Boston College

Lynch School of Education

Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education

Professional School Administrator Program

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT TO PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Dissertation in Practice by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
May 2022

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by

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**Abstract**

This individual case study is part of a larger group study examining how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools. Specifically, this study sought to understand what organizational and individual factors contributed to principals' decision-making about implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies in a large, urban school district in Massachusetts. The research team interviewed a total of 21 participants, including central office leaders, principals, and educators. The study found that principals use a variety of factors to make sense of DEI policies. In particular, they were responsive to organizational changes instituted by the central office, notably the creation of an executive team to lead the district's DEI initiatives and the first ever district-wide professional development day dedicated to DEI. While most principals indicated that they believed in the work of the DEI office, there was less evidence that they were self-reflective about their role in how to implement DEI policies. Further, the data suggested that principals made few individual decisions to take action with regard to the DEI policy implementation. However, coupling organizational learning with research on policy implementation shows that self-reflection and individual learning stem from individual sense-making of organizational changes, and that these changes become cyclical and ongoing, leading to greater implementation.

## Acknowledgments

This dissertation in practice would not have been possible without the guidance, candor, and sense of humor of Dr. Vincent Cho, the chair for Team inVINcible. Additionally, our mentor and reader Dr. Maryellen Brunelle's encouragement made the process seem possible from day one, while reader Dr. Maureen Kinney provided clarity when we were caught in the weeds. Importantly, the wisdom, patience, and kind words from our editor, Katherine Harper, made everything seem easier.

In addition, I must acknowledge my colleagues of Team inVINcible, along with their families. It has been my honor and privilege to write such a pithy dissertation with you, Dr. Marc Banks (the chief of staff), Dr. William Hahn (the comedian), Dr. Erica Herman (the process person), and Dr. Christine Landry (the relationship person). Tuesday nights will never be same.

Finally, I am immensely grateful for the support of my family, especially Leslie, Debbie, Ben, Charlie, and Lily, who cheered me on every Sunday and graciously wore Boston College gear even in Southern California heat. To my partner, Michael, and his family, Susan, Steven, Anna, Joe, Auntie, and Uncle, you have been supportive beyond measure. Thank you for feeding me every week, for fixing things around the house, and for teaching me Italian. And, last but not least, my daughter, Sofia. When started our cross-country adventure, you took a leap of faith and did so with aplomb. Look where we wound up—because everything happens for a reason.

**Dedication**

This dissertation in practice highlights the importance and multiple roles of principals and their influence on others. I was lucky: the most significant principal in my life is also my mom, Susan Hill. She unselfishly and singlehandedly lifted my sister and me up on her shoulders where we would stand steadfast in love, grounded by values to celebrate diversity and equity, and a commitment to remain in service to others.

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**CHAPTER 1[1]**

**PROBLEM STATEMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Statement of the Problem**

Principals matter to the success of schools. They play a critical role in supporting student achievement; attracting, developing, and retaining educators; and creating a culturally inclusive community (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004; Levin et al., 2020). Furthermore, the job of the principal is intensifying in terms of its complexity, volume of responsibilities, and increased accountability (Pollock et al., 2015, Wang, et al., 2018). High-stakes accountability for student achievement, increased school choice options, the adoption of the common core standards, and revised teacher evaluation systems have added to the intensification of the role (Pollock et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2021). Moreover, a heightened attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion nationally has dramatically added to the work of the school principal (Grissom et al., 2021). Given the increasingly complex and sometimes competing measures for success that principals are expected to meet, it should come as no surprise that the principalship has seen increased job stress, higher turnover rates, and elevated transfers from urban schools (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012).

We contend that the goal of education is to ensure that every student is successful in school. Therefore, every school must have a strong principal. Unfortunately, many school districts and policymakers have relied on superhero behaviors displayed by school principals, reinforcing strategies that are not sustainable or scalable, leading to high principal turnover and high burnout (Ikemoto et al., 2014). The average tenure of a principal is a mere three to four years (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Our study is important because the principal's role has

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[1] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Marc A. Banks, William R. Hahn, Erica M. Herman, Christine L. Landry, and Lauren M. Viviani.

intensified; therefore, the conditions for hiring, supporting, and retaining school principals need to change in order to see dramatic and sustained improvements in schools. Yet, in the literature, empirical research focused on the strategies to effectively hire, support, and retain principals is still evolving (Grissom, 2021). As a result, our research team sought to contribute to the literature and to inform practice through exploring how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, their relationships, and their abilities to make decisions.

## Literature Review

In order to better understand how the role of the principal is viewed and experienced today, this literature review begins with an overview of the demographics of our nation's principals. We then discuss the ways that principals matter, focusing on the impact principals have on student achievement, teacher quality, and school culture. We then review the ways that the principal role has intensified in the areas of accountability and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Following the literature review, we apply and extend concepts relating to professional capital to the principalship (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### Our Nation's Principals

While the students in our nation's schools are racially diverse, the vast majority of our schools' principals identify as White (Davis et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2017). Only 20 percent of the principals leading schools identify as people of color and there are gender disparities at the secondary level for women in principal positions (Khalifa et al., 2016; Tran et al., 2020; US Department of Education, 2016; Welton et al., 2015). The myth remains that the ideal leader for most schools conforms to a White, masculine stereotype (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). This incongruence is important to note because studies have found that diversifying the role of school

principal by gender, race, and ethnicity has positive influences on students and overall school success (Castro et al., 2018; Fuller et al., 2019; Grissom et al., 2021). Despite the importance of diversifying the role, studies have indicated that leaders of color face systemic barriers, bias, and discrimination when they are trying to enter the principalship (Guthery & Bailes, 2021; Sanchez et al., 2008). As well, principals of color continue to be placed in more urban, racially, ethnically and economically diverse schools with less funding and fewer school resources (Tillman, 2004).

**Ways in Which Principals Matter**

Principals matter greatly to the success of their schools (Cruickshank, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2020). Effective principals develop strong relationships within the school community among adults, families, students, and community partners. Loewenberg (2016) describes the principal's role as the anchor for high-quality implementation of education reforms. Leithwood et al., (2020) argues that the principal plays a critical role in supporting student learning, structuring the school setting and mediating external demands. As experienced educational leaders serving as school principals and district administrators, we strongly agree with Leithwood et al. (2020) that principals make a significant impact. King Rice (2010) argues that the importance of principals has long been recognized by educators and researchers; however, empirical studies on the effectiveness of principals have been undermined by the lack of data on principals' complex work and their impact on schooling. When it comes to the importance of principals, we highlight three important areas: student outcomes, teacher retention, and school culture.

First, principals are important to student outcomes because they create clear educational goals, influence high quality instruction, and supervise the delivery of rigorous and relevant curricula (Cruickshank, 2017; Gajda & Militello, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Loewenberg, 2016; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). Branch et al. (2013) found that principals increased

achievement levels of a typical student within the school in a single year, while ineffective principals actually lowered achievement within a similar time frame. While teachers are the number one influence on increased student outcomes, effective principals make developmentally appropriate teaching a top priority, in effect, making greater student outcomes far more likely to occur (Cruickshank, 2017; Loewenberg, 2016). This means that effective principals need to prioritize their time to visit classrooms, observe instruction, and provide feedback to improve the level of instruction students receive. Consequently, principals who do not increase outcomes for students as measured by standardized tests face increased sanctions, which could include removal from the role of principal and increased job stress (Li, 2015; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). Therefore, increasing student outcomes must be a top priority for school principals.

Second, principals matter through their influence on educators. Specifically, principals matter in how they hire and retain effective teachers as well as develop and encourage educators to create strong conditions for teaching and learning in the classroom (Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004). Nationally, 16 percent of public school teachers leave their schools annually (Burkhauser, 2017), therefore demonstrating the need for principals to develop the knowledge, skills, and relationships to effectively work with their teachers to retain them in their roles. When teachers leave, there are multiple negative consequences, including reduced teacher quality, decreased student achievement, and interrupted family partnerships (Brown & Wynn, 2007). For these reasons, principals must support teachers to improve their work through a culture of excellent instruction, a professional community of shared norms and values, and a culture of trust (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). Principals also create the workplace conditions that enable teachers to have a strong sense of self-efficacy and perform at their best to remain in the field (Huberman et al., 2012). This is particularly true in urban school settings where principals

need to provide professional development focused on developing educators' knowledge and skills to teach within a diverse school setting (King, 1993; King Rice, 2010). Furthermore, principals are responsible for creating the conditions for collaborative structures that support teacher effectiveness and retention, such as professional learning communities and mentoring (Berry et al., Brown & Wynn, 2007; Leithwood et al., 1999). As such, principals influence student learning through their ability to foster collegial relationships among educators and within the different stakeholder groups across the school community (Berry et al., 2021).

Third, effective school principals are responsible for establishing school cultures that focus on student learning and foster culturally responsive school communities (Khalifa et al., 2016; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). The culture of a school is defined by the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges (Jerald, 2006). A strong school culture is one where members routinely connect around shared problems and goals (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). In order to establish a strong culture, principals must be honest and transparent with decision making, especially in the context of addressing issues of race and racism in schools (Rivera-McCutchen & Watson, 2014). Principals create strong, trusting, and inclusive learning environments for students and for the adults by fostering a climate of continuous growth, empowering staff, students, and families to assume leadership roles, and making data-informed decisions (Banwo et al., 2021; Levin, 2020). While these findings add weight to the argument that principals matter in establishing a strong school culture, Bryk and Schneider (2002) argued that the need to improve school culture, climate, and interpersonal relationships has received too little attention in research, practice, and policy. The components of the work that contribute to

the ways in which principals matter are also the components that have led to the intensification

of the role.

**Intensification of the Principalship**

The principalship has intensified over time, mimicking societal changes. Research on

work intensification illuminates a conception of nested expectations and responsibilities that

continue to expand (Pollock et al., 2015). This phenomenon is true for principals. As new

demands are placed on school principals, the old responsibilities persist, making the sheer

number of tasks to be completed in a day nearly impossible (Hallinger, 1992; Rousmaniere,

2009; Kafka, 2009). Over time, the position of the principal has ranged from disciplinarian to the

lead change agent in schools, and everything in between. At its core, the job of a principal is that

of a middle manager who both implements the vision of the central office and advocates for the

individualized needs of educators and students (Honig & Coburn, 2008; Pollack et al., 2015).

While principals are still responsible for managing buses, budgets, and buildings, principals

today are also overseeing the most dramatic shifts in public schooling in more than a decade

(Grissom et al., 2021). As outlined below, we contend that the two greatest shifts in the

principalship center around accountability and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

*Accountability*

Accountability measures have contributed to the intensification of the role of the

principal. There is higher accountability for teaching and learning outcomes with major

repercussions on schools and on the principals themselves for not meeting these accountability

targets (Daly, 2009; Pollack et al., 2015; Kellar & Slayton, 2016; Knapp & Feldman, 2012;

Seashore & Robinson, 2012). The increased accountability on schools emerged from the fears of

parents that their children would not be prepared for the changing economy, sparked by the

release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). The report provided an alarmist

message about the state of American education if immediate changes were not taken to focus on

outcomes over inputs (Murphy, 1994). Although *A Nation at Risk* has been widely questioned for

its inaccuracies and dramatic tone, its key role in shifting the focus to student achievement has

had a lasting and, some would argue, positive impact on public education and the role of the

principal (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012; *A Nation at Risk*, 1983). Others have argued the

increased pressures arising from the focus on outcomes as measured by standardized tests has

had negative influences on schools, including increased job stress, high turnover of principals

and teachers, and negative school cultures (Daly & Finnigan, 2011; Ford, et al., 2020). Further

reports developed in the 20th century highlighted that our schools were failing to support

students, especially students of color, to achieve on standardized measures of core subjects,

resulting in the push for greater accountability for schools and principals (Daly & Finnigan,

2012; Hallinger, 1992; Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012).

### *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

A focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion has intensified the work and expectations of

principals, especially as they educate the most diverse student population in our nation's history

(Ingersoll et al., 2019; Khalifa et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Pollock et al., 2015; Segeren

& Kutsyuruba, 2012). Specifically, a renewed focus on culturally responsive practices and DEI

policies have emerged as priorities for schools and districts. The structure for DEI initiatives

often begin with school leaders, specifically, by providing educators time and tools to engage

with each other and new skills to address implicit biases and explicit racism (Bristol et al., 2021).

As the research around implementing DEI policies and culturally responsive practices continues

to evolve and grow, school principals are tasked with the immense responsibility to address these

challenges and respond appropriately to meet the needs of students and staff. This additional focus is an important aspect of the role, but another condition that intensifies the position. Because of the significant intensification, further research is necessary to investigate how principals use professional capital in their roles to meet the complex demands of the principalship.

