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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: THE INDIVIDUAL  
JOURNEY OF THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL AND ITS IMPACT ON  
RECRUITMENT

Dissertation in Practice by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Dr. Vincent Cho, Chair  
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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. Limited studies consider how the recruiting principal's individual pathway may impact who they chose to recruit. Accordingly, this qualitative study examined the factors that influence educators to become principals and how these factors influence principals' decisions to recruit other potential candidates into the principalship. This study explored the professional journeys of eight school principals from one large urban school district in Massachusetts and how their principal pathways impacted their recruitment strategies. Findings revealed that building principals often credited their collegial relationship and interactions as playing an important role in their pathway to the principalship. Another finding from this study revealed that principals recruited potential leaders with the same qualifications or characteristics as themselves through the informal recruitment practices of tapping and their narrow definition of fit. Recommendations of this study suggest that districts should develop more formal social networks that ensure all educators have access to the necessary support and pipelines to consider the principal pathway. And, principals must

reflect on their own principal pathway and potential bias to disrupt the cycle of recruiting a homophilous leadership workforce.

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## **Dedication**

For my wife, Beth.

None of this happens without you.

I love you.

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## CHAPTER 1<sup>1</sup>

### 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 school 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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

high principal turnover and high burnout (Ikemoto et al., 2014). For instance, 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 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 (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) to the principalship.

### ***Our Nation's Principals***

While our nation's schools are more 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 of Educators of Color	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What leadership strategies, if any, do principals use to support the retention of educators of color in the Elody Public School District?</li> <li>2. Why do those educators of color remain in their district?</li> </ol>
Hahn (2022)	The Individual Journey of the Building Principal and its Impact on Recruitment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do principals make sense of how they became principal?</li> <li>2. What influences a building principal's decision to recruit, "tap," or recommend a potential school leader?</li> </ol>
Herman (2022)	Culturally Responsive District Strategies to Retain School Principals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What strategies, if any, does the district employ toward the retention of school principals?</li> <li>2. How, if at all, do these strategies influence a principal's decision to remain in their role?</li> </ol>
Landry (2022)	The Influence of Relationships on Principals' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In what ways do districts organize and encourage relationships with and among principals?</li> <li>2. To what extent do strong relationships with central office leaders and other principals impact principals' feelings of efficacy?</li> </ol>
Viviani (2022)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the organizational factors that contribute to principals' decisional capital about DEI policy implementation?</li> <li>2. What are the individual factors that contribute to principals' decisional capital about DEI policy implementation?</li> </ol>



## **CHAPTER 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 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.

In order to fulfill the study requirements for each team member, 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%. This particular criterion was necessary, as Banks's (2022) study focused on how principals shaped their professional capital to help improve the retention of their educators of color. 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 Viviani's (2022) study focused on how principals shaped their decisional capital with regard to policy implementation. While the studies completed by Hahn (2022), Herman (2022), and Landry (2022) did not need specific requirements of the district, it was helpful that there was evidence of a principal internship program and structures for professional development.

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 21 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*

<b>Role in District</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Superintendent	1
Central Office Administrator	5
Principal	8
Educator	7
Total	22

We began our study with purposive 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). Document analysis processes unique to individual studies are discussed in Chapter 3 of each individual authors' respective dissertation-in-practice.



## Chapter 3<sup>2</sup>

### Individual Research Proposal

#### Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

The school principal is second only to the classroom teacher as an influence on student learning (Davis et al., 2017; Leithwood et al., 2010), impacting school culture and climate through relationships with school stakeholders (Moolenaar, 2012). And yet, many districts across the country struggle to fill this crucial role effectively (Johnston et al., 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014). A number of studies have investigated this problem by researching principal recruitment with a focus on credentials, initiation, incentives, and desires on why some educators want to become principal (Davis et al., 2017; Hancock et al., 2019; Weiner & Holder, 2019; Myung et al., 2011). We know educators are often recruited by current principals through an informal approach regularly referred to as “tapping” (Myung et al., 2011). Most studies on principal recruitment focus on the educator being recruited rather than the principal who is doing the tapping. Myung et al. (2011) suggests that principals tap teachers who are male and share their ethnicity. However, limited studies consider how the recruiting principal’s individual pathway may impact who they chose to recruit.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap in the research by exploring the factors that influence the principal's decision to recruit. Moreover, this study argues that an important step to understanding those factors is delving into how principals consider their own pathway into leadership. As such, this study addressed the following research questions: (1) How do principals understand how they became principal? (2) What

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<sup>2</sup> This chapter is individually written by William R. Hahn

influences a principal's decision to recruit, “tap,” or recommend a potential school leader? Findings from this qualitative study of school principals provide a deeper understanding of the building principal’s journey to principalship and how this path impacted recruitment.

## **Literature Review**

Several themes emerge from the literature that relate to the principal pathway and its possible impact on recruitment. In this review, social capital is first defined. The next section focuses on factors that influence the principal pathway. The final section of this review considers principal recruitment through both formal and informal methods.

