Leverett, L. (2002, July). Warriors to advance equity: An argument for distributing leadership. NCCSR Bookmark, 3(7). Monthly Newsletter by the National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform. Retrieved July 11, 2002, from http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu.

Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2007). Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Louis, K. S., Febey, K., Gordon, M., Meath, J., & Thomas, E. (2005). *Educational leadership from the states: A cultural analysis*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Lugg, C. A., & Shoho, A. R. (2006). Dare public school administrators build a new social order? Social justice and the possibly perilous politics of educational leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44*(3), 196-208.

Lunenburg, F. C. (2006). Leadership for learning: State and national accountability policy can leverage social justice. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. (2004). Educational administration: Concepts and practices (4thed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Lynch, K., & Baker, J. (2005). Equality in education: An equality of condition perspective. *Theory and Research in Education, 3*(2), 131-164.

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

Marshall, C., & Olivia, M. (2006). *Leadership for social justice: Making revolutions in education*. Boston: Pearson.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2006). Designing Qualitative Research (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Marshall, C., & Oliva, M. (2009) Second Edition, Revised: *Leadership for Social Justice: Making Revolutions in Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Matusov, E. (2011). Imagining No Child Left Behind freed from neoliberal hijackers. *Democracy & Education, 19*(2), Article 2. Retrieved from http://www.democracyeducationjournal.org/home/vol19/iss2/2/.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

McEwan, E. (2003). *Ten traits of highly effective principals.* California: Corwin Press, Inc.

McKenzie, K., Christmas, D. E., Hernandez, F., Fierro, E., Capper, C. A., Dantley, M., Gonzalez, M. L., Cambron-McCabe, N., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008). From the field: A proposal for educating leaders for social justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(1), 111-138.

McLaughlin, M. W. (1987). Learning from experience: Lessons from policy implementation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 9*(2), 171–178.

Mendoza-Jenkins, L. R. (2009). The superintendent and reform: A case study of action by the system leader to improve student achievement in a large urban school district. University of Southern California.

Meyer, L. & Feistritzer, E. (2003). *Better leaders for America's schools: A manifesto.*

Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Miles, M.D., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Motoko, R. (2013). Holding states and schools accountable. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/10/education/debate-over-federal-role-in-public-school-policy.html?_r=0.

Mustafa, Y. (2010). An analysis of school principals' listening skills according to teacher feedback. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education, 38*, 292-306.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1997). Statistical analysis report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Development.

National Council of Education Statistics (NCES) (2014). The condition of education. Retrieved February 7, 2015 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cnj.pdf.

National Council of Education Statistics (NCES) (2014). Digest of education statistics. Retrieved January 31, 2015 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_098.asp.

Nestor-Baker, N. S., & Hoy, W. K. (2001). Tacit knowledge of school superintendents: Its nature, meaning, and content. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 37*(1), 86-129.

North, C. E. (2006). More than words? Delving into the substantive meaning(s) of "social justice" in education. *Review of Educational Research, 108*, 11-13.

Norton, M. (2005). *Executive leadership for effective administration.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Oakes, J., Quartz, K. H., Ryan, S., & Lipton, M. (2000). Becoming good American schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(8), 568-576.

Obiakor F. E., & Beachum F. D. (2005). Urban education for the 21st century: Research, issues, and perspectives. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishing.

Opfer, V. D. (2006). Evaluating equity: A framework for understanding action and inaction on social justice issues. *Educational Policy, 20*(1), 271-290.

Parker-Chenaille, R. (2012). *The impact of superintendent turnover on student achievement in rural districts*. St. John Fisher College.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Payne, C. (2008). *So much reform: So little change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Peabody, R. L. (1962). Perceptions of organizational authority: A comparative analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 6*(4), 463-482.

Peterkin, R., Jewell-Sherman, D., Kelley, L., & Boozer, L. (Eds.). (2011). *Every child, every classroom, every day: School leaders who are making equity a reality*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Petersen, G. J., & Young, M. D. (2004). The No Child Left Behind and its influence on current and future district leaders. Journal of Law & Education, 33(3), 343-363.

Phillips, A. (2004). Defending equality of outcome. *Journal of Political Philosophy, 12*(1), 1-19.

Phillips, K. (2014). How diversity makes us smarter. *Scientific American.* Retrieved from http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-

us-smarter/.

Popham, W. J. (1999). Why standardized testing? *Educational Leadership, 56*(6), 8-15.

Rojas-LeBouef, A., & Slate, J. R. (2011). The achievement gap between white and non-white students: A conceptual analysis. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation,* 6(4), 1-20.

Roorda, D.L., Koomen, H.M.Y., Spilt, J.L. & Oort, F.J. (2011). 'The influence of affective teacher–student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach'. *Review of Educational Research,* 81 (4), 493-529.

Rorrer, A. K., & Skrla, L. (2005). Leaders as policy mediators: The reconceptualization of accountability. *Theory into Practice, 44*(1), 53-62.

Ross, J. A., & Glaze, A. (2005). *Creating turn around schools: The effects of project REACH on students, teachers, principals and support staff.* Toronto, ON: Final Report to the Ontario Principals Council.

Roza, M. & Miles, K. H. (2002). A new look at inequities in school funding: A presentation on the resource variations within districts. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington.

