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"WE DON'T LOOK AT THEM AS ANY DIFFERENT":

EDUCATORS' DISCOURSES ABOUT IMMIGRANT-ORIGIN STUDENTS

IN TWO DIFFERENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Dissertation
by

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Abstract

We Don't Look at Them as Any Different": Educators' Discourses About Immigrant-Origin Students in Two Different School Districts

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As the population of students with at least one foreign-born parent increases in US schools, educators play key roles in supporting them. The anti-immigrant context during the Trump era has heightened the urgency for all US educators to understand the experiences of their immigrant-origin students and respond accordingly. Discourses about immigrant-origin students have profound implications on how their educators understand and support them. In this study, I explored the nature of the discourses educators privilege and perpetuate when working with immigrant-origin students. I studied two distinct contexts with varying community reflections of the national conversation during the Trump era. I proposed the following questions: How do educators in two different immigrant-serving districts make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context? What larger discourses about immigrants and immigrant-origin students do educators reflect as they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences?

Through a thematic analysis of 10 educator interviews from each district, I found that three key factors influenced educators' sensemaking about their immigrant-origin students' experiences: 1) comparison of immigrant-origin students to non-immigrant-origin peers, 2) responsibility towards deeply understanding immigrant-origin students' experiences, and 3) personal and professional identity and experiences with immigrants and immigration. A critical discourse analysis of policy documents and language related to supporting immigrant-origin students surfaced different defining discourses about immigrant-origin students on federal, state, and district levels. The findings led to three key insights: 1) Educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences through existing individual and collective mental models of immigrants and immigration, or lack thereof, 2) The location, student demographics, and sociopolitical backdrop of each district context heavily influenced individual educators' discourse about immigrant-origin students' experiences, and 3) Power can be shared between federal, state, and district-level entities in order to create more humanizing and culturally sustaining environments for immigrant-origin students. The conclusion includes implications related to these key insights.

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Although I have become well acquainted with using words to convey meaning, there is no combination of words that can capture how grateful I am for my family and friends. Thank you to my husband, parents, parents-in-law, and siblings for all the love.

I want to especially thank my mother who has shown me how to move through this world with kindness and generosity. I hope to do the same for our daughter Diana.

I dedicate this dissertation to you, Mom.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As the population of students with at least one foreign-born parent increases in U.S. schools (Batalova et al., 2020), educators play key roles in supporting them academically and socially (C. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Numerous changes in immigration-related policies during the Trump era (Pierce, 2019), along with immigration-related rhetoric, have contributed to creating unwelcoming environments for many immigrants and restricting their movement, rights, and sense of safety. The anti-immigrant context has heightened the urgency for all U.S. educators to understand the experiences of their immigrant-origin students and respond accordingly.

Discourses about immigrant-origin students that inform and are informed by educators have profound implications on how educators understand and support immigrant-origin students. Unfortunately, educators could be steeped in discourses that may be unconsciously perpetuating the marginalization of vulnerable students (Diamond & Spillane, 2004). Thus, it is important for researchers and practitioners to engage in a deep exploration of the discourses educators privilege and perpetuate when working with immigrant-origin students. As an entry point, we can learn a lot by paying closer attention to how educators talk about the experiences of their immigrant-origin students. In this dissertation, I was motivated by a supposition that the design and implementation of practices to support immigrant-origin students can be informed by a deeper awareness of the discourses driving them.

To better understand how local contexts reflect the anti-immigrant national policies and rhetoric differently (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014), I studied two distinct contexts with varying community reflections of the national conversation during the Trump era.

For my dissertation, I proposed the following questions: How do educators in two different immigrant-serving districts make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context? What larger discourses about immigrants and immigrant-origin students do educators reflect as they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences?

Positionality

I brought my background as an immigrant student and former teacher of immigrant-origin students to this research. Although I moved to the U.S. from South Korea when I was three years old and completed most of my schooling in American public schools, I still experienced the wide cultural divide between home and school. My family and I have been both marginalized and privileged by immigration policy and discourses on immigrants. Now, more than 30 years after we first entered the US, we have all obtained American citizenship and settled into our multicultural, transnational lives. Before starting my doctorate, I spent ten years as a teacher of diverse populations which included immigrant-origin students. Having navigated immigration from both the student and educator point-of-view, I have directly encountered the outcomes of various discourses and policies in a diverse array of contexts. I envision a future of increased understanding and engagement of immigrant-origin students and their families with U.S. schools through a shift in educators' mindsets and practices so that students feel safe, supported, and seen at school, even despite a federal administration that has undermined these feelings.

Guiding Frameworks

Two frameworks have oriented the direction of this dissertation: Turner and Mangual Figueroa's (2019) "immigration policy and education in lived reality" framework and Fairclough's (2010) critical discourse analysis approach. The frameworks support the two main constructs that form the backbone of this research: the education of immigrant-origin students and discourses about immigrants. The following two sections explain each framework and how they have shaped this dissertation's theoretical background and research direction.

"Immigration Policy and Education in Lived Reality" Framework

Turner and Mangual Figueroa (2019) created the "immigration policy and education in lived reality" framework to understand the complex ways immigration policy and education intersect based on a sociocultural and critical policy and race studies lens. This framework urges us to situate the perspectives of immigrant-serving educators in a complex ecosystem of social and political forces. The framework focuses on five intersecting elements: 1) people, 2) everyday interactions, 3) contexts, 4) outcomes, and 5) power. The people are immigrant-origin students, families, and educators. These people engage in everyday interactions in which they experience the intersections of education and immigration policy. Contexts at local, state, federal, and international levels shape these interactions that occur across schools, homes, and communities. The people, their daily interactions, and the contexts in which they occur lead to a diverse array of outcomes that continue to influence the lives of immigrant-origin students and their families. Power permeates all aforementioned framework components by marginalizing and privileging the experiences and perspectives of certain individuals or

groups over others. The following sections describe these elements—contexts, people, everyday interactions—in more detail as they pertained to this study. These sections do not focus on outcomes because this particular research study did not include a close study of the actual outcomes or experiences of the immigrant-origin students themselves. Power is elaborated upon in a subsequent section about the critical discourse analysis framework.

Contexts.

While the national landscape of immigration affects every state and their schools, it is important to remember that local contexts have unique networks of practices and perspectives that ultimately determine the kinds of experiences immigrant communities have in their day-to-day lives. For example, Vidal (2018) found that people who live in the Southern states and especially those who identify as White held more anti-immigrant views than their non-Southern, non-White counterparts. Portes and Rumbaut (2014) explained that immigrants' contexts of reception are defined by "the policies of the receiving government, the character of the host labor market, and the features of their own ethnic communities" (p. 139). Adapting Portes and Rumbaut's framework of contexts of reception to school districts, I assumed that district-level policies along with the practices and perspectives of district educators determine immigrant-students' contexts of reception. Of course, district-level contexts of reception are informed by local, state, and national contexts. By studying two different school districts in two different states, I brought attention to micro-level contextual features that afford more specificity to the macro-level national context.

People.

I relied on empirical research on how educators have contributed to the academic and social growth of their immigrant-origin students to justify why it is important to study educators who support immigrant-origin students. Although the existing research on educators supporting immigrant-origin students largely highlights cases with positive outcomes for immigrant-origin students, I assumed not all educators are able to reach that level of success yet. While some educators support immigrant-origin students with an awareness of the damaging effects of an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context, some undermine immigrant-origin students by failing to fully understand their experiences and abilities. I also viewed educators as existing in systems of power that influence their perspectives and actions in relation to immigration policy and immigrant-origin students.

Although the focus of this study was on the educators of immigrant-origin students, we must remember that immigrant-origin students are not a monolithic or homogenous group. Immigrant-origin students not only have differing immigrant statuses (e.g., first generation, second generation, documentation status, status as asylee or refugee), but they also differ in socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and other identity markers that shape their experiences and opportunities (C. Suárez-Orozco, 2019). Immigrant-origin students grow up not only in schools but in their homes, peer groups, communities, and religious/cultural organizations.

Everyday interactions.

Educators' discourses on immigrant-origin students make up a subset of the various everyday interactions educators have with the intersection of immigration policy and education. Turner and Mangual Figueroa (2019) explained that educators' "practices

can constitute unofficial immigration policies that open or foreclose belonging through words or deeds" (p. 552). They also viewed immigration policies, both official and unofficial, as places where ideologies about immigrants and immigration are expressed, undeniably informed by the power differentials in our socially and economically stratified society.

Extending Turner and Mangual Figueroa's critical stance on immigration policy and education, I viewed discourse or discursive practices through a critical lens supported by a critical discourse analysis framework. The next chapter conceptualizes what discourses mean before providing an overview of educators' discourses on immigrant-origin students. I assumed that educators' discourses have significant effects on schooling experiences for immigrant-origin students. More concretely, educators who internalize and enact marginalizing discourses such as deficit-based thinking about immigrant-origin students exacerbate the negative experiences for immigrant-origin youth in a national context that has already created more challenging and hostile environments for them. Educators who have a greater awareness of the growing challenges created by Trump-era immigration policies and adopt asset-based views of immigrant-origin youth will likely shape environments that mitigate the effects of practices and policies that harm immigrant-origin students.

I engaged in this research project as a way to illuminate aspects of this immigration policy and education in a lived reality framework and contribute to the existing body of research aimed at ultimately improving the lives of immigrant-origin students in U.S. schools as well as the efforts of their educators.

Discourse in a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Framework

I viewed discourse within a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework (Fairclough, 2010), which has been informed by critical linguistics and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978; R. Rogers, 2004). Discourse is not just language in the form of speech, writing, images, and behaviors. More than just a product, discourse is "a set of consumptive, productive, distributive, and reproductive processes that is in relation to the social world" (R. Rogers, 2004, p. 5). Discourse both constructs the social world and is constructed by the social world. Thus, discourse is always laden with social, political, and economic values, ideas, and practices. By working with this definition of discourse, I treated the study data as more than language or language in use, but as language in use that creates and is created by the social world.

To understand discourse, it is important to understand social structures, social practices, and social events (Fairclough, 2003). *Social structures* are the most abstract of the three terms. They stand for a potential or set of possibilities. The country's sociopolitical landscape of immigration is an example of a social structure because it creates a set of possibilities for how people view and interact with immigrants. *Social events* are the most concrete of the terms; they are what actually happen in the world. The speech and behavior of educators in PK-12 schools who support immigrant-origin students are examples of social events. Since the relationship between a social structure and social event is rarely simple, it would be difficult to explain how a certain immigration policy directly led to a conversation between two educators in the way that it unfolded. Thus, we understand the relationship between social events and social structures to be mediated by social practices. *Social practices* are the intermediate entities

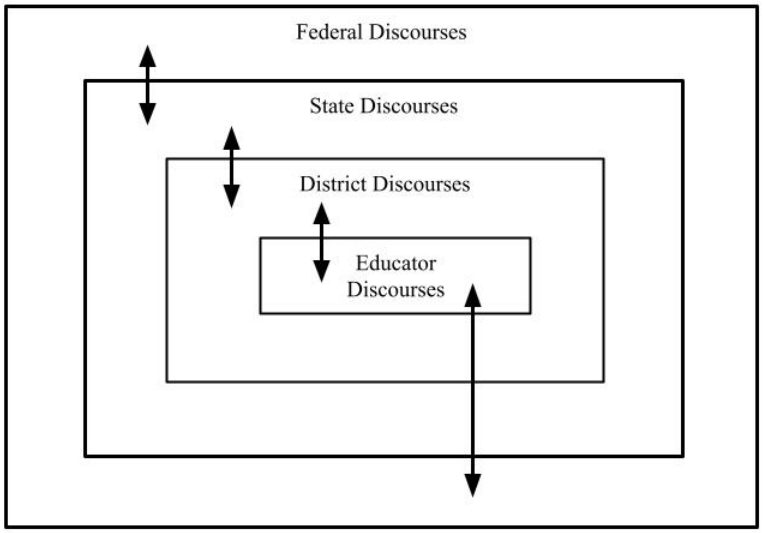
that consistently privilege certain structural possibilities over others. Practices and policies in an educational institution supporting immigrant-origin students are examples of social practices.

The differentiation between social structures, social practices, and social events helps explain how language functions at the different levels. For this study, I designated the following four contexts as the different levels that contain discursive practices that interact with one another: 1) federal, 2) state, 3) district, 4) individual educator. Using CDA as a framework, I moved between these four levels of discursive practices to make sense of the relationships amongst the different levels. I used individual educators' talk about their immigrant-origin students as the grounding discursive practices to gather insight into discursive practices existing on the federal, state, and district levels. The CDA framework helped highlight the kinds of discourses being privileged by educators, the ways in which they do so, and why this may be the case. Through this process, I highlighted the extent to which their educators' discursive practices empower or exclude their immigrant-origin students.

Figure 1 shows the four different levels and how they interact with one another. The *federal* level functions as the most macro-level form of discourse that contains the meso-level discourses of the *state* and *district* levels, which subsume the micro-level language discourses of the *educator* level. This study aims to understand more about the relationships amongst the levels, which are represented in the figure by arrows.

Figure 1.

Relationships Amongst the Four Different Levels of Discourse



Since I worked with educator talk about immigrant-origin students as the grounding discourses, I delved into what educators have said about their immigrant-origin students for the data analysis portion of the study. This included educators' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and understandings of immigrant-origin students. I considered the different service delivery models for immigrant-origin students at the national, state, and district levels as the national, state, and district discourses that influence and are influenced by educators' talk. Many, though not all, immigrant-origin students qualify for linguistic support as English Learners and these service delivery models reflect collective beliefs and values of a particular district. Thus, a district or state's language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) or service delivery models (Scanlan & Zehrbach, 2010) needed to be considered in order to fully understand the context in which educators' discourses about their immigrant-origin students' experiences arise. For example, culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017) and subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) are well-known approaches toward culturally and linguistically

diverse students studied and conceptualized by researchers that can inform national, state, and district level discourses about immigrant-origin students.

The next section reviews the general national discourse around immigration, beyond the education landscape, in order to set up a full picture of the social structures which the study data arose from.

Sociopolitical Discourses of Immigration in the US During the Trump Era (2015-19)

Donald Trump launched his presidential campaign by calling Mexicans "rapists", "criminals", and "drug dealers" (Astrada & Astrada, 2019; Phillips, 2017). His ensuing campaign was drenched with anti-immigrant rhetoric such as "Build a Wall!" as he pledged to "Make American Great Again" (Qui, 2016). Though this section focuses on the sociopolitical context of immigration in the U.S. during a particular snapshot of the Trump era, starting from his campaign launch in June 2015 to November 2019 when the study data collection took place, it is important to recognize that the marginalization of immigrant communities by the US federal government is not a new phenomenon (Chacon, 2017; Kerwin, 2018; Waldinger, 2018).

Limiting the entry and rights of Chinese immigrants, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was one of the first immigration laws to marginalize immigrants of a particular nationality (Young, 2017). Ensuing legislation excluded immigrants by income and education along with moral and physical qualities. However, rises in the European population, labor demand in burgeoning industries, and advancements in transportation drove large-scale immigration to the US from southern and eastern Europe as well as Asia and Mexico. By the early 1920s, immigrants comprised over 13% of the population, close to the percentage of immigrants that make up the U.S. today. Unfortunately, fear

and hostility toward immigrants led to increasing nativist and exclusionary legislation that caused a decline in immigration for decades afterwards. Many Americans viewed immigrants as unassimilable, immoral, and criminal. In the labor market, native-born workers voiced anxieties about job security and competition from immigrants who would work for lower pay. By 1970, immigrants made up less than 5% of the U.S. population.

During the peak of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, many Americans began to view existing immigration legislation that restricted entry and rights based on national origin as a form of racism (Obinna, 2018). Amid that sociopolitical context, President Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, abolishing the existing quota system and putting into place a system that gave preference to immigrants with existing family relationships and desirable professional skills. Despite the intention to welcome more immigrants, the system created other constraints. Due to growth in the agricultural and service sectors, undocumented migration to the U.S. especially from Mexico and other countries in Latin America and Caribbean boomed in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (ICRA) of 1986, signed by President Reagan, tried to address undocumented migration by sanctioning employers and providing some pathways to legalization (Young, 2017). With the passage of the ICRA, immigration law started to resemble criminal law. Signed by President Clinton, the Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 increased resources for barring entry of and expediting removal of undocumented immigrants (Kerwin, 2018). The IIRIRA sped up the merging of the immigration and criminal justice systems, also known as “crimmigration” (Stumpf, 2006).

After the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, President George W. Bush created the Department of Homeland Security, which established the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency (Obinna, 2018). ICE took harsher measures against immigrants. President Barack Obama inherited this increasingly criminalized and restrictive immigration system (Chacon, 2017). Although President Obama signed an executive order known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) granting rights to some undocumented immigrants, his administration deported a record number of undocumented immigrants.

This short overview of immigration policies and rhetoric over the past 140 years demonstrates that the U.S. has a complex history regarding the inclusion and exclusion of immigrants. Economic contexts and social movements have heavily influenced the kinds of laws and policies passed by the federal government. When immigrants are perceived as "economic burdens, national security threats, or cultural/social interlopers" (Obinna, 2018, p. 247), immigration policies and rhetoric have become more exclusionary, further marginalizing immigrant communities. The legacy of "crimmigration" continues to this day (Kerwin, 2018).

As evidenced by the recent immigration-related policies and rhetoric enacted by the Trump administration, we lived in a time of particularly harmful expressions of xenophobia and intolerance (Crabtree et al., 2018; Romero, 2018) during the period in which this study took place. Alarmingly, modern nativists have had "an outlet that earlier generations did not: a [former] president who not only seem[ed] to agree with many of their arguments, but who also stoke[d] the flames of this nativism so explicitly and aggressively" (Young, 2017, p. 228). Since June 2015, President Trump made

immigration a top priority, bringing super-charged energy, force, and voice to the anti-immigrant sentiments that have been simmering in the political background for many decades (Sussman, 2017; Waldinger, 2018).

Scholars have found that negative frames such as fear and loathing have much stronger effects than positive frames such as unity and togetherness (Alamillo et al., 2019). Trump negatively framed immigration policies to influence public perception about immigration (Vasile, 2017). For example, he emphasized the criminality and immorality of certain immigrant groups rather than portraying immigrants as people with families, jobs, and aspirations. Astrada and Astrada (2019) argued that Trump employed "spectacle", or the use of images and words to drive forth a singular ideology in the absence of evidence and substantiated content towards the truth of that ideology. In the era of the spectacle, Trump consistently portrayed immigrants as a threat to national security and blamed them for America's social and economic struggles (M. Saldaña et al., 2018). This dangerously undemocratic and unscrupulous tactic may have propelled him into presidency and into a position to inflict negative repercussions for many years to come.

Instead of targeting Europeans and Asians like the policies and rhetoric of the 20th century, the anti-immigrant national discourse during the Trump era was directed towards Mexicans, other Central Americans, Muslims, and noncitizens (Villazor & Johnson, 2019). Just one week after assuming office in January 2017, Trump signed an executive order restricting the movement of people from many majority Muslim countries. Many viewed this action as antagonistic towards the Muslims, who Trump had accused of being terrorists (M. Saldaña et al., 2018). Soon after, he signed another executive order

replacing the prosecutorial discretion guidelines used by ICE during the Obama administration, making it easier to deport any person without status (Pierce, 2019). Without sufficient numbers of courts and judges to process increasing deportation claims, the order created a nightmarish backlog of cases and overcrowding of detention centers (Chacon, 2017).

Later in 2017, Trump called for the end of the DACA program and overturn of Temporary Protected Status for immigrants from war-torn or natural disaster-stricken countries (Wadhia, 2019). In mid-2018, the Department of Justice's "zero tolerance" policy went into effect, causing increased separations of families and imprisonment of children under 18, including infants and toddlers (Pineo, 2020). Even though the policy was reversed after a few months, thousands of children remained separated from their families, living in cruel and inhumane conditions (*Family Separation*, 2019). Overall, the policies and rhetoric about immigrants have been damaging for nearly every immigrant community that has already been marginalized in the U.S. (Waslin, 2020). The anti-immigrant context also dissuaded other nations from looking upon the U.S. favorably as a haven for immigrants (Schmidt, 2019). Our country's immigration system "too often serves as an instrument of exclusion and marginalization" and has become "a symbol to the world of U.S. cruelty and injustice" (Kerwin, 2018, p. 202).

Impact of Trump Era Immigration Policies and Rhetoric on Immigrant-Origin Students

Even before the Trump administration came into office, immigration policies and rhetoric impacted immigrant-origin students in significant ways. As shown in the historical overview of the U.S. immigration context, policies influenced the type and

quantity of immigrants entering the U.S. as well as the quality of their lives once they arrived. Since most immigrant-origin students live in family units, whatever policies have impacted their family members have also affected them both directly and indirectly. In a context where rhetoric and policies have been more distinctly anti-immigrant than in previous administrations, there may have been impacts to students that were unique in the Trump era.

Generally, Gelatt et al. (2018) found that heightened state enforcement policies linked to increased material hardship of immigrant families, especially mixed-status families that have at least one family member who is undocumented. Since economic hardship can been associated with declines in children's well-being, increases in enforcement proceedings likely have harmful effects on the well-being of school-age children. In addition to the material challenges, family separations generally have negative effects on the mental, social, and emotional lives of immigrant-origin children (Gubernskaya & Dreby, 2017). Overtime, family unity and support systems weaken, compounding the negative effects of enforcement policies. Most educators know too well that "the dividing line between what happens in school and everything that takes place outside of school is not always clear" (Jawetz, 2017, p. 18). Thus, we can predict serious and harmful implications of restrictive immigration policies for students both now and in the long term future.

Inside schools, students have also felt the negative effects of the Trump era policies (Gándara & Ee, 2018; Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Results from a nationwide spring 2016 survey for educators demonstrated that immigrant-origin, Muslim, and African American children expressed heightened anxiety, stress, and fear about what might

happen to them and their families after the presidential election (Costello, 2016). Educators also reported many students were emboldened to use bigoted language against minorities and immigrants and that tensions have flared amongst students with different political viewpoints and backgrounds in ugly and sometimes violent ways. A similar study by Rogers et al. (2017) not only supported these findings, but also discovered that more students are experiencing adverse academic consequences and the degradation of the democratic purposes of public education.

In a series of short essays detailing the implications of the Trump administration's immigration policies, a high school teacher wrote, “[W]e must recognize how deeply traumatic these first months of the Trump administration have been for targeted groups” (Hamann & Morgenson, 2017, p. 401). Quoting a teacher’s response to a nationwide survey about immigration and education, Gándara and Ee (2018) described a situation of a student affected by recent policies, “We have one student who had attempted to slit her wrists because her family has been separated and she wants to be with her mother. She literally didn’t want to live without her mother” (p. 10). They also shared the story of a student’s whose grades plummeted once her father was deported after living in the U.S. for 24 years. Both specific stories and broad patterns gleaned from widespread survey data show that the immigration policies are hurting students.

A guide created for educators by Colorín Colorado (2018) clearly lists possible impacts of immigration issues that educators should be aware of. The guide explains that immigrant-origin students may have unique family situations that educators may not have experienced themselves. For example, students may have significant care-taking responsibilities for younger siblings if parents or other care-taking adults have been

deported. Students may be separated from family that still live in unstable and violent areas, causing them to worry about them from afar. Unaccompanied minors who make it to the U.S. may be meeting their parents or family members after an extended separation and may be meeting new siblings for the first time. The guide also highlights the social-emotional and economic impacts that immigration issues may have on vulnerable families. All of these difficult implications further harm immigrant-origin students, who already disproportionally attend less-resourced schools and graduate without the skills to flourish in this increasingly knowledge-based economy (M. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2016).

Despite the overwhelmingly negative impact of immigration policies during the Trump era, some researchers have found some promising opportunities and outcomes for students. Miranda (2017) found that immigrant-origin students are standing up for each other through one-on-one connections as well as through larger-scale protests or rallies. She also observed students engaging in thoughtful conversations about immigration policies. Similarly, Kennedy et al. (2020) established that catalytic political events during the Trump era, such as the Muslim ban, have provided students with opportunities for moral identity development. The adolescents in their study came to understand, to varying degrees, that inequality exists in society. They also verbalized their belief that they can mobilize their peers to unite for equity and keep pursuing their education as a way to resist the marginalizing policies of the Trump administration. Thus, ironically, the Trump era has provided a unique impetus and motivation to increase critical consciousness around equity and education (Peters, 2017).

Preliminary research during the Trump era has thus far constructed a picture of students who have experienced compromised wellbeing and performance, but also been afforded many opportunities to engage with exercising and building critical consciousness.

The Key Role of Local Educators in Supporting Immigrant-Origin Students

The current sociopolitical landscape of immigration has not only impacted immigrant-origin students, but also educators who support them. Research has shown educators in various roles have been significant actors in the academic, social, and emotional development of immigrant-origin children.

Portes and Rumbaut (2014) found the presence of a "really significant other" (p. 299) in the narratives of immigrant-origin students who had achieved high educational attainment by graduating from high school and attending selective post-secondary institutions. Frequently, this really significant other was an educator such as a teacher or counselor. These educators guided students during their PK-12 education to set them up for post-graduation success. They not only took a concerted interest in students, but also possessed the knowledge and experience necessary to support them. Other studies have emphasized the importance of strong, culturally responsive relationships between students and their educators in determining the quality of academic and social support immigrant-origin students experience (Gándara, 2002; Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Irizarry & Raible, 2011; Ramirez & Taylor Jaffee, 2016).

In addition to teachers and counselors, school and district leaders have the agency to affect the educational experiences of immigrant-origin students, particularly through the provision of structural supports and resources (Jaffe-Walter, 2018). Leaders have the

power to address deficit discourses and incoherent policies, cultivating a collaborative, holistic, and safe institutional environment for their staff and students (Crawford et al., 2018). Rogers et al. (2017) found that student behavior related to Trump era politics grew worse in the absence of proactive measures by school leaders to create a tolerant and respectful culture, such as public statements about the value of civil exchange and democratic principles. The majority of study participants agreed that school leadership should provide more guidance on how to support students in this polarizing climate. Jaffe-Walter (2018), Crawford et al. (2018), and Rogers et al. (2017) indirectly call for social justice leadership (Theoharis, 2007) and leadership for culturally and linguistically responsive schools (Scanlan & López, 2014). Leaders who practice social justice leadership to create culturally and linguistically responsive schools make issues of historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the U.S. driving components of their work.

In a sociopolitical context that has contributed to the marginalization of immigrant communities, all educators need to be drawing upon social justice leadership practices in order to mitigate the negative impacts on students, as evidenced by recent scholarship. On the ground, this means working as collaborative groups of educators to address instructional and organizational capacity (Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2015) to support immigrant-origin students. Educators in various roles have significant impacts on immigrant-origin students. Consequently, in this dissertation I studied educators as a broad group instead of particular types of educators (e.g., teachers, counselors, or school leaders) because I was interested in the differences and similarities amongst various educators' talk about immigrant-origin students. In addition, educators work together in

community and thereby, it is likely that they influence each other's perspectives and discursive practices. Since the kaleidoscope of various educators' talk and actions create a network of practices to support immigrant-origin students, it is important to see the system more holistically by including the voices of educators with diverse professional roles and capacities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review, I first provide an overview of the education of immigrant-origin students, making the case that this field of study is necessary and important. I then discuss the importance of studying educators' discourses in education before turning to a systematic literature review of prior work on educators' discourses about immigrant-origin students. At the end of the chapter, I share more details about my research questions as well as the theoretical frameworks guiding my inquiry.

Education of Immigrant-Origin Students

The percentage of immigrant-origin children in US households has risen from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2018 (Batalova et al., 2020). This means that about one in four children under age 18 lived with at least one immigrant parent in 2018. As a sizeable and growing proportion of our nation's students, there is a need to focus on the education of immigrant-origin students. As immigrant-origin students and their families settle into US society, they can face psychological, social, and economic challenges in addition to difficult academic transitions (Birman et al., 2007). Often, these challenges unfold in public schools, furthering the need to pay close attention to educational structures and practices experienced by immigrant-origin students.

As noted in the introduction, it is important to remember that immigrant-origin students come from diverse backgrounds. Their families have moved to the US for various reasons; some come for employment or education-related opportunities while others have been forced out of their countries due to war or political violence. They have varying educational levels and familiarities with school systems. They speak different languages and practice a myriad of cultural, ethnic, and national ways of being (Birman

et al., 2007). Thus, in school settings, immigrant-origin students need differentiated support, depending on their background.

Undocumented immigrant-origin youth, or those who live in the U.S. without legal status to do so, are a particularly vulnerable segment of the larger immigrant-origin youth population (del Carmen Salazar et al., 2016). Forty percent of undocumented students ages 18-24 do not complete high school, in comparison to 8% of their native-born peers (Pérez, 2014). Even undocumented students who graduate from high school face large barriers to attending some form of higher education (Gonzales, 2016). Due to the lack of rights and privileges afforded to students with legal status, undocumented students need to navigate yet another layer of their identity as an immigrant-origin student. Thus, when studying the education of immigrant-origin students, we need to be particularly sensitive to the contextual conditions for immigrant-origin students created by both federal and local immigration policies.

Drawing from fieldwork with immigrant-origin students, Gibson and Carrasco (2009a) found that in spite of official school discourses to foster equal educational opportunities for immigrant-origin students, many local ideologies, structures, and practices have produced unwelcoming experiences for immigrant-origin students. More specifically, immigrant-origin students have felt marginalized both when using their home language and the mainstream language of English because language differences often manifest as language hierarchies. For example, even though school systems have made large strides in embracing biliteracy and dual-language education, English-only approaches to education still have lasting negative effects. California and Massachusetts banned bilingual education in the early 2000s only to repeal them in the last five years

(Mitchell, 2019). Arizona remains the only US state still upholding an "English-only" law (Jacobson, 2020). However, the existence of such a policy demonstrates how language hierarchies manifest and deny bilingual students the usage of their home language in their formal educational experiences.

Immigrant-origin students have also internalized and blamed themselves for unequal academic outcomes largely due to schools' overarching discourse of a meritocratic ideology that masks how school practices privilege non-immigrant students from middle to upper level socioeconomic backgrounds (Gibson & Carrasco, 2009a). For example, an immigrant-origin student who gets lower standardized test scores and less access to enrichment opportunities due to their family's lack of experience with the American school system may blame herself for low academic achievement even though the system privileges those with the resources and social capital in regards to standardized testing and extracurricular activities.

In addition to being unwelcoming, school environments for immigrant-origin students can be academically less appropriate, rigorous, or challenging than for non-immigrant peers (Gibson & Carrasco, 2009a). For example, first generation immigrant youth are frequently separated into newcomer or EL classes with inadequate curriculum materials and poorly trained teachers. Because of the school structures that separate these immigrant-origin students, they often cannot access both academic and social activities that promote participation and belonging of all students.

Fortunately, researchers have highlighted practices and perspectives that can more authentically lead to more welcoming and supportive environments for immigrant-origin students. Lowenhaupt and Hopkins (2020) suggest educators do the following:

communicate asset-based framing of immigrant communities, establish two-way communication with immigrant families, develop explicit opportunities for staff to collaborate with one another in supporting immigrant-origin youth, and partner with community-based organizations to create a web of support for immigrant families. Birman et al. (2007) also stress the importance of educators forming relationships with immigrant parents, especially through cultural brokers such as multicultural and multilingual liaisons. They also make the case for paying particular attention to EL programs so as to create hospitable climates and reduce marginalization of immigrant-origin students and their EL teachers. This involves providing adequate opportunities for EL teacher training and taking steps to integrate immigrant-origin students into schools' programming for all students.

Without focused research on the education of immigrant-origin students, immigrant-origin students may continue to be seen largely through their language abilities or cultural differences. By identifying students as immigrant-origin students, we can consider multiple aspects of immigrant-origin students' backgrounds such as their immigrant status and migration stories in addition to their cultural and linguistic identities. Our nation's constantly shifting immigration policies and rhetoric only heighten the urgency for educators to see the multiple aspects that inform immigrant-origin students' identities and experiences in school settings.

Educators' Discourses in Education

What exactly are researchers focusing on when studying discourses in education? And what is the purpose of delving into discourses in education? Discourses, or language in use, exist in many places and aspects of educational settings. They show up in most

pedagogical materials such as textbooks, instructions, and classroom dialogue (van Dijk, 1980). These discourses vary in style and content; they also influence learning in various ways. Discourse also occurs constantly between educators, students, families, and community members through visual and verbal communication such as newsletters or informal conversations. There are endless examples of discourse that happen every day in schools. Researchers who study discourses are interested in how people "use language to accomplish social action, presupposing and creating contextual norms, practices, and relationships as they do so" (Wortham et al., 2017, p. ix). Discourse researchers reason that we can ultimately improve educational practices by better understanding how language is used in various social contexts.

Although I have chosen to approach discourse through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lens, there are other approaches to studying discourse that have been used in educational research such as linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis, and interactional linguistics (Wortham et al., 2017). The variety of methods of studying discourse demonstrate that discourse can be framed and analyzed in different ways. However, CDA and other approaches to studying discourse are similar in that language is examined as it is used in specific contexts, not as an isolated event. In this particular study's case, I have taken into account the macrosocial context of immigration policies and rhetoric as well as the local contexts where educators work in order to understand what educators mean when talking about the experiences of their immigrant-origin students. I chose a CDA approach because I was specifically interested in the ways the unequal distribution of power plays out at national, state, district, and school/classroom levels in ways that affect the education of immigrant-origin students.

Just like the difficulty of neatly summarizing the study of discourse in education into one method or approach, educational researchers who claim to use CDA to study discourse are far from unified in how they define and analyze discourse (R. Rogers et al., 2005). In the 1970s, scholars of education began to more frequently employ linguistic analyses to understand how people made meaning in educational settings. They drew upon longer running traditions of studying discourses from the fields of philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. In the 1990s, an eclectic group of scholars from various traditions came together to congeal different theories and approaches under the umbrella of CDA (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Since then, educational researchers have been utilizing this interdisciplinary and newly evolving form of CDA to support their inquiries about the relationship between language in use in educational settings and society at large.

Since there are multiple approaches to study discourse even within one tradition, how did I operationalize discourse in this study? And whose discourses was I most interested in? I treated discourse as language that can reveal the "subtle ways that power works through our practices and our very being, and how even with the best of intentions we can be complicit in perpetuating unjust systems that we claim to want to challenge" (Applebaum, 2016, p. 4). Although discourse happens amongst many stakeholders in educational settings, I specifically focused on educators' discourse on the micro or everyday level since educators hold a lot of power and influence over the experience of immigrant-origin students in their schools. In educational settings, educators' everyday discourses reflect beliefs, values, perceptions, and understandings of both individual educators and collective groups such as educators with similar roles, staff who all work at the same school, or an entire school district. Discourses include both what is said by

educators and what is omitted or not talked about by educators. These discourses actively construct and maintain the social practices that occur each day in schools, reflected in meso-level discourses that can be categorized as discourses at the district and state level.

The next section of this literature review delves into existing research on educators' discourses about immigrant-origin students. These discourses exist somewhere between the macro and micro-levels of discourse on immigrants and immigration. These are discourses that researchers have documented through both empirical and theoretical research on educators of immigrant-origin students.

Educators' Discourses About Immigrant-Origin Students

Discourses about immigrant-origin students exist in many forms, but I was most interested in the discourses educators both drew upon and reproduced as they had conversations about their immigrant-origin students, reflected upon their role in supporting these students, and made plans for responding with appropriate supports in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context. Thus far, educational researchers have studied language and beliefs connected to immigrant-origin students, English learners (most English learners are immigrant-origin students), and cultural diversity (immigrant-origin students bring cultural diversity into schools).

While the research related to school/district-level discourse on immigrant-origin students in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context remains small for now, there are deeper bodies of literature related to educators', specifically teachers', perceptions of students designated as English Learners (ELs) and of cultural diversity. Through a comprehensive review of literature on teachers' beliefs on ELs, Lucas et al. (2015) found the following: 1) many teachers do not feel prepared to teach ELs and prefer not to have

ELs in their classes; 2) many harbor deficit views toward ELs and misconceptions about language acquisition; 3) many have no interest in participating in EL-related professional development; and 4) teachers who teach ELs and have experiences with diverse populations hold more favorable beliefs about ELs. This literature review highlights both troubling and promising aspects of existing discourses on immigrant-origin students.

In a review of research on teachers' beliefs on cultural diversity, Gay (2015) found the following: 1) many teachers think the best way to deal with cultural diversity is to not deal with it at all, by claiming colorblindness and denying widespread inequalities; 2) many do not feel confident about their ability to approach and address diversity; and 3) many rely on stereotypes or prevailing social values on diversity such as positive views on cultural assimilation, selective receptivity to immigrant groups, and blaming of marginalized groups for their own social conditions. Although more troubling than promising, these findings only strengthen the argument that it is important to study discourses about marginalized student groups in order to shine a light upon and ultimately change the direction of damaging discourses.

Most of the discourses highlighted by Lucas et al. (2015) and Gay (2015) can be categorized as exclusionary, inclusive, or conflicting. Not wanting English Learners in their classroom and employing selective receptivity to immigrant groups are examples of exclusionary discourse. Holding favorable beliefs about English Learners is an example of inclusionary discourse. Educators who hold favorable beliefs about English Learners but also do not want English Learners in their own classrooms harbor conflicting discourses about immigrant-origin students. The next sections provide a more detailed overview of exclusionary or deficit-based discourses, inclusive or asset-based discourses,

and conflicting discourses that have been both documented and conceptualized by researchers.

Exclusionary or Deficit-Based Discourses

Deficit thinking attributes peoples' struggles and failures to their own deficits and deficiencies in intellectual abilities, motivation, morality, or linguistic abilities (Valencia, 2010). People who adopt a deficit-based way of understanding certain people blame the "victim" and thereby seek to change the "victim" instead of the ways a system marginalizes the less privileged. By chalking up failures to internal shortcomings, deficit-based thinkers preserve the status quo, which oppresses certain groups of people. Dangerously, the reasoning behind blaming the victim and preserving the status quo are not based in methodologically-sound scientific evidence and research. As sociopolitical contexts change, ideologies driving deficit thinking also change. For example, in our current time period, deficit-based thinkers may explain deficits as being caused by inferior home environments versus by inferior genes. This exclusionary way of thinking is evident not only in the restrictive immigration policies but also in educational thought and practice. Deficit thinking leads educators to make unfounded and damaging judgments about the educability of certain students, especially students of color from low-income backgrounds.

Many researchers have both theorized and gathered empirical evidence for the existence of deficit discourses in immigrant-serving school settings or more broadly, in schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse students. In her research of teachers in new immigrant destinations, Adair (2014) found that educators described the influx of immigrants into their towns as intrusions. She observed patterns of "white

ownership" (Adair, 2014, p. 657) that revealed a belief in the normativity and dominance of whiteness over other cultures and groups. Educators, in general, believed that immigrant families should adapt to fit more easily into their community instead of the community changing to welcoming immigrant families. The exceptions were educators who were immigrants themselves. These educators expressed willingness to change and adapt to better accommodate and build relationships with immigrant families. Adair argued that observed cultural, racial, and linguistic disconnects between immigrant families and schools were manifestations of whiteness on an institutional level. Whiteness acted as a narrative that shapes how certain groups of people should be "shaped, taught, changed, acculturated, or reconfigured to be considered successful in education" (Adair, 2014, p. 644).

Adair's argument is related to Valenzuela's (1999) concept of subtractive schooling, which is characterized by assimilationist policies and practices that deprive Mexican and Mexican-American students of their language and culture. Subtractive schooling prevents immigrant-origin students from gaining the social capital necessary to succeed in school and beyond. Valenzuela found a disconnect between what educators and students thought it meant to care about school. While educators generally perceived first-generation immigrant students' stance toward schooling as aligned with theirs, they tended to view second-generation youth as not caring about school in the ways educators care about school. For example, they viewed first-generation students as hard-working, conscientious, and grateful for their educational opportunities, which aligned with their perceptions of how students who care about school should act. In contrast, they saw second-generation students as caring less about school, characterized by a looser attitude

towards academics and behavior in the classroom. Both views toward immigrant-origin youth can be detrimental because they do not take into account the actual subjective experiences of the youth and instead lead to the domination of educators' views over students' views. In this way, educators and educational systems can "subtract" resources from immigrant-origin youth and exclude them from full participation in American society.

Delpit (1988, 1995) may refer to Adair's "white ownership" and Valenzuela's "subtractive schooling" as stemming from the dominant "culture of power" in America. She found that many white, middle-class educators consider students of color and those from low-income backgrounds as "other people's children", excluding them from the culture of power and ultimately interacting with these students in ways that hinder their full participation in society. García and Guerra (2004) build upon Delpit's conceptualization of the culture of power by analyzing patterns of educators' discourse regarding students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds. They found several educators overgeneralized about students' family backgrounds, most frequently making sweeping assumptions that CLD students do not come to school ready to learn due to poverty, language, or culture. Linked to this overgeneralization, many educators lowered expectations for CLD students, assuming that they come from unsupportive households and need more sympathy in school. Educators often had superficial understandings of their students' cultures and tended to normalize their own, typically middle-class values over other values. Similar to Adair's analysis, García and Guerra found that educators assume that students and their families need to conform to the already existing educational system.

A study of teachers in Spain and their views on cultural diversity found that teachers understood cultural diversity from an "interventionist viewpoint associated with the occurrence of problematic situations, ignoring the possibility of anticipation or actions of a more preventative nature" (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015, p. 408). This interventionist viewpoint perceives students from non-dominant backgrounds as having a problem that needs treatment by different interventionists such as counselors, social workers, or language specialists. This viewpoint prevents students from non-dominant backgrounds from being fully integrated into the school setting and culture. Although this study was undertaken in a different country, this pathology-oriented, interventionist viewpoint also exists in American schools.

Schools can also exclude aspects of immigrant-origin students' identities and exacerbate the adoption of an interventionist viewpoint by framing some of them reductively as English learners. Dabach and Fones (2016) argue that labeling students as English learners "not only narrowly frames transnational immigrant students' language abilities; it also masks these youth's political knowledge that travels across communities and borders" (p. 8). In addition, dominant discourses about language use in schools supports English monolingualism (Skilton-Sylvester, 2003). Discourses on language use and English learners parallel discourses about immigrant-origin students in that they can exclude and marginalize student groups that are not seen as part of the majority.

Inclusive or Asset-Based Discourses

Some recent studies have shown that leaders taking culturally responsive, asset-based approaches and resisting culturally incompetent, deficit-oriented ones have paved the path for more positive outcomes for immigrant-origin students and their families

(Crawford et al., 2018; Gil, 2019; Guillaume et al., 2019; S. Rodriguez, 2019). An orientation toward building strong structures for support and long lasting relationships amongst different stakeholders frequently surfaces as a positive value in the discourse about immigrant-origin students. For the past few decades, educational researchers have also outlined asset-based approaches, building up these discourses to combat the deficit-based ones.

The Funds of Knowledge (FoK) approach counters deficit-based views and enhances learning opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds by supporting educators to connect students' home lives to what happens in school (G. M. Rodriguez, 2013). Moll et al. (1992) define FoK as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). Moll et al. (1992) list material and scientific knowledge such as construction and household management knowledge such as childcare as some of the many examples of household FoK. In a FoK approach, the multiple experiences, backgrounds, and identities of immigrant-origin students are noticed, engaged, and brought into the classroom leading to a deeper whole person approach to learning.

The FoK approach is related to what Delpit (1988) refers to as a "very special kind of listening" that requires open eyes, ears, hearts, and minds. She writes, "We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs" (Delpit, 1988, p. 297). She believes this special kind of listening is a crucial part of starting a dialogue between people from various backgrounds in the service of providing more equitable opportunities for all children to learn. Delpit's orientation towards listening,

dialogue, and equity is reflected in Nieto and Bode's (2011) definition of multicultural education in a sociopolitical context:

> [Multicultural education] challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, gender, and sexual orientation, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect…Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice. (p. 42)

Nieto explains that antiracism and antidiscrimination in general is at the heart of multicultural education, which aims to include all students instead of paying superficial lip service to inclusion. Often, multicultural education exposes racist and discriminatory school practices, forcing educators to confront situations and understandings that may cause discomfort.

Nieto (2005) outlines five attitudes of educators who effectively engage in multicultural education: "a sense of mission; solidarity with, and empathy for students; the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge; improvisation; and a passion for social justice" (p. 204). All of these qualities help educators engage students as whole people and promote a more equitable, inclusive culture. In particular, challenging mainstream knowledge centers marginalized, oppressed voices. This important quality involves confronting "the kinds of discourses promoted by each society as truth, and produced, transmitted, and kept in place by systems of power such as universities, the military, and the media" (Nieto, 2005, p. 209)

Yosso (2005) uses the lens of Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and related theories such as LatCrit (Bernal, 2002; Montoya, 2006) to critique a deficit-oriented discourse of students of color. Yosso then outlines a concept of community cultural wealth, which highlights forms of capital that are often unacknowledged and unrecognized. These forms of capital include aspirational, familial, social, navigational, linguistic, cultural, and resistant capital. This framework is meant to help educators move away from the White, middle-class way of conflating wealth with income and toward more inclusive perspectives that allow them to see multiple strengths of CLD students.

Similarly, culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2017) aims to sustain the cultures and lives of CLD students and resist exclusionary practices and beliefs. This approach "extend[s] the previous visions of asset pedagogies by demanding explicitly pluralist outcomes that are not centered on White middle-class, monolingual/monocultural norms and notions of educational achievement—and that call out the imposition of these norms as harmful to and discriminatory against many of our communities" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 12). Two-way immersion programs are examples of educational models that center bilingualism and biculturalism. Students who come from non-dominant backgrounds are viewed as invaluable assets to the learning community, rather than people in need of intervention. Culturally sustaining pedagogy also works to combat any static perceptions of culture by instead putting forth dynamic and shifting visions of culture. As an approach that does not shy away from difficult dialogues and conversations, culturally sustaining pedagogy also argues all stakeholders

to question all issues, even those that may seem progressive and social-justice oriented at the surface.

Building off of culturally sustaining pedagogy and other asset-based approaches, Doucet (2017) offers a concrete framework of commitments educators can practice to build more humanizing and sustaining environments for immigrant-origin students. The commitments include increasing knowledge about diversity, building classrooms/schools/districts as communities of trust, involving families and communities, combating prejudice and discrimination, addressing diversity in its full complexity, and promoting global perspectives. Doucet's commitments for creating humanizing and sustaining environments reflect Nieto's attitudes of effective multicultural educators. Valenzuela (1999) may refer to these tenets or attitudes as aspects of the "politics of caring" and Suárez-Orozco (2019) may describe them as part of "ecologies of care" toward immigrant-origin students.

The various terms, theories, and conceptualizes of inclusive, asset-based approaches toward immigrant-origin students help us to both understand and notice social structures, practices, and events that support and sustain immigrant-origin students in positive ways. These approaches also manifest in forms of educators' discourses at the everyday level.

Conflicting Discourses

Few researchers have found educators to hold solely exclusionary or inclusionary views towards immigrant-origin students. Most often, educators hold complex and ever shifting arrays of perspectives that can include immigrant-origin students in one sentence and exclude them the next. Thus, educators usually hold conflicting beliefs and views

about their immigrant-origin students and more broadly, their culturally and linguistically diverse students. For example, Blanchard and Muller (2015) found that teachers in their study generally perceived immigrant language minority students as hardworking but also believed these students were not as likely to go to college as their non-immigrant peers. In a different study, DeMulder et al. (2014) found teachers claiming empathy for the immigrant experience while simultaneously expressing the need for immigrants to assimilate into American culture. These teachers also acknowledged arguments resisting the dominant narrative while at the same time undermining these resistance movements by critiquing the ways in which the ideas were presented. In addition, the researchers noticed that educators wanted to address equity while at the same time avoiding activities and discussions aimed toward social change, especially if they benefit from the current system due to their identity and existing social capital.

Even within the asset-based Funds of Knowledge (FoK) approach, educators can reproduce school or educator-centered pedagogy (G. M. Rodriguez, 2013). Zipin (2009) argues that educators who take the FoK approach tend to build curriculum around positive or light knowledge from students' backgrounds and avoid negative or dark knowledge. For example, educators may laud students' diligent and hardworking attitudes as first-generation immigrants wanting to build a better life for themselves than what they might have had in their other country but avoid talking about the pressures they face from their parents and community to succeed, which may take mental and emotional tolls on these students. Although it is wise to consider the moral and ethical repercussions of inquiring into difficult and even traumatic aspects of students' lives, avoiding dark FoK sometimes reinforces the power dynamic of educators being able to choose what

aspects of students' identities are seen and acknowledged in schools. Furthermore, the avoidance of dark knowledge, driven by the intention of taking asset-based views, can ironically mask and reproduce deficit perspectives. For example, a teacher in Zipin's research group explained that, "Some of the lifeworlds of the kids we teach are so bad. One thing you want to do is try to have them think that this is a place where they don't have to deal with their lifeworld, so they've got like a safety zone when they come to school" (Zipin, 2009, p. 322). This teacher viewed some students' lives as places to be disengaged from because they are "so bad". This particular case was an example of how liberal intentions to educate all children equitably can backfire if educators mask lowering standards behind warmth, friendliness, and care (Delpit, 1988).

Although silence can be viewed as a lack of a stance, it can reflect conflicting and sometimes confused perspectives. Jefferies (2014) describes the silence of educators, students, and family members around issues of immigration status as a Circle of Silence that ultimately limits the kind of support undocumented students can receive in their schools. Educators who are unsure how to ask about immigration status and even if they should in the first place struggle to open the lines of communication between schools and students. Lack of information and misinformation such as myths, fears, and stereotypes around immigration contribute to this Circle of Silence and hinder students' access to educational opportunities. Even though educators may participate in the Circle of Silence with the intention of protecting students' privacy, in the end, the Circle of Silence is damaging in that it only perpetuates the marginalization of immigrant students who are undocumented.

The Circle of Silence echoes what Bonilla-Silva (2014) calls color-blind racism, a racial ideology that took hold in the 1960s. Replacing Jim Crow racism that explained away racism through the biological and moral inferiority of people of color, color-blind racism rationalizes racism through market dynamics and the cultural limitations of people of color. Color-blind racism allows people, especially White people, to say that they don't see color or skin tone and insist that they see people for simply who they are. Color-blind racism allows people to believe that we are beyond the race problem. Color-blind racism allows people to disregard both systemic and everyday discrimination against people of color, keeping in place practices that marginalize people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. On the surface-level, people who insist on taking a colorblind approach could appear progressive and not wanting to perpetuate harmful racial ideologies stemming from the Jim Crow era. However, this superficial desire to appear progressive and beyond racism actually can unsuccessfully mask deep-standing beliefs that contribute to the continued marginalization of CLD people. In schools, educators who subscribe to color-blind racism may verbally accept their immigrant-origin students and insist that they see students without any labels, but internally harbor marginalizing views.

Similarly, Gay (2010) has found that although educators usually accept cultural diversity as a "valuable resource in teaching and learning", they actually see it as a "threat and detriment to be denied, avoided, or eliminated" (p. 146). Because many educators struggle to resolve this contradiction, they frequently respond with silence, disassociation, or denial. Some may choose to work with aspects of diversity that are less controversial or personally uncomfortable, such as gender, sexuality, or class. Pollock

(2009) focuses on the contradictions behind the use of the word "all", frequently used to talk about educating and supporting "all students". She argues, that "race is deeply buried in the word—as a policy word that is colormute and race-loaded simultaneously, 'all' can be both a useful and a dangerous word for equality efforts" (Pollock, 2009, p. 74). While embracing all students equitably is something to be desired, the mindset of "all students" frequently leads educators to disregard the specific assets and challenges that CLD students bring to schools. Collectively, Pollock, Gay, Bonilla-Silva, and Jefferies bring attention to the conflicting and ambivalent approaches educators adopt when understanding their CLD students. Despite surface-level good intentions, many educators struggle to fully include their immigrant-origin students as part of the normative school culture.

The exclusionary, inclusive, and conflicting orders of discourse about immigrant-origin students in both research and practice reflect what Dorner et al. (2017) describe as boundary work. Boundary work is "the process of delineating 'us' versus 'them' and the underlying aspects that provoke such differentiation" (p. 925). Educators unconsciously build boundaries between schools and immigrant-origin students. Some boundaries may be more exclusionary while others are more permeable and conducive to building an inclusive environment. Boundary work helps us understand the role of discourse in "creating, maintaining, contesting, or even dissolving institutionalized social differences" (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). Often, symbolic boundaries, or the conceptual distinctions educators make between themselves and immigrant-origin students, lead to the rise or continuation of social boundaries, or the actual manifestation of differences. In this study, I analyzed the mechanisms associated with the creation, maintenance,

contestation, or dissolution of boundaries as a way to structure my inquiry into the discourses educators draw from to understand their immigrant-origin students.

Theoretical Frameworks

I drew on principles of sensemaking and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to guide the structure and process of this inquiry. Sensemaking is the "cognitive act of taking in information, framing it, and using it to determine actions and behaviors in a way that manages meaning for individuals" (Evans, 2007, p. 161). In this study, I was most interested in how educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences since their sensemaking has hefty implications for how the educators actually respond to and support immigrant-origin students. While individual educators undergo sensemaking processes, sensemaking is actual a social activity in that it is situated in certain contexts, environments, and discourses (Spillane et al., 2002).

Rather than isolated or finite events, sensemaking is a cyclical process where people continually create, revise, and recreate meanings out of the many cues drawn from their environments (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Sensemaking is usually triggered when people's expectations for their environment are violated. In this study, the increasing population of immigrant-origin students and the increasingly hostile immigration policies and rhetoric, along with the need for educators to support their immigrant-origin student population served as contexts that have prompted educators' sensemaking around the experiences of their immigrant-origin students.

Sensemaking has seven properties that distinguish it from understanding and interpretation. It is "grounded in identity construction, retrospective, enactive of sensible environments, social, ongoing, focused on and by extracted cues, and driven by

plausibility rather than accuracy" (Weick, 1995, p. 17). I was particularly interested in how educators establish their identity in relation to their immigrant-origin students. Who is the self that makes sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences? How does that self relate to immigrant-origin students, other educators, families, local communities, and the society at large? Erez and Earley (1993) posited that people's identity construction is driven by the need to create and maintain a positive and coherent perception of themselves as competent and effective in their organizations. Individual's identity construction is tied also to how they and other people view the organizations they operate within.

While social contexts are considered as integral aspects of the sensemaking process for educators, the inquiry into their sensemaking processes begins with teasing apart what they say about immigrant-origin students and what their language reveals about their identities. Thus, the CDA framework was used as an additional and intertwined theoretical framework in order to orient my focus to broader social patterns of meaning-making, especially in regards to how power plays out at national, state, and district levels (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Adopting the CDA framework comes with this following set of core assumptions: 1) there are conditions of inequality in society that should be uncovered and transformed, 2) analyses should go beyond interpreting language by trying to explain how language constructs and is constructed by society, and 3) all viewpoints, which includes the researcher's viewpoints, arise from complex contexts and are far from neutral (Mullet, 2018).

The first assumption sets up CDA as a problem-based approach, which means that a social problem is presumed to exist and that this problem can be overcome (Fairclough,

2001). For this study, there was an assumption that immigrant-origin students may not receive an education equitable to their non-immigrant-origin peers due to ideological issues that marginalize and exclude them, especially through language used by educators. Thus, analyses of the language used by educators were driven by a keen interest in the ways discourse perpetuates or mitigates the marginalization of immigrant-origin students and the ultimate purpose of highlighting challenges to providing an equitable education for all students. The second and third assumptions of the CDA framework led me to consider the larger social forces informing educators' discourses. They also encouraged me to continually be reflexive by checking my own assumptions and processes throughout the analyses as a way to include my own language use and production as part of the ongoing process of making sense of the research questions.

Research Questions

This study sought to understand the discourses various educators use, reflect, create, and perpetuate as they talk about the experiences of the immigrant-origin students in their districts. The study aimed not only to describe the existing discourses documented through educator talk, but also to interpret why these discourses exist by paying attention to individual educators' identities, beliefs, and experiences along with district and state-level practices and nationwide policies/rhetoric regarding immigrants and immigration.

The main research questions for this study were as follows:

(RQ1) How do educators in two different immigrant-serving districts make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context?

(RQ2) What larger discourses about immigrants and immigrant-origin students do educators reflect as they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences?

The first research question was first explored on a descriptive basis to better understand what educators were saying, reflecting, and creating in their discursive practices regarding the experiences of their immigrant-origin students. Interpretations of the discursive practices evolved as the study delved into the sensemaking patterns between individual educators and between the two different districts.

Interpretations of the discursive practices evolved and became increasingly complex as the study moved to the second research question. Analyses made connections between educators' everyday discourses about immigrant-origin students and broader discourses at district, state, and national levels identified in public documents and websites regarding immigrant-origin students. The following section lays out the methods used to explore these questions.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Research Contexts

I undertook a comparative case study of two immigrant-serving districts (Yin, 2018). One school district was located in suburban Illinois (IL). The population of immigrant-origin students represented over 60 different home languages and many cultures. Although the demographics of the immigrant-origin population has been in flux and on the rise, this district has been serving immigrant-origin students for many decades. The other district was located in rural Georgia (GA). Over the last fifteen years, the Latinx population has grown tremendously to over 30% of the community as migrant workers settled in town. Both school districts were relatively small, serving less than 2,000 students. The Illinois district only served pre-kindergarten to 8th grade students while the Georgia district served pre-kindergarten to 12th grade students. Table 1 captures salient aspects of each context.

Table 1.

Description of District Cases

District State	Locale	Student Enrollment (entire district)	Demographics of Immigrant-origin Students	% English Learners	% Low Income
IL	Suburb	1,823	Heterogeneous	23%	50%
GA	Rural	1,782	Mostly Spanish-speaking	17%	55%

When analyzing the data, it was important to keep in mind the local context of each district. State and county-level policies and rhetoric may have mediating or

intensifying influences on the federal immigration policies. The next sections detail some state level policies pertaining to immigration and immigrants for each context.

Illinois Context

In August 2017, Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner (Republican) signed the TRUST Act into law. Under the TRUST Act, local police cannot comply with immigration enforcement officials unless they have a warrant issued by a judge. In addition, local police cannot stop, search, or arrest anyone based on their immigration status (*Illinois TRUST Act*, 2017). This law provides state-level due process protections for immigrants fearing deportation, creating a more welcoming and safe environment for immigrants.

Also in 2017, Illinois enacted a law that created the Illinois Muslim American Advisory Council in order to advise to governor and the General Assembly on policy issues that impact Muslim Americans and immigrants (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018). This council works to advance civic participation of Muslim Americans, increase trade-relations with Muslim-majority countries and the state, and foster stronger relationships amongst Muslim Americans and immigrant communities. In addition, Illinois passed a resolution to create a Statewide Task Force on the Future of Adult Education and Literacy, increasing adult access to learning, which includes education for immigrants (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018).

In 2018, Illinois legally appropriated funds for refugee aid services. The state also passed a resolution urging the U.S. Census Bureau to omit questions about citizenship status. It also passed a professional regulation law that states that no one shall be denied a license, certificate, permit, or registration by the Department of Professional Regulation

solely based on citizenship or immigration status (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019).

The laws, regulations, and resolutions passed by Illinois legislatures during 2017 and 2018 show concerted efforts to protect, include, and empower immigrant populations. The Illinois context certainly differed from the national context of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric.

Georgia Context

In 2017, Georgia passed a law opposing sanctuary policies (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018). Sanctuary policies is a term given to places that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities on matters such as communicating immigration status. Georgia's House Bill 37 prohibits postsecondary institutions from adopting sanctuary policies and outlines penalties for violating this law.

During his 2018 campaign for governor, current Georgia governor Brian Kemp (Republican) frequently referred to undocumented immigrants as "criminal illegal aliens" (Rico, 2018). Like the other candidates, he wanted to create tougher laws to target undocumented immigration, even though Georgia already had a reputation for having some of the toughest immigration laws in the country. On his campaign website, he outlined his "Track and Deport Plan" in order to curb what he referred to as "illegal immigration in Georgia" (*Brian Kemp's Track and Deport Plan*, 2018). Although he has not followed through on this campaign promise, it was clear through opinion pieces in various news media outlets that many Georgia residents have not forgotten his promises and hope to see the fruition of the "Track and Deport Plan" (Daily-Citizen News, 2020).

House Bill 37 and the rhetoric around immigration from 2018 showed a state-level environment that has been hostile toward immigrants, particularly ones who are undocumented. This social milieu aligned with the anti-immigrant context at the national level at the time of the study. In comparison to the Illinois context, the Georgia context was decidedly less welcoming and protective toward its immigrant populations.

Data Sources

I collected the data to be analyzed for this study as part of a larger project involving research-practice partnerships with six immigrant-serving districts. In fall 2019, I traveled to each of the two districts for one week to conduct interviews and observations. I had already established relationships with some district educators in a previous visit in fall 2018 where I presented the results from an immigration-related survey administered in each district during spring 2018. In collaboration with a district leader, I selected 10 interview participants from each district who were heavily involved in practices to support immigrant-origin students, a form of purposive sampling. Table 2 shows the participant pseudonyms and roles.

Table 2.

Description of Interview Participants

District state	Name	Role
IL	Andrew	District Superintendent
	Marie	District Director of EL Services
	Raquel	District Director of EL Parent Center
	Misty	Elementary School Principal
	Stacy	Elementary School Principal
	Lila	Elementary School EL Teacher

	Claire	Elementary School EL Resource Teacher
	Paul	Junior High Principal
	Deborah	Junior High EL Department Chair
	Jacqueline	Junior High Counselor
GA	Lucas	District Superintendent
	Meredith	District Assistant Superintendent
	Cristina	District Migrant Coordinator
	Eric	Elementary School Principal
	Bailey	Elementary School Instructional Coach
	Isabella	Elementary School EL Teacher
	Margaret	Elementary School Counselor
	Clara	Middle School Counselor
	Helen	High School Graduation Coach
	Kayla	High School Counselor

I conducted one-on-one interviews with all participants using a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A). The protocol was created in collaboration with other project researchers and piloted with practitioners. It was designed to highlight and expand upon findings from the spring 2018 survey about practices to support immigrant-origin students in the sociopolitical context at that time. Interviews were conducted in offices or classrooms. Most of the time, I was alone with the interviewee but in a few cases, there were other non-participating educators in the room because the interviewee shared space with a colleague. Interviews took between 30 minutes and 2 hours. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and cleaned of any identifying factors.

I also recorded fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 2011) to capture the context of the interviews. These fieldnotes were a running log of the observations and thoughts that arose through each day I spent at the district. I took written or audio notes throughout the day and used these jottings to type up fieldnotes at the end of each day. I read through the fieldnotes a week after the visit to add any more thoughts or observations I remembered. These fieldnotes were used to triangulate views or observations made during the interviews.

Data Analysis

I first carried out thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the interview transcripts to address RQ1, which enquired into how educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in the anti-immigrant sociopolitical context. I considered 10 interviews from each district as two separate data sets. Thus, I ran two separate processes of thematic analysis to define themes emerging from each district.

I then implemented a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach (Mullet, 2018) to delve into RQ2, which asks about the larger discourses about immigrants and immigration. I drew from the same interview transcripts used to address RQ1. In addition, I gathered data from national, state, and district level education department websites about support services for immigrant-origin students. Since immigrant-origin students are not identified as "immigrant-origin" by education departments, I used the terms "English Learner", "migrant", and "culturally and linguistically diverse students" as proxy identifying factors. Table 3 outlines the alignment between research questions, data sources, and analytic methods.

Table 3.

Alignment of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analytic Methods

Research Question	Data Sources	Analytic Method
RQ1: How do educators in two different immigrant-serving districts make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in the current sociopolitical context?	• Interview transcripts • Fieldnotes	Thematic Analysis
RQ2: What larger discourses about immigrants and immigrant-origin students do educators reflect as they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences?	• Interview transcripts • National, state, and district level websites containing guidance and resources for supporting immigrant-origin students (also referred to as English Learners, culturally and linguistically diverse learners)	Critical Discourse Analysis

RQ1: Thematic Analysis of Educator Interviews

To address the first research question, I approached the interview transcripts through open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) using the MAXQDA data analysis software. While open coding, I focused on aspects of the transcript that showed how educators talked about immigrant-origin students, how they positioned themselves in relation to immigrant students, how they related to immigrant students, and what kind of factors might have influenced how they made sense of immigrant students. Open coding helped to organize the interview transcripts into more manageable chunks of data (Dey, 1993; J. Saldaña, 2016). Throughout this process, I frequently referred back to RQ1 in order to guide the open coding process.

As I moved within and between transcripts, I performed axial coding to illuminate relationships between concepts and comparative analysis to compare interviews for

similarities and differences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Throughout the whole process, I wrote detailed memos during the coding and analysis to not only record my analytic steps but also to engage in reflexivity (Stevens, 2004), or being metacognitive about my own role in data analysis. I took the time to be cognizant of the personal perspectives and assumptions influencing interpretations of the data. The closer I got to conceptual saturation, I began synthesizing the different codes and analytic memos to arrive upon crosscutting concepts and themes both within and between districts. I presented these overarching concepts and themes separately by district as well as comparatively. I expected to find themes that were unique to each district as well as themes that arose when comparing the districts. I wrote up the findings for this stage of analysis in one chapter, including quotations from the interview transcripts to support the presentation of the themes. Appendix B shows the codes, descriptions, and examples. Appendix C includes examples of reflective memos that supported the analysis. Appendix D contains examples of how the axial coding process unfolded.

RQ2: Analyzing National, State, and District Level Discourses about Support Services for Immigrant-origin Students

Guided by the sensemaking and CDA frameworks, I analyzed discourse at the national, state, and district levels to understand how and why educators make sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences in certain ways. I relied mostly upon national, state, and district level websites about services for immigrant-origin students (commonly identified as English Learners or migrant children) to gather data about the discourses related to immigrant-origin students. The goal was to explore ways in which different

levels of discourse influenced the individual educators' ways in which they made sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences.

I collected any documents from federal and state department of education websites containing information about services for immigrant-origin students and any literature related to how to support immigrant-origin students. In addition to any text about English Learner programs found on district websites, I relied on interviews and conversations I have had with the directors of English Learner programs in each district to piece together the services for each district.

The following tables list the data collected for each level of discourse. Resources for the federal level of discourse were collected from the U.S. Department of Education website. Resources for the state levels of discourse were collected from the Illinois State Board of Education website and the Georgia Department of Education website. Resources for the district levels of discourse were collected from the Illinois district's website and the Georgia district's website as well as from interviews with the Director of EL Services in Illinois and the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services in Georgia. I also relied upon all interview data from each district in order to triangulate the district level discourse attributed to these district level leaders in charge of the EL programming.

Table 4.

Data Sources from U.S. Department of Education Website.

Title of Data Source	Publishing Entity
Non-Regulatory Guidance: English Learners and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	OESE[1]

Recently Arrived English Learners: A Guide for States	OESE
Serving All Students: With a Focus on English Learners and Children with Disabilities	OESE
Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited Proficient Parents	OCR[2]
Newcomer Toolkit	OELA[3]
Literature Review of English Learner Accountability	OELA
English Learner Toolkit	OELA

[1] OESE = Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, [2] OCR = Office for Civil Rights, [3]OELA = Office of English Language Acquisition

Table 5.

Data Sources from Illinois State Board of Education Website.

Title of Data Source	Publishing Entity
Serving English Language Learners with Disabilities: A Resource Manual for Illinois Educators	ISBE[1]
Registration Guidance: Residency & Enrollment, Immigrant Pupils, Homeless Pupils and School Fees & Waivers	SSE[2]
Immigrant Students: Your Rights to Free Public Education	ISBE
A Guide to Your Children's School: A Parent Handbook	ALRC[3]

[1] ISBE = Illinois State Board of Education, [2] SSE = State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Carmen I. Ayala, [3]ALRC = Adult Learning Resource Center

Table 6.

Data Sources from Illinois District's Website and Interviews.

Title of Data Source	Publishing Entity or Interviewee(s)
English Learner (EL) Services	Director of EL Services
Policy Manual 6:160 English Learners	District Board of Education
Policy Manual 6:145 Migrant Children	District Board of Education
Immigration and Citizenship Services	Coordinator of Family Services and Engagement
Interview regarding district-level service delivery model for English Learners	Director of EL Services
Individual educator discourse about English learners or immigrant-origin students	All interview participants from IL identified in Table 2

Table 7.

Data Sources from Georgia Department of Education Website.

Title of Data Source	Publishing Entity
Policy 160-4-5.02 Language Instruction Program for English Learners	GaDOE[1]
A Resource Guide to Support School Districts' English Learner Language Programs	GaDOE
Georgia's State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act	GSS[2]

[1] GaDOE = Georgia Department of Education, [2] SSE = Georgia's School Superintendent, Richard Woods

Table 8.

Resources from Georgia District Website and Interviews.

Title of Data Source	Publishing Entity or Interviewee(s)
Title III-A Limited English Proficient and Immigrant	Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Title I-C Migrant Education Program	Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Interview regarding district-level service delivery model for English Learners	Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Individual educator discourse about English learners or immigrant-origin students	All interview participants from GA identified in Table 2

The analysis was informed by Ziskin's (2019) approach to data analysis using CDA. The steps were as follows: 1) Code all federal, state, and district documents thematically and select key passages related to how educators make sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences, 2) Review codes and write analytic memos guided by a CDA framework, 3) Synthesize steps 2 and 3 by creating a narrative of the complex meanings surfaced through the analyses and arriving at defining discourses for each level of discourse. For step 1, I only recoded the interview data for Marie and Meredith, the key district leaders in charge of the support services for English learners. I chose not to recode the rest of participant interview data. Rather, I relied on the three main themes found in each district's interview data and revisited the themes through a CDA lens. In the analytic memos, I explored defining themes and values present in each level of discourse that gave insight into power dynamics between different levels of discourse as well as problematic ways that immigrant-origin students may be marginalized. Like Pacini-Ketchabaw and Armstrong de Almeida (2006), I relied upon the CDA framework to draw out the ideologies, beliefs, and values enmeshed in the ways the documents and participants spoke about immigrant-origin students and their relationships to them. I continually reflected upon how the different levels of discourses interacted with one another. More specifically, I was interested in how the national, district, and state level

discourses aligned or failed to align with each other and how these discourses showed up in the participants' interviews. Appendix E contains a list of first-level codes. Appendix F shows examples of CDA informed memos. Appendix G captures the process of creating a narrative of the complex meanings surfaced through the analyses and arriving at defining discourses.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion for RQ1

This chapter focuses on the first research question: How do educators in two different immigrant-serving districts make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in an anti-immigrant sociopolitical context? Table 9 provides a broad overview of the three key factors that influenced educators' sensemaking and how they manifested in each district.

Table 9.

Key Factors Influencing Educators' Sensemaking in Each District.

	District	
Key Factors	IL	GA
Comparison of immigrant-origin students to non-immigrant-origin peers	Educators acknowledged that immigrant-origin students face unique challenges from their non-immigrant-origin peers.	Educators viewed immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from their non-immigrant-origin peers.
Responsibility towards deeply understanding immigrant-origin students' experiences	All educators felt responsible to make sense of their immigrant-origin students through an inquiry-based orientation.	Educators relied on two key Latinx educators to make sense of immigrant-origin students and families on a deeper level.
Personal and professional identity and experiences with immigrants and immigration	Many educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students through their own personal experiences of being an immigrant-origin student, of being a newcomer in a different culture, or of working with many immigrant-origin students throughout their career.	Most educators did not have a personal connection to immigration and few personal experiences with migration, but made sense of their relationship to their immigrant-origin students through their Christian faith.

In the following sections, I expand upon the findings for the districts. Then, I discuss each key sensemaking factor before comparing findings from the two districts. It is important to remember in both districts the themes arose from data collected from only 10 educators from each district. Thus, the study is not take a comprehensive view of all educators working in the district. However, the selected educators were identified as key district members that make sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences and have significant insights that helped address the first research question.

Illinois District Findings

Three key sensemaking themes emerged from the interview data of ten key educators from the Illinois school district: 1) Educators acknowledged that immigrant-origin students face unique challenges from their non-immigrant-origin peers, 2) All educators felt responsible to make sense of their immigrant-origin students through an inquiry-based orientation, and 3) Many educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students through their own personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration. The following sections include additional descriptions of these themes supported by interview data.

Theme 1: Acknowledging challenges facing immigrant-origin students

All of the interviewed educators in the Illinois district directly addressed the various challenges facing immigrant-origin students and barriers they faced in accessing educational opportunities in their district. Language and cultural barriers, traumatic situations, and financial hardships were some of the challenges mentioned by these educators. Instead of lumping immigrant-origin students in with all other students in their district, the educators highlighted the differences that made these students unique. They

were reflective of the different kinds of supports that would be necessary for these students due to their specific experiences. They were also careful not to tell just one story about their immigrant students. Rather, they highlighted different stories and often brought attention to the fact that over 60 different home languages were present in their district. All educators relayed stories of specific immigrant families that were part of the school district and the experiences they have gone through both before and after moving to this country.

Language and cultural barriers.

Not speaking English fluently and not understanding the culture in US schools were challenges facing many immigrant-origin students, especially those who recently moved to the US. The language and cultural barriers can make it difficult for these students to feel comfortable and competent in their school environments. Deborah, the junior high EL department chair and teacher recounted, “One of the [newcomer] sisters [from Pakistan], an eighth grader, was tearing on her first day. She was so nervous. Nobody speaks her language. It was tough.” She explained that she understands how nervous and uncomfortable newcomer students may be, especially those who do not speak English or have not been in school for extended periods before arriving in the US. Therefore, she always sets up her room and her actions to welcome them and make them feel that the classroom is a place where they are belong. I observed her standing in front of her classroom door at each passing period and greeting the students as they entered the classroom. Each of them knew where to sit and began to work independently even before the period began, signaling the presence of clear routines and structures.

The parents of immigrant-origin students also frequently struggle with language and cultural barriers. Andrew, the district superintendent, noted, “Language is a big obstacle. Families are often hesitant. If they can’t speak the language, they’re hesitant to come in and try to communicate.” In addition to the language barrier, in many cases, parents are not used to bringing their voices into the school district. Andrew continued, “I think new immigrant parents don’t often realize that they have the right to engage and that their input is more welcomed than elsewhere.” This lack of cultural understanding about the US school system hinders parents from engaging with educators in a proactive way. For example, Lila, an elementary school EL teacher, also noted that many immigrant families are not aware that they can have an interpreter present for meetings with educators. Both Lila and Andrew pointed out that in the US, parents are expected to be more involved in school and have their voices heard. In other cultures, they observed that parents may not have been expected to actively voice their concerns or get involved in the direction of the school’s activities. To address these cultural and language-based barriers, the district has an EL Parent Center where immigrant parents can take free language classes and also get support for getting acclimated to a new country.

Traumatic situations.

While differences in language and culture may be the first visible challenges educators notice for immigrant-origin students, after more interactions with these students, educators have found that many of them carry worries about sociopolitical situations in their home countries. Deborah shared, “We know that our kids are aware of what’s happening on the political level. The parents are talking about it. That can affect them. They see everything and they see the killing and everything in their country.”

Knowing that students are cued into situations in their home countries, which can often be violent and upsetting, Deborah explained that the school acts on this awareness by having social workers check in with these students to help regulate their social and emotional well-being.

Educators also understood that immigrant-origin students and their parents can bring their past trauma histories to their experiences at school. Since the district has students who come from war-torn countries as refugees, many children live with trauma caused by political strife. Marie, the director of EL Services, acknowledged that many of the social workers tend to understand trauma as arising from situations such as domestic violence, drug addiction, and alcoholism. She pointed out, "For many of our students, trauma is experiencing war, violence in the streets. It tends to be more political." Echoing Marie, Lila acknowledged, "I feel a lot of our immigrant students have seen things that they probably shouldn't have as young kids, and that really scars them. You'll hear them talking about tanks." She relayed a story about a student who was misbehaving in the classroom and when she dug deeper into the causes of the misbehavior, she learned that his father had been killed in Syrian Civil War. Knowing that many of the district's educators lack expertise on how to deal with this kind of war-related trauma, Marie has been pushing for more professional development for the district's mental health professionals to build their capacity to help students recover from their trauma.

Paul, the junior high principal, also recounted a disciplinary situation with an immigrant family. The student kept getting referred to administration for horse-playing with a group of boys during gym class. Initially, Paul did not understand why the boy's mother was so upset and convinced that her child was not safe. She went as far as to

voice her worry that her son would die in the school. In his perspective, the boys were mostly engaging in harmless horse-play and he first thought she was overreacting to the situation. However, he soon realized that the family had lived in Iraq and their family members had been killed. Becoming aware of this past trauma around violence and death, Paul became more understanding about the mom's reaction and responded in a way to help ease her anxiety.

Some families remain separated, which adds to the emotional stress for some immigrant-origin students. Raquel, the director of the EL Parent Center, shared that a student checks her phone first thing in the morning because her mom is back in Syria and wants to make sure that she made it through the night. Even though the student's life is safe from immediate threat here in the US, she still carries the weight of not knowing whether her mother is safe every day. Lila described a situation where a student had been living in a different country, separated for many years from his mother who lived in the US. They recently reunited and the student has enrolled in the district. Not only did he need support to acclimate to a new country, he needed socioemotional support to work through his feelings of being separated for so long from his mother. Deborah has also observed similar situations where students attend school in different countries for their elementary school years, separated from their parents, and reunite during the last year of junior high before moving onto high school. Some parents wanted their child to keep their mother language and culture; other parents were not able to bring their child to the US due to immigration policies. Jacqueline, a junior high counselor, works with students who have lived separately from their parents. She shared that one particular student "felt really disconnected and felt like other students didn't really understand her experience

being so far away from her family." She has helped this student work through these feelings of being an outsider and having her feet in two cultures.

The study participants showed an awareness that immigrant-origin students have also experienced trauma, fear, and anxiety due to immigration policies in the US. Andrew explained that in the six months following the election of President Trump, "Kids were coming to school traumatized, worried, and talking to social workers." Many students were disclosing to their teachers their worry that their parents would not be home one day, due to a deportation. Marie heard from a school nurse that families were asking her to watch their kids if the parents were to be deported. She also knew about an elementary school student who expressed anxiety about her parents being taken away because she heard them constantly talking about the possibility in their studio apartment. In addition, she has learned that some families have become more wary of the district, in fear that the district would turn over personal information to the government that would comprise their safety. This fear has stopped some families from accessing support that they otherwise would have in a more pro-immigrant milieu. Jacqueline shared that a family could have applied for a U visa, which protects families that have suffered mental or physical abuse due to criminal activity. However, they were too scared to do so in the aftermath of the 2016 election. Jacqueline lamented, "It just is heartbreaking to see that happen."

Being aware of these immigration policy related fears and worries, the community displayed a huge outpouring of support for immigrant families through visible signs that said that their district "Welcomes everyone" and that "Hate has no home here". Though not all educators were quick to openly denounce the current federal administration's

stance on immigration, many of them discussed the hatefulness and the damaging rhetoric that they wished to combat through their actions. Marie fretted about how anti-immigrant rhetoric could remove hope for some immigrant-origin students. She said,

> If your future's unsure and your parents came here to pursue the American Dream and the message you're getting constantly is, "Oh no, you're not welcome here. Go back to where you came from. You will be going back to where you came from," eventually I think children are like, "Well, why should I do my homework? Why should I be paying attention in school if I'm doomed to this second tier in this country?" Many of our kids are really hard workers—really, really smart. They can go far and do great things. But if you take away hope and the whole reason that they came here, I think that's a huge shame.

This passage clearly shows how federal level rhetoric about immigrants and immigration can have an insidious effect on immigrant-origin students' motivation and engagement with their education. Due to these negative effects, Marie was clear about her opposition to the current administration's immigration policies and rhetoric. She sees it as her responsibility to actively work against these policies and rhetoric that she finds so damaging by advocating for immigrant-origin students and their families.

Additional barriers.

Educators noted that in addition to the challenges immigrant-origin students and their families faced in their home countries and the barriers caused by anti-immigrant policies, their immigrant families often face more economic and social hardships as they become acclimated to their new home. Andrew explained, "Sometimes you have families under a lot more stress. They're often more on survival mode. That certainly is not true of

everybody, but we know a lot of our immigrant families who are just coming here, they're learning to build connections." Because some parents are working multiple jobs and navigating language and cultural barriers, Andrew realizes that some immigrant families are difficult to reach and to engage with the school district.

There is also an acknowledgment that not all educators in the district may be as understanding or willing to understand as some of the interviewees. Jacqueline explained, "A real source of frustration for me is the lack of understanding about the impact that our current climate has had on kids and about just what it feels like for a child and a family to be thrust into a new country, often after having had very traumatic or violent experiences." She continued, "If people actually knew what kids were going through, if they could hear the stories that I hear, I do feel like attitudes would be different." Because she works closely with so many immigrant-origin students that face unique challenges related to their migration, immigration status, or identity as an immigrant or newcomer, Jacqueline makes sense of the students through these stories and she hopes that other educators can also look at the students through these stories.

Similarly, Stacy, an elementary school principal, noted that some educators struggle to truly understand the immigrant-origin students' experiences from the students' perspectives. She shared,

> I think sometimes people who don't have an immigration story of their own feel like "I'm sure [the immigrant-origin students and families] are glad to be here [in America]." This could be true for many people, but there's so much sadness and loss and all of that and in some cases trauma that we don't see and we don't make sure to look for.

Because she realizes that some educators may not understand the nuances of the immigrant-origin students' and families' experiences, Stacy has prioritized helping both individual teachers and teams of teachers to keep the perspective that families do not always have the same experiences as they do, especially since most of the educators are white, middle-class Americans.

Overall, there is an acknowledgement that immigrant families may have additional barriers to educational access and success, especially in comparison to non-immigrant families who also attend the district. Paul summed it up this way,

> The district understands that immigrant students and families are being missed and not being supported in all ways that they could be…We ask ourselves, "Are we being strategic about supporting this group of students and their families that are not well resourced socioeconomically or in their ability to engage in the educational system?"

Paul's question about whether or not the district is strategically supporting immigrant-origin students and their families demonstrates that the educators in this district are continually making sense of this group of students through the unique challenges related to their immigrant identities. The acknowledgement of additional barriers for immigrant families helps the district to question and move forward their own practices to support the various families. But in moving forward, there is also an awareness that, as Andrew put it, "different immigrants experience [the US context] very differently". Thus, the educators in this district try their best to pay attention to the nuances, rather than arriving at one-size-fits-all type solutions or systems.

Theme 2: Taking collective responsibility to make sense of their immigrant-origin students through an inquiry-based orientation

All of the interviewed educators shared a sense of responsibility to make sense of their immigrant-origin students on a deeper level by understanding the nuances of their students' experiences through an inquiry-based orientation. They described different ways they try to understand immigrant-origin students from the students' perspectives along with their reflections as they work to improve different supports for immigrant-origin students. They were introspective of their current practices and shared details about shifts in those practices at district, school, and classroom levels to better support immigrant-origin students along with their families in the current sociopolitical context. Most study participants spoke about growing and evolving as a group to meet the needs of their ever-changing and super-diverse student population.

As a district leader, Andrew has taken the responsibility of modeling an inquiry-based orientation for the entire staff. He noted the constant evolution of practice and understanding that the district engages in, especially since the backgrounds of the immigrant-origin students have changed over the last twenty years. He explained,

> There's been waves of change, but I think teachers felt, because they've been here and experienced working with kids of different colors, that meant they were highly adept at issues of culture, race, language, and cultural understandings. As we started to dig into that a little bit, we realized that wasn't really so much the case.

While he has taken a leadership role in digging into educators' understandings of their diverse students, the quote shows Andrew using the pronoun "we". This pronoun use

signals that there are many people working alongside him as he leads the staff to take collective responsibility for understanding students from different backgrounds.

As a result of the deeper realization that the district needs to be evolving their practices to meet the needs of their immigrant populations, Andrew has invited in multiple groups, such as our academic research group, to observe and support the district. He has also been deliberate about changing the EL programming, led by a new director of EL services, a cabinet-level position that he recently created. He has committed to hiring a more diverse staff to reflect the diversity of the student population. By "digging into" what the district staff took for granted, such as their ability to work with diverse populations, Andrew has been able to open up the district to new possibilities to improve the experiences of immigrant families.

On the classroom level, Claire, an elementary school EL resource room teacher, also takes responsibility to understand her students in a more nuanced way. Claire shared that she likes to interview the family whenever a newcomer student joins her classroom. She explained,

> I have the family and an interpreter come in and I just get to know the family a little bit and see, "What do they need?" Some of them don't have internet at home or the parents also want to learn English. I try to connect them to the EL Parent Center to figure those things out. How can we get internet in your home? How can we get you enrolled in these English classes?

Through the one-on-one interviews followed up with phone calls and emails, Claire continues to ask questions of her immigrant families so that she gets to know them better and ensure that they have the resources they need to help support the students' learning.

Instead of making assumptions about families, Claire directly approaches them with her inquiry mindset.

Through the ways educators in various roles approach immigrant-origin students and their families, it is clear that the district wants immigrant families to have more of a voice in their district. The educators have followed through by making pathways for parents to work for the district as paraprofessionals, office staff, or volunteers. They secured funding to provide translation training for people involved with the district, in hopes that parents would be able to translate for the district during parent-teacher conferences. The district also created a new position that would be dedicated to getting immigrant families more educated and involved in the district. Fortunately, Raquel, who already has a depth of experiences working with district families, will be moving into this new role. As the new coordinator of Family Services and Engagement, she is planning on "taking a crack at getting the district to really embrace the human capital of the district's parent population and connecting them in a way that isn't being done right now."

In addition to the district-level position to engage families, classroom teachers are engaging immigrant families by providing information about the system and teaching them about unfamiliar systems so that they can be empowered to get engaged with their children's education. Lila explained how she runs through the basic schedule with newcomer families, letting them know details such as how mealtimes work and what kind of clothes students need to wear. She wants the families to feel that "this is their school too." She understands that giving this kind of support helps the families feel that "they're in charge of their kid's education, not just dropping them off at school".

Many of the interviewed educators viewed engaging families as a crucial piece to deepening their inquiry into their immigrant-origin students. Some considered the championing of bilingualism and biculturalism as an important move to more authentically engage the immigrant parents. Lila tells the families, "Stick with your native language, read books to them in your language, sing songs in your native language as much as you can to keep that language alive. Your child will learn English." Stacy also messages to her families, "We got the English. You just please speak your own language because your kids need that and it's good for the brain. Bilingualism is good." Instead of adopting an "English-only" stance to their students' education, Lila and Stacy support bilingualism as a way to engage families and even learn from the families' own educational practices.

Beyond messaging to families to continue speaking their language and maintaining their cultural practices, Stacy thinks it is important to celebrate and learn about different cultures. She has created a culture committee that has committed to doing at least three school-wide cultural explorations each school year. For example, the school had events, lessons, and displays related to Diwali, a holiday that many Americans are not familiar with, but that about ten percent of her students celebrate. While she understands that these cultural explorations only scratch the surface of promoting cultural exchange, they are very visible and explicit actions that powerfully signal to immigrant-origin families that their backgrounds are valued and welcomed in the schools. Her school continues to inquire into different cultures each year, expanding their collective knowledge of different ways of being in the world. The schoolwide inquiries send a

message to both teachers and students that they should remain curious about cultures and people from different backgrounds.

Theme 3: Understanding students through personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration

All study participants shared specific stories of their personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration as a way to make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. Two of the participants, Lila and Deborah, identified as either an immigrant or child of immigrants. They explained that this personal immigration-origin identity has helped them to relate to their students in a more nuanced way. All of the participants have worked extensively with immigrant-origin populations in educational settings. Collectively these educators have a rich repertoire of experiences with immigrant-origin students and families throughout the span of their careers.

Lila has been able to relate to the immigrant-origin students through her background as an immigrant-origin student herself. This personal connection has allowed her to ask questions and reach insights that may be more difficult for a person who has not experienced being an immigrant. Lila recounted her own experiences as an immigrant-origin student in Illinois,

> I was born here but my family was from Syria and they were refugees as well. I grew up speaking Assyrian. When I started school, I had to be in the bilingual classroom because I spoke Assyrian at home and I needed that English support. But unfortunately, I wasn't literate in Assyrian either. I just knew it orally. In order to provide bilingual support, your students have to be somewhat literate in their language, being able to read and write in that language.

Understanding that bilingual education works best when students have a basic literacy in their own language, Lila finds it important to fully assess students' abilities in their native language before assuming that a bilingual environment would be the best fit for a student who need English language support. She also has knowledge of the sociopolitical situation in Syria and knows that many students were not allowed to learn the Assyrian alphabet due to religious reasons. Her personal experiences have supported her in making sense of the experiences of her immigrant-origin students by helping her to anticipate some of the challenges they may face, especially in regards to their language acquisition.

Misty, an elementary school principal, relied on her professional experiences of working with immigrant-origin students from various backgrounds in a larger urban school district to deepen her inquiry of the immigrant-origin students in this smaller suburban district. She shared,

> When I taught high school in the city I definitely knew I had kids who were [undocumented] because you start to talk about college and I remember we had a college counselor come and give out information about what to do if you are [undocumented] and how to navigate that system. This was also years ago and kids were more open about it, I think. It wasn't as scary, and now, no one—I can't imagine talking about it.

She acknowledged the heightened challenges facing undocumented students as well as the growing hesitation to share immigration status with school districts in the anti-immigrant sociopolitical context. Having past experiences in a different school district and in a different sociopolitical context has helped her to remain aware of the challenges that her immigrant-origin students may be facing currently. Her attention to the shifting

contexts pushes her to maintain an inquiry-stance toward her role, rather than a fixed view of how she and other educators should be supporting immigrant-origin students.

Stacy used her personal experiences of being a newcomer in different countries as grounding points for her inquiry into what it might feel like to be an immigrant-origin student, being thrust into an unfamiliar environment and facing the language and cultural barriers. Although Stacy grew up in a racially homogenous rural area, she has lived in other countries and traveled extensively in areas where she has been the racial minority. Her experiences abroad has made her more aware of what newcomers may feel when they first arrive. Therefore, she does a quick needs assessment anytime an immigrant family enrolls, guided by the following questions: "What are they familiar with here, and what are they not familiar with, and how can we maybe ease that as best we can?" These questions set Stacy up with an inquiry-based mindset of how she approaches and understands immigrant-origin students and their families.

Raquel has relied upon her knowledge of and close connections with immigrant families to make sense of the immigrant-origin students' experiences. Raquel sees immigrant families at the EL Parent Center on a daily basis. She explained how she and her staff get to know the families on a personal basis:

> Nobody comes to the EL Parent Center only to learn English. Once they get here, they see that we're good people and we're just trying to help and we don't kick anyone out for not having documentation or anything like that. They start to open up. We regularly see students who need help making doctor's appointments…though hospitals will have a language line, some parents don't necessarily trust that but they come here…A lot of times they bring their mail

> when they get a letter they don't understand…That goes a long way for a family who doesn't know what to do or where to go.

By interacting with the immigrant families and getting to know their challenges on a close level, Raquel has a wealth of professional experiences that provide deeper insights into the district's population that classroom educators and even administrators may not be privy to. Her deep knowledge of the immigrant families helps get them connected to resources they need.

Georgia District Findings

This section elaborates upon the three key sensemaking factors that emerged from an analysis of the 10 educator interviews and fieldnotes from the Georgia district: 1) Educators viewed immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from their non-immigrant-origin peers, 2) Educators relied on two key Latinx educators to make sense of immigrant-origin students and families on a deeper level, and 3) Most educators did not have personal experiences with immigration but made sense of their relationship to their immigrant-origin students through their Christian faith.

Theme 1: Viewing immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from non-immigrant-origin students

As a visitor to the district, I soon realized that the Georgia educators do not use the terms "immigrant students" or "immigrant-origin students" to refer to their students who have at least one foreign born parent. They referred to these students as Hispanic students or ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) students. Some of the students whose parents are migrant workers are also referred to as migrant students. Bailey, an elementary school instructional coach, pointed out that the ESOL population is

almost entirely Hispanic so sometimes these terms are used interchangeably by the district's educators. She shared, "We have such a huge immigrant population but we don't use that term here. We just use ESOL and I guess we just use it interchangeably. Y'all say immigrant, we say ESOL." However, not all Hispanic students are in the ESOL program because they have graduated out of the program or have grown up speaking English at home, especially those who are second or third generation immigrants. According to Meredith, the assistant superintendent, at the time of our interview, the ESOL population was approximately 230 students in a district of 1900 students. The migrant population was 30 students.

Thus, in carrying out the interviews, I noticed myself changing the interview questions to be about the Hispanic or ESOL students instead of immigrant-origin students, as the questions were originally written. But even when I used the terms Hispanic and ESOL to prompt the educators to speak about their immigrant-origin students, many chose to instead speak generally about how they serve all students, rather than a certain subset of students. They acknowledged that language may be an issue for some first generation Hispanic students, but mostly, they viewed their Hispanic students as simply part of the district, facing similar challenges as their non-immigrant peers.

Margaret, an elementary school counselor, stated that she and other educators work with immigrant-origin students "just in the same way that we work with all of our students." She noted, "There's not a big distinction, I don't think, in our role. We work with them as often as we do everyone else." In a similar vein, Bailey stated, "We treat our Hispanic children just like everybody else…In the 21 years I've been here, it has always felt like this is where they belong…I mean, they're just part of us. We don't look at them

as any different." These quotes show how educators did not view district's immigrant-origin students as significantly different from the other non-immigrant-origin students in the district. Throughout almost all interviews, there was an emphasis on treating everyone the same, no matter what their identity may be. Therefore, these educators strive to treat immigrant-origin students as they would any other student.

This view of immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from non-immigrant-origin students is connected to the fact that many of them start attending the district from pre-kindergarten and stay in the district throughout their school experience. Because of many of the immigrant-origin students are not newcomers, Margaret believes that the immigrant-origin students are "very acclimated to our school and our community". She further explained, "Their parents work here. They're a part of us." This quote demonstrates how both the students and their families are seen as part of the fabric of the community, not just socially at school, but economically in the town as well.

While there are some newcomers in the middle and high school levels, the majority of Hispanic students have been with the district for their whole educational lives. Meredith explained that most of the Hispanic students are not technically immigrants themselves since they were born here. The Hispanic students who come from migrant families are the students that are most likely to be immigrants. She further explained that students who are not citizens make up "less than 1 percent of their total ESOL population". In reflecting on her district in comparison to other districts in the larger research study that this dissertation study draws from, Meredith shared, "When you look at other districts that were chosen in the study, I think we were less immigrant than may have been desired, but it does make sense with the parents, who were probably

immigrants. Our children are often bilingual and their parents are only Spanish-speaking." This quote shows an awareness of the different immigrant generations and the fact that most of the immigrant-origin students would be considered second-generation immigrants. Since many of the immigrant-origin students were born in the US, there is even a sense they may not take on an immigrant identity, from this educator's point of view.

Due to poverty and lack of access to resources, the majority of students in this rural Georgia district are viewed by many educators as having socioeconomic barriers to educational success. In this way, immigrant-origin students are not seen as a significantly more marginalized than non-immigrant-origin students. On the subject of socioeconomic barriers, Lucas, the superintendent, explained,

> The common factor for us is poverty. And because of that, I think you don't see as much divisiveness within cultures and within the community. Events like the Reading Fiesta are meant to be an opportunity to engage the Hispanic community, but it is all-encompassing. We make sure we take those opportunities and promote them forward so we can continue to support all kids from that particular standpoint.

This quote shows that district leadership views even culturally specific events as being "all-encompassing", or meant to serve all students, who are united by the common factor of poverty. Although poverty can make daily life challenging for the students and families in this district, the silver lining is that it unites the community under the shared challenge. Efforts to engage the immigrant community are viewed ultimately as efforts to engage the whole community, not just a particular subset.

Academically, immigrant-origin students are viewed as on-par with their non-immigrant-origin peers. Meredith remarked,

> The last time we did an analysis of the gaps at the high school, our Hispanic students had closed the gaps. Achievement-wise, there was no gap…They are truly very hardworking and dedicated to their studies. A large part of that is because of the parents. They value [education].

Many of the participants echoed this observation that immigrant-origin students in their district are achieving at the same level as their non-immigrant peers. A few of the educators even shared their perspective that students from immigrant families value education even more than the students who are not from immigrant families. They have seen that the majority of parents or guardians coming out for school events tend to be the immigrant families. In this way, if a perceived difference between immigrant-origin and non-immigrant-origin students existed, it was usually in favor of the immigrant-origin students; the immigrant-origin students and their families were viewed as more invested in education than their non-immigrant-origin peers. As shown in Meredith's quote, she views Hispanic students as "truly very hardworking and dedicated to their studies". She mentioned further that she hopes the Hispanic students "don't become Americanized," fearing that if they do become Americanized, they may simply take their education for granted. She has observed that many immigrant families express gratitude for being in America and being able to get a free, public education.

The participants who worked at the high school level saw some differences in the Hispanic students that were not mentioned by educators who worked at the other grade levels or at the district level. Helen, the high school graduation coach, has noticed that

more Hispanic students drop out of school to "earn a living and help contribute to the family". She does not see that as much in her "Caucasian and African American populations". Kayla, the high school counselor, mentioned, "I do find a lot of the Hispanics don't reach out as much as our other kids would reach out for help." It seems that even though the immigrant-origin students may seamlessly fit into the school environment at the elementary and middle school levels, their status as an immigrant-origin student may lead to some more noticeable differences at the high school level. As they transition into post-high school life, their status as an immigrant or child of immigrants may have a larger impact on their daily lives. But even as the high school educators spoke to these differences, they emphasized to me that they work with all students, not just students who come from an immigrant background. So though the differences were mentioned, these differences were minimized by the strong conviction that their role is to serve all children, no matter their backgrounds or identities.

There were the only two participants, out of the ten interviewees, who worked exclusively with Hispanic students and families. They had unique viewpoints that did not align with this theme of "viewing immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from non-immigrant-origin students". They were also the only two participants who identified as Spanish-speaking immigrants from Central America. The following section goes into more detail about these particular educators.

Theme 2: Relying on a two key Latinx educators for deeper insights into immigrant-origin students and families

Though all participants spoke positively about their Hispanic students and families, most lacked deeper knowledge about how immigrant-origin students and

families experience being part of the district. Margaret admitted that she does not "always know what happens outside of school, culturally or with the families [of immigrant-origin students]". But she has a sense that most immigrant-origin students have a "good experience" in the schools and that the parents are "very respectful of school and their children being educated". This counselor explained that she is "not as in touch with those families are as our EL teachers probably are". There was distancing between getting to know the families more deeply and an assumption that they are getting a good experience in the schools, without much evidence.

Many participants mentioned two key Latinx educators—Cristina, the Migrant Coordinator and Isabella, an elementary school ESOL teacher—as important sources of information when asked about their immigrant-origin students. The district relies on them to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents and to reach out to families. My interviews with Cristina and Isabella were noticeably different from the other interviews in that they both freely shared their stories of moving to the U.S. from different countries. They both also shared more specific stories of immigrant-origin students and families they have worked with through their career in the district, in comparison to other educators who tended to relay more general ideas about immigrant-origin students.

When I met Cristina, I was immediately struck by her openness and warm demeanor. She readily shared her life story. She was born in Central America and lived all over the world when she married someone who worked for the military. She was unlike many of the educators in this district, who had grown up in Georgia and never traveled very far from home. In fact, many of the educators I met had gone to school in this district themselves. Cristina ended up working in this district because she had met

some migrant workers on a farm she visited. These migrant workers told her that their children would benefit from having someone like her, who spoke Spanish fluently, at their school. This interaction motivated her to apply to work with the children of migrant workers. She got a position at this district in the late nineties and has been there ever since.

Over the last twenty years, Cristina has gotten to know the Hispanic families in the district. She has earned the community's trust and thus has been privy to many of their personal challenges. She recalled a story of a student who had immigrated to the US through the U.S.-Mexico border:

> This student wrote me a note and told me that seeing me go through [a tough time] taught her that she can do anything in this world because she said that my strength helped her to see that she could do more for herself. I remember that this same student, when she came here, shared her story about coming through the Rio Grande and she said it was really awful. She said that the current was so hard. When I heard their stories and I see what they're doing, I'm so proud of them. I don't mean to cry; I'm sorry.

Cristina became emotional when thinking of her students and the struggles they have endured just to get to where they are. Having gone through a difficult health issue, she connected further with the students and modeled for them strength in the face of extreme difficulties. She also shared that during the Obama administration, immigration officers showed up in the trailer parks where the immigrant families lived during one summer. The families were so scared that summer school was canceled that year and students recalled hiding in the grass when the immigration officers came around.

Cristina was aware that she is the frontline for many immigrant families, whether they are in the Migrant program or not. She explained,

> The parents do call me to see what to do, or who to contact, and I will guide them where they have to go, so that's the social part of it. It's not only the migrant parents. The other parents that used to be migrant would call and then I would talk to the admin or the counselor and tell them what's going on, and then they all communicate with each other…They will say, "Somebody told me to call you because you would know what to do Cristina." I'm thankful that they know I'm here in the county and I try to do the best for the families.

This quote shows that Cristina makes herself available to all immigrant families and her reputation precedes herself. She knows that she is an important resource to the district not only because of her ability to speak Spanish, but because she has been in the district for some time and has a deep sense of what the immigrant families have been going through for the last twenty years. She shared that the students call her "Tia Cristina", which is Aunt Cristina in Spanish, or "Grandma Cristina". In return, she calls the students her "grandbabies", even though they are not her actual grandchildren.

Immigrant families are not the only ones reaching out to Cristina. Other educators in the district reach out to Cristina when they are not sure how to help a student, especially in regards to post-high school transition planning. Helen shared why she reaches out to Cristina, "I don't understand, legally, everything either so I reach out to my migrant teacher. She's very helpful. I don't know most of the time what to say and how to advise these students." Kayla also mentioned turning often to Cristina when immigrant students who do not have social security numbers start asking questions about

going to college. She shared, “Cristina helps a lot because she’s been in the system helping them for many years. She is a big asset and knows a lot of things.” Clara, the middle school counselor, explained, “[Cristina] is great about working with our families and helping make sure all the documents are there and that—meaning if they need shots or anything like that, just to communicate and just get a plan for extra support.” Cristina is trusted by both educators and families to help immigrant-origin students with important life transitions, which she does readily with warm assurance and hard-earned competence.

Isabella is another educator that many families and teachers rely upon to connect with immigrant-origin students and their families. Isabella attended this district as a student and came back to work as an ESOL teacher. She explained what motivated her to work in the district where she grew up:

> Just growing up here and experiencing what I experienced, I wanted to make a difference in the children here in the community. When I graduated, I worked with the migrant program and translated for them while getting my bachelor’s degree. Doing that, I thought, “They need somebody here.” So I went into the school and did that.

Isabella’s parents were migrant workers that came to the U.S. before her so that they could get settled before bringing her to the US with her grandmother. Isabella shared that she was “smuggled in [to the US] with somebody else’s documents” from Central America a few times when she was young. When she started school in this district, there were only a handful of Hispanic students in the school. She described the culture shock she experienced mostly alone because the other Hispanic students had been born here and

spoke English. Even though she was supposed to be in first grade, the school placed her in kindergarten because she could not speak English yet. She shared the difficult emotions she felt as a young student: “I was terrified. I didn’t want to be here. I hated it and I would cry every day when I came to school…I still have vivid pictures. It was in this wing, the first classroom to the left.” She recalled the environment being unwelcoming and the years it took for her to get acclimated to the school. Looking back, she sees that the curriculum tried to “Americanize” her right away and “forced [her] to forget about [her] culture, [her] language”. These negative experiences have fueled her desire to help change the district environment for immigrant-origin students.

Isabella credited good high school mentorship and the obtainment of her green card as crucial elements to her being able to continue her education upon graduation. Even though she had little knowledge of higher education as the first person in her family to graduate from high school, she has been able to pursue her studies to the highest level. During her first few years as a full-time staff member of this district, she has already orchestrated yearly Hispanic Heritage celebrations and created a website that immigrant parents can access to learn how to support their children. Since she grew up in the town, she has a lot of connections that have helped her to pull off big events and also spread the word about the website. In the classroom, she is able to connect with her students by telling them her story and encouraging them to set high expectations for themselves.

Isabella has sometimes found herself being pulled from her teaching responsibilities in order to act as a translator for a Hispanic family. Having personally experienced the struggle of feeling like an outsider to the school, she is very invested in engaging immigrant families and helping them to advocate for their children. Thus, she

has convinced the district to create a hybrid position for her where she gets a reduction in teaching hours and formal time to connect with families. She started this position during a challenging period for the whole nation where learning had to be re-envisioned due to the pandemic. Like Cristina, she is sought after by families not only because of her ability to speak Spanish, but because of the trust she has built by being part of this community for most of her life.

Participants who work as administrators—Lucas, Meredith, Bailey, and Eric—mentioned Isabella in their interviews. They all highlighted her story as a Hispanic student who grew up in this district and came back to work there. They acknowledged that she knows first-hand what it is like to be from an immigrant background and they were eager to empower her to help the district improve its practices to support immigrant families. In fact, the district had originally planned to have Lucas, Meredith, and Bailey attend the convening of all six project districts hosted by Boston College. However, the district leaders changed direction and decided to send Isabella in Meredith's place. Later, they also decided to send Cristina in Lucas's stead. This decision served as further evidence that the district relies heavily upon these two key Latinx educators to support their immigrant-origin population.

Theme 3: Relating to their work with immigrant-origin students through faith

As previously mentioned, Isabella and Cristina were among the few educators that had personal experiences as an immigrant. Most study participants and other educators I met throughout my time in the district were born and raised in Georgia during a time when there were few immigrants in their communities. Thus, these educators could not relate to their immigrant-origin students through their own personal experiences with

immigration. Instead, many educators made sense of their relationship to immigrant-origin students through their Christian faith, a religious identity that most of them shared with each other and their students.

During my visit, I noticed many references to God and the Christian faith in the schools. Although one study participant explicitly mentioned her faith, I became more familiar with many of the educators' faith-based view of the world and their work during informal interactions and observations as I spent more time in the district. Many of them had biblical passages posted in their offices. For example, on my first day in the district, I noticed that Lucas, the superintendent, had the following biblical passage posted prominently in his office: "Jeremiah 29:11, For I know the plans I have for you, plans to give you hope and a future". While I do not identify as Christian and have low familiarity with the Bible, this verse struck me as motivational not just for Lucas himself but for all the students in the district. It seemed to say that God has hopeful plans for everyone's future and that it is a person's duty to allow those plans to occur in the positive way that God intended. The verse gave a sense that a larger being is guiding people's lives and that people need to surrender to and trust in that power. On an educator level, God's plan could be for the educator to serve all students that they work with. These types of Christian references gave me insight into the study participants' views on the world and their work that seeped into their sensemaking processes around educators' relationships to their immigrant-origin students.

The community's collective emphasis on the Christian faith crystallized for me on my second day in the district when Isabella and I chatted informally after our interview over school lunch trays. She told me that "being [in the Georgia district] is God's plan for

her" and that she is exactly where she needs to be. Perhaps my lack of a mirrored reaction, a genuine curiosity about my background, or a mixture of both propelled Isabella to ask me point blank, "Are you Christian?" It was in this moment that I understood that to not be Christian, which I am not, is to take on an outsider status in this community. A deep-seated faith and belief in God's plan is likely an important way that educators in this district connect with each other and to their students. Though Isabella already relates deeply to the immigrant-origin students through her own experiences as an immigrant student in this district, her faith likely intensifies her connection to the community and her sense of pride in doing important work.

Although only one educator, Isabella, directly disclosed her faith and how her faith applies to their work, I sensed through many educators' use of language that they are heavily influenced by their Christian faith. For example, Katrina, the middle school guidance counselor, shared, "I just love to serve children." Her words "love" and "serve" mirrored the language of God loving humanity and service as a way to show love to God and others. Cristina shared how she is "praying that the lord will bring somebody that will be able to do what I have been doing to be there for them" when she retires soon. Her words "pray" and "lord" related to God, faith, and prayer. These educators' choice of words show how Christian faith weaves into educators' everyday discourse and how their understand their work of serving students in the district.

On my last day in the district, I spent an hour with a high school science teacher who described the community as "Christian and conservative". She stated, "We're in the Bible Belt," and explained how community life still revolves around the churches. Even though the community churches are mostly segregated by race, the people in the

community are still connected by their Christian faith. With this context in mind, I realized that I should not have been so surprised when I heard students singing a song about how great God is during a chorus class. The context of faith also put into perspective the elementary school principal's daily morning announcement to the students to "Remember that we love each of you." The choral songs and the morning announcements were reminiscent of the Christian belief that God loves humanity. In this largely Christian community, it makes sense that the educators would relate to their students as being loved by God and perhaps being equal in that they are worthy of the same love from God. The religious aspect of this community is an important part of its context; it puts into context the first theme of viewing immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from other students.

While the evidence for this third sensemaking theme is more indirect in comparison to the evidence for the other two themes, it is important to consider the study participants' Christian identity as a factor that influences how they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. Since many educators seem to view the world through their faith, an analysis of their sensemaking processes would not be complete without considering how this Christian faith influences how they think about their immigrant-origin students and their families. In addition, this third theme ties strongly to the first theme of treating all students the same, irrespective of immigrant-status, because all students as well as the educators themselves are equally considered as God's children or followers of the Christian faith. While my own perspectives and experiences have played a role in how I make sense of all of the study data, my own status as a non-Christian has heightened my awareness of how Christianity filters into the participants'

thinking processes. That said, I acknowledge that the statements I make in relation to this finding are very broad and stray into the dangerous zone of making sweeping generalizations based on ungrounded assumptions. Everyone's Christian faith is unique and further study would be required in order to delve into the nuances of each participant's faith and how their faith influences their sensemaking processes.

Discussion

In this section, the findings from each district are discussed in relation to the three key sensemaking factors identified in Table 9. The districts are then compared in light of their different contexts.

Key Factor 1: Comparison of Immigrant-Origin Students to Non-Immigrant Origin Peers

By acknowledging the challenges facing immigrant-origin students, the Illinois study participants approached their work with awareness and humility. By observing and listening to immigrant-origin students' stories, the educators saw the students as complex people with a diverse array of experiences that affect the ways they learn in this district instead of narrowly framing them as English learners (Dabach & Fones, 2016). Specifically, they highlighted language and cultural differences, immigration-related trauma, financial hardships, and lack of educators' understanding of immigrants' experiences as barriers felt specifically by immigrant-origin students and their families. District-wide, the educators are learning to go beyond just embracing diversity on the surface-level and digging deeper to engage the immigrant-origin students and their families. It is clear that the educators want immigrant families to have more of a voice in their district in order to center marginalized voices (Nieto, 2005) and embrace

community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). For example, Stacy's school has engaged in numerous cultural explorations throughout the year and educators across the district have begun talking about how to see and support students who have experienced trauma related to their migration or status as an immigration. In addition, creating a new district-level position to engage families has been an important step in deepening the relationships the district has already forged with the immigrant families.

In contrast, most of the Georgia study participants struggled to reflect on how immigrant-origin students may have unique experiences in the schools related to their immigrant identity. They described immigrant-origin students as not being different from the non-immigrant-origin students. Viewing immigrant-origin students as simply part of the district or a seamless part of who they are may have its benefits. Since all students are viewed as belonging to the district, immigrant-origin students may feel welcomed and not out of place in the schools. However, accepting the students without a deeper introspection into their immigrant identities may mask challenges that could be addressed by the school district. While equitable treatment of immigrant-origin students can be theoretically positive, not recognizing their differences may be an example of color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) that may prevent these students from accessing support or additional educational opportunities. For example, not shining a light on the trauma some of the students may have experienced while traveling to Georgia via the U.S.-Mexico border could negatively impact some children that need to more fully process those experiences with someone outside of their family. Also, as students transition to post-high school life, they may benefit from extra support related to their immigration status, especially if they are undocumented. By not explicitly addressing the challenges that may

exist in the community, some students and families may not know about resources or opportunities that can help them. This simplification of the immigrant-origin students' experiences may be an example of what Jefferies (2014) calls the Circle of Silence, which ultimately prevents a community from most effectively serving its immigrant-origin population. In addition, focusing on poverty as a unifying factor may be more comfortable for some educators who may be less comfortable about speaking about ethnic, racial, or cultural differences (Gay, 2010).

Key Factor 2: Responsibility Towards Deeply Understanding Immigrant-Origin Students' Experiences

In the Illinois district, the study participants took collective responsibility in making sense of immigrant-origin students on a deeper level, specifically by adopting an inquiry mindset. Through their inquiry-based actions, the district is taking many of the steps recommended by Lowenhaupt and Hopkins (2020) to better serve immigrant-origin students and their families. Specifically, individual educators have started working on communicating asset-based framing of immigrant communities, as evidenced by Stacy and Lila's championing of bilingualism. The district is working on improving its two-way communication with immigrant families and partners with community-based organizations through the development of the coordinator of Family Services and Engagement position. Some schools within the district, such as Stacy's school, have developed explicit opportunities for staff to collaborate with one another in supporting immigrant-origin youth. All of these actions contribute to creating humanizing and culturally sustaining environments for immigrant-origin students (Doucet, 2017; Paris & Alim, 2017).

In the Georgia district, sensemaking around immigrant-origin students' experiences was largely reserved for Isabella and Cristina. These two educators have gained trust of the immigrant families and been given access to their lives—their struggles, successes, and aspirations. They have been able to make sense of the immigrant-origin students in ways that their non-immigrant colleagues have not been able to do. As a result, they have built a depth of knowledge that other educators can draw from as they try to better understand their immigrant-origin population. In this way, they have both become a "really significant other" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014, p. 299) in not just immigrant-origin students' lives but the lives of other educators who need to better understand immigrant-origin students' experiences. They are what Birman (2007) refers to as cultural brokers, acting as liaisons between families and the district educators. Unfortunately, during her time as a student in this Georgia district, Isabella experienced what Valenzuela (1999) calls subtractive schooling and what Gibson and Carrasco (2009b) describe as a language hierarchy. However, these negative experiences have fueled her desire to help the immigrant-origin students and the district to make changes to their curricular approach. While the immigrant-origin students and their families greatly benefit from Isabella and Cristina's presence, their presence also allows other educators to shy away from engaging in deeper inquiry about their immigrant-origin students. The other educators may be avoiding negative, dark, or difficult knowledge about immigrant-origin students (Zipin, 2009) by relying so heavily on these two Latinx educators to engage in most of the sensemaking around immigrant-origin students' experiences.

Key Factor 3: Personal and Professional Identity and Experiences

In both the Georgia and Illinois districts, the study participants engaged in collective sensemaking (Coburn, 2001) based on shared identities and experiences to construct shared narratives about their immigrant-origin students. Many Illinois study participants made sense of their immigrant-origin students through their own personal experiences of being an immigrant-origin student or of being a newcomer in a different culture. Their professional experiences of working with many immigrant-origin students over their career also supported their sensemaking process. They relied upon specific stories of students they currently work with or have worked with in the past in order to deepen their understanding of what the immigrant-origin students are experiencing both in and out of school. For example, having worked with undocumented students in the past has made Misty aware of how immigration status can have a large impact on how students experience school. Being part of a district where the leadership expects all educators to deepen their inquiry into serving a diverse student population supports collective efforts to better understand and support immigrant-origin students (Jaffe-Walter, 2018).

In the Georgia district, the study participants had limited personal experiences with immigration or migration and limited professional experiences working with immigrant-origin students exclusively. Instead of relying on personal or professional experiences with immigrants or immigration, many of the Georgia educators related to and made sense of their immigrant-origin students through their Christian faith. While this district is public, the way educators related to their students through faith, prayer, and love parallels findings from research done in Christian schools regarding the influence of

Christian faith on how students and educators related to one another (Kitchen, 2021). While each educator has their own unique interpretation and manifestation of their Christian faith (Elton-Chalcraft & Cammack, 2020), it was clear through both spoken and unspoken interactions that many of the educators made sense of their relationship with the students through their faith-based view of the world.

Comparison of Illinois and Georgia Districts

The findings from the Georgia district data served as a big contrast from the Illinois district data. While the majority of participants in Georgia viewed immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from other students, most Illinois participants spoke extensively about the challenges and experiences that make their immigrant-origin students different from their non-immigrant-origin peers. While the Illinois participants in various roles took responsibility to inquire about immigrant-origin families, the Georgia participants mainly relied upon two key Latinx educators to make sense of their immigrant-origin students and families. Illinois participants connected to their students through their own immigrant background or past experiences working with immigrant populations while Georgia participants strongly related to their students and their roles in supporting their students via their Christian faith. The contrasts in these two districts can be attributed largely to their vastly different contexts. The districts vary greatly in the following contextual factors: location, student demographics, and sociopolitical backdrop. The following paragraphs discuss these three factors in more detail.

Location.

The Illinois district is located in a suburban area with a strong tax base due to its large shopping centers. Therefore, it has robust financial resources to potentially drive

their efforts to support immigrant-origin students and their families (Jimenez-Castellanos, 2010). It is also located close to a large urban area with many different institutions of higher education where educators can receive professional training and immigrant families can access many forms of support. For example, there are multiple legal aid organizations in the metropolitan area that can help families in need of free or low-cost legal support. The location of the Illinois district makes it possible for the educators to find or create various solutions to the challenges that their immigrant-origin students may face (Thompson et al., 2020).

In contrast, the Georgia district is in a rural area with many families living in poverty. The closest suburban area is a thirty minute drive away and the closest large urban area is an hour's drive away. Many of the immigrant families do not own a car and therefore do not leave the area often. There are few organizations in the area to provide support to families other than the churches. The community does not yet have even a community center where community members can congregate. Due to its location, the Georgia district struggles to have access to resources that could help immigrant-origin students and families (Bright, 2018).

Due to differences in their location, the educators in these two districts have disparate resources at hand. Perhaps the variety of resources available to support immigrant-origin students even outside of the schools makes it possible for the Illinois educators to acknowledge the challenges facing their immigrant-origin students. When there are ways to address challenges, educators are probably more likely to actually surface the challenges. With the lack of resources to support immigrant-origin students, educators in the Georgia district are perhaps more likely to utilize their finite resources to

help all students. It may be difficult to allocate specialized resources to help address challenges only faced by immigrant-origin students.

Student demographics.

Student demographics vary vastly in the two districts. The Illinois district's immigrant-origin student population represents over 60 different home languages while the Georgia district's immigrant-origin student population mainly utilize Spanish at home. In this way, the Illinois district's immigrant-origin student population can be seen as a lot more heterogeneous than the Georgia district's immigrant-origin student population. These demographic differences may have large effects on how educators in each district make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. The heterogeneous nature of the Illinois district's immigrant-origin student population can more urgently push educators to get to know the various cultural backgrounds since they cannot necessarily rely on general patterns of how all immigrant-origin students may experience school (C. Suárez-Orozco, 2017). Because their immigrant-origin students come from all over the world with different migration stories, the educators can be forced to ask questions in order to better serve each student. While the immigrant-origin students may have similarities across cultures, the obvious differences in language allow for educators to have a clear starting point for their inquiry into their immigrant-origin students' lives.

In contrast, the educators in the Georgia district do not necessarily even view their Hispanic student population as being their immigrant-origin population, which can be considered a form of colorblindness (Bell & Hartmann, 2007; Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Pollock, 2009). Because many of these Hispanic students start their educational lives in

this school district, they grow up speaking English from an early age. As they reach the higher grades, language is not an issue unless the immigrant student is a newcomer. Since many of the immigrant-origin students in this district do not experience much of a language barrier, educators here are perhaps more likely to simply see the Hispanic students as just part of the district without any particular challenges that would set them apart from any of the non-immigrant-origin students.

Sociopolitical backdrop.

The sociopolitical atmosphere at the Illinois district is heavily against the Trump administration's federal immigration policies and rhetoric. Some of the study participants were quite vocal about their opposition to the anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies. They saw it as their role to speak out against what they saw as hateful speech and thought about immigrants. Being surrounded by like-minded people, they are empowered to speak publicly against restrictive and harmful immigration policies. They also acknowledged that the federal policies have an impact on the immigrant-origin students and families. Thus, the immigrant-origin students and their educators exist in a largely favorable receiving context of reception (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014) that worked against the anti-immigrant sociopolitical context that existed on a federal level during the Trump administration.

In contrast, many of the Georgia study participants mostly viewed the sociopolitical context regarding immigrants and immigration as happening largely outside of their community. Being a small community in a rural area, many of the non-Latinx study participants explained that they felt shielded from the effects of the federal government's immigration policies and rhetoric. Some educators noted that children from

different backgrounds grow up together and that adults from different backgrounds work together in the community. Therefore, the educators claimed that the divisiveness seen on the political spectrum is not reflected amongst the people. While the educators may sincerely believe that the anti-immigration policies and rhetoric on the federal level have little effect on their small community, this deflection may be a mechanism to avoid conversation about actual community attitudes toward immigrants, which tend to be more restrictionist in rural areas (Fennelly & Federico, 2008). This deflection may also be a way to separate personal views on immigration from perceptions of the students. Due to possible conflict between personal views and professional expectations, there was not much open conversation about the sociopolitical context and its effect on the immigrant-origin students.

Despite differences in context, the two districts have some similarities in how they make sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences. Educators from both districts spoke about engaging immigrant-origin students' families rather than working exclusively with the students inside of school (Housel, 2020). Educators in both districts understand that in order to better serve immigrant-origin students in the school setting, they must open channels of communication with their parents and guardians. The Illinois district is making progress on family engagement through the creation of a new district-level position addressing family engagement. The Georgia district is also making progress on this front by creating a hybrid position for family engagement on the elementary school level for the 2020-21 school year. Both districts have chosen to fill these roles with people who have already worked in the district and have gained the trust of many families.

The next chapter delves more into the discourses about immigrant-origin students that exist in each district and state. The discourses about immigrant-origin students in these locations were analyzed in light of the discourses about immigrant-origin students at the federal, state, and district levels as well as the educators' discourses that have been discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion for RQ2

This chapter focuses on the second research question: What larger discourses about immigrants and immigrant-origin students do educators reflect as they make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences? Each level of discourse was analyzed both independently and in relation to other discourse levels. Table 9 captures the defining discourses at the different levels of discourse.

Table 9.

Defining Discourses for Different Levels of Discourse

Level of Discourse	Defining Discourse	Description	Example(s)
Federal	Setting the country's vision for education: Equity for all	Belief that all children, including immigrant-origin children, should have equal access to educational opportunities	"LEAs must ensure that EL students have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities (*Non-Regulatory Guidance*, 2016, p. 6)."
State (IL)	Advocating for immigrant-origin students and families with the understanding that they face challenges and marginalizing conditions	Perspective that immigrant-origin students and families should receive specialized supports and attention due to their specific circumstances	The state's board of education has published a fact sheet on immigrant students' rights to a free public education (*Immigrant Students: Your Rights to Free Public Education*, 2019) and a parent handbook to help immigrant families understand the US school system (*A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook*, 2012); Both resources are available in multiple languages.
State (GA)	Moving from compliance to collaboration in order to help districts better	Viewpoint that higher order mandates must be followed closely, but culture needs	"In the past…the burden of support and compliance rested with local school leaders because GaDOE was organized and operated not as a true partner with LEAs, but as a

	support their immigrant-origin students and families	to shift in order to have a stronger working relationship between the state education department and LEAs to improve student outcomes	passive compliance monitor. Now, GaDOE is aligning major programs/initiatives…to support LEAs and schools in a focused, cohesive way… (*Educating Georgia's Future*, 2019, p. 51)."
District (IL)	Engaging immigrant families as a way to empower them and equalize currently unequal power dynamics over time	Perspective that immigrant families' voices need to be engaged more fully and brought into the district culture	The district has created a cabinet level position titled Coordinator of Family Services and Engagement, dedicating time and resources to proactively engaging the voices of immigrant families, especially those voices who have not historically been represented in the district culture.
District (GA)	Including immigrant-origin students as part of the district "family" but failing to consistently notice power dynamics between school and immigrant families	Viewpoint that immigrant-origin students should be included in services for all district students rather than being separated or singled out, which can be beneficial in theory but ignores nuanced needs of immigrant-origin students	The district has adopted a push-in model of service delivery for English Learner immigrant-origin students as a way to include these students into all curricular and extracurricular offerings in their schools. However, responsibility to make sense of immigrant-origin students' experiences has largely been left to two Latinx educators rather than the whole faculty and parent voices have not been actively engaged.

The first section provides an overview of the federal and state-level discourses about immigrant-origin students[1]. The next section presents findings for the Illinois

[1] In federal and state-level education policy documents, immigrant-origin students were most frequently identified and labeled as English Learners. Sometimes, they were recognized as immigrant or migrant students. Though most English Learners are also immigrant-origin students, not all immigrant-origin

district, followed by a discussion of those findings. The same presentation of findings and a discussion occurs for the Georgia district before findings from the two districts are compared.

Federal Discourse

The U.S. Department of Education's website describes the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed in 2015, as a "bipartisan measure reauthoriz[ing] the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation's national education law and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students" (*Every Student*, n.d.). The website also highlights that the law "advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students". The law includes Title III-Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students and Title I, Part C-Education of Migratory Children, which can be directly applicable to immigrant-origin students (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Title I also includes measures to hold states and local educational agencies (LEAs) accountable for the appropriate assessment and provision of services for English Learners.

Equal opportunity and equity are at the heart of the discourse of federal educational policies and rhetoric. This is because the policies reflect Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits language-based discrimination and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974, which mandated LEAs to provide appropriate services so that students with language-based barriers can equally access instructional programs available to their peers (Gándara, 2015; *Non-Regulatory*

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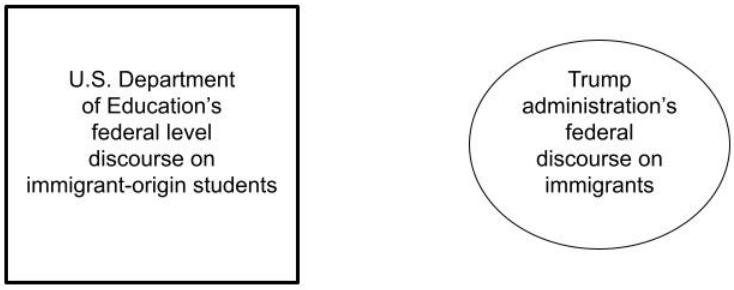
students are English Learners. Thus, the label of English Learner does not capture the backgrounds and needs of all immigrant-origin students. The label of English Learner also foregrounds the language needs of immigrant-origin students though they also have other academic socioeconomic needs.

Guidance, 2016). The following court cases have been instrumental in interpreting and informing these laws: *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which ruled that schools need to uphold Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 by taking affirmative steps to make sure that English learners can meaningfully participate in educational programs and services, and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981), which formulated a three-pronged test to determine whether an LEA has complied with the EEOA. Additionally, the Supreme Court ruling in the *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) case ensured access to free public education for immigrant children regardless of their immigration status, based on the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Title I of ESSA also has a non-discrimination provision that says that "a student shall not be admitted to, or excluded from, any federally assisted education program on the basis of a surname or language-minority status" (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015, Sec. 1112). Discursive choices in the U.S. Department of Education's policy documents that champion equity and access to equal opportunities stand in contrast with the polarizing anti-immigrant rhetoric from the Trump administration.

It makes sense that federal discourse would not be cohesive amongst all federal departments, since each federal department operates separately from the others. Figure 2 conceptualizes how the federal education department's discourse on immigrant-origin students differs from the Trump administration's discourse on immigrants. The different shapes representing the discourses shows that there is a clear difference between the equity-based language that supports all children to succeed, no matter their background, and the exclusionary language that the Trump administration employed to threaten the rights and wellbeing of various immigrant groups.

Figure 2.

Difference Between Federal Education Discourse and Trump Administration's Discourse



The federal education government's non-regulatory guidance and resources regarding English learners, which provide more information on how to make equity a reality through local practices, show both a recognition of immigrant-origin students' assets and barriers to equal educational access due to their backgrounds. For example, the Non-Regulatory Guidance for English Learners and Title III of ESSA notes,

> ELs also comprise a highly diverse group of students who bring with them valuable cultural and linguistic assets, including their home languages. Yet despite these many assets, ELs face significant opportunity and academic achievement gaps compared to their non-EL peers. For example, in the school year 2013-2014, the high school graduation rate for ELs was just 62.6 percent, compared to 82.3 percent for all students. (*Non-Regulatory Guidance*, 2016, p. 3)

This text selection highlights the cultural and linguistic assets that immigrant-origin students bring into their educational settings as well as a concrete example of the challenges immigrant-origin students face in comparison to non-immigrant-origin peers. Thus, the federal government's policy makers reason that it is a shared responsibility to

provide resources for immigrant-origin students to tap into their assets and to address challenges that obstruct equal access to educational opportunities.

The federal education department's staff who wrote the policies and policy guidance documents understand that immigrant-origin students should not be treated as a monolithic group since they come from a variety of backgrounds. For example, federal staff members who recognized that recently arrived English Learners (RA ELs) face unique challenges from English learners who were born in the U.S. or have been in the U.S. for many years have commissioned a report that provides guidelines for states to understand their RA ELs and create innovative solutions to include their RA ELs in their state accountability systems, since ESSA has "substantially expanded provisions related to assessment and accountability for RA ELs" (Linquanti & Cook, 2017, p. vi).

Since the federal education policy makers are aware of the diversity of immigrant-origin students and the different contexts they enter, they do not take a one-size-fits-all approach to language instruction educational programs (LIEPs). Instead, they allow states and LEAs to select any LIEP that is effective and meets its Title VI and EEOA obligations. That said, a non-regulatory guidance document mentions that "States and LEAs may wish to incorporate methods of supporting home language development" (*Non-Regulatory Guidance*, 2016, p. 20). It continues to explain that supporting home language development within high quality educational settings can lead to positive outcomes for both non-native English speakers and native English speakers. So although the federal government policies do not push one particular LIEP model, they do endorse the support of home language development instead of an English-only approach.

In addition to ESSA and guidance pertaining to ESSA and English Learners, the U.S. Department of Education has posted two resources for educational leaders working with immigrant-origin populations: English Learner Toolkit and Newcomer Toolkit. Although the U.S. Department of Education's staff members carefully proclaim that the views expressed in these resources, which were prepared by outside agencies, do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department, I included the discourse from these resources in my analysis since the resources are posted on the federal website. Both resources intend to build capacity and shared understanding about how to best serve immigrant-origin students. They offer concrete activities for professional development and recommendations for practices to support the language, academic, and socioemotional development of immigrant-origin students. They also take an asset-based view of immigrant-origin students and their families. For example, the Newcomers Toolkit (2016) describes newcomers as playing "an important role weaving our nation's social and economic fabric" (p. 1). The English Learner Toolkit (2017) notes that "educators may need to shift from a deficit model—focusing on families aren't doing—to a strengths-based model that acknowledge that families want to help their students succeed" (p. 7).

Overall, the federal discourse is protective of immigrant-origin students' rights to an equal education. The federal documents identify immigrant-origin students mostly through their language identity but also recognize them through their migrant status and newcomer status. While the federal education department as a whole does not prescribe specific interventions or practices that States and LEAs must follow in their support of immigrant-origin students, it endorses supporting home language development and

adopting asset-based views of immigrant-origin students. This endorsement marks a shift from a federal-level emphasis "solely on the acquisition of English" (Gándara, 2015, p. 122) and viewing immigrant-origin students largely from a deficit-based perspective, which was reflected in the last iteration of the ESEA, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

State-level Discourse

Each state's consolidated plan under ESSA includes specific steps that states will take to address the following programs directly applicable to immigrant-origin students: Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and LEAs, Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children, and Title III, Part A – Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students. Although the consolidated plans include information for more programs, I focused on these parts since they relate most directly to the discourse about immigrant-origin students. I also considered non-regulatory guidance and resources associated with supporting immigrant-origin students and families posted on the states' English Learner websites.

Illinois State Board of Education

In the introductory section of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)'s Consolidated State Plan under ESSA, the state's governing education board declares its mission as the following:

> to provide leadership and resources to achieve excellence across all Illinois districts through engaging legislators, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders in formulating and advocating for policies that

> enhance education, empower districts, and ensure equitable outcomes for all students. (*ISBE State Template*, 2017, p. 8)

Like the federal ESSA, ISBE's state plan emphasizes the focus on equity, as evidenced by the phrase "equitable outcomes". The plan notes that the state's policy makers and educators are using the opportunities provided by ESSA to "reduce barriers to learning in order to achieve fair access to high-quality educational opportunities for each and every child" (*ISBE State Template*, 2017, p. 9). The plan's introductory language sets a discursive context in which to understand how the state makes sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences and how state actors will set up systems to support them.

Similarly, The Illinois State Board of Education's Multilingual Department webpage states, "The Multilingual Department provides leadership, advocacy, and support to district, parents, and policy makers by promoting equitable access to language support services for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have been identified as English Learners" (*Multilingual*, n.d.). Again, the focus on equity comes up through the language of "promoting equitable access". The Multilingual Department shares here its role in leading, advocating, and supporting districts, parents, and policy makers to achieve more equity for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Although ISBE's policies and discourse align with the federal government on the equity focus, the ISBE policy makers critique how the previous reauthorization of ESEA (NCLB) attempted to reach a higher level of equity in US schools. ISBE staff note that the federal government relied on "compliance, pressure, and oversight" (*ISBE State Template*, 2017, p. 10) from afar to achieve greater equity, which ultimately created

confusion, resentment, and frustration for schools, students, and families. The ISBE members recognize that the latest reauthorization of ESEA (ESSA) acknowledges local expertise and engages local stakeholders in the goal of achieving greater equity for all students. By providing this critique and reflection, staff at the ISBE put themselves in conversation with the federal discourse on education, instead of merely receiving orders from a broader entity. By taking this position, the ISBE as a whole positions itself as a thought-partner to the U.S. Department of Education on matters leading to decisions on how to best support all of its students.

The ISBE staff members make it clear that their state vision for education goes beyond what is prescribed by ESSA. The state plan for ESSA proclaims,

> We take seriously the questions posed by ED [The U.S. Department of Education] within the ESSA template. This introduction is our attempt to demonstrate the state vision for education and how ESSA is an opportunity to assist Illinois in achieving our vision. At the same time, this text is our effort to extend beyond the required sections in the template to provide the field with intentions that were difficult, if not impossible, to articulate in the ED template. (*ISBE State Template*, 2017, p. 16)

Since the ISBE policy makers are limited in what they can do on the state plan for ESSA, they have made many resources available for educators supporting immigrant-origin students and for immigrant families through its Multilingual Department website. For example, the ISBE has published its own non-regulatory guidance on registration for immigrant pupils (*Registration Guidance*, 2018) and a resource manual for educators serving English learners with disabilities (*Serving English Language Learners with*

Disabilities, 2002). For immigrant families, the state department has published a fact sheet about immigrant students' rights to a free public education, available in 8 different languages (*Immigrant Students: Your Rights to Free Public Education*, 2019), and a parent handbook, available in 14 languages, that addresses important aspects of U.S. schools that the families should know such as enrollment information and school procedures (*A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook*, 2012).

These documents show how Illinois state level discourse goes beyond the federal discourse of equity to advocate for its immigrant families. The ISBE staff demonstrate their understanding that multilingual families may have a hard time accessing English documents and acts upon this understanding by making documents available in a variety of languages. ISBE members also advocate for undocumented or mixed status families by informing them of their children's rights to a free public education and educating LEAs about how to ensure their enrollment procedures do not ask families to reveal their immigration status.

Georgia Department of Education

Unlike the ISBE policy makers, who took the time to lay out their vision and intentions behind the consolidated state plan for ESSA, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) staff launched straight into fulfilling the requirements of the consolidated state plan in the order requested by the federal government. It is only one third of the way into the document that the GaDOE's ESSA document addresses Georgia's own state culture and vision. The GaDOE's document notes,

> Recently, the culture of the GaDOE began the shift from one rooted in compliance to a more balanced approach that is focused on closing the

> achievement gap through high-quality service and support with a powerful focus on pinpointing what impacts schools and what are barriers to academic success. (*Educating Georgia's Future*, 2019, p. 48)

In the ESSA document, the GaDOE policy makers concede that state level teams have interacted with LEAs and individual schools in an "often disconnected and isolated method that discouraged supportive interaction" (*Educating Georgia's Future*, 2019, p. 51). The policy makers on these state-level teams commit to interacting with LEAs in a more cohesive and supportive fashion rather than acting as a compliance monitor. Through this discourse, it is clear that the GaDOE's staff members wish to shift its state-level culture to be more collaborative with LEAs since a more aloof approach has not led to optimal educational outcomes, especially for struggling LEAs.

However, the language on webpage of the state department's English Learner program, called English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), still maintains a compliance-oriented discourse. In the introductory text, the GaDOE staff write that states and LEAs "have a legal obligation to remove barriers and ensure that students who are not fully proficient in English can meaningfully participate in their educational programs and services" (*ESOL*, n.d.). By bringing attention to the legal obligation to serve students who are not fully proficient in English, the state's policy makers foreground compliance rather than a state-led vision or value. They also foreground the language deficiency of immigrant-origin students by describing them as not fully proficient in English. Instead of seeing the language and cultural assets that the immigrant-origin students bring to the schools, the state's discourse focuses on remediating the language skill that the immigrant-origin students do not yet possess.

The resources posted on the state's ESOL webpage also focus on helping LEAs reach compliance with their legal obligations to provide language services to English learners. For example, a resource guide to support school districts' English Learner Language Programs explains in detail what steps LEAs need to take to be compliant in registration/enrollment processes, EL entrance and exit procedures, post-exit monitoring processes, and how to factor EL student data into the state accountability system (*A Resource Guide*, 2020). There is also a hyperlinked list of state guidance documents for different language instruction program models and assessment programs. Similar to the state's plan for ESSA, there is an absence of discourse about the state's own vision and values behind ESOL programming.

Comparison of Findings from Illinois and Georgia State Discourse

Each state relates differently to the federal policies and surrounding discourse about supporting immigrant-origin students. Through language in the state plan for ESSA, the ISBE policy makers make it clear that the state sees itself as an equal partner to the federal government. The state's actors are empowered to critique past practices of the federal government and aim to go beyond mandates to provide the most equitable education for all of the students in Illinois schools. On the other hand, the GaDOE policy makers are still mostly operating on a compliance-based mode in relation to the federal government. The GaDOE staff recognize that operating in this mode and replicating this mode in their relationship to the LEAs does not lead to the best outcomes for their students. Thus, the GaDOE staff members intend to shift statewide culture to be less oriented toward compliance. However, the culture of deference towards the federal

government still exists in the language found in their state plan for ESSA and on their state's ESOL webpage.

Through its resources outlining immigrant students' rights, the ISBE staff play an advocacy role for immigrant students, especially for those who may be undocumented. The ISBE staff also make available resources for immigrant parents to better understand and engage with their children's schools in many different languages. This action signals the state's position of valuing the contributions of immigrant families and recognizing the diversity of their language backgrounds. In this way, the ISBE staff members are practicing social justice leadership (Crawford et al., 2018; Theoharis, 2007). Parallel resources are not available on the GaDOE website. This absence of resources for undocumented students could be an example of Jefferies' (2014) Circle of Silence and Bonilla-Silva's (2014) color-blind racism, which ultimately marginalizes immigrant-origin youth by failing to open up channels of communication that can expand their access to educational opportunities.

District Level Discourse

Illinois District

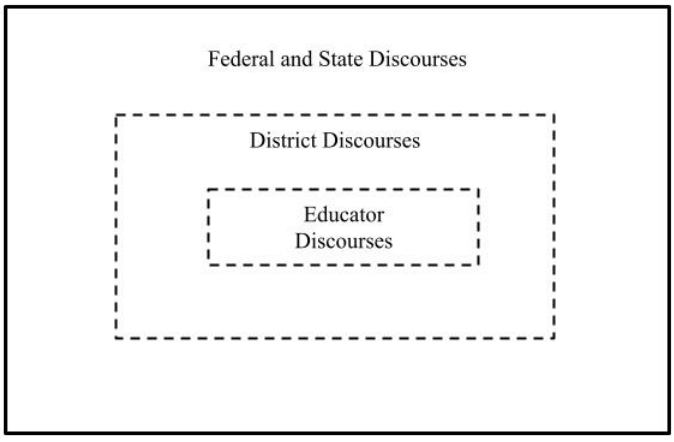
A critical discourse analysis of Illinois district documents and interviews from district participants revealed that district level discourse aligned with state level discourse to go beyond federal policies and guidelines to advocate for immigrant-origin students and their families. While the discourses about immigrant-origin students aligned in their focus on equity at the district, state, and federal levels, it was clear this focal district and the ISBE go beyond what is required by the federal government to provide support for immigrant-origin students and their families. Along with advocating for immigrant-origin

students and families, the district level discourse emphasized authentic engagement with immigrant-origin families by taking proactive steps to bring their voices into the schools.

Figure 3 is a slight revision of Figure 1, which conceptualized the relationships between federal, state, district, and individual educator discourses. Like Figure 1, this figure shows that the different levels of discourse are nested within each other. However, in this Illinois district case, the federal and state level discourses are placed in the same plane, showing that the federal and state level discourses have a more equitable relationship instead of the federal level discourse dictating the state level discourse. The boundaries between the state and federal levels of discourse, the district level of discourse, and individual educator level of discourse are more permeable, as indicated by the dotted lines. As individual educators in the district feel empowered to advocate for and engage their immigrant-origin students and families, there is not a clear power dynamic between the four different levels of discourse. The power and responsibility for supporting immigrant-origin students is shared amongst the different discourse levels.

Figure 3.

Relationship Between Different Levels of Discourse for the Illinois District.



As a baseline, the district adopts an equity-based discourse regarding its English Learners. In its Board of Education policy document, the district says it offers "opportunities for resident English Learners to develop high levels of academic attainment in English and to meet the same academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to attain".[2] The district's vision is to provide the necessary support for all children to meet their expectations. This vision is also reflected in their policy document regarding migrant students.

In the district level website about EL services, the director of EL services shares the goals of the program, the rationale behind the program model, expected outcomes of the programming, and detailed descriptions of the program model at different grade levels. The director of EL services explains via this public facing website that a district team reviewed the research on service delivery models for ELs, looked at their own data, and visited other school sites in order to recently revise their EL program model. By creating a representative team to do this research, even the revision of their past EL program model was done in an equitable fashion, bringing in many different voices to the table rather than having the director of EL services unilaterally decide upon the support structure for ELs.

In her interview, Marie, the director of EL services, shared how rare it is to have a director of EL services at a cabinet or district-leadership level. She explained, "It's about equity. Often, the Director of EL Services is not perceived to be an equitable position to the Director of Special Education even if the Director of EL Services has twice as many children as the Director of Special Education." Although she is seeing more districts

[2] Citations are not provided in order to protect the anonymity of this district.

creating this position, she thinks the lack of litigation around EL services, in comparison to special education services, has hindered the advancement of this kind of position. Through hiring Marie for this position in 2016, the district made a bold statement in elevating attention to EL services at the district level.

As a cabinet-level leader, Marie is able to be "involved in decision-making and policy". Knowing her immigrant families are "among the most vulnerable in [the] community", Marie said, "I do see it my responsibility to advocate," especially since the immigrant families can struggle to advocate for themselves. She recognized that other educators may shy away from taking an advocacy stance in fears of risking employment or job security. But she shared, "I'm an old bird. I've been doing this a long time. I feel comfortable in knowing how to navigate." Her over 40 years of experience in the field of language instruction at school, district, and state levels have equipped her with the tools, skills, and knowledge to navigate structures in order to advocate for immigrant families. Marie's depth of knowledge of the challenges facing immigrant-origin students and their families reflects the first theme from the thematic analysis of the Illinois interview data based on the first research question: Illinois educators acknowledged challenges facing immigrant-origin students.

Throughout the interview, Marie adopted a whole child approach, realizing that the school system has to go beyond just providing language instruction services and address other "variables that impact education" such as "social and emotional development" and "feelings of community and belonging". For example, she wants the district to enact specific training for social workers for working with immigrant populations of all different generations. She noted that immigrant students' experiences

should influence social workers to rethink their definitions of trauma. She explained, "I think [the social workers'] understanding of trauma tends to be around things like domestic violence, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Whereas for many of our students, trauma is experiencing war, violence in the streets; it tends to be more political." She showed an understanding that educators in a variety of roles need to build their understanding of immigrant students' experiences in order to provide them with the appropriate supports that lead to more equitable opportunities. On a more logistical level, she has worked with educators to make sure English learner immigrant students are "having lunch with their peers and participating in electives or the encore classes and having a really healthy, well-rounded experience." Her use of the words "healthy" and "well-rounded" demonstrated an emphasis on the socioemotional aspect of immigrant-origin students' experiences in addition to attending to their academic and language-related needs.

Andrew, the district superintendent, has played a pivotal role in convincing the district's board of education to approve the director of EL services position. He pointed to his own experience as a bilingual teacher as one of the reasons why he has advocated for immigrant-origin students through the creation of this position.

> You always had the sense that, a little bit of that stepchild mentality, just with the kids you had. Then also as a bilingual teacher, you didn't quite feel equal. It was all real subtle. There was nothing you could really point to, but you could kind of feel it, that your kids and your program were a little bit less than everyone else. That always irked me.

Andrew's following words and phrases—"stepchild", "didn't quite feel equal", "all real subtle", a little less than everyone else"—showed how he felt that the needs of immigrant-origin students and even the educators who worked with them were not prioritized when he worked as a bilingual teacher in a different district. When he got to this district, he noticed that students were being pulled out of their classrooms, especially during science class. Therefore, most immigrant-origin students who were also English Learners did not receive science instruction. As a way to change this structure, he hired Marie, who has revamped the EL program model to ensure that students are getting content-based language services or sheltered content instruction, based on both formal and informal assessment data. Andrew's own experience of feeling "less than everyone else" as a bilingual teacher has been fueling his efforts to go beyond bare requirements of providing language instruction services to English learners. Andrew and Marie both shared with me during informal conversations that the district has made a commitment to only hire new teaching staff with their ESL endorsements.

This district-level stance of advocacy toward immigrant-origin students and their families was reflected in the interviews with individual educators working in the district schools. As a result of the changes in the EL programming, Lila, an elementary school EL teacher, noted, "I feel our staff has been more trained and educated in terms of being more culturally aware, and being more culturally aware I feel you're more sensitive to the issues, or the stories that our immigrant families come with." The phrases "more cultural aware" and "sensitive to the issues" demonstrate how educators rely on their nuanced understanding of their immigrant families in order to know how to advocate for them. Lila advocates for her immigrant-origin students and families by building strong

relationships with them as soon as they enter the schools. In her past role as an ESL resource teacher, she had more flexibility with her time to work one-on-one with many immigrant-origin students, especially recently arrived students, to get a sense of what resources their families might need and to connect them with the appropriate resources. As a EL teacher with her own classroom of students, she has now become part of the new culture to build a stronger sense of shared responsibility and advocacy for immigrant-origin students amongst all school staff.

Some educators went even beyond the district-level advocacy to provide appropriate services for immigrant-origin students to work actively on shifting any deficit-based thinking around immigrant-origin students. For example, Deborah, a junior high EL teacher, shared,

> I always wanted to do something for EL, just because I believe that—sometimes teachers underestimate their ability. Just because they are ESL, they might think that it's a problematic issue, which it's not. We should look at this as a benefit. If you can speak another language, research proves that you can look at things from a different perspective, and you're smarter.

Deborah's use of the words "benefit" and "smarter" shows how she is trying to flip the script of underestimating immigrant-origin students and thinking that they are just hindered by not knowing English. In a similar vein, Stacy, an elementary school principal, reflected that it has been challenging for some teachers to keep "that perspective that families don't always have the same experience as [they] do." Thus, in her role, she helps educators delve deeper into the stories and experiences of their immigrant-origin children in order to best serve them. She takes the stance that the

students bring talents and she "can't wait to get to know [them] more," and encourages her staff to do the same instead of falling into a trap of feeling pity for their students.

The change in the EL programming and shift in mindsets about immigrant-origin students are not the only changes that the district has adopted to advocate for their immigrant-origin students and families. The district has created a new position of coordinator of Family Services and Engagement in order to both advocate for families and to engage them more deeply. Reflecting on the new role of coordinator of Family Services and Engagement, Paul, the junior high principal, explained,

> This position, I think, is intended to make the district a little more robust when it comes to which—are we responding to a fire that this empowered parent group is starting or are we being strategic about supporting this group of students and their families that are not well resourced socioeconomically and even in their ability to engage in the educational system.

The words "robust" and "strategic" show that the district is trying to be well-rounded and strategic in their approach to engaging a diverse set of parents instead of continuing to engage the same group of parents who are already highly involved and empowered. Although the role encompasses all families in the district, the district cabinet expects the coordinator to focus on engaging immigrant-origin families, whose voices are not yet well represented in planning and policies. This position is a manifestation of the second theme from the thematic analysis: Educators took an inquiry-based orientation towards their role in supporting immigrant-origin students and their families. The inquiry into what the immigrant-origin students and families need and want has led to the creation of this coordinator position.

The EL center director and incoming coordinator of Family Services and Engagement, Raquel, views the work that the EL center does in helping immigrant stay-at-home mothers secure jobs in the school system as a "women's empowerment program". In her new role, she intends to bring in more immigrant families' voices into the district and empower them to be more engaged with the educational structures and decisions that affect their children's daily experiences. She shared that this district in the past "has had a less welcoming approach to parents than other districts." Understanding that kind of reputation and culture takes a long time to turn around, she approved of the district's deliberate tactic of saying "We want to see a diverse set of parents engaged," by creating this new position.

While this Illinois district is building up its discourse of engagement, advocacy, and equity for immigrant-origin students and their families, many educators understand that the national anti-immigrant discourse from the Trump administration can undermine their efforts. Jacqueline, the social worker, brought up how the anti-immigrant sociopolitical context of the Trump era has made it difficult to advocate for her students and families in the way that she would like to. She disclosed,

> I'm just spending a lot more time with parents and students processing the feeling that things aren't always safe. We don't always have control…I would like to be able to be more of an advocate. It feels like, right now, that's one of things we have to do is say, "Yeah, things are scary and uncertain. I can't promise you that things will be okay. This is what I think is likely to happen." Then processing that frustration and anger and sadness that families have about the current climate.

The phrases “aren’t always safe”, “don’t always have control”, “scary and uncertain”, and “frustration and anger and sadness” highlight the difficult emotions that have been surfacing for parents and students as they navigate being an immigrant in an anti-immigrant climate. Jacqueline’s observations about the influence of the sociopolitical climate on her ability to advocate for families demonstrates that larger discourses about immigrants do influence what happens in schools between students, families, and educators. This shows how schools do not operate in isolation from other discourses, even though sometimes educators would like to operate as if they do.

Georgia District

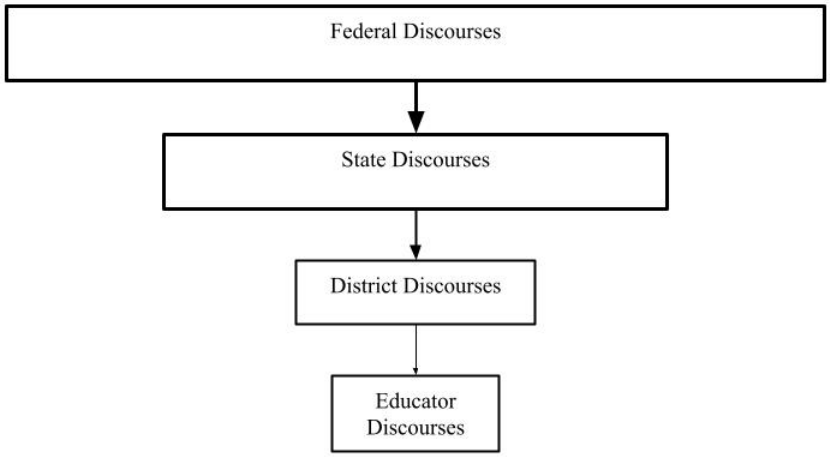
Much like the state level discourse, the formal district level discourse in the focal Georgia district focused mostly on complying with federal policies and guidelines about English Learners (ELs). The district website provides information about its English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program under the umbrella of “Title Programs”. Title programs is language set forth by the federal government to delineate programming for vulnerable or disadvantaged student subgroups. The use of the federal government’s language shows that the district views its services to support immigrant-origin students’ language needs as a way to fulfill external obligations.

Figure 4 refashions the original Figure 1 for this Georgia district. Instead of having the discourses nested in one another, the data shows that the relationship between the different levels of discourse is more linear. The federal level of discourse powerfully shapes the state level discourse, which then powerfully shapes district level discourse and so on. There exists a power differential over discourses about immigrant-origin students, with the federal government holding the most power over how immigrant-origin students

are supported and conceptualized at the individual educator level. Since the state level actors interpret the federal discourse in a more compliance oriented fashion, the district level also adopts this stance.

Figure 4.

Relationships Between Different Levels of Discourse for the Georgia District



Although Title III language has changed in the most recent reauthorization of the ESEA (ESSA), the district website still refers to Title III as "Limited English Proficient and Immigrant", as it was for NCLB. In ESSA, Title III is now labeled as "Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students". By still referring to their English Learner immigrant-origin students as limited English proficient, the district focuses on their language deficits. Beyond quoting language from the federal and state government's Title III and Title I-C: Migrant Education Program expectations, the district website does not provide information about the actual programming or structure of the ESOL or Migrant Education programs. The district website provides the contact information for Cristina, the migrant coordinator, on their page about the migration education program. It does not provide information for the Title III coordinator. The only

other contact information that is available on the Title Program webpages is that of the homeless liaison. The presence of Cristina's contact information supports the second theme found in the thematic analysis for the first research question that the Georgia district relies on Cristina for deeper insight into immigrant families.

Lucas, the superintendent, provided information about the district context that painted a larger picture of why the district level language may be focused on complying with federal level policies. He shared,

> I had never experienced poverty on the scale that we see it here. Seventy-eight percent of our students are in poverty. Because of that, 100 percent of our kids are on free and reduced lunch. That brings a different perspective to it, brings a different level of bureaucracy to it. Because we're a Title I district, there are a lot of things that we have to do. Sometimes that rigidity creates its own barrier because you have to do it this way if you receive federal funds.

This contextual information shows that the district almost has no choice but to comply to a higher order of policies and the discourse surrounding those policies, especially since most of their district's funding comes from federal funds. The words "bureaucracy" and "rigidity" show the need to comply with the federal rules and expectations.

Lucas went on to note that the district tries to meet the mandated guidelines but also to be creative within those guidelines in order to best meet the needs of all students. He said, "We have to get out of our own way. We had to burn boxes. I tell ya, education sometimes is in a box and we want to get outside the box and burn the box and do what's right for our kids." Thus, although the official district discourse seems to simply comply with the federal discourse of providing equitable services for immigrant-origin students,

according to Lucas, the educators in the Georgia district have been finding spaces to support students on their own terms. His use of the phrase "our kids" further shows that the district is not necessarily seeing immigrant-origin students as separate or distinct from other students. Instead, all students are viewed as needing extra support through creative uses of federal funds.

Meredith, the assistant superintendent, oversees not only the district's ESOL and migrant education programs but also all curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional learning, federal programs, and accreditation for the district. Unlike the Illinois district, which has one person dedicated to solely managing the language instruction services for all ELs in the district, this Georgia district has a leader who is managing many different programs at once. As a way to keep English Learner immigrant-origin students included in the day-to-day school life, Meredith explained that the district has adopted a push-in model for English Learners.

In this push-in model, ESOL teachers go into a general education classroom to provide support for English Learners. This stems from Meredith's belief that students will learn best when immersed into the mainstream culture. She reasoned,

> We can do separation. I always want to know, well, how is that going to be any better? How is that going to provide more support?...research and my own experiences have been that the more the children are involved in English, the faster they're going to acquire it.

Bailey, an instructional coach, echoed Meredith's belief in immersing students in general education classrooms by saying, "The research shows that with the push-in model, the kids are immersed in the regular classroom and they are around their peers who are

English speakers. When you pull those ESOL kids out, they're just relying on the teacher to teach them the language." In her experience, Bailey has seen ESOL students show resistance to being separated from their peers for routines such as formal assessments. By pushing into the classroom, Bailey explains how the schools can circumvent feelings of segregation and allow students to learn from their English speaking peers. In addition to their observations of ESOL students, both Bailey and Meredith cite research in general as the reason why the district leaders have chosen to adopt the push-in model; this shows that they look to outside influences to help them make district decisions. This orientation of using outside ideas as rationale behind district structures reflects the position of the district having mandates placed upon it from an outside entity, such as the state or federal education department.

The reasoning behind the push-in model demonstrates the district's emphasis on inclusion. The district educators see immigrant-origin students as simply part of the district. As Bailey put it, "We treat our Hispanic children just like everybody else." Margaret, the elementary school counselor, also described the district's immigrant-origin students as "just very much a part of our school population" and shared that "I could be wrong, but I don't think that they feel a lot different from any of our other students." In contrast to the Illinois district that welcomes newcomer immigrants, many of the educators in Georgia noted that the majority of the immigrant-origin students were born here, have grown up here, and have attended this district for their whole educational lives. As Helen, the graduation coach, put it, "Our students, for the most part, they've grown up in this community." So even though many immigrant-origin students may be in the ESOL program because they spent their early childhood speaking a language other

than English, they have not been a newcomer in a social sense because they entered the district at the same time as their peers.

While the inclusive approach may have the intention to integrate immigrant-origin students with their non-immigrant-origin peers, it could have the opposite impact, especially if the curriculum is not culturally responsive. Isabella described her own experiences as an immigrant-origin student in this district,

> What I've noticed is that the curriculum, it tries to Americanize you right away. It tries to assimilate you and try to make you forget about your culture, your language…it forces you to forget. It wants that. In social studies, it teaches you about white men, their accomplishments. It never incorporates minorities or how they upheld to create this country, their accomplishments.

The words "Americanize", "assimilate", and "forget" show how Isabella felt that her own culture as a Central American, Spanish-speaking immigrant was not welcomed by the school. In particular, the curricula that the school adopted did not reflect the cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds of nondominant people. If immigrant-origin students are being treated like everyone else by being exposed to curriculum that is not culturally responsive or sustaining, then inclusive practices are only inclusive in name and not in practice.

When thinking about the impact of the sociopolitical context on immigrant-origin students, Meredith noted that "because I do have the federal program on my side, it really doesn't matter so much if Georgia is being more restrictive or less restrictive [in their immigration policies]." In this instance, Meredith aligned the district more with the federal discourse of protecting and serving immigrant-origin students and distanced the

district from state level immigration policies that may restrict the rights and safety of immigrant families. In addition to having federal programs "on [their] side", the district is in a rural area with particular contextual features that influence how immigrant-origin students and their families experience daily life. Cristina shared, "I've noticed that a lot of my [migrant] families stay in this county. A lot. I've been here 21 years. It's a smaller county and they feel secure here because the police officers don't bother them." Bailey also spoke to the welcoming and safe nature of the area, "You would think in a little rural southern Georgia town, if you were going to have racist or hate crimes or something and it would be a bunch of rednecks because that's what the TV makes you think, but here it's all good." Bailey's statement shows that while people outside of this community might expect racism to run rampant in the rural Southern town, in her point of view, people inside this community get along.

Of course, the area is still undergoing growing pains from having its demographics changed drastically in such a short period of time. Many of the educators, who have been working in this district for the majority of their careers, noted that only twenty years ago, there were almost no immigrant-origin students in the community. Lucas noted that the community is still "very much a Mayberry town" with older white people who "don't really want to understand cultural differences and don't want to embrace those pieces." This resistance to understanding cultural differences aligns with Vidal's (2018) findings that white people in the South held more anti-immigrant views than non-white counterparts from non-Southern states. Lucas observed that even though these community members treat everyone with respect, the resistance to understand cultural differences mainly impacts the availability of support services for the

diversifying population. It is important to keep this local context in mind when making sense of the district level discourse around immigrant-origin students.

Comparison of Findings from Illinois and Georgia District Discourses

In both cases, district level discourse closely mirrored state level discourse about immigrant-origin students but also had distinctive defining discourses for their districts. The different levels of discourse inform each other and ultimately influence how immigrant-origin students experience their education in each context. In the Illinois district, the federal discourse of equity and the state level discourse of advocacy filtered into the district and individual educator discourses of engagement with immigrant families. For the Georgia district, the federal discourse of equity worked together with a shifting state level of discourse from a culture of compliance to collaboration to lead to district and individual educator level discourses of inclusion for immigrant-origin students. The discourse of inclusion, while equitable in theory, was problematic because the educators in Georgia mostly did not problematize the culture that immigrant-origin students were being included into. Notably, Isabella mentioned that the curriculum tried to Americanize her right away and make her forget her language and culture when she was a student in the district. If the school culture and curricula are not reflective of the students' cultures and backgrounds, including the immigrant-origin students into school life may actually leave them feeling excluded and hindered from exploring their own identities.

In Illinois, the relationship between the different levels of discourse were more equitable while the relationships in the Georgia case were more hierarchical. The more equitable nature of the Illinois-based relationships was well-captured in the IL ESSA

document that included the ISBE's own vision for the education of its state's students. Instead of merely fulfilling requirements set out by the federal government, the ISBE policy makers adapted the "assignment" to their context. The agency demonstrated by the ISBE document was also reflected in the district-level documents and interviews with district educators. In contrast, there was a focus on compliance in the Georgia case. The federal policies were viewed by both state and district-level actors as important rules to be followed and complied with. This hierarchy was apparent in the lack of extra material in the GA ESSA, the transparent admittance that the GaDOE has operated in the compliance mode in the recent past, and the district educators mentioning all the actions the district must take in order to obtain federal funding as a Title I district.

The more equitable relationships between federal, state, and district-level actors in Illinois led to more nuanced understandings of immigrant-origin students and families and the more hierarchical relationships in Georgia led to a more simplistic view of how immigrant-origin students and families experience school (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). For example, more educators in Illinois understood that anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric such as the Muslim travel ban or the increased threat of deportation were affecting their students and families in negative ways that the schools can address through empathetic, inquiry-based communication. Most educators in Georgia insisted that the outside rhetoric on immigrants largely did not affect their students or how they interacted with their immigrant-origin students. By not being aware of or not acknowledging the powerful outside forces on their immigrant-origin students and families, the Georgia educators did not have a driving motivation to revisit and re-envision existing structures to support immigrant-origin students and their families.

In this comparison of the two different districts, it is easy to fall into the trap of saying that the Illinois district is more supportive in its efforts to serve immigrant-origin students. While this may be the case, it is also crucial to look at the contextual features and structures that have allowed for the Illinois district to operate in ways that the Georgia district cannot. First off, the Illinois context is more supportive of immigrants than the Georgia context, as evidenced in the discussion of research contexts at the beginning of Chapter 3. Illinois' Governor Rauner has taken steps such as the TRUST Act to protect the state's undocumented immigrant population while Georgia's Governor Kemp has promised to track and deport who he referred to as "criminal illegal aliens" (Rico, 2018). The school systems operate within these varying local contexts. As a state, Illinois is more supportive in its efforts to protect and empower immigrants and these efforts are reflected in the state's educational system. While Governor Kemp's external hostility towards undocumented immigrants is not outwardly reflected in the Georgia district's discourse, the state's social milieu has powerful implications on how far a school district will go to serve and protect its immigrant-origin population.

The Illinois district is located in an area with a robust tax base that is relatively close to a major metropolitan area with many resources for immigrant families. Thus, the Illinois district has the resources it needs in order to fully serve immigrant-origin students and families. For example, the district has the funds to create and hire new people for cabinet level positions. In contrast, the Georgia district is located in a rural area with limited resources. In addition, the head of the ESOL program also oversees many other programs. In a small district with limited resources, personnel need to be used in creative ways to meet multiple needs. For example, I met a high school teacher who taught math,

business, and theater. As a small school that still aims to provide students with various course offerings, the school needs to be creative about how to divvy up the finite resources that it has. If Georgia were to instate a policy like the Illinois district of committing to only hire new staff with their ESL endorsements, it would be difficult for the district to fill its positions.

There is also a difference in the leadership that heavily influences how immigrant-origin students are served. The study participants in Georgia's district level positions, Lucas and Meredith, do not have any experience teaching within a language instruction program. Lucas was a business teacher before moving into administration as a principal and Meredith was an English teacher for a few years before moving into administrative positions. Comparatively, the study participants in Illinois' district level positions, Andrew and Marie, both have extensive experience teaching in language instruction programs and therefore working closely with immigrant-origin youth and families throughout their careers.

In addition to the differences in resource availability and leadership, the two districts have different professional cultures. In Georgia, there is a discourse of deference amongst all educators. I seldom heard educators referring to each other by their first names. They used Ms., Mr., or Dr. in addition to the educators' last names. In contrast, everyone in Illinois referred to each other by their first names. The hierarchical discourse amongst the Georgia district's staff reflected the hierarchical structure of how the different levels of discourses informed each other for this context. The more equitable discourse amongst the Illinois district's staff mirrored the more fluid boundaries between this context's levels of discourse.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter, I highlight key insights and related implications regarding discourse about immigrant-origin students surfaced through this study. In Table 10, I summarize the key insights, sources supporting the insights, and implications related to each insight. These are each discussed in detail, before I then address study limitations and wrap up with concluding thoughts.

Table 10.

Key Insights, Sources, and Related Implications

Key Insight	Source(s) of Insight	Related Implication(s)
1. Educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences through existing individual and collective mental models of immigrants and immigration, or lack thereof.	Chapter 4: Key Factors 1-3, Illinois District Themes 1-3, Georgia District Themes 1-3	Share responsibility for supporting immigrant-origin students and their families Build pipeline of educators with immigration experience
2. The location, student demographics, and sociopolitical backdrop in each district context heavily influenced individual educators' discourse about immigrant-origin students.	Chapter 4: Key Factor 1, Comparison of Illinois and Georgia Districts, Chapter 5: Comparison of Findings from Georgia and Illinois District Discourses	Raise awareness of how context may be limiting certain possibilities or allowing for certain affordances in order to brainstorm ways to address these limitations and leverage affordances
3. Power can be shared between federal, state, and district-level entities in order to create more humanizing and culturally sustaining environments for immigrant-origin students.	Chapter 5: Comparison of Findings from Illinois and Georgia District Discourses	Disrupt power hierarchies amongst different levels of discourse

Key Insights and Related Implications

Key Insight 1: Sensemaking through Existing Mental Models

In the Illinois district, all of the interviewed educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences through their own personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration. Some of them identified as an immigrant or a child of immigrants. Others had worked with many immigrant-origin students over the course of their career. One study participant spoke about embodying the newcomer experience as an extensive traveler to foreign countries where she was a racial minority. Through their diverse array of experiences, the Illinois educators' discourse about their immigrant-origin students were based in understanding their students either first-hand or second-hand through repeated exposure to the immigrant experience. Due to their collective personal and professional commitments to understanding immigrants and immigration, all of the study participants demonstrated a high sense of responsibility to make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. They carried out this responsibility through an inquiry-based orientation as evidence by the open-ended questions they posed both about and to their immigrant-origin students and families.

In the Georgia district, the study participants relied on two key Latinx educators to make sense of immigrant-origin students' and families' experiences. Since most of the study participants did not have personal experiences with immigration or many experiences with traveling outside of their community, they struggled to deeply understand the backgrounds of their immigrant-origin students as a collective. However, they shared the Christian faith amongst each other and their students. It seemed that this

faith helped the educators connect with their immigrant-origin students and deepened their sense of purpose in serving them with love and compassion.

Sensemaking starts with noticing and bracketing, which are informed by existing mental models acquired through work, professional development, and personal life experiences (Weick et al., 2005). Thus, educators who have more nuanced mental models regarding immigrants and immigration are more likely to notice and make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences in more particular and nuanced ways. In general, the Illinois educators had stronger metal models about immigrants and immigration than the Georgia educators, excepting Isabella and Cristina, because collectively, they had more personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration. Following their noticing and bracketing of immigrant-origin students' experiences, the Illinois educators were able to label or put words to the immigrant-origin experience, which was shown clearly in the ways they acknowledged the various challenges facing immigrant-origin students. The Illinois educators have also engaged in collective sensemaking (Coburn, 2001) by discussing diversity and equity at both the school and district levels, which includes specific conversations about their immigrant-origin students. The district has recently reconfigured their English Learner programming, which has prompted many collective sensemaking events about the needs of immigrant-origin students.

Comparatively, in the Georgia district, sensemaking around immigrant-origin students' experiences has largely been left up to two Latinx educators. In the absence of strong mental models about immigrants and immigration and the absence of collective organizational discussion about immigrants and immigration, the Georgia educators have had little impetus to engage in sensemaking about their immigrant-origin students'

experiences. Notably, the district and school leaders, who hold higher positions of power in the community, lacked both personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration. The collective viewpoint that immigrant-origin students are not significantly different from their non-immigrant-origin peers perpetuates a culture with little instigation for more nuanced sensemaking about immigrant-origin students. Perhaps there is a collective avoidance of deeper introspection into district practices and the experiences of immigrant-origin students because acknowledging the unique and separate experiences of immigrant-origin students may disrupt the Georgia educators' collective identity as a colorblind staff (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) that treats all students equally.

Related Implications for Key Insight 1: Sharing Responsibility and Building Educator Pipeline

The Illinois district demonstrated that collective sensemaking around immigrant-origin students can lead to collective action to improve immigrant-origin students' experiences, as evidenced by the changes in the EL programming and the creation of another cabinet level position to further engage immigrant-origin students' families. In contrast, the Georgia district relied upon two immigrant educators to make sense of and support their immigrant families. By shifting responsibility to a few staff members, the rest of the staff have not had to engage in dialogue or thinking about the specific needs of immigrant-origin students. Additionally, in concentrating the sensemaking process to a few staff, the Georgia district has made itself vulnerable to the loss of institutional knowledge when these staff members leave, which unfortunately has become a reality. Isabella is no longer with the district and Cristina will be retiring soon. With these key Latinx educators leaving the district, who will now make sense of immigrant-origin

students' experiences? Thus, immigrant-origin students should not become "owned" by certain teachers and staff. Rather, every educator in immigrant-serving districts should be part of a collective and shared effort to make sense of the experiences of their immigrant-origin students and families (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

In each district, educators who had experiences of immigration themselves or in their families had powerful mental models that helped them relate to immigrant-origin students and make sense of their experiences. The lack of strong mental models of immigrants and immigration in the Georgia district's leadership team points to the need to empower educators like Isabella and Cristina to hold higher formal positions of power, such as roles in school or district administration. The federal and state level government should create policies to recruit those who have experiences migrating and/or being bilingual or multilingual. Creating a pipeline of educators who have lived experiences of immigration would benefit immigrant-origin students because they would have educators who may have a more visceral understanding of what they are going through as they transition from one environment to another, whether it is from home to school, or from another country to the US.

Because efforts to recruit and maintain immigrant-origin educators have not been highly successful (Hamann et al., 2015), teacher education programs have also been making efforts to build cultural understanding among non-immigrant-origin educators. This tactic can also be effective as it helps build deeper mental models in educators so that they can better notice and bracket experiences of their immigrant-origin students and engage in more complex sensemaking that could lead to more supportive actions.

Key Insight 2: Contextual Influence

In comparing the key sensemaking themes from the educator interviews, it was clear that three important features of each district's context—location, student demographics, and sociopolitical backdrop—heavily influenced how educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. Located in a politically liberal suburban area with a diverse immigrant population representing over 60 different languages, the Illinois district existed in a context that facilitated their sensemaking. Likely, the Illinois educators were able to acknowledge that immigrant-origin students face unique challenges from their non-immigrant-origin peers because they possess the financial and personnel resources to address those unique challenges. For example, due to their strong tax base, the district is able to pay for a full-time director of EL services. In addition, they can rely on legal aid organizations to help families receive immigration-related support that will greatly influence students' wellbeing.

Georgia is located in a politically conservative rural area with an immigrant population that hails mostly from Mexico and other Central American countries. The district lacks resources to address needs that may be unique to immigrant-origin students. For example, there are not enough staff that speak Spanish and therefore, there are only a few educators that are relied upon in order to facilitate communication with immigrant families. In the politically conservative milieu, most educators chose to approach immigration policies as existing outside of their community and thereby conclude that the policies have little effect on the district's immigrant-origin students. All of these contextual factors help explain why educators may view immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from their non-immigrant-origin peers. Without more ways to

provide nuanced support and without a motivation to dig deeper into the ways immigration policies may be affecting the community, it made sense that many Georgia educators would not feel a need to acknowledge immigrant-origin students as having unique needs.

Golash-Boza and Valdez (2018) have built upon the work of Portes and Rumbaut (2014) to create a "nested contexts of reception" framework. Portes and Rumbaut (2014) explained that immigrants' experiences are dependent on various features of their receiving context such as government policies, labor conditions, and characteristics of their ethnic community. Golash-Boza and Valdez (2018) posited that contexts of reception are not uniform at local, state, and federal levels though they are nested within each other. For example, at the time of this study, while an anti-immigrant context existed at the federal level that affected all immigrants, states and local communities differed in the ways they aligned with or did not align with the federal policies and rhetoric. This study focused in on the local contexts as a way to further analyze why educators in the focal Illinois and Georgia districts made sense of their immigrant-origin students in disparate ways. The nested contexts of reception framework helps us to understand that local contexts exist within larger contexts that heavily influence what may be possible in each school district. However, the framework also supports the view that local contexts can differ from the larger contexts and operate in ways that can be more supportive of immigrant-origin students than the wider contexts may be.

Related Implication for Key Insight 2: Raising Contextual Awareness

Since the local context heavily influences immigrant-origin students' experiences, educators, especially educational leaders such as superintendents and principals, should

invest time to raise their awareness of different features and attitudes in their context that affect immigrant-origin students and their families. This means not only examining the district practices and discourses regarding immigrant-origin students but also studying the community in which the students and their families live. One way that educators could increase their contextual awareness is by doing a community-based equity audit (Green, 2017). Guided by the framework of Freirean dialogue, Green (2017) combined work that has been done through equity audits, community audits, and ethical and professional norms for community-based research to create a four-phased community-based equity audit process. The phases are as follows: "(a) disrupt deficit views of community, (b) conduct initial community inquiry and shared community experiences, (c) establish Community Leadership Team (CLT), and (d) collect equity, asset-based community data for action" (Green, 2017, p. 17).

While Green's work targets underserved urban communities of color, community-based equity audits can be also be applied in suburban or rural districts that serve immigrant-origin students because immigrant-origin students in any context have been vulnerable to deficit views, as evidenced by the anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric at the federal level. As a crucial first phase, a team of various stakeholders from diverse backgrounds should be created and the team needs to calibrate their beliefs to be asset-based and equitable at the core. Green (2017) suggests the team study Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and hold discussions that problematize any existing deficit views. In the second phase of this audit process, educational leaders and their teams map out assets in their community, interview community leaders, and have shared community experiences as a way to understand various interconnecting parts of the community. The

first two phases lead to the development of the community leadership team, which then collects data on the school and community's history, assesses community opportunity and equity, and holds a series of critical community dialogues to discuss findings and collectively decide how to move forward as a community.

While Green's (2017) community-based equity audit is not the only way that educators can raise awareness of the different features of their local context that affect their immigrant-origin students, it is a detailed and structured approach that is grounded in a strong foundation of equity. Whichever approach educators take to raise their contextual awareness, the work will be more powerful if done in teams that have a shared vision to make the community a more equitable space. By engaging in this process, educators will build great insight into both limitations and affordances of their contexts.

Key Insight 3: Sharing Power

According to Foucault (1982), the "exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others" (p. 788). This description of the exercise of power shows that power only exists when exercised relationally rather than as a static idea or entity. This description also demonstrates that the exercise of power can structure the possibility of other actions. This study shed light upon the relationships amongst federal, state, and district level discourses about immigrant-origin students. In doing so, it brought awareness to the ways power was exercised amongst the different levels of discourses and how each level of discourse structured possibilities for the other levels of discourse.

In the focal Illinois district, the exercise of power amongst federal, state, and district levels was shared in order to create optimal systems of support for immigrant-

origin students. In other words, actors at each level of discourse did the following: 1) They acknowledged the expertise of the other levels of discourse in creating theoretical and practical structures to support immigrant-origin students, and 2) They put forth their own context-specific visions for their work. This shared power was evidenced by individual district educators feeling empowered to advocate for immigrant-origin students beyond what is required by federal and state policies. In addition, the state's board of education staff demonstrated empowerment by going beyond the federal requirements for the ESSA plan to put forth their own mission and vision for their state's systems of support for all students, which includes immigrant-origin students. The Illinois State Board of Education also made available many documents to support immigrant-origin families on how to engage more fully with their schools, a move that was unique to the state of Illinois. Figure 3 in Chapter 5 conceptualized the relationships between the federal, state, district, and individual educator discourses for the Illinois case. It showed how the different levels of discourse, while still nested within each other, had more permeable boundaries, indicating the shared power and responsibility for supporting immigrant-origin students. While figure 3 did not visually capture the local community level discourse on immigrants and immigration, it is important to acknowledge that local community level discourse powerfully shapes educators make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences as well as the ways they can support them.

In the focal Georgia district, the exercise of power flowed more hierarchically, with the federal government's discourse about immigrant-origin students determining the dominant discourses at state and local levels. More specifically, though the federal

education department's language championed equitable opportunities for all students, the state and local level actors viewed the process of meeting those expectations as more of acts of compliance rather than opportunities to deeply understand and advocate for their immigrant-origin students. In this way, the actors at the federal education department structured possibilities for the actors at state and district levels, but the actors at the state and district levels did not fully exercise their power to either push back or go beyond the possibilities laid out to them by the federal actors.[3] As with the Illinois district, the local community context of the Georgia district heavily influenced the realities and possibilities of how the Georgia educators made sense of and supported their immigrant-origin students.

On their website, actors at the U.S. Department of Education (2021) state that education is mainly a state and local responsibility in the U.S., especially since about 92% of all school funds come from non-federal sources. However, as a cabinet level agency, the department claims that it plays a major role in leading a national dialogue on how to improve educational outcomes for all students. The department's use of the word "dialogue" demonstrates that conversations between federal, state, and local actors should be a multi-channeled flow of meaning amongst the different levels of discourse rather than a one-sided talk where the federal government tells state and local actors what they should say and do.

[3] Of course, we need to keep in mind that the focal Illinois district does not rely as heavily on federal funds as the focal Georgia district does. This financial reality no doubt plays into the different power dynamics observed between the different levels of discourse for the two districts. However, the focal Illinois district demonstrated the kinds of actions and words support advocacy for immigrant-origin students.

In reality, power imbalances exist amongst the different levels of discourse (Toll, 2001). To address these power imbalances, Toll (2001) argues that educators and policymakers cannot "afford to minimize [issues of power] or to smooth over our disagreements" (p. 324). Rather, Toll believes bringing attention to the issues of power and creating dialogue about how to work within existing constraints will lead to authentic educational change, which includes practices to better serve immigrant-origin students. Like the U.S. Department of Education and Green (2017), Toll highlights the importance of dialogue amongst different stakeholders in the educational arena. Dialogue (Bohm, 2004; Freire, 1970) has been highlighted by these educational stakeholders and researchers as an actionable way to equalize power and build more awareness within the system that can lead to more favorable outcomes for students.

Related Implication for Key Insight 3: Disrupting Discourse Hierarchies

Regarding critical discourse analysis, Ziskin (2019) notes, "Analyses of this kind have the potential not only to produce grounded, defensible, and useful findings but also to weaken current and persistent barriers to the open, democratic, and participatory debate of important issues related to educational equity" (p. 609). This study's findings illuminated both supportive and marginalizing discourses regarding immigrant-origin students at different levels. In doing so, the findings add to the open and participatory debate and/or dialogue of important equity-related issues. For example, some people may argue that the rhetoric of serving all students is more important than singling out certain students. I would argue through the data that both kinds of discourses are important, but that the language of serving all students can unfortunately perpetuate the marginalizing conditions that some immigrant-origin students face in schools. Namely, immigrant-

origin students may be learning in environments that are not culturally responsive or sustaining of their cultural and linguistic assets.

Knowing that the federal discourse on immigrant-origin students does have a large effect on how states then support LEAs, actors in the federal government need to examine the actions behind its defining discourse of equity. In order to do so, the federal staff members need to ask themselves the following questions. How can the federal government empower states and LEAs to best serve their immigrant-origin students? How can the federal government also effectively and collaboratively push districts that are perhaps not serving their immigrant-origin students in the most optimal ways? How can the federal government "burn boxes", as described by Georgia's superintendent, to provide resources to places that are thin on resources, such as the Georgia district? Also, how might states learn from each other even if they operate in very different sociopolitical contexts?

The findings demonstrated that state level discourse has a larger influence on the district level discourse than the federal level discourse because the discourses were more proximal. With this knowledge, staff members at the state level education departments can improve services for immigrant-origin students by asking themselves and district leaders to consider the following questions. What are our state's and district's missions and visions for this group of students? If a parent were to look at our language and materials, what would they think about this state or district? How can we employ language to serve, engage, and empower our immigrant-origin students and families in authentic ways? How are state and district level discourses being understood and used by individual educators?

Leaders at the federal, state, and district levels need to hold forums to discuss these kinds of questions. They should engage educators who work with immigrant-origin students in varying roles and capacities. They should also engage immigrant-origin families to bring their voices into the discourse about how to best serve immigrant-origin students. Though conversations are happening around best practices for English Learners, actors at the different discourse levels need to broaden their conversation to include all immigrant-origin students because immigrant-origin students have needs and experiences beyond their language acquisition.

Limitations

The study's sample and size limits the types of conclusions and applications that can arise from the data. Since the study only included educator's voices, I could not make conclusions about how the discourse actually affects students and families. The study only included two small districts and thus the findings cannot be generalized to all other similar districts. The following sections explore these two limitations in more detail.

Lack of immigrant-origin students' and families' voices

The study only examined educators' voices and left out the voices of immigrant-origin students and families. Therefore, I was not able to analyze how immigrant-origin students and families are making sense of their own experiences and how their sensemaking relates to the educators' sensemaking along with how their discourse interacts with other levels of discourse.

In order to more fully understand the implications of the different kinds of discourse about immigrant-origin students, it is necessary to capture the voices of immigrant-origin students and their families. Without their voices, I am working under an

assumption that certain types of discourses (deficit or asset) will affect the students and families in certain ways. By engaging their voices, I would be able to delve more deeply into the lived experiences of the immigrant-origin students, the ways that discourse about them shape their experiences, and how they shape the discourse through their own discourse and actions.

Study size

The study included two small districts in two states. Thus, it is not possible to say that similar districts would have similar discourses or similar relationships amongst different levels of discourse. In order to draw those kinds of generalized conclusions, it would be necessary to look at a greater number of districts within each state. It would be powerful to look at other districts in the same state with similar contexts and to see if their district and individual educator discourses were the similar to the discourses of our focal districts.

Because each context has so many different variables that affect educators' sensemaking, it may not be possible to draw generalizations even if the sample size were expanded. Thus, it might be more interesting to increase the sample size to other states so that state level discourses can be compared to one another. In addition to the state and district sampling, the study was limited in that I interviewed only 10 educators from each district. Increasing the interview sample to more educators in varying roles would lead to a richer picture of how educators in a district make sense of their immigrant-origin students' experiences. The interview sample included more district and school leaders than teachers. It would be interesting to see how teachers as a group are making sense of

their immigrant-origin students' experiences and compare their sensemaking patterns to the sensemaking patterns of the school and district leaders.

Concluding Thoughts

Discourse is not a static entity. Since this study's data collection and analysis, there have, no doubt, been shifts in the discourse about immigrant-origin students in each district. Notably, the federal level discourse on immigrants has changed since the change in administration. For example, the Biden administration has overturned the Trump administration's Muslim travel ban and the pending end of DACA. Though the rhetoric and policies regarding immigrants has become less hostile, the legacy of the crimmigration system remains. Immigrants still experience the threat of deportation and other limitations to their rights. They may still live in areas where their neighbors are not welcoming and perhaps openly hostile.

Thus, there is a still a need to focus on and bring greater awareness to the experiences of immigrant-origin students and the educators who serve them. As the fastest growing group of students in the public education system, immigrant-origin students need more nuanced attention regarding their backgrounds, assets, and needs. By engaging in deeper study like the one carried out in this dissertation, educators can collectively add to the existing discourse about immigrant-origin students and transform discourses that marginalize immigrant-origin students by engaging in dialogue with others.

As a classroom teacher of many immigrant-origin students, I am quite aware that my own mental models that allow me to notice, bracket, and deepen my inquiry into my students' backgrounds have limitations. Though I have my own personal experiences of

immigration and have studied how other educators make sense of their immigrant-origin students, I have much to learn and experience as I continue to engage with my students and their families. I am grateful for this opportunity as a doctoral candidate to have delved more deeply into sensemaking processes and the relationships amongst various levels of discourse. In the end, this endeavor has confirmed my belief that dialogue is a powerful tool to transform marginalizing discourses. I look forward to engaging in further dialogue with multiple stakeholders about immigrant-origin students and other students that I will serve throughout my career in education.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introduction

"Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to talk with me today. I am here to learn about your work, with a focus on how you and your colleagues are serving immigrant-origin students. You are in a unique position to help us understand this and we greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

I want to let you know that throughout the course of this study, we will work to preserve confidentiality. We will not use your name or reveal other identifying information in study publications. At any time during this interview, you may choose not to answer a question or stop the interview. Before we begin, I would like to ask you to read this consent form and sign it, if you agree. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the study. For the purposes of accuracy, I'd like to audio record this conversation. Is that okay?"

Signing of Consent Form

Questions and Possible Prompts

1. I'd like to start by learning a little about your work and how you came to this role. Can you tell me a bit about that?

    a. Can you describe your responsibilities in the district?

    b. In what ways do you work with immigrant-origin students and/or their families?

2. We are trying to understand how educators are responding to support immigrant-origin students. By immigrant-origin, we mean any students who either themselves immigrated from another country or whose parents or guardians are immigrants. In particular, we are trying to learn about a few key practices that we heard about on the survey. I'll ask you about each in turn.

    First, I'd like to hear about [practice].

    a. Can you tell me a little about this practice? What has your involvement been?
    b. How long have you participated?
    c. Who else is involved?
    d. Why did you (or the district) decide to use this approach to your work with immigrant students?
    e. What do you think the impact of [practice] has been? Can you think of an example to illustrate that?
    f. What have been some challenges with implementing this practice?
    g. What do you think would improve [practice] to make it more effective?

3. One of our goals is to identify additional resources or support for you in your work with immigrant-origin students. What would be most helpful to you to better serve these students?

    a. How might the district provide that for you?

    b. What external support do you wish you had?

4. Taking a broader view, how do immigration policies shape your role, the work of educators in your district?

    a. How do you learn about these policies and make sense of them?

    b. Are there ways that these policies impact your work inside or outside of schools?

5. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about immigrant-origin students in the district?

    a. Is there anything else that I should know?

    b. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study.

Appendix B

Codes from Thematic Analysis for RQ1

Code	Description	Example from IL data	Example from GA data
Asset-based view	An approach to making sense of immigrant-origin students' and families' experience by seeing their strengths and the assets they bring into the community	We very much encourage bilingualism, biculturalism. It's not about being more American. It's just about navigating the language because it's going to be easier to get resources in English. (Raquel)	I have very high regard for them, just as a population of people. We always speak very highly about our Hispanic students. They're generally very well behaved, bright. They're hard working. Their parents are very supportive like I mentioned before. They're just a good community of people to work with. I appreciate that about them. (Margaret)
Deficit-based view	A perspective on immigrant-origin students and families that focuses on what they do not have or what others perceive that they are taking away from the community	[The teachers] are incredibly compassionate people, but you want to make sure you're not feeling bad for somebody, like, "Oh, these poor people." And that you're being practical about what it is that needs to be addressed. (Stacy)	I had two years ago a local businessman that graduated from this system, that made a comment that he didn't wanna pay any more taxes because he didn't see any products from school systems doing anything for this community. (Lucas)
Conflicting view	An understanding of immigrant-origin students and families as having both assets and deficits; for	We started off with a Day of the Dead *ofrenda*, and I had parents calling me saying, "You're	I think our community realizes our non-English-speaking parents and children. I think for the most part

	example, some community members may hold the view that immigrants are good for the community in that they increase diversity and add to the economic backbone, but also think that immigrants are not equal to them and are quick to turn against them due to their deep-seated biases when accommodating them feels burdensome	teaching about religion in school, and why do we have to have this?" Then, once we talked through it, it's been smooth sailing, but it started really rough…Those kinds of things, but again, it was pretty much from my white middle-class parents who love living in a diverse community. They love that, but then there's that extra layer of, What does that mean? When do we have to accommodate? When do we have to celebrate? (Stacy)	are they're respected and seen as hard workers who came here for a better life. I am sure, just like in any community, there's prejudice and there's probably some racism associated with it too. (Meredith)
Growth-oriented view	An approach towards serving immigrant-origin students that emphasizes growth and improvement from existing services; a key word to look out for in growth-oriented views is "yet"	Because that's not a formalized process yet, yeah, that doesn't happen with other families that probably have needs that need other supports. That's in my head of a direction that I'd like to go in, is having some sort of process to get to know these families, 'cause typically, they're coming in with some needs that we might not find out about for quite a while. (Misty)	Again, all of it is driven back to that underlying premise, if we can develop a growth mindset that our kids can learn. We just have to find the ways to connect and find the ways to teach so they can learn. Then we'll see the results. (Lucas)
Colorblindness	A perspective that an educator does not see the	No example	We don't look at 'em as being any different. I don't know, if you

	color or race of their students because they believe it means they treat all of their children in the same way		were to ask me right now if I walked in a classroom, how many kids are White, how many are Black, how many are Hispanic? I would not have a clue. I mean that's not what we see. We just see the person. (Bailey)
Compassionate view	A view of immigrant-origin students and families that is grounded in compassion and empathy for their experiences	I feel when you understand where these families come from, culturally, knowing their backgrounds, their beliefs, I feel you're able to be more sympathetic, and when they see that you understand where they're coming from, they're more open to you helping them out, and receiving that support. (Lila)	I would never want to tell someone how to run their home, but it's important for me to let them know how it feels to someone. It may be mixed 'cause we all want the same thing. We want this kid to adjust and be happy. You just have to say, sometimes there are lots of—the yelling at the other siblings is upsetting her when she's not used to this. What can we do to let her know where she can—'cause she's taking all this in—where she's not being mentally affected? (Clara)
Embracing diversity	The perspective that diversity in student backgrounds and different cultures should be embraced, welcomed, and	I think the district is really trying to be deliberate with this new position of saying, "No, we do. We will embrace parents. We do want them in the schools. We do	We just had our Hispanic Heritage Month celebration. I mean, here, the kids embrace the differences. It sounds weird, but, I mean, I

	celebrated in a school community	wanna hear their voices and not just say that we want—we celebrate diversity. We want to see it more. We wanna see a diverse set of parents engaged." (Raquel)	don't—they just—they've grown up together. (Helen)
Serving all students	The view that immigrant-origin students are not significantly different from all students and that they are served in the way that all students are served in the schools	No example	We do classroom lessons also. Of course, they're part of the classroom. Really, just in the same way that we work with all of our students. There's not a big distinction, I don't think, in our role. That we work with them as often as we do everyone else. (Margaret)
Culture shift	An observation that school and district culture around serving immigrant-origin students and families has shifted or needs to shift in response to the changing demographics of the student population and their needs	Now, a significant number of students are a part of that program, and so the focus of our work has shifted over the years. We definitely had a very diverse population, but students spoke English and didn't qualify for the program. The emphasis wasn't on our ESL program. Now, I feel like every single teacher is touched by that program in some way, and so needing the knowledge for how to	That's why I incorporated the—I started incorporating the Hispanic Heritage celebrations 'cause they've never had anything like that when I was growing up. We do all kinds of stuff for the kids. (Isabella)

		support learners of English. (Misty)	
Disengagement	Instances of students or families disengaging from society, mainly due to lack of trust in schools and/or government, and educators experiencing silence from families	I think it causes people to introvert, to not volunteer, to not come out, to just lay low, don't become observable… They have withdrawn from social media because they're convinced that they're being watched. (Marie)	When it charges up, it creates uncertainty. The impact, of course, in the classroom kids weren't here, it creates an opportunity gap. The kids are missing instruction and they had to go back and fill to fill those particular pieces back. (Lucas)
Role orientation	How participants related to their role and how this relationship affected their practices to support immigrant-origin students	I always make sure that I am the person to take them directly to the classroom, and that gives me a lotta time to chat with them and let them know that I'm here, and I'm friendly. "Come on in, and tell me what you need." (Stacy)	I would like to know more about how to advise every population that I have here on campus so that they can see that their dreams are fulfilled…but I don't feel confident advising how to get over the hurdles [of being undocumented] so that they can go to college. (Helen)
Past professional or personal experiences	Examples of professional experiences that the interview participant experienced in the past that inform how they make sense of immigrant-origin students in the present	I had the chance to grow a dual language program, which was really interesting, and I think gave me a lot more insights into the challenges that kids are facing when they're not growing up speaking English as their first language. (Stacy)	I can relate to them…I usually bring them in here and I tell them my story. I'm like, "Hey, I'm an immigrant. I'm a first generation. I went to college and I want you to do the same thing 'cause you could do it. If ya all need any help,

			come over here and let me know." (Isabella)
Practices to support immigrant-origin students	Practices, structures, or processes that educators have put in place in order to support their immigrant-origin students academically and socially	When I get a newcomer student, I like to interview the family. I have them come in. I have an interpreter come in, and I just get to know the family a little bit and see, what do they need? Some of them don't have internet at home, or the parents also wanna learn English. I try to connect them to the Center to figure those things out. (Claire)	When a kid comes in not knowing the language whatsoever, no English, I will automatically—we have our English learners pretty much grouped in two classes. That way the ESOL teacher can go in and serve these children to help them with the language. They're pretty much in two different classes. Then I look at that roster and I look who would be a good fit to one, that they're comfortable. They would be comfortable helping and that it would be a good fit. (Clara)
Demographic descriptions	The way that interview participants describe their immigrant-origin student population in terms of racial, ethnic, national, or cultural background, generational status, immigration status, language learning identity, and migrant education status	I think here, when we say immigrant, I would think we're generally referring to first-generation immigrants since this is a community that very much has a first-generation immigrant experience. I mean, we get first-generation immigrants moving here pretty regularly. A week or so ago, we had a family of four come	They would be like less than 1 percent of our total ESOL population. Right now in the district, my ESOL population is approximately 230 kids out of 1900. It is a significant amount of students. Then I have some that have exited-based on their language proficiency. That's approximately another 35 kids but

		from Afghanistan, to all enroll in one elementary school. That's very much an experience here. (Andrew)	they are still being watched carefully. (Meredith)
Specific stories	Instances of specific stories of immigrant-origin students and their families that help educators make sense of their experiences	There's one I can think of in particular from District who said that there were families who are asking her, "Can you watch my kids if I get deported?" That's a big deal. That is maybe even one family, one example, but if that's the case that one person heard of, then we know there's hundreds of other people who are thinking these same things or who are also struggling with these same issues. It's super serious. (Raquel)	That same student—when she came here I remember—she shared her story with me that they was coming through the river—you know the Mexican River—and she said it was really awful. She said that the current was so hard. When I heard her stories and I see what they're doing, I'm so proud of them. (Cristina)
Barriers	Examples of challenges and barriers immigrant-origin students and their families face due to their identity-related circumstances as well as barriers that the schools face to providing them with appropriate supports	Our immigrant parent population is our most difficult to reach sometimes. We probably have families that are working multiple jobs or just don't have the same schedule that may allow them to participate as much. Then there's language barriers and cultural barriers where—how they've been accustomed to dealing with school	We have a big EL population, so a lot of times one of the challenges would be that one teacher has a lot of students. Last year I had 60 plus students. This year I have close to 40. That's one of the challenges. Another one would be the time. I will have a math segment and it's for 45. I feel I need more time in there just because it's math and to

		in their countries versus here. (Andrew)	go over the steps and the strategies. (Isabella)
Acknowledge trauma	Awareness and acknowledgement of trauma specific to immigrant-origin students and their families	If you're dismissing her concern as that's just outrageous, then you're not getting the fact that when they lived in Iraq, their family members were killed. There's all this past trauma around violence and death. (Paul)	Then one of them was, "Migrant Coordinator, we were hiding when they came. They came out, and once we hid in the grass." Those stories. That breaks my heart because my children have to go through that. (Cristina)
Acknowledge difference	Acknowledgement of difference between immigrant-origin students/families and non-immigrant-origin students/families and/or an awareness of the differences amongst immigrant-origin students/families and working actively against the myth of a single story	Either a student hasn't been in an institutionalized school setting—they haven't been in school, or the type of school has been incredibly different. With Student 9, she's coming from San Francisco. It's not like they haven't been in schools, but the immigrant families, who come here, there's a huge gap…then we have other kids that are coming from Pakistan that have never been in school. (Paul)	I don't know that the speaking part isn't cultural because I know the ESOL kids are usually quieter than the non-ESOL kids and I've had Hispanic friends tell me that part of their culture is that the children are to be quiet. That's just what they do. They don't look you in the eye. There's just certain things culturally that they don't do, and I think as a district, we've had to educate our teachers and you know, this child's not being disrespectful, this is just how this child was raised. (Bailey)
Family life	Descriptions of how immigrant families live,	Also, I think, from a family perspective, some of our families	Generally speaking in our community Hispanic families are

	what values they hold, what struggles or needs they have, and how they relate to schools	who are recent immigrants, just parents need a little bit more help just navigating, what resources can I access? How do I get them? How do I get supports? Whether it's from a mental health perspective or more concrete supports. How do I get supports to help my transition as an adult having made this huge move to another country? (Lila)	more family oriented and are taught a little bit differently like we were raised in a household. Black females, there's a lot of single income families here, a lot of single parent families. Unfortunately, a lot of families with mother's with more than one dad with a kid in the household. (Eric)
International context	Discussions of international contexts that immigrant-origin students and families are coming from	There is a direct impact of that of what countries are favorable to the US to allow into the US. We will see that trickled into this town in a way that I think just really reminds me that we're all connected. An earthquake in Nepal meant I got two Nepalese families in the town. There's this real connection. There's this real feeling of what's happening in the world, we will see reflected in our community that way. (Raquel)	With my migrant, I used have more migrant student because more people was coming from Mexico for work and we knew they were migrant if they work at agriculture, and they quality for migrant if they move across school state—not state, but county lines—and if they're coming from Florida or North Carolina, anywhere in the United States, and they work any type of agriculture: poultry, fishery, anything, plant. (Cristina)

National context	Discussions of how national context, especially around federal immigration policies and rhetoric, are impacting immigrant-origin students and their families	I think [national immigration policies] have such a huge impact. Absolutely, I think families don't feel comfortable engaging for all kinds of reasons, not feeling welcome, feeling fear about what might happen. I think that's really pervasive. It's pervasive across different groups. In addition to not feeling comfortable asserting oneself, I think there's also sometimes a fear of just coming in the building. (Jacqueline)	These kids are hilarious because they just come to school and they say exactly what their moms and dads have said, you know, whenever we were having the election and Donald Trump got elected, these kids went crazy because they were just convinced they were all gonna be deported. (Bailey)
State context	Discussions of how the state or regional level context affects the schools with its policies, guidelines, or another support mechanism for immigrant-origin students and their families	With multitiered systems of support, that whole thing, we're supposed to be doing universal screening…We pay for the technology to do the universal screening and then also just having the time to go into all those classrooms, that's something I never would've had the capacity to do at District 2 schools that I was at. I think that's one way that the resources have a huge impact here. I think Illinois is trying to get all schools to do this, eventually. I	I guess growing up here, being in the South there's a lot of racism and all. I feel this community, I dunno, do try to help each other a lot. If somebody needs something, we'll try to step in and help. There is a lot. I've experienced discrimination and all. It's expected in the South. (Isabella)

		don't know what that will look like, just because of capacity issues. It's a huge help. (Jacqueline)	
Local context	Discussions of how the local context, in terms of political leanings, economics, and cultural awareness, affect the schools and its immigrant-origin students (or the kinds of supports available for immigrant-origin students/families)	I know in my previous district, if I had made a decision to do something like that as a school district, I would have gotten a lot of flak from a lot of people in the community. It wasn't as a liberal leaning community. Here, I would probably get more applause from a parent group, from parents for doing that kind of thing. (Andrew)	I had two years ago a local businessman that graduated from this system, that made a comment that he didn't wanna pay any more taxes because he didn't see any products from school systems doing anything for this community. (Lucas)
Government mandates	Examples of how the school district has to comply with federal and/or state mandates around instruction or services for their immigrant-origin students	We also now—we are by law required to offer bilingual Spanish in this building because we have over 20 students across K-5 that were identified on the home language survey as being exposed to Spanish. If you checked off "Spanish is spoken in our home," even if your child only speaks English, your child is now listed as a Spanish-speaking student, and that's counted in that number. We have over 20 kids that are counted	For the state, mm-hmm. For the state program. Then Person 7 is a new resource coordinator that we have, and she will come and monitor me in the class—observe me to make sure I'm doing everything. It's just protocol for the state department, and she will come and make sure that I'm doing—she will come and see the students, and check all my paperwork. I have a lot of paperwork. Middle school I have

		as Spanish speakers. Some of them don't speak any Spanish at all, and so we're trying to navigate how to meet the legal requirements of us offering bilingual Spanish, but then also not having students that would benefit from need of language instruction. (Misty)	to—you saw me in that room. I have three file cabinets. Everything have to be locked. Everything is confidential. I have forms that I have to do. (Cristina)
Access to resources	Examples of resources, both physical and service-oriented, that the school, town, community, or state provides for immigrant-origin students and their families	Something I've done in the past is I've taken my newcomer students to the Town 1 Public Library on a field trip, and I've invited parents to come along just so they can see it as a resource and get an idea of what the library can help you with. You can find books in your language. I think that was very successful. (Claire)	We have a lot of support. Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development. We are a workforce development committee that is regional. We are working on something called a college and peer academy concept with a grant that really pulls in post-secondary. We've got four colleges that have agreed to work with us. There are several regional manufacturing groups. (Lucas)

Appendix C

Examples of Reflective Memos for RQ1

August 4, 2020

In July I read through all 20 interview transcripts, coded them, and wrote analytic memos. The Georgia data was definitely different from the Illinois data. The Georgia educators had less nuanced understandings of their immigrant-origin students. They held asset-based views about them – that they are hard-working, care about education, and are well-behaved. The main form of support for Hispanic students came in the form of language services. Poverty did not just overlap with having an immigrant identity. The majority of students, regardless of immigrant identity, were from low-income backgrounds. Thus, the services provided for students and families are not disproportionately used by immigrant families. I sensed an underlying discourse that immigrant families are grateful to be in this county and in this school system. There is a sense that they wouldn't have these opportunities in their home country. So is the national fear and exclusion a "price" to pay for educational opportunity?

There is a sense that educators cannot influence the political rhetoric regarding immigration. They do what they can, more so with students than with families. There is definitely a lack of Hispanic educators and staff. Perhaps as generations age, immigrant-origin students will become teachers that live and work in this community. There is something in the community that keeps people here. Perhaps it's the poverty, but maybe it's the familiarity with each other. There is a sense that hate is out there, but not in this community.

By viewing one's job as a life purpose given by God, the educators work to be compassionate and loving towards their students. Maybe even the Hispanic students are "easier" to love because they are seen as willing and eager to learn, in comparison to their white and black counterparts. If anything, Hispanic students are seen as assets to the detriment of other non-immigrant students.

The use of language is interesting. The immigrant-origin students are referred to as Hispanics, migrant kids, or ESOL kids. By not using the term immigrant, has the community distanced itself from national immigration rhetoric? If your neighbor is not seen as an immigrant and rather as a Hispanic, migrant worker, or language learner, are you more likely to divorce your political views from your personal relationships? If so, you can continue to see immigrant students and families as assets while supporting federal policies that harm immigrant communities.

Being in a rural area, there is a sense of isolation from ideas and theories. Most educators were born, raised, and educated in Georgia. Their immigrant students, while "stuck" in trailer parks, have traveled longer distances than many of them. Isabella and Cristina are the only two interviewees that have immigrant identities. They had a deeper understanding and insight into immigrant families that was decidedly different than the

insights offered by the other educators. The district relies on them to engage Hispanic families. They are both empowering them and letting them do the thinking that perhaps more educators should be doing.

Isabella was the only person I spoke to that was pushing for more culturally relevant pedagogy. Most of the other educators mainly said that they love what they do and try their best each day. There is perhaps a lack of vision on how to better support immigrant students not just language-wise, but beyond. I can't help but think how crucial Isabella's presence is in this district with a growing population of Hispanic students. Her allies—Bailey, Lucas, and Meredith—will be critical members on her mission to transform the district into a more actively inclusive one. However, I hope there is also work to include and empower black voices. Whiteness is such a norm in places like Georgia and it will take time to incorporate and embrace discourses that are authentically humanizing and sustaining for immigrant children.

August 5, 2020

Writing about the Illinois data. I distinctly remember feeling more comfortable and at east during my visit to the Illinois district, in comparison to my visit to Georgia. The population is more diverse there so I didn't stick out like a sore thumb.

Reading through the interviews once again, I was struck by the inquiry stance that many of the educators took. They questioned their own practices and their districts' practices. They didn't act like they knew everything. In fact, they were willing to say that they weren't doing everything well and willing to learn how to better engage their immigrant families.

More of these educators, in comparison to the Georgia folks, shared specific stories of immigrant students and their families they have worked with.

Another difference is that many of these educators have worked and lived in bigger cities. In comparison, most Georgia educators had lived and worked locally for most of their lives.

There is definitely a difference in outlook in the educators from two different places. Each educators' own life experiences probably greatly influence how they make sense of their immigrant students' experiences and consequently, the ways in which they interact with the students.

Appendix D

Axial Coding Process for RQ1

Illinois Data

Codes→	Major ideas→	Main themes
• Acknowledge trauma • Acknowledge differences • Barriers • Demographic descriptions	Acknowledgement of challenges and barriers facing immigrant families	Educators acknowledged that immigrant-origin students face unique challenges from their non-immigrant-origin peers.
• Specific stories • Family life • Compassionate view • Practices to support immigrant-origin students	Making sense of immigrant families' experiences by working directly with immigrant families	All educators felt responsible to make sense of their immigrant-origin students through an inquiry-based orientation.
• Asset-based view • Embracing diversity	Working with immigrant families and viewing parent as assets	
• Growth-oriented view • Culture shift	Inquiry-based orientation towards both their role and students	
• Past professional and personal experiences • Local context	Expansive worldview coming from personal and professional experiences	Many educators made sense of their immigrant-origin students through their own personal and professional experiences with immigrants and immigration.

Georgia Data

Codes→	Major ideas→	Main themes
• Serving all students • Demographic descriptions • Access to resources • Practices to support immigrant-origin students • Colorblindness	The whole community, not just immigrant students, is marginalized due to poverty and lack of resources	Educators viewed immigrant-origin students as not significantly different from their non-immigrant-origin peers.
• Local context • Government mandates	Poverty as a unifying factor	
• Role orientations • Specific stories • Acknowledge trauma • Acknowledge difference • Family life	A few key Hispanic educators have deeper insights into immigrant families.	Educators relied on 2 key Latinx educators to make sense of immigrant-origin students and families on a deeper level.
• Past professional and personal experiences • Compassionate view	A sense of purpose and mission drive educators to serve all students in creative ways	Most educators did not have personal experiences with immigration but made sense of their relationship to their immigrant-origin students through their Christian faith.

Appendix E

List of First-level Codes for RQ2 Analysis

- Advocacy
- thinking beyond just language
- Equity in positions
- Advocacy structure
- Advocate for good teaching
- Change takes times
- Past model - pull out IL
- Dedicated to EL
- Holistic Approach IL
- Equity
- Title III language
- External organizations for immigrants IL
- Building educator capacity
- Inclusion
- EL program creation IL
- Learn English in order to access content
- Focus on Equity IL
- Outdated language
- Mirrors focus on English proficiency (LEP) - GA
- Focus on lack of English proficiency
- Multilingual Home Language Survey (MLL HLS) Amendment GA
- Valuing multilingual/bilingual GA
- State and District Text GA
- Lack of focus on immigrant children GA
- GA Title III Consortium
- Screening for GA ESOL students
- Migrant children
- Culturally and linguistically competent
- Tiered support approach for whole GA state
- State culture shift
- Accountability
- ACCESS score GA
- College and Career Readiness GA
- Barriers for Migrant Youth
- Evolving definitions
- Specific data on IL migrant youth (academic)
- Service delivery plan for IL migrant population
- Mirroring individual educator discourse
- Mirror Fed Discourse
- Engaging Families
- IL specific subgroups
- Testing for newcomers
- IL Demographics
- Growth
- Concrete EL practice goals
- State Vision
- GA Demographics
- Sound educational programs
- 3 pronged test to EL services
- Ensuring compliance
- No certain model required
- equal educational opportunities
- Protecting people from discrimination
- Right of EL student to equal education (civil rights)
- Specific website dedicated to immigration resources
- Concrete suggestion for use of immigrant subgrant

- LEA gets more $ for having significant increase in immigrant population
- Culturally responsive practices
- Federal rules trump state and district policies in this case
- Stringent requirements on how to notify parents of EL status
- Specificity on how immigrant children might differ from others
- Title III is supplemental
- Who is included in supporting EL students
- States and LEAs establishing EL educator PD/training
- Importance of EL Educator Training
- Value: State autonomy
- Agency of states to determine EL teacher training
- Foster and maintain bilingualism
- States and LEAs choose own service delivery model
- Change in federal policy
- Services depend on context
- Evaluate EL program
- Communication with LEP parents
- Assessing and monitoring ELs
- Training Staff
- Barriers for immigrant students
- Equal Opportunities for ELs
- including ELs
- Legalese
- Relying on Expertise of Latinx Educators
- Acknowledging diversity of EL group
- Acknowledging challenges facing immigrant-origin students
- Immigrant students being the same as all students
- Asset based view
- The Four Stages of Immigrant Parent Involvement
- Core Stressors for Newcomers
- Offering supports or services that are not culturally responsive
- Acknowledgement of influence of sociopolitical context
- Influence of sociopolitical context
- Key Attributes of Dual Language Education Programs, by Program
- Educating for global competence: Preparing our youth to engage
- Characteristics of Effective Practices to Engage Newcomer Parents
- Concrete school practices that we may take for granted
- Specific practices and mindsets
- Highlighting practices in specific schools
- Inclusive practices
- Building relationships
- Distinctions within one ethnic group
- Differences other than language
- Needs of immigrant students and families
- Specific stories of immigrants
- Immigrant demographics
- Challenges for newcomers
- Distinction between different waves of immigrant
- Role of schools to help newcomers
- Issues affecting education of ELs
- Equal Opportunity
- Federal Department Mission
- English Language Proficiency
- SEL
- Welcoming Families

Appendix F

January 11, 2021

Document: Non-Regulatory Guidance for ELs and Title III (federal)

- Parts of this document mention seeing bilingualism as an asset. This view mirrors the IL discourse more than the GA discourse, although Meredith did mentioned how she doesn't want the immigrant students to become Americanized. Seeing bilingualism as an asset helps position immigrant students and families as having assets, rather than just deficiencies that need to be addressed through programming or services. It good to see a federal level document taking this asset based approach instead of trying to stay "neutral" about language.

April 20, 2021

Document: Non-Regulatory Guidance for ELs and Title III (federal)

- It was tough to stay concentrated and read through this entire document. It is very technical in how Title I and III funds should be used to support ELs. The audience is definitely not the average educator. It is directly toward policy makers on the State level – who gets into these jobs? And what do they think about as they read this non-regulatory guidance in conjunction with actually reading through ESSA?

  However, the document got surprisingly more interesting to read as it went on. It was really interesting to see how the discourse is driven by performance and results. I see that reflected in how the educators talk about their EL students. Of course, because this document is a high level one, there are not many details about context or specific situations that district may face. The document does acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of immigrant students. It stresses that the districts and states are legally held accountable for providing an effective and equitable education for its English Learners. The responsibility in this case falls on the States to figure out how to effectively use the funds from the federal government to support ELs. It is clear that there is not one way to use the funds and the states or LEAs need to figure out what service delivery model or LIEP works best for them. This document shows how the federal government is setting a tone of accountability but I am finding that the accountability is supported by a vision and rhetoric of equity for all students.

This following excerpt helped me to better understand why EL teachers are so focused on student growth. “At a minimum, LIEPs should be outcomes-driven; an LIEP should demonstrably result in improved English language proficiency and academic achievement for ELs to be considered “effective” for purposes of the Title III requirements.” This makes a lot of sense now why the EL teachers in both IL and GA were very focused on student growth. The programs need to be outcomes driven. Since the focus is so much on outcomes, do educators then "naturally" focus first on the deficits of these students that need to be addressed? And if the focus is mainly on academics or language proficiency, then are people not seeing immigrant students holistically for their needs?

May 10-11, 2021

Document: Newcomer Toolkit (Federal)

- The following excerpt is built on the assumption that the immigrant students already have cultural and linguistic backgrounds that can be expanded and strengthened. “Expand and strengthen opportunities for cultural and linguistic integration and education.” This newcomer toolkit decidedly takes an asset-based approach. The asset-based approach is more forward and explicit than it was in the non-regulatory guidelines on ELs and Title III document.

  It took me a few hours to read through this newcomer toolkit. I enjoyed reading the practical activities that the toolkit provided for professional development. I think it would be beneficial to use a resource such as this in our PIECE project. The activities definitely help to build capacity and shared understanding about how to best serve immigrant students. Newcomers are definitely seen as assets and there are very concrete things that schools can be doing.

  The best audience for this seems to be administrators or other educational leaders. I’m not sure though who has actually read this and uses the exercises. There must be a steep learning curve for educational leaders as they serve populations that they haven’t served before.

Document: English Learner Toolkit (Federal)

- Like the Newcomer Toolkit, the audience for this document are state, district, and school leaders.

  This document is pretty comprehensive and I think can be useful for leaders of SEAs, LEAs, and schools. There are a myriad of tools the leaders can use as they

work toward providing equitable opportunities for their English Learners. There are definitely compliance issues that are addressed, but most of the tools are meant to help leaders better understand and serve their immigrant populations.

Overall, it takes an asset based approach toward immigrant students and their families.

There is an inquiry orientation because many of the tool kits are about asking certain questions of yourself as a leader and of the people served. Again, the documents are directed toward educational leaders, who should put structures in place for on-the-ground educators to serve students well.

There is an acknowledgement that ELs need extra support and attention, but there is also the "mandate" that they are not unnecessarily segregated and integrated into the fabric of the school. This juxtaposition shows the first IL theme and the first GA theme. So we need to both acknowledge the challenges and differences of immigrant students AND include them in the mainstream flow of a school. There needs to be a balance of the approaches. I can see in IL how EL students have felt segregated from the other students since the district does not have a push-in model. I would best describe the IL model as an eclectic one. Newcomers seem segregated into EL only classes for all content-areas while more developing language learners only have EL classes for perhaps English class (and are in general education classes with an SEI certified teacher otherwise). At least this is the case on the junior high level. In the elementary schools, there are some classes that are non-EL students only (Gen Ed), some classes at are a mix (Gen Ed Plus), and some classes that only have EL students (ESL). Perhaps the goal is to have mostly Gen Ed Plus classes, but the district doesn't yet have the staff capacity to do this. There aren't enough staff with ESL certification and the school district doesn't want to let go of existing staff because of this (and there are probably union issues too).

Physical segregation of ELs does not seem to be the case in GA because they have a push-in model where students are part of the classroom. However, for testing, the EL students are placed in their separate classroom where the test is read aloud to them.

Getting back to the English Learner Toolkit document, I think it adds to a discourse of compliance that ultimately supports the vision for a more equitable school system across the board.

Document: Dear Colleague Letter: ELs and LEP parents (Federal)

- This document was hard to get through...much like the other Department of Ed documents. However, it had clear, concrete examples of how the rights of ELs and their parents can be violated as well as how to remediate this violations. States and LEAs have to be very mindful of their programming and their accountability structures so that they don't break any rules. The main goal of these accountability structures is to provide equitable educational opportunities for ELs. The federal education department's rhetoric is decidedly different from the Trump era federal administration's anti-immigrant sentiment. There are laws protecting immigrants despite the terrible rhetoric that made them feel unsafe. The Trump government was not able to undo all of these protective laws - thank goodness.

May 12-13, 2021

Document: Immigrant Students' Rights: Fact Sheet (State – IL)

- This document states how schools cannot ask for immigration status or any information that would give away immigration status - this probably arises from the non-regulatory guidance for immigrant pupils. The Fact Sheet is translated into 7 different languages besides English. This document shows that the State doesn't just pay lip service to honoring different languages – it puts actions behind these words by actually translating its documents so that the documents are more widely useable.

  There is an air of advocacy here as the state acknowledges that undocumented immigrants may be uncertain about their rights. It's one thing to have protections but another to actually be knowledgeable about protections that exist.

Document: Parent Handbook: Guide to Schools (State – IL)

- This is a very helpful guide for immigrant parents who want to know more about the public school systems. It's written in English so it may be difficult to access for parents who do not speak English, but at least the information is all housed somewhere. There are a lot of basic facts or practices that people who attended US schools may take for granted that everyone knows. Although this was created by the Illinois State BOE, it would be helpful to immigrant families in other states as well.

  Like the Immigrant Students' Right Fact Sheet, there is a sense of advocacy for families who may not be knowledgeable about how schools work in America.

Document: Resource Manual for Educators: Serving ELs with Disabilities (State – IL)

- This document mirrors the federal document "Serving All Students: With Focus on ELs and Children with Disabilities". There are chapters written by educators based in Illinois with practical "advice" based on research. There is a more local understanding of the specific challenges faced by ELs, especially those with disabilities.

Document: Non-regulatory guidance for Immigrant Pupils (State – IL)

- This document makes it clear that LEAs cannot ask questions about immigration status and partake in any actions that may have a chilling effect on the families. It also notes that funds are available for districts with a large influx of immigrant students. Again, there is a stance of advocacy coming through. It feels genuine and really targeted towards supporting marginalized populations. The fact that the State wrote its own guidance speaks volumes to the State owning its own vision for how to treat its immigrant population, separate from the federal government (although basically supported by federal laws).

Document: IL Plan for ESSA (State – IL)

- The first 100ish pages include the state plan for ESSA but then the equity plan follows. I wonder if GA also has an equity plan. The plan looks pretty sophisticated and robust. It's about a 100pages. Then the migrant education program identification and recruitment manual follows that. MEP was created in 1966 as an amendment to Title 1 to the Elementary and Secondary Art of 1965. The document clearly identifies multiple barriers faced by migrant children and youth.

  There is a critique of NCLB, which I did not see in the GA plan for ESSA. While at face value it looks like IL may not be aligned then with the federal discourse, IL actually has more alignment with the federal government. It's ironic that even though it is critical of the federal government, IL is probably more authentically moving towards equity for all students in its state. In comparison, it looks like GA trying its best to comply. IL does not seem as worried about compliance and more concerned about doing the right by the kiddos.

May 13-14, 2021

Document: Language Instruction Program for ELs (State – GA)

- This document clearly lays out the different options for service delivery models for ELs. It also has information about funding, class size and teacher

training/certification. I have to figure out where manual this five pager comes from and if IL has some similar to this. It's a pretty clear menu for districts to choose from when trying to decide which service delivery model to adopt.

Document: Resource Guide to Support Districts' EL Programs (State – GA)

- This document helps LEAs comply with the federal requirements of their EL programs, especially in regards to HLS, entrance/exit assessment measures, reporting, and timelines. This language is very similar (but not exactly the same) as the language posted by the GA district on their website. The language is compliance oriented – telling LEAs what they need to do in order to be legally compliant. The first section of the document is titled "Federal Laws" and lays out all the laws that the state and the LEAs need to follow. There is no leading with a state vision or empowerment of districts to lead with their visions.

Document: GA Plan for ESSA (State – GA)

- Something I noticed from the beginning is that there is no Table of Contents for this Plan, so it was harder to follow than the IL document. There is no cohesive vision presented, at least from the get-go, as IL did.

  Wow, big observation – IL recognizes officially in their state document that immigrant children and youth is a special subgroup. However, GA does not. GA does focus on migrant students and EL learners, but only because the federal government requires them to do so.

  IL seems more sophisticated in its ESSA document than GA. This sophistication is reflected in the individual educators' discourse. It's really cool to see how state level discourse does actually affect district and individual level discourse. I'm sure that the state context in general affects how individuals speak and act. With a stronger (more wicked) legacy of slavery and intolerance, it makes sense that the South may not be as far along in the path to realizing equity for all students. There's just more damaging rhetoric and ingrained biases about CLD students to "undo" in this area. I am probably biased as a non-Southerner, but the evidence at least for this study is showing that there are stark differences to the approaches taken by the different states.

  Also really interesting was the admittance that the GaDOE has not always been the most helpful towards LEAs. This makes me think - maybe LEAs need their states to not be super aligned with the federal government -- they need someone more on their side and understanding their context. GA SEA has aligned more

with the compliance language of the federal government -- not on supporting the LEAs, at least historically. The good thing is that there is an awareness of this past. The state is trying to shift from compliance to actually providing the support that the districts need - culture shifts take time so it means that the educators have gotten used to the compliance culture and it will take time to understand & feel that the state is giving high quality support to the schools

May 18, 2021

Document: District Webpage for English Learner Services (IL)

- This webpage gives an overview of the new EL program design, as well as the steps taken to decide upon this design. EL program was created in coordination with many people in the district, not just unilaterally by one person.

  There is a rationale behind why the design is as it is as well as expected outcomes. There are detailed explanations of the K-5 level instruction and the 6-8 instruction. There is a focus on including English Learners in mainstream activities so that the "stigma of pullout instruction for a majority of ELs will be reduced". The language on this page is straightforward and informative. I don't see particular stances towards immigrant-origin students other than the vision to improve their educational opportunities (equity) and to include them into the "mainstream", which is to say that they should not be unnecessarily segregated from non-ELs.

Document: District's Board of Education Policies about English Learners and Migrant Students (IL)

- Parental involvement is written into the district policy language here. The document about ELs says that parents/guardians of ELs will be "given an opportunity to provide input to the program" and "provided notification regarding their child's placement in, and information about, the District's English Learners programs. The document about migrant students says that the migrant education program will include a means to "provide parents/guardians an opportunity for meaningful participation in the program." This seems really important that parental involvement/engagement is baked into the language of the district policies. I didn't see this kind of language in the GA district's EL-related webpages.

Document: District Webpage for Information about Immigration and Citizenship Services (IL)

- On the district webpage, there is a list of community organizations, with hyperlinks, that immigrant-origin families can learn about. No doubt, Raquel is behind the creation of this webpage. The existence of this webpage shows that the district is aware of the diverse backgrounds of the students and hopes to engage families through these organizations. By getting them more resources or more social capital, the rationale might be that immigrant families will feel more connected to the community and also more empowered to connect with the schools through their voices.

Document: Interview with Marie, director of EL Services (IL)

- Unlike the director of EL services in GA who has experience in general ed teaching and athletic administration, this director has been dedicated to the language learning field for almost forty years, at the time of the interview. She started with bilingual ed and helped to create a bilingual preschool. She has worked at the state level working with immigrant students. At this district, she is building the infrastructure and being patient for the change to take place, while still having a sense of urgency to change the system, which had a lot of room for improvement.

  She advocates for her immigrant families not only through improving the EL program but also posting information on her Twitter for both families and educators. There is definitely a recognition that life is not easy for some of the immigrant families and that she and the district have the power to help them have a better life experience. She thinks about the children and the family holistically, understanding that supporting them goes beyond just giving them language instruction services.

Document: District Webpage for Title III-A LEP and Immigrant and Title I-C Migrant Education Program (GA)

- The language of this district is not updated to reflect new ESEA (ESSA), which uses English Learner instead of Limited English Proficient (LEP). Maybe the district figures that not a lot of people are checking out their district website's information about Title III programming, especially if the immigrant parents/guardians cannot yet read English. That seems problematic. Even if the district thinks that people might not be checking them out, they should keep their website more current. But perhaps the person in charge of the website has not prioritized this even though Meredith has asked them to change the language. There is a lot I don't know about how information gets updated on a website.

I also noticed that Cristina's name and contact information is posted on the Migrant Education Program page, which again shows that the district relies on her a lot to connect with families. There isn't a contact person for the ESOL programs. You would think that if information was posted about the Migrant Education Program liaison, there should be information posted about the director of ESOL services, which is actually the assistant superintendent of student services.

I am noticing that GA does not have the MEP and ESOL programs as part of their BOE policy manual. I clicked through their whole policy manual and did not find a dedicated portion as I found in the IL district's BOE policy manual. This omission shows that the district may not consider the ESOL or immigrant population as a special population in need of specialized support OR that they don't feel like they have the resources to provide specialized support. The latter is probably true to a certain extent in that there aren't very many staff trained to work with the ESOL population. There also aren't very many bilingual staff.

In comparison to the IL district webpage, there is very little actually said about the immigrant population or the diversity in the GA district. I wonder if it feels safer in this district to not bring attention to itself as an advocate of immigrant families. There are definitely undocumented people living in this community and maybe it feels safer to have more compliance oriented language and unify all students under the label of poverty than to single out the immigrant population. After all, the state's own governor ran on a "Track and Deport" plan that was more aligned with the Trump administration's anti-immigrant sentiment.

Instead of just labeling the GA district as unsophisticated or not doing all that it can for immigrant-origin students, it's important to remember holistically the context that it is operating in. That way, I don't just denounce or vilify the people in this GA district. I think their hearts are in the right place in that they want the best for all students, but I do think there is a lack of critical reflection on what "best" is. There definitely needs to be more engagement of immigrant parent voices, but I know that the district just struggles in general to get parental engagement. Actually, it is the immigrant parent group that shows up more frequently to school-related events. In this way, it seems like the immigrant families have revitalized perhaps a stagnating district.

Document: Interview with Meredith, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (GA)

- Rereading through this interview after reading the federal and state level documents, I am more aware of how quickly Meredith quoted the number of

ESOL and migrant students as well as their achievement data. I realize that in the Title I regulations, there is probably a lot of data reporting and that Meredith is steeped in these numbers. While the IL district has probably been thinking about how to educate immigrant students since the early 1900s, the GA district has just gotten an influx of newcomers in the last 20 years. That's really not that much time. While Meredith is trying her best to understand the immigrant students and families and provide appropriate services, she's also providing services to all other students in the district. It could be a strength that she can see all the services holistically, but also a detriment that she is not able to dedicate more focused attention on the subgroups. Since she oversees all programming for subgroups, it makes sense that she would try to lump all students together to see how programming can reach all of them. With limited resources, this tactic makes sense. This "all students" mentality was reflected in almost every interview I had with the GA participants. It was definitely there from the first interview I did with the superintendent, Lucas.

I remember in the Colormute book by Mica Pollock, she talks about the danger of the "all students" rhetoric as it can be a form of erasure or ignoring the actual marginalization of culturally and linguistically diverse students. I think this might be related to what some people referred to as a post-racial society after Obama was elected as president. There's a sense of "Oh, we've moved past racism and harm coming from identity differences." Or that we never have had those kind of problems. But I'm thinking that they have maybe never dealt with talking about racism in a deep way. It probably doesn't feel comfortable and therefore is avoided by having this external language of inclusion.

Appendix G

Federal

- Looking back at the federal documents, there is definitely a difference between the ESSA and the educator toolkits. There is a lot of what I coded as "legalese" in the ESSA and its companion documents such as the non-regulatory guidance for ELs and Title III. Although the ESSA does champion equity, there is a kind of neutrality to the language in that there aren't any specific stories about immigrant-origin students or their families to create a narrative behind the laws that are supposed to lead to more equitable opportunities. However, the Newcomer Toolkit and the EL Toolkit both take an asset-based view towards immigrant-origin students in that they recognize the linguistic and cultural strengths that immigrant-origin students bring to a district.

  Ultimately, what ties all the federal documents together is the focus on equity and creating equitable opportunities for all students, especially students who are marginalized due to poverty, disability, language, and/or immigrant status. Of course, the federal government is interested in keeping states accountable for following through on creating equitable opportunities. By keeping states in check, they ultimately protect students because without the accountability, some schools may "get away with" not serving all students equitably.

  It will be important to note in the findings that the federal discourse on immigrant students is very different from the federal discourse on immigrants and immigration coming from the Trump administration. Instead of curtailing the rights of immigrants, the federal education department protects the rights of all students to a free and equitable public education, no matter what their immigration status is. So kids may be protected but their undocumented parents might not be. There is definitely a difference in how children and their parents are viewed by the federal government, but in reality, children and parents live under the same roof and their circumstances affect each other.

  So the defining discourse for federal level discourse, at least in the education arena, is about setting the vision for equity. At the "highest" level of the accountability, the federal education department has to be clear about the standards that they are holding states to and providing detailed explanations for how to meet these standards. The language is at many times dry and detailed, but helpful for state-level policy makers who may be wondering how the federal government is defining equitable and/or effective for students.

State – IL

- The ISBE's stance towards advocating for the rights of their most vulnerable immigrant students (those who are undocumented) was very clear, especially in juxtaposition to the GaDOE, who had less public documents about immigrant students' rights. The Immigrant Students' Rights fact sheet makes it clear, in many different languages, that the state will support any undocumented students in their right to access a free public education. The Parent Handbook makes it clear that the state wants parents informed and thereby involved in their children's schools.

  The advocacy of their immigrant students seems to stem from a deeper knowledge of the challenges the immigrant-origin students and their families face as well as from the state's own vision of equity AND advocacy. The ISBE seems meet and go beyond what the federal government has laid out for the state. In this way, there is an equal power sharing between this state and the federal government. The ISBE views itself as an equal partner that can have a debate with the federal government rather than a lower level entity that takes orders from a higher level entity. I wonder if other states have this kind of dynamic with the federal government. The GaDOE seems to have more a subservient relationship to the federal government.

  What factors influence the power dynamic between the state and federal level policies and rhetoric? I would think this has a lot to do with who is actually working at the state level policies as well as the federal level policies. Perhaps the state level employees in IL have more of an advocacy background than the state level employees working in GA or in other states.

State – GA

- As I alluded to in the narrative about the ISBE's defining discourse of advocacy, the GaDOE has more of a discourse of compliance and subservience to the federal government. However, embedded in the state's plan for ESSA was a recognition that this role of compliance monitor has not served the state and its LEAs in the goal of providing equitable opportunities for all students. The GaDOE recognizes that in order to improve experiences for students, the state needs to improve upon its relationships with LEAs by being more supportive than adversarial.

  Overall, the GaDOE does not have as clear or strong of a voice as the ISBE when it comes to advocating for its students or engaging their families. The GaDOE is still trying to figure out how to be an authentic partner to its LEAs. I suppose it will take time to build these relationships and build dialogue about what the state and the LEAs want to see in their schools.

  Contextually, as Georgia may be a newer immigrant destination, the GaDOE may be in the earlier stages of making sense of their immigrant-origin students experience and how the schools can best serve their needs. As the state serves more students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the hope is that it also becomes increasingly nuanced and sophisticated in its language about its visions and supports for immigrant-origin students.

  Also, Georgia is in the South, which has a tougher legacy of slavery and intolerance in general. Although public schools are known to be places of non-discrimination, they still exist in a society where discrimination exists. Therefore, there may be mismatch between policies in theory and policies in practice. Of course, individual level educators probably do not discriminate or act intolerant in explicit or even intentional ways, but it is probably safe to say that some level of discrimination or intolerance may be implicitly coming through in their actions.

District – IL

- Marie, the director of EL services, explicitly said in her interview that she sees herself as an advocate for immigrant-origin students and families. She understands that they are often times the most vulnerable families in the district and do not always have the means to advocate for themselves. Knowing their struggles and needs, she sees it as her job to figure out what they need and make steps toward providing for those needs. Looking back at the interviews holistically, many district level and school level staff pointed to the creation of the coordinator of family services and engagement position. This position was created to not only advocate for the families but to engage them in ways that immigrant families have not be engaged in the past. There is an acknowledgement that the immigrant families' voices are not always included in the district level discourse. This is because some families come from a culture where their voices were not expected to be heard in schools and also because some families do not have the knowledge that their voices are welcomed in the school. So the district acknowledges that they aren't yet doing the best they can do in engaging their immigrant families in authentic ways and that they want to improve.

  The information provided on the district webpage about the EL services, the migrant program, and immigration/citizenship services show that the district is making information about the school and immigration-related services accessible to the families. By making this kind of information more transparent, the district allows parents to engage further with the district. Without knowing what is going on inside the school walls or without knowing what their rights are, parents are probably less likely to engage with the school.

  In the district webpage and through the interviews, the IL educators show that they not only advocate for the immigrant-origin students, but they also are working to engage them and their families more deeply. They want to not only provide services, but they want to provide services that are culturally relevant and responsive to the students'/families' needs. The district is working to empower their immigrant families. Raquel, the director of the EL Parent Center, sees much of her programming as a women's empowerment program because she helps immigrant woman who are usually at home to get jobs in the schools. As the incoming coordinator of family services and engagement, Raquel will bring this stance of empowerment of families into the district, at least on the leadership level. I would need to talk to families and students to actually know about the impact of this new position. Does creating a new position change immigrant families' experiences or does the change need to be more all-encompassing in that

all staff should be included and educated about engaging families more authentically?

District – GA

- The district webpage did not give much information about the services and programs geared toward immigrant-origin students. The information given was in language that is similar to federal and state level mandates regarding the services necessary to be provided to immigrant-origin students. In this way, the district reflects the discourse of compliance that the state has adopted in the past, even though the state is trying to move away from simply complying with federal policies. Since this district is a Title I district, it also makes sense that the language/discourse would reflect federal level discourse. There are probably many rules and regulations that the district needs to follow since they are getting most of their funds from the federal government. This is probably different from the IL district that gets funding from its strong tax base. Therefore, the IL district probably has more say in how its money is used in comparison to this GA district.

  However, it seems that the information on the district webpage is not current, as the language for ELs services still reflects the language of the NCLB, not the ESSA. The lack of up-to-date attention to immigrant-origin students as a specific subgroup of students reflects the district's general attitude that immigrant-origin students are not that different from all their other students. In this way, immigrant-origin students are included into the whole student population. Is this inclusion seamless? I would suppose not, even if the educators insisted that there is a seamless inclusion of their ESOL students.

  What makes me think that the defining discourse of inclusion is problematic? My perspective is tied to the interview data analysis, which found that the district relies heavily on the 2 Latinx educators interviewed to make sense of the immigrant-origin students. If the students were truly included in the whole student population, I would think then the whole staff would take more ownership for making sense of the immigrant-origin students' experiences. This mismatch in words and actions makes me think that educators are not thinking deeply about what it means to authentically include immigrant-origin students into their district.

  On speaking about the service delivery model (push-in) for the district, Meredith mentioned that immersing students in the English language helps them to acquire the language faster. She compared this model to a situation if she were to go to China, she would learn Chinese faster if she were immersed in the Chinese language. While this is probably true, I found the comparison too simplistic. In China, she would probably be viewed in a positive light since she is from America and her interactions with others would be more positive than negative;

this assumption stems from my own experience of how Koreans relate to white Americans. There would be probably be more curiosity of American culture and a two-way exchange between her and native Chinese may occur. However, in America, there has been a “looking down” on Hispanic or Latinx culture, as evidenced by the rhetoric during the Trump administration. Thus, when students are included into the mainstream English speaking culture, is there culture being honored as well or is there a whitewashing happening? According to Isabella, she felt that the curriculum forced her to forget her language and her culture. This piece of data points to the problems that may arise in taking an inclusive stance, which can seem very positive at the surface.