### ***Defining Social Capital***

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), an important element to professional capital is social capital. Social capital involves how interactions and relationships among people affect their access to knowledge and resources. Because social capital is embedded in relationships, it is deeply tied to issues of expectation, obligation, trust, and social norms. As such, social capital provided me with a way to conceptualize the role of relationships with the principal pathway and the principal’s decisions to recruit other leaders into the principalship. In addition, for the purpose of this study, collegial connections are defined as mutual acquaintances, relationships, and connections that provided principals with the support of social capital, or “credentials” that entitled them the access to social support, knowledge, and information within the district (Bourdieu, 1986; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Although a full discussion of social capital is beyond the scope of this paper, the next section of the literature briefly outlines three defining

factors that influence the principal pathway in order to better understand how this pathway may impact recruitment.

### ***Factors That Influence the Principal Pathway***

The following sections will further explore three components that influence the principal pathway. These factors include a focus on diversity, extrinsic motivators, and intrinsic motivators essential to a principal's decision to pursue the principalship.

**Diversity.** The expanding body of literature highlights the need to promote culturally responsive school environments and consider the racial and gender identities of school leaders (Khalifa et al., 2016). In the 2016 US Department of Education's Report, "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce," it was reported that for the most part, principals are a racially homogenous group. In the 2011-2012 school year, a majority of public school principals were white (80 percent), while ten percent were black, and seven percent were Hispanic. This was a small increase of Black and Hispanic school leaders compared to the 2003-2004 school year when eleven percent of school principals were Black and five percent were Hispanic (US Department of Education, 2016).

The principal workforce also has disparities relating to gender. For example, the percentage of female principals was 52 percent in 2012 (Fuller et al., 2019). The majority of this female leadership was found at the elementary level. At the middle school and high school levels, only 40 percent and 33 percent of principals respectively were women which represented a stark contrast to the student population which is approximately 50 percent female in any given year (Fuller et al., 2019). In order to further highlight the underrepresentation of females and people of color in the administrator role, Davis et al.

(2017) used data obtained from the Texas Education Agency and the National Center for Education Statistics over a 17-year period and ultimately found that disincentives associated with the role outweigh the incentives for these educators. Most importantly, this study recommends that districts need to formally recruit and offer effective professional development to attract more diverse leaders.

We know that most recruitment strategies in schools rely on informal networks and on sitting principals encouraging teachers to consider the leadership field (Myung et al., 2011). However, relying on this informal process puts women and racially diverse candidates at a disadvantage because those leadership positions already hold discriminatory stereotypes of who should be a leader (Fuller et al., 2019; Koenig et al., 2011). It is evident that these informal practices and discriminatory strategies are a contributing factor on why the majority of school leaders are white males (Fuller et al., 2019; Kafka, 2009). Hence, principals must understand their own pathways to leadership and how this pathway may impact their recruitment of future leaders.

**Extrinsic Motivators.** Many leaders are impacted by extrinsic forces when considering the role of principal (Baker et al., 2010; Boyce et al., 2016; Farley-Ripple, 2012). For example, Hancock et al. (2019) studied the impact of nine work-related factors that influence the motivation of German and United States principals to become school leaders. Their survey was completed by 446 principals and asked participants to respond to questions about demographics and views of the principal role that motivated their work. After completing the survey, a select number of participants were asked to engage in semi-structured interviews. They found that US school principals were motivated by extrinsic incentives such as salary, career opportunities, leadership roles, and job status.

Some studies such as Farley-Ripple et al. (2012), found that very few career paths or decisions of school principals are self-initiated. In fact, most are influenced by other actors, or external forces, within the system. Just as importantly, decisions to stay in the position are impacted by relationships with students and district support (Baker et al., 2010; DeJong et al., 2017). Ultimately, this study supports a better understanding of local human resource processes, such as pipeline initiatives, recruitment strategies, and salary scales to attract the most qualified candidates to the role.

**Intrinsic Motivators.** In addition to external factors, many educators choose the principalship based on more inherent factors that impact their decision to become principal. For instance, Weiner and Holder's (2019) narrative inquiry explored why aspiring school leaders become principal. The study found three intrinsic motivating factors why aspiring principals wished to become school leaders:

1. To address perceived inequity
2. To catalyze educational change, and;
3. Their commitment to teaching and learning (Weiner & Holder, 2019, p. 1)

This study illuminated the motivations of those pursuing school leadership positions in high needs schools, and like Howley et al. (2005), demonstrated the importance of longitudinal research to better help us connect to intrinsic motivations, behaviors, and outcomes to recruit and attract the best and most diverse leaders.

### ***Principal Recruitment***

The following sections will explore two principal recruitment methods. These methods consider both formal and informal strategies to recruit principals and how they are studied within the literature. This section of the literature introduces the challenges of

principal recruitment and how these challenges may influence the selection of future leaders.

**Formal Principal Recruitment.** Leithwood et al. (2004) argued that formal efforts to improve school leader recruitment and ongoing development should be considered as a highly cost-effective approach to successful school improvement. Yet there are still limited studies and programs that evaluate and recommend formal recruitment mechanisms, such as a principal pipeline program. The Wallace Foundation, has established and supported principal pipeline programs in six districts across the country ranging geographically from Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida to Denver Public Schools in Colorado (Gates et al., 2019).

In collaboration with the Rand Institute, a study on these six districts demonstrated improved student achievement and retention with new principals over a two and three year period (Gates et al., 2019). Ultimately, and not surprisingly, the same study's "overarching recommendation is that districts should think strategically about the full range of pipeline activities and make smart investments that account for their local challenges and opportunities" (p. 102). And yet, cultivating and recruiting school leaders is something few school districts have done well (Johnston et al., 2010). Most districts have relied instead on self-selection by internal candidates who meet requirements for years of service, licensure requirements, and access to the right leaders. And although some strong principals have emerged this way, research has indicated a need for more formal recruitment strategies that emphasize a more deliberate approach, such as pipeline programs, to attract a diverse and qualified candidate pool (Leithwood et al., 2004).