Ryan, J. E. (2004). The perverse incentives of the No Child Left Behind Act. *New York University Law Review, 79*(8), 932-89.

Ryan, J. (2006). Inclusive Leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ryan, J., Pollock, K., & Antonelli, F. (2009). Teacher diversity in Canada: Leaky pipelines, bottlenecks, and glass ceilings. *Canadian Journal of Education, 32*(3), 591-617.

Ryan, J. (2010). Promoting social justice in schools: Principals' political strategies.

International Journal of Leadership in Education, 13(4), 357-376.

Scheurich, J., & Skrla, L. (2003). Leadership for equity and excellence: Creating high achievement classrooms, schools, and districts. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Scheurich, J. J., Skrla, L., & Johnson, J. F. (2000). Thinking carefully about equity and accountability. *Phi Delta Kappan, 82*(4), 293-299.

Schulte, D. P., & Hong, B. S. S. (2011). Portraits of leaders: Striving for a fuller humanity. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 14*(4), 31-46.

Schulte, D. P., Slate, J. R., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2010). Characteristics of effective school principals: A mized-research study. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 56*(2), 172-195.

Scott, J. (2009). Student ownership of education: Practicing democracy in schools. *Education Canada, 49*(2), 36-38.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Shaw, K. E. (1978). Understanding the curriculum: The approach through case studies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 10(1), 1-17.

Sherman, W. & Grogan, M. (2003). Superintendents' responses to the achievement gap: An ethical critique. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 6*(2), 1-15.

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

Sipple, J. W., Killeen, K., & Monk, D. H. (2004). Adoption and adaptation: New York state school districts' responses to state imposed high school

graduation requirements. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(2).

Skrla, L. (2001). Accountability, equity, and complexity. *Educational Researcher, 30*, 15-21.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Johnson, J. F., & Koschoreck, J. W. (2001). Accountability for equity: Can state policy leverage social justice. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4*(3), 237-260.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Johnson, Jr. J. F., & Koschoreck, J. W. (2004). Accountability for equity: Can state policy leverage social justice? In L. Skria & J. J. Scheurich (Eds.), *Educational equity and accountability: Paradigms, policies, andpolitics* (pp. 51-78). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G. (2010). Equity audits: A practical leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools. In C. Marshall & M. Oliva (Eds.), *Leadership for social justice* (2ⁿᵈ ed., pp. 259-283). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Spaulding, L. L. (2014). *Accountability at the top: Focusing on the superintendent*. Chicago State University, 3629538.

Supovitz, J. (2010). Is high-stakes testing working? University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

Talbert-Johnson, C. (2004). Structural inequities and the achievement gap in urban schools. *Education and Urban Society, 37*(1), 22-36.

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

Theoharis, G. (2008). At every turn: The resistance that principals face in their pursuit of equity and justice. *Journal of School Leadership 18*(3), 303-43.

Theoharis, G. (2009). *The school leaders our children deserve: Seven keys to equity, social justice, and school reform.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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

Thompson, J. Ray, Templeton, N.R., & Ballenger, J. (2013). School board president and superintendents' use of transformational leadership to improve student outcomes. National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, 30(4).

Thurlow, M. L., Bremer, C., & Albus, D. (2011). *2008-09 Publicly reported assessment results for students with disabilities and ELLs with disabilities.* Technical Report 59. University of Minnesota: National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Tillman, L. C., Brown, K., Campbell-Jones, F., & Gonzalez, M. L. (2006). Transformative leadership for social justice: Concluding thoughts. *Journal of School Leadership, 16*(2), 207-209.

Tienda, M. (2009). *Hispanicity and educational inequality: Risks, opportunities and the nation's future*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Travers, J., & Rosenberg, D. (2013). Four questions every new superintendent should ask. *Education Week*. Retrieved November 10, 2015 from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/08/02/37travers.h32.html.

Trujillo, T. M., & Woulfin, S. L. (2014). Equity-oriented reform amid standards-based accountability: A qualitative comparative analysis of an intermediary's instructional practices. *American Education Research Journal, 51*(2), 253-293.

Ubben, G. C. Hughes, L. W., & Norris, C. J. (2011). *The principal: Creative leadership for excellence in schools.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Vogel, L. R. (2011). Enacting social justice: Perceptions of educational leaders. *Administrators Issue Journal: Practice and Research, 1*(2), 69-82.

Wang, F. (2012). *Leading diverse schools: Tempering accountability policy with social justice*. University of Toronto.

Wasonga, T. A. (2009). Leadership practices for social justice, democratic community, and learning: School principals' perspectives. *Journal of School Leadership, 19*(2), 200-224.

West, C. (1999). The new cultural politics of difference. In C. West (Ed.), *The Cornel West Reader* (pp.119-139). New York: Basic Civitas Books.

West, M., Ainscow, M., & Stanford, J. (2005). Sustaining improvement in schools in challenging circumstances: A study of successful practices. *School Leadership and Management, 25*(1), 77-93.

White, K. R. (1982). The relation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. *Psychological Bulletin, 91*, 461-481.

Wood, J. A., & Winston, B. E. (2005). Toward a new understanding of leader accountability: Defining a critical construct. *Journal of Leadership and Organization Studies, 11*(2), 84-94.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Zucker, D.M. (2009). Teaching case study research. In M. Garner, C. Wagner, & B. Kawulich, *Teaching Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Oxon, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited.