

Boston College
Lynch School of Education

Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education
Professional School Administrator Program

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: THE INFLUENCE OF
RELATIONSHIPS ON PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY

Dissertation in Practice by

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

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by

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Abstract

This individual case study is part of a larger group study examining how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools. Principals play a critical role in supporting student learning, while also structuring the culture of the school and mediating external demands. Despite the importance of the school principal, principal dissatisfaction is high and retention rates are low. The job of the principal is intensifying in terms of its complexity and volume of responsibilities. While extant research on teacher social networks makes a strong connection to perceptions of self-efficacy, little research exists regarding principals. This qualitative case study explored how district leaders in one Massachusetts school district focused on principal retention and whether their actions influenced a principal's feelings of self-efficacy. This study is part of a larger study that investigated how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools. Data were gathered from fourteen semi-structured interviews with district level leaders and principals. Data supported the literature that relationships based in work and friendship with district leaders and colleagues positively influenced principal feelings of self-efficacy. Recommendations include examining the impact of top-down district reforms on principal persistence and innovation. Further investigation needs to be done examining the influence of relationships on specific antecedents of principal self-efficacy.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dissertation-in-practice team Marc Banks, Lauren Viviani, Erica Herman, and Bill Hahn for their commitment and dedication to this work. I already miss our Tuesday evening laughs together and will be forever grateful for how much I have learned with and from this invincible team. Professor Vin Cho, Maryellen Brunelle, and Professor Maureen Kenny; thank you for your leadership and guidance throughout this work. This dissertation would not have been possible without the incredible cooperation and openness of “Elody Public Schools.” I also want to thank the full PSAP Cohort 6, our professors, and Gracie Trotman for making this experience, particularly during a pandemic, both meaningful and possible.

I feel enormous gratitude towards my current and former colleagues in BPS, particularly Mary, Kelly, Andrea, Drew, Christine C, Shakera, Karen, Kristen, and the whole Academics Team for your encouragement and friendship. The BPS principals with whom I have worked most closely were an ongoing inspiration to my writing and learning – thank you Christine, Marcia, Yeshi, Tamara, Craig, Leslie, Elvis, Katie, Ed, Renee, Pauline, Robby, and Geoff for your leadership and your friendship. To our friends who have provided childcare support, commitment, and love, especially the Medeiros-Brooks and Rubin families; I am forever grateful. To my incredible brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and more, thank you for your ongoing belief and support. I am so lucky to have you all. Finally, I want to thank my mom who instilled in me my love of learning and commitment to service. I know you have been with me the whole time.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful children, Rena, Edwin, Gabe and Lucy, as well as my incredible wife Megan Reed. Gabe and Lucy, thank you for your love, understanding, and patience as you allowed me to focus on my learning. You inspired and encouraged me every day. Rena and Edwin – thank you for your support and for throwing a fantastic wedding right when I needed a break! Megan, my best friend, and wife, I could not have asked for a better partner on this journey, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for taking on the extra responsibilities to provide the time I needed to complete this work. You have always been my best cheerleader and my most respected advisor.

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CHAPTER 1¹: 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 high principal turnover and high burnout (Ikemoto et al., 2014). For instance, the average

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

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 define professional capital, as developed by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), to apply 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). While women in leadership positions have increased, research centering on the perspectives of women is absent from the literature (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. (Bryk et al., n.d.) (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 think about their impact in terms of three especially 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 highly effective 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 glorified 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, sitting principals today are 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 begins 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 studied leadership strategies that impact educator of color retention considering human capital; Hahn, using a social capital framework, studied the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment; Herman examined district strategies that influenced principal retention, combining human and decisional capital; Landry examined the organization of social relationships and their impact on principal efficacy, while considering social capital; and Viviani studied principal decisional capital and its impact on policy implementation. Table 1 reflects how the individual studies fall under the umbrella of our overarching research statement. Given the influence of school leadership, providing each school a strong principal should be a top priority of every district (Cruickshank, 2017; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood, 2004).

Table 1*Five Studies on How Principals Benefit from and Shape Professional Capital*

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

CHAPTER 2²: 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.

Case Study Design

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.

Site Selection

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

² 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

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. Second, we wanted a district with five or more educators of color. According to the DESE, Elody met this criterion as the number of educators of color in this district in the 2021-2022 school year was nearly 23%. This particular criterion was necessary, as one of the individual studies focused on how principals shaped their professional capital to help improve the retention of their educators of color (Banks, 2022). Third, we wanted a district that was implementing at least one policy across schools. The superintendent identified several policies that were being enacted across the district that were suitable for our study. It was important to include this criterion in our purposeful sampling as one of the individual studies focused on how principals shaped their decisional capital with regard to policy implementation (Viviani, 2022).

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

Elody's work on diversity, equity, inclusion in this specific order, using the acronym DEI where appropriate.

Data Collection

Our team collected data throughout the Fall of 2021. Data collection is, of course, critical for approaching the central purpose of our research study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Our data collection plan included gathering multiple sources of data in order to make sense of both how principals shape and benefit from professional capital. In the next section, we describe the data sources we used, which included semi-structured interviews and documents.

Semi-structured Interviews

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

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

Table 2*Interview Participants*

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

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

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

engage in this study, which is why we contacted all 22 principals in the district. As for educator selection, we contacted 12, seven of whom agreed to be interviewed.

Interview Protocols. These interviews were the main source of our data collection. The semi-structured approach was best for the purposes of this study because it accomplished two tasks: allowing participants to voice their opinions through open-ended questions and examining the answers more deeply with clarifying probes (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Examples of probes are included in our interview protocols (See Appendices A, B, C, and D). To prepare for these interviews, we piloted our interview questions with educators in similar roles to those being interviewed who were not a part of this study in order to assess their comprehension. Based on the feedback, we modified a few questions. For example, instead of asking an educator how the principal used professional capital to influence their desire to stay, we changed the question to be more colloquial and straightforward. We asked, “Does the principal do anything that makes you want to stay?”

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

conducting these interviews in pairs was to make sure that we captured as much of the information as possible.

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

Documents

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

Data Analysis

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

As we collected and analyzed the data, our team was fully aware of not only the trust that was placed in us by the participants in this study, but also the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to keep information confidential. With this in mind, we preserved confidentiality by keeping all data collected on a password-protected cloud-based server, accessible only to the researchers of this study. In order to maintain the privacy of all those involved, we assigned pseudonyms to all participants and the district itself from the beginning of our study. We then maintained a pseudonym key for

each of the participants in a password-protected file. We continued to use Zotero, our research reference organizer, updating folders as we proceeded with the study.