**Informal Principal Recruitment.** While some school districts have adopted a formalized pipeline to recruit principals (Gates et al., 2019), the majority of districts across the United States rely on a far more informal approach to attracting and recruiting qualified candidates. District leadership encouraging budding leaders to consider the role of principal is often referred to as “shoulder tapping” or just “tapping” (Myung et al., 2011). The study used survey and administrative data on teachers and principals from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and found that most principals were “tapped” by their own principals when they were teachers. Principals tended to “tap” teachers with more school-level leadership experience. Just as importantly, and potentially most alarming, principals tended to tap teachers who are male or share their ethnicity (Myung et al., 2011).

Tooms et al. (2010) speaks to the “tapping” phenomenon by rethinking the politics of “fit” and studying the constructs behind the word “fit” and how it is used to perpetuate hegemony and social constructs of what a school leader is or should be. More specifically, Tooms et al. (2010) reveals the constructed values of educational leadership that have little to do with skill and ability and more to do with ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, and age. Perhaps more concerning, according to Tooms et al. (2010) is that aspiring school leaders often try to reflect the organizational norms that they perceive to become an educational leader rather than demonstrating the characteristics that are true to their own leadership abilities. Tooms et al. (2010) suggests that this may have a serious impact on educational leadership by reducing those people who are not members of the more dominant culture “or, more bluntly, someone who does not fit” (p. 114). As a result, when districts screen leadership candidates they are often influenced by the age, gender,

and ethnicity of these candidates (Lugg, 2003). Understanding the Tooms et al. (2010) definition of “fit” helps explain Myung et al. (2011) “tapping” phenomenon because school leaders reproduce these leadership norms by managing and defining the organizational culture within their own constructs. Both the Myung et al. and Tooms et al. findings inform the present study’s approach to examining barriers women and people of color face to become, or even to be considered, school and district leaders.

### **Methodology**

This case study drew upon qualitative data to measure how current school principals from the Elody School District understood their personal path to principalship and how this path, if at all, impacted the recruitment of other school leaders. The bounded qualitative case study (QCS) design was best suited for this study because it allowed for an in-depth analysis of a single school district and school principals (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The Elody School District was appropriate for this study because it was large enough to provide this study with access to a variety of building principals for interviews. The following section reviews how I collected and analyzed data for the study.

### **Data Collection**

In order to understand principals' pathways and its impact on recruitment strategies, I drew upon interview data and documents. Data collection took place during the fall of 2021.

### ***Interviews***

My purposive sampling consisted of eight building principals that were interviewed for this study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Interviews of principals were semi-structured, conducted using open-ended questions so that participants could



communicate their experiences and stories (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Lines of questions and prompts focused on factors that influenced the principal pathway, characteristics of a leader, and recruitment strategies, including decisions to “tap” other potential educational leaders. To access the journeys and principal pathways, I asked questions to better understand the participants’ stories of how they became school principals and how, if at all, they recruit other leaders (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Understanding a building principal’s professional story was an effective way to better comprehend their actions and decisions at the moment-in-time of this study. Interview questions for this specific study are outlined in Table 3 below.

### ***Documents***

Both research questions connected to recruitment themes as related to the principalship. In order to affirm my interview data, I conducted a review of two documents related to the Administrative Internship Program within the Elody School District. There were limited documents about the Administrative Internship Program but they were an important artifact to review when drawing conclusions from the interviews. I reviewed public documents accessed from the Elody School District collective bargaining agreement and I further obtained a memo from a district leader that shared the terms of the Administrative Internship Program with all teaching and administrative personnel.

In total I reviewed two documents about the Administrative Internship Program. Data from the document review was considered to confirm findings concerning the Administrative Internship Program. For instance, the memo that was sent to staff

about the Administrative Internship Program was limited to the most basic information about the program such as preferred qualifications and the deadline for the application.

**Table 3**

*Semi-Structured Interview Questions Connected to Each Research Question*

Research Questions	Principal Interview Questions
RQ1	How did you end up becoming a principal?
RQ1	What roles have you had prior to becoming a principal? Were these roles all in the same district?
RQ1	How did other people/mentors/educators impact your decision to become a principal?
RQ1	Who encouraged you?
RQ1, RQ2	Is this how others become principals?
RQ2	How do you encourage others to become a principal? Tell me about someone you have encouraged to consider the principalship.
RQ2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Probe - What do you like about them? Anyone you would not encourage? Is there someone like this now?</li> </ul>

*Note:* RQ1: How do principals understand how they became principal?

RQ2: What influences a principal's decision to recruit, "tap," or recommend a potential school leader?

This affirmed that communication from the district about this program did little to attract or recruit participants and most people pursued the program because they were encouraged by another administrator. In short, the document review served as background while I was coding and analyzing interview data.

### **Data Analysis**

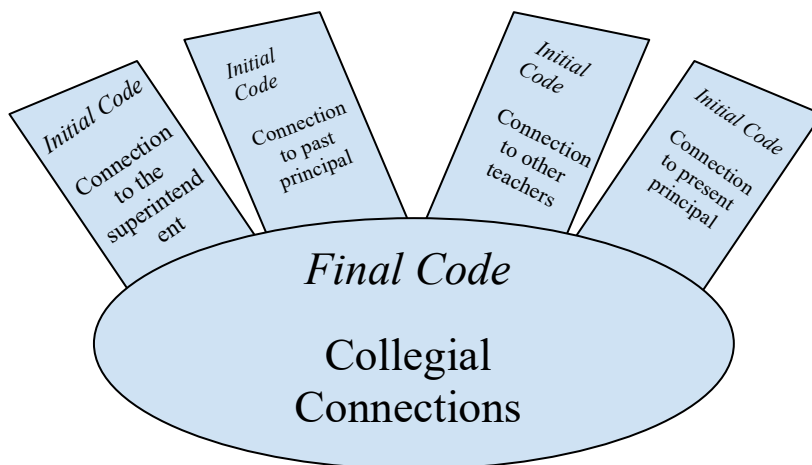
Data from the document review and semi-structured interviews provided evidence regarding the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment. I used Dedoose

(www.dedoose.com), a data management tool for organization, categorization, and coding of all interview data.

To analyze the data, I used multiple steps to begin to construct categories and ultimately codes of the interview data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). First, I listened to each interview in its entirety in order to identify common themes and patterns as related to each research question (RQ1 & RQ2). Second, I listened to each question and response related to my specific research study and created an initial code list under each of my research questions. The initial code list was very broad and included over 20 potential codes. Figure 3 highlights one example of how an initial code list was combined to make one code for this study.

**Figure 3**

*Initial Code List to Final Codes*



Finally, after I listened to all of the interviews again, I created a final code list that combined themes and grounded my analysis to form conclusions about the principal pathway and decision to recruit other potential school leaders (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For instance, when participants identified how mentors impacted their pathway to the

principalship, this was coded as “mentor” in Dedoose and used to address my first research question. The process of grouping my various codes, or axial coding, allowed me to go beyond descriptive coding to interpret and reflect on the meaning of my codes to organize my analysis and draw the best conclusions for each of my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ultimately, eight principal interviews accounted for 103 interview excerpts that were sorted into seven different final codes. Each code was organized under each research question. There was one code, collegial connection, that was included under both research questions (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Research Questions, Initial Codes and Final Codes*

Research Questions	Codes
RQ1: How do principals understand how they became principal?	Times of service Mentors Why I chose this role Collegial connection Administrative program
RQ2: What influences a principal's decision to recruit, “tap,” or recommend a potential school leader?	Formally recruiting principals Tapping Collegial connection

## Findings

In what follows, I first describe principals' pathways toward the principalship. Second, I describe their decisions to recruit others into the principalship.

### Principal Pathway

The first research question examined how principals make sense of how they became principal. From a social capital perspective, “institutionalized relationships” can

provide the necessary social “credentials” to pursue new social roles (Bourdieu, 1986). In Elody, these institutionalized relationships and credentials were evidenced in comments about collegial connections, years of experience, the reasons why principals chose this pathway, and the role of the Administrative Internship Program.

### ***Collegial Relationships***

Collegial relationships are one form of institutionalized relationship. Most of the principals interviewed for this study identified collegial relationships that had an impact on their decision to pursue the principalship. In Elody, collegial relationships took the shape of collaborative teams, interactions with the district superintendent, and informal mentors.

**Collaborative Teams.** Many of these collegial relationships were developed through collaborative teams that were established and organized when the principal was a teacher or assistant principal. These groups included PLCs, support staff teams, and assistant principal teams from across the district. Regardless of their makeup, access to these teams provided the support and collegial connections necessary to develop the interest, and ultimately, the confidence to pursue the role of principal. Over half of the principals interviewed cited these teams as playing a crucial role in their professional growth and their decision to choose the principalship. One participant explained how an assistant principal team was influential in the decision to become principal. The respondent stated that by “watching” different skill sets that different people “bring to the table” he grew as a leader and developed the confidence to pursue the principalship.

Many principals shared similar accounts to the one noted above about the importance of teams when they reflected on collegial connections that impacted their

decision to become principal. It was evident that these relationships, and ultimately the intangibles they learned through these relationships, gave many principals the ability to grow and develop their skills, which in return gave them the assurance to pursue the principalship.

**Superintendent.** In some cases, the collegial connection was directly linked to the district superintendent. In this particular district, the sitting superintendent often played a role in connecting with potential leaders and encouraging them to pursue the role of principal. Principals shared personal anecdotes and connections to the district superintendent that impacted their story to becoming principal. Many of the principals interviewed identified the present or former superintendents who directly encouraged them to consider the role of principal often during an informal meeting or as a quick phone call. One principal even recalled the time the superintendent directly commented to his wife during a building walkthrough:

One of our superintendents...he'd been on a tour and he actually met my wife who was teaching at middle school in [district]. They go, 'Oh, this is [principal's] wife,' and he was like, 'Oh, yeah, I can't get that guy to take a building. He's really good, but he won't take a building.' So that was sort of a known type of thing.