**Professional Capital as an Organizing Framework**

Our research team used professional capital as the conceptual framework for our study because each aspect of professional capital, taken individually, was a useful framework that provided synergy for our individual research problems (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Professional capital is defined as "the systematic development and integration of three kinds of capital—human, social, and decisional" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. xv). Although Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) primarily conceptualize professional capital in terms of teachers, our team took into account the literature on the importance of the principals and therefore used professional capital to focus on building principals. Our research team sought to expand the conceptual framework to include building leadership to identify how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, their relationships, and their abilities to make decisions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). We used the diagram below (Figure 1) to capture how professional capital is a product of three dimensions of capital and how they amplify each other (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). We further defined each kind of capital within this conceptual framework to fully address our research problem and how it relates to the principalship.

**Figure 1**

*Professional Capital, Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012*



### Human Capital

In the practice of education, human capital is the knowledge, skill and expertise necessary for educators (Spillane et al., 2003). Similarly, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) explain human capital in education as having the skills and knowledge to carry out your role, combined with the desire to continually improve in support of all students. It is the emphasis on education and content knowledge that is crucial to the development and success of all professionals. Examples of human capital in education are measured by college degrees, advanced coursework, or types of teacher or content level certification (Sanders et al., 2018). Human capital is the accumulation of knowledge and skills over time, which suggests that seniority, years of experience, and participation in professional development like peer evaluation or mentoring, all improve productivity and effectiveness (Daly et al., 2020). Moreover, in their definition, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) challenge the idea that human capital can be developed in isolation, which brings us to the next form of capital.

*Social Capital*

Social capital can be understood as the ways in which individuals use resources and social relationships to increase success (Finnigan & Daly, 2010). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) credit economist James Loury and sociologist James Coleman as early influencers of social capital. According to Coleman, social capital exists "in the relations among people," a statement he confirmed in his late-1980s studies of Catholic and public school dropout comparisons (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 90). Bryk and Schneider (2002) go a step further when they claim that these relations and trust between teachers and students have a direct correlation to increased student achievement. Districts that intentionally provide opportunities for teachers and principals to foster relationships and engage in meaningful collaborative experiences build social capital. Professional learning communities that promote trust, respect, and mutual regard among novice and experienced educators also promote social capital (Sanders et al., 2018). By building social capital, leaders better support their staff through the development of trust that leads to improved efficacy (Daly et al., 2015; Myung et al, 2011). The development of knowledge and skills through collaborative relationships leads to decisional capital.

*Decisional Capital*

The final category of professional capital is acquired through experience, practice, and reflection to make wise decisions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Using decisional capital requires individuals to draw on the insights of colleagues in forming judgments and is solidified through interactions with peers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Ultimately, decisions improve when educators collaborate with colleagues and apply their professional expertise from experience in the field. Decisional capital is important to principals as they make discretionary judgements between the managerial and instructional imperatives of the role (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012;

Leithwood, 1994). The principal's obligation to promote and enhance both human capital as well as social capital within their buildings is an added charge that principals must undertake as part of their ever-expanding job. Building principals that are able to use their professional judgment and collaborative relationships to effectively make decisions have demonstrated that their discretion is crucial in leadership (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### Professional Capital and Our Individual Studies

The conceptual framework of professional capital relies heavily on the work of Hargreaves and Fullan. It should be noted that while Hargreaves and Fullan did not invent any of these individual kinds of capital, it is their multi-dimensional approach that best summarizes and connects to our study. Their definition of professional capital recognizes the complex and evolving nature of education, while providing a framework for this research on the leadership of school principals. Fullan (2013) notes, "the role of school leaders is to build 'professional capital' across and beyond the school. All three must be addressed explicitly, and in combination" (p. 26). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) offer a powerful concept that brings these three kinds of capital together by developing individual human capital, fostering social capital, and promoting decisional capital that will cultivate and empower educators.

Given the three components of professional capital, and the ways in which they intersect with one another, we argue that using professional capital as a framework to study principal leadership better correlates with the intensifying demands of the role, the relationships needed to be successful in the role, and the adaptive changes needed for long-term success in inclusive schools. Therefore, districts should invest in school leader development by creating the conditions for principals to shape and benefit from professional capital (Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo, & Hargreaves, 2015). Each of our individually authored studies explored the dimensions of

professional capital with regard to principal leadership. Specifically, Banks (2022) studied leadership strategies that impact educator of color retention considering human capital; Hahn (2022), using a social capital framework, studied the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment; Herman (2022) examined district strategies that influenced principal retention, combining human and decisional capital; Landry (2022) examined the organization of social relationships and their impact on principal efficacy, while considering social capital; and Viviani (2022) studied principal decisional capital and its impact on policy implementation. Table 1 reflects how the individual studies fall under the umbrella of our overarching research statement. Given the influence of school leadership, providing each school a strong principal should be a top priority of every district (Cruickshank, 2017; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood, 2004).

**Table 1**

*Five Studies on How Principals Benefit from and Shape Professional Capital*

| Author/Year | Title | Research Questions |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Banks (2022) | The Principal's Influence on the Retention Educators of Color | 1. What leadership strategies, if any, do principals use to support the retention of educators of color in the Elody Public School District? <br> 2. Why do those educators of color remain in their district? |
| Hahn (2022) | The Individual Journey of the Building Principal and its Impact on Recruitment | 1. How do principals make sense of how they became principal? <br> 2. What influences a building principal's decision to recruit, "tap," or recommend a potential school leader? |
| Herman (2022) | Culturally Responsive District Strategies to Retain School Principals | 1. What strategies, if any, does the district employ toward the retention of school principals? <br> 2. How, if at all, do these strategies influence a principal's decision to remain in their role? |
| Landry (2022) | The Influence of Relationships on Principals' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy | 1. In what ways do districts organize and encourage relationships with and among principals? <br> 2. To what extent do strong relationships with central office leaders and other principals impact principals' feelings of efficacy? |
| Viviani (2022) | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Implementation | 1. What are the organizational factors that contribute to principals' decisional capital about DEI policy implementation? <br> 2. What are the individual factors that contribute to principals' decisional capital about DEI policy implementation? |

**CHAPTER 2[2]**

**METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by five researchers who were interested in investigating how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools (see Table 1). The data collected for this study contributed both to the overall findings as well as each individual team member's study. As a team, we worked together on a majority of the pieces of this investigation; therefore, in the following sections we discuss the shared methodological approaches to our study, including the case study design, site selection, data collection, and data analysis. Any methodological approaches specific to an individual study are discussed in the individual chapters. In addition, for the purposes of confidentiality, we gave the pseudonym Elody to this district.

The five members of our team employed a qualitative case study design, which "generates theories based on participant perspectives" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 63). This allowed us to collectively examine how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools. This case study was bounded because it focused on one urban school district, Elody, in Massachusetts during the Fall of 2021.

**District Context**

Our team selected the Elody Public School District using purposeful sampling. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) define purposeful sampling as intentional selection of "individuals and sites to learn or understand [a] central phenomenon" (p. 206). With both our team and individual studies in mind, we engaged in purposeful sampling related to four specific criteria. First, we wanted to conduct our research in a large, urban public school district that employed at least

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[2] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project:
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several principals in similar grade bands. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Elody School District met the criterion for size with 15,265 students and 22 principals. Having multiple principals across grade bands allowed our team to investigate any similarities or differences across buildings with reference to principals benefitting from or shaping professional capital to improve their schools. Second, we wanted a district with five or more educators of color. According to the DESE, Elody met this criterion as the number of educators of color in this district in the 2021-2022 school year was nearly 23 percent. This particular criterion was necessary, as one of the individual studies focused on how principals shaped their professional capital to help improve the retention of their educators of color (Banks, 2022). Third, we wanted a district that was implementing at least one policy across schools. The superintendent identified several policies that were being enacted across the district that were suitable for our study. It was important to include this criterion in our purposeful sampling as one of the individual studies focused on how principals shaped their decisional capital with regard to policy implementation (Viviani, 2022).

We ultimately chose Elody because it fit all of these criteria and it did not establish any conflict of interest for any group member. We also noticed that this district did not use the typical phrasing and acronym for its diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the same way as its peer districts across the Commonwealth. As a result, we referred to Elody's work on diversity, equity, inclusion in this specific order, using the acronym DEI where appropriate.

**Data Collection**

Our team collected data throughout the Fall of 2021. Data collection is, of course, critical for approaching the central purpose of our research study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Our data collection plan included gathering multiple sources of data in order to make sense of both

how principals shape and benefit from professional capital. In the next section, we describe the data sources we used, which included semi-structured interviews and documents.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Our team used a semi-structured approach for all of the interviews in this study. A semi-structured approach enabled our team to dig deeper and collect data in a guided way that allowed for some structured variation depending on the participants' answers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In the following sections we describe the interview participant selection process, the interview protocols, and the interview process itself.

*Interview Participants*

Our team interviewed 22 participants from a variety of roles within Elody. While a majority of the interviews were conducted in person, some were done via Zoom because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Though the focus of our overarching study was on building principals, in order to gain a better understanding of their role and how they benefit from and shape the three dimensions of professional capital we included district leaders and educators to support the individual studies. Table 2 illustrates the role and number of participants who agreed to take part in our study.

**Table 2**

*Interview Participants*

| Role in District | Number of Participants |
| --- | --- |
| Superintendent | 1 |
| Central Office Administrator | 5 |
| Principal | 8 |
| Educator | 7 |
| Total | 22 |

We began our study with convenience sampling of each of the participant groups, which was the selection of participants "because they [were] willing and available to be studied" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 143). As our study continued and we established relationships within the district, we then used snowball sampling, "a form of purposeful sampling that typically proceeds after a study begins and occurs when the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals to be sampled" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 209). Additional differing sampling methods are explained in the individual studies.

As seen in Table 2, we consulted several types of personnel beyond principals. We began by interviewing the superintendent and five other central office administrators, all of whom agreed to participate in our study. Through our initial interviews, we identified a central office leader who assisted our team in reaching out to the principals to interview. Our group understood that some principals would not be available or willing to engage in this study, which is why we contacted all 22 principals in the district. As for educator selection, we contacted 12, seven of whom agreed to be interviewed.

### *Interview Protocols*

These interviews were the main source of our data collection. The semi-structured approach was best for the purposes of this study because it accomplished two tasks: allowing participants to voice their opinions through open-ended questions and examining the answers more deeply with clarifying probes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Examples of probes are included in our interview protocols (See Appendices A, B, C, and D). To prepare for these interviews, we piloted our interview questions with educators in similar roles to those being interviewed who were not a part of this study in order to assess their comprehension. Based on the feedback, we modified a few questions. For example, instead of asking an educator how the

principal used professional capital to influence their desire to stay, we changed the question to be more colloquial and straightforward. We asked, "Does the principal do anything that makes you want to stay?"

These semi-structured interviews were done in person or over Zoom during the months of August through December 2021. The interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes in duration. All interviews were audio-recorded, except for one individual. This person declined to be recorded for personal reasons. In this case, we typed notes to capture the participant's responses. Whenever possible, our research team conducted the interviews in pairs, but there were a few occasions when the interviews were conducted singularly because of time commitment and scheduling challenges. Our goal in conducting these interviews in pairs was to make sure that we captured as much of the information as possible.

In these interviews, we gained greater understanding and insight from the participants regarding how principals shape and benefit from professional capital. In thinking about the team's overall topic and our individual case studies, we decided to create differing interview protocols based on the position the interview subject held within the district (refer to Appendices A through D). Given that each team member analyzed how principals shape and benefit from professional capital through a different lens, we included a question alignment key that identified the question as either general or one that aligned to a particular individual study. This ensured the team addressed the needs of each individual study.

### *Documents*

Prior to and during the interviews, we asked the participants for documents related to the individual studies. The documents requested related to the administrative internship program and DEI policy implementation. Of these requested documents, our team only received the DEI

policy manual. As well, during the interviews, many of the administrators at the district and principal level also referred to the recently completed district review by the DESE. As a result, we also reviewed the DESE's report as part of our study. This type of purposive sampling of documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) allowed the team to examine how principals used or benefitted from professional capital in their leadership. We excluded any documents not related to the individual studies.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense or meaning of data that have been collected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This section describes our approach to analyzing the collected data in order to answer our team's overarching inquiry. The research team engaged in weekly reflexive discussions that contributed to critical thinking and analysis and to ensure group calibration. We used a data management tool for organization, categorization, and coding of data. Further, we utilized a cloud-based document to record our weekly meetings, where we shared our thoughts, hunches, and speculations as they came to mind throughout the data analysis process (Saldaña, 2013). This shaped our group's work by helping us stay focused on the key tenets of professional capital throughout the analysis process. These two systems allowed the group members to synthesize our individual analyses by discovering common themes and topics in our findings across studies. These commonalities informed our collective understanding, conclusions, and impressions.

As we collected and analyzed the data, our team was fully aware of not only the trust that was placed in us by the participants in this study, but also the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to keep information confidential. With this in mind, we preserved confidentiality by keeping all data collected on a password-protected cloud-based server,

accessible only to the researchers of this study. In order to maintain the privacy of all those involved, we assigned pseudonyms to all participants and the district itself from the beginning of our study. We then maintained a pseudonym key for each of the participants in a password-protected file. We continued to use Zotero, our research reference organizer, updating folders as we proceeded with the study.

## Interview Analysis

In order to analyze interviews, we each used a variation of an iterative process of condensing, coding, codifying and then categorizing responses to interview questions to aid the analysis and synthesis of codes that emerged (Saldaña, 2013). Interview analysis processes unique to individual studies are discussed in Chapter 3 of each individual authors' respective dissertation-in-practice. The resulting themes, categories, and findings addressed our research topic and were exhaustive, mutually exclusive, as sensitive to the data as possible, and conceptually congruent (Merriam &Tisdell, 2016).

## Document Analysis

Similarly, we analyzed the documents and identified themes that we coded to support the validity of the interview data. Just as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note, "What someone tells you in an interview can be checked against what you observe on site [and] what you read about in documents...you have thus employed triangulation" (p. 245). For example, checking included looking for similar themes in a document or listening for similar words and codes in interviews for congruence. Ultimately using a document review protocol (see Appendix I), we analyzed documents, which allowed us to verify information we gleaned from interviews to complete our research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

CHAPTER 3[3]

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Implementation**

**Statement of the Problem**

As school principals' roles have expanded in the 21st century (Bridwell-Mitchell & Sherer, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Russell et al., 2017; Spillane et al., 2003, 2018; Wahlstrom et al., 2010), their responsibilities have grown exponentially. Principals are expected to engage in various types of leadership—instructional, managerial, and transformational (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). As such, principals are a key conduit to policy implementation (Coburn, 2005; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Spillane et al., 2002) and it is well documented that they have a compound effect on teacher practices that lead to improved student outcomes (Davis et al., 2017; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2010; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). District leaders and principals provide structures and allocate resources to advance teachers' knowledge to support the implementation of new classroom practices and implementation of policy (Coburn, 2006; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Moolenaar et al., 2011).

However, principals who misunderstand the intent of a policy can muddle teachers' learning, especially related to the implementation of necessary policies and evidence-based practices and curriculum. Coburn (2006) studied a large urban district implementing a new reading curriculum and discovered that principals have the power to mitigate the implementation of district policy by the way they frame the problem and establish learning structures for teachers. In fact, principals and teachers use problem framing and sensemaking to "socially construct and reconstruct policy problems through social interaction" (Coburn, 2006, p. 348). Further, a principal who is skilled at problem framing can influence teachers' behavior and motivation for the better in reform implementation. Additional studies have been conducted that

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[3] This chapter was written individually by Lauren M. Viviani.

demonstrate the importance of principals' leadership in implementing educational policies and

creating safe and supportive learning environments (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Boies & Fiset,

2019). Furthermore, professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) supports the view that

experience, growth in knowledge and skills, and social relationships influence how professionals

perform their duties, including making decisions. In addition, the role of district leaders and their

relationship to building administrators is critical. For these reasons, the role and influence of the

interplay between district leaders, principals, and school staff, especially with regard to the

decisions they make, cannot be understated.

Importantly, since the death of George Floyd in 2021, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

(DEI) has become increasingly relevant in school districts' practices and policies. In the past

decade, there has been an uptick in the creation of DEI policies and practices in school districts

(Bristol et al., 2021). As school committees set DEI policy and superintendents and central office

leaders design systems to enact that policy, building principals are left to ensure these policies

are implemented in classrooms. It is important to learn which organizational and individual

factors, through their thoughts and actions, contribute to principal decision-making about DEI

policy implementation.

Previous studies focused on how principals make sense of district policy and on the ways

leaders support policy implementation (Spillane et al., 2002; Coburn, 2005). By studying the

factors that lead to the decisions of principals and their interaction with district leaders and

school staff, the present study will fill a gap in the research in two ways. First, it will contribute

to evidence regarding principals' decisional capital and how principals use their experience in

decision-making. Second, it will contribute to the literature by examining the ways in which

principals make sense of district DEI policies and what kinds of decisions principals are making

to ensure district DEI policies are implemented in their buildings. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand how principals make sense of how to implement new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies in an urban school district.

This study is guided by these research questions:

1. What individual factors contribute to principals' decision-making about DEI policy implementation?

2. What organizational factors contribute to principals' decision-making about DEI policy implementation?

<div align="center">**Conceptual Framework and Relevant Literature**</div>

This qualitative study is guided by the coupling of two theoretical constructs: decisional capital (an aspect of professional capital) and sensemaking. Decisional capital builds on the processes of sensemaking. Below, I outline the strategies for implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and the necessary individual factors that people should employ which propels the implementation of those policies. Finally, I describe the ways in which sensemaking and decisional capital provide an organizing structure for this research study.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies are important so that the values, identities, and experiences of students and staff are included and valued in the culture of their schools and districts (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012). While DEI is not new, school districts are drawing renewed attention to it by creating policies to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in response to national events, such as the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was killed under the knee of a police officer in 2020. While the literature related to DEI policy in schools is sparse, the literature that does exist describes three necessary components for successful

implementation. These components include strategies for enhancing individual factors, especially introspection and self-reflection (including the role of whiteness and white privilege); strategies to enact organizational change; and ways for individuals to connect socially and professionally (Bristol et al., 2021; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; McMahon, 2007; Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012). According to the authors, and in alignment with research in organizational learning (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Nonaka et al., 1998; Orlikowski, 1996), each one of these components, through an interactive process that provides for continuous individual learning and group sensemaking, advances organizational changes. These organizational changes happen through the establishment of communities of practice that lead to incremental changes in everyday behavior. Similarly, the implementation of DEI policies happens through self-reflection, communities of practice and affinity groups.

Further literature suggests that the structure for DEI initiatives often begins in the central office. As Bristol, et al. (2021), describe in their working paper, strategies for successful implementation of DEI policies include: 1) forming communities of practice; 2) increasing staff ability to assess "will, skill, knowledge and capacity of the organization" (p. 3) and 3) providing ongoing training and use of an equity toolkit. Additional examples of activities district use include organizational changes, such as changes in organizational charts, creation of new DEI offices, and ways districts provide professional development (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012).

**Individual Factors that Contribute to DEI Policy Implementations**

Individuals who are charged with ensuring DEI policies are implemented must have a fundamental understanding of the ways race, racial identity, and bias affect their relationships with others (Friere, 2000; Welton et al., 2015). As individuals engage in critical self-reflection about their social identity and their views about race, their ability to actively engage in DEI work

increases as their ability to understand how their views on race may contribute to implicit biases. For principals, this is especially important because the student body of schools are increasingly diverse while the racial makeup of staff and principals remain largely White (US Department of Education, 2016). Further, the traditional color-blind or multicultural approach that has been common in school districts has hampered individuals' understanding of how to address the complexity of race (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012; Welton et al., 2015). This is critical because, as Friere (2000) asserts, in order to eliminate bias and oppression, leaders must think critically about systemic inequality. In order to do this, individuals must be willing and able to examine their beliefs about the role of race and engage in deep reflection about their biases (Friere, 2000; Swanson & Welton, 2019). Principals must learn to improve their racial fluency, first through critical self-reflection, and then engage in discussions with others about race (Swanson & Welton, 2019). It is through this ongoing dialogue and self-reflection that understanding occurs in principals, eventually leading them to feel more comfortable in identifying and actively eliminate racist tendencies in themselves and racist practices in their personal interactions.

**Sensemaking**

Sensemaking is the way people organize and interpret actions, data, and ideas to learn or generate their own ideas and then act based on those ideas (Coburn, 2006; Coburn et al., 2009; Honig & Coburn, 2008; Weick, 2009; Weick et al., 2005). Weick (2005) describes sensemaking as the "interplay of action and interpretation rather than the influence of evaluation on choice" (p. 409). This framework assumes that learning is socially constructed through language and experience and sensemaking is nuanced in the difference between how leaders make sense of a situation (Weick, 2009). This is further illustrated by other organizational learning theorists who describe the ways in which people learn and thus take action to create or do something new.

Learning may take place in a school or other formal setting, with an instructor presenting explicit knowledge of a topic (Nonaka et al., 1998). This is also known as canonical practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991). Knowledge may also be shared among people in a tacit or noncanonical manner using socially constructed practices and decisions. Individual sensemaking leads to individual changes and thus becomes the foundation for organizational changes. Professional learning communities, networking meetings, and problem-solving meetings such as the case consultancy model, are good examples of individuals trying to make sense of a particular issue or problem, then coming together to discuss in formal and informal ways to find better ways of addressing the problem.

**Organizational Changes**

Organizational change literature demonstrates that as organizations grow, they must adapt and change to address their members' needs (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Nonaka et al., 1998; Orlikowski, 1996). Individuals in the environment are social beings, and social interaction, whether formal or informal, influences other individuals in the organization. These social interactions create culture. Organizations can influence the culture by creating systems and structures, such as learning communities. Additional, impromptu structures also create cultures. Slow and steady interaction causes individuals to learn, grow, and innovate. Nonaka et al., (1998) describe how tacit and explicit knowledge begin at the individual level and, through socialization and formal training, eventually become "prototypes for new products" (p. 151) and innovation. Brown and Duguid (1991) describe this growth happening socially and suggest that working, learning, and innovating in organizations should be seen as interrelated and happen best with communities of practice, both formal communities and, importantly, the structures that happen naturally and are organically organized by the workforce. That is, leaders should provide

structures for employees to learn and grow together in formal ways, such as formal training programs; but they should provide unstructured time for individuals to organically create systems for collaboration and informal networking.

Organizational changes that happen in public schools are usually conceived through the dissemination of district-wide policies and initiatives. The genesis of these policies can be viewed as reactionary or symbolic and attributed to the external pressures, including the political context of a city, or even the nation, as we saw with the renewed focus on DEI following the death of George Floyd (Honig & Coburn, 2008; Spillane et al., 2002). Sometimes school committees face political pressure stemming from accountability reports, which changes its policies (Coburn & Penuel, 2016). Policy changes often begin in the central office and are then disseminated to schools with the expectation that principals will ensure they are implemented in classrooms. Multiple studies have found that social capital, social interactions, the political landscape, individuals' roles, and the history of the organization influence how leaders implement policy (Coburn, 2006; Seashore Louis et al., 2006; Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012; Spillane et al., 2002). Specifically, Spillane et al., (2002) describe the evolving nature of policy implementation in their literature review in which they delve deeply into the implementing agents' sensemaking regarding policy implementation. They assert that the failure of a policy to be implemented is not because the implementing agent is rejecting the idea; but because the agent does not understand the purpose or the way a policy should be implemented. This signals that it is especially important to understand how principals make sense of new policy.

**Professional Capital**

As outlined above, sensemaking is necessary for individuals to figure out how to do new things. Sensemaking is integrally related to professional capital. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) define professional capital as an umbrella term that comprises three types of capital. The first, human capital, is the knowledge and skills people possess to perform their jobs. The second is social capital, or the relationships people have with one another. The final aspect is decisional capital, or the "ability to make discretionary judgment" (p. 93). Sensemaking informs decision-making which, as an iterative process, builds decisional capital (Coburn et al., 2009; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Weick, 2009; Weick et al., 2005). For example, professionals must practice using their judgment in complex decision-making situations, especially when there are competing priorities or directives. The authors further explain that decisional capital is at least in small part influenced by an individual's social capital, which is influenced by individuals' access to each other's human capital. Decisional capital grows over time and with experience. The more individuals practice sound decision-making using their experience and judgment, the better decisions they make. By practicing decision-making, professionals build their decisional capital, which in turn, builds their capacity to make better decisions. Given the various demands on school principals, using and growing decisional capital is critical as it empowers principals to "make wise judgements in circumstances where there is no fixed rule" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 94).

Principals must make a multitude of decisions in a single day (Claude Ah-Teck & E. Starr, 2014; Honig & Coburn, 2008; Shen et al., 2016; Tjan, 2017; Wang, 2020; Zeni et al., 2016). These decisions include, but are not limited to, those relating to personnel, curriculum, student discipline, family engagement, and policy implementation. In order to make effective

decisions, especially about policy, principals must first make sense of those policies and how to enact them. This is especially true for policies related to complex issues that are designed to promote equity, increase diversity, and enhance inclusion, especially when individuals are asked to face their own biases and acknowledge that old adages of "color blind" perpetuated inequity.

## Methods

I used individual and organizational sensemaking as a conceptual framework to investigate what individual factors, specifically their thoughts and actions, principals used to make sense about how they implemented DEI policies in their buildings; and how they were influenced by organizational activities and actors. The data analyzed here were part of a large research study as described in Chapter 2. The district studied is a large, urban district in Massachusetts, selected because they had begun implementing DEI policies across two or more schools.

In the section below, I explain how my positionality may affect the study. Further, I outline the procedures for participant selection, describe the methods for data collection, and processes for data analysis.

### Positionality

It is important to explicitly state that, as a White woman, my experience of race and of DEI policies may be influenced by the privilege I experience because of my race. Critical self-awareness (Khalifa et al., 2016) is essential to understand how a person's identity affects assumptions and understanding of others. While I have engaged in ongoing critical introspective examination about race and the role of whiteness, I am viewing this work from my vantage point with the associated White privilege. Therefore, by examining and explicitly stating my own identity, I was able to think critically about the social constructs of race and how I see them. For

this reason, I went to lengths to discuss my methods, research questions, findings, and discussion with both colleagues of color and White colleagues so that what I present here is as free from bias as possible.

**Participant Selection**

My research design began with purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) of district and school staff and included all willing individuals. The district's central office supported recruitment by introducing the research team via e-mail. If no response was received, the research team sent a follow-up email. During the central office leader and principal interviews, I engaged in snowball sampling, "a form of purposeful sampling that typically proceeds after a study begins and occurs when the researcher asks participants to recommend other individuals to be sampled" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 209) to obtain names of educators and other leaders who might be willing to participate in the study.

**Data Collection**

The research team collected data using two methods: 1) semi-structured interviews with district leaders, principals, and educators and 2) document reviews. Interview and document protocols can be found in appendices A and I, respectively.

The selection of central office leaders to interview included all willing individuals, for a total of six individuals. Eight principals agreed to participate, with 14 either declining or not responding to outreach. It is uncertain why these principals did not participate, but this could be attributed to the first return to school pressures following the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, it is possible that some individuals did not want to participate in conversations about DEI in general, or specifically about the DEI policies the school district was undertaking. The snowball sampling

resulted in seven educators' agreeing to participate and five declining. In total, out of 25 schools in the district, eight were represented in interview data, with 15 participants overall. See Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Interview Participants by Role and Participation*

| Role | Participated | Declined | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| District Leaders | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Principal | 8 | 14 | 22 |
| Educator | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Total | 21 | 25 | 46 |

### *Interviews*

I employed semi-structured interviews to engage with district leaders, principals, and educators to ascertain what individual and organizational factors influenced how DEI policies were implemented from each of their unique perspectives. The data included interviews from at least one principal at each grade range of school available (high school, middle school, and elementary school principals).

Further, I interviewed district administrators and educators and asked them to describe, from their vantage point, what factors principals were using to make decisions about DEI policy implementation. For example, one set of questions was designed to answer which individual factors principals used to make decisions about DEI policy implementation. These questions ascertained what kind of professional development the district is providing principals to increase their understanding of DEI policies and increase their self-reflection acumen. The second set of

questions was designed to determine how organizational factors contributed to principals'

decision-making about DEI policy implementation (Table 3). Specifically, what kind of activities

or action did principals take to promote the implementation of DEI policy. I have combined the

district leader, principal, and educator interview questions in the table below to show the

congruence among each protocol.

**Table 4**

*Semi-Structured Interview Questions with Corresponding Research Question*

| Interview Question | Research Question |
| --- | --- |
| 7. Tell me about your experiences with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?<br>    Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?<br>    Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?<br>    Probe: What do you know about Elody's[4] DEI initiative?<br>    Probe: What do you think about Elody's initiative? | RQ1, RQ2 |
| 9. What has your school done about implementing DEI?<br>    Probe: What do you think about the school's DEI initiative? | RQ1, RQ2 |
| 8. Based on what you know about Elody's initiative, how are you rolling it out in your school?<br>    Probe: How did you decide what to do about DEI in your school?<br>    Probe: How does DEI fit in your school mission?<br>    Probe: Who, if anyone, helped you decide how to implement DEI in your school?<br>    Probe: How do you make decisions about the competing priorities? | RQ2 |

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[4] Elody is the pseudonym for the district.

9. How does race impact your interactions with your staff?       RQ1
      Probe: Is there a story you can think of when you
      purposely had race at the forefront of your mind when
      interacting with one of your staff?
      Probe: If race doesn't, why not?

*Note*: RQ1: What individual factors contribute to principals' decision-making about DEI policy implementation? RQ2: What organizational factors contribute to principals' decision-making about DEI policy implementation?

### *Document Review*

Because the district's DEI policies were new, only one district-created document that described the DEI policy was available for review. This document was a small booklet that was given to each participant during the district-wide professional development (PD) day that was dedicated to introducing the DEI initiative in the district. It included an agenda and corresponding handouts which I analyzed to verify themes that emerged in the interview data. The document review protocol can be found in Appendix B.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis is an iterative process of condensing, coding, codifying, and then categorizing responses to interview questions to aid the analysis and synthesis of codes that may emerge (Saldaña, 2013). Furthermore, by using various qualitative evidence sources, including interviews and document review, to triangulate the data, a more complete and reliable analysis resulted (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I conducted interviews with district leaders and educators of color to obtain various viewpoints of a principal's decision-making about DEI policy implementation. Each interview was between 35 and 65 minutes. Fourteen of the 15 interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using an online transcription service; one

educator requested not to be recorded, so the team relied on handwritten notes. The transcripts were then uploaded to Dedoose[5], a web-based management tool, where the data was coded.

I began the iterative coding process by creating a coding manual and journal with the research questions and conceptual framework driving the initial codes, which included "organizational factors" and "individual factors." This journal allowed me to refer back to my coding to ensure consistency when applying codes to the interview transcripts. Following the first round of coding, I broke down the organizational category further by creating subcodes, including: personnel, curriculum, and the importance of the creation of the DEI office. For example, codes that were initially grouped as "organizational" were refined into "social," "symbolic," and "conceptual." The data initially coded as "individual" were further distilled to "the role of whiteness," "self-reflection," and "superficial." A specific example of the progression of the data codes is as follows: "the work is important, but I think people didn't really internalize the work" began as an "individual" code; it subsequently became "internal" and then "self-reflection."

Following the analysis of the interview data, I analyzed the district-wide PD Day document. I was able to verify the activities and worksheets that were often mentioned by the interviewees. I was therefore able to verify the interview data, which promotes validity and reliability of the analysis. Although this document was a draft and meant only for this school's personnel, it provided a written policy and purpose for the DEI office at the time of analysis.

### Findings

Sensemaking is a critical component of how and why individuals make certain decisions. Weick (2005) asserts that, following an event, individuals need to interact with each other and with the content of the event, in order to make sense of the event. The way individuals make

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[5] https://www.dedoose.com/

sense influences the culture and growth of organizations (Brown & Duguid, 1991). By understanding how individual sensemaking influences organizational learning, and how organizational actions in turn influences individual sensemaking, we can begin to understand how decisions are made.

From this analysis of the interview data, I found that principals use a variety of factors that contribute to their sensemaking about how to implement DEI policies. While most principals used both organizational and individual factors, specifically how they generated and acted on their ideas, the former were the greater influence in principal decision-making about DEI policy implementation. In the following section, I will explain which organizational factors were most critical in principal's decision-making and how individual factors, based on ideas and actions, were less influential.

## Organizational Factors

The data suggest that the following organizational factors are a precursor for principals' making sense of the district's DEI policies. Over time, external pressures and the context of the district led to the creation of a DEI office and associated executive staff, a district-wide PD Day, and updated hiring and personnel practices.

### *External Pressure*

Many central office leaders cited political pressure as the precipitating event for the creation of the DEI policies. The pressures they mentioned included the political context of the city, the school committee agenda, and the superintendent's desire to respond to the death of George Floyd by creating organizational changes to the school district. One leader stated, "there are a lot of outdated policies…the school committee represents old [Elody]." Another external pressure stemmed from a report issued by the state department of education following an in-

depth monitoring visit which revealed a lack of thorough policies, procedures, and systems to promote equitable learning environments. The publicly available performance data demonstrates significant discrepancies between outcomes for students of color, students learning English, and students with disabilities.

### *Creation of DEI Office and Professional Development Day*

The superintendent of the Elody school district, in collaboration with the school committee, created new DEI policies in the 2021-2022 school year, one of the key organizational changes in the district. Specifically, the district: 1) hired a new district-wide executive leader; 2) created an office dedicated to the implementation of professional development for teachers and student support for students; and 3) planned and conducted the first district-wide professional development day dedicated to the DEI initiatives. This organizational change was a foundation on which other DEI initiatives were built, and was consistent with existing literature. One district leader explained the importance of the new DEI office and districtwide PD Day, with an emphasis on how they see these initiatives validating the implementation; and importantly, that the work of the office is fully supported with full time employees and supported by the school committee.

> This [the creation of a DEI office] was a big deal. … it is not just not having a coordinated position where I have my box of books with black and brown authors—here you go, let's check this box, now we're culturally responsive—but that this is a full office that's supported and has the backing of the school committee to actually do the work.

There were three main threads for the work that the DEI office was responsible for completing. One involved supporting the entire school district to understand the mission and vision of DEI work of the district. As a kickoff for this work, and oft mentioned, the DEI office

organized and executed a districtwide PD Day. A key leader who was interviewed just prior to the event was enthusiastic and stated that "the November date…that day will be for all [staff]. It will be teachers, everybody that's certified, paraprofessionals, our MTAs, our custodians, new bus drivers." However, many principals expressed hesitation about what that meant for them, for their leadership teams in the building, and for their staff in general, with one noting, "We'll have to see how this shakes out." Another principal amplified this by sharing that, "I think it's a reaction. I know it's rubbing a lot of people the wrong way." Following the event, other principals reflected about the day by explaining that, "They [the staff] didn't come in a good mind frame for this conference," further followed up by reflecting, "[I] don't think it went over as well as everybody thought it was going to. Heard a lot of grumbling."

While some of the interviews happened prior to the PD Day, one full interview and additional follow up occurred at a later date. Two stories highlighted the chaos that is sometimes associated with the beginning of system learning and illustrated examples of the ways individuals experienced bias from their colleagues. First, during the DEI staff day and while in small groups, a woman of color moved her chair away from her assigned small group, all of whom were White employees. One of these employees asked the individual of color, "You don't want to be the monkey in the middle?" The second story relates to a White administrator who recommended to the central office staff to "string him up" when describing what he thought the district should do in response to a Black student's ongoing and severe behavior. These are striking and offensive examples of how bias and racism are perpetuated through the use of phrases and nomenclature.

The final example, both as outlined by interviews and via the document review is the DEI checklist. This checklist was designed to help principals and educators think critically about their

roles and responsibilities related to equity and was used during the PD Day. Principals cited this checklist as an important impetus for their understanding of the work. It provides concrete and specific strategies for principals to use in their buildings to promote equity. The checklist is organized in four sections, Professional Practice, Learning Environment, Learning Materials, and Lesson Planning. Each section contains approximately six indicators followed by a series of questions designed "to help unpack our individual growth." Some examples of the indicators include "I regularly reflect on my own bias, views and treatment of people with cultural practices that are different from my own"; "I encourage the sharing of opinions that are different from my own, as well as the examining of multiple perspectives"; and "I preview learning materials for stereotypes and biases." Principals shared that this experience was important as it provided context on which new and deeper work of the PD Day could be built.

Connected to the district-wide PD Day and associated checklist, includes the ways the districts chose and implemented curriculum and supported sound instructional practices. As described in the PD Day workbook for participants, one stated purpose of the DEI office is to "develop decolonized curricula and instructional resources that promote practices that re-center transformational teaching and learning and a protocol for their use." This sentiment is bolstered by one principal who stated that the purpose is "[a] decolonization of the curriculum." One central office leader explains that this work is still expanding by stating "we have a senior administrator for professional growth and school culture. So that person is going to be doing professional development with the teachers and supporting them as they work with our students."

### *Organizational Changes Related to Personnel*

Another organizational strand of work is related to personnel—both the development of personnel and in hiring. The DEI director hired an associate to support the human resources

department in recruiting diverse candidates. These supports include central office organization of affinity groups. One central office leader explained, "We will be creating affinity groups to support our teachers of color. We'll have one at each school and then there'll be coordinators across school types."

Many principals also mentioned that they were working with the central office to identify potential candidates of color. Hiring diverse candidates is also a stated objective of the DEI office. Specifically the office intends to "Increase recruitment and retention of more diverse educators and staff that are representative of our student body." However, every principal explained that, for the most part, most of their staff of color were support staff. Because of this dichotomy, principals and central office leaders both described an emphasis on designing pipelines and policies to promote support staff.

**Principal Self-Reflection**

Based on data from the interviews and document review, there were significantly fewer individual factors contributing to principals' sensemaking about how to implement DEI policies. Principals' actions related to the implementation of DEI policy were primarily instigated by external influences rather than internal ideas and experiences. There was some level of chaos in principals' understanding what DEI policies are and why they are needed and how their self-awareness affects how they make sense, and thus make decisions, about how to implement those policies. This chaos was demonstrated in the wide variability in their views of the purpose and efficacy of the DEI PD Day and office; and importantly, how their critical self-reflection can contribute to or detract from successful implementation of DEI policy.

Some principals seemed to find the stated purpose of these initiatives incompatible with their own experience. The DEI's written plan describes the office as existing to assist

administrators by, among other things, "provid[ing] professional development…that gives them the tools to deliver high-quality educational services," One interviewee, however, explained that this statement meant that they and others were "being micromanaged…told to use specific lesson plans [and] curriculums." A second stated that "people didn't really internalize the work…they were just, like, 'oh, okay, we are being dictated [to] again.'" These comments, while aligned with the document, were communicated in a way that suggested the principals believed they were being coerced to do the work which implied they could not or would not do this work without mandates. Conversely, the educators of color interviewed for this study, including Black, Latinx, and Asian educators, were supportive of the professional development day. However, they expressed disappointment because they overheard White colleagues dismissing, and even criticizing the PD Day and the corresponding activities. One such teacher confided that "they [the DEI office] did a really good job," but that the responses "frustrated me because some of the teachers were like, 'Wow, why do we have to do this?'" These data further illustrate the incongruence between staff of color and White staff, thereby reinforcing the need for ongoing DEI work.

Moreover, there was wide variability in principals' understanding of how their self-reflection affects the success of DEI policy implementation. This is underscored by the statements of educators of color who described the need for principals to obtain additional knowledge about DEI in general and, more specifically, how to become more self-reflective about their own racial identities and how that affects systems in schools. While the educators of color did not speak with a monolithic voice, there were two common themes that emerged from their interviews: 1) DEI initiatives are necessary because White staff, including principals, do not understand how to engage in conversations about race; and 2) DEI initiatives are necessary

because staff of color experience implicit bias in the district. As one educator stated, "A lot of issues that occur… are about how she [the principal] talks to people…she talks down to people a lot." The principal's ability to understand the role of race and how that affects DEI initiatives in the school can be summarized by one principal stating, "I don't look at myself as White. I am a principal, a teacher." When asked if race impacts interactions with staff, the response was "not really." These statements highlight the old adages of "color blindness" and emphasize the need for principals to understand the role of whiteness, their privilege, both due to race and because of their power as a principal, affects how staff and students of color experience the school culture.

Further highlighting the lack of self-awareness that specifically White principals have about the role of race can be explained by this educator of color, when discussing how the DEI policies were rolling out explained that there were "lots of committees" but "I haven't seen a change so much." When pushed to discuss how individuals thought principals were going to react to the new DEI initiatives and how they would respond to staff, educators of color were not optimistic that individual, inherent acknowledgement was possible. One educator explained, "The work really starts with focusing on your own identities and recognizing how your own bias interferes with your ability to see the world in the same way as somebody next to you." This sentiment was highlighted by these comments from educators: "What are we doing with inherent bias"; "It's ignorance… there's some deep-seeded stuff that needs to be rooted out"; and "It's going to be a tough road."

## Discussion

This study sought to understand what factors shaped principals' decisions about DEI policy implementation. My study found that in this district, principals generally relied on organizational changes as the impetus for enacting DEI policies in their buildings. Principals

were reactive to the plethora of district-led initiatives related to DEI policies. This led to bright spots in the implementation of DEI policies which led to attention to diversity in HR hiring practices and ensuring that the curriculum was inclusive and representative of all students and families. However, there was little evidence that individual behaviors, such as introspection or consideration of the role of race and the impact it has on students and staff were present. Further, educators of color expressed their desire for principals to better understand and become more fluent in how to discuss race and confront acts of bias.

Below, I describe the implications based on these findings, including a model for DEI policy implementation. There are important implications for organizational change within DEI policy studies; and the practice of educational leadership. Finally, I describe the opportunities for future research.

**Implications for Organizational Change and DEI Policies**

Most sensemaking theories state that individual learning is iterative, it is social, and it is ongoing (Coburn, 2005; Weick, 2009; Weick et al., 2005). Organizational changes happen over time and as a result of individuals responding to one another in formal situations such as professional learning communities. It also happens through daily interactions, such as responding to each other's successes and mistakes. And those changes create new knowledge for each individual (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Nonaka et al., 1998; Orlikowski, 1996).

Conceptual changes lead to organizational changes which in turn lead to individual changes. This cycle of change is especially important when considering how to implement DEI policies. As research suggests, DEI policies should include an organizational change component, an introspective or self-reflective component, and a social/cultural component (Bristol et al., 2021; McMahon, 2007; Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012)**.** By engaging in ongoing reflective

practices and sensemaking, I posit that DEI policy implementation is cyclical. Rather than traditional top-down or bottom-up methods of implementation, a circular and iterative approach, in alignment with organizational theory, is necessary. Organizational change leads to individual reflection and personal change. This in turn leads to new ideas, thereby leading to new organizational changes (see figure 2). This cycle of change related to the implementation of DEI policy has important implications for leaders and policymakers, which will be described below.

**Figure 2**

*Cycle of Change for Implementation of DEI Policy*

New Concepts

Organizational Changes

Individual Changes
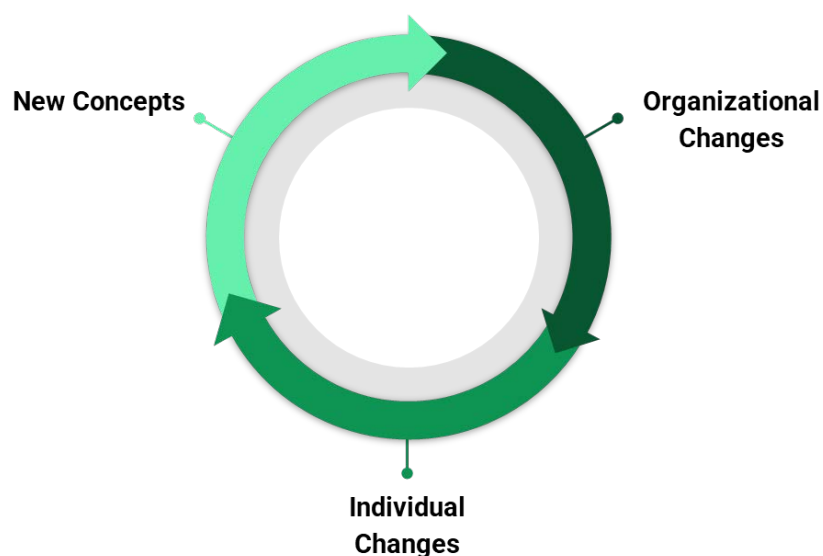
**Opportunities for Leadership**

There are two key opportunities for the district studied here to support the deeper implementation of DEI activities. First, because a few educators of color expressed concern that some of the DEI work in the district was symbolic—that is, that the initiatives were reactionary and superficial—additional opportunities for *introspective* growth, in particular for White staff, are important. The district has already established affinity groups and school-based diversity teams which could serve a starting point for additional introspective learning. Affinity groups for

everyone, including for White staff, could be an important avenue to establish space for sensemaking: that is, so discussion can lead to individual growth, in turn leading to actions that promote inclusive school culture.

For lasting organizational change, as opposed to just "changing bulletin boards," it is necessary to sharpen principals' fluency in discussing race, including engaging in deeper conversations about the impact of race, how to address bias in themselves and their staff, and the role of whiteness is necessary. Additionally, principals should be able to discuss the role of whiteness and the privilege associated with it. As the literature in DEI and organizational learning research has shown, professional learning communities coupled with opportunities for individual self-reflection and sensemaking, are key for lasting and deep organizational change (Bristol et al., 2021; Brown & Duguid, 1991; McMahon, 2007; Orlikowski, 1996; Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012; Weick, 2009; Weick et al., 2005). Most principals confided that they wished there were formal avenues for job-alike collaboration. Additional social networking opportunities, especially role-alike groups with a focus on equity, could be helpful and lead to additional social changes in the staff with subsequent application for addressing inequities for students.

**Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research**

This study explored what factors principals use to make decisions about DEI policy implementation during September, October, and November of the 2021-2022 school year. While the data presented here are valid and reliable, and document review supports the interview analysis, some potential limitations to the study should be noted. First, the three-month window of data collection, coupled with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, limited the opportunities for interviews because of staff availability. Several individuals declined to participate in this study.

While some factors for this refusal may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, some individuals may felt uncomfortable with the subject matter. Furthermore, the research team was unable to conduct observations and focus groups because of public health restrictions.

A longitudinal study to understand how individuals and the organization grew over time, especially in this district, would be beneficial to understand the efficacy of DEI policies and how organizational factors can support individuals to think critically about their own positionality and self-awareness. Future research to understand how the factors for decision-making change after exposure to resources and training in DEI initiatives would enable policy makers and educational leaders to provide tailored and specific PD and resources to improve the efficacy and speed of implementation. Furthermore, interviews with leaders, principals, and educators who represent greater diversity will likely affect how individuals make sense of DEI policy implementation and provide a holistic view of how DEI policies are implemented and what factors were most important for principals' decision making about DEI policy implementation.

# CHAPTER 4[6]

# DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of our project was to investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, their relationships, and their abilities to make decisions. To do so, our five studies looked at professional capital through its three different dimensions (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Through a human capital lens, Banks (2022) explored the leadership factors, if any, principals used to promote the retention of their educators of color and why educators of color remained in the district. Herman (2022) used human capital and decisional capital to explore the district strategies employed to retain school principals and whether these actions influenced a principal's decision to remain in their role. Through a social capital lens, Hahn (2022) examined the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment practices. Also, through a social capital lens, Landry (2022) explored principals' relationships and their influence on perceptions of self-efficacy. And through a decisional capital lens, Viviani (2022) considered how principals made sense of district-wide policies and the decisions principals made about how to implement those policies.

We begin with a summary of the strengths of the Elody School District related to professional capital and school leadership. By synthesizing our individual research studies, we explore common findings to better understand how principals benefit from and shape professional capital. We then build upon the existing framework of professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) to introduce a new perspective, inclusive capital.

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[6] This chapter was jointly written by the authors listed and reflects the team approach of this project: Marc A. Banks, William R. Hahn, Erica M. Herman, Christine L. Landry, and Lauren M. Viviani.

**Strengths of Elody**

The Elody School District has many strengths, one being a tremendous sense of pride about their community and its rich traditions. Educators, principals, and administrators alike spoke at length about their commitment to the community, and most importantly, the students in the district. This strong sense of community was also fostered by a commitment to a grow-your-own program that has existed for several decades. This focus on human capital showed an investment in helping the district's educators grow their talents and skills through paraprofessional training programs and an administrative internship program. As a result, the Elody School District had high retention rates among principals and district administrators.

Most recently, the Elody School District has reorganized their central leadership team and added an entire office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This human and social capital investment to DEI demonstrated their commitment to cultural proficiency and their priority to diversifying their staff, supporting all students, and ensuring an inclusive environment where all members of the community were welcomed. Just as importantly, Elody implemented a DEI professional development (PD) day required for all certified staff; and open to all district employees. The initial purposes of the PD were to introduce the newly hired DEI executive team, to describe the commitment of the district to DEI, and to outline the guiding principles of the office. These guiding principles were actionable by four focus areas, used for measuring the progress of the newly created office. These measurable areas included increased recruitment and retention of diverse educators and staff, improved school climate, focused professional development so that they are able to deliver high quality services, and more inclusive curriculum and instructional practices. Furthermore, the day offered the opportunity for staff to engage in

critical self-reflection and acquire decisional capital to make the appropriate professional judgements about race and to design ways to implement DEI practices in their daily work.

Like many districts across the country, Elody has confronted a number of challenges navigating their schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the many participants that were interviewed during this study demonstrated incredible resiliency when faced with adversity during this difficult time. Moreover, many stakeholders clearly communicated their commitment to the students of Elody. It is evident that the staff of the Elody School District care deeply about the success of students and will do almost anything to champion that cause.

## Harnessing Relationships

We believe that how principals manage groups and harness relationships is critical in meeting the needs of staff and students (Spillane & Sun, 2020)**.** Consistent with Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), we recognize the characteristics of social capital through the quantity and quality of interactions and relationships among people. In most school districts like Elody, group cohesion and personal relationships are important and can lead to better student performance (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004). In contrast, some social dynamics can limit diversity of thought, ultimately silencing important stakeholders. For example, Herman (2022) found that relationships and growing one's own leaders were positively attributed to strong principal retention; however, these were identified as barriers to enacting culturally responsive district leadership practices. Below we define and focus on how homophily, groupthink, and multiplex relationships were common themes across our studies and helped us to better understand how to build on the professional capital framework to improve school leadership.

**Homophily**

Homophily is the concept of connecting with others who are like yourself: birds of a feather flock together (McPherson et al., 2001; Myung et al., 2011). In a range of organizations, researchers have demonstrated that people associate more with others who are similar to themselves (Kleinbaum, et al., 2013). A homophilous work environment can produce uniformity, illusions of unanimity, and even self-censorship (Hart, 1991). In education, homophilous workforces are created and maintained through outdated hiring practices and deeply rooted traditions that limit diversity, especially in professional and leadership roles (Myung et al., 2011; Daly & Finnigan, 2011). As a result, homophily limits people's access to social capital in a way that has powerful implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience (McPherson et al., 2001). Moreover, Landry (2022) found in her study that homophilous relationships can hurt those within the relationship by creating a sense of expectation or entitlement. Therefore, urban districts like Elody should work to embrace divergent voices. To do so, districts must look beyond the traditional educator and administrator pools to areas in which talented staff ranging from paraprofessionals to career-switchers may be overlooked (Clewell & Villegas, 1999). Districts must actively recruit a more diverse leadership team by connecting with institutions of higher education who bring a variety of experiences and personal insights to the table (Honig, 2008). Because homophily is typical in most organizations, districts must create systematic structures that consider formalized relationships and support networks that value inclusivity and reciprocal sharing (McPherson et al., 2001). These actions will demonstrate to candidates that districts are actively engaged in recognizing the importance of diverse voices.

**Groupthink**

Groupthink is the practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility (Janis, 1982). Groupthink increases when leaders are under stress or navigating through crises (Janis, 1982; Liou & Daly, 2020). In these circumstances, leaders often perceive threats to their leadership or to their self-esteem when people do not adhere to the decisions of the group (Hart, 1991). In schools, groupthink limits the collaboration and voice of school leaders that districts claim to support. This was true in districts like Elody that unwittingly build or encourage a groupthink mentality that leads to a homophilous workforce (Janis, 1982).

As districts navigate traditional practices, such as hiring, they need to deliberately create conditions that foster creativity and the underrepresented voice. For instance, Hahn (2022) found that mostly White administrators with long term tenures with the district were the ones actually benefiting from the administrative internship program. When pipeline programs are attracting only seasoned veterans, there is a strong potential that educators of color are being overlooked or passed over. When districts rely on historic programs like these they must deliberately give voice to those that are outside of the "group" and target the demographics in such a way that their staff reflects their students. In this case, the groupthink occurs when a historical practice is actually reinforcing a failed method that recruits a singular leadership profile and no one steps up to creatively address a failed practice. Ultimately, groupthink does not embrace practices that embody diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Understanding groupthink mentality is important as many districts navigate DEI initiatives and planning in the face of America's response to renewed racial unrest (Altman, 2020; Viviani, 2022). As Viviani (2022) found, educators of color were concerned about their

White counterparts not embracing the DEI work initiated by the Elody School District. As districts embrace DEI work, they must ensure that all of their educators come to the table prepared to discuss divergent viewpoints and hear voices that are not typically represented in the majority and thereby understand how implicit bias perpetuates groupthink.

**Multiplex Relationships**

Multiplex relationships are relationships grounded in *both* work and friendship-related interactions, thus leading to more substantive, diverse, and bidirectional interactions with peers (Burt, 1997; Hite et al., 2006; Liou & Daly, 2020). Expressive relationships provide trust and support but often, not the feedback needed to make change. Conversely, instrumental, or work-related relationships provide considerable feedback but not the support required to act on it. As the role of the principalship continues to intensify, districts must consider how to activate relationships that will engender trust and the type of problem-solving needed to respond to new challenges. Building multiplex relationships ensure districts will be better prepared to navigate complex problems such as the underrepresentation of teachers and leaders of color faced in Elody. Banks (2022) found in his study that educators of color desired more critical feedback on their pedagogical practices in addition to the recognition of being an educator of color within their buildings. By capturing the expressive and instrumental sides of what educators of color need, principals can harness the multiplex relationship to better support their educators of color and create a more inclusive school environment. In short, districts that foster multiplex relationships in a strategic way will create environments that better support the whole educator and encourage strong leadership practices (Hite, 2005; Liou & Daly, 2020). For example, districts can create professional learning communities among principals focused on developing relationships among colleagues, while also advancing their learning. In addition, leaders in

districts have the power to take deliberate action to provide opportunities for educators to build multiplex relationships, where they can demonstrate their expertise and show their authentic identity in an inclusive way (Honig, 2008).

## The Influence of Race

In each of our five studies focused on an aspect of professional capital, we found that race had an influence on the way principals acquired knowledge and skills, developed social interactions, and made decisions. Elody mirrored districts nationwide in the fact that a majority of its principals identified as White (The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce, 2016). As a result, the following sections will focus on how race and critical consciousness affect professional capital and how the importance of diverse representation in leadership leads to greater school outcomes.

### Race and Critical Consciousness

As the population of students across the country becomes increasingly diverse, the racial makeup of teachers and principals remain predominantly White, thus requiring districts to consider the relationship between race and critical consciousness (US Department of Education, 2016). Critical consciousness is a theoretical framework that addresses systemic oppression as the root of individual and organizational dysfunction (Freire, 2000). With a diversifying student population, being critically conscious about race and its effect on curriculum and instruction, hiring practices, and retention have become increasingly important to promote positive outcomes for students (Welton et al., 2015). Especially key in these decisions about how to promote racial equity is the principal (Swanson & Welton, 2019). An effective avenue for creating lasting, systemic anti-racist practices is to examine the way race, especially the role of Whiteness, affects social relationships and decision-making through the lens of critical consciousness.

According to Freire (2000), in order to eradicate oppression, it is necessary to think critically about the realities of systemic inequality. In order to do this, districts must adopt a strength-based, solution-oriented approach for self-determination at both the individual and organizational levels (Friere, 2000). Engaging in authentic discussions about race is key to addressing opportunity gaps for students of color (Swanson, 2019; Bristol 2021; Welton et al., 2015). Examples of practices to make districts more inclusive include the retention of educators of color (Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Quiocho & Rios, 2000), the recruitment and retention of principals of color (Banwo & Seashore, 2020, Khalifa, 2012), and the creation of professional development and networks, such as mentoring, professional learning communities, and affinity groups (Alston, 2018; DuFour & Eaker, 2009; Mosely, 2018). Further, critical consciousness includes multiple voices and perspectives which leads to social changes as will be discussed in more detail below (McMahon, 2007).

Critical consciousness goes beyond the adage of "color blindness" and "multiculturalism" that has been the norm in schools for the past several decades (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012). These old-fashioned doctrines perpetuate systemic inequities by neglecting to challenge the privilege of whiteness through ongoing policies such as insular professional development and hiring practices (McMahon, 2007). In order for individuals to be able to engage in critical consciousness, it is necessary to move from the surface level of multiculturalism to acknowledging the role of race and engaging in an introspective and personal examination of their beliefs about race (Swanson & Welton, 2019).

Leaders in schools must develop and hone their skills to challenge systemic racism. To do this, leaders must acquire knowledge and skills about race, engage in discussions with others about race, and make decisions about how to implement equitable initiatives using a critical-

consciousness lens (Friere, 2000). One way this can be accomplished is through a combination of district-organized affinity groups, ongoing coaching in building equity in leadership, and creating safe places for open dialogue among staff of color and White staff. Only through self-reflection on the role of race and a commitment to understanding the impact of White privilege can educational leaders begin to actualize the tenets of professional capital. For example, Viviani (2022) found that, to authentically meet the organizational changes that DEI policies require, districts must provide more opportunities for introspective growth. Therefore, districts like Elody should provide staff the time and opportunities for professional development and provide resources and tools for staff to understand their own views about race and their identities.  Secondly, affinity groups and school based diversity teams are a starting point for additional introspective learning (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). For lasting organizational change, individual school leaders must be critically conscious to improve their own fluency in discussing race and the role of Whiteness to mitigate biases.

**Diverse Representation**

Diverse representation in leadership matters. Although harnessing professional capital increases the benefits of being a strong leader, it fails to adequately address the importance of representative leadership. There are many benefits to having a diverse, representative leadership, including increased student achievement (Tran et al., 2020; Tillman, 2004), increased retention among principals of color (Levin & Bradley, 2019; Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020), and an increased diversity of thought (Crow & Glascock, 1995; Koenig et al., 2011). Diverse leadership leads to increased student achievement in areas such as strong role modeling for students, a drop in disciplinary sanctions for students of color, and an increase in students of color being a part of gifted and talented programs (Moore et al., 2017; Sanchez et al., 2008). Given that student

achievement increased for students of color when students had or saw educators in their buildings who were racially congruent to them (Moore et al., 2017; Tran et al., 2020). All districts should ensure that there are leaders of color in their buildings.

As districts create and hone their DEI work, they may find that racial diversity at the principal level also affects retention outcomes for both principals and staff. Districts can look to institutions of higher education for examples of this work, as many have had DEI offices for decades (Nunes, 2021). As Clayton (2021) notes from her study at the university level, DEI must be prioritized and institutionalized as a core competency and made everyone's responsibility. As our team found in our studies, districts may find that culturally responsive environments that support leaders of color are more likely to lead to increased diverse leadership (Hahn, 2022), stronger self-efficacy (Landry, 2022), and greater retention for the principal (Herman, 2022). Furthermore, in schools in which there are principals of color, the research supports that educators of color are more likely to stay and are also more satisfied with their jobs (Gates et al., 2006; Grissom & Keiser, 2011).

One reason for the lack of representation at the principal level is that a majority of teachers are White, and they use their professional capital to join school administrations. Educators of color generally do not have access to this same pathway. As Hahn (2022) noted in his study of principal pathways, "Building principals often credited [their] collegial connections and interactions as playing an important role in their pathway to the principalship" (p. 26). Districts should therefore consider how they can harness the characteristics of inclusion to help them more fully consider the barriers that prevent educators of color from becoming principals. Some of the barriers educators of color face include a lack of support and mentoring from their principal when they are in the teacher role and a lack of leadership opportunities to develop their

administrative skills (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). And once these educators have advanced to the role of principal, there needs to be a concerted effort to support them; otherwise, the lack of support could quickly lead to feelings of inadequacy and frustration. Districts should continue to focus on growing and supporting their leaders of color, while at the same time recognizing that "As numbers of nontraditional leaders (women, people of color, young adults) increase in school leadership, particularly in urban settings, districts must adjust to accommodate the needs of this unique (and diverse) population" (Peters, 2012, p. 36). Districts that deliberately scrutinize human, social, and decisional capital through an inclusive lens become not only more culturally responsive, but also more representative of the diverse student population they aim to serve. The next section critically analyzes the framework of professional capital and introduces a new perspective that our research team calls inclusive capital.

## Inclusive Capital

Professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) was developed before the renewed racial unrest and protests across the United States arising from the murder of George Floyd and Breanne Taylor, among others in recent years. We believe Hargreaves and Fullan stopped short of considering the influence of other forms of capital that add value beyond human, social, and decisional capital. Accordingly, we introduce a new perspective that embodies Hargreaves and Fullan's professional capital, while adding a fourth dimension that includes the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We call this framework inclusive capital (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*The Evolution of Professional Capital to Inclusive Capital*

*Professional Capital, Hargreaves &*              *Inclusive Capital*
*Fullan, 2012*
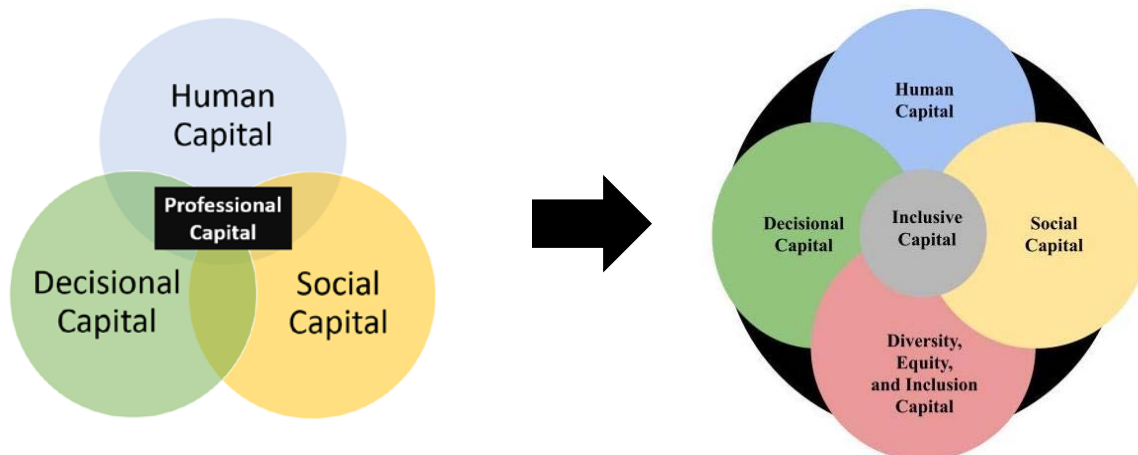
Inclusive capital builds upon the older framework of professional capital by elevating the significance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. A professional capital framework that includes the dimension of diversity, equity, and inclusion is more complete and understands that DEI cannot simply be part of the social, human, and decisional capitals; rather, it must be added as its own dimension. In short, we assert that diversity, equity, and inclusion must be elevated to create a unique form of capital integrated into Hargreaves and Fullan's professional capital framework. Consistent with Yosso's cultural capital framework (2005), we believe the DEI dimension must be understood as an asset-based element that elevates the intersectionality of race, gender, and identity in a way that gives power and voice to a those who have not historically been included in the conversation (Lugg, 2003). Inclusive capital asserts that, in order to collectively transform schools that harness the commitments and capabilities of the many, DEI must be elevated as an equally important dimension to human, social, and decisional capital. Below, we capture how the

additional dimension of DEI strengthens the professional capital framework to create more inclusive systems.