Interview Analysis

In order to analyze interviews, we each used a variation of an iterative process of condensing, coding, codifying and then categorizing responses to interview questions to aid the analysis and synthesis of codes that emerged (Saldaña, 2013). Individual analysis processes will be discussed further in the next chapter. 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

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

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIPS ON PRINCIPALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY

Purpose of the Study and Problem Statement

It is well-founded that the principal role has an important impact on student learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004). This critical position is also increasingly complex (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Flessa, et al., 2008, 2006; Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). As such, a quarter of all U.S. principals leave each year, and half of all principals leave after five years (Beusaert et al., 2021) with job dissatisfaction being the primary reason why principals voluntarily leave (Johnson, 2005). However, Bandura (1977, 1982) argues that the higher self-efficacy a person has, the more likely that individual is to take action, to persist in achieving goals, and cope with difficult situations. Furthermore, Postma, 2019) confirmed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and principal job satisfaction specifically. Therefore, district strategies to support principals in feeling more efficacious in their role deserve further investigation.

Much of the research on effective principals comes from the human capital lens, providing the field a perspective on the competencies that support principal success (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Spillane, et al., 2003). However, this “list of what works” does little to inform the ways in which districts can foster these skills in principals (Ford, 2020). As social capital is the mechanism that provides access to human capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), examination of how principals’ relationships influence their perception of their self-efficacy to do this complex job will help districts to organize

more effectively for principal support (Burt, 1997; Coleman, 1988; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

I use social capital theory to untangle the sources of principal self-efficacy as they relate to relationships between and among district leaders and principals. As well, I explain which types of relationships may have promise in supporting principals' perceptions of self-efficacy to carry out their role. An emerging body of research has explored the connection between principal self-efficacy and relationships through coaching and mentoring, (Bottoms & Schmidt, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Eliers & Camacho, 2007) professional development, (Spillane, et. al, 2009; Stein & Coburn, 2008), innovation (Daly, et al., 2105) and reciprocal learning (Honig, 2012, Honig, et al., 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). This study builds on and adds to the research by elaborating the influences of relationships on perceptions of self-efficacy through exploration of the following questions: (1) In what ways do districts organize and encourage relationships with and among principals? (2) To what extent do strong relationships with central office leaders and other principals influence principals' feelings of efficacy?

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Several themes emerge from the literature that relate to the possible impact of relationships on principals' feelings of self-efficacy. This literature review will begin with a definition of social capital, followed by descriptions of four characteristics of relationships within this frame that are most salient to the focus of my study: homophily,

multiplexity, threat rigidity, and joint work. I will then outline the literature on the potential antecedents and influence of principals' feelings of self-efficacy followed by the power of district actions to support relations on principals' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Principals and Social Capital

Nahapiet and Ghoshal define social capital as the accumulation of the “actual and potential resources” embedded within the network of relationships collectively shared by a social system (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). In this study, I viewed the school district as a social system and identified the structures and characteristics of social networks that may influence principal self-efficacy. As social capital addresses the resources created and leveraged through relationships, it is closely connected to issues of expectation and obligation (Burt, 1990), trust (Fukuyama, 1995), social norms (Coleman, 1990), and identity (Rigby, 2016). In addition, social capital theory posits that the social ties between actors facilitate the flow of resources across a network with greater efficiency than individual interactions (Burt, 1992). As such, social capital provided me with a way to conceptualize the possible flow of efficacy through principal's relationships. The next section of the literature briefly outlines four relationship dynamics (homophily, multiplexity, threat rigidity, and joint work) in order to better understand how these relationships may influence self-efficacy.

Homophily

Individuals are more likely to interact with others who are similar to themselves in terms of their race and gender (Ibarra, 1992; McPherson et al., 2001; Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003). Prior research has shown that homophily of race and gender has a

statistically significant relationship with social networks amongst educators (Spillane et al., 2012). This phenomenon is important to consider when studying principals because of the significant underrepresentation of principals of color in U.S. schools (Bristol & Shirrell, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016;). Homophily in the presence of this level of racial imbalance can lead to leaders of color having limited access to social capital, in turn impacting their success and professional opportunities. As well, White leaders could have limited access to diverse perspectives if they receive most of their resources through homophilous networks (Ibarra, 1992).

Multiplex Relationships

Multiplexity refers to the overlap of various relationships and can impact the depth of principals' relationships. Ties are often characterized as instrumental (those between colleagues that are grounded in work-related interactions) and expressive (those that are grounded in affective properties, such as friendship and trust). Instrumental ties tend to be weaker and more transactional than expressive ties because they are often borne from an immediate need and not a stronger commitment based on a deep feeling of kinship (Liou & Daly, 2018). Multiplex ties are those relations that have instrumental and expressive components, such as a principal and supervisor who have a long-standing friendship from college. Multiplex ties tend to have stronger, more substantive, diverse and often reciprocal resource flow, increasing the opportunities for synergy (Hite, 2005; Liou & Daly, 2020).

Threat-Rigidity

In an era of increased accountability, increased external pressures can change the

ways in which principals experience relationships in the district through threat-rigidity response. Daly and Finnigan (2010) showed the impact on relationships that a highly centralized approach in a low-performing district can take. They found that interactions between central offices and principals focused on one-way technical knowledge transfer over two-way substantive communication because of the district's authoritative approach that limited principal agency (Daly & Finnigan, 2010). These top-down structures, "limit the contribution and access to valuable knowledge by marginalizing individuals at the periphery and ultimately having a negative impact on intra-organizational knowledge sharing" (Daly & Finnigan, 2010, p. 128). In a later study Daly and Finnigan (2012) found that weak structures for social networks in districts under sanction led to limited relationships and even less reciprocal sharing of best practices (Daly & Finnigan, 2012).

Joint Work

As the role of the principal has evolved to focus on instructional improvements shoulder to shoulder with teachers, shifting the principal supervisor role to one focused on joint work is critical. Principals, like the teachers they supervise, benefit from ongoing, intensive, job-embedded, professional learning to facilitate changes in instructional leadership practice and improve student achievement (Thessin & Seashore Louis, 2019). Moreover, the social processes that are activated in such learning experiences, such as grappling with new information and applying it to their own actions and thinking are essential to changes in people's actual work practices (Honig, 2012). Joint work between district leaders and principals on activities of value to the district increased work engagement and commitment. In turn, principal supervisors more readily

saw improvements in schools as their own as well as principals' responsibility. (Honig, 2012)

Principals and Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1986) as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (p. 391). Self-efficacy beliefs influence the courses of action that people pursue and is an important construct for understanding human behavior in various contexts (Bandura 1986;1997). Extant research has found principal self-efficacy correlates to several key areas of school leadership. High principal self-efficacy has been linked to principals’ abilities to persist in the face of challenge, (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996; Paglis & Green, 2002) lead reform, (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008) motivate others, (Leithwood et al., 2010) and perform the tasks necessary to lead groups to meet shared goals (Daly, Liou, 2020; McDonald, 2001). Further, a leader’s feelings of efficacy can extend beyond their own leadership practices to the school community through their impact and influence. However, those with low self-efficacy are quick to call themselves failures and rigidly persist in their original course of action when their solution is not successful (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996). A strong sense of efficacy in principals can have a far-reaching impact for principal, district, and student success and merits further investigation into its development.

Sources of Self-Efficacy

If perceptions of principal self-efficacy are related to the effectiveness of their leadership, it is important to know the sources of these perceptions. According to

Bandura (1989, 1997) self-efficacy is shaped by four types of experiences: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional state. People gather information from these four experiences to inform their self-efficacy. The four types of experiences do not operate independently from one another. Azah (2014) concluded that leaders (including principals) are more effective when they stimulate self-efficacy in multiple areas and through multiple types of experiences. Often the dynamic interactions between all four types of experiences dictate the power or sway an experience will have.

Mastery Experiences. Mastery experiences produce the most powerful and enduring changes to self-efficacy because they provide direct evidence to an individual that one can succeed at a given task (Bandura, 1997). Azah (2014) identified various forms of mastery experiences for principals, including job-embedded professional development, involvement in special projects, and family engagement. Mastery experiences represent successful outcomes that result from perseverance and mastery of complex skills performed in succession. Murphy and Johnson (2011) concluded that successful mastery experiences for leaders did lead individuals to engage in future leadership experiences. A mastery experience alone does not increase self-efficacy. Whether a mastery experience increases self-efficacy or has no effect is dependent upon how the individual processes the information from the experience. Individuals who focus upon successful experiences rather than failed attempts have higher self-efficacy than those who focus more on failures (Bandura, 1989).

Vicarious Experiences. Vicarious experiences are formed by the observation of social models performing tasks or demonstrating mastery of a task. By observing successful models, individuals can determine the skills and behaviors necessary for mastery, which increases self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences are more impactful if the model being observed is more similar to the observer. However, it is more impactful to self-efficacy if individuals can observe another individual modeling an undaunted attitude and perseverance no matter what challenges are presented. Conversely, observing individuals similar to oneself fail despite high effort can negatively impact self-efficacy by confirming internal doubts (Bandura, 1989). Azah (2014) found vicarious experiences for principals often take the form of mentor and mentee relationships between new and experienced principals.

Verbal Persuasion. Verbal persuasion of one's abilities or capacity is often provided through feedback and can help develop skills or attributes, particularly in the early stages of skill development (Bandura, 1997). However, persuasion must remain in the bounds of realistic appraisal of one's abilities or the results can be contradictory. By overestimating one's abilities they may place themselves in situations that are far above their actual abilities and then experience profound failure, thus lowering self-efficacy and discrediting the original source of verbal persuasion. Verbal persuasion, when used to negatively assess one's abilities or skill can significantly decrease self-efficacy. Mellor, et al. (2006) found that verbal persuasion was effective in persuading leaders to take on other leadership roles. Azah (2014) identifies principal colleagues and senior district officials as specific sources of verbal persuasion of principal self-efficacy but noted that,

similar to Bandura's findings, the credibility of the source of verbal persuasion is key to determining the impact on self-efficacy.

Emotional States. When determining one's abilities, feedback is gathered from different emotional and physical information. During particularly stressful or intense situations, individuals experiencing heightened anxiety or tension may perceive these emotional feelings as indications of vulnerability or ineptitude (Bandura, 1997). This stress builds, further lower one's sense of ability and lead to poor performance, thus confirming low levels of self-efficacy. Federici and Skaalvik (2012) found that principals with low self-efficacy tended to have higher levels of exhaustion than their more efficacious counterparts. The researchers found that more exhausted principals evaluated themselves more negatively (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). The next section will describe the four major thought processes through which efficacy-shaping experiences produce outcomes in behavior.

The Influence of Relationships on Self-Efficacy

Azah (2104) found that involvement in district-level decision making, high levels of trust with district leadership, and high levels of autonomy were important antecedents to high levels of principal self-efficacy (Azah, 2014). Other research has distilled specific district practices that led to stronger feelings of self-efficacy in principals. Daly and Finnigan (2012) noted a virtuous cycle that was created through shared professional learning opportunities: "the more leaders perceived trusting relations among and between central office administrators, the more frequent exchanges around best practices tended to be reciprocated" (p. 12). Mentoring and coaching from central office leaders or outside

vendors provided by the central office have been shown to both increase self-efficacy and teacher perceptions of principal effectiveness (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Versland, 2013). Furthermore, Honig (2008) provided a clarion call to central offices to redesign themselves in assistance to principals through authentic joint work such as modeling for principals that “create valued identity structures, social opportunities, and tools” (Honig, 2008, p. 634). Burch & Spillane (2004) demonstrated how the central office work of resource development could be redefined as collaborative, iterative work done in concert with school leaders. In such, moving from command and control to reciprocal relationships with school leaders, central offices bring increased “legitimacy and value” to the relationship (Honig, 2006).

Methods

This case study utilized qualitative data to elucidate how principals and district leaders in one Massachusetts district supported relationships with principals and to what extent, if any, did these relationships influence principals’ perceptions of self-efficacy. The study took the shape of a case study to allow for depth of self-efficacy and relationships through two levels of a district (principals and central office leaders) (Yin, 2014). The depth made possible by the single case provides the opportunity to build on theory about self-efficacy that would have otherwise remained invisible (Meriam, 1998). This case study utilized multiple qualitative methods to analyze the stories of principals including interviews and observations to triangulate and make sense of the multiple data sources.

Elody District

Elody District was a large urban district serving approximately 15,000 students. About eighty five percent of the students identify as students of color, whereas only four of the twenty district principals identify as nonwhite. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) identified the district as a system that has not served students well (DESE, 2020). According to accountability data, the district met 45% of improvement targets with 14 of the district schools needing targeted support from the district. In a review of DESE principal retention data from 2017-2021, the district had an average of 89.6% of principals retained compared to the state average of 84.2% retention rates for principals making Elody the right district for my study.

This study took place in the Elody School District, a large-sized school district in Massachusetts that provided access to building principals and central office leaders who supported or supervised principals. The size of the district allowed for at least one principal to be interviewed at each grade range and school type, ensuring the access to principals at each grade band and school time to allow for data saturation that the study required. In addition to principals, I interviewed five central office administrators who are responsible for principal supervision and/or professional development to support my examination of the strength and nature of network connections between school and district leaders and their associated sense of self-efficacy.

Data Collection

In order to understand the influence of principal and district leader relationships on principals' perceptions of self-efficacy, I drew upon interview data and documents. Data collection took place during the fall of 2021.

Participant Data

The selection of participants included all invited central office leaders for a total of six. Of the 22 principals in the district, eight agreed to participate, with 14 either declining or not responding to outreach. I began my study using convenience sampling by interviewing those principals and district leadership staff who were available and willing to participate in the research (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019). As I proceeded through the research process, I employed snowball sampling by asking participants to recommend others to be interviewed to gain further understanding of the experiences of district leaders and principals. Snowball sampling resulted in seven educators' agreeing to participate and five declining. In total, out of 22 schools in the district, eight were represented in interview data with 14 participants overall. See table 3.1.

Table 3.1*Interview Participants by Role and Participation*

Role	Participated	Declined	Total
District Leaders	6	0	6
Principal	8	14	22
Educator	7	5	12
Total	21	25	40

Semi-Structured Interviews

This study drew upon semi-structured interviews of eight of the district's 22 principals and six central office administrators who were responsible for principal supervision or professional development. Interviews lasted for forty-five to sixty minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed (see Appendix A for interview protocols). The

interview format utilized open-ended questions so that participants could share their experience openly (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Interview questions focused on gaining understanding of the emotional and professional closeness of participants' relationships through name generator questions used to elicit specific names and experiences (Marsden, 1990). Table 3.2 shows the questions from the principal interview protocol that are aligned to answering research questions.

Table 3.2

Sample Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
(1) In what ways do districts organize and encourage relationship ties with and among principals?	District Leader Interview Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do principals call you? 2. Tell me about a positive relationship you have with a principal and what sustains it.
(2) To what extent do strong relationships with central office leaders and other principals influence principals' feelings of efficacy?	Principal Interview Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did other people (mentors, educators) impact your decision to become a principal? Who encouraged you? 2. Tell me about a time when you felt like you demonstrated your greatest strength as a principal. 3. The principal's role is so hard. Tell me about a relationship you have with someone in the district that keeps you going.

These questions got to the core of social ties by addressing the strength and content of relationships amongst participants as well as possible influences of these relationships on feelings of self-efficacy.

Data Analysis

Data from semi-structured interviews provided evidence regarding relationships and their influence on principal perceptions of self-efficacy. To analyze the data, I used an iterative process of synthesizing, coding, and categorizing responses to interview questions simultaneously with collection of data (Saldaña, 2013) to understand patterns of social ties in the principals' and district leaders' networks. I utilized Dedoose () to organize, and code interview data. Interviews were coded using descriptive notations including participant demographics and deductive codes related to social network relationships. First, prior to conducting interviews, I created an initial code list based on the study's research questions. This initial code list included "types of relationships", "sources of self-efficacy", "benefits of self-efficacy" and "challenges of self-efficacy", and "resources shared through relationships". Next, I listened to recordings and read transcripts of each interview in order to identify common themes and patterns as related to each research question (RQ1 & RQ2). I then revised my initial code list to isolate the differences in relationships based on role and to highlight trends in types of relationships shared in the interviews. For example, excerpts coded as "District - Principal Relationships" or "Principal - Principal Relationships" became "District - Multiplex Relationships", "District - Homophily", "District - Joint Work" and "District -

Threat-Rigidity” to signal the source and the nature of the relationships. A parallel code set was created for relationships principals noted with other principal colleagues. An example of the progression of the data codes can be found in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3
Data Analysis Codes

Excerpt	Original Code	Final Code
She is always quick to acknowledge that, and at the same time, recognizes, this is what mentorship looks like, this is what leadership looks like. And I think mentorship is by the way critical, because the way you mentor somebody influences the way they lead. Again, she's one person and I talk to her probably, every day. So, she's in [a doctoral] program, I push her along.	District - Principal Relationships	District Multiplex Relationships
So, when the superintendent asked me to come here, he said no one can go to this school except for you. You're the counselor. I know you can do the job. I want you to go there and do it as a favor to me.	District-Principal Relationships	Principal Homophily
It's us working together as a group, the principals. We're always talking through and getting through situations. Giving each other	Principal - Principal Relationships	Principal Joint work

Excerpt	Original Code	Final Code
different ideas, different thoughts. And then when things come up, again, it's not like you have a script to look at, but you have different thoughts and ideas that you've built over time in your head that kind of help you through.		

I primarily used data from semi-structured interviews to create my findings. 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. 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. When necessary, I contacted participants with clarifying questions about the Administrative Internship Program and details not answered in the first round of interviews such as years of service.

Findings

In order to understand the influence of relationships on principal feelings of self-efficacy in the Elody School District, I conducted interviews with the superintendent, five additional district leaders and eight school principals. In the first section, I discuss district strategies related to principal relationships. In the second section, I discuss the influence of these relationships on principal perceptions of self-efficacy.

District Organization and Encouragement of Relationships in Elody

This section addresses research question one, related to the organization and encouragement of relationships in the district. All of the educators who participated in this study shared a belief that relationships between and amongst principals and central office were critical to the success of the district. In line with the themes in my literature review, district leaders and principals spoke about four key relationship dynamics: joint work, homophily, multiplexity and threat-rigidity. The interview data also showed a relationship between these dynamics and particular district practices. Based on interview coding, I described the district practice or initiative that was mentioned most frequently in relation to each relationship dynamic.

Joint Work and Professional Development

Responses pertaining to principal professional learning clustered around one emergent initiative defined, in part, by joint work and one that appears to be a departure from it. The newly established DEI Office in Elody was leading one of the two strands of professional development and had just started a series of all-day sessions on diversity, equity, and inclusion when my interviews occurred. To demonstrate that the district was “starting over and starting together” in their learning on this topic, the professional development occurred on a day when the district was closed so that everyone from custodians and the support staff as well as the teachers and administrators could participate. Although those who were interviewed after the professional development day shared mixed feedback on its effectiveness, most participants acknowledged the

symbolism of district leaders and staff learning together signaled that this work was important. Once central office leaders reflected:

It's a first step of many. We've never done a conference like that before in this district. We've never had a full PD day that included the custodians and the support staff as well as the teachers and administrators. It was a first. So, I'm like, 'You just made history.'

Prior to the current year, elementary principals in Elody took part in formal professional development programs through an outside partner focused on “instruction, excellence, and equity” for several full days throughout the year. Five of the six elementary principals cited this experience and the “thought partnership” they had by learning alongside their supervisor as valuable. This partnership was replaced with a second strand of principal development facilitated by district leaders and focused on instructional practices and evaluation put in its place in the current year. Three district leaders spoke to how this change provided greater vertical coherence for all principals. However, principals at all grade levels bemoaned the new structure of monthly professional development offerings from the district feeling more top-down. One principal characterized this professional development as feeling “basically like a lecture” and another principal referred to it as “directive”. A third principal underscored these comments, expressing that they wished that district leaders had included principal partnership in the design to better meet their developmental needs. This principal shared, “That's why it goes back to that being it's kind of insulting. If they actually talked to us, [they] would've figured out [the elementary principals have] been doing this for years.”

These data show that district leaders and principals, if in different ways, acknowledge the value of relationships in principals' professional learning.

Homophily and Career Pathways

Principals most commonly discussed relationships in terms of the access that relationships provided or denied them on their pathways to the principalship. The phrase “grow your own” was used colloquially by many participants to express the ways that internal candidates are encouraged to consider for career advancement opportunities, both informally through relationships and formally through the district's Administrative Internship Program. For example, one White principal reflected on the shared experience he had with many principal colleagues, “Many of the principals were like me. I grew up here. I went through [the district], graduated from [the district], came back and taught here my whole career.” A White district leader confirmed, “We really have always believed that Elody has a culture of ‘grow your own’. They've always tapped people that are here to move up.” In fact, the majority of principals interviewed recalled being offered their current principal position by the superintendent through an unexpected informal conversation, showing the value of relationships in career advancement.

Seven of the eight principals interviewed participated in the Administrative Internship Program before becoming a principal. The program provided twelve school-based district staff members to spend twelve weeks working in a central office role as a way to learn about district leadership while working on a project of value for the district. While the projects were cited as beneficial to some, all spoke about the access to social capital in the district that their participation provided. One White principal shared

the benefit she experienced from the internship, “So they took my picture, they did a little bio, and next thing you know I got a phone call from one of the principals at the school. She said, ‘I’m looking for an assistant principal.’” Conversely, three of four Black leaders saw the district’s emphasis on “grow your own” as exacerbating the prioritization of one district leader called “adult comfort and convenience as opposed to student outcomes” as well as supporting the persistence of racial gaps in leadership positions. While the seven white principals shared relatively predictable pathways to the principalship through the Administrative Internship Program and informal mentoring, the one Black principal, who grew up and spent his career in the district, shared:

I think being a Black man in the city, I think that was one of the obstacles that I faced. There were people that I thought I was better than that got jobs before me. I think people used a lot of different sayings to keep me out of jobs. They said I was too angry, they said I was too nice. I believe they had other people lined up for positions and I think that was the obstacle that I faced.

As part of the district’s broader equity and diversity initiative and in response to concerns about retaining diverse teachers and leaders, it piloted a promising practice of informal racial affinity groups for teachers at each school site and was starting to formalize organic affinity groups for principals. All participants of color as well as three white district staff mentioned affinity groups as a positive relationship-building strategy. Six participants mentioned this work as a positive relationship-building strategy. Despite efforts to diversity and retain leaders of color, these data are important because they demonstrate relationship practices in the district that maintain homophilous leadership.

Multiplexity and Mentoring

In line with the research, all principals and four of six district leaders interviewed referred to their most impactful relationships in the district as multiplex in nature. In other words, their important relationships superimposed friendship and work-based characteristics. One leader stated bluntly, “I’m not going to reach out to someone who I only have a professional relationship with.” This was especially true of relationships related to mentorship. Elody did not have a formal mentorship program in place for principals but the district encouraged and informally organized opportunities for many principals, including time for best practice sharing and problem-solving in all monthly principal professional development sessions. A district leader amplified the belief that personal relationships were necessary for principals to do their important work because, “The change starts with them. If we don't support them and give them a network, not only with people [who can get them] answers from central office, but [those who] can work together and share ideas and get advice from each other.” A seasoned principal spoke of the reciprocal benefit she felt from mentoring a newer principal, “She has a long drive in the morning, so we talk a couple days a week, at least for a half hour on her commute in. But I get as much from her, and that's what I tell her. I said, "I am not your mentor. You and I, we just talk things over and problem-solve together." These insights are important in demonstrating the role that friendship plays in supporting principals affectively and instrumentally in their complex role.

Threat-Rigidity and Increased Accountability

Participants shared divergent views on how their relationships were influenced by the district's response to increased accountability from the state. All elementary principals spoke of a distinct change in their relationships with the central office under increased state sanction through their change in supervisor and professional development structures. In line with research on threat rigidity, leaders spoke to a feeling that the district was responding to pressure from the state by trading a reciprocal relationship with principals for a "top-down" approach (Daly & Finnigan, 2010). One principal shared how this approach threatened principal voices as advocates for their students, "It's just that it's different this year right now. I feel as though in the past if there was something that we felt was best for children, I could defend and give a reason why and be able to show why, we had an opportunity to do things." Furthermore, other elementary principals spoke of feeling "devalued" and "isolated" in the current environment where "[principals] are the problem" and "there's no voice of principals in any of the things that are coming down". Finally, one leader shared how principals were taking it upon themselves to continue structures that had been lost, "All of those structures that [were] put in place for us to work together and collaborate, they're all dismantled. We're group texting and we're going out. We're meeting. It's not perfect, but it's something because we all just need that."

District leaders acknowledged the struggle that sanctions create regarding prioritizing principals' time in schools or in their own learning. One leader shared an example of the internal conflict the leadership team had before cutting a popular principal

coaching program, “It doesn't mean that the program isn't worthy. The leadership program is worthy... If you're out of your building three hours in a day, you pay for that for the next three days. There are mixed feelings. So, then, what do you do? After-school? Then they're exhausted.” Secondary leaders tended to empathize with the district perspective. One principal shared, “I know they have a lot of pressure on them too, because obviously we have to be successful for [the state] to move forward.” Perhaps because they didn't have the same level of coordination in the past, secondary leaders did not feel the same sense of loss as their elementary peers. Instead, they saw organizational changes with optimism that they would increase social capital so they would no longer need to “figure it out on [their] own.” These perspectives are important because they demonstrate how relationships in a district can change due to external factors such as increased sanction.

Influence of Relationships on Sources of Self-Efficacy in Elody

Whereas the preceding passages describe the district's efforts to organize relationships, research question two, building on findings from question one, related to the influence those relationships had on activating feelings of self-efficacy in principals. Principals identified mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and finally, emotional states as antecedents to feelings of self-efficacy developed through their relationships with peers and district leaders and tied to district practices or initiatives discussed in the preceding section. These sources of self-efficacy, along with their district practice to which they were most frequently connected in the data, will be explained further in the following sections and visually represented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4
Influence on Relationships on Sources of Self-Efficacy

District Practice or initiative	Relationship Dynamic Encouraged	Source of Self-Efficacy Activated
Mentorship	Multiplexity	Vicarious Experiences
Career Pathways	Homophily	Verbal Persuasion
Increased Accountability	Threat-Rigidity	Emotional States
Professional Development	Joint Work	Mastery Experiences

Vicarious Experiences and Mentorship

The most common source of efficacy was vicarious experiences derived from district leaders or other principals. The commitment to social models as a means of learning the principalship were demonstrated by comments relating to opportunities to learn from colleagues. One district leader shared how ongoing informal mentorship with principals supported their internalization of new skills, “I started hearing myself in people, and I’m like, ‘Wow, okay. You’re just repeating what I said,’ and then I realized it’s connecting. It’s connecting, and they are starting to think differently.” A principal shared how an effective practice spread efficiently throughout the network through social models, “Then we started doing the PLC work and we had the inquiry cycle work and that was some powerful stuff. Principals would come and we would model for them. I felt like that was amazing.” When asked about their greatest strength as a principal, five of

the eight principals interviewed connected it to their relationships with their colleagues. Vicarious experiences provided effective and efficient ways for principals to apply new skills with a strong social model with confidence.

Verbal Persuasion and Homophily

The second most commonly heard source of self-efficacy was verbal persuasion from central office leaders who were homophilous to the recipient. Receiving positive verbal feedback was demonstrated by comments relating to taking on complex tasks, most frequently, a new role in the district. The superintendent was seen as a source of confidence and support for principals, “He never lets me get a chance to be discouraged, give up. I think he's someone that I really look up to and I respect as a mentor. I think he was my guy and he believed in me.” More generally, principals shared a sense that the district tries to “support us to really make us happy, if we can use that phrase, so that we want to stay.” Verbal persuasion did not always impact principals’ self-efficacy positively. Three principals spoke about how a long-standing, homophilous relationship with a superior could lead to a sense of obligation and even coercion. One principal shared how she was told by a district leader that she was the only person who could take over at a school because of her specific skill set. Although this verbal persuasion initially made the principal have a stronger sense of self-efficacy, the result was that she was moved into a role she didn’t want with no option of returning to the role she loved. After considering pushing the issue, the principal resigned herself to her fate, “Then I was like, okay, I know the pecking order. I'm not going to go above you and then be in the doghouse.” Given that principals often have to implement ideas they may not agree with,

this added obligation to superiors based on long-standing relationships can negatively impact a principal's feelings of self-efficacy.

Emotional States and Threat-Rigidity

The third most common factor mentioned as a source of self-efficacy were their emotional states. Emotional states were demonstrated by comments relating to the perceived ability or inability to persevere through challenging circumstances, most frequently the pandemic and increased sanctions. Many principals spoke to having a negative emotional state in the current year related to changes in organization and support from the central office. One leader spoke to a sense of hopelessness due to these changes that has led her to question her abilities, "You know when you feel like you're not doing your job? At the end of the day, when you work as hard as you can, or you think you work as hard as you can, and then you go home and you say, 'I got nothing done today. I did not accomplish [anything]'. Another principal framed these changes as surprising and impediments to momentum that had been established:

I thought what we were doing was fine then we got some new faces in and everything's been dictated from the district and I thought the district should have been there from the beginning if they want us to implement certain things and they weren't there. We were on our own working with the state and I thought that was fine too. Just don't want to be flip flopping and changing the game plan up during the middle of the game.

Although emotional states were often low, principals showed resolve to get through the challenges. One principal shared, "certainly I'm not going to give up and I'm not going to

let it reflect poorly on me that I didn't give it my best effort". These perspectives are important because lack of principal voice and expressive relationship components in relationships could lead to disengagement and diminished problem-solving and persistence in leaders.

Mastery Experiences and Joint Work

The least commonly heard source of self-efficacy came in the form of mastery experiences, experiences where leaders felt personal success. One could assume that because it is not an inherently socially based source of efficacy like vicarious experiences or verbal persuasion, the relationship would be less strong. However, some leaders did speak to the accumulated self-efficacy they had collected through relationships with principals and district leaders over time. One principal shared how these relationships were always with him when he had mastery experiences:

We're always talking through and getting through situations. Giving each other different ideas, different thoughts. And then when things come up, again, it's not like you have a script to look at, but you have different thoughts and ideas that you've built over time in your head that kind of help you through.

When asked what kept her going during difficult times, another principal shared, "We're all in this together. Being collaborative and being able to pick up the phone and call [my supervisor] whenever, and each other." Although relationships between principals and district leaders were not without challenge, many spoke to a deep level of camaraderie from being in the work together. A secondary principal spoke of this reimagined relationship with the central office, "But now, it's very much mutual respect. I think when

[the deputy superintendent] calling on me to do things, there isn't a thing I wouldn't do. Same thing with the super. I've known him..." It is important to note that principals interviewed reported having 17 to 29 years of experience in education, with many not becoming a principal until after their twentieth year in the district. All principals spoke to career trajectories that were both incremental and mostly predictable that provided for many mastery experiences and a feeling of readiness for their current role.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

In the preceding section, I described how one district organized and encouraged relationships with principals, and how these relationships have influenced principals' perceptions of self-efficacy. One finding showed that principals related their perceptions of self-efficacy to vicarious experiences through mentoring. The majority of their mentorship opportunities were rooted in informal social networks developed over time through collaborative work and friendship. A second finding showed that principals related their perceptions of self-efficacy to verbal persuasion through homophilous relationships. White principals often credited their relationships as playing an important role in their career pathway, but Black principals and district leaders saw homophily as a deterrent to opportunity. A third finding showed that principals related their perceptions of self-efficacy to emotional states through threat-rigidity responses from the district. The feeling that one's voice had less influence coupled with dramatic changes to professional learning caused leaders to question their ability and desire to continue doing their job.

As such, these findings lead to a discussion of issues related to extending and codifying culturally responsive mentorship opportunities for all principals in the district to increase access to resources and strengthen principal feelings of self-efficacy. This should include reconsidering existing mentorship programs such as the Administrative Internship Program in alignment with the district values relating to equity and inclusion. As well, this finding leads to a discussion related to increasing principal agency. The district can do this by providing avenues for effective leaders to inform district goals and initiatives in collaboration with district leaders to increase the responsiveness of their support and strengthen their self-efficacy.

Building Formal Mentorship Opportunities

In the Elody School District, building principals credited multiplex relationships and interactions as playing an important role in their perceived success in their role. All principals in this district stressed the importance of these relationships and interactions through informal mentors, principal networks, or long-standing personal relationships, although, importantly, the one Black principal in the study experienced these relationships to a much lesser degree. Bauer and Brazer (2013) elucidated the role that the district can play in building self-efficacy in leaders through mentorship. They define a chain reaction whereby principals who are provided social support through coaching develop diminished feelings of isolation and thus improved feelings of self-efficacy similar to how many leaders felt in Elody (Bauer & Brazer, 2013). Leithwood & Jantzi (2008) also investigated the district's role in self-efficacy through stratified random sampling of leaders in forty-five districts, finding that a district can best develop this

perception by building collaboration between leaders. They concluded that district leaders have a strong, if indirect, influence on school leader efficacy in all categories, with the strongest influence being in building collaborative cultures and structures (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). These studies create a strong argument and potential roadmaps for how districts may organize to intentionally focus their efforts on building efficacy in new and seasoned principals alike.