What appears as a simple anecdote demonstrates just how important that connection was to this principal by deliberately identifying this story as having an impact on his decision to pursue the principalship. In fact, several principals described the connection between themselves and the superintendent as a driving factor for why they chose to become principals. This personal relationship and the fact the superintendent was from the

community played an important role in why some principals chose the role. This institutional relationship had a clear impact on why some principals chose this pathway and demonstrated how this connection played an important role in the pathway of many principals.

**Informal mentors.** The Elody School District does not have a formal mentoring program for aspiring principals. However, a number of principals did identify informal mentors who impacted their decision to become principal. On a number of occasions, it was the gentle encouragement from these mentors that played a major role in the decision to become principal. As one principal cited, “We don't have an official principal mentor program. So, when I wanted to apply for this, it was just friends that I knew. So, my principal in my building at the time, he was encouraging me to apply for it.”

For many principals, the lack of a formal mentor program was felt even after they officially became principal. This required several principals to rely heavily on the mentors and relationships they made prior to becoming principal. One principal noted:

It's pretty much incumbent on the principal to go out and find people that you trust that you can ask if something comes out. We still do that now though, like we'll still pick up the phone and I'll call [name] who's over at the [name] School and say, ‘[name], I got a situation I've never had before. What do I do?’ So, we still rely on each other, but it's not an official mentoring kind of program.

Similar to the collegial connections made by the principals, educational leaders benefit from informal mentors that impact their pathway to the principalship. Moreover, mentors do not just exist as a snapshot in time, but rather, an integral role woven into the career path of principals over a career. This was best captured by one principal when reflecting

about the impact of mentors, “I would say that really the principal at the time who still continues to be a strong mentor for me was probably the most significant [mentor]. But in just thinking about my own professional career, there was always somebody that helped me.” This is important to note because it was evident that mentors not only impacted the choice principals made to become principal, but they also continued to positively impact their role years into the role.

There was one outlier to this finding. One principal who identified as a black man, did not share the same collegial connections and informal mentors in their rise to the principalship. When the other principals discussed collegial bonds and informal mentors who paved the way for their pathway to the principalship, this principal described the obstacles and the challenges he faced in pursuing the role:

There were a lot of days, a lot of years I've been discouraged and I've applied for many jobs and I've been overlooked many times. To say I'm here, it's a chance by God to be here. I never imagined in a million years I'd ever get this opportunity but someone looked out for me and gave me a chance and I've been here ever since. To be honest with you, it was very hard to get through the doors. There were a lot of obstacles that kind of were very discouraging preventing me from getting this opportunity. It's a blessing to be here.

This counter narrative was an important part of this findings section because it demonstrated the contrast the one principal of color interviewed for this study experienced with his collegial connections on his pathway to the principalship. This principal did not share stories of mentors or colleagues who supported him in his journey



to the principalship. Rather, he described the obstacles he faced even just “to get through the doors”.

### ***Years of Experience***

Analysis and coding of the interview data revealed additional factors that contributed to the participants’ decision to become principal. One consistent finding was the principals’ reflections about their years of service in education, and more specifically, years of service *within* the district, before becoming principal. Principals reported years of service ranging from 17 to 29 years in education. Most of the principals who were interviewed worked in the district in a teaching or support staff capacity for an average of 24 years before becoming principals. Participants spoke with great pride about their storied careers and carefully crafted a journey that represented a wealth of knowledge and experience. One principal noted:

I’ve been teaching for 27 years. Actually 23 years since this is my 6th year as a principal. I think six years ago I did one year of assistant principal and I became the principal. Before that I was a football coach, I used to be a float teacher just working with the assistant deans and deans at the high school. I did that for some years, about 14 years over there. I started out, I think I did one year of MTA, and then I got a teaching job at the alternative school. I did that for about nine, 10 years and the rest of the years then I came here.

In almost every instance, principals were careful to point out their connection and commitment to the district. Often referring to the district as their “home” even when they lived in a neighboring community. Moreover, many principals quantified their years of experience that included time in the district even as a student. One principal recalled,

“We moved here I believe in 1984, and I grew up here until the time I went to middle school, and high school, and college, most of my life since I've been here. I've been through the Elody Public Schools for years.” Principals displayed enthusiasm and pride about their years of experience in education, and in the district, and connected this to how they became principal in every interview. These years of experience and experience within the district acted as further “credentials” that provided principals with access to knowledge and information that impacted their personal pathway (Bourdieu, 1986; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

### ***The Intrinsic Motivators***

One factor that influences the principal pathway is intrinsic motivation. Participants from this study identified several intrinsic motivators that influenced their decision to become principals. As noted in the literature review, Weiner and Holder (2019) found that educational leaders chose the principalship because it allowed them to better address perceived inequity, catalyze educational change, and commit at a broader level to teaching and learning. Consistent with the research, principals in this case study identified their strengths as problem solvers or desire to take on complex challenges, such as student learning, as reasons why they chose the principalship, “I have a superpower. It's problem-solving. I really looked at it as a problem to be solved.” Often, these complex challenges were rooted in playing a more global role in students or children's lives as school. As one principal exclaimed:

...so it was always my focus [sic] was on trying to get kids to cross the finish line and meet them where they were, and understanding that not everybody can access

education. If there's someone at home supporting you, that's great. But for so many kids, they don't have that. And so, who's going to be their champion?