Human capital encourages effective human resources practices to make the best hires. With the added dimension of DEI, districts ensure inclusivity by creating pipeline programs that attract and hire educators of color. Social capital encourages professional learning communities that allows educators to collaborate on best practices. With the added dimension of DEI, districts ensure inclusivity by creating affinity groups that support educators of color by enhancing social networks across the district. Decisional capital encourages policies that support strong communication and consensus building. With the added dimension of DEI, districts ensure inclusivity by bringing to the forefront the voices of the most underrepresented staff in all policies. Thus, in each of these examples, inclusive capital is the systematic development and integration of four forms of capital—human, social, decisional, and DEI—into the principalship. This suggests the need for future research focused on different forms of capital related to DEI and the intersectionality with professional capital. Furthermore, it is imperative that studies be conducted by researchers who are representative of today's students. Therefore, through policy and practice, district leaders should seek to establish inclusive capital as a perspective for developing school principals.

## Conclusion

In our research, our team found that using the perspective of inclusive capital for principal leadership better correlates with the evolving, intensifying nature of the role and the sustained adaptive changes needed for long-term success in schools. Research has demonstrated the positive influence school principals have on improved student outcomes, improved school culture, and teacher quality (Leithwood et al., 2004; Levin et al., 2020). Diversity, equity, and

inclusion must remain central to leadership practices and be at the center when observing principals and assessing their leadership practices (Hernandez et al., 2014). Therefore, districts should invest in school leader development by creating conditions for principals to shape and benefit from inclusive capital (Banks, 2022; Hahn, 2022; Herman, 2022; Landry, 2022; Viviani, 2022). Ultimately, true change in the face of adversity requires an individual and collective investment that does not protect the dominant voice; rather, it builds everyone's capacity to learn, be challenged, and move forward toward a shared vision.

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**Appendix A**

**District Leaders**

Researcher (to be read to participants):

Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, relationships, and ability to make decisions. We will be asking questions related to teacher diversity, principal recruitment, principal retention, improving self efficacy, and implementing policy.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.
The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Before starting, we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session.

(Get signature on consent form)
Thank you.

(Once recording starts)
The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?
[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the [**Elody] Public Schools**. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45-60 minutes for this interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so. Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

**Question alignment key**

| | |
|---|---|
| **GQ** = General Question | **BER** = Black Educator Retention |
| **OAQ** = Overarching Question | **PI** = Policy Implementation |
| **PP** = Principal Pathway | **PE** = Principal Efficacy |
| **PR** = Principal Retention | |

**District Leader Questions:**
1. Why do you think principals decide to stay in this district? **(PR)**
    a. Probe: What does [Elody] do to retain school leaders? **(PR)**
    b. Probe: How do you provide autonomy to principals? **(PI/PR)**
    c. *Probe - Is there anything specific the district does to retain educators of color? (BER)*
    d. *Probe: What is your role in school leader retention?*

2. Why do you think principals decide to leave the district? **(PR)**
    a. Probe: Could you have done anything different to keep them in their role?
3. In what ways do you see principals supporting each other? (PE)
    a. *Probe - In what ways are networks of principals developed, formally or informally?*
4. How do you evaluate principals? **(PR)**
5. What are the ways the district supports principals' professional growth? **(PE/PR)**
    a. *Probe - Tell me some specific ways that you contribute to that growth.*
    b. *Probe - What structures, if any, are in place to mentor principals? How long do these relationships remain in place?*
6. Equity work is really challenging. How do you promote equity in the district? **(PR)**
    a. Probe: How do you work with your principals on topics around race and equity? (PR/PI/PE)
7. Tell me about your experiences with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion? **(PI)**
    a. *Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?*
    b. *Probe: What do you know about [Elody's] DEI initiative?*
    c. *Probe: What do you think about [Elody's] initiative?*
    d. *Probe: How do you feel DEI fits in the overall mission of the district?*
8. How are the principals implementing DEI? **(PI)**
9. Why do principals call you? **(PE)**
    a. Probe: What is the last thing a principal came to you for help with?
10. Tell me about a positive relationship you have with a principal and what sustains it. **(PE)**
    a. What do you talk about?
11. Is there anything I should have asked you?

*Follow Up Demographic Questions (if not answered in questions above):*
- How many years have you served in the role?
- Would you consider yourself an educator of color?
    - If so, how do you identify?

**Appendix B**

**Human Resources Director Protocol**

Researcher (to be read to participants):

Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, relationships, and ability to make decisions. We will be asking questions related to teacher diversity, principal recruitment, principal retention, improving self efficacy, and implementing policy.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.
The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Before starting, we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session.

(Get signature on consent form)
Thank you.

(Once recording starts)
The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?
[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the [**Elody] Public Schools**. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45-60 minutes for this interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so. Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

**Question alignment key**

| | |
|---|---|
| **GQ** = General Question | **BER** = Black Educator Retention |
| **OAQ** = Overarching Question | **PI** = Policy Implementation |
| **PP** = Principal Pathway | **PE** = Principal Efficacy |
| **PR** = Principal Retention | |

**District Leader Questions: Human Resources Director**

1. Why do you think principals decide to stay in this district? **(PR)**
   a. *Probe: What does [Elody] do to retain school leaders? (PR)*
   b. *Probe: How do you provide autonomy to principals? (PI/PR)*
   c. *Probe: What is your role in school leader retention? (PR)*

2. Why do you think principals decide to leave the district? **(PR)**
   a. *Probe: Could you have done anything different to keep them in their role?*

3. Is there anything specific the district does to retain educators of color? *(BER)*
   a. *Probe: Does the district have any direct conversations with principals regarding the retention of educators of colors?*

4. How are principals recruited in [Elody]? **(PR)**
   a. *Probe: How is it determined whether a principal is appointed or hired by committee?*
   b. *Probe: - What are the core competencies you look for?*

5. What is the history of the Administrative Internship Program? **(PP)**
   a. *Probe: How was this program designed and how was the agreement made with the BPS teachers association (contract)?*
   b. *Probe: Tell us more how BPS recruits or advertises for the Administrative Internship Program.*

6. How do you or your office promote equity in the district? **(PR)**
   a. *Probe: How do you work with your principals on topics around race and equity? (PR/PI/PE)*

7. How are principals evaluated in [Elody]? **(PE/PR)**
   **a.** *Probe: What happens to principals who are not performing well?*

8. What is the demographic breakdown of principals currently employed in [Elody]?
   a. Race
   b. Gender

      c.  Years of experience in [Elody]
      d.  Years of experience as principal
      e.  Did they participate in the administrative internship program?

*Follow Up Demographic Questions (if not answered in questions above):*
- How many years have you served in the role?
- Would you consider yourself an educator of color?
  - If so, how do you identify?

Document request:

1. Do you have data, rosters, participation of all staff who have participated in the Administrative Internship Program?
   a. *Probe: District leaders who participated in the program*

## Appendix C

## Principal Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants):

Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, relationships, and ability to make decisions. We will be asking questions related to teacher diversity, principal recruitment, principal retention, improving self efficacy, and implementing policy.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.
The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Before starting, we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session.

(Get signature on consent form)
Thank you.

(Once recording starts)
The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?
[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the [Elody Public Schools]. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45-60 minutes for this interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so. Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

**Question alignment key**

| | |
|---|---|
| **GQ** = General Question | **BER** = Black Educator Retention |
| **OAQ** = Overarching Question | **PI** = Policy Implementation |
| **PP** = Principal Pathway | **PE** = Principal Efficacy |
| **PR** = Principal Retention | |

**Principal Interview questions**

1. How did you end up becoming a principal? **(PP)**
   a. *Probe: What roles have you had prior to becoming a principal? Were these roles all in the same district?*
2. How did other people/mentor/educators impact your decision to become a principal? Who encouraged you?
   a. *Probe: Is this how others become principals?*
3. How do you encourage others to become a principal? Tell me about someone you have encouraged to consider the principalship. **(PP)**
   a. *Probe - What do you like about them? Anyone you would not encourage? Is there someone like this now?*
4. Why do you stay as a principal? **(PR and PE)**
   a. *Probe: Is anything specific about [Elody] that makes you stay?*
   b. *Probe: What does the district (or your colleagues) do to retain you as a principal?*
   c. *Probe: How does the district support you to manage the challenges that you face?*
   d. *Probe: How much autonomy (flexibility) do you feel as a principal in this district?*
5. Tell me about a time when you felt like you demonstrated your greatest strength as a principal. **(PE)**
   a. *Probe: Where did this ability come from?*
   b. *Probe: When it comes to your strengths, does the district do anything to help you build this strength?*
   c. *Probe: What is your greatest area for growth?*
6. The principal's role is so hard. Tell me about a relationship you have with someone in the district that keeps you going. **(PE)**
   a. *Probe: Other school leader? District leader?*
   b. *Probe: What are your conversations generally about?*
   c. *Probe: Tell me a specific example of a time when this relationship helped.*
   d. *Probe: Is there a relationship that brings you down?*
7. Tell me about your experiences with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion? **(PI)**
   a. *Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?*
   b. *Probe: What do you know about [Elody's] DEI initiative?*
   c. *Probe: What do you think about [Elody's] initiative?*
   d. *Probe: How do you feel DEI fits in the overall mission of the district?*
8. Based on what you know about [Elody's] initiative, how are you rolling it out in your school? **(PI)**

      a.  *Probe: How did you decide what to do about DEI in your school?*
      b.  *Probe: How does DEI fit in your school mission?*
      c.  *Probe: Who, if anyone, helped you decide how to implement DEI in your school?*
      d.  How do you make decisions about the competing priorities?

9. How does race impact your interactions with your staff? **(BER)**
      a.  *Probe: Is there a story you can think of when you purposely had race at the forefront of your mind when interacting with one of your staff?*
      b.  *\*Probe: If race doesn't, why not?*

10. What do you do to get teachers to stay at your school? **(BER)**
      a.  *Probe - Do you do anything in particular for staff of color to get them to stay?*

11. Have you ever thought about leaving your position as the principal?
      a.  *Probe: What made you think about leaving? (PR)*
            i.  *Probe: In what ways has the time commitment of the role factored into your decision? ...Working conditions? ...Accountability? ...Autonomy?*
      b.  *Probe: If considering leaving the position, is there anything the district could do to retain you in your role?*

12. Is there anything I should have asked you?

*Follow Up Questions (if not answered in questions above):*
- How many years have you served as a principal? In [Elody]? Or elsewhere?
- What is it like to be a principal in [Elody]?
- Would you consider yourself an educator of color?
  - If so, how do you identify?
- Earlier we asked you about specific things you may be doing to retain your professional status staff of color. Are there any teachers you recommend we reach out to interview?

## Appendix D

## Educator Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants):

Hi, my name is (insert) and we are here today as part of our dissertation as doctoral candidates at Boston College. Our overarching research study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to enhance their knowledge, relationships, and ability to make decisions. We will be asking questions related to teacher diversity, principal recruitment, principal retention, improving self efficacy, and implementing policy.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.
The information from responses to this semi-structured interview will be compiled by the dissertation team for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender, that is not currently available to the public will only be used in aggregated form that cannot be used to discern the identity of any participant in any report or presentation or in the public use file that will be made available to the public at the conclusion of this study. Before starting, we would like to get your consent to participate in this study and permission to record this session.

(Get signature on consent form)
Thank you.