School districts should consider more formal mentoring programs to support principals throughout their career. As the role intensifies over time, principals will always need an objective and accountable partner to help them make sense of their work and support their growth and ambitions. Districts should consider mentorship 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 (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). Furthermore, principals of color should be supported with mentors and racial affinity groups that help them access leadership opportunities within a district.

Building Principal Agency

Although principals are persisting in their roles beyond the national average, their perceptions of self-efficacy, and therefore, their agency in their role, are diminished due to the district's response to increased sanctions. Formalizing principal voice in districts through processes such as a principal cabinet or professional development team has many benefits. Bandura underscores that self-efficacy is the "foundation of human agency" and

as such, actors with diminishing self-efficacy will eventually have little incentive to act (Bandura, 2000). Conversely, Azah (2014) found that involvement in district-level decision making, high levels of trust with district leadership, and high levels of autonomy were important antecedents to high levels of principal self-efficacy (Azah, 2014) By strengthening the instrumental ties between principals and district leaders, the district can benefit from an increased sense of obligation and duty from principals (Beausaert, et al., 2021). These vertical relationships will also benefit principals through increased trust and credibility based on expertise (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Beausaert, et al., 2021). These bridging relationships often provide more valuable resources to both parties to support the district's forward progress. The social capital framework afforded me the opportunity to cast this study in the agency of the principal and district leaders to build capacity for long-term results in contrast to the external accountability which has often defined success for principals in the 21st century (Fullan et al., 2015).

Study Limitation and Future Research

The scope of this project is limited in breadth and depth to focus on a study of a single district over a four-month period. While there may be transferable learning, the study is limited in the ability to impact large scale reform. There was decreased access to people and buildings due to COVID-19 restrictions. The data collected for this study was also done so during a transitional phase within the district with a new interim deputy superintendent and new principal network structures, which may have led to responses that would have been different during a more typical period of time. As such, my data reflects the opinions and experiences of district leaders and school principals during this

limited time period. These findings present an accurate representation of the views and opinions evaluated in the current study. However, there are potential biases that should be noted. Additionally, the majority of data was collected based on eight principals and selective administrative interviews. Principal participants were self-selected and therefore, not necessarily an accurate representation of the principal population at large. My current role as a district leader contributed to my interest in the research and may have contributed to potential bias. However, I attempted to remain unbiased during the process.

Despite their important role in raising student achievement, principal turnover due to job dissatisfaction is high. Given this, it is important for school districts to understand the reasons why principals who stay feel satisfied and effective in their job and support principals in ways that will increase their self-efficacy. Social capital provides the opportunities for principals to apply new skills garnered through human capital efficiently. This study adds to the body of research between principal self-efficacy and relationships with principal and central office colleagues and supports the assertions of prior researchers that principal self-efficacy is related to relationships (Daly, et al., 2105, Honig, et al, 2010, Honig, 2012; Spillane, et. al, 2009). This study, which showed a significant relationship between self-efficacy and principal job satisfaction, furthers the research on how specific relationship dynamics engage the four antecedents of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982). Bandura (1977, 1982) identifies four ways to build self-efficacy: mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states. Further research into which of these sources have been used by principals with

high-self-efficacy to develop their self-efficacy will help to identify potential relationship dynamics for school districts to strengthen through their work with principals.

CHAPTER 4³: 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

³ 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, or as we simplify it with the colloquial phrase: 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 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).

Groupthink

Groupthink is the practice of thinking or making decisions as a group in a way that discourages creativity or individual responsibility (Janis, 1982). Interestingly, the chances of groupthink increased when decision-makers were under stress or navigating through crises (Janis, 1982; Liou & Daly, 2020). In these circumstances, the group supported leaders perceived threats to their leadership or to their self-esteem (Hart, 1991). In schools, groupthink limits the collaboration and voice of school leaders districts claimed to support. This was true in the Elody School District and we suspect that other districts also 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. 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. Furthermore, Swanson and Welton (2019) also encourage school leaders to think critically about business as usual so that effective innovative practices can take shape.

Multiplex Relationships

Multiplex relationships are relationships grounded in both work and friendship-related interactions, 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). 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). 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 create affinity groups and school based diversity teams as a starting point for additional introspective learning (Rogers-Ard & Knaus, 2020). For lasting organizational change, individual school leaders must be critically conscious to improve their own fluency in discussing race and the role of Whiteness to mitigate biases.

Diverse Representation

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

As districts create and hone their DEI work, they may find that racial diversity at the principal level also affects retention outcomes for both principals and staff. Districts

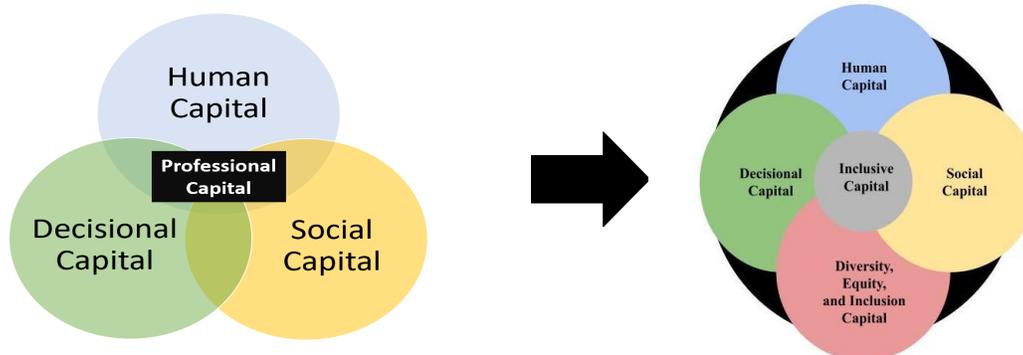
can look to institutions of higher education for examples of this work, as many have had DEI offices for decades (Nunes, 2021). As Clayton (2021) notes from her study at the university level, DEI must be prioritized and institutionalized as a core competency and made everyone's responsibility. As our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

One reason for the lack of representation at the principal level is that a majority of teachers are White, and, in turn, 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 in 2020. 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 decision-making ability. 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 dissertation team will compile the information from responses to this semi-structured interview for their analyses. Any data, including race/ethnicity and gender that is not currently available to the public will only be used in an 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 after 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: Before starting the script, ensure that all questions regarding: 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**. We've allocated 45-60 minutes for this interview as a quick reminder. 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. Your information and responses will be confidential and used for research purposes. No individual data or identifying information will be shared. You can end our conversation or take a break for any reason at any point in our interview. If, for any reason, the interview questions do not apply to you, or you wish to skip any question, you may do so. Your input is important to us, and we want you to feel comfortable during

this interview, so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

Question alignment key

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

District Leader Questions:

1. Why do you think principals decide to stay in this district? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: What does [Elody] do to retain school leaders? **(PR)**
 - b. Probe: How do you provide autonomy to principals? **(PI/PR)**
 - c. Probe - *Is there anything specific the district does to retain educators of color? (BER)*
 - d. Probe: *What is your role in school leader retention?*
2. Why do you think principals decide to leave the district? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: Could you have done anything different to keep them in their role?
3. In what ways do you see principals supporting each other? **(PE)**
 - a. Probe - *In what ways are 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

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

District Leader Questions: Human Resources Director

1. Why do you think principals decide to stay in this district? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: What does [Elody] do to retain school leaders? **(PR)**
 - b. Probe: How do you provide autonomy to principals? **(PI/PR)**
 - c. Probe: What is your role in school leader retention? **(PR)**
2. Why do you think principals decide to leave the district? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: Could you have done anything different to keep them in their role?
3. Is there anything specific the district does to retain educators of color? **(BER)**
 - a. Probe: Does the district have any direct conversations with principals regarding the retention of educators of colors?
4. How are principals recruited in [Elody]? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: How is it determined whether a principal is appointed or hired by committee?
 - b. Probe: - What are the core competencies you look for?
5. What is the history of the Administrative Internship Program? **(PP)**
 - a. Probe: How was this program designed and how was the agreement made with the BPS teachers association (contract)?
 - b. Probe: Tell us more how BPS recruits or advertises for the Administrative Internship Program.
6. How do you or your office promote equity in the district? **(PR)**
 - a. Probe: How do you work with your principals on topics around race and equity? **(PR/PI/PE)**

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

8. What is the demographic breakdown of principals currently employed in [Elody]?
 - a. Race
 - b. Gender
 - c. Years of experience in [Elody]
 - d. Years of experience as principal
 - e. Did they participate in the administrative internship program?

Follow Up Demographic Questions (if not answered in questions above):

- How many years have you served in the role?
- Would you consider yourself an educator of color?
 - If so, how do you identify?

Document request:

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

Appendix C: Principal Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants):

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

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.

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

(Get signature on consent form)

Thank you.

(Once recording starts)

The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

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

comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

Question alignment key

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

Principal Interview Questions:

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

- c. *Probe: Tell me a specific example of a time when this relationship helped.*
- d. *Probe: Is there a relationship that brings you down?*
- 7. Tell me about your experiences with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion? **(PI)**
 - a. *Probe: Where did you learn about DEI?*
 - b. *Probe: What do you know about [Elody's] DEI initiative?*
 - c. *Probe: What do you think about [Elody's] initiative?*
 - d. *Probe: How do you feel DEI fits in the overall mission of the district?*
- 8. Based on what you know about [Elody's] initiative, how are you rolling it out in your school? **(PI)**
 - a. *Probe: How did you decide what to do about DEI in your school?*
 - b. *Probe: How does DEI fit in your school mission?*
 - c. *Probe: Who, if anyone, helped you decide how to implement DEI in your school?*
 - d. *How do you make decisions about the competing priorities?*
- 9. How does race impact your interactions with your staff? **(BER)**
 - a. *Probe: Is there a story you can think of when you purposely had race at the forefront of your mind when interacting with one of your staff?*
 - b. **Probe: If race doesn't, why not?*
- 10. What do you do to get teachers to stay at your school? **(BER)**
 - a. *Probe - Do you do anything in particular for staff of color to get them to stay?*
- 11. Have you ever thought about leaving your position as the principal?
 - a. *Probe: What made you think about leaving? (PR)*
 - i. *Probe: In what ways has the time commitment of the role factored into your decision? ...Working conditions? ...Accountability? ...Autonomy?*
 - b. *Probe: If considering leaving the position, is there anything the district could do to retain you in your role?*
- 12. Is there anything I should have asked you?

Follow Up Questions (if not answered in questions above):

- How many years have you served as a principal? In [Elody]? Or elsewhere?
- What is it like to be a principal in [Elody]?
- Would you consider yourself an educator of color?
 - If so, how do you identify?
- Earlier we asked you about specific things you may be doing to retain your professional status staff of color. Are there any teachers you recommend we reach out to interview?

Appendix D: Educator Interview Protocol

Researcher (to be read to participants):

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

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.

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

(Get signature on consent form)

Thank you.

(Once recording starts)

The recording has started. Thank you for allowing us to record this session. Before we start, do you have any questions?

[Interviewer: Prior to starting the script, ensure that all questions re: consent form & study have been thoroughly addressed]

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

comfortable during this interview so please ask any clarifying questions you may have or let us know if you don't understand a question.

Question alignment key

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

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:

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

We look forward to working with you!

Appendix F: Educator of Color Recruitment Email

Dear Teachers,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lauren Viviani	vivianla@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx
Faculty Advisor		
Dr. Vincent Cho	vincent.cho@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx

Appendix G: Educator of Color Recruitment Email with Introduction

Hi [Educator],

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

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

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

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

*Best,
Marc*

Dear Teachers,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix H: Written Consent Form



Boston College Consent Form
Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development
Informed Consent to be in study, Principal Leadership

Researchers:

Marc Banks
William Hahn
Erica Herman
Christine Landry
Lauren Viviani

Study Sponsor: Dr. Vincent Cho

Type of consent: Adult Consent Form

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

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

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

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

Therefore, our studies will investigate how principals benefit from and shape professional capital to improve schools and their own professional efficacy.

In line with this mutual interest, each of our individually-authored studies explores and extends different dimensions of professional capital. Specifically, Banks will study leadership factors that impact Black educator retention, Hahn will study the principal pathway and its impact on principal recruitment, Herman will examine district strategies implemented during crisis to influence principal retention, Landry will examine the organization of 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:

Researcher(s)	Email	Cell Phone
Marc Banks	banksma@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx
William Hahn	hahnwi@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx
Erica Herman	hermane@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx
Christine Landry	landrych@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx
Lauren Viviani	vivianla@bc.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx

Faculty Advisor		
Dr. Vincent Cho	vincent.cho@bc.edu	XXX-XXX-XXXX

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

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

Boston College

Office for Research Protections

Phone: (617) 552-4778

Email: irb@bc.edu

Your Consent

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature

Date

Consent to Use Data for Future Research

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

YES _____

NO _____

Signature

Date

Consent to be Audio Recorded

I agree to be audio recorded.

YES _____ **NO** _____

Signature

Date

Appendix I: Document Analysis Protocol (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)

Item Name	Date of publication	Format	Author	Intended Audience	Code	Detail