The commitment to impact student learning was evident across most interviews when principals explained why they chose the role. When describing their why, one principal focused on their dedication to influence student outcomes as a key driving force on their pathway to the principalship, "...to really be inspired by the why which was redefining the conditions for kids to essentially provide them with equitable outcomes. The outcomes we're still working on." Like this principal, it was evident that most principals from this study identified a greater purpose or a desire to have a more global role to address the complex needs of students' learning. Pursuing the principalship was one way they fulfilled this desire and met their professional goals.

### ***The Administrative Internship Program***

Nearly every principal and district administrator interviewed for this study identified the Administrative Internship Program as a resource that impacted their, or other leaders', decisions to become a principal. The Administrator Internship Program is a district program that is collectively bargained under the contract between the Elody Education Association and the School Committee of the city that allows current licensed teachers or support staff to complete a 12-week administrative internship at both central and local schools. According to interviews with central leadership and human resources personnel, the Administrator Internship Program was established over thirty years ago and has played an important role in identifying future leaders of the Elody public schools and providing great opportunities for future leaders of the district. As explained by one central administrator:

You're not going to get another experience like this, where from April to June, you get to leave your classroom, you get paid, you work really hard, but you're never going to get that kind of time with someone again. So we let it be very much individualized and tailored.

While the program has evolved over the years, this program has been a starting point for most leaders in the district and has made an impression on educational leaders' decision to pursue the principalship.

Of the eight principals who were interviewed for this study, seven of them participated in the Administrative Internship Program. Moreover, each of these seven principals identified the Administrative Internship Program as a driving force in their pathway to the principalship. One principal summarized it well:

After about 12 years, I did the administrative internship here in the [district]. I just felt as though I loved working with kids in my room and that, but I had my own ideas of things we could do district wide. I thought I could bring more to the table that way. So I did the internship and then I got hired as an assistant principal right away after I'd done that.

One district level leader even identified the Administrative Internship Program as a reason they chose to come to the district. "To be, again, completely personally honest, it's one of the reasons that I left the previous district where I used to teach where I made more money to come to [this district]." In each instance, it was clear this de facto administrative pipeline program is having an impact on the district and shaping the future leadership of the schools within the district. It was evident the Administrative Internship Program played an important role in why the principals interviewed for this study chose

the principalship. However, it should be noted that it was not as clear about why principals chose to participate in the program. In other words, it was not evident if educators were more likely to be recruited to the program or if they applied on their own ambition.

### **Recruiting Potential Leaders**

The second research question examined what influenced a principal's decision to recruit or recommend a potential school leader. As described in the literature review, this dynamic plays out in many schools through an informal process often referred to as "tapping" (Myung et al., 2011). As such, below I describe two findings that focus on informal recruitment strategies and how principals identified the right fit of those potential leaders they chose to recruit for the role of principal.

#### ***Informal recruitment***

Although principals interviewed for this study did not identify formal recruitment strategies they utilized to encourage others to the field, many principals identified several times they "informally" encouraged teachers to consider the role of the principalship. When asked about recruiting, one principal reflected:

It's that fine line, but I have reached out to individuals in the past and said, 'Hey, have you thought about the internships coming up? I think you'd be a great fit.

Have you ever thought about this?' And it's just informal conversations over time.

While this does not directly speak to what influences a principal's decision to recruit or recommend a potential school leader, this was an important finding because it confirmed and highlighted the often informal process of recruiting future leaders. This informal approach to recruitment, limits the principal's ability to tap potential leaders outside of

their direct professional circle. As a result, this could reinforce the mechanism to recruit or promote only individuals who resemble their background and leadership values (Myung et al, 2011), something discussed in more depth in the section below. This informal approach was best exemplified by one principal, “But if someone in my building wanted to be a principal, I would encourage them, but I don't go out saying, ‘Hey, who wants to be a principal?’” By relying on informal connections that are formed with the people around you, principals are potentially limiting themselves to a single network of candidates.

### ***The Right Fit***

Principals also identified the importance of the right fit when they decided to recruit potential leaders. What made someone a good fit often depended on the individual principal. Sometimes principals just saw the intangibles of a strong leader and because of these qualities they would encourage the principalship. Other times it was an educator's ability as a teacher that impacted a principal's decision to recruit them to the principalship. As summarized by one principal describing a teacher, they recently encouraged to consider the role of principal, “If you're going to be a good leader, I think you have to be a good educator first and she is.”

In addition, the educator's problem-solving ability and approach with staff impacted the principals' decision to recruit them. As one principal reflected when considering recruiting a teacher, “And just being a problem solver. I think that's huge, having those problem-solving skills.” In summary, principals identified many characteristics of a potential school leader that ranged from strong teachers to complex

problem solvers and almost always included those intangible qualities of an effective leader.

While there was not one clear theme that defined an educator as a good fit, the varying responses in and of themselves were their own finding. Principals were given limited guidance or training on what made someone a strong candidate for the principalship. As a result, they relied on their own instincts and experience to define who would make a good fit for the role of principal. And more often, those principal candidates reflected similar qualities or experiences as the recruiting principal. For instance, principals who were “good with people” often tapped educators who were identified as “approachable” or easy to talk to. Principals who used to work as special educators and could collaborate with other educators on complex cases, in return, recruited special education teachers who could command a room or navigate difficult staff. In short, principals recruited educators who were like them. Ultimately, that was the most accurate description of fit.