(Once recording starts)
The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?
[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

Thank you for sharing your time so we can learn more about your experiences in the [**Elody Public Schools**]. As a quick reminder, we've allocated 45-60 minutes for this interview. Please let us know if you have any questions during our conversation. We just want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers, we only wish to understand your unique insight. All of your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual information or identifying information will be shared. At any point in our interview, you can end our conversation or take a break for any reason. If for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so. Your input is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

**Question alignment key**

| **GQ** = General Question | **BER** = Black Educator Retention |
|---|---|
| **OAQ** = Overarching Question | **PI** = Policy Implementation |
| **PP** = Principal Pathway | **PE** = Principal Efficacy |
| **PR** = Principal Retention | |

**Teacher Questions**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Would you consider yourself an educator of color? (**BER**)
   a. If so, how do you identify?
3. Why do you stay in teaching?
   a. *Probe - Have you ever thought about leaving teaching?*
4. Given what you just said, how does race play a factor in your job? (**BER**)
   a. *Probe: How does race impact your decision to stay?*
   b. *Probe - Tell us a story in which race played a role in influencing how you interacted with a student or colleague.*
5. Do your relationships with other staff factor into your decision to stay? (**BER**)
   a. *Probe: What does your school/district do, if anything, to facilitate interactions with your colleagues?*
   b. *Probe: What do you do to reach out to other staff?*
6. Have you been mentored by or mentored other teachers? Explain the mentoring experience? (**BER**)
   a. *Probe: Have you been mentored at any point by a staff member of the same race?*
7. Can you tell me about some recent interactions with your principal? (**BER**)
   a. *Probe - Does the principal do anything that makes you want to stay? Anything that makes you want to leave?*
   b. *Probe - Does your principal talk to you about race? How often? If so, what kind of things does he or she say?*
   c. *Probe - Has your principal ever spoken with you about moving into administration? Can you describe the conversation and your reaction to it?* **(BER/PP)**
8. Tell me about your experiences with Diversity Equity and Inclusion? (**PI**)
   a. *Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?*
   b. *Probe: What do you know about [Elody's] DEI initiative?*
   c. *Probe: What do you think about [Elody's] initiative?* (**PI**)

9. What has your school done about implementing DEI? (**PI**)
   a. What do you think about the school's DEI initiative?

10. What brings you joy? (**BER**)

11. Is there anything we should have asked you?

*Follow Up Demographic Questions (if not answered in questions above):*
- How many years have you served as a teacher in this school? Elsewhere?

**Appendix E**

**Principal Recruitment Email**

*Hello All,*
*Please see the below message from a Boston College research team approved by the*
*Superintendent and the [Elody] IRB team to conduct a study in [Elody]. As you can see*
*from their message, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate,*
*your contribution will be completely anonymous and will provide valuable information to*
*a study focusing on the principalship.*

*Thank you,*
*[Central Office Administrator]*

Dear Principals,

You are invited to participate in a research study led by doctoral students at Boston
College. You were selected to be in the study because you are a principal in the [Elody]
Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary.

The study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to
improve schools and their own feelings of professional effectiveness. Although you may
not directly benefit from participating in this study, some who are involved may benefit
because the researchers hope to use their findings to better understand specific leadership
behaviors principals use and benefit from to retain veteran teachers, promote principal
retention and recruitment, implement policies, and build principal efficacy.

The researchers would deeply appreciate an opportunity to meet you to support their
research study on improving principal effectiveness and retention. If you are able to meet
with them, they are eager to schedule some time with you soon. Although meeting in
person would be preferable, researchers would be happy to conduct interviews over
Zoom. The priority is to schedule a 60 minute interview with you. One of the members of
the team will reach out to you individually to check your availability and schedule a time.

During interviews and meeting observations, only the researchers who audio tape
recordings will have access to them for the purposes of accurate data collection and
coding. The audio recordings will be erased upon the completion of our research, no later
than June 30, 2022.

If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with
the [Elody] Public Schools or Boston College.

If you have questions about this research, you may contact any of the researchers using
the contact information below:

| Researcher(s) | Email | Cell Phone |
|---|---|---|
| Marc Banks | banksma@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| William Hahn | hahnwi@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Erica Herman | hermane@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Christine Landry | landrych@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Lauren Viviani | vivianla@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| **Faculty Advisor** | | |
| Dr. Vincent Cho | vincent.cho@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |

We look forward to working with you!

**Appendix F**

**Educator of Color Recruitment Email**

Dear Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a research study led by doctoral students at Boston College. You were selected to be in the study because you are a Black educator in the [Elody] Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary.

The study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools through multiple lenses, one of which is the leadership qualities principals employ to retain their educators of color. Although you may not directly benefit from participating in this study, some who are involved may benefit because the researchers hope to use their findings to better understand specific leadership behaviors principals use and benefit from to retain veteran teachers, promote principal retention and recruitment, implement policies, and build principal efficacy.

The researchers would deeply appreciate an opportunity to meet you to support their research study on improving principal effectiveness and retention. If you are able to meet with them, they are eager to schedule some time with you soon. Although meeting in person would be preferable, researchers would be happy to conduct interviews over Zoom. The priority is to schedule a 60 minute interview with you. One of the members of the team will reach out to you individually to check your availability and schedule a time.

During interviews and meeting observations, only the researchers who audio tape recordings will have access to them for the purposes of accurate data collection and coding. The audio recordings will be erased upon the completion of our research, no later than June 30, 2022.

If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with the [Elody] Public Schools or Boston College.

If you have questions about this research, you may contact any of the researchers using the contact information below:

| Researcher(s) | Email | Cell Phone |
|---|---|---|
| Marc Banks | banksma@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| William Hahn | hahnwi@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Erica Herman | hermane@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Christine Landry | landrych@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Lauren Viviani | vivianla@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| **Faculty Advisor** | | |
| Dr. Vincent Cho | vincent.cho@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |

**Appendix G**

**Educator of Color Recruitment Email with Introduction**

*Hi [Educator],*

*My name is Marc Banks and I am a researcher-practitioner from Boston College. With the approval of the [Elody] Superintendent, my research team has been interviewing central office staff, principals, and teachers across the district to gain a better understanding of [Elody's] principals.*

*Part of the study references specifically what leadership factors principals use to retain their educators of color. We asked if there are any specific educators we should reach out to and your name came up from your principal as someone who may be possibly interested in participating in the study.*

*Below is the email we have sent to educators of color who may be interested in participating. If you are interested, we would appreciate the opportunity to interview you! We can work around your schedule and meet via Zoom, if that's easier.*

*Thank you so much for taking the time to consider this request, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.*

*Best,*
*Marc*

Dear Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a research study led by doctoral students at Boston College. You were selected to be in the study because you are a Black educator in the [Elody] Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is completely voluntary.

The study will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools through multiple lenses, one of which is the leadership qualities principals employ to retain their educators of color. Although you may not directly benefit from participating in this study, some who are involved may benefit because the researchers hope to use their findings to better understand specific leadership behaviors principals use and benefit from to retain veteran teachers, promote principal retention and recruitment, implement policies, and build principal efficacy.

The researchers would deeply appreciate an opportunity to meet you to support their research study on improving principal effectiveness and retention. If you are able to meet with them, they are eager to schedule some time with you soon. Although meeting in person would be preferable, researchers would be happy to conduct interviews over Zoom. The priority is to schedule a 60 minute interview with you. One of the members of the team will reach out to you individually to check your availability and schedule a time.

During interviews and meeting observations, only the researchers who audio tape recordings will have access to them for the purposes of accurate data collection and coding. The audio recordings will be erased upon the completion of our research, no later than June 30, 2022.

If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with the [Elody] Public Schools or Boston College.

If you have questions about this research, you may contact any of the researchers using the contact information below:

| Researcher(s) | Email | Cell Phone |
|---|---|---|
| Marc Banks | banksma@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| William Hahn | hahnwi@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Erica Herman | hermane@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Christine Landry | landrych@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Lauren Viviani | vivianla@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| **Faculty Advisor** | | |
| Dr. Vincent Cho | vincent.cho@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |

**Appendix H**

**Written Consent Form**



**Boston College Consent Form**
**Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development**
**Informed Consent to be in study, Principal Leadership**
**Researchers:**
**Marc Banks**
**William Hahn**
**Erica Herman**
**Christine Landry**
**Lauren Viviani**
**Study Sponsor: Dr. Vincent Cho**
**Type of consent: Adult Consent Form**

| **Invitation to be Part of a Research Study** |
| --- |

You are invited to participate in a research study. You were selected to be in the study because you are a teacher/principal/administrator/district personnel in the [Elody] Public Schools. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

| **What is the study about and why are we doing it?** |
| --- |

Our study is important because we contend that there is no stronger investment in education with a higher ceiling on its potential return than improving and retaining school principals (Grissom et al., 2021). It is critical that the principal perspective is considered more seriously in research to enhance principal quality and to ultimately make gains in high school graduation rates and student achievement (Levin et al., 2020).

Therefore, our studies will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools and their own professional efficacy.
In line with this mutual interest, each of our individually-authored studies explores and extends different dimensions of professional capital. Specifically, Banks will study leadership factors that impact Black educator retention, Hahn will study the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment, Herman will examine district strategies implemented during crisis to influence principal retention, Landry will examine the organization of social network ties and their impact on principal efficacy, and Viviani will study principal decisional capital and its impact on policy implementation.

| **What will happen if you take part in this study?** |
| --- |

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your practice and participate in 2-3 meeting observations at an agreed upon time between September and December. Interviews will occur through the Zoom platform and/or in-person and include note taking and audio recording to collect data. Meeting observations will include note-taking and if

all members consent, audio recording. We expect the interviews to take 45-60 minutes and meeting observations to last the duration of the meeting.

### How could you benefit from this study?

Although you may not directly benefit from participating in this study, some who are involved may benefit because we hope to use our findings to better understand specific leadership behaviors principals use and benefit from to retain veteran teachers, promote principal retention and recruitment, implement policies, and build principal efficacy.

### What risks might result from being in this study?

We don't believe there are physical, psychological, or informational risks from participating in this research. Risks or discomforts from this research include discussing issues pertaining to racism, job efficacy, recruitment and retention strategies. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop at any time. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

Researchers will minimize potential risks by allowing participants to skip interview questions or end at any time. To minimize informational risks we will ensure that survey responses are anonymous, and we will not use identifiable information during observation data gathering.

### How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All electronic information will be coded and secured using both password-protected drives and files.

We will assign to each participant a unique, coded identifier that will be used in place of actual identifiers. We will separately maintain a record that links each participant's coded identifier to his/her/their actual name, but this separate record will not include research data.

During interviews and meeting observations, only the researchers who audio tape recordings will have access to them for the purposes of accurate data collection and coding. The audio recordings will be erased upon the completion of our research, no later than June 30, 2022.

The Institutional Review Board at Boston College and internal Boston College auditors may review the research records. State or federal laws or court orders may also require that information from your research study records be released. Otherwise, the researchers will not release to others any information that identifies you unless you give your permission, or unless we are legally required to do so.

### What will happen to the information we collect about you after the study is over?

Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from the research data collected as part of the project. No later than June 30, 2022.

We will not share our research data with other investigators.

Any data maintained as part of this research project will not contain information that could directly identify you.

**How will we compensate you for being part of the study?**

There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

**What are the costs to you to be part of the study?**

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

**Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary**

It is fully up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, we will delete any prior data collected, connected to your participation.

If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with the [Elody] Public Schools or Boston College.

**Getting Dismissed from the Study**

The researcher may dismiss you from the study at any time for the following reasons: (1) it is in your best interests (e.g. side effects or distress have resulted), (2) you have failed to comply with the study rules.

**Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research**

If you have questions about this research, you may contact:

| Researcher(s) | Email | Cell Phone |
|---|---|---|
| Marc Banks | banksma@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| William Hahn | hahnwi@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Erica Herman | hermane@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Christine Landry | landrych@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| Lauren Viviani | vivianla@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |
| **Faculty Advisor** | | |
| Dr. Vincent Cho | vincent.cho@bc.edu | xxx-xxx-xxxx |

**Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant**

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:
Boston College

Office for Research Protections
Phone: (617) 552-4778
Email: irb@bc.edu

| **Your Consent** |
| --- |

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. I/We will give you a copy of this document for your records. I/We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.*

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature                                      Date

**Consent to Use Data for Future Research**
I agree that my information may be shared with other researchers for future research studies that may be similar to this study or may be completely different. The information shared with other researchers will not include any information that can directly identify me. Researchers will not contact me for additional permission to use this information.

YES_____                    NO_____

_____

Signature                                      Date

**Consent to be Audio Recorded**

*I agree to be audio recorded.*

**YES_____        NO_____**

_____
                    Signature                                      Date

**Appendix I**

**Document Analysis Protocol (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)**

| Item Name | Date of publication | Format | Author | Intended Audience | Code | Detail |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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