Another important finding and worth noting is the only principal who spoke about outside candidates as the potential right fit was the same principal of color discussed earlier. In fact, this principal was the only interviewee who reflected on “out-of-the-district” candidates as potential principals. This principal shared that he would look closely at the “new people” that arrived from outside of the district. He would watch how they approached “different situations” and how they navigated the classroom. When appropriate, he would discuss administrative opportunities and point them in the right direction if they were interested in the principalship.

This principal's unique perspective is consistent with the finding above that most principals recruit principals like them. In this case, this particular principal always felt marginalized and, on the outside, even though he too grew up within the community. Therefore, it was not surprising that he was the only principal who spoke about "outside" candidates and encouraged them to consider the principalship.

## **Discussion**

### **Summary of Findings**

In the preceding section, I described and answered how principals interpreted their pathway to the principalship, and how these views may have impacted their decisions to recruit others into the principalship. The data from this study yielded two major findings. One finding showed that building principals often credited their collegial relationship and interactions as playing an important role in their pathway to the principalship. Even though participants spoke of formalized collaborative teams, the majority of their collegial connections were rooted in informal social networks, such as ties to the superintendent or access to informal mentors, that ultimately led them to the principalship. Another finding from this study revealed that principals recruited potential leaders with the same qualifications or characteristics as themselves. In other words, consistent with prior studies, the Elody School District perpetuates a homogeneous leadership team of principals through the informal recruitment practices of tapping and their narrow definition of fit.

As a result, these findings lead to a discussion of issues related to developing more formal social networks that ensure all educators have access to the necessary support and pipelines to consider the principal pathway. And, if districts continue to rely



on tapping as the primary recruitment strategy, principals must reflect on their own principal pathway and potential bias to disrupt the cycle of recruiting a homogenous leadership team.

### **Building Formal Recruitment Strategies**

In the Elody School District, building principals credited collegial connections and interactions as playing an important role in their pathway to the principalship. Whether it was access to collaborative teams, personal connections to the superintendent, or informal mentors who guided their professional journeys, principals in this district stressed the importance of these relationships and interactions. The only principal that did not identify the importance of these collegial connections while describing their pathway to the principalship was the only black principal interviewed for this study. This suggests a strong contrast between his experience and the rest of his colleagues demonstrating a significant difference in their access to, and the benefits from, social capital.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) describe social capital through the quantity and quality of interactions and relationships among people in educational systems and how this affects access to knowledge and information. Yet too often, some educators have more access to these relationships while others are left on the outside. This may be especially so for minoritized populations, such as Latina leaders (Ortiz, 2001). After all, the majority of principals are still white, with gender still seeming to play a role in the kinds of positions principals land (Fuller et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). I contend that this homogeneity is caused by the limited access to relationships and interactions for some educators within school systems, thus denying some educators

the ability to engage in important professional network opportunities and social connections that would potentially advance their careers or leadership opportunities.

School districts need to develop more formal recruitment strategies to attract a more diverse leadership team. Districts should consider pipeline programs for aspiring educational leaders that ensure equitable access to mentors and leadership networks that give all educators an opportunity to pursue the principalship, especially those who may not have the same access to informal ties or connections (Aladjem et al., 2021; Gates et al., 2019; Peter-Hawkins et al., 2018). In addition, educators who are often marginalized, such as educators of color, should be supported with mentors and affinity groups that help them access leadership opportunities within a district (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020).

### **Principal Recruitment**

It was evident from the findings that principals from the Elody School District recruited or tapped potential leaders with the same qualifications or characteristics as themselves. These findings were not surprising considering the research on principal recruitment (Davis et al., 2017; Myung et al., 2011). Principals from this study also stressed their long term commitment to the district and how they grew internally into the role of principal over many years. This created a unique definition of what Tooms et al. (2010) would define as “fit”. In other words, time in the district was one of the values that the Elody School District perpetuates under the guise of “fit” when identifying potential leaders. Recruiting and supporting internal candidates can have its benefits, but I would contend the problem with this approach is that it potentially excludes strong, diverse candidates who are not considered for the role because of their limited time in the district.

District and school leaders should strongly consider their own pathways to the principalship and how recruiting leaders like themselves could create leadership teams with limited diversity. This single minded approach is less likely to identify successful leaders who can guide the district beyond the 21st century by perpetuating the same cycle of female white leaders in our elementary schools and male white leaders at the secondary level (US Department of Education, 2016). In addition, district leaders should consider how the culture of their schools truly defines “fit,” reflecting on “What policy actions have encouraged the perpetuation of the status quo in the educational system” (Tooms et al., 2010, p.123)? For instance, have we created social norms that reinforce biases that do not allow some educators to rise to the rank of principal? It may seem naive that principals simply reflecting on their own pathway could disrupt some of the informal recruitment practices that are supporting a majority white principal workforce, but one of the first steps to understanding bias is considering our own experience (Fergus, 2017; Sevon et al., 2021a, 2021b). While this step alone will not solve the problem, it could be a good first step for the many districts that rely on informal recruitment strategies for their principals. This work is rarely easy, but it could have a positive and lasting impact on leadership within a district and ultimately on the entire school community of learners.

### **Study Limitation and Future Research**

These findings present an accurate representation of the views and opinions evaluated in the current study. However, there are limitations and potential biases that should be noted. The first limitation of this study was the length of time that the data was collected. The research was completed over the course of four months starting in

September 2021. Therefore, the data is representative of that time only. Furthermore, this district along with school systems across the world, were dealing with the complex demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, our collective data reflects the experiences and opinions of staff members during this difficult time. Additionally, the majority of data was collected based on eight principals and selective administrative interviews. Participants in the principal interviews, while reliable, were self-selected, therefore not necessarily an accurate representation of the principal population at large. In addition, as an outsider to the district, I was dependent upon district personnel to gather documents necessary to maximize findings. Because of a number of variables, I was given limited access to documents and participation statistics of the Administrative Internship Program. The documents I did have access to were available to the public and subject to my personal interpretation. My employment as a district-based administrator contributed to my interest in this research study and revealed my potential bias that may have influenced my interpretations of data. However, I dutifully attempted to remain impartial and unbiased during data collection, analysis, and drafting of my research.

Considering most school districts do not have formal succession management systems or administrative pipelines, an educator's connection to a building principal plays an important role in that individual educator's opportunity to become a building principal (Myung et al., 2011). One implication of this study is that schools/districts should work more deliberately to improve each educator's (especially non-white educator's) access to social networks and social ties to ensure more equitable access to the principalship. In addition, it is crucial that principals reflect on their own pathway so they do not fall into the habit of unconsciously recruiting future leaders who are just like

them. I would suggest an honest reflection of their own principal pathway may help disrupt the dangerous cycle of a homophilous leadership team. More research in this area is needed to support these findings. This study investigated the importance of identifying and recruiting the right leaders for the principal position. As education evolves, so must effective school leadership, and the importance of this role demands that we find the right people to choose the pathway and remain in the position to encourage the right leaders to do the same.

## CHAPTER 4<sup>3</sup>

### 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

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<sup>3</sup> 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

professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) to introduce a new perspective, inclusive capital.

### **Strengths of Elody**

The Elody School District has many strengths, one of which 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 important, 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 their 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 (Freire, 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; Quirocho & 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 “colorblindness” 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 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 in her study 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 those 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.

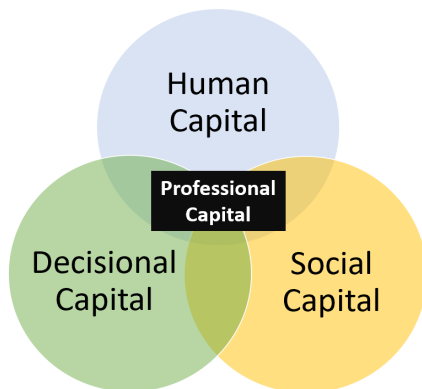
### **Inclusive Capital**

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 2).

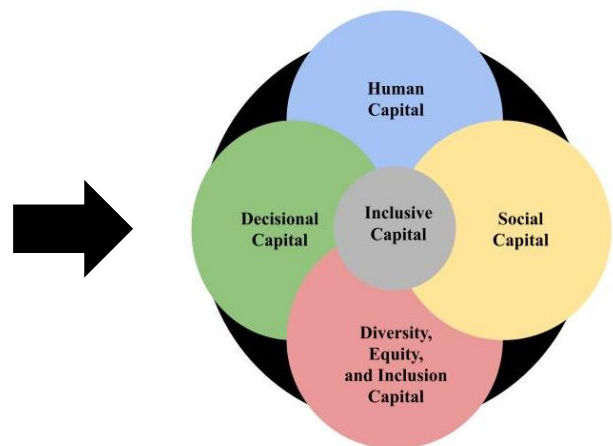
**Figure 2**

*The Evolution of Professional Capital to Inclusive Capital*

*Professional Capital, Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012*



*Inclusive Capital*



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 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 are conducted by researchers that 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 towards a shared vision.

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## Appendix A

### District Leader 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

<b>GQ</b> = General Question	<b>BER</b> = Black Educator Retention
<b>OAQ</b> = Overarching Question	<b>PI</b> = Policy Implementation
<b>PP</b> = Principal Pathway	<b>PE</b> = Principal Efficacy
<b>PR</b> = 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 relationships 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 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

<b>GQ</b> = General Question	<b>BER</b> = Black Educator Retention
<b>OAQ</b> = Overarching Question	<b>PI</b> = Policy Implementation
<b>PP</b> = Principal Pathway	<b>PE</b> = Principal Efficacy
<b>PR</b> = 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

<b>GQ</b> = General Question	<b>BER</b> = Black Educator Retention
<b>OAQ</b> = Overarching Question	<b>PI</b> = Policy Implementation
<b>PP</b> = Principal Pathway	<b>PE</b> = Principal Efficacy
<b>PR</b> = 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 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

<b>GQ</b> = General Question	<b>BER</b> = Black Educator Retention
<b>OAQ</b> = Overarching Question	<b>PI</b> = Policy Implementation
<b>PP</b> = Principal Pathway	<b>PE</b> = Principal Efficacy
<b>PR</b> = Principal Retention	

### Educator Interview 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:

<b>Researcher(s)</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>
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
<b>Faculty Advisor</b>		
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
<b>Faculty Advisor</b>		
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:

<b>Researcher(s)</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>
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
<b>Faculty Advisor</b>		
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 relationships and their influence 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:

<b>Researcher(s)</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>
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
<b>Faculty Advisor</b>		
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](mailto: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)**

<b>Item Name</b>	<b>Date of publication</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Intended Audience</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Detail</b>